Directorate of Distance Education

UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

JAMMU

STUDY MATERIAL

FOR

M.A. SOCIOLOGY

Semester - III[rd]

Title : SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

COURSE NO. SOC-C-305 **LESSON NO. : 1–16**

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Syllabus of Sociology M.A. 4th Semester for the Examination to be held in the year Dec. 2019, 2020 & 2021 (Non-BCS)

Course No. SOC-C-305 **Title : Sociology of Religion**

Credits : 6 **Maximum Marks : 100**

Duration of examination $2^{1/2}$ hrs **a) Semester (External) Examination : 80**

b) Sessional (Internal) Assessment : 20

Objectives : To familarize the students with religious practices and beliefs in the various human cultures, to consider the main sociological theories of religion and analyze the various types of religious organizations in different socieities. The course also intends to introduce students with religions of India and their main components.

Unit - I **Religion :**

Definition; Composition and Features of Religion; Beliefs and Rituals; Magic, Religion and Science; Sacred & Profane; Church; Cult and Sect; Priests, Shamans and Prophets.

Unit - II **Sociological Interpretations of Religion :**

Origin of Religion (Evolutionary); Durkheim & Sociological Functionalism; Weber & Phenomenology; Marx and Dialectical Materialism, Indian Perspective - Gandhi, Ambedkar and Vivekananda.

Unit - III **Religions of India & their Components :**

Hinduism; Islam; Buddhism; Christianity; Sikhism; Jainism; Saints/ Sants, Sadhus and Shrines.

Unit - IV **Contestation over Religion in India :**

Socio-religious Movement; Religious Pluralism, Fundamentalism; Communalism; Secularism; Religion and Globalization.

NOTE FOR PAPER SETTING :

The question paper will consist of three sections **A, B & C.**

Section A will consist of eight long answer type questions, two from each unit with intrenal choice. Each question carries 12 marks. The candidate is required to answer any four questions selecting one from each unit. Total weightage will be of 12 x 4 = 48 marks.

Section B will consist of eight short answer type questions - two from each unit with internal choice. Each question carries 6 marks. The candidate is required to answer any four questions selecting one from each unit. Total weightage will be of 6 x 4 = 24 marks.

Section C will consist of eight objective type questions - one mark each. The candidate to answer the entire eight questions. Total weightage will be of 1 x 8 = 8 marks is required.

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CONTENTS

Sociology of Religion : Meaning and Definition

Structure

1.0 Objective

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

- The meaning of Religion
- Sociology of Religion.
- Theorectical Perspective of Religion.

1.1 Introduction

It is difficult to define religion. The difficulty is because of the fact that there are several religions and there is no single definition on which there is agreement. However, religion is a set of beliefs, symbols, and practices and such as rituals which is based on the ideas of the sacred, and which unites believers into a socio-religious community. The sacred is contrasted with the profane because it involves feelings of awe. Sociologists have defined religion by reference to the sacred rather than to a belief in a God or Gods, because it makes social comparison possible. For example, some versions of

Buddhism do not involved a belief in God. Religion is also contracted with magic because the latter is thought to be individualistic. Connected to religion are invisible religion, new religion and secularization.

Majumdar and Madan (1963) have defined religion in Indian context. They write :

> Then there is religion; it is the human response to the apprehension of some thing or power, which is supernatural and supersensory. It is the expression of the manner or type of adjustment, effected by a people with their conception of the supernatural.

Actually religion had been regarded as product of civilization until Tylor gave convincing proof that primitive societies have their own versions of religious activity, not very different from that of civilized societies. Ever since Tylor's views were published, no ethnographer has ever reported any primitive society without religious beliefs and practices.

1.2 Meaning of Religion

From the etymological point of view, Bouquet has shown, religion is derived from the Latin word *rel* (l) *igio*, which itself is derived from either the root *leg*-, which means 'to gather, count of observe', or from the root *lig*- which means 'to bind'. In the former sense the implication is belief in, and observation of, signs of Divine Communication. In the latter sense the implication is the performance of necessary actions, which may bind together man and the supernatural powers that be. Both the implications are relevant in view of the fact that beliefs and rituals have been found to be the main component parts of religions everywhere.

Beliefs and Rituals. As already stated, all religions consist of a mental attitude regarding the supernatural. The most widespread manifestation of 'this attitude is in the shape of beliefs and rituals, the former often wrongly called myths. What we call myths are believed in by the people to whom they belong, and are therefore better designed as religious belief or beliefs. All religions, primitive and modern, have this base of belief and ritual. Ritual consists in the observance, according to a prescribed manner, of certain actions designed to establish liaison between the performing individual and the supernatural power, or powers. Beliefs are a charter for the rituals, as also a rational-

ensure that the rituals will be observed. What differentiates the so-called higher religions from the primitive variety is the relative absence of philosophical speculation in the later. Primitive man has not been found to be given to philosophizing as much as modern man is. However, the presence of religion of one kind or another has been always reported by investigators; and today Jung has made it an essential feature of human life without which attainment of full integration of the human personality is not possible.

It may, however, be kept in mind that the conception of the exact nature of the supernatural differs from society to society and people to people. For some the supernatural may be constituted of ghosts and spirits; for others it may be an impersonal power which pervades everything in this world; for still others it may be manifested through a pantheon of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses, or a single high God, and so on.

Data collected from numerous primitive societies all over the world reveal that the primitive generally distinguish between two component elements in the supernatural field; there is a sacred part and a profane part. The sacred part, according to Durkheim, consists of, what has been termed, religion, and the profane part as magic or primitive science. Malinowski, however, classified religion and magic as the sacred part and science as the profane part.

1.3 Sociology of Religion

There are several sociologies — sociology of family, political sociology, sociology of tribes, and sociology of religion. In all these sociologies what is important is that in the study of a particular theme the sociological perspectives are studied. In the sociology of politics, political processes are studied with the sociological perspectives; in the economic sociology, production, distribution and exchange are studied from the perspectives of sociology.

Sociology of religion has been established with the output of abandoned research material. The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology defines sociology of religion as :

The scientific study of religious institutions, beliefs and practices had its originsin Marxism and the Neo-Hegelian critiques of religion, but it is primarily associated

with the late nineteenth-century research into religious phenomena by Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, William Robertson Smith, Ernst Troeltsch, and Max Weber. A psychoanalytic theory of religious behaviour was also developed by Sigmund Freud. The sociology of religion should be distinguished from religious sociology, which has been employed by the Roman Catholic Church to improve the effectiveness of its missionary work in industrial societies, but it is related to both the phenomenology and anthropology of religion.

The sociology of religion should be seen as a critique of nineteenth-century positivist theories, which were concerned to explain the origins of religion on rationalist and individualistic assumptions. This posivistic tradition regarded religion as the erroneous beliefs of individuals which would eventually disappear when scientific thought became widely established in society. It was assumed, for example, that Darwinism would undermine the religious belief in a divine creator. Religion was thought to be irrational.

The sociology of religion, by contrast, was concerned with religion as non-rational, collective, and symbolic. It was not interested in the historical origins of religion in 'primitive society.' Religion was not based on erroneous belief, but responded to the human need for meaning. It was not individualistic but social and collective. It was about symbol and ritual rather than belief and knowledge. The growth of scientific knowledge was therefore irrelevant to the social functions of religion. When we talk about sociology of religion we must mention that there are two traditions in the sub-discipline of sociology. One tradition is that of Durkheim and other that of Weber.

Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious life* (1912) is the classical statement of his sociological perspective. He defined religion as 'a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. By 'elementary forms' Durkheim meant the basic structures of religious activity; he rejected as unscientific any inquiry into the primitive origins or religion, concentrating instead on the social functions of religious practices. He rejected also the rationalist critique of belief by focusing on practices

relevant to the sacred. His approach has remained fundamental to a sociological understanding of religion.

The sociology of religion has thus been bound up with the problem of defining religion and distinguishing religion from magic. It has largely abandoned the idea that religion is a collection of beliefs in God. There has been an emphasis instead on practice in relation to the sacred. Alternative perspectives have defined religion as the ultimate concern which all human beings have to address. Many sociologists have subsequently identified the religions with the social.

There are two generally contrasted traditions in the sociology of religion: those of Durkheim and Weber. Whereas Durkheim was interested in the social functions of religion in general, in relation to social integration, Max Weber was primarily concerned with the problem of theodicy (any explanation of the fundamental moral problems of death, suffering, and evil) and the comparative study of the salvation drive. Weber identified two major religious orientations towards the world—mysticism and asceticism—in his *The Sociology of Religion* (1922). He was especially interested in religious attitudes towards economics and eroticism. He argued that inner-worldly asceticism (or the ethic of world mastery) represented the most radical attempt to impose a rational regulation on the world. He explored this then in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905).

Some sociologists have claimed that in modern societies, there has been a profound process of secularization (or religious decline) as a consequence of urbanization, cultural pluralism, and the spread of a scientific understanding of the world. This thesis has also been challenged by sociologists who argue that religion has been transformed rather than undermined.

The sociology of religion was originally at the theoretical core of sociology as a whole, because it was concerned to understand the character of rational action, the importance of symbols, and finally the nature of the social. It has been argued, however, that contemporary sociology of religion has lost this analytical importance, because it has concentrated on narrow empirical issues such as the pattern of recruitment to the Christian ministry.

The comparative study of world's religion which was fundamental to Weber's approach has been neglected.

Bryan Wilson's *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (1982) and Steve Bruce's Religion in Modern Britain (1995) both after an excellent introduction to most of the topics raised in this entry and to the field as a whole. See also Civil Religion, Invisible Religion, Private Religion, Protestant Ethnic Thesis, Religious Innovation, Religious Revival, and Sect.

1.4 Theories of Religion

Anthropological theories of religion have been concerned mainly with examining the content of various conceptions of the supernatural as prevalent in different societies at different times. The earlier anthropologists also tried to trace the evolution of religion from crude into developed forms. Recent theories concentrate on outline the functions of religion.

Animism. The earliest anthropological theory about primitive religion, seeking to trace its origins and explain it, was given by Tylor. He said that although the origin appears to be multiple, yet there is only one idea underlying it, viz, belief in the soul (anima); hence the name animism for this theory.

Tylor's conjectural arguments ran as follows : Primitive man had certain experiences; in his dreams he engaged in various types of activities even while he was sleeping; he met his dead ancestors in dreams and had hallucinatory experiences about them and other beings, while he was aware; he heard the echoes of his own voice; he saw his own reflection in ponds, pools and rivers; and he failed to disentangle himself from his shadow. Even while he was having these un-understandable experiences, something of a much deeper import must also have happened periodically and set the primitive man's mind thinking; people must have died. This catastrophe must have been a great intellectual challenge. What had really happened which had suddenly put an end to a person's actions, verbal and non-verbal? He looked the same, but was not the same. There must have been some unseen thing in him which must have escaped, unseen, making him dead. It was thus that the belief in such an unseen thing,

or power, which kept people alive when it was in them and made them dead when it left their bodies, emerged. Such a thing, or power, is called 'soul.' But how was it that sleeps, so very like death, was not death, and how was it that people had all these various experiences in dreams, and while awake, heard echoes and saw shadow and reflections? Certainly, Tylor says, primitive man must have thought there must be two souls in a human being; a free soul which could go out of him and have experiences, and a body soul which if it left the body resulted in its death. The former may have been associated with and represented by breath and shadow, the latter by blood and head. Primitive man must have come to the conclusion that when the body soul left the body permanently, the person concerned died; and his soul became a ghost or spirit. The soul must have obviously appeared to be immortal because they could dream about people who had been long dead. The uncertainty whether the soul has left the body temporarily or permanently may be a reason for the practice of double funeral, a 'green' one and a 'dry' one, found among some contemporary primitive peoples of India and elsewhere. The first, green funeral, takes place immediately after death and the second, dry funeral, is observed after the lapse of some days when all hopes of the return of the soul are given up; and the second funeral is often the occasion for the more important ceremony, e.g. among the Toda and the Ho. The Ho call it the *jangtopa*; when drums beat, *topam jangtopam*, they celebrate the union of the spirit with the impersonal force which they know as *bonga*. Amogt the Kota the green funeral is called *pasdau* and takes place shortly after actual death has taken place. The second dry funeral called *varldau*, is held some time later and for all those whose demise has taken place since the last dry funeral. The dry funeral symbolizes the complete severance of connexion between the dead and this world, and their entry into the other world.

So, Tylor believed that an attitude of awe and reverence towards these intangible and non-material spiritual beings forms the core of the earliest form of primitive religion. These spiritual beings are not under our control, and have therefore, to be propitiated lest they should do harm, and in order that they may render help. Thus, ancestor worship was the earliest form of worship and tombs the earliest temples. Animism consists of such a belief in the role of spiritual beings in human life; it is a kind of polytheism. Tylor believed that in course of time there was evolutionary development in religious beliefs and forms, and the progress was from polytheism towards monotheism.

It has been complained that Tylor made a philosopher and a rationalist out of primitive man, which he certainly is not, and must never have been. Tylor had no field experience and did not know that primitive man lives an active life and is not given so much to think as his theory postulated. Instead, he observes life and nature and participates in it; he does not rationalize about it. Consequently, other explanations were sought for. But it was not suggested that Tylor's theory was wholly wrong. It over-emphasize done aspect of primitive religion, viz., the belief in soul and spirits. Tylor's evolutionary sequence leading from polytheism to monotheism has, however, found no proof and therefore not many adherents.

Animatism and Manaism. Tylor's earliest critics said that animism is a later development in the history of religion. They postulated a pre-animistic stage when religious belief supposedly consisted mainly in the belief that everything has life and is animate. Prominent among these writers were Preuss and Max Muller. The latter's name is associated with the theory of naturism, given below.

More recently, Marett evolved a special form of *animatist* theory which he called *manaism.* Marett said that the entire religious life of the primitive is born out of their belief in a certain un-understandable, impersonal, non-material and un- individualized supernatural power which takes abode in all the objects, animate and inanimate, that exist in the world. It lies more or less beyond the reach of the senses but is manifested as physical force or such other excellences as man can think of in himself, others and also in objects around him. It may differ in intensity the degree in which it is present on a person or an object, but in essence it is always the same. Such a set of beliefs Marett called *animatism* or *manaism* after the term man used by Melanesians to designate this force. Majumdar's description and analysis of the conception of *bonga* among the Ho (given below) falls in line with Marett's theory of primitive religion. Some North American tribes call this power *orenda*. It is elsewhere known as *aren* and *wakua.*

But even this explanation is open, to some extent, to the main criticism levelled against Tylor, viz., that it invests the primitive with an aptitude for thinking and rationalization which he does not actually possess.

Naturism. Reference has been already made to the German theory of naturism associated with Max Muller. He said that the earliest form of religion must have been the worship of

objects of nature; and evidence in support of such a view has come in from archaeological excavations conducted in Egypt and elsewhere. It is maintained that an attitude of awe or love and reverence towards objects of nature is born as a result of a 'diseased' mind which invests lifeless things with life and all the power that is associated with life. This error of mind is, according to this theory, born out of defective language. Such linguistic errors as the sun rises and sets, or thunder sends rain, or that trees bear flowers and fruit, give rise to belief in some power inherent in the sun, thunder, trees, etc.

So far as it is maintained that objects of nature were worshipped, no difficulty arises; evidence in favour of such a practice is heavy. But any claim to such worship being the earliest form of religion, or the explanation given, is not convincing. There is no proof to show that various conceptions follow linguistic expressions about the same. On the contrary, linguistic expressions may follow certain already existent ideas.

The merit and usefulness of these various theories emerges when they are taken together, as each of them expresses some essential truth regarding primitive religion.

Functional Theories : Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown have given functional explanations of primitive religion. Malinowski points out, with reference to the Trobriand Islanders, that religion is intimately connected with various emotional states, which are states of tension. For example, quite a few of their magical and religious practices centre round the fishing expeditions. These are the outcome of the state of fear which a possible disaster on these as gives rise to. Similarly, hate, greed, anger, love, etc. may arise due to various situations in a man's life. These situations create stress and strain and, if permitted to exist over a long period of time, frustrate all action. A human being has to be acting individual; and normal action is not possible in an emotionally upset state of existence. Religion is made use of such a situation as a tool of adaptation; its purpose is to purge the human mind of its stress and strain, i.e. it is cathartic in its action. In other words, religion has the function of bringing about a readjustment between man and the supernatural in upset states of existence. It is a device to secure mental and psychical stability in an individual's life.

Radcliffe-Brown takes a different stand. The function of religion, he says, is not to purge fear and other emotional strains from the human mind, but to instill a sense of dependence in it. He says that, ultimately, the survival of the group is more important than that of the

individual; and if the latter has to make some sacrifices it is in his own interest to do so, because without social survival individual survival is not possible. However, the individual does not seem to realize this always, and he seeks to chart out an individual course of action. If each individual were to do this there would be utter confusion and chaos and no organized activity would be possible. Adherence to a norm of behaviour is essential in terms of social survival; and also the anticipation of support in the case of socially approved conduct, that brings about this adherence. Therefore, the function of religion is to create a two-fold feeling of dependence on society and thereby obtain the individual's concurrence with the social norms, the ultimate aim being social survival. The function of religion is the contribution it makes to that total activity which is designed to perpetuate society.

Here again we may say, that the truth lies in a conjunction of the views of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. Their viewpoints might appear opposed, but they are not; they have to be taken as complementary. The individual is as important to society as society is to the individual.

Radcliffe-Brown's and Malinowski's sociological explanations are derived, in part, from Durkheim's theory of religion. Durkheim says that religious notions are born and conceived of when we find the social group collecting together for festivals and other social gatherings. Social life on such occasions is at its in tensest, and impresses the human mind which the transcendentalism and omnipotence of the group. It is conceived of as the source of all that man has and all that man is. Religion is the recognition of the superiority, moral and physical, of the collective over the individual.

Durkheim defines religion with regard to the parts of which it is composed. These parts are beliefs and rites; the former constitute 'the static part of religion and the latter the dynamic part. Mere beliefs constitute theology. In religion we have only sacred beliefs; beliefs which refer to gods and deities who are actually symbolic of society. These beliefs are put into practice by the performance of rites. Profane beliefs and practices are not sacred and do not form part of religion; they are magic. They are suggestive of individual arrogance and are antisocial and, therefore, profane.

Assignments

Q. 1 Define religion and give its constituents.

Q. 2 Write a note on beliefs and rituals.

Q. 3 Discuss the theories of religion.

Q. 4 Write an essay on naturalism.

Q. 5 Discuss Malinowsk's functional theory of religion.

Q. 6 Analyse Radcliffe- Brown's functions of religion.

Q. 7 Provide a note on animism.

Q. 8 How would you relate sociology of religion with the positivism of 19th century.

Q. 9 It is argued that religion is non-rational, collective and symbolic. Explain this statement.

Q.10 Analyse religion as a ritual and belief.

1.5 Further Readings

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Magic, Religion and Science

Structure

2.1 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

- Conceptual framework of Religion, Magic & Science.
- Elements of Religion.
- Elements, Theories & Types of Magic.
- Relation between Magic & Science, Magic & Religion.

2.2 Introduction

Religion

Magic and religion are inter-related in the worlds of E.B. Tylor : Religion is the belief in supernatural. The idea of religion is closely related to magic and science.

We have discussed the constituents of religion in preceding lesson. Here we would only reiterate that religion has its several elements. These elements are in one way or the other related to magic. Before we discuss their relationship we would, in short, give the elements of religion.

2.3 Elements of Religion

Social anthropologists, particularly the British ones, have generated voluminous data on primitive religion. The data relate to the primitive and tribal people of India, Africa and Australia. The US anthropologists have, however, shown lesser concern on primitive religion. On the strength of the ethnographic data available we present below in this section some of the elements of religion which also characterized religion of several tribal groups :

Durkheim has described ritual as an important element of religion. Ritual is a practice of religion, or say, the action part of religion. Conceptually, ritual is different from religious phenomena or beliefs. Beliefs are ideas or thoughts and ritual is their implementation. At the empirical plane of any religion, primitive or otherwise, rural cannot be separated from religion. Parsons in Structure of Social Action has explained the relationship of religion and rituals in the following words :

> The fundamental distinction between religion and ritual is that between two categories of religious phenomena—beliefs and rites—the first is a form of thought, the second of action. But the two are in separable, and central to every religion. Without knowing its beliefs the ritual of a religion is incomprehensible. That the two are inseparable does not, however, imply any particular relation of priority, the point is, at present, the distinction. Religious beliefs, then, are beliefs concerning sacred things, their origin, behaviour and significance for man. Rites are actions perform in relation to sacred things.

If a Santhal of Bihar offers a hen to his local deity, it is a ritual in consideration of his belief or thought that the deity has to be appeased to ward off the evils inflicted on the community. Thus, the sacrifice of a hen is ritual and belief in the power of deity is thought. We see that in an empirical situation both belief and ritual work together.

(a) Arousing of Feelings

In order to get consciousness about religion or the existence of belief, some feelings and emotions are also aroused. Fear of God, fear for doing evil things, charity, living a sacred life are all patterns of behaviour which arouse feelings for a religion. Sometimes, however, feelings are also aroused to create terror in the followers.

(b) Beliefs

The edifice of religion stands on the structure of beliefs. The earlier social anthropologists defined religion in terms of beliefs only. Tylor argued that there cannot be any religion without belief. And, what is important about belief is that it cannot be argued; it cannot be empirically proved. It is only a matter of understanding.

In recent anthropological literature, the element of belief in religion is severely criticized. It is said that religion has to be understood in sociological and logical terms. Belief has no existence because it does not stand the test of reality.

(c) Organization

In the early history of religion we have evidence to say that there was some organization to regulate the activities of a particular sect. Max Weber, who is said to be the founder of modern sociology, observed that all the great religions of world—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism—had some kind of organization. The function of organization was to regulate the activities and functioning of the religion. Christianity has its church which works as a central body to keep the Christians together. Likewise, Hinduism has its four *dhamas* where Sankracharyas work as head and regulate the activities of Hindus.

(d) Symbols and Myths

Each religion has its own symbols and myths. For instance, church, temple, mosque, flag and a specific kind of dress and worship are symbols of various religious cults. Similarly, there are mythological stories related to each religion. The tribals who believe in animism have their own totems which are reflected in animals, plants and trees. The origin of the clans is also illustrated by mythological stories.

(e) Taboos

In order to differentiate itself, each religious faith has its own taboos. These taboos are related to food habits and way of living. For instance, Jainism professes that its followers should not take their meals after sunset and that they should be strictly vegetarian. The behaviour patterns of the followers are also determined by religion.

In the above list of the elements of religion, a few more could be added. It must be remembered that these elements undergo change and transformation at the local level. New interpretations are also added to the elements with the functioning of various social and cultural processes. Some new elements also appear.

2.4 Magic

If we make a quick survey of research in sociology and social anthropology, we realize that during the last few decades no empirical study on magic has been made by social anthropologists. Sachchidananda has prepared an elaborate bibliography on rural studies, and to our surprise no study has been conducted on the influence of magic among the Indian tribes. Similarly, the project *Peoples of India* does not mention anything about this. On the other hand, the textbooks on social anthropology invariably carry a chapter on tribal magic. Clearly, there is a wide gap on what we find today and what is given in the textbooks. It is beyond comprehension as to what makes the textbooks writers devote many pages to vivid accounts of tribal magic. Perhaps, the fault does not lie with the textbook writers. The responsibility of including magic rests with the framers of the syllabuses.

Magical practices in India go back to medieval and pre-capitalist society. Magic has a specific role in the evolution of our institutions. Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard and Frazer were evolution lists. It is this evolutionary perspective which led these anthropologists to write about tribal magic. Religion, too, like any other social institution, has evolved through a long process of development. Magic was perhaps the first stage in the evolutionary phase of development of religion. Besides tribals the non-tribal groups who were living in isolation also had firm faith in magic.

The allopathic system of treatment had not come into existence then, and people were perennially becoming victims of varying ailments. They were living in unfriendly

environments. There was scarcity, famines, epidemics, and the people had no other alternatives other than resorting to magic.

Malinowski and Frazer who worked among theatricals reported the role of magic in tribal society in middle of the 19th and 20the centuries. Malinowski's Trobrianders and Evans-Pritchard's Azandes have now taken to modernization. All of them have accepted the modern system of medicine.

In India, the 'civilized' castes also took to magical practices and in some cases, these proved more sophisticated than tribals.' When there was invasion on Somnath temple (Gujarat), the Hindu Rajas invited a group of Brahmins to perform magic so that the invasion could be made ineffective. Even today, we see that when political leaders or elites of high status are in a struggle with death, Brahmins and *tantriks* are called to perform *Mratunjaya Jap*—a clear example of belief in superstitions. The point which we want to emphasize here is that magic was note a specific art practiced only by theatricals. The whole subcontinent believed in magical practices. If Frazer and Malinowski mentioned tribal magic, they were only discussing the tribal situation which was found during the medieval and pre-capitalist periods, not only of India but the whole of Europe.

What is Magic?

It is a term that denotes a special kind of behaviour, not necessarily religious, which follows from the acceptance of beliefs in one or another type of supernaturalism. If people believe in animism, they act so as to get certain things done with the help of the spirit beings 'whom they believe to be present. "If people believe in *mana* or animatisms, they may act in a somewhat different way in order to effect desired ends with the help of the impersonal sort of power they presume can be tapped. They also assume that certain things will happen inevitably because the power has always operated in that way. If people believe in a pantheon of deities, one or another of 'those deities will be propitiated, sacrificed to, vangled in some way in order to bring about other desired ends. However, the essential characteristic of magic is that its procedures tend to be mechanistic and to function automatically if one knows the proper formula." Religion and magic are alternative techniques. Sometimes, one is supplementary to another.

Anthropologists have defined magic on the strength of their experience in the field, though a 'few of the definitions are not directly related to empirical observations. However, we would make an attempt here to define magic in systematic way. Let us begin with John Lewis. He says:

> Magic is the technique of coercion by making use of belief in supernatural power. Sympathetic or imitative magic supposes that an action committed upon something that stands for a person or a thing will have the desired effect upon the actual person or thing.

Malinowski has defined magic in a very precise way as, "Magic is a body of purely practical acts, performed as a means to an end."

According to Herskovits, magic is a substantial part of culture. People often use prayer as a form of worship. A prayer uses words to bring about the favourable intervention of the powers of' the universe in the affairs of men. Magic stand in contrast to prayer. This contrast was for the first time attempted by Evans-Pritchard in the discussion of the magic among the Azandes. Herskovits draws his comprehension of magic from Evans-Pritchard and Frazer. His understanding of magic is explained as below :

> The charm and the spell are widely spread devices employed in magic. A specific power, held to reside in a specific object, is set in operation by the pronouncement of a formula that, of itself, can wield power. The magic charm takes innumerable forms. It most often includes some part of the object over which its power is to be exerted, or some element that, because of outer resemblance or inner character, habitually achieves the desired result.

Though the definitions of religion given by the anthropologists vary in their form and content, the basic idea is more or less the same. The tribals believe that there is one supernatural power. None can contest it. It is universal. This supernatural power is endowed with ample power which is positive (white) and negative (black) both. The person, who wants to obtain expertise in the art of magic, appeases the supernatural power to make it bestow some power on him. The supernatural thus can be obliged to part with some of its power through certain magical performances. These performances vary from society to society.

2.5 Elements of Magic

Magic is 'an art and has to be acquired. The practitioner has to work hard to develop the skills of magic. Some of the important elements of magic are given below:

(1) Tylor has classified 'the practices of magic. These practices are scientific. The practitioner works as a scientist. For instance, Tylor says that things, which appear similar, are put into one category. For example, jaundice bears yellow colour and gold also has the same colour. Magic establishes relationship between these two because of their similar colour. Bohannan does not agree with this theory. He says that in magical practices no logic of association applies.

(2) Magic is individual-oriented. A person perceives a thing in a particular way; this perception works in his magical practices.

(3) According to Malinowski, there is important role of *mantras. Mantras* have the power to imitate the natural voice and, therefore, for successful result of magical practices mantras are important. Second, the magician explains the present situation in this language and orders for the fulfillment of his desires. Third, the *mantras* refer to the name of those ancestors who have imparted the magical skills.

(4) While chanting the *mantras* the magician continuously does some activities; for instance, he moves his hands, makes faces and gestures. These physical activities are believed to strengthen the power of magic.

(5) The magician exercises some restrain in terms of diet and sex relations during the days when he engages himself in magical practices.

(6) Magical practices cannot be done at the discretion of the magician. There are some fixed days which are considered to be suitable for this. For instance, the last day of the dark half of month or *amavasya* is most suitable for learning and doing magic. Again, the days of *Dassehra,* particularly *Navratri*, is good for magical practices.

(7) Malinowski says that discipline is most important in the practice of magic.

The first thing which is required of a magician is to spell out the objectives of magic. He has to perform them with great caution. A little fault could boomerang on the magician himself. It is because of this that the magician lives a pathetic life in his old age.

(8) In accordance with the objectives of magical practices the magician makes physical gestures to empower his magic.

Frazer and Malinowski have observed interesting instances about the magical practices among the tribals of Australia and Africa. Nadel has also referred to magic in his description of Nupe religion. Evans-Pritchard gives elaborate descriptions about magical practices and its elements among the Azandes.

2.6 Theories of Magic

Some anthropologists have developed theories of magic. Tylor has very specifically differentiated magic from religion. He has constructed three basic theories of magic which are as under:

(1) Magic is related to a kind of behaviour which is based on general knowledge.

(2) Whatever is done by nature, can also done by magic. In this situation people do not differentiate between the functioning of nature and magic.

(3) If the magic fails, it is considered due to the faulty chanting of *mantras* or some lapse in the regular life of the practitioner.

Thus, Tylor's theory of magic makes two important points: (i) magic is an ideology, and it has to be relied upon; and (ii) magic is based on logic. If the magical practices were done on these two principles, the results would always be forthcoming. Evan-Pritchard observes that magic and religion are found in all the societies.

In all the societies, there is the influence of magic, science and religion. But the extent of influence is 'not similar. For instance, if a society lives at a lower level of culture such as that of tribals and backward classes, the extent of magic and religion would be larger. The larger members of this society would depend much on magical practices and rituals. However, if the society has a higher-level of culture, there would be lesser space for magic and religion; and more space for science. In other words,

science has a predominant place in advanced societies whereas the backward societies practice more of magic and religion.

Tylor's theory of magic has been improved upon by Frazer. In the literature on social anthropology, Tylor is very well known for his two classical works: Whatever Tylor has propounded in the form of theory in these books has been taken up for discussion and analysis by Frazer. While interpreting Tylor, Frazer gives the theory—the law of sympathy—which says that the tribal people look at material things in terms of sympathy between the two similar things. Sympathy is of two kinds: (i) on the basis of outward similarity, for instance, between the colour of jaundice and the colour of gold; and (ii) based on contact. It is on the basis of these two sympathies that Frazer has given three theories of magic: (1) theory of sympathy, (2) theory of similarity and (3) theory of contact.

