

The Social and Moral Teachings of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism in the Context of Global Peace

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Introduction:

Of all the attempts and quests by man to secure global peace, religion plays the most outstanding role. This is against the backdrop of the moral principles and values contained in the teaching of the religious founders that is capable of reducing to the lowest denominator ultimate eradiating of greed, hatred and delusion, which constitutes the root of all conflicts and wars both internal and external. Arising from the understanding that conflicts originates from the mind culminating into outbursts of physical global violence, it is necessary global peace also starts with the construction of peace in the minds of men. In this task of peace construction in the minds, religions play a significance role. This is why of the world major religions; we consider the role of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism in the promotion of global peace. For format purpose, the paper is structured into the following; abstract, introduction, which is ongoing already, conceptual clarification, the background history of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, teachings of the selected world religions in the context of peace, findings and conclusion.

Conceptual Clarification:

The concepts that we shall clarify here are religion and peace as they underlined the discourse of this paper.

Religion: Religion as a concept has been subjected to plethora definitions arising of inability of scholars to agree on a single conceptualisation. Thus, few definitions would be taken. According to E. B. Taylor, cited in Spiro, religion is a belief in spiritual beings, it excludes rituals and ceremonies which characterises religions like Judaism and Buddhism.(1) This conceptualisation may be criticise on the ground that worship, ceremonies and rituals are exercises that transcends physical but spiritual as man attempts to interact probably with the supernatural being or his creator. To James Frazer, cited in Ugbegili, religion is, a propitiations or conciliation of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the cause of nature and human life.² In this conceptualisation lays the

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matrix of magic, science and religion as they are products of man's attempt to consult the supernatural in solving the problems of life. To Karl Marx and his disciples, religion is the opium³ of the masses, i.e. a tool or instrument of exploitation use by the ruling cabal. This conception does not see religion as a serious spiritual endeavour and a medium of communion with spiritual power as man attempt to circumvent the challenges of life being it, social, spiritual, political and economic.

Be that as it may, this paper sees religion as a way of life crafted as man attempt to invoke the spiritual into the affairs of the universe. Ceremonies, worship, and even rituals are parts of these exercises. The essence of religion as conceived in the paper is social goods as man interacts with supernatural and fellow men. It is on this premise all the teachings of the basic religions considered in the paper centres on good virtues and values such as; love, peace, kindness, etc.,.

Peace: The concept of peace, like "beauty", "truth", and "love" defies precise and universally agreed definition as authorities view it from different perspectives. Thus, few definitions would be taken. To Merriam Webster Dictionary, peace connotes; a state of tranquillity or quiet, freedom from civil disturbance, a state in which there is no war fighting, a state of security provided for by law or custom etc.(4)

The above conception of peace though plausible, it is myopic, limited and commits a serious oversight as; while war has brought out the worst kind of behaviour in humans, it has also brought out the best. Also, the conceptualisation ignores the residual feelings of mistrust and suspicion that the winners and losers of a war harbour towards each other. Defining peace as a mere absence of war or physical hostility and fighting may be another way of defining cold war. What is interesting in the above definition in the context of this paper is that which pitches "peace" as a state of security in tandem with the people's religion and culture. B. A. Reardon cited in A. F. Usman and G. O. Odeh, conceptualizes peace as the absence of violence in all its forms – be it physical, psychological and structural.⁵ This definition too has its own fundamental shortcoming. It fails to provide any affirmative picture of peace or its ingredients arising from close examination of the very nature, causes and goals of war so that we may reach human goals without resorting to application of force.

Our point of contention here is that "peace" which depends heavily upon the threat and intention to kill vast number of human beings is hardly a stable or justifiable peace worthy of the name. Those in charge of waging war know that killing is a questionable activity. Otherwise, they would not use such terms as "collateral damage" and "smart bombs" to obfuscate it. It is in this premise we condemn the deployment of nuclear weapon by U. S. since

1986 and other nations that followed and copied that approach including Africa as inhuman.

“Peace” as conceived in this paper is the state of well being characterised by trust, love, peace, compassion and justice solidly anchored on history and religion. This provides us the opportunity to see others and ourselves as part of the human family, part of one world.

