

Religion

Religion refers to the beliefs and a series of practical and moral instructions that the prophets have related on behalf of Allah to guide and lead human beings.

Believing in these tenets and performing these instructions result in man's prosperity and happiness in this world and in the world Hereafter.

So if we abide by religion and follow the orders of Allah and the Prophet (S), we will become prosperous not only in this short life, but also in the everlasting and endless world Hereafter.

We are aware that a happy and prosperous person is one who has a true objective in his life and who does not live in misdeed and aberration. He possesses a good and praiseworthy demeanor and performs good deeds and has a confident, strong, and peaceful heart in this turbulent world.

The religion of Allah directs us towards this happiness and prosperity. Without religion, there would be no prosperity and bliss. Religious tenets are like secret police in the heart of man and always accompany him. They keep man away from moral wickedness and force him to be virtuous.

Belief is the strongest and most solid refuge in which man never confronts fear and anguish in the ups and downs of life. The worshippers of Allah never lose their courage in any circumstances and never feel disdain and inferior, for they see themselves connected to the infinite might of the Creator of the world and under all circumstances, they remember Allah and seek refuge with Allah; they possess a confident, strong, and peaceful heart.

Religion commands us to have a praiseworthy behavior and to perform good and decent deeds as far as we can.

Therefore, religion is divided into three parts:

(1) Beliefs;

(2) Ethics;

(3) Commandments.

This brief account should be elaborated to be acceptable to the honorable readers.

1. Beliefs

If we use our commonsense and conscience, we realize that this world of existence with its wonderful order could not be created by itself and this astonishing order of the world of creation could not be achieved without an organizer.

Undoubtedly, there is a Creator Who has created this vast and magnificent world with His infinite capability and knowledge and who has established the world of creation with exact order by the invariable and unchangeable rules that He has set up throughout the world of existence. Nothing has been created uselessly and extravagantly. No creature falls outside the purview of the laws of Allah that govern the world.

Can it be believed that such a compassionate Allah with all the grace and blessings that He has toward His creatures would leave man, the masterpiece creation on his own? And that He would leave human beings to man's wisdom which is mostly victim of carnal desires and is, as a result, faced with aberration and misery? The reply to this question is self-evident.

Consequently, Allah must send instructions to human beings by prophets – who are free from any kind of sin and error – to lead men to happiness and prosperity by following them.

We realize that in this world, the signs and valuable benefits of adherence to religious principles do not become completely evident. Neither the righteous are rewarded, nor the criminals and oppressors are punished for their deeds.

From this, we understand that another world must exist where people's deeds are closely investigated, so that if one has done a charitable act, he would be rewarded or if he has committed an indecent deed, he would be castigated. Religion encourages people with these tenets and other rightful beliefs, which will later be thoroughly discussed in this book, and warns them of paganism and ignorance.

2. Ethics

Religion decrees that we adopt praiseworthy qualities in life, have a good nature, and accomplish ourselves with good and commendable attributes. We must be conscientious, benevolent, philanthropic, kind, faithful, good-natured, pleasing to meet, and just.

We must defend our own rights. We must not transgress our own limits and rights and should not encroach upon the property, reputation, and lives of people. In search of knowledge and civility, we must not spare any effort for self-sacrifice and self-denial whatsoever. Finally, we must have equality and

moderation in all affairs of life.

3. Commandments

Religion decrees that we perform acts that are beneficial to ourselves and to our society during our life and refrain from acts that cause corruption and immorality. It also teaches us to engage in reciting *salat* (prayers), observing *sawm* (fasting), and performing similar other duties which are signs of servitude and obedience towards Allah.

These are the laws and instructions the religion offers and invites us to perform. As it is evident, some of them are doctrinal, others ethical, and some others practical. As mentioned before, acceptance and performance of these principles is the only means of happiness and prosperity, for we are aware that man should be nothing but realistic and should live with good ethics and praiseworthy deeds.

Is It Necessary For Man To Follow A Religion?

