

How religious is the nature of human choice ?

“ It is pleasant that there will be no religion in heaven “
~ Mahatma Gandhi

Majority of people in the world believe in religion. The prevalent prominent religions are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism and Jainism. The books on religions make aware about meaning and existence of God as well the ways of doing prayers etc. How we acquire a religion? Why we believe in it? What it gives to us? Is it necessary to have a religion? Whether the religion gives meaning to God? Can we have the choice of a religion! Are we free not to believe in religion? How religion is related with humanity? All these questions come to the mind of human beings across the globe.

The existence of God as supernatural power is a common factor in all religions with whatever name. There are people who do not believe in religion, say in God. For them there is no meaning of religion. It is really difficult to understand their psychology for not believing in supernatural power which is controlling all living beings. You can't deny the fact that these people do excel in life coming from different professions. The small percentage of these people does not have any effect on the sanctity of religion because globally religion is one word which is an integral part of life. We are born with it, we live with it and we die with it. Again the question remains as to what is religion? Is it only the belief in God and destiny or is it a spiritual faith which gives peace of mind in the weak moments of life.

I have named Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. How do you say that you belong to a particular religion? Generally it comes by birth. The parents name your religion though they may belong to different religions. In most of the cases it is the religion of mother which decides religion. There are different schools of thought. Some people say it is the mother's tongue and father's religion. Basically when you believe in God you are a religious person .We are quite selfish while practicing religion. A Hindu does worship, goes to the temple, remains on fast and performs other religious activities for fulfilment of his desires by prayers, he even tries to bribe the God in terms of doing something after getting the wish fulfilled. Hindu customs and rituals are quite elaborate.

There is multiplicity of Gods and Goddess. The large numbers of festivals are having social value because of participation of people from other religions. The cosmopolitan nature of regions around the world has ensured the presence of Hinduism all over, same is the case for other religions too. Some prayers performed by Hindus are having active involvement of yogic exercises like meditation, *asana* and *pranayam* etc.,.These are good otherwise also for health of human beings. *Bhagavadh Gita* as a holy book is accepted by all Hindus round the world.

In Islam, almost the same practices are there, It goes for fasting, regular prayers and different festivals again for fulfilment of wishes by God. Like any other religious persons a Muslim also makes more prayers when needs something badly. The expectation is in the form of quick response from God. The Muslim prayers also involve yogic exercises. Even the fasts are scientifically proven good for health. Islam is a new religion as compared to others. It has got a great similarity with Christianity. The holy book Quran is like the Bible of a Christian. But the flexibility is less and too much rigidity is there. There is hardly any scope for deviation. The practise of Islam is there all over the world and the faith is so much that there are large number of Islamic countries where all citizens believe and practice Islam.

Sikhism is also a well known religion having lot of similarities with Hinduism. It has the prayers, shrines, Gurus and their teachings. The holy book is *Granth Sahib*. The Sikhism is also quite rigid if you strictly follow it. Normally a Sikh identifies himself in Hinduism because prior to coming to this religion they were Hindus.

Now comes the Christianity which is being practiced in most of the countries all over the world though population-wise there are less Christians. This religion came from the teachings of Lord Jesus with a strong belief in Mother Mary. It is a very systematic religion with Bible as holy book. You have morning prayers, night prayers and Sunday mass etc. A Christian also does the same thing of choosing the right prayer which gives him desired relief. This religion is having some flexibility in the matter of practice. Their prayers are quite common being attended by the people from other religions.

The above discussion on important religions makes one thing common i.e. Prayers, for getting something from the almighty. Sincerity, devotion, faith and trust in God are the main features of all religions. People are having these religions as their way of life. It means something is there which makes them happy to be a religious person. The feeling of love, apathy, brotherhood, co-operation and helpful attitude are the common characteristics of every religion. Naturally these are some essential qualities one looks in a good human being. Then why we should not call humanity as religion? Can we debate for a common religion which may be practical?

Having talked about the religions and their practices, I am not ignoring the existence of the people who do not believe in God. I certainly can't argue with these people since they have their own way of thinking. They believe in themselves making their own destiny. You need to value them because some of them proved to be great philosophers, thinkers, writers and successful people in different walks of life making their name highlighted globally.

Now the basic question of this article remains to be answered as to who should choose the religion? As I said earlier it is mostly imposed on a person or it comes naturally. Let us debate, Is it the right way of getting and practising religion all through your life? Some people may tend to differ. Why can't we have some moral classes right from schooling?

Let it be a subject for study when full knowledge can be imparted in respect of all religions. A virgin mind will grasp complete knowledge about various aspects of each religion. Let it go that way till matriculation when you get the opportunity to re-affirm your date of birth. Why can't we give the similar choice for declaring religion at that time to live with it forever? I dream it will be a great freedom for mankind to choose the religion on merit as decided by him based on his own understanding and belief. A person may not declare any religion if he feels so.

Don't you think it will be an ideal situation to practice religion of your own choice? This idea may go a long way in modernising various religious practices because the person will have the strong belief in the concept that *Humanity is the best religion*.