Background History of Selected World Religion: Christianity, Islam and Buddhism

Christianity: The birth of Christianity as a religion or a way of life is strongly tied to the birth of Jesus Christ in the 4th century BC at Bethlehem Judea.⁶ Christianity laid emphasizes on the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind. Its history proper is tied to their great patriarch, Abraham who lived in Mesopotamia around 2000BC and led his tribe from Ur to the Mediterranean coast-region called Palestine about 1400BC.⁷ This region they considered as their “Promised Land” by God Jehovah. Arises from the challenges of environments in 13th century BC, the Hebrews migrated to northern Egypt. After about 400 years in Egypt, God sent Moses to delivered them from Egyptian bondage. This very Moses was the author of the Pentateuch i.e., the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. This five books with others made up the Old Testament texts of the Bible. It was in Genesis 3-15, that God promised the “Seed of the woman” that is to “bruised the head of the serpent” which became fulfilled in the birth of the person of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament which contains Ten Commandments given to Moses and the New Testament constitutes the sacred book of the Christians called the Holy Bible.

Islam: Islam is a religion founded by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who was held to have been born in Mecca in 570AD, and belongs to the Hashmite family of Quraishi tribe.⁸ Right from his youthful days, he was believed to have pondered so much on the religious life of his fellowmen. In many of his travels as a trader’s boy, he had met many Jews and Christians whose monotheistic ideas came to influence him profoundly. He came to realised the full impact of divine message at the age of forty. Consequently, he began to gather disciples and in 630AD, he has captured Mecca and at the time of his death in 632AD, the whole of Arabia has been concretely united under his able leadership and his followers.

Buddhism: Buddhism is a religion and philosophy founded by Prince Buddha (Gautama) born around 560 BC,(9) at Lumbini near Kapilavastu in India. The religion or philosophy as some chose to call it began as a reflection on human suffering and is anchored around human suffering. There was hardly anybody else who has been profoundly touched by the reality of human misery as Buddha was. It was this reality of man’s suffering that made Buddha, through born as a prince to left the palace, his wife, child and all his

possession and began to live a wondering life of mediation and reflection till he reached the point of supreme knowledge and insight or enlightenment from which his name Buddha, enlightened one¹⁰ is derived. It was in this state of ecstasm he discovered what he called the truth about human suffering.

Among the religious movements carried out in Indian soil in the ancient times of Hinduism, the most important was Buddhism, which with the passage of time, emerged as a separate religion and spread even out of India to the various countries of South Asia like Burma, Tibet, China, Thailand and other states because it produced eloquent orators and able preachers. When the revival of Brahmanism took place in India, it reduced the Buddhist into minority and eventually it rolled back from the land of its birth, India; it however flourished in other states of the South Asia, presently, almost 225 million followers of Buddhism are present all across the world.(11)

Some Social and Moral Teachings of World Religions: Example from Christianity:

Christianity: Christianity globally accepted as a religion remained a way of life,... *“and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”* (Acts 11:26). Whichever or whatever perspectives one sees it either, as a religion or way of life, Christianity is known for peace since the dawn of its history. One of the names of the Gods of Christians known in the Holy Scripture which stands for peace is *“Jehovah – Shalom or Yahweh Shalom”* (Judges 6:24), which is been translated, *“God of peace”* substantiates this fact. In ancient Judaism, *“Shalom”* also connotes peace.¹² It teaches virtues like, love, kindness, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, righteousness, etc. These reflect greatly in the Ten Commandments and the message of Jesus Christ famously known as the Beatitudes or the Sermon on the Mount. The Ten Commandments reads thus;

- Thou shall have no other God before me,
- Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shall not bow down to them nor serve them,
- Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain,
- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,
- Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,
- Thou shall not kill,
- Thou shall not commit adultery,
- Thou shall not steal,
- Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbour,

- Thou shall not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's. (Exodus 20:3 – 17).