The foremost question that comes up here is "what is the relation of men's lives with religion and piety?" Is it not possible for a human society to continue its humanitarian existence without religion and faith in Allah? Is it not that a religious person is one who proves Allah's existence and performs specific acts for His satisfaction?

It is possible that in the society, according to the laws enacted by human beings, the duty of each member of the society determines the benefit and the loss. In this case, the laws of men replace religious laws and there will be no need for religion.

But with little attention and deliberation on Islamic commandments and regulations, the opposite of this is proved, for Islam has not been concerned only with praying to and praising Allah, rather it has enacted comprehensive instructions and specific regulations for all individual and social positions of man. Islam has considered the vast world of humanity in an astonishing manner and has enacted suitable regulations in accordance with man's individual and social actions and otherwise.

Finally, Islam has provided and guaranteed the happiness and prosperity of the members of social community in every respect and to the maximum extent possible. Every just person acknowledges that the laws sprang from man's limited thoughts and knowledge cannot equal those of religion. This power of the Almighty Allah has described the religion of Islam in the Holy Quran. As examples, we will cite few verses here:

"Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam, and those to whom the Book had been given did not show opposition but after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves: and whoever disbelieves in the communications of Allah then surely Allah is quick in reckoning (3: 19)."

The religion towards which all prophets have invited people consists of theism and submission to Allah's orders. Though the religious scholars specified right through wrong, they did not accept what was rightful due to their prejudice and animosity. Each scholar adopted a specific course of action; as a result, different religions came into existence on earth. In fact, this category of people did not believe in the Divine verses. Allah will soon retribute their deeds.

"And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him. and in the Hereafter he shall be one of the losers (3:85)."

"O you who believe! enter into submission one and all, and do not follow the footsteps of Shaytan (satan); surely he is your open enemy (2:208)."

"And fulfil the covenant of Allah when you have made a covenant, and do not break the oaths after making them fast, and you have indeed made Allah a surety for you; surely Allah knows what you do (16:91)."

The purpose of this verse is to indicate that any Muslim who makes a promise to Allah or to people must keep it and must not breach it.

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have debates with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way (16: 125)."

This refers to the fact that to promote religion, a Muslim must converse with people according to their understanding and in a way that is beneficial to them. However, if he fails to guide a person through logic and advice then he must debate in the best manner, which is one of the means of proving something, to guide him towards truth.

"And when the Qur'an is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you (7:204)."

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Prophet and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Prophet, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day; this is better and very good in the end (4:59)."

This verse means that in an Islamic society, disputes can only be settled by the Qur'an and the ahadith of the Prophet (S). Every difference must be settled by these two factors. If a Muslim settles differences by the logic of reason, this is due to the fact that the Qur'an has accepted the rule of logic.

"Thus, it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and take counsel with them in the affair; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust (3: 159)."

Good behavior, benevolence, and taking counsel in the affairs result in fellowship and kindness. Members of the society must respect their leader to be influenced by him. Allah orders the honorable leader of the Muslims to be benevolent and to take counsel. But since it is possible that people may make mistakes in their decisions, Allah orders the leader to be independent in his decision after taking counsel and to have trust in Allah, because no one can oppose Allah's will.

In like manner, the Almighty Allah introduces Judaism and Christianity with their Divine books of *Tawrat* (Old Testament) and the *Injil* (Bible) and their social precepts and provisions as:

"And how do they make you a judge and they have the Tawrat wherein is Allah's judgement. .. Surely We revealed Tawrat in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets who submitted themselves (to Allah) judged (matters) for those who were Jews, and the masters of divine knowledge and the doctors..."

And We sent after them in their footsteps 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)... and We gave him the Injil in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of Tawrat..."

And the followers of the Injil should have judged by what Allah revealed in it... And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what Allah has revealed ... (5:43 - 48)."

Tawrat and *Injil* which are now in the hands of the Jews and Christians emphasize this point, because the *Tawrat* contains many legal and judicial provisions and apparently the *Injil* confirms and certifies the religious laws of *Tawrat*.

