

# **A Comparative Study on the Significance of Religions in Conquering the Challenges faced by Youths**

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## **Prelude**

Religion is an organized institution with a collection of beliefs and a cultural system. The term 'religion' which is derived from Latin term of *'religio'* means faith, reverence, or respect. In this sense, the term 'Religion' means respect or reverence for God. "Religion is a belief in an invisible superhuman power together with the feelings and practices that flow from such a belief"<sup>1</sup> "Religion is quest for the values of the ideal life, and for the means of achieving them, and includes quest to the surrounding universe"<sup>2</sup>

Religion has been leading to both mental and material developments of the individual. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate the utility of religious concepts to conquer challenges of the young people. The comparative methods applied in this study are the primary resources, prepared discussions with Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Islamic young people from twenty to thirty-five years old.

## **Definition of Young People on the Religion**

"Religion guides individuals to realize the ultimate reality of the universe and makes awareness to understand the good and bad."<sup>3</sup> "Religion shows the right path which should be practiced by people, indeed, if one lives righteously, that it is the meaning of the religion."<sup>4</sup> "Religion makes hopes of future and leads the life for the accurate path"<sup>5</sup> "Religion grows good qualities of soul after the birth of a human being."<sup>6</sup>

Human beings are fallen to suffering with their birth; therefore, they need a religion to the cessation of sufferings. It guides to cultivate mind and humanism among individuals. In this respect, it is difficult to live without a religion. These definitions indicate the significance of the religions. In this sense, all people believe that the religions perform a big role in their lives.

## Why Youth Need a Religion?

Young people are the lifeblood of any ethnic group. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; ‘young people are the fountain of thoughts for the innovation’. They live with thousands of yearnings and ambitions. To conquer those goals they have to face variety of challenges. Varieties of challenges elaborated in terms of three categories are as follows;

- i. Psychological challenges
- ii. Physiological challenges
- iii. Sociological challenges

Establishing self-confidence is the most effective remedy, which can be practiced in religions. On the other hand, if the young people do not achieve their goals through challenges, they will be collapsed to the repentance. It is mentioned in the *Dhammapada* as thus; “They who have not observed proper discipline and gained wealth in their youth languish in their old age, like old herons in a lake without fish and repent pondering over their past, like fallen arrows on the ground.”<sup>7</sup>

“The purpose of Religion is to control yourself;  
Not to criticize others” (Dalai Lama)

The purpose of this study is to show that the religious thoughts and its cultures are very much significant to establish the self-confidence among young people, which really influence to conquer challenges of their lives.

## Religious Solutions to Conquer Challenges of Young People

In this study, it is obviously acknowledged that most of the young people believe and accept their religious scriptures provide better solutions for the challenges that they face throughout their life. Therefore, I do hope to describe here, some significant religious concepts which the young people explicated me at the discussions. They said that the following religious teachings are very much helpful for them to establish the self-confidence as the most effective remedy, which can be practiced in religions.

Young people have to come across variety of challenges, such as psychological challenges, physiological challenges and sociological challenges, etc. The situation of the tasks are different

from one to another, sometimes it may be glad and sometimes it may be miserable. The Middle path (*Majjhimā paṭipadā*) in Buddhism will help to overcome those types of challenges. It is mentioned in the *Maṅgala Sutta* as follows;

“A mind unruffled by the vagaries of fortune, from sorrow freed;  
from defilements cleansed, from fear liberated-this is the greatest blessing”<sup>8</sup>  
(11<sup>th</sup> Verse)

Buddhism leads to have “a sound mind in a sound body.” Well practiced mind should bring the joyfulness or the happiness for the individuals. In *Dhammapada* it is mentioned as follows;

“Hard to hold down, nimble, alighting wherever it likes:  
the mind, its taming is good, the mind well-tamed brings ease”<sup>9</sup>  
(3:35)

Wealth management is another challenge that the young people have. For that purpose, Buddhist Canonical Literature has given an enough account that can be applied as a practicable theory, In the *Dīgha Nikāya* elucidates that explanation as follows;

“Once wealth is accumulated, family and household life may follow,  
by dividing wealth into four parts, true friendships are bound;”  
“One part should be enjoyed; two parts invested in business;  
and the fourth set aside; against future misfortunes”<sup>10</sup>  
(*Sigālaka Sutta*)

When the young people associate the people in the society, they have to associate various types individuals. In such an occasion, they can be easily fallen to the indelicate groups. In just a position, Youngsters who have observed religious thoughts can deal with any crowds without falling to the wrong paths. Therefore, one who lives according to the religion can conquer the challenges of the life with a happy mind. The Holy Bible indicates that;

“Happy are those - who reject the advice of evil men, who do not follow  
the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God...”  
“Instead, thy find joy in-obeying the law of the Lord and they study it day  
and night...” “But evil men are not like this at all; they are like straw that  
the wind blow away...”<sup>11</sup>



The Holy Bible says that the God looks at the people who practices 'His' path. That belief is highly occupied by the young people. They feel that they are not alone and the God is with them. The God keeps them and protects them to do overcome their challenges.