These Old Testament Commandments were what Christ came to modified. In brief, his teachings refers to as the Sermon on the Mount remained one of the basic principles of Christian living that is in tandem with the promotion of peace and good neighbourliness. The teaching goes thus;

- Blessed are the poor in spirits; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven,
- Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth,
- Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,
- Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy,
- Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God,
- Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God,
- Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven,
- Blessed are you, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely; rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you¹³ (Matthew 5:3-12, Luke 6:20-23).

Arising from the above, throughout the early church history, Christians has been referred to as defenseless Christians as they hardly resort to the use of arms or physical weapon. Though most conflicts in Africa and in other parts of the world has been linked to Islam and Christianity as Ali Mazrui argues:

These traditional African creeds did not have ambitions to convert the world. They are religions of particularly ethnic groups, fundamentally important for those groups, but definitely not intended for export. Christianity and Islam, on the other hand, have been commodities for export from the first century of their existence. It is their competition in the market place of creeds which has generated the crusade syndrome over the centuries.¹⁴

Though one may uphold the above observation, but it is important to notes that most of the conflicts in Africa and elsewhere in the world are tailored by ethnic divisions of the States and thus; conflicts associated with ethnicity are offers religious explanation.

In order to have a peaceful society, it is incumbent to provide safety to the life and property of the member of that society. In addition to it, an individual should also regard and practice the fundamental laws and codes pertaining to ethics and morality and abstain from evil deeds like theft, robbery, cheating, gambling, addiction and injustice; besides, they may avoid

all sorts of indulgence which affect and mar rational faculties. They must live with peace and equality, practice justice and tolerance; respect the rights of one another.

Some Social and Moral Teachings of World Religions: A comparative analysis of Islam and Buddhism:

Islam: The literary meanings of the word Islam is “to submit or to conciliate” whereas the idiomatic meaning connotes that Islam is the religion of peace, it means the teachings of Islam reiterate that man should submit to the laws of Allah, the Creator, the Nourisher and the Sustainer of the entire universe. The laws and code of conduct of life revealed by Almighty Allah and taught by His prophets spread love, peace, justice, brotherhood, equality and tolerance. In Arabic language, the word “Islam” etymologically means peace, security, safety and equity. Islam as a religion was not only preached and propagated by Hazarat Muhammad (peace be upon him) but all the prophets sent by Almighty Allah did preach and practice the religion of Islam. As observes;

In accordance with the tenets and teachings of Islam, human life has two main reasons and objectives to exist and prevail: individually man should be provided with all essential requisites and laws to live a peaceful and respectable life, collectively essential measures should be taken to invest all human energy, power, wisdom for general good, collective welfare and over all progress and development of the society at global level, so that the march of civilization may proceed to the state of more perfection and better world; moreover, the balance between the individual and society vis-a-vis integration and interrelatedness between the single component and collective body may also be maintained and adjusted to carry on the future course of things. The sort of check and balance propounded by Islam does not allow individual to fringe the rights of society and vice versa.(15)

It is Islam which lays serious emphasis on universal brotherhood, and condemned all sorts of discrimination based on caste, creed, colour, riches and possession. The Holy Quran, the last and final revelation of Allah to the last prophet, Hazarat Muhammad (SAW), categorically reveals:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who) is the most righteous of you – and God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).(16)

Besides, the last prophet of Allah, Hazarat Muhammad (SAW) also inculcated and reiterated the same message to humanity:

O people! Verily your Lord is One and your father is one. All of you belong to the ancestry of Adam and Adam was created from clay. An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab neither is a non-Arab superior to an Arab. Similarly the white has no superiority over the black nor does the black have superiority over the white: except in piety. Verily the noblest among you is the most pious.(17)

Thus, Islam has provided complete code of conduct for human life and has along with well-expressed tenets of faith, ways and means of worship so that by acting upon the injunctions of Islam man may live a peaceful and respectable life.

Buddhism:

The history presents no example of the teaching of high moral values like what Buddha presented. His teachings focused on the ways and means to refine and control bodily desires, which culminate in avarice, jealousy, selfishness, anger and revenge, he rather reiterated the principles which could inject the sense of integrity, peace, justice, affection, brotherhood, sympathy, non-violence and equality, which are the chief constituents of Buddhism. It is praiseworthy to mention that marvelous teachings of Buddhism directed humanity to the right path in the times of oppression, cruelty, selfishness and injustice.

