

Religion & Spirituality in Society - Religious Foundations

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Abstract—How far is our progression holistic? While acknowledging to the fact that we have progressed from nowhere to somewhere, it is equally important to examine whether the progression has increased harmony in the societies or has caused devastation.

Answers reveal that World societies today are highly competing to become tyrannical in terms of Economy, Industry, Production, Technology, Military and Power. Thus, the Materialistic Societies of the West have abandoned Religion, formed a blatant lifestyle (culture) that reflects disbelief (atheism), crookedness, immorality (Gay & Lesbian relationships), shamelessness, 'porn'ication (illegal sex), drug addiction, murder and suicides. If such a Western lifestyle determines societal development, then the progress is rather atomistic. Their dominance has spread their corrupt lifestyles to other societies causing major devastation in the world.

So, What accounts for 'holistic' development of a society? A way / path / guidance which when followed brings benefit to mankind in every aspect of life can only determine holistic development of a society. Having religion as the foundation, every development must comply with the Religious Laws / Guidance.

Evidence for the above is taken from the Quran where God says, "This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me (God). This day I (God) have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion" (Quran 5:3) [1]

God calls Religion as a favor (benefit) to mankind. A life under this Religious guidance (Islam) which God Himself has perfected and approved alone can develop a holistic societal environment.

Prophet Muhammad (May God's peace and blessings be on him), the Islamic Prophet, who is rated #1 among the Most Influential Persons in History [2], have lived his life on the light of Islam, ruled his people by the Laws of the Divine Revelation (The Quran & Sunnah) and have succeeded in bringing up a holistic Muslim Society in Medina, which has spread all around the world today due to its authenticity and nobility.

Today, the Middle East nation from where Islam has originated can be viewed as the best example for a holistic society. By living and ruling as per the religious laws, it still has become one among the developed nations in today's times. The society has proven to be upright in its morality, modesty, religiosity, economic advancement, educational advancement, Industrial advancement, social security, respect for women and much more.

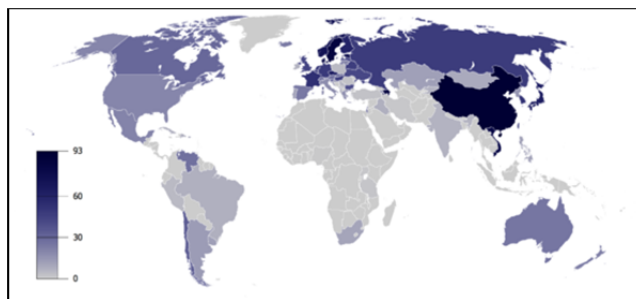
This stands as a proof for Islam's compatibility and applicability for people of all ages. From this we study that Islam does not and cannot be outdated with time for it is the final warning of God sent to mankind until the End of times.

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Poor Condition of Societies that ignore Religion

As discussed in abstract, World Societies today have become materialistic and they are serious in their objectives of becoming the Top Most Nations in the world or atleast in becoming one of the developed nations, by any means. Intentions, Decisions or actions are focused solely to meet the above goal. For the same reasons, the past and the present affairs in the world proves that Western Society has always desired to be the dominant force that controls the rest of the world.

As Theism & Religion teaches God consciousness, submission to Divine Commandments and maintaining moderation in pursuing materialistic gains, they have been strongly detested and dejected by nations paving way for the origin of 'Atheism' that never existed in history until 18th Century.



Demographics of irreligiosity in the world [3]

1.2 Moral corruption in societies

By Denying God, His existence and His Divine Commandments, the Atheists chose to remain in their state of ignorance to satisfy their every whims and desires. Consequence of such an unrestrained behavior is transgression beyond limits where the unlawful (pre-marital sex) becomes lawful, immorality (Gay and Lesbian relationships) [4] becomes socially accepted and adopted moral and the illegal

(boyfriend, girlfriend relationship) becomes legal in their books of law [5].

