

# Observation

## Religion and God

by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

I usually don't talk much about religion and God because I find it vague, unintelligible and divisive. I consider myself a man of ordinary intelligence, therefore, clarity is very important to me, nonetheless, I still try to read religious books and articles in hope of finding some clarity on the subject. Unfortunately, more I read, more baffled I become. I asked several theologians and godmen to explain religion and God to me. Their explanations made me even more frustrated.

I also feel that God has been hijacked by religion and He must be freed. Sometimes I listen to short lectures by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev. He doesn't preach nor does he recite garbled passages from scriptures. He clarifies matters related to spirituality in a layman's terms. I am not his follower, but his talks make sense to me. According to him, religion is a belief. When we believe in something, we don't question what we don't know. Interestingly, according to him, even atheists are religious because they believe in nihility of God. Since they believe in something without questioning and without knowing, that makes them religious.

According to me, the role of religion should be providing guidelines for every situation in life, spreading love and service to humanity and explaining matters related to spirituality to its followers.

Some examples of providing guidelines are Five Pillars of Islam, Ten Commandments of Christianity or four Yoga(s) mentioned in Hinduism. I just gave some random examples to make my point. Religious practices are much broader and not limited to what I mentioned above.

Trying to understand the concept of God is even more complex. This has created divisiveness,

cynicism and fanaticism among fellow human beings. Here are some examples:

The Christians believe Jesus is God, the son of God, the second person of the Trinity. Islam rejects the divinity of Christ. So, it cannot be said that they worship the same God. (Ref: An, Kirlkand. "Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God? College Washington Post, December 17 2015).

According to Islam, Allah is the only God and Prophet Muhammad is His messenger (shahadah). Does that mean that Allah is different than other gods? No one knows.

The Hindus believe in plurality of gods but they also insist on God's oneness. So, it can be said that it is both a monotheistic and polytheistic religion depending on who you talk to.

Buddhism doesn't mention God.

In my view, the concept of God should be left to individuals because all prayers go to the same Supreme Being or to the same phenomenon. I am not trying to impose my concept on others; I am simply stating my thoughts here. I worship idol figures out of fear, want and for conforming to the society that I live in. Many (not all) in other religions do what they do for same reasons.

God is someone or some marvel who creates, preserves and destroys life and matter around and beyond us. That Being or phenomenon is infinite, without any beginning and end, formless, immeasurable, indefatigable, indestructible, all pervasive and inexplicable.

That is what I think. The choice should be strictly ours to decide God's identity. As I know, Hinduism is the only religion that allows us to do so.