Buddha believes that if any individual intends to abstain from all kinds of sins and wishes to live with piety and prudence must adopt seclusion, practice ascetic life style and exercise simplicity in wearing, eating and drinking. Besides, he needs to avoid profligacy, ostentation, affectation and vanities. The person who abides by these teachings of Buddha by letter and spirit is called Bikhsu.(18)

When one becomes Bikhsu, he acts upon these commandments of Buddha to attain Nirvana thus;

- He will not kill any living organism
- He will not commit theft
- He will not commit adultery
- He will not speak lie
- He will not get used to any kind of addiction
- He will not have food after afternoon
- He will keep himself away from the music and dance parties
- He will not practice affectation or ostentation and will not use perfumes
- He will not sit on any comfortable seat, chair or bed
- He will keep himself away from gold and silver.(19)

It is a well-established fact that the peace in the world gets disturbed when an individual or a group or part of the society faces danger and violence inflicted

upon them by others. The most important thing for man is life itself; if life is in the state of jeopardy, it leads to intensive violence and destruction of world at large. For that, all the religions of the world give much importance to life.

Islam and Buddhism at a Glance:

1. Laws and Injunctions of Islam about Human Life

The laws which constitutes the foundation of Islamic society and civilization is based on the law of life and its security. Piety of human soul and positivity, truthfulness and altruism in human action are the most praiseworthy tenets of Islam. The Holy Quran mentioned the first act of crime and violence, in which a man killed another, and regards it as the first evil action of human history, which paved way for the ultimate disintegration, decay and downfall of mankind. Hence, it became indispensable to teach man to respect and take care of the life of other livings. It was to be inculcated that every living has a right to live, exist and prevail. After mentioning this heinous act of murder, the Holy Quran reveals that:

On that account we ordained for the children of Israel that if any one slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land it would be as if he slew the whole people and if any one saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.²⁰

The above-cited verse reiterates that the murder of one person is tantamount to killing all human beings whereas saving the life of one person is likely to save the whole mankind. While mentioning the characteristics of virtuous man, Allah Almighty reveals that; “Those who make not with God any other god, nor slay such life as God has made sacred”.²¹ To highlight the importance of piety and abstinence from evil indulgence, it was further revealed that: “Take not life which God hath made sacred except by way of justice and law”.(22) Hazarat Anas bin Malak, opines that the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW), says that the four among all major sins is to associates any partner with Allah, to commit a murder, to disobey parents and to speak lie.(23)

The Holy Prophet in his last sermon delivered at the eve of Hajj said:

I apprise you that your lives, your property and your honour are similarly as sacred to one another as this sacred day of this sacred month in this sacred town, soon you will be meeting your Lord and He will ask you about your actions.(24)

Islam promulgates stern laws and codes to punish those who spread mischief, commit murder and indulge in terrorism and bloodshed, invoke extremist practices in the society, for them there will be far severe punishment after the Day of Judgment. If any Islamic state is circumstantially bound to wage war or it is imposed upon them, even then if a person from the enemy side begs for asylum, he must be provided with secure asylum and he should be escorted to the safe place he intends to go to.

If anyone amongst the Pagans asks thee for asylum, grant it to him so that he may hear the word of God and then escort him to where he can be securing that is because they are men without knowledge.(25)

Islam prefers and appreciates to set the war prisoner free and forbids inflicting torture and misery upon them. Besides, Islam strongly propounds that women, children, the aged, physically or mentally impaired and sick will not be harmed in the battlefield or at warfronts. Whatever ethical and moral values the present day civilized world possess and boasts of, Islam has its due share in it because the teachings of Islam commenced in the epoch of decadence, disintegration, downfall of values and ethics to the extent that life itself lost its worth and was molested and destroyed with no remorse or regret.

2. Abstinence from Committing Theft:

The second commandment of Buddha for becoming Bikhshu is about the safety of property. It is an undeniable fact that property and possession causes feuds and scuffle in the society, the situation further aggravates if the property or possession is achieved or accumulated by unfair and illegal means. One among many other illegal means of taking possession of other's property is theft, which ensues uncertainty, disintegration, conflict and quarrels in the society.

Islamic Laws and Injunction about Property:

Islam clearly bifurcates the fair and unfair means of accomplishing or accumulating property, it emphasizes the fair and judicious ways to obtain it whereas strongly admonishes and condemns for applying unfair or illegal means to achieve the property what does not legally belong to or you are not legally entitled to possess it. The Holy Quran reveals: "O ye who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: but let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual good will".(26)

It further reveals: "And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, nor use it as bait for judges with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) peoples' property".²⁷ To commit theft is one of the major sins Islam legislate punishment. The Holy Quran prescribes "the thief either male or female, his/her hand be cut off. A punishment by way of example from God, for their crime and God is exalted in power".²⁸ If a member of a society get involve in unfair and unjust means of accumulating property, adulteration, bribe, interest, cheating, baiting, gambling; and as a result the whole fiber of the society gets tilted towards evil, quarrel and bloodshed the society would be bound to wither and crumble irrevocably. Islam not only strongly forbids getting involved in unjust means of collecting property but it also legislates and promulgates clear laws and injunctions regarding the punishments of such heinous acts.

3. To Avoid Adultery:

The third commandment of Buddha is not to indulge in adultery. As adultery or extramarital sex spreads decadence, disputes and downfall of values in the society, so Islam has also forbidden illegitimate ways and means employed for the fulfillment of carnal desires. Adultery is one of that illegitimate ways of fulfilling sensual desires therefore the Holy Quran ascertains it as one of the heinous sins/crimes. Almighty Allah reveals: “Nor come nigh to adultery for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evil)”.²⁹ The Holy Prophet pledged a promise from the believers:

Narrated Ubdah bin As-saamit: Allah’s Apostle said while a group of his companions were around him: Swear allegiance to me for: Not to join anything in worship along with Allah, not to steal, not to commit illegal sexual intercourse, not to kill your children, not to accuse an innocent person (to spread such an accusation among people), not to be disobedient (when ordered) to do good deed. The prophet added: whoever amongst you fulfills his pledge will be rewarded by Allah.(30)

Islam owing the seamless consequences and adverse after-effects of adultery has ordained it an act subject to punishment. The Holy Quran prescribes the punishment for adultery as under:

“The woman and man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by God, if ye believe in God and the Last Day and let a party of the believers witness their punishment.(31)

The great Islamic scholar Maududi writes:

“Islam does not rely on punitive law alone for saving humanity from the menace of fornication. It employs both reformatory and prohibitory measures on a large scale. It has provided legal punishment only as a last resort. Islam does not want that the people should go on committing this crime and getting flogged with stripes day and night. Its real aim is that the people should not commit this crime at all and there should be no occasion to resort to the extreme punishment. For this purpose Islam first of all purifies man. It imbues him with the fear of All-Powerful and All-Knowing Allah, it inculcates in him the sense of accountability for his actions in the Hereafter from which even death cannot release him. It fills him with obligation of obedience to Divine Law which is sure to follow true faith”.(32)

4. Fourth Commandment of Buddha about Prevention from Speaking False:

It is a fact that lie is the mother of all social evils; it begets disputes, breach of trust and pollutes the peace, truth and justice. Truth has always royal road to

peace and prosperity notwithstanding some jerks and jolts bound to impede its way. Buddha forbids from telling lie and commands to follow the path of truthfulness. Likewise, Islam also ordains its believers to abstain from speaking lie, and to practice truthfulness in life. The Holy Quran reveals: “O ye who believe! Fear God and be with those who are true (in word and deed)”.(33)

The Holy Prophet said: Narrated Abdullah: The Prophet (SAW) said:

“Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to paradise, and a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fajur (i.e. wickedness, evil doing) and Al Fajur (wickedness) leads to the (Hell) fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar”.(34)

Narrated Abu Bakra: Allah’s Apostle inculcated thrice:

Shall I not inform you of the biggest of the great sins?” we said yes o Allah’s apostle. He said, “ To join partners in worship with Allah, to be undutiful to one’s parents” the Prophet set up after he had been reclining and added, “And I warn you against giving forged statement and a false witness, I warn you against giving forged statement and false witness.” The Prophet keeps on saying that warning till we thought that he would not stop.(35)

5. Abstinance from Addiction:

To attain the state of Nirvana, Buddha in his fifth commandment emphasizes altogether abstinance from all sorts of addiction. It is a fact that the use of drugs and intoxicant material affects the faculties of human, the reasoning faculties for time being remains suspended therefore one fails to distinguish between vice and virtue, good and bad; as the result, it casts adverse impact upon the society and leads to ultimate downfall, decadence and unending disputes or quarrels.

Islam being the religion of peace and prudence also commands its believer to abstain from all kinds of addiction, not only this, but terms addiction as Haram (impermissible/ unlawful/ illegitimate and its use is likely to commit sin and subject to punishment) and there are clear-cut laws of punishment for the consumer of intoxicant materials and drugs of addiction. The Holy Quran reveals:

“O ye who believe, intoxicants, and gambling (Dedication to) stones and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan’s handiwork. Eschew such (abomination) that ye may proper. Satan’s plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer will you not then abstain.(36)

Originally, the Arabic word Khamar meant only wine made from grapes, and it was equally applied to the liquors made from wheat, barley, dried grapes, dates and honey. The Holy Prophet (SAW), applied prohibitions to all

intoxicants and, there are traditions that clearly supports this. For instance, Aisha opines that Allah's Apostle asked Al-Bit, and he says, "all drinks that intoxicates are unlawful (to drink)".³⁷ Ibn Umar Umar once stood up on the pulpit and says;

Now then prohibition of alcoholic drinks have been revealed and those drinks are prepared from five things i.e. grapes, dates, honey, wheat or barley and an alcoholic drinks is that, that disturbs the mind.(38)

In this connection, the Holy Prophet laid down the general principle of a large dose of something that is intoxicants and that its smallest dose also is unlawful and, if a cup of everything is intoxicant then a drop of it also is unlawful.(39)

6. Abstinence from Food after Mid-Day:

Buddha in his sixth commandment suggest his follower that for becoming true Bhikshu they must not eat after the mid of the day. For the midday is the crucial time for working, if one takes lunch, he feels sleepy, lethargic and drowsy; therefore, the speed, quality and quantity of doing work gets marred/ hampered. Buddha wants his followers to keep themselves away from taking meal after midday. However, Islam on the contrary has not forbidden taking routine lunch, but there is a month in which all Muslim adult are expected to observe fasting and not to drink or eat anything from dawn to dusk. This observance is regarded as worship. The month is called Ramdhan – the month of bounty and benevolence. Allah Almighty reveals that;

Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down, the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong) so everyone of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill or on journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you, He does not want to put you difficulties.(40)

Furthermore, ALLAH says, and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread then complete your fast till the night appears.⁴¹ The observance of fast is highly beneficial for individual in particular and society in general. The fasting instils patience, tolerance, sympathy for hungry people and piety or control over baser passions.

7. Avoidance from Music, Dance and Party:

In his seventh commandment, Buddha forbids to join dance parties, musical concert because such deeds eventually become an inalienable and integral part of the nature of rich people; the continuous indulgence in these activities makes them obsessed with sensual and amorous sentiments, ostentation, worldly affection, pomp and show. Thus, such sorts of parties of

music and dance lead to moral decadence, as the result, the young debauchee become lethargic, work-shy, lecherous, debauched and prone to unending quarrels, feuds and disputes. Islam has also forbidden attending such kind of parties/concert, which may lead towards ultimate decay and downfall of individual and society as well.

The Holy Prophet said that some of my followers would drink wine just by changing/labelling it with other names, music would be play before them, and there would be female singer/dancer before them. Allah would inhume them under the ground and their state would be degraded to the level of a beast.⁴² Islam does not altogether forbid attaining the parties/gatherings that provide aesthetic pleasure to human, neither does Islam suppress human natural feelings but it only draws laws and principles to control, refine and reform the conduct of man, so that he could have self-control, temperance and piety. Islam allows such kinds of gathering/get-together parties/concerts, which may not result into amorous indulgence, disputes and feuds.