Conclusion

From the aforementioned statement, it becomes evident that religion as viewed by the Qur'an is the same as the method of living from which man cannot escape. The difference between religion and a social law is that religion is descended by the Almighty Allah, whereas social laws spring from people's minds. In other words, religion unites man's social life with his worship and obedience of the Almighty Allah, while no attempt at such unity is made by social laws.

The Advantages of Religion

It was revealed that religion has a profound effect in reforming the individual and the society. It is also the only means of obtaining bliss and prosperity.

A society which does not abide by religion loses its realignment and intellectualism and spends its precious life in aberration, externalism, and negligence. Such a society ignores wisdom, and like animals, becomes narrow-minded and foolish.

This society becomes involved in immorality and misbehavior, thus forfeiting all its humanitarian privileges. Such a society will not reach its everlasting prosperity and rather, it will experience the inauspicious outcomes and the unpleasant effects of its deviations and misdeeds.

Sooner or later, such a society will suffer from the evil consequences of its negligence and will realize that the only way towards prosperity is religion and belief in Allah. Finally, this society will regret its actions.

The Almighty Allah states:

"He will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it (91:9 -10)."

It is necessary to understand that the application of religious instructions ensures the happiness and salvation of the individual and the society, otherwise only nomination does not help. Since it is only the reality itself that counts and not the claim for reality.

Whoever claims to be a Muslim, and with his gloomy heart, inferior character, and awkward behavior expects to meet the angel of happiness, resembles a patient who expects to recover without having treatment as per the prescription. Obviously with such an idea, he will not attain his goal. The Almighty Allah states:

"Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians and the Sabians¹, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and does good, they shall have reward from their Lord... (2:62)."

It might be assumed that, according to this verse, those who have faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment and who perform good deeds will be saved even if they do not believe in all or some prophets. But it must be realized that in *Surat al-Nisa' Ayat* (verses) 150 and 151, Allah considers those who disbelieve in all or some of the prophets as *kafirin* (unbelievers). In this respect, He states:

"Surely those who disbelieve in Allah and His apostles and (those who) desire to make a distinction between Allah and His apostles and say: 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others'; and desire to take a course between (this and) that. These it is that are truly unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement (4: 150-151)."

As a result, whoever believes in all the prophets and performs good deeds will avail of his faith.

Human Civilization

If we study the means and factors which led to the development of human societies in the past, this truth becomes evident to us that in his life, man only demands and pursues his own prosperity and happiness. Of course, this happiness would not be possible without the total provision of all means of

existence.

On the other hand, with his understanding, gifted by Allah, man realizes that he can never attain and prepare all his needs on his own, so as to provide the means of his ideal welfare and prosperity, because he realizes that he cannot solve the problems of life and reach perfection by himself.

As a result, he necessarily submits himself to a social life to supply his needs and considers cooperation with others as the easiest means towards achieving his goal. He engages in acquiring the means of his livelihood collectively.

That is to say, each person undertakes to provide some of the means and makes them available. Then, all individuals gather the outcome of their activities. Proportionate with his activity and social status, each individual takes a share and uses it to manage his life.

In this way, he will work hand in hand with his fellowmen to ensure his welfare. This is to say that they all endeavor for one another and pile up the outcomes of their activities. Then each member of the society gathers the product of his activity in accordance with his position and the extent of his endeavor.

The Need for Regulations in the Society

As the results of the activities of individuals are linked with one another and since everyone wants to benefit from them, forcibly, inconvenience and conflict of interests are indispensable elements of this contact and constant relation.

It is needless to say that material benefits are normally the source of all kinds of differences, animosities, and loss of sincerity. In order to maintain sincerity among people, society requires a series of regulations, the observance of which prevents disturbance and chaos.

It is self-evident that if no laws and regulations for the management of the society exist, there will be a chaos in which human society cannot survive even for a single day.

Certainly, these rules vary from one society to another based on the extent of civilization or savagery of tribes and nations, and the level of understanding of societies and their governments. In neither case is a society free from the need of a series of traditions and regulations which are at least respected by most of its members. In the history of mankind, never has a society evolved without possessing common rites, traditions, and regulations.