This minority has caused corruption not just to their own souls but sadly had influenced the rest of the society causing utter devastation to their moral standards. Such a corrupt living paved way for many Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Venereal Diseases and other highly contagious diseases that has no cure. [6] [7]

1.3 Unhealthy life styles of Societies

Also, their greatness in sins have lowered their spirits, made them weak physically & mentally. When life tries them with some afflictions, they no longer have the power to endure (forbearance) and end-up becoming drug addicts or commits suicide. [8]

Similarly, the craze for pork eating, alcohol drinking, lewdness, 'porn'ication & murders are the other sinful prohibited acts that have gained popularity in some societies including the Trinity followers and other polytheistic world religions. The interesting fact with them is that the above mentioned sinful acts are strictly prohibited in their religions too [9] but people are either ignorant or heedless of it falling prey for Swine Flu, Ebola, Cancer are the other deadly diseases that are experienced in recent times.

1.4 Absence of Modesty in Societies

Also, Shamelessness was manifest in their clothing which they termed fashion, trend or 'freedom' (from what??!!). Whereas the Eastern societies that dressed modestly from head to toe were mocked and looked down by them as if they were sinners. Research says that the early Western Travelers, traveling to Persia, turkey, India or China would frequently remark on the absence of change in fashion and so this clarifies the spread of corrupt clothing to the world. [10]

1.5 Loss of environmental care

Furthermore, the economic or materialistic goal that world societies compete for makes life miserable for the less fortunate nations/societies. Natural resources are traded (exploited) for money. Best of Best products are exported to wealthy nations to increase revenue. Despite these, the less fortunate nations are still striving to win the never-ending world race and results in a country that is doomed on all aspects.

2. POOR CONDITION OF POLYTHEISTIC SOCIETIES

Those societies which are polytheistic are easy prey for corruption because their system of belief is unable to guide them to Truth, with conviction. Due to Multiplicity in gods, their pivotal faith on Oneness is lost. People remain attached to their traditional gods which were followed by their ancestors and therefore results numerous differences in their own society. Such a setup has paved way to the rise of caste

system which they have mixed with their religion. This has been the sad story of polytheistic societies till date. [11] Thus, irreligiosity and polytheism are dreadful for the well-being of the society.

3. ABOUT ISLAM AND ITS STRENGTH

Islam, the ever-Monotheistic Religion comes as a solution to all these social & economic problems because every societal problem is referenced to the fundamental commandments of The One and Only God. There is not a second or a third to negate or dispute with this Ultimate Commandment. Therefore, there is no confusion in Monotheistic religion and its teachings. Everything law (commandment) is crystal clear and it proves to benefit mankind of all ages and in every walk of life and time.

4. ABOUT QURAN, THE DIRECT WORD OF GOD

The Quran, being the Revelation of God is full of warnings to mankind to adhere to the Monotheistic religion and to obey His (God's) commandments to achieve success in this life and in the next. Verses from the Quran about God Characteristics clarifies the state of belief in One God. God in the Holy Quran says,

"Say, "He is Allah (The God), [who is] One, Allah (The God), the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not nor is He begotten; and there is none equal or comparable to Him." (Quran 112:1-4) [12]

This tiny Chapter of the Quran, clarifies the whole of understanding about God, His purity in His Oneness, which was affirmed precisely in all the former religious scriptures and such was the message of all the Prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (May God's peace and blessings be on him).

5. MONOTHEISM IN HINDU SCRIPTURES

Hindu Vedic Scripture says,

"There is no image of Him." [Yajurveda 32:3] [13]

"He is bodiless and pure." [Yajurveda 40:8] [14]

"They enter darkness, those who worship the natural elements" (Air, Water, Fire, etc.). "They sink deeper in darkness, those who worship sambhuti (created things)." [Yajurveda 40:9] [15]

Upanishads, the other sacred scriptures of Hinduism says,

"He is One only without a second." [Chandogya Upanishad 6:2:1] [16]

"Of Him there are neither parents nor lord." [Svetasvatara Upanishad 6:9] [17]

"There is no likeness of Him." [Svetasvatara Upanishad 4:19] [18]

"His form is not to be seen; no one sees Him with the eye."
[Svetasvatara Upanishad 4:20] [19]

Verses from Bhagavath Gita validates the above thought,

"Those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures." [Bhagavad Gita 7:20] [20]

Thus, the authentic Hinduism per its Divine Scriptures, has Monotheism as its foundational belief like that of Islam however today's Hinduism is all distorted and Monotheism no longer exists in the Hindu Society. Therefore, people follow their own demigods as prescribed by their forefathers and are blindly ignorant in worshipping the natural elements and the Sambhuti (Created beings).

