

# Form and Spirit

Religious teachings have two aspects: The apparent form of the Divine Law and its deeply rooted spirit. For example, bowing down during prayer is its form but establishing a relationship with God and developing the feelings of submission to God is the spirit of our prayer. Circumambulating around Ka'aba is the form of pilgrimage but total submission to the Almighty Allah is its spirit. Feeding poor is an act of piety but developing a feeling of thankfulness to God and love with people is its spirit. Similarly, all religious activities have their form and spirit.

دعوت دین کا کام کیسے کیا جائے؟ اس کا عملی طریق کار کیا ہونا چاہیے؟ دین کی دعوت کا کام کرنے والے مبلغ میں کیا خصوصیات ہونی چاہئیں؟ [ان سوالات کا جواب حاصل کرنے کے لئے اس تحریر کا مطالعہ کیجیے۔](#)

When religious activities become habits, the real spirit of the deed is ignored and people focus only on the apparent ritual. After that, their prayers become a physical exercise, fasting becomes thirst and hunger, charity becomes a show-off activity and the pilgrimage becomes an ordinary travel. At next stage, a few rituals become the base of religion and the most important teachings of religion are ignored. It results in open violation of even basic religious principles.

People pay alms and Zakat but humiliate the poor. They perform the Pilgrimage but also indulge in smuggling with that. They fast but spend extravagantly on fast-breaking (Iftaar) parties. They perform prayers for God but the objective is to establish an impression of their piety. They conduct holy war (Jehad) in the name of God but kill innocent people at the same time.

*Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude. Thomas Jefferson*

At the time of Prophet Jesus (عليه الصلوة والسلام), the scholars of Jerusalem were the victim of such ritualism. The Bible says that these people are very conscious about cleanliness of their utensils, but they ignore the fact that the food they are eating from those utensils, has been acquired unfairly.

On the other extreme, some people do not pay attention to the rituals because they have to follow certain procedures for it. They say, "We do not need to perform prayer because we spend our time in social service. And religion is the name of social service."

But in fact, religion is the name of Allah's instructions. Both form and spirit of religious activities are important. People who ignore either of them, will be held accountable for it.

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## **Think about it!**

- Why do people ignore the spirit of Divine Law? On the contrary, others ignore the form of Divine Law. What is the reason for this attitude?
- Describe the significance of both the form and spirit of religion.

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