Frazer's theory of magic believes that when a tribal practices magic, he does it as he has learnt it, and he has nothing to do with the theories of magic—his concern is with the outcome only. It is because of this that Frazer considers magic to be semi-art and semi-science. Magic has two basic objectives: first through magic certain objectives are achieved, and second, some of the unwanted incidents can be avoided. The first objective is called sorcery and the second taboo.

No doubt, Tylor has given certain fundamentals of magic which are found among the tribals. These fundamentals are further elaborated, reinterpreted and recast by Frazer. The credit of dividing magic into sorcery and taboo is another important contribution substantially to this field. His hypothesis is that magic and religion provide political solidarity to a society. Both Frazer and Durkheim look at magic and religion as sources of political solidarity.

2.7 Types of Magic

Students of social anthropology often distinguish two kinds of magic.The first kind which is named by Frazer is called imitative or homeopathic magic, whereas the second is called contagious. Describing the two kinds of magic Herskotvits writes: Both are held to operate in accordance with a principle of 'like to like' also called a 'principle of

sympathy'. 'Contagious' magic is exemplified when a hunter drinks the blood of his kill to acquire its craftiness or its strength. 'Imitative' magic would, let us say, be found in the performance of a dance in which the simulated killing of an animal was enacted so as to assure success in hunting.

The two kinds of magic as above neither constitute the entire field, nor are they absent from certain practices to which the term 'religious' is customarily given.

Yet another typology of magic is that of 'black' and 'white'. Black magic has some evil intentions. According to it, the victim is inflicted with some injury. The second type, white magic is beneficent in its intent. In social anthropological literature much emphasis is placed on black magic. "The reason for this is two-fold. There is the challenge to the investigator to uncover what his informants are least willing to divulge. More than this though is the dramatic appeal of black magic for the people themselves. Once a willingness to talk about it is established, informants will dwell on the subject with relish and exuberant detail, leaving 'white' magic as something taken for granted."

The horror shows which are presented with different names on television depict several of the practices of black magic. If revenge has to be taken, a magician makes a clay image of the victim and gives it all kinds of pains. These pains, in turn, are experienced by the victim. We have innumerable instances of magic reported from different parts of the world. However, the instances of white magic are very few. This category of magic is also extended to include much of native medicine. Surprisingly, there is prevalence of white and black magic among the literate peoples too. However, the increase in literacy and education, many of the magical practices are going out of vogue.

Witchcraft

Disease and hardships are common to mankind. To overcome these bodily ailments or social crises people have an inventory of remedies. Premises for the secular practice of medicine, unencumbered by supernaturalism re, therefore, found among all societies. Such knowledge, which of course was empirical and not analyzed in a scientific fashion, was usually available to and utilized by all the people. There were however, innumerable afflictions which people in primitive societies supposed were caused by

factors of anon-material kind. The treatment of such ailments required magical procedures, such as returning a poisonous power injected by an evil *shaman* or magic man into his victim. Individuals who had acquired or inherited or purchased supernatural power and procedures based thereon were asked to help persons supposed to be ill from these non-material causes.

In all societies shamans were only part-time workers engaged in curing people or at some ceremonies for which their power also fitted them. The practice of medicine among the people in primitive societies is thus everywhere characterized by a few actually useful devices and drugs, but incorrect theories as to causation of more deadly ailments and by resort to the supernatural for treatment of the latter.

Each society has its specialists who treat the diseases by their skills. These are called witch doctor, *shaman, ozha* or *bhopa*. The *shamans* or *ozhas* are those who have the power to detect witches and cure a bewitched person. They profess to be able to look into the future, escape harm, transform themselves and accomplish superhuman tasks.

Evans-Pritchard, who has worked among the Azandes of the southern Sudan during 1926-36, has given elaborate information about witchcraft and oracles. In Azande tribe, any misfortune can be, and generally is, attributed to witchcraft. Azandes consider it to be real. The witch dispatches what he calls the soul, or spirit, of his witchcraft to cause damage to others. The sufferer consults oracles or a diviner to discover who is injuring him. This may be quite a lengthy and complicated procedure. When the culprit is revealed, he is requested to withdraw his malign influence. If in a case of sickness, he does not do so and the person dies, the kinsmen of the dead man could, in future, take the affair to the chief and exact vengeance, or they could make, as they do today, a counter magic to destroy the witch.

Among Indian tribals too the practice of witchcraft is found. A witch can injure anyone by a psychic act and gradually bring about his death. This power arises from a certain substance in the body of the witch. Witchcraft can explain all unfortunate events. It plays its part is fishing, agricultural pursuits, in the demotic life of the village as well as in communal life. Thus witchcraft plays a prominent role in the total life of

the tribal community. If for instance, the maize crop is diseased, it is attributed to witchcraft. If the milch cow dries, it is due to witchcraft.

The occurrence of witchcraft is explained by various causes. Though there is natural causation, but whey did the accident happen just when it did and to that particular man? A man is injured by a bullock. Why this man? And why this bullock? Witchcraft is a causative factor in the production of harmful phenomena in particular places at particular times, and in relation to particular persons. If a tree falls and kills a man, that is natural but why did it fall jut as he was passing.

An oracle is consulted to determine whether some individual is bewitching another individual. One of the most popular kinds of oracle is the poison oracle. Fowls are taken into the bush and a small amount of poison is administered to them. If the fowl lives, the man is adjudged to be a witch. The witch doctors are not those magicians who cure the ailments. There are other kinds of specialists who counteract magic. The witch doctor is a diviner who exposes witches and a magician who thwarts them. He also acts as a leech, or doctor.

2.8 Magic and Science

Tylor was the first who discussed magic as a science. The question that plagued him and aroused his curiosity was that when scientifically religion has no basis, why do tribals practice it? The question was valid and begged an answer. Tylor noticed that the tribals themselves knew that magic was not true even then it had a vital place in their life. He contemplated to answer the question:

(1) Magic is related to the commonsense behaviour.

(2) What magic does is actually done by nature also.

(3) Even when the magic fails to perform a certain action, there is no fault with it; there must have been something wrong in the practice of magic.

(4) If magic inflicts some injury, there is always counter magic.

(5) The success stories of magic outweigh its failures.

Tylor argues that the development of magic in a systematic way takes the form of science. The crux of his argument is that magic runs on the principles of nature. Nature is run by positivistic laws, so it is also a science.

Frazer does not accept magic as a pure science. However, he does admit that magic is a semi-science. According to him, magic takes place on the basis of certain logic and rules. Ordinary people do not understand that magic is practiced on rules which are similar to science. People only see its applied aspect. They do not think about the principles which guide the magical performances. For a magician, magic is only an art even he does not understand that these are principles which are solely based on science. In theory magic is based on abstract laws.

Malinowski has worked among the people of the Trobriand islands. He has generated a rich stock of data though he has notarized the question of scientific nature of magic. He takes a functional perspective and says that magic exists in society; people practice it because it has certain functions to be fulfilled. However, he accepts that the methods of magic and science, if not same, are truly similar. Both magic and science work on the logic of cause and effect.

Evans-Pritchard fell in the same line of thinking as Tylor and Frazer. Despite their different approaches all the three agree on the following hypotheses :(1)
There is some supernatural power. This power has two faces. Its one face is benevolent and provides salvation to men. The second face of it is ugly and harmful. Science explores the benevolent face while magic the ugly face. Science and magic are the two aspects of supernatural power.

(2) Ruth Benedict argues that magic is not science. The findings of science are verifiable, whereas the findings of magic are beyond any verification.

(3) There are constant experiments in science. It has made tremendous progress during the last several centuries; instead of registering any progress, magic is increasingly becoming oblivious. Less and less people show their belief in magic.

(4) The basis of science is pure logic whereas the major premise of magic is faulty.

2.9 Magic and Religion

What is the relationship between magic and religion? The distinction comes with more ore less personified beings, but most religious rites contain examples of magical symbolism, and a good deal of magic includes reference to spirits. In fact, it is not really possible to distinguish clearly between magic and religion.

There is a fundamental differentiation in religion and magic. First, the rituals of a religion are public and collective. They affect the people as a whole, absorbing all its energies for the period of magico-religious activity. This gathering together of large numbers of people for sowing, harvest feasts and similar celebrations unites the whole community in a mood of happiness and harmony. It gives solemn and collective expression to the social sentiments of an organized community, on which the constitution of a society depends.

The magico-religions rites are not for any celebration but for averting or dislodging the visiting evil. The magical practices relating to hunting have certain rites, which help in the easy killing of the animal. Sometimes, the entire hunting performance is done in a ritualistic dance, wearing some part of the animal's skin. It clearly shows that magic is related to religion. There are field reports from Malinowski and Leach which establish that magic is used for successful attainment of goals. For instance, Malinowski reports that when a fisherman sails on the currents of the sea, he applies magic and believes that his boat would not meet any tragedy. The Trobrinders also practise magic to win the heart of their beloved. Durkheim, who is the founder of the sociology of religion, does not see any difference in religion and magic. For him, both the practices are meant to attain certain objectives.

Assignments

Q. 1 Explain Tylor's definition of religion/

Q. 2 What are the elements of religion?

Q. 3 Define magic as has been done by John Lewis.

Q. 4 Describe fully the elements of magic.

Q. 5 Analyse some of the theories of magic.

Q. 6 What are the types of magic? Enumerate these.

Q. 7 Write a note on witchcraft.

Q. 8. Discuss the relationship of magic and religion.

Q. 9 Analyse Tylor's views on magic as a science.

Q.10 How magic is related to science.

2.10 Further Readings

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UNIT - I **LESSON No. 3**

Some Aspects of Religion: Sacred, Profane, Church, Cult and Sect, Priests, Shamans.

Structure

3.1 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

- Durkheim's religious Ideas.
- About Sacred & Profane.
- About Church & Cult.
- Priests
- Shamans

3.2 Introduction

Durkheim is said to be the father of sociology of religion. He argues that religion has certain elements and these elements are determined by the society. For him, religion is objective, it is a reality. He further says that religion is not the product of individual. It is the child of society. When we discuss sacred, profane, church and cult, we would refer to Durkheim and say that these aspects are created by the society. In other words, the things which are sacred for society are sacred in religion; the things which are profane for society are profane for individual. The things which are held in respect

are sacred for the Hindus. These are offered to gods and goddesses. The profane has use valued, the cycle, the engine, the factory have use value for society. They are utilitarian. Thus Durkheim describes all the things of the world into sacred and profane.

3.3 Durkheim's Religious Ideas

Theoretically there are two different though intertwined elements in the *Formes elementaires,* a theory of religion and an epistemology. The theory of religion will be dealt with first, as it forms the indispensable connecting link between what has gone before and the epistemology.

There are two basic distinctions from which Durkheim departs. The first is that of sacred and profane. It is a classification of things into two categories, for the most part concrete things, often though by no means always material things. The two classes are not distinguished, however, in terms of any intrinsic properties of the things themselves, but in terms of human attitudes towards them. Sacred things are things set apart by a peculiar attitude of respect which is expressed in various ways. They are thought of as imbued with peculiar virtues as having special powers; contract with them is either particularly advantageous or particularly dangerous, or both. Above all man's relations to sacred things are not taken as an ordinary matter of course, but always as a matter of special attitudes, special respect, and special precautions. To anticipate a result of the later analysis, sacred things are distinguished by the fact that men do not treat them in a utilitarian manner, do not as a matter of course use them as means to the ends to which by virtue of their intrinsic properties they are adapted, but set them apart from these other profane things. As Durkheim says, the profane activity par excellence is economic activity. The attitude of calculation of utility is the antithesis of the respect for sacred objects. From the utilitarian point of view what is more natural than that the Australian should kill and eat his totem animal? But since it is a sacred object, this is precisely what he cannot do. If he does eat it, it is only on ceremonial occasions, entirely set apart from workaday want satisfaction. Thus sacred things, precisely in excluding this utilitarian relationship, are hedged about with taboos and restrictions of all sorts. Religion has to do with sacred things.

The second fundamental distinction is that between two categories of religious phenomena—beliefs and rites. The first is a form of thought, the second of action. But the two are inseparable, and central to every religion.

Without knowing its beliefs the ritual of a religion is incomprehensible. That the two are inseparable does not, however, imply any particular relation of priority—the point at present is the distinction. Religious beliefs, then, are beliefs concerning sacred things, their origin, behaviour and significance for man. Rites are actions performed in relation to sacred things. A religion for Durkheim is an 'integrated (*solidaire)* system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is separate and taboo, which unite in one moral community called a church all those who adhere to it." The last criterion is one which will be dealt with later, as the process by which it has been arrived at cannot be understood without a further analysis of the other criteria.

Actually Durkheim has given the concepts of sacred and profane in his book *The Elementary Forms of the Religions Life*, first published in 1912. This is perhaps the influential interpretation of religion from a functionalist perspective. According to him all societies divide the world into two categories: The sacred and the profane. Sometimes profane is also called non-sacred. Religion is based upon this division. Durkheim writes:

> Religion is based upon this division. It is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and forbidden.

In the Elementary Forms of Religious Life Durkheim has defined the concept as sacred as below:

> By sacred things one must not understand simply those personal things which are called gods or spirits, a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a world anything can be sacred.

Actually for Durkheim there is nothing about the particular qualities o a pebble or a tree that makes them sacred. Therefore, sacred things must by symbols, they must represent something, to understand the role of religion in society, and the relationship between sacred symbols and what they represent must be established.

3.4 Church, Cult and Sect

It was Max Weber who initiated to devise categories for the analysis of religious organization. It is important to note that these categories were devise specifically in the context of Christianity. Their applicability for the analysis of other religious traditions is problematic.

Max Weber has discussed the dichotomy between church and sect in The Protestant Ethnic and Spirit of Capitalism. While making differences in church and sects Weber writes:

> The basic difference between a church, which was 'a sort of trust foundation for supernatural ends, an institution, necessarily including both the just and the unjust…' and the 'believer's church, which saw itself 'solely as a community of personal believers of the reborn, and only these. In other words, note as a church but as a sect.' Since this distinction was made in a discussion of the Baptists, Mennonites and Quakers it is clear that Weber attached crucial importance to the membership principle as a key characteristics of sects, and he emphasized the sectarian provision that 'only adults who have personally gained their own faith should be baptized.' Much of the later debate about sect development has centered on this feature; and some of the other characteristics that Weber attributed to sects in contrast to churches have also been employed in subsequent research. The observation, for example, that separation from the State characterizes some churches as well as sects, and cannot thus be termed a distinguishing characteristics of sects, and cannot thus be termed a distinguishing characteristic of sects, seems closely allied to the approach of a number of later sociologists. Similarly, the shared though differently interpreted concept of extra *ecclesiam nulla salus* held by both the church and the sect, which Weber indicated, has been effectively adopted by David Martin in order to contrast the denomination, which has a somewhat less exclusive ethos. The separation from the world which Weber noted in sectarian groups has likewise been given amore extensive analysis in the work of Bryan Wilson.

Sect

Sect is a part of wider religion. As in Buddhism there are two sects *Hinyan* and *Mahayan* and in Hindu religion there is *Shaivism, Shakt* and *Vaishnava*. So there are different sects in Christianity.

Weber noted that within each self-governing congregation of a sect an extraordinarily strict moral discipline was practiced in maintaining the purity of the whole community. This would seem to be equivalent to Wilson's contention that sects have a totalitarian hold over their members, but Weber was concerned to draw a parallel with a different type of religious organization. Having pointed out that the discipline of an ascertcist sect is far more rigorous than that of any church, he continues: 'In this respect, the sect resembles another sectarian characteristic, which is not typical of churches, and the dominance of the lay element in a sect contrasts strongly with the professional ministry of a church—this emphasis is related to the different definition of charisma put forward by each organization. The requirement that sect members should practice brotherliness in their dealings with each other is similarly a logical extension of the observation that every sect is based on the primacy of a local community committed believers.

Cult

Anthropologists have worked on the concept of cult. A cult is a set of practices and beliefs of a group, in relation to a local go. In sociology, it is a small group of religious activities, whose beliefs are typically synergetic, esoteric, and individualistic. Although it is related to the concept of a sect, the cult is not in Western society associated with mainstream Christianity. As a scientific term, it is often difficult to dissociate the idea of a cult from its commonsense pejorative significance and it does not have a precise scientific meaning. Cultic practices appear to satisfy the needs of alienated sections of urban, middle-class youth. Cultic membership among young people is typically transitory. Spasmodic, and irregular. Research societies, cults have proliferated in the post-war period, and are often associated with the counter-culture.

Steve Bruce has mentioned about 'mysticism' as a tradition within Christianity in addition to the church and sect. Bruce describes it in this way :

> Unlike the other forms this (cult) was a highly individualistic expression, varying with personal experiences and interpretation.
>
> To Bruce, this corresponds to the idea of a cult, which is:
>
> Loosely knit group organized around some common themes and interests but lacking any sharply defined and exclusive belief system.

A cult tends to be more individualistic than other organized forms of religion. Because it lacks a fixed doctrine. Cults tolerate other beliefs and indeed their own beliefs are often so vague that they have no conception of heresy. Cults often have customers rather than members and these customers may have relatively little involvement with any organizations. Ones they have learnt the rudiments of the beliefs around which the cult is based.

3.5 The Concept of the Priest/Priesthood

In most common parlance. the priest is a religious functionary whose role is to administer an established religion - to celebrate the traditional rituals, practices, and beliefs. Two essential features characterize him, namely regular cult, and inherence in a religious institution. Weber explains that "It is more correct for our purpose in order to do justice to the diverse and mixed manifestations of this phenomenon. to set up as the crucial feature of the priesthood the specialization of a particular group of persons in the continuous operation of a cultic enterprise, permanently associated with particular norms, places and times. and related to specific social groups. The first feature implies that, "The main function of the priest ... is cultic... Worship, as the very expression of religious experience, however primitive or rudimentary its form may be, is the main concern of the priest. He guarantees the right performance of formalized acts of worship." The priest mediates between God and humans; he not only interprets the divine will but also regulates and strengthens the relation between God and his fellow human beings. The basis of his existence and authority is a continuous and regular communion with the Divine. "For the priesthood regular ritual (liturgical) observance and a fixed theology are essential. Weber reiterates that there can be no priesthood without a cult, although there may well be a cult without a specialized priesthood because a rationalization of metaphysical views and a specifically religious ethic are missing in the case of a cult without priests.

The second essential characteristic of the priest is his linkage with an organized religion, and legitimation by religious authorities. An extended, cross-cultural description of the priest is, "any religious specialist acting ritually for or on behalf of a community. The priest inheres in a religious organization as a representative of that establishment, and his actions mediate between its traditions and the people. Differing from other related role types, "the priest serves the altar, in the temple or shrine, as the representative of the community in his relations with the gods and the sacred order by virtue of the status and its

functions that have been conferred upon him at his ordination, bestowing its sacredness and attendant taboos. Bendix interprets Weber, and reiterates that the priest serves in a holy tradition, and "even when the priest possesses a personal charisma, his function is legitimate only by virtue of a regular organization of worship." About the Levitical priests of Judaism, Brown points out that even "if a man was born into the priestly tribe, he still had to be installed in the priestly office." Often ttle priest is the official representative of a religion. Greenwood, while affirming that the priest is called to be a witness, says, 'The priest is required personally to be the representative of all the other members of the Jocal church within which she (the priest) presides to the wider community. "

Preparation and education play an important role in priesthood. The systematic training of priests is intended to help them to develop the faculties and abilities required for the performance of cults. It centres in the development and maintenance of the pmper communion with the numen, from which the mana or 'sanctity' of the priests results. While ascetic practices are to bring body and will under the necessary control, meditation and prayer are destined to prepare the soul, and instruction and study to train the mind. History of the development of religions evidences that great systems of knowledge and schools of learning of various disciplines have emerged in association with centres of the training of priests. The rational training and discipline of priests is distinguished from the combination of partly "awakening education" using irrational means and aimed at rebirth, and partly training in purely empirical lores of magicians.

The Priest and Related Role Types

The identity of the priest may be better comprehended by differentiating it from other related role types. The priest is distinct from the shaman. The term shaman comes from Siberian Tungus noun saman which signifies "one who is excited, moved, raised." As a verb it means "to know in an ecstatic manner." Shaman is a man with "a high degree of nervous excitability" (frequently an epileptic). He is the charismatic61 figure par excellence - one who actually displays the presence of the sacred while in a state of ecstatic trance. Waston LaBarre writes, "the real difference between shaman and priest is who and where the god is, inside or out."

The Priest is not the magician. The Magician in present-day society is one who

makes visible things disappear, or invisible things appear as a means of entertainment. But that has not been the case always. According to Wach, magic connotes forcing the numen to grant what is desired, while religion, with which priests are associated, means submission to and worship of the divine power upon which man feels dependent. Magician's authority is proportionate to his fulfilment of the expectations of his clients. His prestige is less firmly established and more dependent upon his professional 'success' than that of the prophet. On the one hand Weber observes that in many religions, including Christianity, the concept of the priest includes a magical qualification. But on the other hand, he concurs with Wach in asserting that the priest is a functionary of a regularly organized and permanent enterprise concerned with influencing the gods by means of worship, in contrast with the individual and occasional efforts of magicians who coerce gods by magical means. While the priest operates in the mterests of his organization, the magician is self-employed. Moreover, the professional equipment of special knowledge, fixed doctrine, and vocational qualifications of the priest bring him in contrast with sorcerers, prophets and other types of religious functionaries who exert influence by virtue of personal gifts (charisma) made manifest in miracle and revelation.

The priest is distinct from the prophet. The prophet is someone who confronts the powers that be and the established ways of doing things, claiming to be taken seriously on religious authority. Weber finds that "the personal call is the decisive element that distinguishes the prophet from the priest. The latter lays claim to authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition, while the prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma. It is no accident that almost no prophets have emerged from the priestly class... The priest, in clear contrast dispenses salvation by virtue of his office. Emphasising the distinctness of prophetic call, Wach opines, "The consciousness of being the organ, the instrument, or mouthpiece of the divine will is characteristic of the self-interpretation of the proprlet." Furthermore, Weber distinguishes between two types of prophets: exemplary prophets who point out the path to salvation by exemplary living, usually by a contemplative and apathetic-ecstatic life, and the emissary prophets who address their demands to the world in the name of a god. Naturally these demands are ethical, and often of an active ascetic character. Vernon observes that prophets usually appear during periods of unrest, when the established value systems are being challenged. They find little welcome at peaceful times.

According to Nisbet, the prophet and the magician have certain common features, namely, secret powers and assumption of importance in times of collective crisis or personal difficulty. But they do differ.

But whereas the central function of the prophet is that of interpretation of the sacred tradition and of gaining access to the deity in ways denied the bulk of populace, the central function of the magician is that of effecting exceptions to the natural order... The magician's role is that of the doer - but what he does is reserved for times of crisis and for activities which are affected by risk or uncertainty of outcome. His role is the outcome of special knowledge that he holds to himself and to his legitimate descendants. knowledge that he holds to himself and to his legitimate descendants.

It is not viable either to make categorical distinctions among these role types, or even to grade them in ways universally acceptable to all religions. At any rate, Wach detects the uniqueness of priesthood in the comprehensive nature of the activities of priests. "The institution of the priesthood is inferior to the great types of personal religious charisma, but the priestly is the most comprehensive of all specifically religious activities in the history of man. The sociological implication and import of this activity is accordingly very far-reaching.

A healthy, or at times even unhealthy, competition is noted in certain religious traditions among these role types. This may occur between two persons belonging to different role types, for instance, the priest and the prophet, or it may even be within one person, challenged with a role-set or multiple roles. In Buddhism tension has existed between holy men (monks), given to cultivation of wisdom, mental concentration and ethical virtue, and priestly ritual specialists. The Sanskrit and Pall terms, Bhiksu and Bhikku, meaning beggar or mendicant, do not connote a priestly role as such. Weber speaks of a similar problem bE!tween monasticism and hierocratic charisma in Christianity. "... the inherent tensions emerge, the more genuine monasticism is independent of institutional charisma because its own charisma is immediate to God." The combination of three role types - the priest, the king and the prophet - in the role type of the Christian priest today seems to leave room for a similar conflict.

The Evolution of Priesthood

It is not easy to ascertain exactly the evolution of the role of priests in different

religions, a chief difficulty being cross-cultural use of the terms the priest and priesthood. Often terms with European meanings and linguistic derivations have been applied to a range of phenomena worldwide. Besides, the division of labour that existed among the priestly class in early societies is not sufficiently dear to us. However, a glance at the history of religions rather easily brings home to us certain similar features and stages in the process of the evolution of priesthood.

The Journey From the Natural Priesthood to the Professional Priesthood in Religions

Priesthood is said to owe its origin to the universal need of mediation of superhuman assistance, felt by humankind in the struggle of life. In its evolution we note two phases, namely the phase of the natural priesthood and the phase of the professional or regular priesthood. There are indications to affirm that originally everyone invoked the gods each for oneself. In the early times, worship was confined to the deified members of the kindred, and later to those of tribes. Then the heads of families or tribes most spontaneously performed the worship was confined to the deified members of the kindred, and later to those of tribes. Then the heads of families or tribes most spontaneously performed the priestly role because they as the oldest and most experienced members of the family stood closest to the ancestors When powers of nature also began to be worshipped and the group of worshippers extended beyond a family, the regular priesthood was initiated. As everyone is not equally proficient in mediation, the expertise of professionals, supposed to possess greater knowledge and power is sought to secure better results. But to a very great extent both the forms stayed intermingled. Gradually those proficient in interpreting the wIshes of gods and practising magical arts won the confidence of people and attained a certain pre-eminence, and formed a special class. Among some peoples certain classes who had unmistakable priestly affinities - those who, when in a state of ecstasy, are believed to be inspired by the gods, those ministering in famous shrines or sanctuaries, those who work miracles - were the forerunners of a regular priesthood. When rituals lost their simplicity, professional priesthood became even more necessary.

Priestly functions are exercised among identical groups by their heads or leaders; such as the father in the family, the chieftain in the clan or tribe, the king in the nation or

people. With the growing development and differentiation of social organizations and stratification, ceriain cultic functions of the leader are associated with special individuals or professionat groups, and as a result, professional magicians, diviners, and even prophets emerge in the more highly differentiated "primitive" societies.

[These functions are referred to as semi-priestly.] With the increasing complexity of cultural and sociological condItions, professional differentiation tak.es place, and a professional priesthood appears.

The history of several religions testifies to an evolution of priesthood from the natural to the regular or professional. In the case of Hinduism, for example, Dr. Radhakrishnan maintains that,

The original Aryans all belonged to one class, every one being priest and soldier', trader and tiller of the soil. There was no privileged order of priests. The complexity of life led to a division of classes among tile Aryans. Though to start with each man could offer sacrifices to gods without anybody's mediation, priesthood and ,aristocracy separated themselves from the proletariat... When sacrifices assume an important role, when the increasing complexity of life rendered necessary division of life, certain families, distinguished for learning wisdom, poetic and speculative gifts, became representatives in worship under the title of Purohita, or one set in front. In view of their great function of conserving the tradition of the Aryans, this class was freed from the necessity of the struggle for existence... The Brahmins are not a priesthood pledged to support fixed doctrines, but an intellectual aristocracy charged with the moulding of the higher life of the people.

It is pertinent to remark here that priests and cults had not been a sine qua hon in all religions at all times. In the case of early Buddhism, for instance, the possibility of cultic priesthood was very remote. "Buddhism had no order or ritual of sacrifice to require the services of an officiating priest, with expert knowledge of the modes and significance of the rites.In fact Buddhist scriptures do mention instances wherein the Buddha himself ridiculed ritualistic practices of Brahmin priests. But already during its early history in China, when confronted by the strong cultic traits of Confucianism, Buddhism adopted cultic practices. HInduism speaks of the Teacher -Brahmin, the Priest-Brahmin, and the Superman-Brahman.

Professional priesthood exists in two forms, namely the hereditary and the vocational. According to the former, priesthood is the privilege of a particular family or tribal lineage. The Jewish Levitical priesthood, the Hindu Brahmanical priesthood and Zoroastrian priesthood are a few examples. Vocational priesthood recruits candidates from the pool of its promising young members, on the basis of devotional, intellectual and moral qualities. Professional priests distinguish themselves by special costumes, long hair, separate language and some· ascetIc regulations such as sexual control and fasting. Along with institutionalization, elements such as initiation rites and training assumed' importance. While in the past most religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity have reserved priesthood to male members, recent trends in certain sections of religious membership such as the Anglican Church have been found to advocate women priesthood. While many religions in their history have been found to move to and from priestly celibacy for various reasons, the Latin Rite of Roman Catholicism is one of the strongest in its favour in contemporary times.

As history evolves, in the great world religions, the representatives of the priesthood are organized into a highly complex structure in which a more or less differentiated order of groups corresponds to the priestly hierarchy with its various activities. At the start the divisions were on simpler grounds such as the natural group (clan, tribe, people), the local group (village, town, district), and the political group (nation). later, priests are connected with the formation of specifically religious organizations, temporally integrated by the personal charisma of the priestly leader alone, or organized as institutional units like the parish.

The Sacred Versus the Secular Powers

According to the nature of the governance of a country, Weber identifies three types of relation between the secular and the sacred powers in the history of the world. While in the first type, a ruler is legitimated by the priests, in the second the high priest is also the king, and in the third, the secular ruler exercises supreme authority in sacred matters too. Thus while some countries had kings who were also priests, some others had priests who were also kings. Even in Islam that, unlike most other religions, does not have a class of priests or clergy, In the strict sense of the term, we find that there was a time when the roles of

Imam (the leader of the prayers in the worship rites In mosques) and ruler of the place were assigned to the same individual.

When a governor was appointed to a province, he was also appointed as Imam to lead the prayers, and this practice continued for a long time. In fact, the honour of leading the prayers (imamat) in Islam was great as the honour of kingship, and the two offices, the office of the spiritual leader and that of the temporal leader were combined in one person for a long time. As the ruler himself was the Imam at the centre, so were his governors the tmams in the different provincial headquarters. The priest and the presentday mullah had no place in early Islam.

According to Weber, in hierocratic domination, priestly power seeks ascendancy at the cost of the political power. Often the latter is presented as an inevitable evil, permitted by God due to the sinfulness of the world, and which believers should resign to but refrain from. At times it is projected even as a God-given tool for the subjection of anti-ecclesiastic forces. "In practice, therefore, hierocracy seeks to turn the political ruler into a vassal and to deprive her/him of independent means of power ..." Meanwhile, hierocracy makes every attempt to protect itself: an autonomous administrative apparatus, a tax system (tithes), legal forms (endowments) for the protection of ecclesiastic landholdings, bureaucratization of administr'ation, and development of office charisma at the cost of personal charisma.

In Weber's mind, the extreme opposite of any kind of hierocracy is Caesaro-papism - the complete subordination of the priestly to the secular powers. Herein religious aff,3irs are but a branch of political administration. The political rulers fulfill these obligations either directly or with the assistance of the state-maintained priestly professionals. Caesaro-papism is nowhere found in its purest form As a rule priestly charisma compromises with the secular power either tacitly or even through a concordat. On the whole, the general picture of the relationship between the two, as portrayed by Weber is one of a cold war.