“But You; O Lord; are always my shield from danger,  
you give me victory and restore my courage”<sup>12</sup>

“Don't forget what I teach you, my son,  
Always remember what I tell you to do”<sup>13</sup>

Youngsters are the people who have a variety of thoughts and feelings. They would be problematic to achieve their goals. Sometimes, those thoughts and feelings can be destroyed the fame of them. In such a situation, it is better to concentrate on the religious notions to get rid of the bad thoughts and feelings. The Holy Quran explicates thus,

“But she in whose house - He was, sought to seduce him and she fastened  
the doors, and said: “Now come” He said: “Allah forbid!

Truly (thy husband) is my lord! He made - My sojourn agreeable!

Truly to no good - Come those who do wrong”<sup>14</sup>

(12:23)

Yuzus was young and handsome man who worked in a palace. One day queen has invited him to engage in the sexual act, but he did not accept the request of the queen and understood the responsibility as an obedient worker of the palace. This kind of biography is obliging and supportive to the young people to improve their good qualities.

Practicing of manners, ethics, customs and formalities should make the good personality for the society. On the other hand, it shows the gratitude of the character. Such religious guidance are helpful and cause for overcoming the challenges.

“And we have enjoined on man - (to be good) to his parents.

In travail upon travail - Did his mother bear him and in years twain

Was his weaning (hear the command),

Show gratitude to me and to thy parents

To me is (thy final) Goal”<sup>15</sup>

(31:14)

Practicing the mankind and humanism are the meanings of religion. If the young people could be able to understand the reality of the universal law, they would be able to manage the psycho, physio and socio challenges without any stress. The belief system (religion) and its culture can demonstrate that actuality which help the youngsters. The *Bhagavath Gītā* states as follows;

“Whatever happened, it happened well.

Whatever is happening, it is happening well.

Whatever will happen, it will also happen well.

What of yours did you lose?

Why or for what are you crying?

What did you bring with you, for you to lose it?

What did you create, for it to be wasted or destroyed?

Whatever you took, it was taken from here.

Whatever you gave, it was given from here.

Whatever is yours today, will belong to someone else tomorrow.

On another day, it will belong to yet another.

This change is the law of the universe.”<sup>16</sup>

(*Bagavath Gītā*)

The better understanding of the universal law is very much significant to the individuals to lead their lives and overcome or conquer the challenges of the lives. Dignity of the young individual is highly substantial to live without any stress. In that context, it is obvious that the improvement of the spiritual life, the *Thirumandiram* always emphasizes some important sayings, viz;

Inner core (the spiritual heart) is the great temple;

Fleshy body, the seat of the soul, (the place of union with *Paramātmā*) is the temple;

For the compassionate lord, the mouth is the tower – entrance;

For those with mental clarify, *Jīva* (life force; soul) soul is the *Śivalingam*;

“The (deceiving) five senses are the burning lamp with within the temple.”<sup>17</sup>

(*Thirumandiram*; 1823)

Well practiced and observed sense organs are assisted to the better life of the young people. It is the meaning of the religion. There is no need of a big temple to practice them. Our own brain, our own heart is the temple of ours. The purpose of all major religious traditions is not to construct big temples on the outside, but to create temples of goodness and compassion inside, of

our hearts.<sup>18</sup> Objectives of the whole of the religions (Gods) are to perceive the human beings in the spiritual fruit, but not the religious nuts. Indeed, religion is the gold bridge which makes connection of the life and spirituality of the individuals.

## Conclusion

Challenges are parts of life. The real understanding of the occurrences and establishing the self-confidence are effortlessly make the pathway for a better lively-hood or they guide the young individuals to overcome the challenges of the lives. All the religious traditions lead them to establish self-confidence. In this respect, the religious teachings and its spirits very much helpful to overcome or conquer the challenges of the young people.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Edited by Hall, William, Introduction to the Study of Religion, (1978), New York, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Defined by Buddhist Youngsters

<sup>4</sup> Defined by Hindu Youngsters

<sup>5</sup> Defined by Christian Youngsters

<sup>6</sup> Defined by Islamic Youngsters

<sup>7</sup> Dhammapada, 11:10, PTS

<sup>8</sup> “*Puṭṭhassa loka dhammehi - Cittaṃ yassa na kampati;  
Asokaṃ virajaṃ khemaṃ - etaṃ maṅgala muttamaṃ,*” K.N.v, Maṅgala Sutta, PTS, p.3

<sup>9</sup> “*Dunniggaḥassa lahuṇo, yatthakāmanipātino;  
Cittassa damatho sādhu, cittaṃ dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ,*” K.N.ii, Dhammapada, PTS, p.4

<sup>10</sup> “*Evaṃ bhoge samāhatvā alamatto kule gihī;  
Catudhā vibhaje bhoge, sa ve mittāni ganthati*”  
“*Ekena bhoge bhūñjeyya, dvīhi kammaṃ payojaye;  
Catutthaṅca nidhāpeyya, āpadāsu bhavissatī,*” D.N,iii, Sigālaka Sutta, PTS, p.187

<sup>11</sup> The Bible, (1976), United Bible Society, p. 538

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.539

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 624

<sup>14</sup> The Holy Quran, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. p. 632

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 1213, 1234

<sup>16</sup> Bagavath Gītā

<sup>17</sup> Thirumular, Thirumandiram, 1823

<sup>18</sup> Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama