

## The Causes of Apostasy

### Why Does Apostasy Lead to a Sense of Emptiness?

#### **Apostasy, the Product of Misunderstanding of Religion and an Analysis of Its Consequences**

In previous lessons, we learned that human beings are inherently religious and inclined toward truth, with an existential and *fitri* connection between them and the religion of truth. In fact, religion is fully aligned with *fitrah* (innate nature) that forms the essence of human existence. However, the question arises: If belief in God and the tendency toward monotheism and goodness are placed in the innate nature of human beings, why do some people lack an inclination toward God and religion and even resist accepting them? Why does a person, who is naturally drawn to religion and whose innate nature is inherently connected to religious concepts, fall into apostasy?

Undoubtedly, there is nothing within religion that repels us since all religious teachings and rules are in perfect alignment with the innate nature of the human being and are directed toward our bliss. If individuals truly understand and embrace authentic religious principles, they will never turn away from religion. Apostasy arises from various causes, some of which are influenced by environmental and social factors, such as the misconduct of religious individuals, misleading propaganda, and the efforts of enemies to divert religiousness from its true path. However, these factors are not the sole reasons for turning away from religious teachings; internal and personal factors also play a significant role in

fostering apostasy. In fact, these internal factors may be even more influential than external ones. This is because, if individuals reach sufficient inner growth and maturity, no external factor can negatively affect them.

The primary cause of apostasy is the conflict between religion and lower desires. Most apostate and anti-religious individuals logically have no problem accepting religion, as there are no fundamental issues or doubts regarding it. However, because religion conflicts with their animal desires, they oppose it. This is because these individuals misunderstand their true essence, defining themselves merely as a man with masculine desires or a woman with feminine desires—beings with limited, material needs who neglect their supra-rational and human dimension. In reality, the core reason that these individuals do not embrace religion is that they approach it without knowing their true self. As a result, they fail to see the connection between religious teachings and the various dimensions of their existence. However, if these individuals embark on the path of self-knowledge, not only will they accept religion, but they will also find it easy and enjoyable to observe its seemingly restrictive aspects.

In this lesson, we intend to discuss our approach to and relationship with God and religion. We will examine how both our material nature and *fitrah* play a role in the establishment of a sincere or insincere relationship with God, and how these factors lead us either toward religion or apostasy.

### **A Sincere and *Fitrah*-Oriented Relationship with God**

Despite having accepted the religion of truth, many of us still face numerous contradictions and confusions in life. This is because we have love and hatred in our hearts and are not fully sincere with ourselves and God.

As mentioned, religion is in harmony with our *fitrah*. If we truly know ourselves and view ourselves from God's perspective— seeing ourselves as an eternal being —we realize that God has perfectly aligned religion with our existential structure [1]. In other words, when we approach religion with our pure, truth-seeking *fitrah*, free from personal biases or animosities, we find it aligned with our human dimension and we embrace its teachings willingly. In this state, a sincere relationship forms between us, God, and religion and observing religious rulings no longer feels burdensome. Even if we live in a non-Islamic country, where religious obligations like *hijab* or abstaining from alcohol are not mandatory, we will remain steadfast in our commitment to these principles. We will resist the temptations that encourage us to break divine boundaries because we have found that religion is the source of life and peace.

It might seem surprising, but many examples of religiousness can be found among individuals who have grown up in secular environments and experienced various animal pleasures, but due to their pure and truth-seeking *fitrah*, at a certain point in their lives, they feel empty and turn to religion. They have realized that none of those pleasures can satisfy their infinity-seeking soul, and to attain inner peace, they must follow their *fitrah*. God has also prepared the means and conditions for their guidance.

### **An Insincere Relationship with God Based on Material Nature**

The difficulties of adhering to religious rulings arise when a person establishes an insincere relationship with God, disregarding the intellect and innate human nature. This is where conflict with God and the questioning of religious rulings often begin, leading some seemingly devout individuals to write books and articles against religion. They attempt to interpret religious rulings through their material nature, even though material nature does not understand the language of *fitrah*. It is important to note that even Islamic rulings concerning material matters, such as sexuality, relationships between men and women, marriage, and inheritance, align with *fitrah*. This is because, from God's perspective, we are eternal beings. Therefore, if someone does not align with their *fitrah*, they will fail to understand religious rulings correctly. In this case, their *fitrah* will fade, like a candle slowly extinguishing.

Claiming to be religious while our lifestyle, character, and behaviors are not compatible with religion indicates a lack of harmony with our *fitrah* and our human dimension. There are many individuals studying Islamic sciences in seminaries and universities, yet their lifestyle and personality do not align with their academic pursuits. Because they have acquired knowledge, they failed to acquire asset. In other words, they have not absorbed this knowledge through their innate nature. As a result, they can never be at peace and happiness with religion or enjoy it. Such individuals often engage in apostasy or anti-religiousness, as their lives lack alignment with their innate human nature. It is crucial to remember that apostasy is, in fact, a form of self-alienation or *fitrah*-alienation.

In this lesson, we first discussed the causes and factors of apostasy. We also noted that if we approach religion with our pure *fitrah*, free from any personal love or

hatred, our relationship with God will be sincere. Consequently, accepting religious beliefs and adhering to its rulings will never be difficult for us. However, if we approach religion through our animal and material dimensions, without aligning with our innate nature, our relationship with God will not be sincere. Ultimately, this will lead to apostasy or fight against religion.

### Reference

[1]. Quran, 30:30