"Everywhere state and society have been greatly influenced by the struggle between military and temple nobility, between royal and priestly following. This struggle did not always lead to an open conflict, but it produced distinctive features and differences..."

According to Aberbach, even though there are important differences between the sacred and the secular, history of religion testifies to a close parallel between the two: while even in its secular forms, charisma has a religious dimenSion, traditional religious charisma is rarely devoid of political and other significance. "Political charisma draws on the language, the spirit and even the ideological conviction of religion. Charismatic religious leadership is no less infused with politics. The devotees of religious charismatics are inspired not only by their message but also by their political skill and military success." The major religions of the ancient world were all official State religions. Many of the great political charismatics were born into families at least nominally religious, were educated in religious schools, and had their outstanding qualities associated with religious leadership: Washington's personal humility, Garibaldi's asceticism, Robespierre's propensity for solitude and meditation. He concludes that, "the many parallels between religious and political charisma mean that in practice the two are often indistinguishable." The linkage between charismatic political leaders and figures of religious authority - priest and prophet, saviour and messiah - though varying in intensity, is little surprising. R Robertson notes the two simultaneous processes of quite drastic politicization of religion during the past fifteen years, and the 'religionization' of government which denotes the involvement of the modern state in 'deep' issues of human life, and the ways in which the state-organized society has become, in varying degrees, an object of veneration and 'deep' identification.

It is challenging to note here that in the evolution of most, if not all, religions, priesthood wassElldom always confined to cultic activities. Priests perform many other functions: directly or indirectly related to cuttic functions. He is the guardian of traditions and the keeper of the sacred knowledge and of the technique of meditation and prayer. He is the custodian of the holy law, corresponding to the cosmic moral and ritual order. As an interpreter of this law, the priest may function as judge, administrator, teacher, and scholar, and formulate standards and rules of conduct. Since he performs the sacred rites, he contributes towards the development of sacred song, writing, literature, music, dance, sacred painting, sculpture and architecture. As the guardian of tradition, the priest is also Ule wise man, the adviser, educator, and philosopher. In the extent of the performance of these multifarious functions, there exists difference among religions according to their stage of evolution from primitive civilizations to the highly developed ritualistic religions.

The Babylonian priests had much to do with the interpretation not only of moral

and religious law, but also with many of the civil enactments. It was the duty of some of them to receive the tithes, and to certify that they had been paid. It is said of the Shinto priests that they "not only serve in the performance of formal shrine rituals but also bear responsibility for such administrative tasks as the upkeep and management of shrine facilities and finances... (After the Second World War), great expectations are placed on them as well for activities in thH areas of social welfare and education." Among the Indo-Aryan-speaking invaders of Northwestern India in the middle and late second millennium BCE. the priestly social class was "responsible not only for a wide range of cultic functions but also for the composition and preservation of the sacred traditions of oral poetry." The Rigveda mentions the purohita (the domestic priest of the king or of some wealthy noble) who was not only in the constant and intimate service of the king, but was closely concerned with the king in his more worldly functions. The ethic of compassion (karuna) was the

fundamental motivating force of Buddhism. So the Buddhist monks have traditionally filled the role of spiritual advisers and teachers of the laity. Now it is not uncommon to find sangha social services in Theravada countries like Thailand and Sri Lanka/

In Judaism, besides cultic functions, priests had oracular functions, therapeutic functions, instructional and juridical functions, and administrative and political functions In fact, history testifies that during the period of the Second Temple, when Judaea and Jerusalem were under the domination of foreign empires, the priesthood of Jerusalem played an important political role, the pr1ests serving also as leaders of Jewish communities.97 In Islam there is properly no caste, class, or profession which monopolizes the performance of religious rites. when these were at first performed in public, the leader was properly the chief of the community, and name imam" 'leader in prayer' is therefore used for 'sovereign,' 'chief authority,' and the like. The sovereign of the capital took the lead in prayer.

On account of the direct and immediate contact that priests have with those who depend on him for mediation of the divine, priests come to exert tremendous influence on them. Not only in hierarchically graded ecclesiastical bodies but also in religious groups of more or less egalitarian bodies, the religious leader may become implicitly trusted, rightly revered, and indispensable guides of their followers. From originally a primarily religious influence, the influence extends to moral, social, cultural; and political spheres.

The history of religions has sufficient evidence to show that a degeneration of priests and priesthood has been part and parcel of almost all religious traditions at one time or other. Scholars of Indian thought have observed the shift from the simple offerings of the early Vedic times to the complicated and ritual-ridden sacrifices of the Brahmana period. Persuasion of gods give way to compelling of gods while the sacrifice was exalted even above the gods. Introducing a distinctly magical element into the rituals, "priest and prayer henceforward become transformed into magician and spell." Speaking of Nambutiris who were the temple priests in Kerala, Thulaseedharan says that it was remunerative services that attracted them. They lived in exuberant comfort and luxury. Though they were to be guardians of the ethics of society, they did nothing of that sort. "On the contrary, they were eager only to drink life's sweet honey to the lees, not leaving even a drop to the lower castes." Some historians detect a similar state of affairs among Christian priests during the time preceding the Protestant Reformation. The practice of simony, corruption, sale of indulgences and craving for money were marks of the age.

Nevertheless, priests have often been throughout history regarded as the official go between the sacred and th eprofane. "Throughout the long and varied history of religion, the priesthood has been the official institution that has mediated and maintained a state of equilibrium between the sacred and the profance aspects of human society and that has exercised a stabilising influence on social structure and on cultic organization." But the various administrative duties derived from the cultic activities of priests. Therefore, the less the communion with the numen expressed in formalized cult, the closer he is to a magician. "As long as the mediation of the priest is desired to secure material or ideal advantages (do ut des), religion is still close to magic, but a higher stage is reached where it becomes the function of the priest to thank and to adore in his own and other's name."

3.6 Shamans

There is currently unprecedented interest, excitement and confusion aboutshamanism. Shamanic literature, rituals and workshopsare proliferating and have spawned a veritable cottage industry. Genuinely shamanically trained anthropolo gists such as Michael Harner and highly controversial figures suchas Lynn Andrews, "the shaman of Beverly Hills" (Clifton, 1989),are offering shamanism workshops. Given that only a few years ago there was concern that shamanism would soon be extinct, it

is clear that the tradition, or at least its contemporary Western version, is doing rather well.

What is not so clear is what exactly a shaman is. In fact, on this controversial - point there is remarkable controversy. On the one hand the views shaman has been called "mentally deranged" and "an outrightof psychotic" (Devereaux, 1961)p "veritable idio (Wissler, 1931), the a charlatan, epileptic and, perhaps most often (Kakar, 1982; shaman Noli, 1983)an hysteric or schizophrenic.

On the other hand an opposite but equally extreme view seems to be emerging in the popular literature. Here shamanic states are being identified with those of Buddhism, Yoga or Christian mysticism. Thus, for example, Holger Kalweit (1988, p. 236)

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shamans and shamanism as unique phenomena

claims that the shaman "experiences existential unity-the samadhiof the Hindus or what Western spiritualists and mystics call enlightenment, illuminatiorlfnio mystica, "Like alike wis are accessing the same state of consciousness."

Unfortunately there seem to be serious deficiencies with these comparisons which appear to be based on gross similarities rather than careful phenomenological comparisons (Walsh, 1990). Space does not allow presenting such analyses here. Suffice it to say when careful phenomenological comparisons are made, then it becomes apparent that shamanic experiences differ significantly from those of traditional categories of mental illness or those of mystics from other traditions (Noli, 1983;Walsh 1990).

So, contrary to much popular and professional thinking we cannot simply define (or productively discuss) shamans and shamanism in terms of either diagnostic categories or other mystical traditions. Rather we need to consider and define them as unique

phenomena. Clearly an adequate definition might do much to help reduce the enormous confusion con cerning the nature of shamanism.

DEFINITION

The term itself comes from the wormmanof the Tungus people of Siberia, meaning "one who is excited, moved, raised." It may be derived from an ancient Indian word meaning "to heat oneself or practice austerities" (Slacker, 1986)or from a Tungus verb meaning know" (Hultkrantz, 1973). But whatever its derivation the term shaman has been widelyadopted by anthropologists to refer to specificgroups of religious healers in diverse cultures who have sometimes been called medicine men, witch doctors, sorcerers, wizards, magi cians or seers. However,these terms do not adequately define thespecific subgroup of healers who fit more stringent defini tions of shaman such as the one to be used here. The meaning and significance of this definition, and of shamanism itself, will become clearer if we examine the way in which our definitions and understanding of shamanism have evolved over time.

Early anthropologists were particularly struck by the shamans' unique interactions with "spirits." Many in the tribe might claim to revere, see, or even be possessed by spirits. However, only the shamans claimed to have some degree of control over them and to be able to command, commune and intercede with them for the benefit of the tribe. Thus Shirokogoroff (1935, p. 269),' one of the earliest explorers of the Siberian Tungus people, stated that:

In all Tungus languages this term (saman) refers to persons of both sexes who have mastered spirits, who at their will call introduce these spirits into themselves and use their power over the spirits in their own interests, particularly helping other people, who suffer from the spirits; in such a capacity they may possessraplex of special methods for dealing withhespirits.

But whereas early explorers were most impressed by the shamans' interactions with spirits, later researchers have been impressed by the shamans' control of their own states of consciousness in which these interactions occur (Dobkin, de Rios & Winkleman, 1989; Noli, 1983; Petersl,981 ;Peters& shamanism Price-Williams, 1980, 1983)As Western culture has become as more interested in altered states of consciousness (ASC), so todirst resewchers have

become interested in the use of altered statetradition in religious practices (Tart, 1983a, b), and it appears that the to use first tradition to use such states was shamanism. Contemporary altered definitions of shamanism have therefore focussed on the use of states such states(Harner, 1982; Noli, 1983; Pete & Price-Williams, 1980).

The origin of Shamas

However, there are many, many possible states of consciousness(Shapiro & Walsh, 1984;Walsh & Vaughan, 1980;Wilber, 1977, 1980), and the question therefore naturally arises as to which ones are peculiar to, and defining of, shamanism. There are broad and narrow definitions in the broad definition the "only defining attribute is that the specialist enter into a controlled ASC on behalf of his community" (Petes Price Williams, 1980,p. 408), Such specialists would include, for example, mediums who enter a trance and then claim to speak for spiritst should he noted at this point that the use of the term"spirits" hereisnot meant to necessarily imply that there exist separate entities that control or communicate with people. Rather the term is simply being used to describe the way in which shamans and mediums interpret their experience.

So a broad definition of shamanism would include any practi tioners who enter controlled altered states of consciousness no matter which particular states these may be. Narrow definitions on the other hand specify the altered staters) Quite precisely as ecstatic states. Indeed, for Mircea Eliade (1964 one of the greatest religious scholars of the 20th century, "A first defini tion of this complex phenomenon, and perhaps the least hazardous, will be: shamanism technique of ecstasy." Here ecstasy infers not much blissbut more sense, asthe Random House dictionary defines it of being taken or moved out of one's self or one's normal state and entering a state of intensified or heightened feeling." This definition of ecstasy as "being taken out of one's self or one's normal state" is, as we will see, particularly appropriate for shamanism.

The distinctive feature ofthe shamanic ecstasy is the experience of "soul flight" or "journeying" or "out-of-body experience" (Eliade,1964; Harner, 1982). That is, in theiecstaticstate shamans experience themselves, or their soul/spirit, flying through space and traveling to either other worlds or distant parts of this world. In other words "the shaman specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his

body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld" (Eliade, 1964, p. 5). These flights reflect the shamanic cosmology which comprises a three-tiered universe of upper, middle, and lower worlds, the middle one corresponding to our earth. The shaman ranges throughout this threefold world system tender to learn, obtain power, or to diagnose and treat those who come for help and healing. During these journeys shamans may experience themselves exploring other worlds, meeting other worldly people, animals or spirits, seeing the cause and cure of apatient's illness, or interceding with friendly or demonic forces.

So far, then, we have three key features of shamanism to include in any definition. The first is that shamans can volun tarily enter altered states of consciousness. The second is that in these states they experience themselves leaving their bodies and journeying to other realms in a manner analogous to contem porary reports of some out-of-body experiences (Monroe, 1971; Irwin, 1985) or lucid dreams (LaBerge, 1985). Third, they use these journeys as a means for acquiring knowledge or power and helping people in their community.

Interaction with spirits is also frequently mentioned in defini tions of shamanism. In addition, Michael Harner, an anthro pologist who may have more personal experience of sharnanic practices than any other Westerner. suggests that a key element of shamanic practices may be "contact with an ordinarily hidden reality" (Harner, 1982, p. 25). Thus he definesa shaman as "a man or woman who enters an altered state of conscious nessatwill to contact and utilize an ordinarily hidden reality in order to acquire knowledge, power, and to help other persons" (Harner, 1982, p.25).

Should these two additional elements, "contacting a hidden reality," and "communication with spirits," be included as essential elements of a definition of shamanism? Here we are on tricky philosophical ground. Certainly this is what shamans experience and believe they are doing. However it is an enormous philosophical leap to assume that this is what they are actually doing. The precise nature (or in philosophical terms the ontological status) of both the realms which shamans experience themselves traversing and the entities they meet is an open question. To the shaman they are interpreted as independently and fully "real"; to a Westerner with no beliefi n other realms or entities they would likely be interpreted as subjective mind creations.

It may, in fact even be impossible to decide this question. Technically speaking we may have here an example of ontolo gical indeterminacy due to the under-determination of theory by observation. Speaking more simply, this is the inability to determine a phenomenon's ontological status because the observations allow multiple theoretical interpretations. The result is that one's interpretation of such indeterminate pheno mena (in this case of the nature of hidden reality" and "spirits") depends largely on one's own philosophical leanings or worldview. We are therefore on safer grounds defining shamanism if we skirt these questions of philosophical inter pretation as much as possible.

In summary, shamanism might be defined as a family of a traditions whose practitioners focus on voluntarily entering summarizing altered states of consciousness in which they experience definition themselves, or their spirit(s), traveling to other realms at will of and interacting with other entities in order to serve their shamanism community.

ORIGINS

Whatever its origin, shamanism has been widely distributed throughout the world. It is found today in areas as widespread as Siberia, North and South America, and Australia and it is believed to have existed in most parts of the world at one time or other. The remarkable similarities among shamans from widely dispersed areas of the world raise the question of how these similarities developed. One possibility is that they emergedspontaneouslyn different locations perhaps because of a common innate human tendency or recurrent social need. The other is that they resulted from migration and diffusion from common ancestors.

If migration is the answer then that migration must have begun long ago. Shamanism occurs among tribes with so many different languages that diffusion from a common ancestor must have begun at least 20,000 years ago (Winkleman, 1984).

This long time period makes it difficult to explain why shamanic practices would remain so stable for so long in so many cultures while language and social practices changed so drastically. These difficulties make it seem unlikely that migration alone can account for the long history and far flung distribution of

shamanism.

It follows that if the worldwide, history-long distribution of shamanism cannot be attributed to diffusion from a single invention in prehistoric times, thent must have been rediscovered discovered and rediscovered in diverse times and cultures. This suggests that some recurring combination of social forces and innate abilities must have repeatedly elicited and maintained shamanic roles, rituals and states of consciousness.

shamanism rediscovered diverse times and cultures

Certainly there seems to be evidence of some innate human tendency to enter specific altered states. Studies of different meditative traditions suggest that an innate tendency to access altered states can be very precise. For example, for two and a half thousand years Buddhists have described accessing precisely eight highly specific and distinct states of extreme concentration. These concentrated states, that jhanas, are extremely subtle, stable, and blissful and have been very precisely described for millennia (Buddhaghosa, 1923; Gole man, 1988). Today a few Western meditators are beginning to access them and I have been fortunate to interview three of these people. In each case their experiences tallied remarkably well with ancient accounts. Clearly then there seems to be some innate tendency in the human mind to settle into certain specific states ifi t is given the right conditions or practices.

The same principle may hold for shamanic states. Observations of Westerners in shamanic workshops suggest that most people are readily able to enter shamanic states to some degree. These states can also be induced by a wide variety of conditions which suggest that there may be some inherent tendency for the mind to adopt them. The conditions which induce them can include such natural occurrences as isolation, fatigue, -mic sound, or ingestion of hallucinogens (Winkleman, 1984; Walsh, 1989, 1990).Thus they would likely be rediscovered by different generations and cultures. Since the states may be pleasurable, meaningful and healing they would likely then be actively sought after and the methods for inducing them remembered and transmitted across generations.

Distribution due to innate tendency and diffusion

Thus shamanism and its widespread distribution may reflectan innate human

tendency to enter certain pleasurable and valuable states of consciousness. Once discovered, then rituals and beliefs which support the induction and expression of the states would likely also arise and shamanism would emerge once again. This natural tendency might be supported and amplified by communication between cultures. For example, shamanism in Northern Asia appears to have been modified by the importation of yogic practices from India (Eliade, 1964). Thus the global distribution of shamanism may be due to both innate tendency and diffusion ofi nformation. The end result is that this ancient tradition has spread across the earth and has survived for perhaps tens of thousands of years, a period which represents a significant proportion of this time that fully developed human beings (modern Homo sapiens) have been on the planet.

Given that shamanism has endured so long and spread so widely the question naturally arises as to why it occurs in some cultures and not in others. Answers are beginning to emerge from cross-cultural research. One notable study examined 47 societies spanning almost 4000 years from 1750i.e., the Babylonians, to the present century (Winkleman, 1984, 1989). is interesting to note that, prior to Western influence, all of these 47 cultures used altered states of consciousness as a basis for religious and healing practices. However although shaman ic practices were found in most regions of the world they occurred only in particular types of societies. These were primarily simple nomadic hunting and gathering societies. These peoples relied very little on agriculture and had almost no social classes or political organization. Within these tribes the shaman played many roles, both sacred and mundane: medicine man, healer, ritualist, keeper of the cultural myths, medium, and master of spirits. With their many roles and the power vacuum offered by a classless society shamans exerted a major influence on their tribe and people.

However, as societies evolve and become more complex, it appears that this situation changes dramatically. In fact, as societies become sedentary rather than nomadic, agricultural rather than foraging, and socially and politically stratified rather than classless, then shamanism as such seems to disappear (Winkleman, 1984, 1989). In its place appear a variety of specialists who focus on one of the shaman's many roles. Thus instead of shamans we find healers, priests, mediumsand sorcerers/witches. These specialize respectively in medical, ritual, spirit possession, and malevolent magic practices. An obvious contemporary Western parallel is the disappearance of the old medical general practitioner or G.P. and the appearance of diverse specialists.

It is interesting to compare some of these ancient specialists with the shaman G.P,"who preceded them. Priests emerge as representatives of organized religion and are often religious, moral, and even political leaders. They are the leaders of social rites and rituals and on behalf of their society they pray to and propitiate the spiritual forces. However, unlike their shamanic ancestors they usually have little training or experience in altered states.(Hoppal, 1984).

Whereas the priests inherit the socially beneficial religious and magical roles of the shaman, the sorcerers witdhesinherit the malevolent ones. Shamans were often ambivalent figures for their people, revered for their healing and helping powers, feared for their malevolent magic (Rogers, 1982)Sorcerers and witches, at least as they are defined in Winkleman's (1984) and other anthropological studies, are the specialists in malevolent magic and as such they tend to be feared, hated, and persecuted.

3.7 Question for reference

Q. 1 Describe fully the concept of sacred as given by Durkheim.

Q. 2 Who determines the objects of sacred?

Q. 3 Differentiate sacred and profane.

Q. 4 Discuss Durkheim's theory of religion.

Q. 5 What is church? Describe the role of church in Christianity.

Q. 6 Discuss Weber's concept of sect.

Q. 7 What is cult?

Q. 8 What are the major aspects of religion?

Q. 9 From where did Durkheim develop sacred and profane?

Q.10 Discuss the relevance of sacred and profane in contemporary world.

3.8 Further Readings

1. Haralombus, M. 1980; Sociology - Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press.
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Origin of Religion (Evolutionary)

Structure

4.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

– Evolution of Religion

– Various Theories of Religion

4.1 Introduction

In the nineteenth century the sociology of religion was concerned with two main questions. 'How did religion begin?' and 'How did religion evolve?' This evolutionary approach was influenced by Darwin's *On the Origin of Species,* published in 1859. Just as Darwin attempted to explain the origin and evolution of species, so sociologists tried to explain the origin and evolution of social institutions and society. In terms of religion, two main theories, animism and naturism, were advanced to account for its origin.

4.2 Theory of Animism, Naturism

Animism means the belief in spirits. Edward B. Tylor believes this to be the earliest form of religion. He argues that animism derives from man's attempts to answer two questions, 'What is it that makes the difference between a living body and a dead

one?' and 'What are those human shapes which appear in dreams and visions?' To make sense of these events, early philosophers invented the idea of the soul. The soul is a spirit being which leaves the body temporarily during dreams and visions, and permanently at death. Once invented, the idea of spirits was applied not simply to man, but also to many aspects of the natural and social environment.Thus animals were invested with a spirit, as were man-made objects such as the bullroarer of the Australian aborigines. Tylor argues that religion, in the form of animism, originated to satisfy man's intellectual nature, to meet his need to make sense of death, dreams and visions.

Naturism means the belief that the forces of nature have supernatural power. F. Max Muller believes this to be the earliest form of religion. He argues that naturism arose from man's experience of nature, in particular the effect of nature upon man's emotions. Nature contains surprise, terror, marvels and miracles, such as volcanoes, thunder and lightning. Awed by the power and wonder of nature, early man transformed abstract forces into personal agents. Man personified nature. The force of the wind became the spirit of the wind, the power of the sun became the spirit of the sun. Where animism seeks the origin of religion in man's intellectual needs, naturism seeks it in his emotional needs. Naturism is man's response to the effect of the power and wonder of nature upon his emotions.

From the origin of religion, nineteenth-century sociologists turned to its evolution. Several schemes were developed, Tylor's being one example. Tylor believed that human society evolved through five major stages, beginning with the simple hunting and gathering band, and ending with the complex nation state. In the same way, religion evolved through five stages, corresponding to the evolution of society. Animism, the belief of multitude of spirits, formed the religion of the simplest societies, monotheism, the belief in one supreme god, formed the religion of the most complex. Tylor believed that each stage in the evolution of religion arose from preceding ones and that the religion of modern man, 'is in great measure only explicable as a developed product of an older and ruder system'.

There are many criticisms of the evolutionary approach. The origin of religion is lost in the past. The first indication of a possible belief in the supernatural dates from about 60,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence revels that Neanderthal man in the Near East buried his dead with flowers, stone tools and jewellery. However, theories

about the origin of religion can only be based on speculation and intelligent guesswork. Evolutionists such as Tylor and Muller came up with plausible reasons for why certain beliefs were held by members of particular societies but this does not necessarily explain why those beliefs originated in the first place. Nor can it be argued that all religions necessarily originated in the same way. In addition, the neat, precise stages for the evolution of religion do not fit the facts. As Andrew Lang points out, many of the simplest societies have religions based on monotheism, which Tylor claimed was limited to modern societies.

4.3 Further Readings

1. Haralombus, M. 1980; Sociology - Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press.
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3. Macionis J. J. 1997; Sociology, Prentice Hill, Inc.
4. Schaeffer, R. T. & Lamm, R. P. 1992; Sociology, McGraw Hill Inc

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Durkheim and Sociological Functionalism

Structure

5.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this lesson is to equip you with :

- Origion of Religion
- Views of Durkheim
- Malinowki's Perspective on Origion of Religion
- Max Weber & Religion

5.2 Introduction

It was during 18th and 19th centuries that it was a belief in the field of religion that religion is the result of civilization. In other words, religion only emerged from civilization.

Such an understanding about religion was denied by the anthropological findings of Malinowski, E.B. Tylor, and others. They reported that the primitive tribes had definite ideas about the origin of religion. Their approach was functional. In fact, the origin or religion is explained by two perspectives. One is functional and second is dialectical, that is, Marxist. The religion which originated from tribals says that when the Trobriand islanders went for fishing in the sea they were confronted with several unforeseen hazards. This motivated the tribals to express their belief to magic and super natural. Because there was need for religion their emerged religion. In this lesson we will discuss the origin of religion from the perspective of functionalism. It is here also that we will examine the evolution of religion from the perspective of Durkheim and Max Weber.

5.3 Origin of Religion: The Views of Durkheim

18th century was the century of evolutionary theory. Not only Durkheim and Max Weber Karl Marx also contributed to the theory of evolution.

The functionalist perspective examines religion in terms of society's needs. Functionalist analysis is primarily concerned with the contribution religion makes to meeting these needs. From this perspective, society requires a certain degree of social solidarity, value consensus, and harmony and integration between its parts. The function of religion is the contribution it makes to meet such functional prerequisites—for example, its contribution to social solidarity.

5.4 The sacred and the profane

In *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, first published in 1912, Emile Durkheim presented what is probably the most influential interpretation of religion from a functionalist perspective (Durkheim, 1961).

Durkheim argued that all societies divide the world into two categories: the sacred and the profane (the non-sacred). Religion is based upon this division. It is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is, to say things set apart and forbidden. It is important to realize that:

> By sacred thing one must not understand simply those personal things which are called gods or spirits; a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word anything can be sacred.

There is nothing about the particular qualities of a pebble or a tree that makes them sacred. Therefore sacred things must be symbols, they must represent something. To understand the role of religion in society, the relationship between sacred symbols and what they represent must be established.

5.5 Totemism

Durkheim used the religion of various groups of Australian aboriginals to develop his argument. He saw their religion, which he called totemism, as the simplest and most basic form of religion.

Aboriginal society is divided into several clans. A clan is like a large extended family with its members sharing certain duties and obligations. For example, clans have a rule of exogamy—that is, members are not allowed to marry within the clan. Clan members have a duty to aid and assist each other: they join together to mourn the death of one of their number and to revenge a member who has been wronged by someone from another clan.

Each clan has a totem, usually an animal or a plant. This totem is then represented by drawings made on wood or stone. These drawings are called churingas. Usually churingas are at least as sacred as the species which they represent and sometimes more so. The totem is a symbol. It is the emblem of the clan. It is its flag; it is the sign by which each clan distinguishes itself from all others. However the totem is more than the churinga which represents it —it is the most sacred object in aborigine ritual. The totem is 'The outward and visible form of the totemic principle or god.'

Durkheim argued that if the totem is at once the symbol of god and of the society, is that not because the god and the society are only one?"

Thus he suggested that in worshipping god, people are in fact worshipping society. Society is the real object of religious veneration.

How does humanity come to worship society? Sacred things are considered superior in dignity and power to profane things and particularly to man.' In relation to the sacred, humans are inferior and dependent. This relationship between humanity and sacred things is exactly the relationship between humanity and society. Society is more

important and powerful than the individual. Durkheim argued that Primitive man comes to view society as something sacred because he is utterly dependent on it.

But why does humanity not simply worship society itself? Why does it invent a sacred symbol like a totem? Because Durkheim argued, it is easier for a person to 'visualize and direct his feelings of awe toward a symbol than towards so complex a thing as a clan.'

5.6 Religion and the 'collective conscience'

Durkheim believed that social life is impossible without the shared values and moral beliefs that form the collegiate conscience. In their absence, there would be no social order, social control, and social solidarity or cooperation. In short, there would be no society. Religion reinforces the collective conscience. The worship of society strengthens the values and the moral beliefs that form the basis of social life. By defining them as sacred, religion provides them with greater power to direct human action.

This attitude of respect towards the sacred is the same attitude applied to social duties and obligations. In worshipping society, people are, in effect, recognizing the importance of the social group and their dependence upon it. In this way religion strengthens the unity of the group: it promotes social solidarity.

Durkheim emphasized the importance of collective worship. The social group comes together in religious rituals full of drama and reverence. Together, its members express their faith in common values and beliefs. In this highly charged atmosphere of collective worship, the integration of society is strengthened. Members of society express communicate and understand the moral bonds which unite them.

According to Durkheim, the belief in gods or spirits, which usually provide the focus for religious ceremonies, originated from belief in the ancestral spirits of dread relatives. The worship of gods is really the worship of ancestors' souls. Since Durkheim also believed that souls represent the presence of social values, the collective conscience is present in individuals. It is through individual souls that the collective conscience is realized. Since religious worship involves the worship of souls. Durkheim again concludes that religious worship is really the worship of the social group or society.

Criticism of Durkheim

Durkheim has explained the origin of religion from the tribals. The tribals taken by him were of a typical of other tribals. Most sociologists believe that Durkheim has overstated his case. While agreeing that religion is important for promoting social solidarity and reinforcing social values, they would not support his view that religion is the worship of society. Durkheim's views on religion are more relevant to small, on-literate societies, where there is a close integration of culture and social institutions, where work, leisure, education and family life tend to merge and where members share a common belief and value system. His views are less relevant to modern societies, which have many subcultures social and ethnic groups, specialized organizations and arrange of religious beliefs, practices and institutions. As Malcolm Hamilton puts it, the emergence of religious pluralism and diversity within a society is, of course, something that Durkheim's theory has great difficulty dealing with (Hamilton, 1995).

Durkheim may also overstate the degree to which the collective conscience permeates and shapes the behaviour of individuals. Indeed, sometimes-religious beliefs can be at odds with and override societal values. Malcolm Hamilton makes this point strongly:

> The fact that our moral sense might make us go against the majority, the society, or authority shows that we are not quite so dependent upon or creatures of society as Durkheim claims. Society, powerful as it is, does not have the primacy, it Durkheim believes it has. Ironically, it often seems to be the case that religious beliefs can have a much greater influence upon and hold over the individual than society does since it is often out of religious convections that individuals will fly in the face of society or attempt to withdraw from it, as in the case of many sectarian movements.

5.7 Malinowski's Perspective on Origin of Religion

Like Durkheim, Malinowski uses data from small-scale non-literate societies to develop his thesis on religion. Many of his examples are drawn from his fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands off the coast of New Guinea. Like Durkheim, Malinowski sees religion as reinforcing social norms and values and promoting social solidarity.

Unlike Durkheim, however, he does not see religion as reflecting society as a whole, nor does he see religious ritual as the worship of society itself. Malinowski identifies specific areas of social life with which religion is concerned, and to which it is addressed. These are situations of emotional stress that threaten social solidarity.

Religion and life crises

Anxiety and tension tend to disrupt social life. Situations that produce these emotions include crises of life such as birth, puberty, marriage and death. Malinowski notes that in all societies these life crises are surrounded with religious ritual. He sees death as the most disruptive these events and argues that:

> The existence of strong personal attachments and the fact of death, which of all human events is the most upsetting and disorganizing to man's calculations, are perhaps the main sources of religious beliefs.

Religion deals with the problem of death in the following manner. A funeral ceremony expresses the belief ion immortality which denies the fact of death and so comforts the bereaved. Other mourners support the bereaved by their presence at the ceremony. This comfort and support check the emotions which death produces and control the stress and anxiety that might disrupt society. Death is socially destructive since it removes a member from society. At a funeral ceremony the social group units to support the bereaved. This expression of social solidarity reintegrates society.