8. Avoiding Affectation/Ostentation and Perfumes:

In his eighth commandment, Buddha forbids his Bikhsu to indulge in worldly ostentatious vanities of pomp and show and prevents from using/applying/spraying perfume. Buddha is of the view that nobody can attain the state of Nirvana unless he has subdued and refined his passion/appetites and is not slave to his desires. These things/activities imbue worldly and materialistic feelings in human being and hinder or impede one from going into the state of seclusion and complete asceticism.

Islam strongly inculcates the importance of cleanliness and teaches its followers to keep themselves clean, tidy and in good state of hygiene. However, the teaching of Islam compulsorily requires believers to do ablution, take bath; in addition to it, Islam not only permits to use perfume but in some cases declares it a praise-worthy act to be applauded for it inspires others and brings positivity in the quality of life. Allah Almighty reveals that; “O children of Adam wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer, eat and drink but waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters”.⁴³ Holy Prophet himself liked perfume and he also suggested/taught his followers to apply/spray perfume (the soothing impact of fragrance increases the opportunity of interaction which leads to love, attachment and positive relationship).(44)

Salman-Al-Farsi reiterates that;

The prophet Muhammad (SAW) said whoever takes a bath on Friday, purifies himself as much as he can, then uses his (Hair) oil or perfumes himself with the scent of his house, then proceeds (For the Juma prayer) (an especial pray offered on each Friday) and does not separate two persons sitting together (in the mosque) then prays as much (ALLAH has) written for him and then remains silent while the

Imam is delivering the Khutba (sermon), his sins in between the present and last Friday would be forgiven.(45)

It is documented that if somebody offers presents containing perfume, it is obligatory on other to accept it.⁴⁶ There is only one occasion when applying perfume is forbidden in Islam and that is during the pilgrimage or Hajj. The dress which pilgrims wear during performing Hajj is called Ahram, and it is forbidden to spray perfume/attar on it.⁴⁷ The latest research studies and in-depth exploration have opened fresh window to this kind of knowledge that fragrance casts deep impact/influence on the attitude of human beings; it not only enthuses man but also works as stimulant. In the 21st century, Fragrance Therapy is use as a mode of treating patients.

9. Sitting and Sleeping on Comfortable Beds/things:

In order to attain the state of Bhikshu, Buddha in his ninth commandment mentions that his true believer/follower would never sit on a comfortable thing nor will recline/sleep on it. This practice imbues simplicity and detachment from worldly comforts. Once a man frees himself from the luxury and lust, he does not easily fall prey to greediness, cunningness, cheating, feuds and injustice.

Conversely, Islam does not forbid availing the means of comfort for enhancing the quality of life but it prevents from making such accumulation whole purpose of life, whereas, Islam promotes simplicity, austerity and thriftiness in life. Holy Prophet himself lived a very simple life, though he was the leader of his nation/followers, yet he never exhibited the fake show of power and possession what mostly the kings or emperors of the powerful empires often did. He wore simple clothes, ate simple food and preferred simplicity and frugality in the other affairs of life as well. Hazrat Ayesha narrated that the bed of the Holy Prophet was made of leather, and a mat made out of the leaves of palm lay spread onto it.(48)

When one of the wives of the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Hifiza was asked about the bed of the Holy Prophet, she replied that it was made of simple wool and was coarse and hard. Holy Prophet slept on it by folding it into two. Once she folded it four times to make it more comfortable, but on the next morning, the Holy Prophet enquired from her what kind of bed she had set for him. She replied the bed had been same but she had just folded it four-fold to make it comfortable. The Holy Prophet ordered her to bring it to its previous state, because the comfortable bed constrained him for rising to Tahjad Prayers (offered after mid night).(49)

The above-cited statements authenticate that the Holy Prophet did not sleep/recline on soft or comfortable bed, as these enhance to intensity and duration of sleep, thus one fails to worship one's Lord. Though the Holy Prophet was the quintessence of humanity and paragon of virtue, one cannot

expect or associate such failure with him, but he set this example for his followers and rest of humanity to track the path of truth.