Man is Not Free Against Regulations

As man performs all his actions with his own free will and choice, he feels a sort of freedom of action for himself. By considering this freedom of action as "absolute", that is, "unconditional", he wants total freedom and escape from any restriction.

For this reason, man suffers from any prohibition and deprivation inflicted on himself. Finally, he feels compelled and senses failure whenever a restriction is imposed on him. Therefore, no matter how small the number of social regulations, they are against man's freedom-seeking nature because they limit him to some extent.

On the other hand, he finds that if he disagrees to forfeit a part of his freedom by abiding by the laws for the sake of the protection of society and its order, a chaos will result that will suddenly annihilate all his freedom and peace. This is just as if he seizes a morsel from others when others will undoubtedly seize morsels from him. In like manner, if he oppresses others, they will oppress him as well.

Therefore, in order to maintain some freedom for himself, he dispenses with a part of his freedom and inevitably respects social regulations.

Weak Point in the Implementation of Regulations

As mentioned before, there is a kind of conflict and incompatibility between man's freedom-seeking nature and social regulations. That is, laws are like chains that are linked to man's feet and he constantly tries to break them and set himself free from captivity. This is the greatest danger which always threatens social regulations and shakes its foundations.

In this regard, alongside practical regulations and duties, there are always other regulations intended to punish offenders which frighten and prevent them from opposition, and to encourage people to abide by the laws by making them confident of receiving rewards and prizes. It cannot be denied that the subject matter (i.e., fear of punishment and eagerness for receiving rewards) aids the enforcement of laws to some extent, but it cannot fully prevent violations and safeguard the influence and domination of laws.

This is because penal codes, like other laws, are vulnerable to violation and are constantly threatened by the freedom-seeking nature of man, because those who have full power and capability can overtly oppose them without fear and fright, or they can force judicial and executive organizations to act according to their desire, by using their influence.

And those who do not have adequate influence and power can take advantage of the negligence or weakness of the authorities to fulfill their oppositions covertly. They can attain their ends through bribery, mediation, or by way of friendship and relationship with the influential sector to disrupt the working order of the society and to paralyze it.

The best evidence for this subject is that every day we observe thousands of these types of oppositions and violations against laws in various human societies.

The Original Source of the Weakness of Laws

We must now find out where the original source of danger lies and how to subdue the unyielding and

freedom seeking nature of man in order to prevent his opposition to the law.

The source of this danger, which is the main cause for penetration of corruption in a society and which cannot even be prevented by regulations, is that the ordinary social methods which have brought the laws into existence consider the material aspects of individuals and ignore their spiritualities and instincts.

They only aim at providing harmony, maintaining order, and balancing the actions of people in such a way that will not result in discord and conflict. Social laws demand adherence of their articles and tend to control the actions of people. Such laws ignore men's innate attributes and innermost feelings which instigate their actions and which are the internal enemies of regulations.

Whenever the freedom-seeking nature of man and hundreds of other instincts (such as selfishness, voluptuousness, which are the main causes of corruption) are ignored, there will be chaos and disturbance and the scope of differences will become wider day by day.

Since all laws are always threatened by the attack and invasion of powerful rebels and the night-time attacks of ingenious robbers springing from these instincts; therefore, they fall short of preventing corruption and differences.

The Advantage of Religion Over Other Laws

The latest social method for the protection of laws is to establish penal codes and appoint officials to enforce them. But as mentioned earlier, penal laws and officials cannot restrain the mutinous nature and other rebellious instincts of man and fail to enforce social regulations.

In addition to appointing officials to maintain control and formulating regulations to castigate violators and rebels as established by human laws, religion has other powerful means at its disposal whereby it can defeat and annihilate any antagonistic force.

(1) As a result of uniting social life and the worship of the Almighty Allah, religion has initiated a divine responsibility for man in all his individual and social acts and holds man responsible in all his endeavours and hesitations.

Since Sublime Allah has full control over man by His infinite might and knowledge he is thoroughly aware of any thought that man nurtures in his mind and any secret in man's heart; and nothing is hidden to Him.