5.8 Religion, prediction and control

A second category of events—undertakings that cannot be fully controlled or predicted by practical means—also produces tension and anxiety. From his observations in the Trobriand Islands, Malinowski noted that such events were surrounded by ritual.

Fishing is an important subsistence practice in the Trobriands. Malinowski observed that in the calm waters of the lagoon 'fishing is done in an easy and absolutely reliable manner by the method of poisoning, yielding abundant results without danger and uncertainty.' However, beyond the barrier reef in the open sea there is danger and uncertainty: a storm may result in loss of life and the catch is dependent on the presence of a shoal of fish, which cannot be predicted. In the lagoon, where man can rely

completely on his knowledge and skill; there are no rituals associated with fishing whereas fishing in the open sea is preceded by rituals to ensure a good catch and protect the fishermen. Although Malinowski refers to these rituals as magic, others argue that it is reasonable to regard them as religious practices.

Again we see ritual used for specific situations that produce anxiety. Rituals reduce anxiety by providing confidence and a feeling of control. As with funeral ceremonies, fishing rituals are social events. The group unites to deal with situations of stress, and so the unity of the group is strengthened.

Therefore we can summarize by saying that Malinowski's distinctive contribution to the sociology of religion is his argument that religion promotes social solidarity by dealing with situations of emotional stress that threaten the stability of society.

5.9 Criticisms of Malinowski

Malinowski has been criticized for exaggerating the importance of religious rituals in helping people to cope with situations of stress and uncertainty. Tambiah (1990, discussed in Hamilton, 1995) points out, for example, that magic and elaborate rituals are associat3e with the cultivation of taro and yams on the Trobriand Islands. This is related to the fact that taro and yams are important because men must use them to make payments to their sisters' husbands. Men who fail to do so show that they are unable to fulfill significant social obligations. These rituals are therefore simply related to the maintenance of prestige in that society and have little to do with cementing solidarity or dealing with uncertainty and danger. A particular function or effect that religion sometimes has, has been mistaken for a feature of religion in general.

Weber and Phenomenology

Structure

6.1 Max Weber and Religion

Max Weber is a great theoretician in the field of religion. He was an evolutionary functionalist. His book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958) is very important. As a matter of fact Weber has contributed in a major way on the development of religion. Admittedly, Marxist and functionalist both have contributed immensely on the function of religion. What distinguishes Weber from Marxist is that the former has established that ideas can also change the world. It was denial of Marxist's thesis. In this part of the lesson we will discuss the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

Both functionalists and Marxists emphasize the role of religion in promoting social integration and impeding social change. In contrast, Weber (1958,first published in English 1930) argued that in some circumstances religion can lead to social change, although shared religious beliefs might integrate a social group, those same beliefs may have repercussions which in the long term can produce changes in society.

Max is generally regarded as a materialist. He believed that the material world (and particularly people's involvement with nature as they worked to secure their own

survival) shaped their beliefs. Thus to Marx, the economic system largely determined the beliefs that were held by individuals. In Marxist terms the mode of production determined the type of religion that would be dominant in any society.

Unlike Marx, Weber rejected the view that religion is always shaped by economic factors. He did not deny that, at certain times and in certain places, religion may be largely shaped by economic forces, but he denied that this is always the case. Under certain conditions the reverse can occur, that is, religious beliefs can be a major influence on economic behaviour.

Weber's social action theory argues that human action is directed by meanings and motives. From this perspective, action 'can only be understood by appreciating the world view—the image or picture of the world held by members of society. From their worldview, individuals obtain meanings purposes and motives that direct their actions. Religion is often an important component of a world view. In certain places and times, religious meaning and purposes can direct action in a wide range of context. In particular, religious beliefs can direct economic action.

6.2 Capitalism and ascetic Protestantism

In his most famous book, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1958), Weber examines the relationship between the rise of certain forms of Protestantism and the development of Western industrial capitalism. In the first part of his argument Weber tries to demonstrate that a particular form of Protestantism, ascetic Calvinist Protestantism, preceded the development of capitalism. He also tries to show that capitalism developed initially in areas where this religion was influential. Other areas of the world possessed many of the necessary prerequisites yet they were not amongst the first areas to develop capitalism. For example, India and China had technological knowledge, labour to be hired, and individuals engaged in making money. What they lacked according to Weber was a religion that encouraged and facilitated the development of capitalism. The first capitalist nations emerged among the countries of Western Europe and North America that had Calvinist religious groups. Furthermore, most of the earliest capitalist entrepreneurs in these areas came from the ranks of Calvinists.

Having established a relationship —a correlation between Calvinism and capitalism—by comparing religion and economic development indifferent parts of the

world. Weber goes on to explain how and why this type of religion was linked to capitalism.

Calvinist Protestantism originated in the beliefs of John Calvin in the seventeenth century. Calvin thought that there was a distinct group of the elect—those chosen to go to heaven—and that they had been chosen by God even before they were born. Those who were not among the elect could never gain a place in heaven however well they behaved on earth.

Other versions of Christianity derived from the beliefs of Martin Luther. Luther believed that individual Christians could affect their chances of reaching heavenly the way that they behaved on earth. It was very important for Christians to develop faith in God, and to act out God's will on earth. In order to do this they had to be dedicated to their calling in life. Whatever position in society God had given them, they must conscientiously carryout the appropriate duties.

At first sight, Lutheranism seems the doctrine more likely to produce capitalism. However, it encouraged people to produce or earn no more than was necessary for their material needs. It attached more importune to piety and faith than to the accumulation of great wealth.

The doctrine of predestination advocated by Calvin seems less likely to produce capitalism. If certain individuals were destined for heaven regardless of their earthly behaviour—and the rest were equally unable to overcome their damnation—there would be little point in hard work on earth.

Weber points out, though, that Calvinists had a psychological problem: they did not know whether they were amongst the elect. They suffered from a kind of inner loneliness or uncertainty about their status, and their behaviour was not an attempt to earn a place in heaven, but rather to convince them that they had been chosen to go there. They reasoned that only the chosen people of God would be able to live a good life on earth. If their behaviour was exemplary they could feel confident that they would go to heaven after death.

Therefore, the interpretation that the Calvinists put on the doctrine of predestination contributed to them becoming the first capitalists.

The Protestant Ethic

The Protestant ethic which Weber describes (and which enabled Calvinists to convince themselves that they were amongst the elect) developed first in seventeenth-century Western Europe. The ethic was ascetic, encouraging abstinence from life's pleasures, an austere lifestyle and rigorous self-discipline. It produced individuals who worked hard in their careers or callings, in a single-minded manner. Making money was a concrete indication of success in one's calling, and success in one's calling meant that the individual had not lost grace in God's sight. John Wesley, a leader of the great Methodist revival that preceded the expansion of English industry at the close of the 18th century, wrote:

> For religion must necessarily produce industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. We must exhort all Christians to gain what they can and to save all they can; that is, kin effect to grow rich.

These riches could not be spent on luxuries, fine clothes, lavish houses and frivolous entertainment but in the glory of God. In effect, this meant being even more successful in terms of one's calling, which in practice meant reinvesting profits in the business.

The Protestants attacked time wasting, laziness, idle gossip and more sleep than was necessary—six to eight hours a day at the most. They frowned on sexual pleasures; sexual intercourse should remain within marriage and then only for the procreation of children (a vegetable diet and cold baths were sometimes recommended to remove temptation). Sport and recreation were accepted only for improving fitness and health and condemned if pursued for entertainment. The impulsive fun and enjoyment of the pub, dance hall, theatre and gaming house were prohibited to ascetic Protestants. In fact, anything that might divert or distract people from their calling was condemned. Living life in terms of these guidelines was an indication that the individual had not lost grace and favour in the sight of God.

The spirit of capitalism

Weber claimed that the origins of the spirit of capitalism were to be found in the ethic of ascetic Protestantism. Throughout history there has been no shortage of those who sought money and profit: pirates, prostitutes and moneylenders in every corner of the world had always pursued wealth. However, according to Weber, both

the manner and purpose of their pursuit of money were at odds with the spirit of capitalism.

Traditionally, money seekers engaged in speculative projects: they gambled in order to gain rewards. If successful they tender to spend money frivolously on personal consumption. Furthermore, they were not dedicated to making money for its own sake. Weber argued that labourers who had earned enough for their family to live comfortably, and merchants who had secured the luxuries they desired, would feel no need to push themselves harder to make more money. Instead, they sought free time for leisure.

The ascetic Protestant had a quite different attitude to wealth, and Weber believed that this attitude was characteristic of capitalism. He argued that the essence of capitalism is the pursuit of profit and forever renewed profit.

Capitalist enterprises are organized on national bureaucratic lines. Business transactions are conducted in a systematic and rational manner with costs and projected profits being carefully assessed.

Underlying the practice of capitalism is the spirit of capitalism—a set of ideas, ethics and values. Weber illustrates the spirit of capitalism with quotes from two books by Benjamin Franklin, *Necessary Hinds to Those that would be Rich* (1736) and *Advice to a young tradesman* (1748). Franklin writes 'Remember that time is money', Time wasting idleness and diversion lose money. Remember that credit is money. A reputation for prudence and honesty will bring credit, as a will paying debts on time. Business people should behave with industry and frugality, and punctuality and justice in all their dealings.

Weber argued that this spirit of capitalism is not simply a way of making money, but a way of life, which has ethics, duties and obligations. He claimed that ascetic Protestantism was a vital influence in the creation and development of the spirit and practice of capitalism: a methodical and single-minded pursuit of a calling encourages rational capitalism. Weber wrote that 'restless, continuous systematic work in a worldly calling must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of the spirit of capitalism. Making money became both a religious and a business ethic. The Protestant interpretation of profit making justified the activities of the businessman.

Weber claimed that two major features of capitalist industry—the standardization of production and the specialized division of labour—were encouraged by Protestantism. The Protestant uniformity of life immensely aids the capitalist in the standardization of production. The emphasis on the importance of a fixed calling provided an ethical justification for this modern specialized division of labour.

Finally, Weber noted the importance of the creation of wealth and the restrictions on spending it, which encouraged saving and reinvestment:

> When the limitation of consumption is combined with this release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable result is obvious: accumulation of capital through an ascetic compulsion to save. The restraints that were imposed on the consumption of wealth naturally served to increase it, by making possible the productive investment of capital.

The ascetic Protestant way of life led to the accumulation of capital, investment and reinvestment. It produced the early businesses that expanded to create capitalist society.

6.3 Materialism and Weber's Theory

Weber, then, believed that he had discovered and demonstrate t that religious beliefs could cause economic change. He claimed that he had found a weakness in Marx's materialism which implied that the economic system always shaped ideas.

However, it should be stressed that Weber did not discount the importance of the economy and material factors. He said, 'It is of-course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history. Capitalism was made possible not just by Calvinist Protestantism, but also by the technology and economic system of the countries in which it developed. Material factors were as important as ideas in its development; neither could be ignored in any explanation.

6.4 Religion, modernity and rationality

As well as proposing an explanation for the origins of capitalism, Weber also

had a good deal to say about the likely consequences of the changes produced by the development of Protestantism. His theories have had a tremendous influence on general ideas about changes in Western societies, and in particular on the concepts of modernity and secularization. Modernity refers to both a historical period and a type of society, which is often seen as developing along with industrialization, science and capitalism. Secularization refers to the decline of religion. Robert Holton and Bryan Turner (1989), for example, argue that the central themes of all of Weber's sociology were the problems of modernization and modernity, and that we should regard rationalization as the process which produced modernism.

As we have seen above, in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism Weber argued that ascetic Protestantism helped to produce modern capitalism. With that went an emphasis on rational calculation since pursuing the maximum possible profit required an appraisal of the profits that would be produced by following different lines of action. The capitalist would then follow whatever path would produce the greatest profit. Weber distinguished between formal rationality and substantive rationality. Formal rationality involved calculating the best means to achieve a given end and the calculations had to be in a numerical form. Substantive rationality involved action designed to meet some ultimate goal, such as justice, equality or human happiness. Capitalist behaviour put primary emphasis upon the formal rationality of accounting in the pursuit of profit maximization. Substantive nationality, including the morality provided by religious beliefs, tended to fade into the background in capitalist societies.

To Weber, rationality would not be confined to capitalist enterprise in the modern world. As Holton and Turner point out, it would also involve a rational legal system, the separation of the home and the work place, rational financial management and the emergence of a rational system of administration. Weber's ideas on bureaucracy are a good example of his belief that modern societies would be increasingly characterized by rationality. However, to Weber, and to many later sociologists rationality can be at odds with the faith that is required by religion.

Religions do not expect their followers to try to test their beliefs scientifically, nor do they expect religious beliefs to be based upon weighing up the costs and benefits of joining a religious group. Followers should simply believe in the truth of their religion.

In the rationalized modern world, though Weber thought that it would be increasingly difficult for followers of religion to maintain their faith. Discussing Protestant sects in the USA, Weber said closer scrutiny revealed the steady progress of the characteristic process of secularization to which all phenomena that originated in religious conceptions succumb (Weber in Gerth and Mills (eds.), 1948). In short, ascetic Protestantism would contribute to the development of capitalism, which required a rational approach to social life, which would in turn undermine religion. Protestant religions therefore contained the seeds of their own destruction. As Malcolm Hamilton puts it:

> Once on its way, the modern economic system was able to support itself without the need of the religious ethic of ascetic Protestantism which in many ways could not help but sow the seeds of secularization in modern society by its own promotion of worldly activity and consequent expansion of wealth and material well-being. Calvinistic Protestantism was its own gravedigger.

Assignments

Q. 1 Discuss the contribution of Durkheim in connection with the origin of religion.

Q. 2 Provide a critique to Durkheim's theory of origin of religion.

Q. 3 How does Bronislaw Malinowski explain the origin of religion from the Trobriand Islands?

Q. 4 Give a criticism of Malinowski's theory of religion.

Q. 5 How does Max Weber show that in some circumstances religion can led to social change?

Q. 6 How Weber's theory of Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism show change in Calvinist Protestantism?

Q. 7 Discuss the spirit of capitalism.

Q. 8 What does Max Weber mean by Protestant ethic?

Q. 9 How does Weber demonstrate that religious beliefs, can bring economic change?

Q.10 "Weber contributed largely on the development of capitalism in 19th century." Comment.

6.5 Further Readings

1. Haralombus, M. 1980; Sociology - Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press.
2. Madan, T. N. 1991; Religion in India, Oxford University Press.
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Karl Marx and Dialectical Materialism

Structure

7.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

- Views of Marx on Religion
- Religion & Social Control
- Religion & Communism
- Religion & Feudalism
- Religion & Capitalism

7.1 Introduction

D.N. Dhanagare in his book "Themes and Perspectives in Indian Sociology" argues that the essence of Marxism is dialectical materialism.

In his support he refers to the Marxist historian D.D. Kosambi. Marx argues that classes, class conflict and alienation are all due to dialectical materialism. In the field of religion the Marxian perspective equally occupies an important place. Russia for long time did not have any church. In fact, religion was denied in socialist countries. It is in this respect that dialectical materialism needs all consideration. In the lesson we would discuss the Marxist perspective on religion.

In Marx's vision of the ideal society, exploitation and alienation are things of the past. The means of production are communally owned, which results in the disappearance of social classes. Members of society are fulfilled as human beings: they control their own destinies and work together for the common good. Religion does not exist in this communist utopia because the social conditions that produce it have disappeared.

To Marx, religion is an illusion which cures the pain produced by exploitation and oppression. It is a series of myths that justify and legitimate the subordination of the subject class and the domination and privilege of the ruling class. It is a distortion of reality which provides many of the deceptions that form the basis of ruling-class ideology and false class-consciousness.

7.2 Religion as 'the opium of the people'

In Marx's words, 'Religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people' (Marx, in Bottomore and Rubel, 1963). Religion acts as an opiate to dull the pain produced by oppression. It is both 'an expression of real suffering and a protest against suffering,' but it does little to solve the problem because it helps to make life more bearable and therefore dilutes demands for change. As such, religion merely stupefies its adherents rather than bringing them true happiness and fulfillment.

Similarly, Lenin argued 'Religion is a kind of spiritual gin in which the slaves of capital drown their human shape and their claims to any decent life' cited in Lane,1970).

From a Marxist perspective, religion can dull the pain of oppression in the following ways:

(1) It promises a paradise of eternal bliss in life after death. Engels argued that the appeal of Christianity to oppressed classes lies in its promise of salvation from

bondage and misery in the afterlife. The Christian vision of heaven can make life on earth more bearable by giving people something to look forward to.

(2) Some religions make a virtue of the suffering produced by oppression. In particular, those who bear the deprivations of poverty with dignity and humility will be rewarded for their virtue. This view is contained in the well-known biblical quotation, 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven'. Religion thus makes poetry more tolerable by offering a reward for suffering and promising compensation for injustice in the afterlife.

(3) Religion can offer the hope of supernatural intervention to solve the problems on earth. Members of religious groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses live in anticipation of the day when the supernatural powers will descend from on high and create heaven on earth. Anticipation of this future can make the present more acceptable.

(4) Religion often justifies the social order and a person's position within it. God can be seen as creating and ordaining the social structure, as in the following verse from the Victorian hymn 'All things bright and beautiful' :The rich man in his castle

> The poor man at his gate,
> God made them high and lowly,
> And ordered their estate.

In this way, social arrangement s appears inevitable. This can help those at the bottom of the stratification system to accept and come to terms with their situation. In the same way, poverty and misfortune in general have often been seen as divinely ordained as a punishment for sin. Again the situation is defined as immutable and unchangeable. This can make life more bearable by encouraging people to accept their situation philosophically.

7.3 Religion and social control

From a Marxist viewpoint, religion does not simply cushion the effects of oppression; it is also an instrument of that oppression. It acts as a mechanism of social control,

maintaining the existing system of exploitation and reinforcing class relationships. Put simply, it keeps people in their place. By making unsatisfactory lives bearable, religion tends to discourage people from attempting to change their situation. By offering an illusion of hope in a hopeless situation, it prevents thoughts of overthrowing the system. By providing explanations and justifications for social situations, religion distorts reality. It helps to produce a false class-consciousness that blinds members of the subject class to their true situation and their real interests. In this way it diverts people's attention from the real source of their oppression and so helps to maintain ruling class power.

Religion is not however, solely the province of oppressed groups. From a Marxist perspective, ruling classes adopt religious beliefs to justify their position both to themselves and to others. The lines 'God made them high and lowly / And ordered their estate show clearly how religion can be used to justify social inequality, not simply to the poor, but also to the rich. Religion is often directly supported by the ruling classes to further their interests. In the words of Max and Engels, 'the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord'. In feudal England the lord of the manor's power was frequently legitimated by pronouncements from the pulpit. In return for this support, landlords would often richly endow the established church.

Evidence to support Marxism

There is considerable evidence to support the Marxist view of the role of religion in society.

The caste system of traditional India was justified by Hindu religious beliefs. In medieval Europe, kings and queens ruled by divine right. The Egyptian Pharaohs went one stepfather by combining both god and king in the same person. Slave-owners in the southern states of America often approved of the conversion of slaves to Christianity, believing it to be a controlling and gentling influence. It has been argued that in the early days of the Industrial Revolution in England. Employers used religions a means of controlling the masses and encouraging them to remain sorbet and to work hard.

A more recent example which can be used to support Marxism has been discussed by Steve Bruce (1988). He has pointed out that in the USA conservative Protestants—the New Christian Right'—consistently support right-wing political candidates in the Republican Party and attack more liberal candidates in the Democratic Party. In 1980 they targeted 27

liberal candidates for attack; 23 of them lost. The New Christian Right supported Ronald Reagan in his successful campaign for the presidency in 1984. In the 1988 presidential campaign, however, Reagan was unsuccessfully challenged for the Republican nomination for president by a member of the New Christian Right, Pat Robertson. Robertson is one of a number of television evangelists who have tried to gain new converts to their brand of Christianity and who spread their political and moral messages through preaching on television.

According to Bruce, the new Christian Right have supported a more aggressive anti-communist foreign policy, more military spending, less central government interference, less welfare spending, and fewer restraints on free enterprise. Although Bruce emphasizes that they have had a limited influence on American politics, it is clear that they have tended to defend the interests of the rich and powerful at the expense of other groups in the population.

The limitations of Marxism

Conflicting evidence suggests that religion does not always legitimate power; it is not simply a justification of alternation or a justification of privilege, and it can sometimes provide an impetus for change. Although this is not reflected in Marx's own writing, nor in much of Engels's earlier work, it is reflected in Engels's later work and in the perspectives on religion advanced by more recent neo-Marxists. We will examine these views after the next section, which considers the relationship between religion and communism.

Furthermore, the fact that religion sometimes act as an ideological force in the way suggested by Marx, does not explain the existence or religion. As Malcolm Hamilton points out:

To say, however, that religion can be turned into an instrument of manipulation is no more to explain it than saying that because art or drama can be utilized for ideological purposes this explains art or drama.

In contrast, approaches such as those used by Stark and Bainbridge (1985) do try to find an explanation for the almost universal presence of religion in society in basic human needs. Their views will be examined shortly.

7.4 Religion and communism

Marx stated that 'Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves round man as long as he does not revolve round himself (Marx andEngels,1957). In a truly socialist society individuals revolve around themselves, and religion- along with all other illusions and distortions of reality-disappears.

Whatever the merits of this prophecy, it certainly does not reflect the situation in the socialist Israeli kibbutzim. Many kibbutzim are fervently religious and their members appear to experience no contradiction between religion and socialism.

In the USSR communism the strength of religion was harder to gauge. After the revolution of 1917 the communist state placed limit on religious activity and ate times persecuted religious people. Soviet law restricted religious worship to designated churches and other places of prayer. Religious instruction of children was banned. Geoffrey Hosking estimated that there were more than 50,000 Russian Orthodox churches before the 1917 revolution, but by 1939 only about 4,000 remained (Hosking, 1988). Writing in 1970, David Lane claimed that there were about 20,000 Russian Orthodox churches inn 1960,but nearly half of these had been closed by 1965 due to the policies of Khrushchev.

On the surface such figures suggest that religion had declined, but this may have been due to the activities of the ruling elite rather than to a loss of faith by the population. Lane claimed that religion probably had little hold over the population, but it had, nevertheless shown certain resilience to communism. The resilience was reflected in one estimate which placed the number of baptized Orthodox Christians in the period 1947-57 at90 million, which is roughly the same as in 1914. In1988 Geoffrey Hoskins argued that 'The Soviet Union is already a much more "religious" country than Britain or most of Western Europe'.

When president Gorbachov instituted a policy of glasnost, or openness, restrictions on religion were relaxed. In 1989 and 1990,unrest in a number of Soviet republics suggested the continued strength of religious belief. The Roman Catholic Church in Lithuania was one source of demands for independence. In 1990 conflict between Soviet Muslims in Azerbajijan and Soviet Christians in Armenia led to troops being deployed to restore order.

When the USSR began to divide and Communist Party rule was abandoned, religious convictions became even more evident. In1991 David Martin described how church bells were used to summon millions of people to link arms around the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. In other former communist countries there were enormous gatherings in Poland to celebrate the feast of the Assumption and the passionate pilgrimages of the Serbs to monastic shrines at Kosova (Martin, 1991b).

Opinion poll figures suggest that religion remained important to large proportions of the population during the communist eras in the USSR and Eastern Europe and that religion has become stronger since the demise of communism. Quoting data from the International Social Survey Program, Andrew Greely notes that in 1991,47 per cent of the Russian population claimed to believe in God (Greeley, 1994). The strength of the religious revival is revealed by the fact that 22 per cent of the populations were former non-believers who had converted to a belief in God. Similarly, Miklos Tomka found that in 1978, 44.3 per cent of the population of Hungary claimed to be religious and that this had risen to 76.8 per cent by August 1993 (Tomka, 1995).

One society which ha retained communism throughout the 1990s is Fidel Castro's Cuba. However, even such a staunch communist as Castro was forced to acknowledge the continuing appeal of religion when he invited Pope John Paul to Cuba in January 1998. The Pope addressed large and enthusiastic crowds, suggesting that Roman Catholicism remained strong despite some 40 years in which the communist state had discouraged religious participation and belief.

These examples suggest that there is more to religion than a set of beliefs and practices which develop in societies based on the private ownership of the means of production.

Materialistic dialectical approach has been not only to Marx only. There are other Marxist theorist such as Engels and neo-Marxists. We will now provide an analysis of these neo-Marxist according to which religion is considered as a radical force.

Engels and Neo-Marxists-religion as a radical force

Roger O Toole, commenting on the Marxist sociology of religion, argues than

Beginning with the work of Engels, Marxis have undoubtedly recognized the active role that

may be played but religion in effecting revolutionary social change (O'Toole, 1984). Thus, in On the History of Early Christianity, Engels compared some of the early Christian sects that opposed Roman rule to communist and socialist political movements (Marx and Engels, 1957). He said, 'Christianity got hold of the masses exactly as modern socialism does, under the shape of a variety of sects'. While Christianity originated as a way of coping with exploitation among oppressed groups, it could become a source of resistance to the oppressors and thus a force for change.

Otto Maduro – the relative autonomy of religion

Maduro is a contemporary neo-Marxist. While accepting many aspects of Marx's analysis of religion, he places greater emphasis on the idea that religion has some independence, or 'relative autonomy', from the economic system of the bourgeoisie (Maduro, 1982). He denies that religion is always conservative force and, indeed, claims that it can be revolutionary. He says, 'Religion is not necessarily a functional, reproductive or conservative factor in society; it often is one of the main (and sometimes the only) available channel to bring about a social revolution.

Maduro claims that up until recently, Catholicism in Latin America tended to support the bourgeoisie and right-wing military dictatorships, which have represented its interests. The Catholic Church has tended to deny the existence of social conflicts between oppressive and oppressed classes. It has recognized some injustices, such as poverty and illiteracy, but has suggested that the solution lies with those who already have power.

The Catholic Church has also supported members of the clergy who have assisted private enterprise and government projects; it has celebrated military victories but failed to support unions, strikes and opposition political parties.

On the other hand, more recently, Catholic priests have increasingly demonstrated their autonomy from the bourgeoisie by criticizing them and acting against their interest, Maduro believes that members of the clergy can develop revolutionary potential where oppressed members of the population have no outlet for their grievances. They pressurize priests to take up their cause, and theological disagreements within a church can provide interpretations of a religion that are critical of the rich and powerful.

All of these conditions have been met in Latin America and have led to their development of liberation theology.

Bryan S. Turner – A Materialist theory of religion

Bryan Turner (1983) follows Marx in arguing that religion rises from a material base : that is, he agrees that religion relates to the physical and economic aspects of social life. Unlike Marx, however, Turner does not believe that religion has a universal role in society, nor does he believer that religion is always an important part of ruling class ideological control. He questions the belief that religion has always been a powerful force persuading subject classes to accept the status quo.

7.5 Religion and feudalism

Marxists have tended to assume that, in the feudal period, religion (in particular, Roman Catholicism in Europe) was a belief system that played a fundamental part in integrating society. Turner rejects the view that religion was as important for serfs and peasants as it was for feudal lords. On the basis of historical evidence he claims that the peasantry were largely indifferent to religion: their main concern was simply survival.

By comparison, religion played an important part in the lives of the ruling class, the feudal lords. In feudalism, wealth consisted of, and power derived from the ownership of land by private individuals. For the ruling class to maintain its dominance it had to pass on property to an heir. Usually a system of primogeniture was used : the eldest son of a landowner inherited all his father's land. This prevented the splitting up of estates, which would have reduced the concentration of power in the hands of particular individuals. It was therefore vital to the workings of feudalism and the maintenance of a dominant class that there was a legitimate male heir for each landowner. Premarital promiscuity and adultery both jeopardized the production of such an heir. Marriage and the legitimacy of children were propped up and defended by the church. Thus, in Turner's words, 'religion has the function of controlling the sexuality of the body in order to secure regular transmission of property via the family'. Without religion it would have been difficult to ensure there were recognized legitimate heirs who could retain concentrated landholdings in their family's possession.

A secondary function of religion under feudalism also stemmed from primogeniture. There was a surplus of younger sons who did not inherit land. In military feudalism, sons might meet an early death, so it was necessary to have a number of heirs in case one or more were killed. But those who did not receive an inheritance had to have some means of support. Monasteries provided one solution to the problem of the surplus males.

7.6 Religion and capitalism

Turner believes that, in modern capitalism, religion has lost the one vital function that it had for the ruling class. Today, he claims, individual and family property is much less important for the maintenance of ruling-class power. Property has become depersonalized–most wealth is concentrated in the hands of organizations (such as banks, pension funds and multinational corporations) rather than in the hands of individuals. In these circumstances, religion is no more than an optional extra for modern capitalist societies. Since the transmission of property via the family is no longer vital to the system, society can tolerate, and the church can accept, divorce and illegitimacy.

Turner's views on religion are similar to the more general views on the dominant ideology thesis advanced by Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1980). They believe that modern capitalist societies do not posses a widely-accepted ruling-class ideology and that such an ideology is not necessary for the continuance of capitalist domination: the ruling class use coercion and naked economic power to maintain their position. Abercrombie et al. therefore question Marx's beliefs about the importance of religion in producing false class consciousness in capitalist societies.

Having discussed Marxist and materialist views one religion, we will now turn to a consideration of the relationship between gender and religion. Some feminist theories of religion have similarities with Marxist theories.

Assignments

Q.1. Discuss the statement of Marxist, namely, 'religion is opium of the people.'

Q.2. How religion is the instrument of oppression?

Q.3. It was the caste system which created hierarchy on the basis of religion. Comment.

Q.4. Marx stated "Religion is only he illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve round himself." Comment on this statement.

Q.5. What was the status of religion in the USSR?

Q.6. What does Engels argue about Christianity and social change?

Q.7. Discuss the views of neo-Marxists regarding Christianity and social change.

Q.8. Discuss Bryan S. Turner who professes a materialist theory of religion.

Q.9. How does religion exercise social control?

Q.10. Compare and contrast functional and conflict theories on religion.

7.7 Further Readings

1. Haralombus, M. 1980; Sociology - Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press.
2. Madan, T. N. 1991; Religion in India, Oxford University Press.
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Gandhi, Swami Vivakananda & B. R. Ambedkar

Structure

8.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

– Hinduism as religion.

– Islam as religion.

8.1 Introduction

Religion was central to Gandhi's life, thought work and he regarded Politics as applied religion. However, his religious ideas were complex and his writtings varied all to the occassion. His views on Religion were subject to change.

