

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, most Kind, most Merciful



Surat ar-Rum, 30:30

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا
فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا
لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith; the nature of Allah in which He has made mankind. There is no changing of Allah's creation; that is the upright religion, but most people do not know.

Learning Objectives

- To identify that it is human nature to seek a higher power
- To analyse the need for rules and guidelines for life
- To explain the advantages of having a religion.

Key Words

فِطْرَة

Fitrah
innate nature

تَوْحِيد

Tawhid
belief in the oneness of Allah

أَخْلَاق

Akhlaq
ethics; morals

Religion is based on two aspects:

- 1 **Faith:** the relationship between man and the higher power he believes in and depends upon.
- 2 **Guidance:** to follow a guide or guidelines that help man to achieve good morals and ethics, in order to reach the purpose for which he was created.

Why do we need religion?



1 Religion gives meaning to life

A stranger on the street turns towards you and says a rude word; in response wouldn't you love to say a rude word right back at him? But, your religious belief teaches you to respond with kindness and show your good *akhlaq*, because Allah is always watching you and will reward your every good action.

Although it is possible to have good *akhlaq* and social qualities without having a religion, all good human values can be traced back to a divinely revealed religion in the past. Moreover, without religion, it is possible a person will treat these teachings only as recommendations, because they will not have the sense of responsibility that a religion gives.

Religion explains the reason for our existence and how we should live our lives if we want the best in this world and the Hereafter. This is what gives people the desire to go out, work hard, and try to make the world a better place. They do it because they believe there is a purpose behind their creation.

2 Strength to struggle in life

A man with faith in Allah will not find himself becoming disappointed and down even in the worst moments of his life, because he knows that Allah is his provider and helper, and that He tests man with only as much as he can handle. He has faith that Allah can solve any problem. With this kind of faith, man can succeed against every disappointment and problem. Without religion, man can feel like giving up when times get hard.



3 Man's innate nature (*fitrah*)

Imagine this. As you walk towards your room you hear a noise. Turning around, you see a basket following you! Could the basket be moving on its own? No way! Your instinct tells you there is something hidden, stronger than the basket, pulling the basket. Human nature says nothing happens without a higher power to cause it.

Humans have always had faith in a higher power. This is part of our nature (*fitrah*) that is built into us. We believe that Allah has designed us with a purpose. Even those that do not believe in a creator find other things to fill this gap. They worship things like the stars, the sun, the moon, animals, fire, trees, idols, other human beings, etc. This shows that as a natural instinct, people have faith in a higher power.

Rasulullah (s) has said: 'Every child is born with *fitrah* (of Islam), and it is the father or mother that make the child a Jew or Christian.'

Even though the child's intellect has not matured, his parents set out rules for him that guide him and shape the person he becomes. Whether the parents follow a set religion or not, the child follows a higher power (i.e. his parents) and practices their rules.

Islam is a religion that is in tune with our *fitrah*.



FIQH FACTS

It is necessary for a person to abide by the laws of his home country in all fields like traffic laws, laws regarding work and school, social laws, etc. It is not *ja'iz* (permissible) to either steal or destroy the public or private property.

It is forbidden to break the trust and promise in regard to any individual, regardless of his gender, religion, citizenship, and beliefs.

4 Religion shows us whom to follow to fulfil our purpose

Allah has created us and has given us a purpose, and only He can guide us towards it. How do you think He has done this?

A drunk man was brought to Abu Bakr.

Abu Bakr asked him, "Did you drink an intoxicant?"

He said, "Yes."

Abu Bakr, "Why did you do so when it is *haram*?"

He said, "I am a Muslim but live in an area where the people drink and consider it to be *halal*. I never knew that it was *haram*; if I had known that it is *haram* to drink intoxicants in Islam, then surely I would have refrained from it."

Abu Bakr asked 'Umar: "What should the judgement be in this case?"

'Umar said: "This is a problem which can only be solved by 'Ali."

Abu Bakr sent his servant to ask 'Ali to come but 'Umar said, "We should all go to him."

When they reached Imam 'Ali's house; they saw Salman Farsi and explained their question to him. Salman narrated it to Imam 'Ali.

Imam 'Ali said, "Send this person with someone and go door to door in the neighbourhood of the Ansar and the *Muhajirin*, and ask if anyone of them has recited the verse of prohibition to this person or not. If no one comes forward, then you can't punish him [because of ignorance]."

The person was taken around and they came back without any witness who had recited the relevant verse to him; and the person was left to go.

Salman said to Imam 'Ali, "O Amiru 'l-Mu'minin, you guided this group!" Imam said, "I wanted to emphasise and remind them of this verse between them and myself: *'Is he who guides to the truth worthier to be followed, or he who guides not unless he is [himself] guided? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?'*" (10:35)

Think about this story; it will help you answer the question above!