In addition to appointing an external police, religion puts man under the care of his conscience which never neglects its duty. Man cannot escape from the rewards and retribution of conscience.

The Almighty Allah states:

"... And Allah comprehends what they do (8:47)."

"... And He is with you wherever you are... (57:4)."

"... And your Lord will most surely pay back to all their deeds in full ... (11:111)."

"... Surely Allah ever watches over you (4:1)."

If we compare the conditions of a man who is governed by laws with one who lives under the jurisdiction of religion, the advantage and superiority of religion will become quite evident.

A society, whose members are all religious and perform their religious duties and know that Allah observes their action in every respect, is protected from the malevolence of its members towards one another.

Thus, the general public who live in such an environment are safeguarded against the actions and statements of others. They even have security in their thinking, whereas this purport does not exist in the laws of the universe. Religion has also prohibited man from mistrust.

"O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy... (49:12)."

Man feels quite comfortable in a religious environment. He will spend a lifetime in utmost joy and comfort and will attain everlasting welfare.

But in a society governed only by human laws, man refrains from unlawful acts when he sees the police watching his actions; otherwise, he may commit any offence.

(2) Under the guidance of religion, every religious person discovers the fact that his life is not limited to a life of short duration in this ephemeral world, rather there is an infinite and endless life ahead of him which does not terminate by death.

He realizes that the only way to attain everlasting prosperity and eternal comfort is to follow religious laws descended by the Almighty Allah through His prophets. He knows that religious laws are descended by the Wise, Powerful, and Knowledgeable Allah who controls man's inward and outward behaviour and who examines man's overt and covert activities. It is, therefore, impossible for man to conceal an act so as to undermine Allah's commands.

(3) According to his religious beliefs, every pious man knows that performing religious orders is, in fact, the obedience to Allah. Even if by so doing he does not get any rewards from the standpoint of servitude, he will receive a good remuneration by the favour and grace of Allah.

Thus by observing religious commandments, he voluntarily makes a dealing and transaction, because he forfeits a part of his freedom willingly and, in return, gains the satisfaction of Compassionate Allah

and receives an excellent reward.

By following religious rules and provisions, a religious man quite happily engages in dealings. The more he loses his freedom, the more he receives benefits. He sells a merchandise and replaces it with a better one. But one who is not committed to religion considers the observation of laws and provisions a loss for himself. His freedom-seeking nature suffers from the loss of a part of his freedom and seeks an opportunity to set himself free from captivity in order to regain his freedom.

Be it known that religion differs from laws in other respects as well. Religious people willingly avoid committing sins, but the followers of laws only avoid committing crimes because of fear. Religion controls the entire body of pious men, whereas laws only dominate the hands and feet. Religion commands openly and secretly, but laws can only command publicly. Not only is religion a guardian preventing blameworthy acts, but also it is a teacher and educator teaching virtue and perfection. Laws, however, have no other function but to serve as police.

If we assume the benefit of other laws to be one unit, then the advantage of religion is more than a thousand units. Thus, those who try to uproot religion by adhering to other laws resemble people who cut their legs by their hands and then replace them with wooden legs.

Thus, from the aforementioned statements, it becomes evident that religion is the best and most exalted way that can organize human society and persuade people to observe social laws more than any other method.

Seeking a Remedy by Others

The underdeveloped countries of the world that have thought of their progress and improvement in the last century, despite the fact that they have accepted a social government, but as they have disregarded the weaknesses of laws and have not benefited from the power of religion, they have led a gloomy life and their environment has become a model of savagery.

On the other hand, the progressive and intelligent people of the world who have discovered the weaknesses of laws have sought a remedy to save them from absolute failure and have thus taken another course of action.

These people organize the method of their education in such a way that individuals, willingly or not, will be brought up by a series of proper ethics, so that upon entrance into the field of activity, they will consider the laws sacred and inviolable.

This kind of education results in the regular progress of laws and, as a result, guarantees the prosperity of the society to a considerable extent and saves the laws from failure.

It should be realized that there are two modes of thinking by which a society educates itself.