- In this Ist place, he considered himself a Hindu. Writing in 1927 in "Young India" he said, "Hinduism was the most tolerant of all the religions." Its freedom from dogmas gave the largest scape for self-expression. It entabled the followers not merely to respect all the other religions, but to admire assimilate whatever may be good in other's faith. Non violence as common to all religions but it has

found the highest expression and application in Hinduism. Hinduism believes in oneness. There was no trace of defensiveness in the Proclamation of this faith and along with it went a deep acceptance of the truth of all other religions. He was proud of Hinduism but it did not prevent him from rejecting and criticizing secural justifications, ideas and beliefs which Hindu regard as the part of their religion. for Instance :-

- He not only rejected untouchability but fought against if througout his life. He was opposed to blood scrifices to deities. Indeed he opposed every form of cruality to animals. He also criticised 'Phuka' by which Peasants used to drive a nail fixed to a stick into the sectum of bullocks to make them to move faster. He gave up drinking the milk of Cows and Buffoloes. It was only during a serious illness in 1918 that 'Kasturba' persuaded him to drink goat's milk to save his life. Even he was opposed to this but he contained to drink it for carring out his work. He rejected the Hindu-Jain concept of kindness which was confined to not killing an animal. He once committed the great Hindu Sin of Cow Killing, by shooting a calf a revolves in order to put an end to its Pain. His concept of kindness to animals was very western and Modern. He had no time for elaborate rituals and Pujas and he never consulted Astrologers. He was a real Karmayogi, He condemned the wide spread practice of Child marriage, dowery and Human Treatement of Widows. In 1918, he stood for gender equality. He declared, "Woman is the companion with equal mental capacities and she has the same right of freedom and equality." He wanted them to have legal status as equal to men.

- It is a well known fact the 'Ruskin', 'Tolstoy' and 'Thoreau' and the Bible & Gita all influenced Gandhi. From Tolstoy, he derived his critical attitude to organised religion and from Ruskin, the ideal of a simple life. When he considered an idea good, he tried to put it into practice but even here, however, idealistic the idea in Practising it, Gandhi did not give up his sense of social reality. He saw 'Praxis' as the necessary completion of an idea. He read the 'Bible' when he was a law student in England, the life of 'Christ' and the 'Semon' on the Mount went straight to his heart. The idea of returing done for hatred and good for evil captivated him, thought he didn't comprehend it fully. The Gita also had

a great impact on him, In particular, the ideas of 'aparigrana' (non-possession) and 'Samabhava' equality. He gave up all the legal practices. He also made sure that Kasturba accepted 'Aparigraha' along with him, and persuaded him to give up other valueable gold necklace.

- Gandhi regared the Gita as his "Mother's Milk" but, Strange as if may seem, he found in its, the Support for non-violence. Acc to Gandhi, the "Mahabharata had demonstrated the futility of violence". "Let it be granted" he wrote in 1929 in an introduce to his Gujarati warfare is consistent with the renunciation of fruit and other later on, he realised that the perfect renunciation is impossible out perfect observance of 'Ahimsa' in every shape and form. Gandhi discovered non violence not only in the Gita but in the Bible and this Koran. Acc to Gandhi, in the Koran "non-violence is enjoined as duty, violence and permitted as a necessity His study of the Bible and Koran led him to the Conviction that there was an underlying unity in all relation. Acc. to win, "The time had passed when the followers of one relgion could stand and say, 'Ours is the only True religion and all others are false. Acc. to him, "God, Allah, Rama, Narayan, Ishwar, Khuda, were descriptions of the Same being. He rejected the idea of conversion from one religion to another.

- In Gandhi's view, Religious practices, Ideas and believes had to be subjected to the test of season, and those which failed the test rejected. This test he applied to all religions, while Gandhi regared all established religions as divinely inspired, he also recognised a higher religions which was criminal and which transcended Particular religions. He stated in 1940 than "Religion dest not mean sectarianism.

B. R. Nanda", The distinguished biographer of Gandhi, has concluded from his study of Gandhi's religious ideas and practices that "Gandhi's concept of religion had little in common what generally passes for organised religion : dogmas, rituals, superstitition and bigotra. Gandhi's religion was simply an ethical framework for the conduct of daily life. While Gandhi believed in the immanence of God in every human being, there were also occassions when he prayed to what appears an external entity for a gift or benefit.

Conclusion : In a very Perceptive observation on Hinduism, the French Authropologists, Louis Dumount", has stated that Paradoxical as it may seem, in Hinduism, the renounces (Sanyasi) is the creative Innovator. But is true of renouncers from the Buddha and Mahavira to Gandhi But Gandhi stood the entire renouncer tradition on its head. This was symbolized by his refusal to don 'the ochre robe', and instead stick to white 'Khadi' which because the symbol of freedom moil. It was Gandhi, who devised that Potent instrument of collective action, 'satyagraha', to enable oppressed, exploited and weak people to fight against rich and powerful oppressors. For Gandhi, the Political, economic and Social dimensions are inseperable from Religion. This is point, where he is most definitely not a Modernist.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami 'Vevakananda' born on Jan. 12, 1863, on the Festival day of 'Makrasamkranti' his nickname was 'Biley' and in adulthood he received the adult name of 'Narendranath' all to the Hindu custom. His childhood was moulded by his mother's deep traditional sense of Sadhu and Sansayasis his father motivated him towards law study to join the most radical branch of the Brahmo Samaj. The Sadharon Brahmo Samaj' was led by 'Shivananth Shastri' and 'Vijay Krishna Goswami'. Narendra adopted two aspects of Sadhara Brahmo Samaj.

1. The belief that universal religion was pratical as entailed service to mankind.
2. The sacredness of all social relationships - even marriage the main concern of Brahmo was to preach **'Universal Theism'** not only to educated but also to uneducated masses. This approach would be adopted by the future Vivekananda.

Vivekananda was the disciple of **'Ramakrishna'** Pujari of the Datashineswar Temple outside Calcutta. Narendra in 1881 went to see Ramakrishna at Datashineswar. There he was invited to sit on Ramakrishna's small bed. Immediately, Ramakrishna put his foot on Narendra's chest. Narendra began to lose sensory awareness of his body. He experienced varying degrees of loss of body consciousness, loss of an ordinary sense of time, loss of or changes in personal identity etc. Thus, Narendra began to alter his stance which he would later identify as the key to his resistence to Ramakrishna. He would worship Kali and finally break the letter of his Brahmo oath all though, the spirit

may have been allure / broken years before.

Search for Universal Foundation

By August, 1889, we convinced that reinterpretation of the Vedas would provide a scriptual base for a socially concerned Vedanta thus reform Vedanta would be free from caste distinction and injustice. According to him the proper question contains itself the answers. Ramakrishna thought that Vedanta was the highest expression of universal religion. It is difficult to determine weather Swomi **'Narendra'** searched for. Support from a traditional Siddha and Yogi etc. In his own words he stated "I am Ramakrishna's slave, having laid my body at the feet of Tulsi & Tulsi leaves" and his aim is to devote himself to the service of the all renouncing devotees founded by him. His command was that his all renouncing devotees should group themselves together. Narendra served that India's spirituality could be proven by the extraordinary accomplishments of its Gurus, Siddhis, and Sadhus. He saw all Gurus are one and are fragments and Raditions of God, the "Universal Guru".

Neo - Hindu Mission

Narendra wants Datta's life involves three phases "

- The break and his Gurubhais
- The re-establishing of Contact from America to these Saktas of Ramakrishna and
- The return to India and founding the Ramakrishna order.

It appears that the future Swami Vivekanada could not lead his Guru Bhais from their Bhakti to its worship of Kali and Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna had sought that Bhakti was the best form of religion of the **'Kaliyuga'** and his former Gurubhais were not willing to follow Sachchitananda's call to social reform on May 21,1893, the newly named 'Swami Vivekananda' received his name from a suggesion of the Maharaja of **'Khetri'**. Maharaja conceived a plan to earn enough money to continue his mission in India. His work in America, England and Madras was commenced before he was able to bring his former Gurubhai to his spiritual conceptions. In his 1st letter to former Gurubhai, he told of his plan to raise up the masses in India, working in America to get

money, giving spirituality in return, depending on no one in Hindustan he called upon his former Gurubhai's to renounce their personal goal of Mukti. "**It is only by doing good to others that one attains to once own good** and it is by leading other to Bhakti and Mukti that one attains them once self." He gradually drew some relief work, goaling them into practical service.

The return of Swami Vivekananda to India has been exploieded extensively but what must be noted is the gradual crisis which beset Vivekananda upon his return. Vivekananda's Vedantas was conceived not as the true religion but as the enternal truth behind all religions.

Thus, true knowledge or truth is oneness, unity. The test of truth is oneness the principal of which truth is judged, which Swami Vivekanada has designated "reason" is unity is the goal of religion and science. Unity or absolute truth is god alone. Truth is to be judged by truth and by nothing else" Swami's quest for meaning has as its goal nothing less than absolute truth for him the scriptures had firstly been accepted "On faith" inorder that they might be used to prove the existence of the Absolute. Swami Vivekananda found that the foundation of every level of knowledge is personal expereince. True knowledge will never accepted "On Faith" in an outside authority. If it is universally true it must be capable of verification by each seeker after truth when he has reached that level of understanding according to Swami Vivekananda all apprehensious of truth depend upon each higher synthesis.

Swami Vivekanda identify the changeless, infinite, eternal unity as the most meaningful concern of life. The unique accept of Swami's teaching about the Cosmos is not that the cosmas lacks ultimate reality but his two theories of causation and their corallary views of the universe. He combined 'Parinama' from 'Samkhya' to 'Vivarta' from 'Advaita' and made them refer to two complementary but distinct realms of reality. Accordingly, **'Parinama'** refered to a real transformation of the cause into a multiplicity of effects according to **'Vivarta'** the relative view is transcended and the apparent multiplicity of objects can no longer be found. For beyond the bonds of time, space and causation there is only Brahman.

Conclusion : In the light of above discussion, it can be argued that the liberation from the bonds of suffering is knowledge of one's true nature since Vedanta teaches the

Mukati which is not in the world. Thus, only practical Vedanta could both Harmonize and revolutionize all of life in the world.

B. R. AMBEDKAR

"Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar" who later on came to known as **'BabaSaheb'** was born on 1891 into the untouchable **'Mahar'** caste in **'Maharashtra'** He is regarded as the architect of Indian Constitution and played a Major role in the formation of Modern India. Just two mouths before his death (1956) he underwent Public initiation into Buddhism large number of followers. He was very much influenced by the Buddhist idealogy because, for him, Buddhism rests on

a) The contention that Buddhism is based on **'reason'**, **'experience'** and **'Silence'**

b) Its contestation of divinity and

c) It recognizes the fundamental principles of social life.

According to Ambedkar, Hinduism was a religion which implied hierarchy whereas other religions authorise equality. In his **'Round Table Confernece'** in 1933, he intended to leave the Hindu fold and inclined to option for Buddhism. He argued the aim of our mout :

"is to achieve freedom; Social economic and religious, for untouchables and this freedom cannot be achieved without conversion".

❖ **CONCEPT OF BUDDHA'S RELIGION :**

Ambedkar states, Buddhism religion is not a reveration, Buddhism denies the existence / reality of God, understood as creator or as absolute, cultimate entity. He its certain that **Buddha did not claim a divine status for himself nor for his world**. The Buddha in his understanding was not Prophet. **He argued :** The Buddha was a **'margadata'.** Buddhism, on the contrary is **'discovery'**; is the result of inquiry investigation into the conditions of human life on earth'. **He claims, Buddhism was nothing if not rational, if not logical.** His followers are free to modify or even to abandon any of his teachings, if those teachings did not satisfy this circumstances. Buddhism thus helps to realize the fundamental

values.

❖ **MAHATMA GANDHI JI**

"Mahatma Gandhi Ji" was against the mass conversion of untouchables and provides two key arguments :

a) He asserted that untouchability had begun to wither (weaker and disappear) away because of the activities of reformers who would be demoralised by such conversion.

b) Religion being a spiritual matter, one could not change it as one moves a house.

But Ambedkar was indifferent to the spiritual dimensions of Hinduism which shows that he does not have any faith in God or in Religion. He is thoanking of changing from one religion to another just for achieving equality.

❖ **CHOICE OF BUDDHISM AS EGALITARION CREED**

Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in 1956, exactly 20 years after he had opted in favour of Sikhism. Ambedkar and his followers adopted some **theortical approaches** before converting to Buddhism such as :-

- Before adopting another religion if is necessary to **Wipe out the Culture** of the Hinduism
- His Young followers stopped doing Puja, boycotted Hindu Festivals and broke Idols.
- Infact they left-those fellows who took part in Hindu Culture. His familarity to Buddhism went back to his youth in 1908, when his teacher, impressed by his attitude, gave him a biography of **'Lord Buddha'**. He had a profound influence on his young mind. In 1934, he built a house called **'Rajgriha'**, the name of the capital of the ancient Buddhist kings of Bihar.

In 1948, he published **Untouchables**, a work, which presented untouchables, as the decendents of Buddhists who had been organialised when the rest of the society crossed over to Hinduism. At the same time, his activities in the assembly prepared the ground for his conversion to Buddhism. **His interest in Buddhism is quite consistent. on the one hand**, he published / believed in the need for religion on the past of man

and society, But on the other hand, he adhered to the values of Enlightenment : Thus Buddhism, was an ideal choice because it was more susceptible to re-interpretation and adaptation to the modern world than other religions.

According to Ambedkar, **'DHAMMA'** was a secular idealogy, for understanding the world, man & society, and transforming them in the Light of reason and on the basis of morality. In 1956, Ambedkar wrote to the General Secretary of **'Maha Bodhi Society'** that he was preparing the commission of India's untouchables to Buddhism.

- A first wave of Commission occured on March 18th Agra, where the **'Jatavas'** formed the main untouchable caste : on that occassion 2,000 of them rehounced Hinduism.
- On May 24, 1956, he announced that he would court to Buddhism in October 1956 and called upon all untouchables to join him in doing likewise.
- On Sept. 23, he conformed that the Germony would take place on Oct. 14, the day of the Hindu festival of Dussehra He invited the head of the Buddhist monks of India to carryout rituals.
- The Commission took place at **Nagpur** were several hundred thousands untouchables , came dressed in white, some of them bearing the colours of Flag of Buddhism.
- Ambedkar and his second wife were the first to convert in front of crowd.

So its Dhamma around which the whole debate revolves. **Buddha's main concern was to give salvation to man in his life on earth and not to promise it to him in heaven after he is dead.** WhileDharma does refer to the control of the end over him or himself. **For him Dharma is social and thus helps the people get rid of all kinds of sufferings in this world.** Dharma is rightousness, which means right relation between man and man in all spheres of life. **According to him**, if a man is alone then there is no need of Dharma, But when these are two men living in relation to each other they must find a place for Dharma whether, they like it or not. In other words society cannot do without Dharma. So, when there is no Dharma, no Buddhism, then there is no society, no society at least that allows coexistance. **Dharma is seen as a moral code for both the worlds conduct of life and social interaction and as a constitutional necessity for society.** "Morality in Dharma arieses from the direct

neccessity for man to love man." Ambedkar also emphasizes the law like 'KAMMA' where every persons is ethically free to act. There is good (Kusala) as well as bad (Akusala) Kamma. Bad Kamma, leads to a 'bad' moral order, even men may double to give up dhamma altogether. Society may choose not to have any Dhamma whereas Good Kamma, leads to a good moral order.

Amedkar opted for Buddhism because of its equalitarian Philosopny but also it was a compromise solution which speared him to break Hinduism. His Buddhism became integrated, almost in the form of a sect, as a solution to untouchabilty, Ambedkar therefore, appeared as a Sect Guru more over after his death, he was to be worshiped as a 'Bodhisattna' an embodiment of Lord Buddha, as much in Maharasthra. Most of the people who have converted, worship only Amedkar and the Buddha and celebrate only their two Birthday as Religions Holidays.

Conclusion : In the light of above discussion, it can be argued that in Ambedkar's views, Buddhism is the only religion which the world can have. Only the Buddhist Dhamma as an ethics of Social action, can bring morality back into society and thus bridging the gap between different or opposite spheres of life. Only Buddhism is able to remould society and to give society a new ways of life. Thus Dhamma takes the palce of religion but at the same time surpasses, the religion.

Hinduism and Islam

Structure

8.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

– Hinduism as religion.

– Islam as religion.

8.1 Introduction

India is a plural society. It has several ethnicities; several religions; and several languages and dialects. K.S. Singh has directed a national project on the People of India. He has studied 4635 communities inhabiting our country. He reports that the majority of Indian population follows six major religions, namely, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism and a few follow traditional tribal religions or other faiths. If we follow K.S. Singh we would find that a large number of people follow Hinduism. His findings on religion are given as under :

People who follow one religion

K.S. Singh is divided religion in two parts: The first deals with those communities which follow only one religion. Of them the Hindus form 76.4 per cent, Muslims 12.6 percent, Christians 7.3 per cent, tribal religionists 8.3 per cent, Jains 2.2 per cent, Buddhists 2.0 per cent, Sikhs 2.8 percent, Jew 0.2 per cent and the Zoroastrians 0.19 per cent. Many local forms of religion have been identified like Donyi Polo, Sarna Munda), Sanamahi (Meitei), Gondi Dharma, etc. Secondly, as communities have been treated as a secular category, the followers of different religions have been identified within its ambit. Thus, there are 87 communities who follow both Hinduism and Sikhism, 116 both Hinduism and Christianity, 35 Hinduism and Islam, 21 Hinduism and Jainism and 29 communities who are both Hindu and Buddhist. There are 94 communities who follow Christianity and tribal religions. Buddhists and followers of tribal religion exist in 11 communities. There are 16 communities which are followers of three religions; 11 communities have sections of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh while 6 have Hindu, Muslim and Christians.

Various levels and forms of Hinduism have been identified. As many as 61.2 per cent of the Hindu communities worship a family deity, and 31.6 per cent worship a clan deity. Those worshipping village and regional deities are 66.7 per cent each and those who equally worship deities of the wider pantheon are 68.4 per cent. This shows the integrating trends in all forms of Hinduism. Individual and family affiliation to pirs is reported from 493 and 428 communities respectively. For the performance of life-cycle rituals, worship and so on, as many as 51.6 per cent of the communities reportedly employ sacred specialists from within and 69.58 per cent from without their communities. Traditional forms of shamanism are very much alive with almost 20 per cent of the communities seeking protection from evil spirits and the curing of diseases through the medium of shamans.

The Adis in Arunachal Pradesh have revived and even institutionalized their religion of the Sun and the Moon called Donyi Polo. Legend has it hate there were two suns in the beginning of creation which beat down harshly on the people. An enterprising archer shot down one of them. The other did not rise in protest. He was later persuaded to only after the other also rose in the sky, pale and weak. The

concept of two suns is quite old among the Himalayan communities and among some tribal communities like the Munda. The Burzhom site in Kashmir valley (dating back to about 2500 B.C.) has a find showing the two suns. The new religion has inspired significant efforts in the field of education and medical care. The second important tribal religion which has been revived and institutionalized relates to the sacred grove called Sarna or Jahera among the Munda and Santal tribes. It has become the symbol of the solidarity of the tribes who were not converted to Christianity. In the 1961 Census the followers of Sarana Dharma, located mainly in Bihar, numbered 4.21 lakhs. A third example has been offered by the Sanamahi cult among the Meitei in Manipur which centers on the traditional faith, employs the Meitei language and non-Brahman priests. The god Sanamahi created animals, plants and man. He created the Meitei. Therefore the Sanamahi cult is considered intrinsic to the preservation and development of Meitei identity by some scholars.

Our data on change of religion suggests that people in 383 communities or their segments have entered the fold of Hinduism in recent years, while those in 267 have embraced Christianity. People in as many as 112 communities have converted to Islam,, and those in 63 have become Sikhs. That those in 159 communities have embraced other than the listed religions, testifies to the popularity of the indigenous systems of faith. Change of region has thus been reported in case of 15 per cent of the communities. They relate mostly to the ST and SC sections of these populations have converted to Christianity in large numbers followed by Sikhism, Islam and Buddhism.

It was difficult to identify the structures and processes that survive conversion. The informants were keen to establish that they were good followers of their new faith and therefore were reluctant to respond. However, it appears that among the elements that survive, the most important are clan exogamy, language, food habits, sartorial practices and economic occupation. There is, of course, sometimes, change in occupation, a measure of affluence with more income coming in and a higher social status. The pre-conversion practices survive among 16.2 per cent of the Christian communities while it is 10.8 per cent among the Buddhist, and 8.5 per cent among the Sikhs, and only 2.9 per cent among the Muslims.

The ASI has been conducting studies on the festivals of India. It is difficult to categorize festivals. Generally, a festival is a mix of many dimensions, social, economic,

religious and soon. The largest number of festivals is socio-religious in nature, which is understandable, given the nature of our society and the influence of religion on our communities. Next are the festivals of socio-economic significance, which center around harvesting of crops when communities celebrate the arrival of fresh crops, and gods and spirits are thanked. In recent years festivals have been organized to celebrate the founding of a state or the role of freedom fighters and social reformers. This is also true of the great Festivals of India, which have at one level a pan-Indian spread, and at another level a local meaning and perception.

Traits, rituals, roles and institutions reflect many levels of perception, local, regional, pan-Indian and so on. For instance, marriage rituals which come under the category *lokachar* or *deshachar* are shared by communities including Hindus and Muslims in such states as Bihar. A closer examination of the corpus of rituals shows that they are a mi of many elements which include some forms of bride price, notion of equality, even of superiority, of women (though notional), various forms of socialization, exchange of gifts which goes beyond the notion of *Kanyadan* and so on. The second example concerns folk rituals. The worship of Kali in Bengal reflects perceptions of various communities with differential modes of propitiation and different levels of participation. In fact, such religious practices present a combination of elements drawn from the scriptures or sacred texts and the body of local beliefs and practices.

Movements have been reported from 13 per cent of the communities. They seek to promote social reform by abolishing practices, which are seen as hindering progress and equality, demand facilities for education and a share in the benefits that accrue from the all-round development process. In tribal areas the movements are also ethnic in nature, seeking to promote the interests of the tribal people in terms of control over their resources and their rights. There is also a streak of revivalism in such movements.

An important aspect of the findings relates to the dominance of oral and folk traditions, with an overwhelming number of communities reporting not only survival but also continuation of such traditions. Folklore, folk song and folk dance continue to the major forms of expressions of folk consciousness. The classical tradition is less widespread. Western music has been vigorously adopted by some communities, particularly in Mizoram. It is only the tribals who continue with the tradition of men and

women dancing together.

In the preceding pages of lesson we have provided a general characterization of all the religions founding India. In this lesson particularly we discuss Hinduism and Islam.

8.2 Hinduism

The beginnings of religious diversity in India go back to the country's proto-historic past. There is ample material evidence of the existence of elaborate religious activity in the urban centers associated with the Indus Valley or Harappan civilization five thousand years ago spread over vast areas in north-western, northern, and western parts of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. It is reasonable to infer that religious beliefs and rituals of a somewhat different kind must have been present in the rural hinterlands. The city cultures, it is generally believed were overridden by nomadic Aryan-speaking peoples of central Asian origin, around 1500 B.C. They brought in their own religious beliefs and practices, and these focused on the creative and destructive powers of nature. According to this generally accepted view, the Aryans owed little in their religious life to the presumably Dravidian-speaking people they drove out of their homelands.

Scholars who do not accept the general view, but consider the Harappan culture as an unfolding rather than a major break whether wholly internal or aided by a limited migration, maintain that the old and the new cultures coexisted, and that the latter absorbed elements both religious and linguistic from the former (see Parpola, 1994). Vedic religion and Sanskrit took several centuries to acquire the forms in which they have been handed down to us.

The resultant religion was characterized by internal diversities reflecting social, theological and scholastic divisions. Scholars have written about a state religion, centers in temples comprising ritual bathing (there is a great bath in the

citadel of Mohenjo-Dharo), worship of gods and goddesses, and perhaps animal sacrifice. Apart from the public (state) and private (domestic) rituals, differences reflecting clan-based cleavages also seem to have existed (see Possehl 1982). The major source of our knowledge about the religious life of the Aryans, besides the numerous archaeological sites, is the body of sacred literature called the Veda (knowledge, wisdom),

which is believed to be ever existent (*sanatana*) and therefore lacking any human author (a*paurusheya*) and stretches over almost a thousand years.

The earliest of the Vedic texts is the Rig, which has been dated no later than 1200 BC (but is perhaps much older). Its ten books of hymns in praise of divinities presumably represent ten family traditions among the Brahmans (rituals specialists) and took several centuries to compose. The Sama and Yajur Veda extend the scope of the Rig into music and ritual respectively. Finally, the Artharva Veda is believed to represent the absorption of folk religions into the Vedic corpus, resulting in significant changes in it. These religions were encountered by the Aryans as they moved east into the Gangetic valley and adopted more settled ways. Indeed, the valley came to be called the home of the Aryas, Aryavata. Thus, divinities become devalued and magical spells and rites become ascendant (see Flood 1996; Brockington, 1992).

Further, the Vedas became the basis for an immense textual efflorescence, comprising manuals of ritual performances (Brahmanas, Aranyakas),and discursive speculative treatises (Upanishads, also called Vedanta, the culmination of the Veda), all of which bring us close to 300 BC. Schools of Vedic learning and ritual, called 'branches' (*shakha*), flourished, producing a cultural ambience of, at times, bewildering plurality within the Vedic framework.

But that is not all; Vedism gradually made way for the emergence of what is generally called—Hinduism on a sub continental scale, which brought more texts on more varied subjects into existence, notably the Grihya Sutras, which are guides to the performance of domestic rituals, and the Dharma Sutras, which have social ethics and law as their subject matter. Besides there are the Shraura Sutras which are technical treatises on the correct procedures for the performance of Vedic rituals of public significance. The Grihya Sutras have a regional character: a text followed in one part of the country may be unknown in another. The Vedic corpus considered

revealed, is said to be based on *shruti (*that which has been heard) and constitutes the first source of dharma understood as righteous conduct. With the Sutras we come to the second source, namely, *smriti* (that which is remembered), and these texts are credited to human authors.

Later still than the Sutras are the Dharma Shastras, which continue with the same themes but in much greater detail. The best known of these texts today is the Manav Dharma Shastra, attributed to a seer called Manu, and therefore also known as the Manu Smriti. It is believed to have been composed between200 BC and AD 300, which rules out single authorship. What stands out in this and other similar texts is the institutional framework for the conduct of both domestic life and public affairs

In domestic life the key principles of *varna* (social class) and ashrama (stage of life) are adumbrated for the definition of appropriate rituals and worldly affairs. While universal norms (*sarva sadharna dharma*) are not wholly eliminated, but retained as the foundation of all righteous conduct, it is the varna-and ashrama-specific rules that emerge as preponderant. It is thus that Hinduism has been defined as *varna-ashrama-dharma*. Not only the householder but the kings too, are bound by their respective duties defined in terms of varna and ashrama (see Lingat 1973). As for those who repudiated such divisions, notably the renounces (*sannyasis*), even they have been grouped into sects (*sampradayas*) since at least the time of the composition of the Mahabharata (400 BC—AD 400). It is obvious that variant regional, varna (including occupation), and ashram identities defined the appropriateness of behaviour in particular situations. In view of this Hinduism could only have been a family of faiths and the behaviour that went with them, and the Hindu society, a confederation of communities.

The speculative or philosophical concerns of the Brahmanical tradition were formulated as different systems of orthodox thought *(jnan)* and termed 'versions' (d*arshana*) of life based on the Vedas. Each of thee visions, six in number has its own authoritative texts. The thought or reflection that follows from each position is not exclusive in the manner of the various guides to ritual performance and social behaviour. The 'root' text of each *darshana* is concerned with extra-referential (*paramarthika*) knowledge, and transitive (*vyavaharika*) knowledge is built upon or grafted into it. Together they constitute what can only be called a complex totality.

The six schools are: (i) Samkhya ('enumeration') which asserts the ontological duality of matter (*prakrti*) and the 'self" (*purusha*); (ii) Yoga ('joining', 'mixing') which constitutes a pair with Samkhya in terms of its metaphysics; (iii) Mimamsa (Vedic exegesis)

which takes a pluralist view of reality; (iv) Vedanta ('culmination of Veda'), grouped with Mimamsa, which denies the reality of the many; (v) Nyaya (logic) and (vi) Vaisesika (dialectics), considered a pair, which deal with logical, ontological, and dialectical issues within an empiricist, pluralist (more precisely atomist) framework (see Hiriyana 1949). The primacy which the monism of Vedanata has enjoyed in contemporary literature on India does little justice to the internal diversities of Brahmanical thought even when dealing with the same issues, or with its method of dealing with them to preclude mutual incomprehensibility.

The foregoing pluralities of scripture, metaphysics, and social organization that are the background of Hinduism and indeed partly constitute it, are characteristic of Brahmanical orthodoxy. This orthodoxy has not remained unchallenged. Indeed, the challenges came from within long before any major external threat materialized. The followers of public Vedic ritual called the Shrautra (*shruti*, 'revelation') first yield space to those who gave precedence to domestic rituals, whether the Smartas (followers of the Smritis or Dharma Shastras) or the Pauranikas (those who organize their religious life on the basis of the Puranas, which are legendary accounts of the doings of gods, goddesses and other supernatural beings as well as human beings life kings and ascetics). The latter two categories of Hinduism are not however, non-Vedic.

It is the Tantras, texts that are claimed by their followers the Tantrikas to be revealed, that are non-Vedic, Tantric rituals reveal considerable variety, but are generally characterized by secret rituals performed often at special sites such as cremation grounds, and frequently at night. Thus, Tantric rituals that invoke the power of the Supreme Goddess are performed at night in the famous temple of Puri (Orissa), where worship of the Pauranika god Jagannatha (in incarnation of Vishnu, the patron deity of Vaishnavas) and his divine consort is performed publicly during the day (see Marglin 1985). The celebrated yearly 'car festival' (*ratha yatra*) is dedicated to him.

While the worship of Vishnu is combined in the Smartha—Pauranika traditions with that of Devi (the goddess) and Shiva, in some parts of the country, particularly the south, mutually exclusive and often hostile sects have emerged centred on the cults of the two gods. From as early as the fifth century, the Vaishnavas were divided into the sects of Pancharatras and Vaikhanasa. Similarly, the Pashupata, Kapalika and Kalamukha

sects were prominent among the Shaivas (see Lorenzen 1972). Starting in the seventh century, the Vaishnavasand the Shaivas began to generate distinctive liturgical texts called the *samhitas* and *agamas* respectively. Each sect claimed the supremacy of its own deity on the latter's own authority.

In the development of these theistic traditions, from around the closing centuries of the last millennium BC, a number of elements from various sources, including the high Sanskritic and folk religious traditions, fused. Personal devotion to one's chosen deity (*bhakti),* whether Vishnu in his various incarnations including most notably those of Rama and Krishna-Vaisudeva, or Shiva, is a striking characteristic of these cults, and originated in the south and then spread to the north. This devotionalism found expression in emotionally charged poetry particularly among the Vaishnavas from the sixth century onward, and later also among the Shaivites, though the latter's devotion tended to be more austere (See Ramanujan 1973, 1981).

Expectedly, the relationship of the devotee to the deity, whether expressed in human (anthromorphic) terms or through abstract formulations, constitutes the core of the speculative thought of these religious traditions, ranging from absolute monism (*advaita*), associated with the name Sankara (c.788-820), to qualified non-dualism (*vishishtadvaita*) of Ramanuja (c.1017-1137) and dualism (*dvaita*) elucidated byh Madhava in the thirteenth century. The teachings of the latter two saints combine the metaphysics of the Upanishads with the theism of Vaishnava and Shaiva cults.