6. MONOTHEISM IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

Such is the case with the present Christianity. Though Christians read Monotheism from their Divine Scriptures (The Bible), they deviate from the Straight path blindly without knowledge. After the advent of Christianity, corrupters from the early generations have elevated Jesus (May God's peace and blessings be on him) to the level of God while he was one of the Messengers of God like any other Prophet mentioned in the Bible.

Below verses from the New testament serves as witness to the fact that Jesus (Peace and blessings be on him) is not God. Jesus (pbuh) says,

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father (God) which hath sent me." [The Bible: John 5:30] [21]

Thus, they have invented Trinity and have associated partners with God making Him one among the three and by declaring a son for Him, which is the gravest of sins. Similarly, the first and foremost of the 10 commandments that were given to Moses (peace and blessings be on him) also dictates the same. God in the ten commandment says,

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me (God). Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." [The Bible, Exodus 20:3-5] [22]

7. ISLAM AFFIRMS THAT WHICH CAME EARLIER

God clarifies the same as well in the Quran as below,

"He (God) has ordained for you the same religion [Islam] which He (God) enjoined on Noah, and that which We

(God) have revealed to you [O Muhammad], and which We (God) enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely that you should remain steadfast in religion and be not divided therein." (Quran 42:13) [23]

The Prophets of old testament starting from Adam (peace and blessings be on him) worshipped and submitted their Will to One God (Who Created the Heavens and the Earth), Islam strictly affirms to this Monotheism that existed in all former religions and societies have made them polytheistic to fulfill their desires.

Say, [O believers], "We have believed in Allah (God) and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him (God)." Quran (2:136) [24]

Thus, the purpose of every religion is strict Monotheism (belief in one God, The Creator) and it strongly condemns idol worship and polytheism. This is the foundational belief in every religion and therefore criticizing or avoiding religion without knowledge is ludicrous. Until today Islam is the only religion that upholds strict Monotheism and remains pure in its state since origin and abides by what God has commanded to be followed.

Indeed, it is We (God) who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We (God) will be its guardian. (Quran 15:9) [25]

Thus, God has taken ownership on Himself in safeguarding the Quran from any corruption and its emphasis on strict Monotheism is a miraculous proof for its authenticity. All Praise and Thanks to God Al-Mighty.

8. CREATION IN SCIENCE & RELIGION – CLARIFIES THE BELIEF IN GOD, THE CREATOR

Creation and Evolution has always been a hot topic of discussion in the recent centuries. All religions affirm to Creation because God is viewed as One and Only (Monotheistic) Who is the Creator of all that exists on the Heavens and on Earth.

Details of Monotheistic God is as below across major religions. The One and Only Monotheistic God, Who is attributed as "The Creator" in almost all major religions.

In Hinduism, Creator God is termed as 'Brahma' – The unchanging, permanent, Highest Reality, The final cause for all that exists. [26]

In Judaism & Christianity, Creator God is termed as "The Father" – Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. [27]

In Islam, Allah (The God) takes the name Al-Khaliq (The Creator). [28]

In Sikhism, The Creator God is termed as ‘Waheguru’ who is shapeless, timeless and sightless (cannot be seen). [29]

Whereas Evolution has only remained a hypothesis ever since and Science was unable to bring an authentic proof to it till date and it can never bring one because the beings that existed earlier are the same till today with no changes to its internal characteristics even while we are a living witness to it.