(1) Thoughts and beliefs such as philanthropy, benevolence, and compassion towards subordinates which are based upon realism and are undoubtedly adopted from divine religions.

Since antiquity, before progressive societies evolved, religion invited people towards this mode of thinking. Consequently, the prosperity and welfare experienced in progressive societies due to these thoughts are considered as the blessings of religion.

(2) Useless and unreal thoughts and beliefs that have no value except in the realm of superstition such as inculcating people with the belief that if they suffer or get killed to save their country, their names will be imprinted in history with golden words.

Although these superstitious thoughts render practical results and may influence an individual to make sacrifice in the battlefield and to destroy a large number of the enemies, their disadvantages overshadow their advantages.

This way of thinking makes man superstitious and disrupts his instincts of realism, because for those who disbelieve in Allah and the Day of Judgment who consider death as inexistence and annihilation, the everlasting life and prosperity after death has no meaning whatsoever.

Due to his nature and temperament granted by Allah, man seeks a religion. This is because, in the course of life, he constantly struggles to provide prosperity for himself and uses all possible means to meet his requirements. He always seeks effective causes which are undefeatable. On the other hand, there are no causes in the world with permanent and undefeatable effects.

The fact that man, on the basis of his nature, demands an undefeatable cause and seeks an indestructible refuge to which he can connect his life and find peace of mind for his prosperity is demanded by religion. It is only the Almighty Allah whose will can never be overcome and subdued. Allah is free from pretext and shortcomings. The way of life that is connected to Allah is only the religion of Islam and nothing else.

Therefore, it can be said that man's instinctive yearning is one of the best reasons that substantiate the threefold fundamentals of religion:

- *Tawhid* (monotheism),
- *Nubuwwah* (prophethood)
- and *Ma'ad* (resurrection),

because man's instinctive perception which is an inherent part of his particular framework never makes a mistake. For example, man never mistakes the meaning of friendship for that of animosity. Nor does he mistake the feeling of thirst in his own natural perception for being quenched.

It is true that man sometimes desires to have feathers in order to fly as a bird or to be in the sky like a star, but he, wholeheartedly and earnestly, seeks a real support for his happiness, an absolute comfort, or a completely humanitarian life.

As long as a man lives, he will never give up this idea. If an undefeatable cause (Allah) did not exist in the world of existence, man would not have thought of it with his immaculate nature. If an absolute and unparalleled peace and tranquility (which is the peace and tranquility of the world Hereafter) did not exist and if the religious policy (sent to us through prophetic mission) was not legitimate, then this desire would not have been engraved on man's mind.

A Summary of the History of Religions

In conducting a brief investigation on the origination of religions, the most confident approach that can be depended upon from a religious point of view is the Holy Qur'an, because it is free from errors, mistakes, prejudice, and spitefulness. The Holy Qur'an states this briefly by saying:

"Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam...(3:19)."

The divine religion, which is the very religion of Islam, has accompanied man from the first day that he came into existence. As stipulated by the Holy Qur'an, the present generation of man originates from one man and one woman. In the Holy Qur'an, the man has been called Adam.

He was a prophet to whom divine *wahy* (divine revelations) had been descended. Adam's religion was very simple and included a few general regulations such as the people should remember Allah and should be kind to each other and specifically to their parents and should keep aloof from corruption, murder, and evil acts.

After Adam and his wife, their children spent their lives with extreme simplicity and without differences of opinion. As the number of people increased, they gradually gathered together and formed a community life. In this manner, they learned how to live and came closer to civilization.

As the number of people proliferated little by little, they divided themselves into different tribes, in each of which there were noblemen whom the people respected. Even after the demise of these nobles, the people made their statues and paid tribute to them. It was exactly at this time that idolatry became prevalent, and as it is cited by religious leaders, idolatry originated in this way.

The history of idolatry confirms this matter as well. Little by little, as a result of the unjust behavior of the mighty towards the weak, differences of opinion sprang up. These disagreements and accidental differences of opinion resulted in various forms of conflicts in life.

