

# **Islamic & Religious Studies**

FAST University

# **The Concept of Religion**

Introduction:

# Introduction

- Misused & Misunderstood
- Some used as means of exploitation & suppression
- Some used as source of power & domination
- In the name of religion few things were noticed in past:
  - Unjustifiable wars inflicted
  - Freedom of thought & consciousness banned
  - Science rejected
  - Rights of individuals deprived
  - Man's dignity spoiled
  - Injustice prevailed
- All issues are historical facts
  - Q: Is this the proper function of a religion?
  - A: No, not at all.
  - Coz, each religion claims to be the one & only true religion. Each is supposed to have come from God for human's guidance. But there are contradictions as well.

# Definitions of Religion

- “Religion”- a word derived from Latin means a system of worship & belief.
- Sir E. B. Taylor defines:

“ Religion means the belief in spiritual beings.”
- Farid Wajdi says:

“ Religion is the name of collection of logical imaginations which opts to reunite all people in a relationship of humanity and they all benefit physically from each other in a way they benefit from their power of wisdom & intellect.”
- Kant says:

“ To consider every responsibility a divine injunction is called a Religion.”
- Schopenhawer says:

“ Religion revolves around the concept of death.”
- Pronite says:

“ Religion is the name of that power of belief which purifies man’s interior. It means a religion is actually the collection of truths that empowers human beings to revolutionize their character provided it is insightfully understood and accepted cordially.

## Cont...

- A renowned psychologist, James. H. Leuba in his book “ God or Man” has made five different definitions of religion.
  - i. “Religion is the name of sensation or feeling that produces the existence of the unseen, the sacred and the supernatural being in the minds of humans.”
  - ii. “Religion is the name of belief in increate and eternal truth whose status and resolution is above the will and resolution of humans and whose relation is very closer to human’s life.”
  - iii. “Religion is the spiritual and intuitive sense that relies on the belief of harmony between human being and the universe.”
  - iv. “Religion is the name of appeasement of supernatural forces which in fact govern human lives.”
  - v. “Religion is the name of the struggle that a human makes in order to achieve true & realistic goals of life.”

## “Quranic Version”

- Religion is the name of those commandments and injunctions which have been sent time to time by Allah Almighty to the people through His prophets & messengers.
- Religion is the name of fulfillment of the needs of this world & the Hereafter as Quran says:

- وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“And of them is he who says: Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of Fire.”

Quran has described this phenomenon through different words as:

الدِّينَ, مِلَّةً, سَبِيلَ, حَسَنَةً...

- Meaning of Deen(الدِّين):
- Islam has used the word “الدِّينَ” for religion as Quran says:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

“ Verily, the religion with God is Islam”

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

“He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it conqueror of all religions however much idolaters may be averse.”

# Cont...

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۚ

“This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour onto you, and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam.”

- Imam Raghib (R.A) says:

“Deen (Religion) means submission & reward” or “ submission towards the commandments of Allah”

- Imam Bukhari says:

“Deen( Religion) means the reward for good and bad”

- Meaning of Millat (مِلَّة):

Quran says:

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ ۖ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Say: Allah speaks truth. So follow the religion of Abraham, the upright. He was not of the idolaters.”

مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“The faith of your father Abraham(is yours). He has named you Muslims of old times.”

- Meaning of Sabil (سَبِيل):

Quran says:

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ۚ

“And follow the path him who repents unto Me.”

## Cont...

- اذْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ط

“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way.”

- Likewise the words هُدًى, هُدَايَ, هُدًى, شِرْعَةً, صِرَاطٍ, طَرِيق have also been used in Quran for the word ‘religion’.



# **Lecture # 02**

## **Need For Religion:**

A social & universal need

- Not only spiritual but a social & universal need
- True religion is to acquaint man with God as well as with himself and the rest of the universe
- Religion is all natural
  - a) Plutarch...
  - b) Voltaire...
  - c) A German scholar...
  - d) Prof: Sabater...
  - e) The Quran...

# A Genuine Religion

- The Islamic concept- A unique one
- Genuine religion must come from God
- A true religion can deal with all outstanding issues of mankind & that religion is Islam
- A genuine religion would be the one that comprehends the following needs and objectives

# Objectives of Religion

Following are the objectives of religion:

- 1) The Accomplishment of natural need  
Natural need is of two kinds:
  - I. Spiritual Necessity
    - a. Developing the sense of Lord's existence (Coming up)
    - b. An Ethical Code (Coming up)
  - II. Materialistic Necessity
- 2) The Accomplishment of other needs
- 3) True guidance of the Intellect/ wisdom
- 4) The Intimation Regarding The Hereafter

# 1- The Accomplishment of natural needs

## (I) A Spiritual Necessity

### a) Developing the sense of Lord's existence

- Making belief in One God
- Satisfies the spiritual needs of man
- Unites human's psychological knots & complexes
- Human's dignity & respect: Quran says,

“We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation.”