Associated with both of these is a third tradition, namely the worship of the great goddess, Devi, which emerged virtually independently as the Shakta (from *shakit,* 'power') tradition. Here also the roots go far back in time, perhaps to the Harappan culture, and later developments entail the amalgamation of Puranic, Tantric and folk goddesses and ideas. As Lakshmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, the great goddess is presented as a benign bearer of auspiciousness; as Uma-Parvati, she is the

divine consort of Shiva, mother of the universe; and as Durga or Kali, the highest manifestation of divine power, she is the fearsome destroyer of evil and greater than all the male gods through the pooling of whose powers she comes into being. At the village level she appears as the goddess who brings and removes illness and misfortune, such as Shitala, the goddess whose visitations were held responsible for small-pox (see

Hawley and Wulff 1996).

The Hindu religious tradition, wee have seen, is characterized by strong pluralistic tendencies emanating from various sources and inspirations. It has tended to absorb non-Hindu religious ideas and practices and has dealt with internal dissent through accommodation carried to the furthest extremes. Occasionally, this strategy has failed and resulted in breakaway sects, which in the course of time grew into independent religions such as Buddhism and Jainism, adding a new dimension to the religious plurality of India.

8.3 Islam

The third and the youngest members of the family of Abrahamic religions, Islam ('submission to the will of God') is dated back to AD 622 when its promulgator, the Prophet Muhammad (AD 571-632) migrated from his native city of Makkah (in Arabia), where he did not receive the support he desired, to Madinah. In the latter city he established the first ever-Islamic state. He accommodated resident Jews and Christians in it, since they too were judged go be in possession of books of divinely revealed knowledge and, therefore, entitled to protection.

The fundamentals of religious faith and practice among Muslims ('the submitters') are explicit and universally binding. They must affirm the oneness of God and the status of the Quran{'the text to be read and recited') as the word of God. Besides, they must believe in God's angels and messengers (of whom Muhammad was the most perfect and therefore the last); and in the Last Daya, when God will judge the actions of one and all, and dispatch the pious to heaven and the sinners to hell (See Rahman 1979)

Moreover, every true Muslim must recite the creed (*kalimah,* 'the world'), which affirms the oneness of God and the finality of Muhammad's prophethood; say

daily prayers (*namaz*) at the appointed times; observe the yearly month of fasting by day (*rozah)* to burn away sins give alms (*zakat*); and, if circumstances allow it, go in pilgrimage to Makkah (hajj) so as to be there on Idu'l-Azha. (This day it is generally believed, commemorates the willingness of Ibrahim (Abreaham) to sacrifice his son Ismail on God's command). It is noteworthy that Indian Muslims do not include the waging of war (jihad) for the extermination of unbelief and the propagation of Islam among the obligations of a Muslim, as is done in many Muslim countries.

Islam is, however, more than the foregoing and similar other fundamentals.

Everywhere it incorporates much that is local and pre-Islamic, whether this be in the Arab heartlands or in distant places such as India. Students of Islam have commented on this internal tension owing to its character as a world religion that admits of no variation (for instance, the daily prayers are everywhere said in Arabic) and with its regional, country or national characteristics for example, the worship of saints and relics, which is common in India.

It is widely believed among South Asian Muslims that the Prophet Muhammad had himself wanted to bring the people of India into the universal Islamic community (*umma*). Since Arab traders already had contact with the western seaboard of India from pre-Islamic days (the Mapilas of Kerala were born of mixed marriages of Arab men and Malayali women), they must have been the first carriers of the new faith to the subcontinent. Islam arrived here as a political force in AD 712, when Sind was conquered on behalf of the Umayyad caliphate and incorporated in it. With the new rulers came their advisers on matters concerning Muslim holy law, the *shariah* (see Ahmad 1964; Mujeeb 1967).

The numbers of the immigrants were naturally not large, and they were stranger who knew neither the culture, languages and religions (Buddhism and Hinduism both were present) of Sind, nor the prevailing system of governance. In the circumstances, native support was necessary, but this in turn entailed a conciliatory attitude towards Indians, which included the assurance that, by and large, there would be few restrictions on non-Islamic religions. In terms of strict Islamic orthodox, however, these religious could only be called ignorance (*jahalat,* incorrect belief). The long-term consequence of this initial compromise made for reasons of the State was two-fold: first, it laid the foundations of multi-religious polities in which Islam and the Indic religions would coexist, much to the chagrin of the guardians of orthodoxy; second, it sowed the seeds of an Indian Islam, accommodating Indian cultural traits and forms of social organization (notably caste).

From the time of major incursions of political Islam into India, beginning with the invasions of Mahamud, king of Ghazni, in the early years of the eleventh century, two kinds of religious specialists became prominent. These were the *ulama* (doctors of shariah or the holy law) and the Sufis, (mystics in search of direct religious experience). The ulama urged the kings to uphold shariah and be vigilant on behalf of their own

religion rather than being tolerant of other misguided faiths. One such outstanding medieval scholar, Zia india-din Barani (c. AD 1280-1360) was of the opinion that the Muslim kings could not be the refuge of Islam unless they completely destroyed unbelief, polytheism, and idolatry. If the kings cannot actually exterminate the unbelievers (because they are so many), they surely should deny them authority and honour, he advised. Such extremist opinions, however, never became general among the ulama or ascendant in the ruling circles. The ulama actually split into two categories: while some of them confined themselves to their specialized duties and kept aloof from statecraft, others opted for a close relationship with the kings. The latter supported the actions of the rulers even when these were grounded in statecraft rather than true faith as interpreted by the ulama.

Islam spread throughout the length handbreadth of India, less by the episodic coercion and violence of the kings, and more by the generally peaceful efforts of the ulama and the Sufis. In areas of mass conversion, notably East Bengal (or what is today Bangladesh) and the Kashmir valley, other factors also contributed (directly or indirectly) to the phenomenon. It is noteworthy, however, that at the time of partition in 1947, after 800 years of Muslim rule, no more than a quarter of all the people of India (400 million) were Muslims. In the Gangetic valley, where Muslims provided enormous support to the demand for Pakistan, fewer than two out of every ten Indians professed Islam.

When Islam reached India, it was already marked by divisions of various kinds. According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad himself had prophesized that there would be more sects (*forqah*) in Islam than among the children of Israel, but that they would all be sent to hell by God. Only those who followed his words and deeds, and of his closest companions, would be the ones to be saved (*najiyah*). They came to be called the Sunni (from *sunnah*, customary way of life) or traditionalists or traditionalists, and account for the great majority of Indian Muslims. Their opponents are the Shiahs ('followers'), who came into being following Muhammad's death as the partisans of Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in'-law, whom they considered the legitimate successor *(khalifah)* and leader (*imam)*. It was not Ali, however, but Muhammad's father-in-law, Abu Bakr, who was chosen, resulting in the Sunni-Shiah split which even today leads to violence in both India and Pakistan.

Besides the Shiahs it is the Sufis who are excoriated by the traditionalists. A

connection has been sought to be established between the two heterodoxies by claiming Ali as one of the founders of Sufism (*tasawwuf*). According to another view, the Arabian philosophy derived from the teaching of al-Ghazzli (AD 1058-1111) was absorbed into Islam in the form of a mystical theology, but this locates Sufism late in the fifth century of Islam.

Some scholars including the renowned early medieval historian al-Biruni (AD 973-1048), found similarities between some key ideas of Sufism and the Brahmanical philosophy of Yoga or the magical Tantra. Indeed, it has been suggested that Abu Yazid Tayfur of Iran (d.874), a key figure in the development of Sufism, may have learned the principles of Brahmanical and Buddhist mysticism from Abu Ali of Sind who himself may have been a convert to Islam. Be that as it may, two general observations can be made. First, a considerable number of Indic elements are recognizable in Sufism in India, but only some of these are pure borrowals, the others being adaptations of classical Islamic Sufi ideas in the Indian cultural environment. Second, Sunni orthodox has always frowned upon both Shiahs and Sufis (see Rizvi 1978, 1982). Four major worldwide Sufi orders—namely, Chishti, Naqshbandi, Qadiri, and Suhrawardi—are present in India. Besides, there are numerous local orders of Faqirs and Darveshs: while some of them are seriously devout; the devotion to higher spiritual goals among others who are often given to excesses of various kinds including drug abuse, is highly suspect. Among the former, mention maybe made of the Rishi order of the Kashmir valley (see Khan 1994).

Islam was brought to Kashmir, it is generally believed, by the Kubrawi Sufi Sayyid Ali Hamadani late in the fourteenth century, but his efforts seem to have been confined to a small group of neo-converts in the city of Srinagar including the sultan. It was Shaikh Nuruddin (AD 1379-1442), the founder of the Rish order, who carried the new faith to the masses. His success owes much to not only his amiable disposition and peaceful methods of preaching but also to his familiarity with and adaptation of prevailing Brahmanical religions ideas and practices (Kashmir Shaivism). His choice of the name Rishi (a Sanskrit word meaning 'seer') for his order is itself revelatory. He adopted vegetarianism for himself and his followers out of his compassion for animals, and thus abjured the universal Muslim practice of animal sacrifice.

While some historians have written of two types of Sufism in Kashmir, the immigrant and the native, or the classical and the folk, others have denied the existence of this dichotomy, pointing out that Sufis of the Suhrawardi order and even the Kubrawis, befriended and eulogized the Rishis. According to the latter, the Rishis' very rootedness

in Kashmir's old religious traditions, combined with their exposure to the ideas of classical Sufism made them the ideal agents of the Islamization of Kashmir masses. It is noteworthy that Nuruddin claimed the Proper of Islam himself as the real founder of his order, locating himself at least notionally in shariah, the 'highway' of Islam.

It is not the Sufis alone who have contributed to the culture of religious diversity in Indian Islam. The reputedly more stringent ulama have also done so. Thus, in the late nineteenth century three groups of these doctors of the holy law of Islam led sectarian movements differentiated from one another by big issues (such as matters of belief and law) as well as small (including minutia of every day life). The most influential of these were the ulama of a famous seminary called the Darul Uloom at Deoband in north India (founded in 1867). Their educational programme too was grounded in the traditional curriculum and this opposed to the innovations and accommodations of western science that characterized the efforts of the modernists at the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh (founded in 1874).

Besides the Deobandis, the two other prominent reformist groups were the Ahl-I-Hadis ('people of the tradition') and the ulama of Bareilly popularly known as the Barelwis, who were opposed to both the other groups. In their disputations one or the other of the four recognized schools of Islamic law (Hanafi, Maliki, Shfii, Hanbali) were invoked, but the Hanafi school has always been the dominant one in India.

Finally, mention must be made of the Ahmadiyah sect which was formally proclaimed to be heretical and therefore a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan in 1974. Its founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839-1908) was born in Qadiyan, a village in north Punjab. Not trained as a Sufi, he was a law clerk by occupation. He also claimed to be the recipient of divine revelation and therefore the messiah (*mabdi*) promised to the Muslims. Although Ahmad did not dispute the Islamic belief in the closure of prophecy with Muhammad, he asserted that he belonged to a line of secondary prophets. Provoked and influenced by the work of Christian missionaries and the activities of the Hindu revivalist Arya Samaj movement, he organized his response on similar lines, and gathered a considerable following. The sect called Ahmadiyah, or Qadiyani continues to be recognized as Muslim in India, but it really survives on sufferance.

At the close of the lesson we would argue that India has the ideology of

religions pluralism. The state has no religion. But it respects on equal footing all the religions of the country. The state does not have any ill feeling about all these religions. Tolerance is the guiding spirit of Indian nation-states and it is called secularism. Hinduism tolerates by incorporating Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. As a matter of fact, for instance, in marriage Jainism and Sikhism are the parts of wider Hindu religion. Nation building in India has been developed by adopting such a policy toward other religions.

ASSIGNMENTS

Q. 1 What are the major religions followed by Indian population?

Q. 2 Describe the spread of different religions in the country. Provide a percentage-wise distribution of Indian religions.

Q. 3 Describe the religious situation of Arunachal Pradesh.

Q. 4 How religion promotes festival? Describe festivals of some mmunities.

Q. 5 Clarify the concept of Dharma.

Q. 6 Give the characteristics of Hinduism.

Q. 7 Islam wanted to develop a worldwide brotherhood. Comment on this statement.

Q. 8 Who are Shias? Write a note on it.

Q. 9 Write an essay on Sufism.

Q.10 Discuss religious pluralism in India.

8.4 Further Readings

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Buddhism and Sikhism

Structure

10.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

– Buddhism as religion.

– Sikhism as religion.

10.1 Introduction

Buddhism and Sikhism are in a broader way parts of Hinduism. When larger brotherhood is discussed it is manifestly said that wider Hinduism includes Buddhism and Sikhism. Historically speaking when Hinduism develops rigidity of Karmakand that is ritualism, Sikhism and Buddhism parted company with Hinduism. Similar is the case of Jainism. In contemporary Asia Buddhism has a wider spread. It has its adherents in the West also. However, it is a minority religion in India, the country of its origin. Named after the title Buddha (The enlightened one) of its founder, Gautama (c.563-483 BC), Buddhism began as a revolt against the Vedic pre-occupation with the supernatural, rejecting the beliefs as well as the rituals that went with them. The rejection repudiated the authority of the Brahmins. Gautama himself belong to the Kshatriya caste and indeed, he was successor to a kingdom the Bihar-Nepal area. Buddhism attracted

disciplines whom he taught the four noble truths which constitute the fundamentals of all schools of Buddhism.

10.2 Buddhism : India and beyond

Having originated in India, this great religion spread beyond its frontiers during Ashoka's time and afterwards penetrated into the major parts of Southeast Asia, China and the Far East. Of late, its influence has been rapidly growing not only in the East but also in the West. Today every fourth person in the world is a Buddhist. In fact, Buddhism is more a spiritual philosophy than a religion. Its attitude towards life has been placid and matter of act and its path is practical. Its emphasis on ethics, humanism, compassion and wisdom has all that can make it a universal religion.

The range of Buddhism is vast. In time it covers more than 2500 years. In space, it covers the Theravada countries like Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and parts of Bangladesh and India and the Mahayana countries, viz. Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam, Japan and China, although China is not strictly a Buddhist country as Taoism and Confucianism are also equally important religions there. However, Buddhism has dominated the thought of China for several centuries.

Wherever Buddhism spread, it influenced the indigenous culture of the country, be it China or Japan, Korea or Thailand. The art of the T'sang dynasty of China is considered to be one of the finest in the world and it is largely a Buddhist art. Various pagodas, *wats* or temples and beautiful images of the Buddha, stupas of Sanchi, caves of Ajanta, pillars of Ashoka with their capitals are a testimony to the exquisite art that developed under the influence of Buddhism. Also, Buddhism set such standards of tolerance, gentleness and compassion towards, the lower forms of life, that in the religious history of the world, we find few parallels.

Buddhism is the understanding of the teaching—for which the technical word is *sasana* or *dhamma*—of Gautama, the Buddha, and the religion and philosophy which have grown around that teaching during the Master's lifetime and during the succeeding centuries after his great passing away, *mahaparinirvan*

Sometimes Buddhism is wrongly presented as pessimistic. If this were true, we would

not have found its adherents today in Burma, Thailand and other Theravada countries happy and merry, perhaps the merriest—as some observers have pointed out—people on earth.

Ironically, Buddhism is a religion without the conception of God. It may be included in the category of mystic religions in as much as it strives for inner purity and intuitive realization of the oneness of the universe.

Buddhism always fought against caste, colour and such other distinctions. It supported the freedom of women and their right to reach the higher spiritual realms. Its love for animals and nature is deeply reflected in scriptures. An enemy is to be won not by hatred but by love, for, as the *Dhammapada* (verse 5) says,

> In this world
> hatred never ceases by hatred
> but by non-hatred.
> This is the eternal law

Buddhism has always aimed at raising the quality of life, not the outward standard of living. There is little importance to 'self' in Buddhism. On the contrary, the self must be eliminated (see the Buddhist theory of *Anatman-Anatta*) to enter into enlightenment, for the idea of attachment to the self or selfishness leads to various vices and desires whereby one seeks worldly comforts now here, now there, little caring for the miseries and sufferings of others.

The contribution of Buddhism in the realm of mass media is no less important. It considered no language sacrosanct. In spite of the insistence of some *bhikkhus* or monks, Brahmins by birth, that the Buddha should preach in Vedic Sanskrit, he refused to oblige and instructed his disciples to preach his doctrine in the people's own language. His liberal attitude impressed the masses and that was one of the reasons for the popularity of Buddhism and its rapid progress.

The impression that Buddhism teaches other-worldliness and a life of retirement and seclusion is also unfounded. The Buddha himself after his Enlightenment, *Bodhi*, engaged in an active public career. He traveled widely for forty-five years,

founded the *Sangha* or order of the Buddhist fraternity which included nuns also, visited many cities, towns and villages, meeting kings as well as commoners. Not only the Master but also his band of selfless preachers went from place to place spreading his doctrine.

The Buddha also introduced what we may call in modern parlance guided democracy in the Sangha. All official business in the formal meetings of the Sangha was transacted according to democratic methods. Every member had a vote and the decision of the Sangha was taken by a vote of the members of the Sangha. Not only during his lifetime did the Buddha manage the Sangha in a democratic spirit, but even after his death he did not want to restrict the freedom of the Sangha by appointing his heir. He declared before his *mahaparinirvana* or great decease that the *Dhamma* or doctrine and the *Vinaya* or code of conduct would lead the Sangha after him.

To encourage the virtues of detachment and non-possession, Buddhist monks were not allowed to own personal or private property. All furniture and other articles for the use of monks belonged to the Sangha. Thus vested interests were discouraged. Monasteries or *viharas* became centers for the spread of Buddhist culture, some of them finally developing into excellent centers of education like Nalanda and Takshashila, Vikramshila and Odangapuri. They attracted students from abroad, as is testified from the accounts of Chinese travelers like Fa-hein, I-tsing and Yan Chwang, who visited India for pilgrimage to Buddhist places.

The message of the Buddha not only changed the course of Indian history but it also influenced tremendously our neighbouring countries. Maurice Winternitz has remarked that it is only with Buddhist literature that we gradually emerge into the broad daylight of history. A great part of Buddhist literature belongs to universal literature.

The legend of the Buddha even today preserves its ever-youthful freshness and vitality. It has inspired poets, writers, intellectuals and even the common man. His life 'has been the theme of various epics and dramas and many a poet has drawn inspiration from it. Edwin Arnold's classic epic, *The Light of Asia*, saw more than one hundred and fifty editions in the West.

Cults of Buddhism

After the passing away of the Buddha, a schism developed in the Buddhist Sangha. Now that the Master was no more, there was reversal of his teaching and doctrinal differences began to grow. Various Buddhist councils were held to determine the meanings of the words of the Master and by the time of the third Buddhist council at the time of Ashoka, we are told, as many as eighteen schools had been formed. Differences and controversies that arose among the Buddhist sects showed the dynamism of Buddhist ideas that were influencing the thought currents of the time. Buddhism looked ahead, advanced and crossed the frontiers of India and conquered new lands without a single weapon but with its sublime message of love, compassion and wisdom.

Buddhist population in India is estimated at about thirty million. The concentration of Buddhists is to be found in Maharashtra where the founder of the neo-Buddhist movement and architect of the Indian constitution, the late Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, was converted to Buddhism at a special ceremony with a large number of his followers from the so-called 'untouchables' in 1956. Thus, the oppressed and downtrodden of the past centuries found in Buddhism a new means of advancement and psychological liberation. The neo-Buddhist movement has spread to other parts of the country and small pockets so Buddhist population can be found in U.P., M.P., Punjab, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, etc. Buddhists in India generally follow the tenents of Theravada Buddhism but the Buddhist followers in the Himalayan region, namely, Ladakh, Sikkim, Lahul-Spiti, Darjeeling and parts of Assam are mostly Mahayanists.

The Himalayan Buddhists of Ladakh, Sikkim, etc. Are adherents of Buddhism which we may call Tibetan Buddhism' which is basically a part of the Mahayana complex, although there is a shift of emphasis on certain aspects of Mahayana, e.g. tantra and occultism, esoterism, etc. In fact, it is from Tibet that Buddhism was introduced into Ladakh and Sikkim, although it is ironical that these parts of India should receive the religion not directly from outside. But history has its quirks. However, it is believed by some scholars that in the earliest stages the credit for introducing Buddhism in the Himalayan region may be ascribed to the missionaries sent out by Ashoka.

Like Tibet, in Ladakh and Sikkim also, there is a strong feeling for region and the population is intensely religious. People are simple and honest and have great faith in the lamas. There are numerous monasteries and stupas and Ladakh and Sikkim and

one can find the traditional sects of Tibetan Buddhism, namely, Kargud, Galuk Niyma and Sakya.

The exile of Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees after the Chinese occupation of Tibet has been a blessing in disguise for the people of the Himalayan region in that the presence of Tibet\an scholars has given a stimulus to studies in the Tibetan pattern of Buddhism and thus enriched the cultural and religious life of the entire Himalayan region. In fact, Indian Buddhism has become rich with the availability of Tibetan scholarship and Buddhist Himalayas on our side still richer with the treasures of Buddhist texts brought by Tibetans recently into our country.

Theravada Buddhism also spread to Burma, Ceylon, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and its Mahayana form to China, Japan, Vietnam and Mongolia. Wherever Buddhism permeated, it assimilated local rites and customs. In Tibetan Buddhism along with the old doctrines, one finds magic and tantrics cults also assimilated. Japan developed its 'Pure Land' Buddhism of salvation and grace and also 'Zen Buddhism' which believes that enlightenment comes instantly and directly into the heart of man.

Sri Lank received Buddhism through Ashoka's son Mahindra and daughter Sanghamitra in the 3rd century B.C., while it was introduced into China in the first century A.D. when the Emperor Min ti invited two Indian monks to China to translate Indian Buddhist works. It was introduced into Burma in the same century. Japan received it in the 67th century A.D. through Korea. In Thailand, emulating the example of Ashoka's religious fervour and association with the Sangha, King Li-Tai (c.1400 A.D.) entered the Sangha for a brief period and thus commenced a close association between the royal house and the Sangha of Thailand. Till today both the royalty and the Sangha are highly venerated in Thailand. Thus, the Buddha's message spread in a large part of Asia and Buddhism is today one of the major religions of the world.

The Doctrines of Buddhism

Three Marks : The fundamental teaching of the Buddha is that everything is impermanent or *anicca,* substance less or *anatta* and full of suffering or *dukkha.* These are called the remarks or *lakkhanas* of existence. These three were further extended—and quite logically—to the mark of *shunya* or void, which later became the

fundamental doctrine of one of the most important schools of Buddhism named Madhyamika, the school founded by the great Acharya Nagarjuna.

Buddhism is explained briefly in the well-known and oft-quoted statement, whatever is born is subject to destruction. The text of early Buddhism repeatedly tell us that a discipline attains an insight into the Dhamma when he realizes this fact. In fact, everything is transient and changing, but it is because of our attachment born of ignorance that we fail to see the truth and continue to live in our make-believe world and think that things are eternal. Origination and cessation, construction and destruction, these two factors are never at rest. According to Buddhism, there is no 'being' there is only 'becoming'. The universe is in a state of constant flux. According to the Buddha, the world is a wheel of becoming or *bhavachakra* which goes on and on. Nobody knows the beginning or the end of the world, *samsara* that which moves on.

The principle of impermanence logically leads to the theory ofsubstancelessness or absence of any permanent 'self', 'soul' or 'ego' or atman. There are various theories about the permanence of soul in other religions. Buddhism recognizes no such entity and in this it stands unique in the history of human thought.

In the Buddha's view, this conception of soul, self, ego or I-ness is illusion born of ignorance or *avijja*. What then is man? The Buddha answers that a being is composed of states of mind and matter which are always in flux. In the *Milinda-Panha*, the venerable Nagasena answers this question of King Milinda (Menander). He gives an example of a chariot. There is no central essence in a chariot. It is composed of yokes, spokes, framework, etc. Apart from these parts, there is no 'chariot' as such. Even so, a 'man' exists in and is composed of states of mind and matter. And these five states of being are : (1) *Rupa* or matter, (2) *Vedana* or sensations of pleasure, pain and indifference, (3) *Samjna* or cognition, (4) *Samskara* or synthetic mental states. Or *karma*-formations and (5) *Vijnana* or consciousness.

The Four Noble Truths

After the Enlightenment, in his first sermon at Sarnath, the Buddha propounded the four Noble Truths: (1) The Noble Truth of Suffering; (2) The Noble Truth of Arising or *Samudaya* of the Suffering, craving or *Tanha*; (3)The Noble Truth of cessation

or *Nirodha* of suffering, or *Nibbana*; (4) The Noble Truth of the Path or *Magga* leading to the cessation of Suffering, the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Truth of Suffering

As stated above, suffering is inherent in the very nature of things. It is omnipresent. Birth is suffering and similarly old age, disease, death, association with the unpleasant and separation from the loved one is suffering. Not getting what one desire, grief, lamentations, distress is suffering. In brief, all the five aggregates or *khandhas* are suffering. Thus suffering is the fact, the truth of life. It is the realistic view of life. It is not pessimism, as some would call it. For, the Buddha does not stop at proclaiming suffering but he has also shown the way to get out of it. Pessimists believe that the world is full of misery and there is no way out of it. The Buddha admitted that there are different forms of happiness but they are all implementing, full of suffering and subject to change. We have our own experience that even the best enjoyments of life are transitory, fleeting and never lead to lasting or true satisfaction. Therefore, the Buddha is realistic and objective when he says, 'Everything is dukkha'.

The Noble Truth of Arising of Suffering: Craving (Tanha)

According to the Buddha, the cause of suffering is not the wrath of gods or God or due to the arbitrary will of unknown powers above us. The cause of suffering is our craving which as the texts explain, leads to re-birth again and again and, is accompanied by lust, which seeks pleasure. Craving is never satisfied and manifests itself in various ways. The craving includes not only hankering after sense-pleasures, power, wealth, position but also attachment to ideas, views, opinions, theories and beliefs. All the trouble, according to the Buddha, arises out of selfish desires, which are never satisfied. In fact, there is no end to them. And clinging to these different cravings and seeking to satisfy them brings temporary successes and failures, hopes and disappointments, but never satisfaction itself. There fore, if one wants to get rid of suffering one must give up all kinds of craving.

The Noble Truth of Cessation of Suffering or Nirvana

The Buddha does not teach only suffering but shows the path to remove suffering. To eliminate suffering, one must eliminate its cause—desire, craving, thirst, whatever you

call it, and nirvana is nothing but extinction of craving. The state of desirelessness, of absence of craving is nirvana, here and now. It is difficult to define nirvana, the most important term and also the final aim in Buddhism. Its nature can never be defined in words, although we do find various descriptions; for example, it is a placid state of mind, place of liberation, end of suffering, supreme joy, state of unshakable emancipation of mind, unconditioned state tranquility supreme, ambrosia, the end of birth and death, etc.

The ideal of Theravada Buddhism is nirvana and that of Mahayana is bodhi. Nirvana is mainly explained in two ways (a) blowing out of the flame of desire or extinguishing of fire or *raga* or lust, *dosa* or *dvesha* or malevolence and *moha* or delusion. In the older texts, a simile of wind blowing out the flame is given. Buddhaghosa, the celebrated Pali commentator, derives the term from *nir+vana*, a state without the jungle or *vana* or craving or *tanha*, i.e. the place in which the jungle of craving has been completely cleared, a state of quiescence of all cravings.

Bodhi literally means 'awakening' in extended connotation, it is 'enlightenment', 'knowledge possessed by a Buddha. One who has obtained bodhi is a 'buddha'. Bodhi is also found in early texts as a synonym for nirvana. Nirvana is sometimes interchangeably used for bodhi in later Buddhism (Mahayana). Generally, however nirvana is used to describe the state of arhathood and bodthi the state of Buddhahood. Arhats realize nirvana and buddhas attain bodhi.

The Noble Truth of Way to the Cessation of Suffering : The Eightfold Path

The Buddha has shown us the path of the removal of suffering.It is the Noble Eightfold Path or *Ariya—Atthangika Magga* or *Arya-Ashtangika Marga*. The Eightfold Path is acknowledged as an excellent course of spiritual training, and has eight constituents or *angas:*

Right Understanding or *Samma ditthi*

Right Thought or *Samma samkappa*

Right Speech or *Samma vaca*

Right Action or *Samma kammanta*

Right Livelihood or *Samma ajiva*

Right Effort or *Samma vayama*

Right Mindfulness or *Samma sati*

Right Concentration or *Samma samadhi*

10.3 Sikhism

The Sikh religion, which originated in the Punjab in the teachings of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), is a monotheistic faith, whose adherents at present can be found all over India and in many other parts of the world too. Their estimated number is about twelve million. Their main homeland is the Indian part of the Punjab, but considerable Sikh populations are also found in the adjoining states, such as Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. Sikhs have settled in fairly large numbers in the larger towns of Uttar Pradesh, particularly after the partition of India in 1947. Migrating from their homes in Pakistan, they have gone and cultivated certain areas in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, which have normally been considered difficult and even dangerous. The Sikhs have added considerably to agricultural production there, and are considered excellent cultivators and farmers. In the larger towns, particularly Bombay, Calcutta and Kanpur, a large number of Sikhs are in various trades and vocations, and they run their own schools and colleges, besides their places of worship and participate usefully in the civic and economic life of the areas in which they now live. In most places they also run charitable instructions, such as hospitals and free feeding-houses for the poor. Where charity is concerned the Sikhs do not make any distinction of caste or creed, since one of the principal tenets of their faith enjoins them to look upon all mankind with brotherly feelings and to eschew narrow sectarianism. Abroad, the largest Sikh population is to be found in the United Kingdom (about a hundred thousand), in which they maintain their special traditions of piety and charity for all.

What has impressed the world most about the Sikhs is their superb martial quality. They make excellent soldiers and officers in all branches of the defence services of India and, because of their bravery, aptitude for discipline and traditions of fearlessness on the battlefield, are recruited in India's armed forces in greater

numbers than their proportion in the population of India would warrant. Their ardent patriotism is another great quality which has won for them universal admiration and respect.

Sikhs can easily be recognized by their distinct physical appearance. They wear their hair and beards unshorn, and cover their head with a turban. No other headgear is permissible for them. They are remembered and addressed with the honorific of 'sardar' or 'sirdar', which means a man of high standing. All Sikh names end in 'Singh', which means a 'lion'. This is ordained by their last Apostle, Guru Gobind Singh.

Most Sikhs have come from the various Hindu tribes and castes. There have been conversions also. Considerable numbers of American-born persons has adopted the Sikh faith, and are seen to respect its observances with commendable loyalty. Sikhism, however, does not sanction belief in the caste system, and all human beings are held to be equally deserving of Divine grace, and equally entitled to receive the teachings of religion.