The generation of these conflicts that led to man's deviation from the path of prosperity towards misery and destruction was the reason that Compassionate Allah assigned prophets and sent a Divine Book

that settled man's differences. As the Almighty Allah states:

"(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that which they differed... (2:213)."

The Religion of Islam

The holy religion of Islam is the last divine religion, and for this reason it is the most perfect of them all. With the advent of this religion, the former religions were abolished, for by having a perfect religion, there is no need for an imperfect one.

The religion of Islam was sent down to man through our Honorable Prophet, Muhammad (S). This door of salvation and prosperity was opened to mankind at a time when human societies had passed through the periods of immaturity and mental incapacity and had become prepared to gain their ideal perfection and acquired the capability to gain knowledge in divine and sublime matters along with their application.

Therefore, Islam has introduced facts and teachings suitable to the understanding of a realistic man as well as praiseworthy ethics that distinguish men, has provided instructions that reform individual and social aspects of man's life, and has also recommended the observance of these factors.

For this reason, the religion of Islam is a universal and eternal religion. It consists of a series of religious tenets and practical and moral provisions, the application of which ensures man's welfare and happiness in this world and the *Akhirah* (the world Hereafter). The regulations of Islam are such as to bring about the best conditions of life and the most progressive human transcendence for individuals and societies observing them.

Islam grants its excellent advantages to all people and societies equally. Adults and children, the wise and the ignorant, men and women, the white and the black, easterners and westerners can, without exception, enjoy the benefits and advantages of this holy religion to attain their needs in the best and the most perfect manner possible.

This is due to the fact that Islam has established its teachings and regulations on the basis of creation and has considered man's needs and tries to settle them. The nature and structure of all men are identical even if they belong to different races and generations. It is evident that human society, from east to west, is regarded as a typical family, that is to say, the members of society are all human.

The adults and children, men and women, the wise and the ignorant, the white and the black, are members of this family. They all share the same principles and foundations of human characteristics. The needs of various individuals and different races are the same. Posterities are also descendants of this very family and will definitely inherit their requirements.

Consequently, Islam is the religion which fulfils the actual and natural needs of man. Islam is adequate for everyone and will survive for ever.

Thus, the Almighty Allah calls Islam a human nature-inspired religion and invites people to keep human nature alive. Theologians have stated that Islam is an easy religion which does not treat man with severity.

The Importance that Islam Attributes to Man's Comfort

Just as religion possesses an excellent position in regard to other social policies, Islam, too, enjoys an excellent position among other religions. Thus, Islam is more advantageous than other policies for human societies. This fact is clarified by comparing Islam with other religions and social policies.

Comparison of Islam with Other Religions

Among all religions, Islam is the only one that is entirely social. The teachings of Islam are not similar to those of the present-day Christianity which only takes into consideration people's happiness in the world Hereafter and ignores their worldly happiness.

The teachings of Islam are neither like the present religion of Judaism that only endeavors to educate a particular nation. The teachings of Islam, unlike the instructions set forth by Magus and some other religions, have not focused on only a few limited subjects relating to ethics and actions.

Islam has considered education and prosperity necessary for this world and the world Hereafter for everybody and forever at any time and place. Evidently, except Islam, there is no other means for reforming societies and providing the people with happiness in this world and the world Hereafter.

First, since the global relations are getting closer and stronger day by day, the reformation of one society or nation from among all human societies will be fruitless and, in fact, it resembles the purification of a drop of water in a contaminated large pool or a river.

Second, only the rectification of a particular society at the expense of neglecting other societies is contrary to the fact of seeking reformation. All ideas and thoughts about the creation of the world and man that may be reflected in man's mind, all ethics that can be implanted in the souls of people and all actions and endeavors that may appear in man's environment have been examined in the teachings of Islam.

However, in Islam, realistic thoughts, on top of which is the Oneness of the Almighty Allah, have been selected and considered as the basis and foundation of religion.

In the ethics of Islam, that which is in fact approved by sound judgment has been chosen and based on the principle of monotheism.