Faith in Action

Now you know the reasons why we need to follow a religion.

Every individual has slightly different reasons for following a religion; find three people and interview them on why they follow a religion. It could be a person of any faith.



The famous historian al-Tabari narrates:

I was in Mecca during the season of *Hajj* and I saw a man from Iran calling out to the people: 'O pilgrims and people of Mecca, I have lost a pouch that contains a thousand dinars. Whoever returns the pouch will be rewarded by Allah with good and will be saved from the fire of hell.'

An old man from the people of Mecca approached him and said: 'O Iranian, our city is in very tough conditions, and this money might fall into the hands of a believer who is poor and old in age. Maybe he plans to give it back if you promise that you will give him a little bit of money that you make *halal* for him to use.'

The Iranian man asked: 'How much does he want?'

The old man replied: 'He wants one-tenth of the money.'

The Iranian replied: 'No, I will not grant him the money. Instead, I will take my case to Allah and complain to Him on the Day of Judgement.'

I realised that it was the old man who had his pouch of dinars, and he wished to have a little amount from it. I followed him until he returned to his home. I heard him calling to his wife: 'Lubabah! I found the owner of the dinars and he does not intend to give any reward to the person who finds it. I said to him, "Give us a hundred dinars," and he refused and said he would take his case to Allah. What should I do, Lubabah? I must return it, for I fear my Lord and I fear that my sin will be multiplied.'

The wife replied: 'Oh, but we have been struggling and suffering from poverty for the last 50 years, and you have four daughters, two sisters, my mother and me, and you are the ninth person. Keep all the money and feed us, for we are hungry, and clothe us, for you know

better our situation. Perhaps Allah will make you rich afterwards and you might be able to give the money back after you have fed your children, or Allah will pay the amount you owe on the Day of Judgement.'

The old man exclaimed: 'Will I consume *haram* after 86 years of my life, and burn my organs with fire after I have been patient with my poverty, and will I become worthy of Allah's anger, even though I am close to my grave? No, by Allah, I will not do so!' I left, but I was amazed at the condition of the old man and his wife.

Later, the owner of the pouch called out again, and the old man approached him, but this time he asked for ten dinars instead of a hundred.

The Iranian refused. Later, once again, the Iranian man made the same announcement.

The old man came to him again and said: 'O Iranian, I said to you the day before yesterday to reward the finder a hundred dinars and you refused. Then I advised you to give him ten dinars and you refused. So will you give him only one dinar so that he can buy with it half of the things he needs and with the other half he can buy sheep's milk so that he can feed his children?'

Again, the Iranian refused.

The old man finally said: 'Come and take your money so that I can sleep at night in peace, for I have found no peace since I have found this money.'

So the old man went with the Iranian and I followed them until the old man entered his house, dug a hole, pulled out the money and said: 'Take your money and ask Allah to forgive me and bless me from His bounty.'

The Iranian then said: 'Old man, my father died and left behind three thousand dinars and said to me: "Take out a third of this money and give it to a person who is most deserving of it." By Allah, I have not seen a person since I left Iran until now, who is more worthy of it than you. So take it, may Allah's blessing be upon you, and may He reward you for the trust you kept and your patience during poverty.' The Iranian left without the money.

The old man wept and prayed: 'May Allah bless the owner of the money in his grave, and may Allah bless his son.'

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Surat at-Talaq, 65:2-3

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

And whoever is wary of Allah, He shall make a way out for him, and provide for him from where he does not reckon. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him.



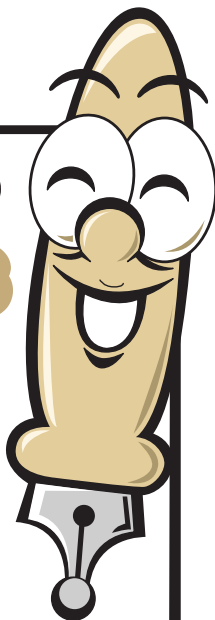


HIGHER LEVEL

Write a short description of what you think this community would look like and how everyone would behave and interact with each other.

[illegible]

- 1 Humans are born with an innate nature to believe in a higher power.
- 2 It is difficult to live in harmony in a society without having laws and rules to guide us.
- 3 Religion gives a meaning to life and the strength to struggle during hardships.





NOTES

- 1 What does *fitrah* mean?

- 2 Religion is based on two aspects: _____
and _____
- 3 List the advantages of following a religion.

- 4 Allah has created us, only He knows how to
guide us best. How has He guided us?