Unlike other religions, Islam has solid proofs from the Quran that validates Creation and thereby challenges the Disbelievers. Quran is the Islamic Scripture, the final revelation of God (Allah – the Arabic name for The God) to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) some 1400 hundred years ago, for a duration of 23 years. (i.e. from 609-632 century). Few verses taken from the Quran about Creation are,

“And they attribute falsely without knowledge sons and daughters to Him. Be He Glorified! [for He is] above what they attribute to Him! He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son when He has no wife? He created all things, and He has full knowledge of everything. Such is Allah, your Lord! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Creator of all things. So worship Him [Alone]. And He has the power to dispose of all affairs. No vision can grasp Him, but His Grasp is over all vision. He is the Most Subtle, Well-Aware.” (Quran 6:100-103) [30]

About the clear sky in the Quran - God says,

Have they not looked at the heaven above them - how We (God) structured it and adorned it and [how] it has no rifts? (Quran 50:6) [31]

God condemns the disbelievers with a question that such a perfect sky cannot come into existence all by itself.

About The Big Bang in the Quran - God says,

“Have not those who disbelieved known that the heavens and the earth were one connected entity, then We (God) separated them?” (Quran 21:30) [32]

This verse comes as a validation of The Big Bang. Science could discover about Big Bang only during the 19th Century but the same was revealed in the 6th Century CE in the Quran when science and technology wasn't present. The Creator of Big Bang (God) certainly knew about it before the humans could know through their discoveries in the later Centuries.

About embryo's development in the womb from the Quran – God says,

“We (God) created man from an extract of clay. Then We (God) made him as a drop in a place of settlement, firmly fixed. Then We (God) made the drop into an alaqah (leech, suspended thing, and blood clot), then We made the alaqah into a mudghah (chewed substance)” (Quran 23:12-14) [33]

Medical Science was not at the peak during the 6th Century to perform electronic pregnancy scans to study the development of embryo. The Creator (God) alone has the right to better explain the unseen to the people of the 6th Century and to the later generations. Prophet Muhammad (May God's peace and blessings be on him) clarifies the above verse on the topic of creations as below,

“Verily the creation of any one of you takes place when he is assembled in his mother's womb; for forty days, he is a drop of fluid, then it becomes a clot for a similar period. Thereafter, it is a lump looking like it has been chewed for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him, who breathes the spirit into him. This angel is commanded to write four decrees: that he writes down his provisions, his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be among the wretched or the blessed.” [Al-Bukhari & Muslim] [34]

Similarly, in the other verses, God says,

“He created the heavens without any pillars that you can see; He set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and He scattered through it beasts of all kinds. We send down rain from the sky and produce on the earth every kind of noble creature, in pairs. Such is the creation of Allah. Now show Me (God) what is there that others besides Him (God) have created. Nay, but the transgressors are in manifest error.” (Quran 31:10-11) [35]

“It is God Who causes the seed grain and the date stone to split and sprout. He causes the living to issue from the dead. And He is the One to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allah (God): then how are you deluded away from the truth? He it is that cleaves the daybreak [from the dark]. He makes the night for rest and tranquility, and the sun and the moon for the reckoning [of time]: such is the judgement and ordering of [Him], the Exalted in Power, the Omniscient. (Quran 6:95-96) [36]

There are many other Scientific Miracles in the Quran and these contributes to the Truth about The Existence of God, Al Mighty, The Creator of the Heavens and the Earth and all that exists between them.

Prophet Muhammad's (May God's peace and blessings be on him) Mission in developing a holistic society in Madina

Prophet Muhammad (May God's peace and blessings be on him) is the Final Messenger of God sent to the whole of mankind to guide people on the True Path until the Day of Judgement. Verse from the Quran is as below,

“We (God) sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a Mercy for all the nations.” (Quran 21:107) [37]

Similarly, in another verse God says,

“We (God) have not sent you (O Muhammad) but as a Messenger to all mankind, giving them glad tidings, and

warning them [against sin], but most of men know not.” (Quran 34:28) [38]

God sent numerous messengers to every nation during different time periods to warn its people on Monotheism and to abide by the Divine commandments. But Prophet Muhammad (May God’s peace and blessings be on him) was sent to warn the whole of mankind across nations until the end of times which is well applicable for today’s society and its upliftment.