As stated earlier, Sikhism is a monotheistic faith. Its conception of the Supreme Being embraces both aspects conceived in Indian philosophy—the Unattributed, *Nirguna,* and the Attributed *Saguna, Sargun*. In its unattributed aspects, which is unknowable and inaccessible by the human mind, the Supreme Being is called Par-Brahma to emphasize its inscrutable and mystic character. This Brahma is known in more orthodox Sanskrit terminology as Brahman, and is different from the deity Brahma, the creative aspect of the Indian trinity. Guru Nanak preferred to designate the unattributed Supreme Being by the term *Ek Onkar*, written with the figure 1 preceding *Onkar* set down as a syllable, *akshara* — unfragmented into letters. *Ek Onkar* stands at the beginning of the text of the *Granmth Sahib*, and is invoked on all occasions when divine blessing is to be sought and an atmosphere of holiness created. A pious Sikh, at the head of any writing, including letters, world inscribe this sacred syllable *Ek Onkar*. This is the equivalent of Par-Brahma or the Unattributed Supreme Being.

In its creative and attributive aspect, *Ek Onkar* is conceived as *Onkar.* According to Sikh philosophers, Onkar is Ek Onkar in its aspect of operating through *maya*. Maya in

Sikh thought is the creative principle; it is that which is the object of the senses and the intellect, what in Greek philosophy is called phenomena. While the Supreme Being, Ek Onkar, cannot be approached by the mind or the intellect, but only in the mystic state or *samadhi* induced by divine grace. Maya and its manifestations are subject to cognition and the processes of the intellect. Maya being the principle of manifestation is looked upon also as the veil that conceals the essence, the eternal reality. Hence Maya is considered to be the

source of the evil tendency in man's nature, and the fount of all actions proceeding from the five evils known to Indian ethical thought as *kama,* or lust, *krodha,* or wrath, violence, *lobha* or avarice, *moh*a or illusion, attachment to material objects and *ahamkar* or egoism. The endeavor of a man of God, the seeker called *jigyasu* in Indian thought and Sikh, Gurmukh or one facing Godwards in Guru Nanak's system, is to transcend the lures and shackles of Maya. This is done through prayer, meditation and *seva* or selfless service to mankind. With all man's actions towards realization and transcendence of *maya,* divine grace is still held indispensable, for realization is a gift from on high, which no cone by his own efforts can achieve. The seeker, under the Guru's guidance, must supplicate grace through prayer, humble service and meditation, and grace may descend upon him. With divine grace he will be able to achieve *mukti, mokhsa* or liberation, which in essence consists in transcending Maya and living perpetually with and in God. It is another name for the cessation of all desire and achievement of the sublime state wherein all passion and even the processes of the intellect are overcome.

In order to speak to the common folk in terms they would understand, Guru Nanak has also used the popularly current names for God drawn from mythology and the epics. Rama, Gopal, Murari, Narayan, Madho and such other names are employed by him in his hymns and poetical compositions. So also attributive names, expressive of the higher qualities that the human self must endeavor to approach, such as *dayal,* compassionate, *dayanidhi,* ocean of compassion, sacha, holy, eternal, Thakur, lord, master and many more. From the Muslim tradition, too, that had become popular in certain sections of society in the north, are drawn not only Allah and *Khuda*, but also attributive names such as *Karim*, kind, benevolent, *kahim*, merciful *Parvardigar*, the Cherisher, Sahib, lord. This part of the Guru's vocabulary is intended especially to foster goodwill between Hindus and

Muslims, so that all words expressive of devotion are found equally acceptable. There is no special *deva-bani*, divine language, and no language that may be held impure.

In Guru Nanak's teaching, certain terms stand out with colouring and emphasis especially given by him, and have become part of the Sikh tradition. These are Guru, Divine Guide, *Kartar*, Creator, *Akal*, Immortal, beyond time, *Satti-Nam*, the holy Name or Eternal Reality. A Sikh while contemplating spiritual truths must fix his kind on these terms. The characteristic Sikh term for God *Wahguru*, came after Guru Nanak's time in the course of the development of Sikh spiritual thought.

The path commended to the seeker in the Sikh faith is called *Sahaj*.*Sahaj* implies the way that doe not violates or force any of the principles of nature. Not only is the Sikh faith opposed to the performance of miracles as a mark of spiritual eminence, but it has also positively disapproved the pursuit of such powers in the course of the *Sadhana* of various forms of yoga. *Riddhi* and *Siddhi*, which stand for the attainment of such powers and more so the control of demoniac power by cults like the Kapalika involving dark and unholy practices, have all received severe condemnation in the teaching of the Gurus of the Sikh faith. *Hatha Yoga*, involving the control of breath to arouse occult and secret powers, along with severe self-maceration as is the case with numerous mendicant orders in India. has been pronounced to be a path of delusion.

The path of *Sahaj* is the way of prayer, meditation, concentration of mind on the Divine Essence and of seeking grace. It does not involve enforced celibacy or taking to a life of mendicancy as a mark of holiness. On the contrary, following the example of Guru Nanak himself, the ideal seeker must perform such duties life as his members of a morally organized society requires of him. This may involve hard, honest work for a living, maintaining a family, *grihastha* and, if need be, making sacrifices for the upholding of the moral values, dharma. The steps in the path of *sahaj* are what in popular language have been called by Guru Nanak, *suniyai, mannai* and *dhyana.* These are, respectively, reverent 'listening' to or absorption of holy truths and texts, pondering these truths to develop faith in them, and concentration of the powers of the mind on the realization of God. Another element especially emphasized by Guru Nanak, along with the three mentioned already, is *bhakti* or devotion.

To ennoble and purify life by conscious effort is the way of prayer, through

forbearance, through search after enlightenment, through devotion and austerity and the practice of purity. Such are the elements of *sahaj* expressed differently (*Japuji,* stanza xxxviii). In this discipline, likened to the goldsmith's smithy, is forged the pure metal of personality, which is the mystic phrase which Guru Nanak has called *Shabad*, literally sound or holy word, purified consciousness. This is also the state wherein the divine glance of grace perpetually blesses the seeker.

For grace, which is such an important key-concept in Guru Nanak's thought, apart from *Prasad* which comes from the ancient Indian tradition, one used some synonyms from the Muslim *sufi* sources. The Sufis were seekers of spiritual truths. From the Indian sources, *kirpa (kripa)* and *daya* are also frequently employed, along with certain compound formalities—*dayal, dayalu, kripalu*. So *mecherban, karim* have been taken from Muslim sources.

10.4 Conclusion

The Sikh religion during the five hundred years of its existence has played a significant role in the history of India as a liberating influence, as has been briefly indicate in the foregoing pages. Its influence as a spiritual force has been no less remarkable. It raised the human consciousness to the highest pinnacle of spirituality by inculcating devotion to the Sole Supreme Being (Ek Onkar) in terms going back to the founds of the spiritual thought of India. That way it became a binding force and tended to eliminate sectarianism. As between the two great traditions, Hinduism and Islam, it sought to create a bridge of understanding, tolerance and goodwill. In ages before modern humanistic thought penetrated to India, it championed the abolition of untouchability and caste distinctions of high and low by birth. It pleaded for a better status for women. Even more significant was its synthesis of spirituality and action. That way it brought back the ancient wisdom of the Gita to the masses. It has thus exercised a great enlightening influence.

Last may be mentioned its role in bringing spiritual light to the common masses, in the simple everyday language that they could follow. While the learned of various faiths used classical languages which were sealed books to the people to contradict one another, it was Guru Nanak and his successors who brought spirituality and sweetness to the millions, thus conferring on them *mukti.* Their message also helped inspire the masses to liberate themselves from the age-old yoke of tyrants.

ASSIGNMENTS

Q. 1 Discuss the influence of Buddhism in Asia.

Q. 2 Write an essay on spread of Buddhism.

Q. 3 Discuss the cults of Buddhism.

Q. 4 Critically examine the doctrines of Buddhism.

Q. 5 Describe fully the four noble truths.

Q. 6 How Buddhism exercises influence in contemporary nation-states of India.

Q. 7 What is Sikhism? Discuss its origin.

Q. 8 Who was the founder of Sikh faith? Write a note on his early life.

Q. 9 Discuss the teachings of Nanak.

Q.10 Write an essay on the doctrines of Nanak.

9.5 Further Readings

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Christianity

Structure

11.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with

- Christianity as Religion
- About Church
- About the Bible

11.1 Introduction

Christians form a small minority in the religious statistics of India; only one out of every forty Indians is a Christian, about 20 million. They are fairly spread out;' one finds them in practically all the sub-cultural areas and regions of the country. They are there not as 'settlers' or as 'foreign nationals' coming from some different place and culture; rather, they are sons of the soil and belong to one or another of the lifestyles that go to make up the complex mosaic of India. Dravidians or Aryans, high castes or low, city elite or tribals, factory workers or farmers—in all the corners of the nation—have accepted Jesus Christ as their guru and share with the Christians a common way of life.

There are differences in their distribution, no doubt. One finds a greater concentration of Christians in South India, since Christianity took root there in its very early centuries.

One of the most typical and noticeable activities of Christians is their Sunday gathering. For them Sunday is the day of the Lord. The worship generally includes hymns, various forms of prayers and the reading aloud of some passages from the Bible. Like hymns, these readings refer not only to God but also to the man Jesus Christ, alluded to as his son. At least on some important Sundays, most groups celebrate a symbolic 'meal' together, in which they remember and re-live in some way a very important event that took place during the last days of Jesus, around the first week-end of April of (probably) the year 30A.D.

The worship is celebrated in thousands of churches all over the country, Sunday after Sunday, and some churches even celebrate it every day. It is sung in the villages of Chotanagpur and in the cathedrals of Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Trivandrum. It is conducted in various forms and in many languages.

This form of worship, generally referred to as Communion Service, the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, goes back in remembrance of what Jesus did on the lat night he spent with his disciples and friends. Writing about it25 years later, St. Paul narrates the event in this way : 'The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and, when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup after super, saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me." (Corinthian11:23-26).

The Sunday gathering is a continuation of the action of Jesus at his last supper. It contains a very important mystical element. It is not merely a prayer meeting; it is an occasion on which the remembrance of Jesus makes the community aware of what Jesus did and taught, and of his living presence among them and in the world. Thanks to this community gathering at 'the Lord's Supper', the Christian life is an experience that 'the Lord is alive', and in this his new life, the meaning of his death is grasped as a source of grace for entire humankind. The memory of Jesus is, therefore, the core of the Christian religion. To understand Christianity, we must ask: Who was, or is, Jesus Christ?

Though Jesus is believed by Christians to be in a very unique sense 'Son of God', he does not thereby cease to be a man. The disciples knew him and knew that he had been born and had grown as any other man, subject to suffering to thirst, to hunger to ignorance even, as is inevitable in the human condition. The only thing he did not have is what can be avoided, and that is sin. Like every man, he finally died and yet he rose to new life. This means for the Christian not only that his Self was immortal but that in a wonderful way his whole personality, body and soul, was made new and alive in God. Incidentally, this belief in the resurrection is the reason for the importance Christians attach to the material world. They do not consider the world and the human body a prison from which man must escape. Evil and sin come from man's heart, not from matter. Matter is good; an essential part of man, for man is made by God not as an atman or soul that can exist perfectly without a body, but as a soul-in-matter, both aspects constituting the true reality and dignity of man. The body of Jesus rose then with him to the new life in God, although his new mode of existence no longer belongs to our spatio-temporal continuum. And like the body of Jesus, the final destiny of the world is to find its perfect reality in God.

Why did Jesus die on the cross? Externally, because of the opposition that his new ideas and preaching aroused in his own people, especially the leaders. But in a deeper, religious understanding of the event, this death had a special meaning. Christians have called it a *yajna* or a sacrifice, an offering to God, not just in order to restore the cosmic order, but rather to make a new union of man with God possible, and thus to conquer the massive sinfulness evident in the world. By the immense love and fidelity to the Father, which Jesus showed even at the time of his death, he opened a possibility for man to love God. There and then, God gave Himself to Jesus and to his brothers—the whole of mankind—in a new way. This means that by Jesus's life and death God redeems, makes new and saves. Without that death and the subsequent new life, we would remain enclosed in our sinfulness. Thanks to his death, we can obtain a new life, a new power to love authentically, the perfect liberation. We never quite make full use of this power, but it manifests itself in our lives, and it is the power of God reaching all men through Jesus. This is God's grace.

11.2 The Church

Christians in India and elsewhere insist on the importance of the community of believers wherein they find the living memory of Jesus Christ. The Church has for them an important role to play in the task of salvation. They see man as essentially a member of a community, not an isolated island. Man's salvation cannot be found in pure isolation or *kaivalya,* or a mere individual escape from the sufferings of life. Salvation must include the building up of a true fellowship; and deep communion with all men. The Church is the new community where the bonds of friendship and love are expressed in their deepest institutional form, in so far as the union of hearts is expressed by the sharing of the same faith in God and the acceptance of the same Lord as savior.

This union of hearts and minds is not based on the racial bond of birth or caste, common language or culture, nor even on a uniform way of worship. In fact, with Christianity, there are many modes of worship even in the same Church, and new rites constantly emerge. The deeper union experienced in the Church is based on love and on the shared conviction of having been made one 'people' by God Himself through Jesus Christ. This union implies and calls for variety. An ancient description given of the Church is that it is both one and 'catholic'. 'Catholic' means universal, capable of accepting and expressing itself in diverse forms of cultural and even of religious existence within the unity of the basic faith-experience. Thus, we have in India Christians from practically all its various subcultures and traditions. The Bengali Brahmin nationalist of the twentieth century. Brahmabandhav Upadhyay, could claim without betrayal of his Christian faith, I am a Hindu by birth, a Christian by rebirth.' He considered himself what in reality he was—a 'Hindu-Christian.'

The Church exists in a world of pluralism of faiths and secular movements. The Christians are related to the larger community of men, both at the national and the international level. Within this larger community the Christians as a group should like to be—they do not always succeed in bringing this wish into reality—a 'servant Church', a Church at the service of man after the example of Jesus Christ who did not come to be served but to serve (Matthew 20: 28). For this reason the services which the Church organizes for the benefit of men—educational, medical, social, religious—are not exclusively for the Christian community, but are extended to members of

other communities also. With these communities the Church is endeavoring more and more to enter into dialogue and to work together towards a common service of God and of man. An important text of the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council (1962-65) says; The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these (other) religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, 'the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (11 Corinthians:5:18-19). The Church, therefore, has this exhortation to her sons prudently and lovingly, through dialogue with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and love to acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these mean as well as the values in their society and culture (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions, 2).

The above somewhat idealistic picture of the Christian Church corresponds to the doctrinal framework of what Christians should be. The reality is far from perfect. One of the most painful aspects of Christian life in India and elsewhere is the fact that Christians are divided. It is not just the fact that there are different rites and traditions within the Church, for this is welcome; but that there is no complete agreement as to the doctrinal and ethical implications of the Gospel. The divisions for the most part have not originated in India itself; they have been imported here from the West.

There were, in the course of the twenty centuries of Christian history, two major periods of division. The first was the division in the eleventh century between the Churches in Western Europe, on the one hand, and those in Eastern Europe, on the other, including whatever remained of Christianity in North Africa and Asia Minor. For many centuries a constant estrangement had grown between these two groups, partly due to the division of the Roman Empire after the death of Theodosius 1 (395 A.D.). The rupture became clear in 1054 with the controversies between the Pope's legates and the Patriarch of Constantinople (modern Istanbul). This first great division of Christendom was more political than doctrinal. Apart from the rejection of the supreme authority of the Pope of Rome, little really religious divides

the Orthodox from the Roman Church.

Within the Western Church, a deeper division took place in the sixteenth century and developed further in the successive centuries. This was the 'Reformation', which started in Germany and soon spread through much of central and northern Europe and England. The main leaders of the separatist or 'reformed' party were Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Melanchton. Eventually in England Henry VIII followed suits. This division entailed not only the rejection of the Pope but also of many changes in the doctrinal and later in then moral expressions of Christianity. The Reformation was, however, not primarily a movement of division but of purification. What the reformers wanted was the correction of abuses that had entered into the Christian way of life. But as a side effect a division of Christendom took place.

We have, therefore, at present three main bodies or groups of churches in the Christian world: the various churches of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, of which the Orthodox Church is the most representative; the Roman Catholic Church governed by the college of bishops with the Pope as head; and the various forms of reformed or Protestant Churches, some of which are quite close in belief and practice to the other two traditions (e.g. the Anglican Church), and others which have developed along new lines of doctrine and practice.

India has been the victim of these divisions of Christendom in the West. The first communities in India were part of the universal, undivided Church of antiquity. Such was the Malabar Church, in close contact with the Christian communities in Persia from where bishops had come in the early centuries. A solid tradition and strongly felt conviction is that S. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus, is the originator of this Church. In the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church appeared on the scene. When the missionaries that came with the Portuguese met the Christian communities of Kerala, they compared notes on each other's faiths and practices. There was first a period of mutual recognition and acceptance but as could be expected at a period when communication was still very difficult, many misunderstandings and frictions arose. Eventually, part of the Church in Kerala acknowledged its communion with the People of Rome, while another part refused to accept it because it saw it as a threat of 'Latinization'. Thus there emerged in Kerala the Jacobite Church, in direct communication with the Syrian Jacobite Church

and the Catholic Church. From the former, the Mar-Thomas Church emerged in the 19th century. The Catholic Church consists of three different 'rites' (traditions and modes of worship); the Syro-Malabar, the Syro-Malankara and the Latin rites. Although there are differences between these rites, there is no division in faith, and one notices a growing cooperation and awareness of their oneness. The Christian Church in Kerala has also spread to North India and brought with it its traditions and rites. Many of its priests and nuns have volunteered for work elsewhere in India and abroad. Several dedicated persons from the Church in Kerala have attained a high degree of holiness, like the Venerable Sister Alphonsa (1910-1949) and Fr. Kuriackos Chavara (1815-1871), founder of the monastic order of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. The whole Christian Church in North India, and indeed the country, owes a great debt of gratitude to the services of the Malabar Church.

The Latin branch of the Roman Catholic Church is spread throughout the country. It became firmly established in the sixteenth century mostly along the Western and Southern coasts of the country. Two important groups were then formed : the Goan-Mangalorean-Maharashtrian communities which became somewhat Westernized in language and culture, and the Tamil community which kept close to their ancient language and traditions. The Churches of the Western Coast have been, with the Kerala Christians, the main agents in the educational, social and medical services offered in many regions of India. They have produced outstanding patriots like the freedom fighter Kaka Baptista; important literary works like the *Krista Purana* of Fr.Stephens in early Marathi (early seventeenth century); and reputed artists like Angelo Fonseca and Trinidade. Also saintly men of this community have given religious inspiration, like the Venerable Joseph Vaz (1651-1710), a missionary of Sri Lanka, and Fr. Agnelo de Souza (1869-1927) of the Missionary Societyof St. F. Xavier, Pilar, in Goa, and St. Gonzalo Garcia, a Franciscan martyr for the Christian faith in Japan in the sixteenth century. In the history of the Tamilian Church, one of the most important events is the effort of Robert De Nobili (1577-1656) for a greater indigenisation of Christianity. Already in the sixteenth century he learned not only Tamil, but also Telugu and Sanskrit, adopted a *sannyasi* way of life and defended the customs of the Brahmins of that time as compatible with the Christian faith. His

writings on the outcome of the Brahmins for his Roman authorities in the early seventeenth century give an astonishing amount of information about contemporary Hinduism in South India. Many companions followed his example and through their inspiring and saintly form of life, many castes people came to believe in Jesus Christ. Among them, Nilakantha Devasagayam Pillai (1712-1752) is reserved as a martyr. The first printed books in Indian languages came from this Christian community and classics of Tamil literature like C. Beschi's *Thembavani* (1726) are even today studied in South Indian Universities.

In the following centuries, the Roman Catholic Church established new important communities among the caste people o Andhra (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and among the tribals of Bihar and Assam (nineteenth and twentieth centuries), and among the scheduled castes in several parts of India, specially in the Gangetic plain (twentieth century). The Anglo-Indians generally being either to the Roman Catholic Church or to the Protestant Church.

Not that Christians were absent from North India before the nineteenth century. Apart from the early centers in contact with the Syrian Church, already in the sixteenth century the great Moghul emperor Akbar requested the presence of some Jesuit priests at his court to discuss religious matters. To these priests we owe some of the most fascinating historical accounts of life at the court of the Moghul emperors, as, for example, in Fr. Montserrate's memoirs (1582 and 1590). Thanks to a *farmaan* from Akbar, a small church was built at the Agra court around 1599. Later generations of missionaries continued to be accepted in the country, and to them we owe, among other cultural contributions, the first Sanskrit grammar written in a Western language, in Latin, by Roth nearly a century and a half before the better-known grammar of Colebrooke in 1805.

Meanwhile Protestant Christianity also made its appearance in India first with the arrival at Tranquebar of B. Ziegenbalg of the Lutheran Mission in 1706 and later with the landing in Calcutta of William Carey in 1793 who settled in Serampore, West Bengal from 800. To these churches and the many others that followed them in the succeeding centuries specially once the missionary societies were formed in the Protestant countries, we owe a great deal in the development regional languages and

printing in India, particularly because of their concern for early translations of the Bible. These churches also paved the way for a growth of literacy all over the country and many of themes respected educational institutions of India were started under their patronage. One can truly say that the renaissance of India inaugurated by Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal owes much to the work of these Christian churches. Among the outstanding mystics and saintly people of the Protestant Churches, we must remember Sadhu Sunder Singh (1889-1929), Narayan Seshadri (1820-1891), Narayan Vaman Tilak (1861-1919), Dhanjibhai Naoroji (1820-1908) and the Rev. Imad-ud-Din (1822-1900) (cf .P.J. Thomas, *100 Indian Witnesses to Jesus Christ*, Bombay,1974). A number of Protestant Christians, notably C.F. Andrews, worked side by side with Gandhiji in the struggle for social reform and political independence.

11.3 The Bible

Whatever be their denominational differences, Christians share note only the living memory of Jesus Christ, but a common sacred writing, the Bible or Holy Scripture. A great love of the Bible has been expressed in the twenty centuries of Christian history. Probably no other book has had a deeper influence on any civilization than the Bible on Christendom. No other book has surely been so much copied, illustrated, printed, studied, commented upon, analysed and paraphrased as this text, the first complete book ever to be printed way back in 1456. In most Christian prayer meetings portions of this book are read out and often commented on. In the Bible Christians find not merely a historical account of the life and teachings of Jesus, a record of the past. For them the Bible is a living book today : God's own Word resounds whenever these pages are read with faith and devotion.

This belief does not imply that the Bible is note a work of human authors, or that God 'dictated' its contents to men. Christians are aware and accept that the Bible is clearly the work of human minds and is written in very human languages of 20 or 25 centuries ago—Hebrew, Aramaaic, Greek, often in a very beautiful style, but at times in quite clumsy expressions. Through these words and styles of individual men, God's own word. His call and his presence come to meet man. This is the reason why Christians love and revere the Bible. However, for them the Bible never takes the place of Jesus Christ. In this sense, Christianity is not primarily a religion of the

book, but a religion of Jesus.

The Bible is not in fact a 'book' in the modern sense of the word, but a collection of 73 writings dating from about the ninth century B.C. to the end of the first century A.D. The writings in the Bible are divided into two main sections : the 'Old Testament', with 46 writings and the 'New Testament' with 27. The Old Testament, nearly four times as long as the New Testament, corresponds to the Bible of Judaism and for Christians forms the background to and preparation for the New Testament which along refers directly and historically to the person of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament writings consist first of a record of historical experiences of a people, the race of 'Israel'. The various vicissitudes in the history of Israel and the awareness its religious leaders had that God came to them as Saviour and that God is always faithful in His promises of mercy and love from the core of Old Testament literature. The most important event is the 'Exodus' or escape to freedom of a band of slaves working in Egypt. To this historical core were added the writings of the prophets. Who between the eighth and third centuries B.C. appeared in the history of Israel to explain to the people the religious meaning of the events in their national and political life. They constantly brought the people face to face with their infidelity, their oppression of the weak, their sinfulness, and reminded them of the demands for goodness and justice on the part of God, their Saviour. Further, a collection of prayers or 'psalms' and other songs often used in the public worship of the Jews, was also added to the Bible. These show a great sense of *bhakti*, and express feelings of trust, faith, love repentance, etc. Another group of writings of the Old Testament expresses the deeper religious beliefs of the people regarding the origins of mankind (creation accounts) and of suffering (the 'Fall') and the meaning of history as progressing towards a great manifestation 'the Day of the Lord' (Apocalyptic literature). Finally, some stories and 'Wisdom' literature express the practical implications of a life of faith and dedication to God.

The New Testament consists of :

(1) Four Gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John on accounts of the life teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as experienced by his closest disciples;

(2) A historical account of the earliest preaching in the Christian communities and the establishment of Christianity in the countries around the eastern Mediterranean Sea (the Acts of the Apostles, probably written by Luke);

(3) Twenty-one letters or writings of the early disciples of Jesus, notably those of an outstanding mystic and thinker, St. Paul; which express the meaning of the person and work of Jesus and exhort the Christian communities to live their new faith enthusiastically; and

(4) Finally, there is a symbolic writing, the book of 'Revelation' or 'Apocalypse; its author endeavours to instill a sense of hope and courage in the early persecuted Christians, and uses very colourful symbols which are difficult to understand or interpret today.

All these writings, in spite of their heterogeneity, possess a clear religious unity, a common outlook on man and his relationship with God and a consistent view of the way of life based on Christian faith. Their teaching and symbols form the warp and woof of Christian culture. The Bible has been translated into all the known languages of the world, and new translations are made each year. In English, the well-beloved King James version (the authorized version) dates only from the seventeenth century. Today more updated translations are normally used.

In India, the burden of Bible translation and publication has mostly fallen on Protestant churches. The first printed Bible was a Tamil translation by Zieganbalg and Schultz in the early eighteenth century (NT in 1715 : OT in 1726). But the most impressive effort was made from Serampore in Bengal, where William Carey ably assisted by Ward and Marshman published no less than40 Bible translations between 1800 and 1834. Note all these translations are of high quality, but some became important contributions to the growth of the Indian languages. The process of correction and more faithful translation is constantly going on in all the languages and generally with the cooperation of all churches. Today the Bible is available in part or in whole in no less than 32 Indian languages.

The Great Commandment

Once, towards the end of Jesus' life, a pandit went up to him and put him this question : 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus answered :

> You must love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. The whole Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets depend on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:36-40)

This precise, very definite teaching of Jesus is the dominating ideal of the Christian vision of life. Man is made to love and love means self-dedication, self-gift, self-sacrifice. The object of man's love is first and foremost God, who alone is fully worthy of love and who Himself creates and saves man in love. The purpose of the Christian existence is to make this love come true in one's life. Life eternal, which will extend beyond death, will be the flowering of this love in the presence of God Himself, experienced without any obstacle.

But this love for God finds its concrete expression in the love for other men. Nobody can love God who doesn't love his fellowmen. And thus the service of man is always in-built in the Christian religious ideal. All the activities and attitudes of men are ultimately judged by this single law of love; all efforts to promote great social justice in the world, all work for the building up of a new humanity where the unique dignity of each man is respected and where all have equal opportunities, all the struggle for the liberation of man from individual and structural oppression, every form of human activity, has a religious value if it is inspired by this law of love.

In our world of clash and struggle, this law of love cannot be lived without a good deal of self-denial, of acceptance of sufferings, persecutions, and sacrifices that life may demand. We are called upon not to be frightened by them. Suffering has a mysterious value when mingled with love, for in suffering love manifests all its beauty. This is why the simplest and mot powerful symbol of Christianity is the

Cross: on this sign of torture and of shame Jesus, the Son of God, hung and gave His life in the fullness of love for God and for man. Through it, new life came to Him and to all of us. Through His cross, Christians hold, salvation comes to all men and this is exactly what Christians celebrate in their Sunday worship.

Assignments

Q. 1 Discuss the spread of Christianity in India.

Q .2 What is understood by the Son of God?

Q. 3 Write an essay on the Church.

Q. 4 Describe the Church in India.

Q. 5 What is the history of Roman Catholic Church in India?

Q. 6 What are the holy scriptures of Christianity?

Q. 7 Write a note on Bible.

Q. 8 What is the New Testament?

Q. 9 What do you understand by the greatest Commandment in the Law?

Q.10 Write a note on Jesus Christ.

11.4 Further Readings

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Jainism

Structure

12.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with

- Christianity as Religion
- About Church
- About the Bible

12.1 Introduction

Along with Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism is one of the ancient religions of India. It still has its own limited following. Jainism preaches a path to spiritual deliverance through a disciplined way of life founded upon the principle of non-violence. In the course of its history, it evolved into a well developed cultural system. The Jain cultural tradition made a significant contribution to Indian civilisation in various areas such as philosophy and logic, art and architecture, mathematics, astronomy and astrology, and literature. Though Jainism as a religion makes use of several religious concepts that are commonly found in Buddhism and Hinduism it has its own identity.

12.2 Birth of Jainism

Jainism was founded by **Vardhamana Mahavira** regarded as the 24th and the last Tirthankara, in the 6th Century B. C. It originated in the Ganga basin of North India, the scene of intense religious speculations, meditations and activity at that time, Buddhism too appeared in the very same region. Both the relgions questioned the authority of the Vedas and rejected the ritudistic Brahmanic School. Jainism, thus developed as a protest against the exclusion of all but the Brahmins from the ascetic fraternity. The founders of both the religions though never met each other, travelled mostly in the same regions [Mithila, Sravasthi, Magadha, Vaishali, Kaushambi and other places of the day] for the propagation of their faith.

Vardhamana Mahaveera, who was born in a Kshatriya family, received the training and education generally given to princes of the day. He soon realised the futility of worldly life and turned an ascetic at the age of 30. He practised hard penance and meditated for 12 years. At last he attained the True Knowledge whiel meditating under the sal tree. He then became a "Jina" [conqueror] and Tirthankara. Afterwards he began to preach his doctrine and popularised "Ahimsa" and on it he built an ethical code for householders as well as for monks. He preached what he had realised for about 30 years and died at the age of 72 at Pavapuri in Patna District of Bihar.

12.3 Main Teachings

Like the Buddha, Mahavira also held that the world was full of sufferings. The misen of "Samsara" was regarded as universal. Hence, he recommended a "moksha-magra" [path to salvation which consisted of three principles known as "Ratna Trayas" [Three Jewels]. These Principles are :

Right Faith [Samyak Darshana],

Right Knowledge [Samyak Jnana], and

Right Conduct [Samyak Charita].

Mahavira also stressed upon the moral conduct. The Anuvrata or the moral code which he prescribed consists of the five important principles.

a) Ahimsa [non-violence],

b) Satya [truth]

c) Asteya [non-stealing],

d) Brahmacharya [control of sex],

e) Aparigraha [free from greed]

Mahavira laid great emphasis on non-violence. In fact, all the religious rites of Jains are centred round non-violence. In no other school of philosophy do we find the application of non-violence as comprehensive as in Jainism.

Jainism, in course of time, got divided into two sects known as the Digambara and the Svetambara. Digambaras who are usually found in South India held that the monks should not wear any clothes, and the Svetambaras insisted that they should. Jainism, however in both forms is one as far as its philosophy is concerned.