Then, on the basis and principle of ethics, a series of provisions and practical laws that examine the details of man's life have been explained and, as a result, individual and social duties of black and white, urban and nomadic, man and woman, young and old, servant and master, king and the subject, rich and poor, have been clarified under ordinary or exceptional circumstances.

"... Of a good word (being) like a good tree, the root of which is firm and the branches of which are in heaven (14:24)."

Anyone, who enquires into the basic principles of intuitive knowledge and ethical teachings of Islam and Islamic jurisprudence, will find them like a boundless sea which renders the wisdom helpless for comprehending and thought for reaching its depth.

Nevertheless, every part of Islam is linked with other parts and all parts constitute an organized unit of theism and human fostering, revealed by the Almighty Allah to His honorable Prophet.

Comparison of Islam with Other Social Systems

By careful examination of the policies of the developed societies of the world, we realize that although the scientific and industrial development of these societies has dazzled man's wisdom, even though their power and strength has reached the moon and Mars, and in spite of the fact that the illuminating institutions of their countries have astonished man, these advanced policies, with their praiseworthy progress, have opened up the gates of misery to the world of humanity.

They have also devastated the world twice in less than a quarter of a century and have annihilated millions of innocent people. At present, too, the third world war, which carries the message of man's annihilation, threatens the inhabitants of the earth.

From the first day of their development, these very policies have put other nations under the yoke of servitude by the name of philanthropy and freedom. They have tied down the four huge continents of the world with colonization and have surrendered them unconditionally to Europe, thus providing the small minority of Europe with absolute ruling over the property, life, and dignity of millions of innocent people.

It cannot be denied that the advanced countries enjoy the material pleasures and blessings of their milieu and have attained most of their humanitarian goals such as social justice and cultural and industrial progress, but they have been entangled with misery and wretchedness, the most important of which are international conflicts and universal bloodshed. They also expose the world to more sinister and bitter calamities than before.

It is self-evident that all these are the bitter and sweet fruits of the tree of civilization and the direct results of the way of living of these nations and societies that are superficially on the path of progress.

But it must be realized that the sweet fruits, from which man and society have benefited, originated from

a series of praiseworthy ethics such as truthfulness, honesty, conscientiousness, benevolence, and self-sacrifice of these nations and not of their laws only. This is because although the same laws exist in undeveloped nations of Asia and Africa, their misery and humility augments day by day.

The bitter fruits of this tree, however, which have unpleasantly given their acrid flavor to man and have caused misery and wretchedness and have led the advanced nations, like others, to total destruction, originate from indecent behaviors such as greed, injustice, atrocity, selfishness, vanity, and stubbornness.

If we consider the instructions of the holy religion of Islam, we come to the realization that Islam orders the performance of the first part of these attributes and prohibits the second part. As a whole, Islam has invited man to perform any righteous and correct act suitable to man's interests and has placed this policy as the basis of its education.

On the other hand, Islam warns man of committing any unrighteous and incorrect act which disrupt man's tranquility (although it may benefit a particular nation or people).

From what has been expressed, the following conclusion can be drawn:

(1) The policies set forth by Islam are more praiseworthy and beneficial for man than any other social policy.

"...That is the right religion, but most people do not know (30:30)."

(2) The clear points and sweet fruits of the present civilized world are entirely due to the blessings of the immaculate religion of Islam and the living examples of its holy principles and tenets and living signs that have fallen into the hands of westerners.

Centuries before the signs of western civilization appeared, Islam had invited people to follow the same ethics by the application of which westerners outpaced us.

Before his martyrdom, the Leader of the Faithful, 'Ali (as), stated to the people: "Do not act in such a way that others may outpace you in practicing the decrees of the Qur'an."

(3) According to the instructions of Islam, ethics must be considered as man's essential objective and the cornerstone of laws. Disregarding decent ethics and establishing laws only to meet the materialistic interests of people will only focus their attention on materialism and will deprive them of spiritualism which is the only mark of distinction of man over animals. It will replace spiritualism with brutality, as in wolves and tigers, and with docility as in cows and sheep.

Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) stated:

"My main objective is the moral education of people."

- [1.](#) Sabians are those who converted from Magian to Jewish religion.

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