He was not only a Prophet / Messenger of God, but a Spiritual & Political Leader, a Military commander, a Just Ruler per the Divine Laws, an excellent companion to the believers, a perfect judge, a pious man with best of characters, the best husband and an affectionate father, a reliable guide and a great Mercy for all the nations.

By ruling the state with Divine Laws (Shariah & Sunnah), he eradicated idol worship and polytheism that prevailed over Arabia, liberated people from slavery, eradicated female infanticide, abolished polygyny, raised the ranks of women who were considered a shame and inferior before the advent of Islam, for the first time ever in history women were given their rights of inheritance, by the observation of veil, women were respected, honored and liberated from molestation, men were restricted from marrying not more than 4 however they were not allowed to take more than one wife unless they satisfy certain conditions, liquor was banned, adultery was prohibited with capital punishment, usury was fully eradicated, only halal (allowable) food was consumed, seeking knowledge was highly encouraged, retaining of kinship & family ties were emphasized, yearly charity was made compulsory & therefore poverty was eradicated & wealth of the society was improved, inculcated faith and character among this people to the extent that even a servant maid was religiously knowledgeable, religious duties such as daily prayers & fasting during Ramadhan were firmly established along with compulsory charity and performance of pilgrimage and much more. People under him lived in peace, harmony, safety, pious and of high moral standards

Such was the excellent condition of the first Islamic Society under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad who lived and ruled early generation Muslims as per Divine Laws.

9. CONCLUSION

Religion helps one to put his belief in God into practice. As discussed in the introduction, practicing sins destroys the mind, body and soul. But practicing faith as prescribed by God, develops mental and spiritual strength. It makes the practicing person virtuous and healthy. The goodness emanates to his neighbors & surroundings. People recognize faith & goodness, they listen to him, learn from him, they imitate some of his good qualities and it keeps growing from person to person and gradually spreads to the society. Thus, Religion is often referred to as “The Way of Life”, in Islam. It

guides, educates and prescribes ways of remembering God, in every walk of life.

As already discussed, God the Creator is One and Only and all religions affirm to this Monotheistic Truth. Starting from Prophet Adam (May God’s peace and blessings be on him), God kept sending numerous Prophets (Messengers) and Revelations (Warnings / Commandments) to different nations at different time periods but with the Same Message (To worship Him and to Obey His Commandments) and therefore arrived the number of Religions.

However, generations continued to deviate from the Straight Path, following their own whims and desires, changing the content in the Scriptures favoring their differences and got lost from the Divine Path prescribed. God, sent the Final Messenger Prophet Muhammad (May God’s peace and blessings be on him) in the 6th Century CE with the Final Revelation (warning) which is the Holy Quran, for the whole of mankind.

Thus, Islam is the only religion that upholds the Original Message of God, unchanged ever since its origin guiding people to that which is right in every walk of life, in the form of Shariah and Sunnah (The Divine Laws).

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says,

“Islam has been built upon five things – on testifying that there is no god save Allah (The God), and that Muhammad is His Messenger; performing Salat (Daily Prayers), giving Zakat (Charity); performance of Hajj to the House; and fasting during Ramadan.” [Al-Bukhari & Muslim] [39]

Islamic Laws are set around the below 5 Categories [40],

1. Responsibilities towards Allah, All-Mighty – Daily Prayers, Fasting, Hajj and other forms of worship
2. Responsibilities towards Oneself – Maintaining good health, Seeking Education, Spending on oneself, Warding off Evil from inside and from outside of oneself
3. Responsibilities towards Other People – Being kind to Parents, Being merciful to young ones, Spending for his family members, Educating & guiding his family members & others to the Straight Path of God etc.,
4. Responsibilities towards Other Creations – Building water reservoirs for mankind & animals, Proper feeding of animals and birds under one’s care, etc.,
5. Responsibilities towards nature and environment – Saving water, planting trees that benefits people and animals that eat from it etc.,

Thus, if every development is in comply with Religious beliefs & values, adhering to Islamic Monotheism, the society would become holistic. God Wiling.

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