- A lesson of equality: Quran says,

“Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.”

& the last sermon of Prophet Muhammad(S.A.W) declares:

“O you people! No doubt The Lord of you all is One, and the father of you all is one, so be remember that there is no preference for Arabs over non- Arabs and for non- Arabs over Arabs; and there is no preference for whites over non- whites and for non- whites over whites except on the basis of piousness.

- A lesson of harmony
- A lesson for the unity of humanity
- World's peace
- Purification of the inner self
- A source of human's intellectual development

## **b) An Ethical Code**

- True religion educates man & trains him in:  
hope and patience, Truthfulness and honesty, Love for the right and good, Courage and endurance. All are required features for the mastery of the great art of living.
- True religion insures/ protects man against fears and spiritual losses
- It assures man of God's help
- It provides man with peace & serenity
- It provides security
- The prophet(SAW)'s teachings
- The impact of harmony
- Purifies soul from evil/ Soul's purification

## (II) Materialistic Necessity

- The first materialistic reflection of human's life is his family life
- Consuetude (Social custom)
- Economy/ financial matters or ways of sustenance
- Law & Politics

## 2) The Accomplishment of other Needs

- Sublimates human's instincts & aspirations



Q: What does sublimate means?

A: To discipline one's desires and the whole course of life

“OR”

To divert the expression of (an instinctual desire or impulse) from its unacceptable form to one that is considered more socially or culturally acceptable.

- Improves knowledge about God- The Highest Truth
- Improves knowledge about one's own self
- Teaches secrets of life, nature of man, good & evil, right and wrong
- Clears the mind from doubts
- Strengthens the character
- Corrects the thinking and conviction of man

# Cont...

## 3) The Guidance of the Intellect/ Wisdom:

- The faultier attitude of the intellect
- The correction/ rectification through revelation
- True revelation only comes through religion
- The Quranic Version

## 4) The Intimation Regarding The Hereafter

- The mortality of the life & this world
- System of reward & punishment
- Manifestation of the God's attribute of "The Just"
- To be informed about the world after death is impossible for human except through religion

# **The Outcomes/ Fruits of Religion**

## **(Lecture# 03-04)**



# The Outcomes/ Fruits of Religion

- **“Hidayat”(True guidance and welfare):**

Quran says:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“in it is guidance sure, to those who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter. They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper.”

- According to Imam Raghīb(R.A) the **“Hidayat”(true guidance)** has four kinds:

## I. Natural/ General guidance:

As Quran says:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

“He said: "Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance.”

## II. Through prophets or messengers

As Quran says:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا...

“And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our command”

# Cont...

## III. The intuitive guidance/ self reformation

As Quran says:

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى

“But to those who receive Guidance, He increases the (light of) Guidance.”

## IV. Leading towards the destination

As Quran says:

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ

“Soon will He guide them and improve their condition.”

- **The recognition of the Lord/ God:**

As Quran says:

الْهَآكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ۚ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ۚ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ۚ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ۚ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْنَهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ۚ ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ۚ

“The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things), until you visit the graves. But no, you soon shall know (the reality). Again, you soon shall know! No, were you to know with certainty of mind, (you would beware!) You shall certainly see Hell-Fire! Again, you shall see it with certainty of sight! Then, shall you be questioned that Day about the joy (you indulged in!)

# Cont...

As Quran says:

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ۝

“for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.”

- **Source of knowledge:**

As Quran says:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ۝ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝

“Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created-Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,-He Who taught (the use of) the pen,-Taught man that which he knew not.”

As Quran says:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ

“ Allah will rise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) Knowledge.

- **The elevation of human’s status:**

As Quran says:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ ۚ

“And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth.”

# Cont...

As Quran says:

وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ۝

“if anyone assigns partners to Allah, is as if he had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds, or the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown him into a far-distant place.”

- **The concept of self- accountability:**

As Quran says:

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۖ

“On that Day will men proceed in companies sorted out, to be shown the deeds that they (had done). Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it.”

- **The perfection of personality:**
- The life of other prophets as example
- The life of the holy Prophet Muhammad(S.A.W)as an example
- Various injunctions in the Book of God & teachings in traditions( hadith)