10. Avoidance from Wearing Jewelry made of Gold or Silver:

The tenth and last commandment of Buddha for Nirvana is that a Bhikshu would refrain from wearing/using gold and silver ornaments. It is also a source of detachment from materialistic world. It is generally observe that greed and avarice of possessing silver and gold ensues quarrel and disputes in the society. Likewise, Islam also forbids use of the crockery/vessels made of gold, especially one used for dining purpose. The Sahih Bukhari includes one tradition: Narrated Hudhaifa: The Prophet (SAW) forbade us to drink out of gold and silver vessels or eat in it and also forbade the wearing of silk.(50) However, Islam allows women to wear the ornaments made of gold and silver but man is forbidden to wear ornaments made of such metals.

The Holy Prophet said that both metal (their use for the sake of ornaments) are unlawful for male believers/followers. Whereas, woman can use (silver and gold) for the sake of ornaments or jewelry.(51) In the light of above tradition all Islamic jurists unanimously agree that: The use of gold and silver for sake of beautification is unlawful for male Muslims whereas female Muslims can use it.(52)

Islam has strongly forbidden the use of dining crockery/vessels made of gold or silver because it promotes affectation, vanities and pomp and show; moreover, it is the sign of profligacy, lavishness and extravagance. Thus, it invokes the feelings of materialistic race in the society, man falls prey to pride and pomp; in the pursuit of such accumulation, he employs fowl and fair means and surpasses all the bounds of justice and ethics. Eventually, it leads to ultimate downfall and decay of the society.

Findings:

We have discovered that of the world religious population of 7,095, 217, 980, we have 33.39% Christians, 22.74% Muslims and 6.77% Buddhists across the globe.(53) The remaining figure is for adherents of other religions and those that have no religion affiliations. A thorough review of religions and human history reveals that religion is an additional blessing and power bestowed upon man that serves as a natural force to direct the cognitive self-will and intellectual power of man to right direction. One cannot deny the fact that the fountainhead of all ethical and moral values of present time is none other but religion. The history of the world bears testimony that the religious teachings promote peace, love, brotherhood, equality, justice and curb wars, oppression of all sorts, exploitation, selfishness and barbarism. Whenever, man assumes the entity of a callous barbarian and exercises his natural power and potential to shed blood and commit injustice and oppression, the religion steps forward to enthuse and inspire man with the noblest notion of love, peace, justice, brotherhood and equality. Thus, the

course of collective goodness and selfless righteousness get saved from being derailed and man in particular and humanity in general march towards the path of truth, progress and prosperity. As bodily desires invoke negative feelings like jealousy, anger, selfishness, exploitation; whereas, the religion endeavours to curb these negative feelings and promotes love, tolerance, justice, brotherhood, sympathy, sacrifice, equity and ethical values, hence religious teachings primarily emphasize human rights and service to mankind.

Conclusion:

All ancient and contemporary religions of the world like Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Jainism and Islam emphasizes and attempt to upholds the highest moral and ethical values in human society in order to produce discipline and good will. Some of the religions strictly command for proper observance and submission to the laws and cannons, whereas the other religions do not stipulates strict allegiance to its principles, yet they nourish and treat human emotions and direct them for the general good of the society. On the whole, all religions aim at moral and ethical upliftment of man, to instil positivity in him and imbues the spirit of sacrifice, equality, affection, brotherhood and justice in mankind. Thus, these all facts testify that all religions, with some differences of pattern, propagate the message of love, equality, brotherhood, justice and equity in the age of materialistic-accumulation-race and greed-ridden epoch where individual profits and benefit overwhelm collective cause and general welfare of mankind. What we have done here in this paper is not to establish that one religion is better than the other is, but to demonstrate that almost all world religions stands for love, peace and harmony. On this note, this paper challenge Christianity, Islam and Buddhism to champion the course of global peace in the age of global crime.

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