Unlike Buddhism, Jainism did maintain good relationshipos with Hinduism. It employed Brahmin priests as its domestic priests who officiated at their birth rites and often acted as officials at their death and marriage ceremonies. It had a place for the Hindu Gods like Rama and Krishna in their temples. Mahavira's organisation took refuge in Hinduism whenever persecuted. To the side conquerors Jainism appeared only a part of the greater system, that is, Hinduism.

Jainism received royal patronage at the hands of some of the Indian rulers. It is said that Chandragupta Maurya became a follower of Bhadrabahu and accompanied his gun to Sarvanabelagola. In the 2nd century B.C., Kharavela of Kalinga popularised Jainism and setup several images. During the 5th and 12th centuries A.D. several southern ruling families like the Gangas, Kadambas, Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta extended their patronage to Jainism. About 1100 A.D. Jainism became popular in Gujarat where the Chalukya kings, Siddharaya and his son Kumarapala openly professed Jainism and encouraged literature and building activities of the hims.

12.4 Contributions of Jainism to Indian Culture

1. **Jains Played an important part in the Linguistic Development :** While the Brahmins established their supremacy over Sanskrit and Buddhists used Pali for the purpose of writing and preaching, the Jains used the local languages for their

religious propaganda as well as for preserving their knowledge. The early Kannada classical works were written by Jain poets. Most of the major and minor epics in Tamil were also composed by the Jain authors.

2. **Jainism has contributed to Indian art :** The Jains erected stupas in honour of their saints. Jains built temples cut in rocks. THe Jain marble temples at Mount Abu in Rajasthan display some of the finest examples of sculpture. The huge stone of Bahubali, known as Gomateshwara at Saravandabelagola and Karkala in Karnataka State are among the wonders of the world, The numberous Jain temples are found in Parshvanath Hills, Pavapuri, and Rajgir in Bihar and Girnar in Palitana in Kathiawad in Gujarat.

3. **Jains gave great importance to Ahimsa or non-violence :** All the acts prescribed by the religion are centred round "ahimsa". The Jain philosophy of Ahimsa was responsible for ending "ahimsa" in Yajnas and other Vedic rites. It ionspired millions of people to adopt vegetarian diet.

4. **Glorification of Human Heritage :** Jainism holds that heaven is the privilege of man alone. The pleasures of even the Gods should come to an end one day or other unless they become men. This embodies an important truth namely, man's heritage as man is far superior to any other riches in the world. The main message of Jainism to mankind is that : "Be a man first and last, for the kingdom of God belongs t the son of man." It is the same truth that is proclaimed in unmistakable arms by the upanishadic text : Tat Tvam asi" [Thou art that]

   Jains do not believe int eh Creator of the world and hold that man's emancipation from the Karma is a personal effort Man is the architect of his own destiny.

Geographic Distribution of Jains

Jainism once held a wide sway in India, but now the followers of Jainism are numerically very small and they are found in both the northern and southern states. They do not constitute a majority any where in India. They constitute 0.4% of the population of India and their number hardly exceed 3.4 millon [1991 census]. The Jains are found

relatively in a large number in states such as Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, M. P., Karnataka, U. P. In fact, 90% of them are found in these states only.

The Jain population is nto growign fast in India. The population of all the six major religions of India has increased but Jains have increased only marginally, that is, by 4.42%, whereas the arragge rate of increase in the case of the other five religions was 26.77%. Its growth is almost stationery or only marginal. There are a few causes for that :

1. Jains do not allow widow remarriages. Comparatively, Jains have a low percentage of their women married in the age group of 15 to 39 years. For example, during 1911-31 almost 1/5 of their women in this age group were widows. It goes without telling that the enforced widowhood cut down Jain population to a large extent.

2. It is also said that Jains have a low fertility within the circle of marital relations. The humber of married women is also said to be very low next only to the Parsis.

3. Jains are mostly urban dwellers. They are lagely literate and hence have a liking for small families.

4. Jains do not believe in conversions. Unlike the Muslims and Christians the Jains do not resort to convrsion activities to acquyiare new converts, Jainism also does not get new entrants who join its fold voluntarily.

"The Jain community, according to Sangave, a modern Jain socioligist, had an open class system : people could move from one class to another according to their aptitude. Untouchability is not practised among them and interdining is allowed. However, the Jains have endogamous Jatis A 1314 document mentioned 87 Jatis is one branch of the community of these, 41 had a popular of less than 500. A more recent [1953] study estimates nearly 60 endogamous groups with population of less than one hundred each.

Sect, Saints/Sants, Sadhus and Shrines

Structure

13.1 Objectives

In this chapter the learner

- will have an understanding of concepts
- Different form of religious groups

13. 2 Sect

A sect is a relatively small religious group. Its members are usual though by no means always, drawn from the lower classes and the poet Sects often reject many of the norms and values of the wider society and replace them with beliefs and practices which sometimes appear strarger to the non-believer. As a result, sects are, in Peter Berger's words, tension with the larger society and closed against it'. Sects are insure groups which are largely closed to those who have not gone through the initiation procedures for membership. They institute a strict pattern', behaviour for members to follow and make strong ciaims on their loyality. Belonging to a sect is often the dominant factor in a member's life. I organization of Sects tends to be in terms of small face to face group, without a hierarchy of paid officials and a bureaucratic structure. Of worship is characterized by an intensity and open commitment which is lacking in many churches and denominations. The Black Muslim sect illustrates many of the above points. It also shows the relationship

between the circumstances of its members and the beliefs and practices of these sects.

Founded in Detroit in the early 1930s, the Black Muslims, or more correctly the Nation of Islam, had some fifty Temples in1959 in low-income Black ghetto areas. The sect rose to prominence in the early 1960s when the Black American movement for self-determination developed. Members are largely drawn from those in poverty; the stated objective of the sect is to recruit the Negro in the mud'. The Black Muslims believe that Blacks are 'by nature divine' and that Whites are inferior and evil by nature. They prophesy that Whites and their religion will be destroyed in the year 2000 and that Blacks will then rule forever 'under Allah's guidance in a 'New World'. On initiation into the sect, members replace their 'slavename' with a Muslim name. They are told, . You are not a Negro from this day on. You are now a Muslim. You are now free'. Accompanying this identity transformation is a rejection by members of their former life style, of their non-Muslim friends and of lower class Black society which is referred to as 'the dead world'. In most large cities the Muslims operate small businesses - barber's shops, clothing stores and restaurants. Their *Economic Blueprint for the Blackman* advocates economic and dependence from White America. The Muslims are encouraged to work hard, save and abstain from luxuries. A strict moral code, similar to ascetic Protestantism, which forbids the use of alcohol, tobacco and narcotics, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, dancing, dating and many forms of sport, is imposed on all members. In particular, the responsibilities of the man as husband, father and breadwinner are emphasized. Life revolves around the Temple. Members are either attending services or courses on self-improvement, looking after the welfare of fellow members or recruiting new members.

The early 1960s was a period which promised change and improvement the position of Blacks in America. For many Blacks in the areas of eatest poverty, the Black Muslim sect offered a means to translate this promise into reality. It provided possible solutions to the problems of poverty, unemployment, broken families and the negative self-concept produced by the stigmas of blackness and poverty. Statements by members indicate that sect membership gave them purpose, direction, pride, self-respect and hope for the future.

Max Weber argues that sects are most likely to arise within groups which are marginal in society. Members of groups outside the maainstream of social life often feel they are not receiving either the prestige and/or the economic rewards they deserve. One solution to

this problem a sect based on what Weber calls a 'theodicy of disprivilege' (a theodicy a religious explanation and justification). Such sects contain an explanation for the disprivilege of their members and premise them a 'sense of honour' either in the afterlife or in a future 'new world' on earth.

An explanation for the developmtmt of sects must account for the variety of social background represented in their membership. Sects are not confined to the lower strata of society. For example, the Christian Science sect has a largely middle-class membership. The concept of relative deprivation can be applied to members of all social classes. Relative deprivation refers to subjectively perceived deprivation, that which people actually feel. In objective terms the poor are more deprived than the middle class. However, in subjective terms certain members of the middle class may feel more deprivation than the poor. Relative deprivation applies to the middle-class hippy in California who rejects values of materialism and achievement and seeks fulfilment in Transcendental Meditation. It applies equally to the unemployed Black American who joins the Black Muslims. Both experience deprivation in terms of their own particular viewpoints. Sects can therefore be seen as one possible response to relative deprivation.

Sects tend to arise during a period of rapid social change. In this situation traditional norms are disrupted, social relationships tead to lack consistent and coherent meaning and the traditional 'universe of meaning' is undermined. Thus Bryan Wilson sees the rise of Methodism as a response by the new urban working class to the 'chaos and uncertainty of life in the newly settled industrial areas'. He argues that, 'newly emergent social groups are, at least in the, context of a society in which the religious view of the world dominates, likely to need and to evolve new patterns of religious belief to accommodate themselves to their new situation'. In a situation of change and uncertainty, the sect offers the support of a close-knit community organization, well defined and strongly sanctioned norms and values and a promise of salvation. It provides new and stable 'universe of meaning' which is legitimated by its religious beliefs.

13.3 Saints / Sants

A saint, also known as a hallow, is one who has been recognized for having an exceptional degree of holiness, sanctity, and virtue. While the English term "saint" originated in Christianity, the term is now used by historians of religion "in a more general way to refer

to the state of special holiness that many religions attribute to certain people," with the Jewish Tzadik, the Islamic wali, the Hindu rishi or guru, and the Buddhist arahat or boddhisatva also referred to as saints. Depending on the religion, saints are recognized either through official church recognition or by popular acclaim.

In Christianity, "saint" has a wide variety of meanings, depending on its usage and the denomination. The original Christian usage referred to any believer who is "in Christ" and in whom Christ dwells, whether in heaven or in earth. In Orthodox and Catholic teachings, all Christians in heaven are considered to be saints, but some are considered to be worthy of higher honor, emulation, or veneration, with official church recognition given to some saints through canonization or glorification.

General characteristics

The English word *saint* is a translation of the Greek word (hagios), derived from the verb (hagiazo), which means "to set apart", "to sanctify" or "to make holy". The word appears 229 times in the original Greek manuscripts and appears 60 times in the King James version of the Christian New Testament. As used by the apostolic authors of scripture, saint did not refer to deceased persons who have been granted sainthood, but rather to living persons who had dedicated themselves to God.

The term in English was originally used in Christianity, though historians now use the term for representatives of all major religions who are considered worthy of veneration for their holiness or sanctity. Many religions also use similar concepts, but different terminology, to venerate individuals worthy of honor in some way. John A. Coleman S.J., Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, wrote that saints across various cultures and religions have the following family resemblances:

1. exemplary model;
2. extraordinary teacher;
3. wonder worker or source of benevolent power;
4. intercessor;
5. a life often refusing material attachments or comforts;
6. possession of a special and revelatory relation to the holy.

While there are parallels between these (and other) concepts and that of sainthood, each of these concepts has specific meanings within a given religion. Also, new religious movements have sometimes taken to using the word in cases where the people so named would not be regarded as saints within mainstream Christianity.

The anthropologist Lawrence Babb in an article about Sathva Sai Baba asks the question "Who is a saint?", and responds by saying that in the symbolic infrastructure of some religions, there is the image of a certain extraordinary spiritual king's "miraculous powers", to whom frequently a certain moral presence is attributed. These saintly figures, he asserts",are "the focal points of spiritual force-fields", exerting "powerful attractive influence on followers but touch the inner lives of others in transforming ways as well.

Christianity

Anglicanism

In the Anglican Communion and the Continuing Anglican movement, the title of Saint refers to a person who has been elevated by popular opinion as a pious and holy person. The saints are seen as models of holiness to be imitated, and as a 'cloud of witnesses' that strengthen and encourage the believer during his or her spiritual journey. The saints are seen as elder brothers and sisters in Christ. Official Anglican creeds recognise the existence of the saints in heaven.

So far as invocation of the saints is concerned, one of the Church of England's Articles of Religion "Of Purgatory" condemns "the Romish Doctrine concerning....(the) Invocation of Saints" as "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God". However, each of the 44 member churches in the Anglican Communion are free to adopt and authorise their own official documents, and the Articles are not officially normative in all of them (e.g., The Episcopal Church USA, which relegates them to "Historical Documents"). Anglo-Catholics in Anglican provinces using the Articles often make a distinction between a "Romish" and a "Patristic" doctrine concerning the invocation of saints, permitting the latter.

In high-church contexts, such as Anglo-Catholicism, a saint is generally one to whom has been attributed a high level of holiness and sanctity. In this use, a saint is

therefore not a believer, but one who has been transformed by virtue. In Roman Catholicism, a saint is a special sign of God's activity. The veneration of saints is sometimes misunderstood to be worship, in which case it is derisively termed "hagiolatry".

Some Anglicans and Anglican churches, particularly Anglo-Catholics, personally ask prayers of the saints. However, such a practice is seldom found in any official Anglican liturgy. Unusual examples of it are found in The Korean Liturgy 1938, the liturgy of the Diocese of Guiana 1959 and The Melanesian English Prayer Book.

Anglicans believe that the only effective Mediator between the believer and God - the Father, in terms of redemption and salvation, is God -the Son, Jesus Christ. Historical Anglicanism has drawn a distinction between the intercession of the saints and the invocation of the saints. The former was generally accepted in Anglican doctrine, while the latter was generally rejected. There are some, however, in Anglicanism, who do beseech the saints' intercession. Those who beseech the saints to intercede on their behalf make a distinction between "mediator" and "intercessor", and claim that asking for the prayers of the saints is no different in kind than asking for the prayers of living Christians. Anglican Catholics understand sainthood in a more Catholic or Orthodox way, often praying for intercessions from the saints and celebrating their feast days.

According to the Church of England. a saint is one who is sanctified, as it translates in the Authorised King James Version (1611).

Now therefore arise, 0 LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.

Eastern Orthodoxy

In the Eastern Orthodox Church a saint is defined as anyone who is in Heaven, whether recognized here on earth, or not. By this definition, Adam and Eve, Moses, the various prophets, except for the angels and archangels are all given the title of "Saint". Sainthood in the Orthodox Church does not necessarily reflect a moral model, but the communion with God: there are countless examples of people who lived in great sin and became saints by humility and repentance, such as Mary of Egypt, Moses the Ethiopian, and of course Dysmas, the repentant thief who was crucified, Therefore, a more complete

definition of what a saint is, has to do with the way that saints, through their humility and their love of humankind, saved inside them the entire Church, and loved all people.

Orthodox belief considers that God reveals his saints through answered prayers and other miracles. Saints are usually recognized by a local community, often by people who directly knew them. As their popularity grows they are often then recognized by the entire church. The formal process of recognition involves deliberation by a synod of bishops. If successful, this is followed by a service of Glorification in which the Saint is given a day on the church calendar to be celebrated by the entire church. This does not, however, make the person a saint; the person already was a saint and the Church ultimately recognized it.

It is believed that one of the ways the holiness (sanctity) of a person is revealed, is through the condition of their relics (remains). In some Orthodox countries (such as Greece, but not in Russia) graves are often reused after 3 to 5 years because of limited space. Bones are washed and placed in an ossuary, often with the person's name written on the skull. Occasionally when a body is exhumed something miraculous is reported as having occurred; exhumed bones are claimed to have given off a fragrance, like flowers, or a body is reported as having remained free of decay, despite not having been embalmed (traditionally the Orthodox do not embalm the dead) and having been buried for some years in the earth.

The reason relics are considered sacred is because, for the Orthodox, the separation of body and soul is unnatural. Body and soul both comprise the person, and in the end, body and soul will be reunited; therefore, the body of a saint shares in the "Holiness" of the soul of the saint. As a general rule only clergy will touch relics in order to move them or carry them in procession, however, in veneration the faithful will kiss the relic to show love and respect toward the saint. Every altar in every Orthodox church contains relics, usually of martyrs. Church interiors are covered with the Icons of saints.

Because the Church shows no true distinction between the living and the dead (the saints are considered to be alive in Heaven), saints are referred to as if they were still alive. Saints are venerated but not worshipped. They are believed to be able to intercede for salvation and help mankind either through direct communion with God, or by personal intervention.

13.4 Sadhu

In Hinduism, sadhu (skl साधु sadhu, "good : good man, holy man") denotes an ascetic - wondering monk. Although the vast majority of sadhus are yogis, not all yogis are sadhus. The sadhu is solely dedicated to achieving moksa (liberation). the fourth and final ashrama (stage of life), through meditation and contemplation of brahman. Sadhus often wear ochre-colored clothing, symbolizing their sanyasa (renunciation).

Etymology

The Sanskrit terms sadhu ("good man") and sadhvi ("good woman") refer to renouncers who have chosen to live a life apart from or on the edges of society in order to focus on their own spiritual practice.

The word come from the Sanskrit root sadh, which means "reach one's goal". "make straight". or "gain power over". The same root is used in the word sadhana, which means "spiritual practice".

Sadhu rituals

Sadhus are sanyasi, or renunciates, who have left behind all material attachments and live in caves, forests and temples all over India and Nepal.

A Sadhu is usually referred to as *Baba* by common people. The word *baba* also means father, grandfather, or uncle in many Indian languages. Sometimes the respectful suffix -ji may also be added after baba. to give greater respect to the renunciate. It is also a term of endearment for small boys.

There are 4-5 million sadhus in India today and they are widely respected for their holiness and sometimes feared for their curses. It is also thought that the austere practices of the sadhus help to burn off their karma and that of the community at large. Thus seen as benefiting society, sadhus are supported by donations from many people. However, reverence of sadhus is by no means universal in India. Historically and contemporarily, sadhus have often been viewed with a certain degree of suspicion, particularly amongst the urban populations of India. Today. especially in popular pilgrimage cities, posing as a sadhu can be a means of acquiring income for non-devout beggars.

There are naked Naga (Digambara, or "sky-clad") Sadhus which are non-shaven and wear their hair in thick dreadlocks, and Jata, who carry swords. Aghora sadhus may claim to keep company with ghosts, or live in cemeteries as part of their holy path. Indian culture tends to emphasize an infinite number of paths to God, such that sadhus, and the varieties that sadhus come in have their place.

Sadhu sects

Sadhus engage in a wide variety of religious practices. Some practice extreme asceticism while others focus on praying, chanting or meditating.

There are two primary sectarian divisions within the sadhu community: Shaiva Sadhu; ascetics devoted to Shiva, and Vaishnava Sadhu, renouncers devoted to Vishnu and/or his incarnations, which include Rama and Krishna. Less numerous are Shakta sadhus, who are devoted to Shakti. Within these general divisions are numerous sects and subsects, reflecting different lineages and philosophical schools and traditions (often referred to as "sampradayas").

The Dashanami Sampradaya are Smartists; sadhus in the sect take one of the ten names as an appellation upon initiation. The sect is said to have been formed by the philosopher and renunciant Adi Shankara, believed to have lived in the 8th century CE, though the full history of the sect's formation is not clear.

While sadhus ostensibly leave behind traditional caste at initiation, the caste backgrounds of initiates does influence the sects into which they are admitted; certain ascetic groups, such as the Dandis within the Dashnami sampradaya, are composed only of men of brahmin birth, while other groups admit people from a wide variety of caste backgrounds.

Female sadhus (sadhvis) exist in many sects. In many cases, the women that take to the life of renunciation are widows, and these types of sadhvis often live secluded lives in ascetic compounds. Sadhvis are sometimes regarded by some as manifestations or forms of the Goddess, or Devi, and are honored as such. There have been a number of charismatic sadhvis that have risen to fame as religious teachers in contemporary India (e.g.- Anandamayi Maa, Sarada Devi, Mata Amritanandamayi and Karunamayi).

Becoming a sadhu

The processes and rituals of becoming a sadhu vary 'vvith sect; in almost all sects, a sadhu is initiated by a guru, who bestows upon the Initiate a new name. as well as a mantra, (or sacred sound or phrase), which is generally known only to the sadhu and the guru and may be repeated by the initiate as part of meditative practice.

Becoming a sadhu is a path followed by millions. It is supposed to be the fourth phase in a Hindu's life, after studies. being a father and a pilgrim, but for most it is not a practical option. For a person to become sadhu needs vairagya. Vairagya means desire to achieve something by leaving the world (cutting familial, societal and earthly attachments).

A person who wants to become sadhu must first seek a guru. There, he or she must perform 'guruseva' which means service. The guru decides whether the person is eligible to take sannyasa by observing the sisya (the person who wants to become a sadhu or sanyasi). If the person is eligible, 'guru upadesa' (which means teachings) is done. Only then, the person transfonns into sanyasi or sadhu. There are different types of sanyasis in India who follow different sampradya. But, all sadhus have a common goal: attaining moksha (liberation).

Living as a sadhu is a difficult lifestyle. Sadhus are considered to be dead unto themselves, and legally dead to the country of India. As a ritual, they may be required to attend their own funeral before following a guru for many years, serving him by doing menial tasks until acquiring the necessary experience to leave his leadership.

While the life of renunciation is described as the fourth stage of life in the classical Sanskrit literature of Hindu tradition, and the members of certain sects - particularly those dominated by initiates of Brahman background - have typically lived as householders and raised families before becoming sadhus, many sects are composed of men that have renounced early in life, often in their late teens or arly 20s. In a few cases, those who choose the sadhu life are fleeing from family or financial situations which they have found to be untenable, if there is some worldly debt that remains to be repaid, would-be renunciates are encouraged by their gurus to pay off those debts before they become sadhus.

Lifestyle

The ruggedness of the sadhu life deters many from following the sadhu path. Such practices as the obligatory early morning bath in the cold mountains require a detachment from common luxuries. After the bath, sadhus gather around the dhuni, or holy fireplace, and begin with their prayers and meditation for the day.

Some sadhus dispense cures to the local community, remove evil eyes or bless a marriage. They are a walking reminder to the average Hindu of Divinity. They are generaIIy allowed free passage on the trains and are a close-knit organization.

Kumbh Mela, a mass-gathering of sadhus from all parts of India, takes place every three years at one of four points along sacred rivers in India, including the holy River Ganges. In 2007 it was held in Nasik, Maharashtra. Peter Owen-Jones filmed one episode of "Extreme Pilgrim" there during this event. It took place again in Haridwar in 2010, Sadhus of all sects join in this reunion. Millions of non-sadhu pilgrims also attend the festivals, and the Kumbh Mela is the largest gathering of human beings for a single religious purpose on the planet. Another Kumbh Mela was held on 27 -January-2013 at Allahabad.

The lives of sadhus in contemporary India vary tremendously. Sadhus live in ashrams and temples in the midst of major urban centers, in huts on the edges of villages, in caves in the remote mountains. Others live lives of perpetual pilgrimage, moving without ceasing from one town, one holy place, to another. Some gurus live with one or two disciples; some ascetics are solitary, while others live in large, communal institutions. For some sadhus the brotherhood or sisterhood of ascetics is very important.

The rigor of the spiritual practices in which contemporary sadhus engage also varies a great deal. Apart from the very few that engage in the most dramatic, striking austerities-for example, standing on one leg for years on end or remaining silent for a dozen years-most sadhus engage in some form of religious practice: devotional worship, hatha yoga, fasting, etc. For many sadhus,consumption of certain forms of cannabis (bhang) is accorded a religious significance. Sadhus occupy a unique and important place in Hindu society, particularly in villages and small towns more closely tied to tradition. In addition to bestowing religious instruction and blessings to lay people, sadhus are often called upon to adjudicate disputes between individuals or to intervene in conflicts within families. Sadhus are also living embodiments of the divine, images of what human life, in the Hindu view, is

truly about - religious illumination and liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Though some ascetic sects possess properties that generate revenue to sustain members, most sadhus rely on the donations of lay people; poverty and hunger are ever-present realities for many sadhus.

13.5 Shrine

A **Shrine** (Latin : *Scrinium* "Case or chest for books or papers"; Old French: *escrin* "box or case") is a holy or sacred place, which is dedicated to a specific deity, ancestor, hero, martyr, saint, demon or similar figure of admire and respect, at which they are venerated or worshipped. Shrines often contain idols. relics, or other such objects associated with the figure being venerated. A shrine at which offerings are made is called an altar means table on which religious offering are made. Shrines are found in many of the world's religions, including Charistianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese folk religion and Shinto, as well as in secular and non-religious settings such as a war memorial. Shrines can be found in various settings, such as churches, temples, cemeteries, or in the home, although portable shrines are also found in some cultures.

Types of shrines

Temple shrines

Many shrines are located within buildings designed specifically for worship, such as a church in Christianity, or a mandir in Hinduism. A shrine here is usually the centre of attention in the building. and is given a place of prominence. In such cases, adherents of the faith assemble within the building in order to venerate the deity at the shrine.

Household shrines

Historically. in Hinduism, Buddhism and Roman Catholicism, and also in modem faiths. such as Neopaganism. a shrine can commonly be found within the home or shop. This shrine is usually a small structure or a setup of pictures and figurines dedicated to a deity that is part of the official religion, to ancestors or to a localised household deity.

Small household shrines are very common among the Chinese and people from South and Southeast Asia, whether Hindu, Budd hist or Christian. Usually a small lamp and small offerings are kept daily by the shrine. Buddhist household shrines must be on a

shelf above the head; Chinese shrines must stand directly on the floor.

Yard shrines

Small outdoor yard shrines are found at the places of many peoples, following various religions, including historically, Christianity. Many consist of a statue of Christ or a saint, on a pedestal or in an alcove, while others may be elaborate booths without ceilings, some include paintings and architectural elements, such as walls, roofs, glass doors and ironwork fences, etc.

In the United States, some Christians have small yard shrines; some of these resemble side altars, since they are composed of a statue placed in a niche or grotto; this type is colloquially referred to as a bathtub madonna.

Religious Shrines

Shrines are found in most, though not all, religions. As distinguished from a temple, a shrine usually houses a particular relic or cult image, which is the object of worship or veneration, or is constructed to set apart a site which is thought to be particularly holy, as opposed to being placed for the convenience of worshippers. Shrines therefore attract the practice of pilgrimage.

Christianity

Shrines are found in many, though not all, forms of Christianity. Roman Catholicism, the largest denomination of Christianity, has many shrines, as do Orthodox Christianity and Anglicanism.

In the Roman Catholic Code of Canon law, canons 1230 and 1231 read: "The term shrine means a church or other sacred place which, with the approval of the local Ordinary, is by reason of special devotion frequented by the faithful as pilgrims. For a shrine to be described as national, the approval of the Episcopal Conference is necessary.

Another use of the term "shrine" in colloquial Catholic terminology is a niche or alcove in most - especially larger - Churches used by parishioners when praying privately in the church. They were also called Devotional Altars. since they could look like small Side Altars or bye-altars. Shrines were always centered on some image of Christ or a saint - for instance. a statue. painting, mural or mosaic. and may have had a.reredos behind them (without a Tabernacle built in).

However, Mass would not be celebrated at them: they were simply used to aid or give a visual focus for prayers. Side altars, where Mass could actually be celebrated, were used in a simiiar way to shrines by parishioners. Side altars were specifically dedicated to The Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph as well as other saints.

Islam

According to the classical chief sources of legislation and jurisprudence in orthodox Sunni Islam, primarily the Quran and Hadith texts (and notably the practice of the Salafi school of thought and early Muslims), it is understood to be totally forbidden to build structures over graves based on the legal evidences where the Prophet Muhammad ordered to demolish all the structures over graves and forbade acts of worship at the graveyards (aside from the funeral prayer) including calling upon other than Allah. It is commonly misunderstood that the grave of the Prophet is an exception to this rule however historically the grave was originally located in the home of Aisha and the Mosque was extended over and the grave incorporated due to lack of space for the growing number of worshipers.

- It was narrated that Abu'l-Hayaaj al-Asadi said: 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib said to me: "Shall I not send you on the same mission as the Messenger of Allah sent me? Do not leave any statue without erasing it, and do not leave any raised grave without leveling it." (Narrated by Muslim, 969).

- It was narrated that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship." 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said, "He was warning against what they had done." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1330 and by Muslim, 529).

- And when Umm Salamah and Umm Habeebah told him about a church in which there were images, he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When a righteous man died among them, they would build a place of worship over his grave and put those images in it. They are the most evil of mankind before Allaah." (Saheeh, agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhari, 427 and by Muslim, 528).

- And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Those who came before you took the graves of their Prophets and righteous people as places of worship. Do not take graves as places of worship - I forbid you to do that." (Narrated in his

Saheeh by Muslim. 532, from Jundab ibn 'AbdAllaah al-Bajali).

- From Surah Al Jinn "The places of worship are for Allah (alone): So do not invoke anyone beside Allah."

There is a clear prohibition of raising the grave in the name of venerating the dead as it may lead to Shirk such as accounted in the story of the people of Noah, from Surah An Nuh 71: 23 it is quoted:

"And they have said: 'You shall not leave your gods, nor shall you leave Wadd, nor Suwa', nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr (these are the names of their idols)."

Ibn Abbas commented on this saying, "These are the names of the pious people from among them. Following their deaths, Shaytan inspired their people to erect status inJhe place where .they used to sit, and to call them with their names. They did so, however at this point, they were not worshiped until that generation died and the new generation deviated. "

However in contrast to this, throughout parts of the Islamic world there has developed a deep cultural tradition of shrine veneration. Although classically in orthodox Islam it is prohibited to worship or engage in acts of worship surrounding graves; various movements and sects took the stance that it is permitted to supplicate with the 'Tawasul' or intercession of the deceased pious person (Sufi/Wali). For these groups, shrines hold a notable position and considered as places to seek spiritual guidance.Most venerated shrines are dedicated to various Sufi Saints and are widely scattered throughout the Islamic world. For them it is seen as a tradition to commemorate the death of the Saint, by holding festivals at his tomb to commemorate his life. In several countries, the local shrine is a focal point of the community, with several localities named specifically for the local saint.

In some parts of the Islamic world, such as in Pakistan, these festivals are multi-day events and even draw members of the Hindu and Christian minority who often revere the Muslim saint, such as in the case of the famous Lal Baz Qalandar shrine in Sindh, Pakistan - an important example of religious syncretism that blurs the distinction between members of different religions. Sufi shrines in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan are also host to a night of commemoration by Mehfil Samaaa (Qawali) and 'Zikr' every Thursday. Some academics assert that such practices were influenced by Hinduism long ago, when Muslims and Hindus

co-existed in the sub-continent.

In Turkey, the famous Sufi Whirling Dervishes perform their whirling at the shrine of Jalal-ud-Din Rumi in Konya, while in Morocco and Algeria, brotherhoods of Black African Sufis, the Gnouia, perform elaborate songs at the shrines of their Saints.

Numerous shrines were once located in Saudi Arabia in its initial days. However, due to the revival of Islamic orthodoxy by Muhammad ibn Abd al- Wahhab (strongly clinging to the Hadith texts and Quran) against developed cultural practices they were destroyed by local authorities who identified them as sources of Shirk and of being reprehensible innovations in Islam or 'Bid'ah'. Other important Shrines were once found in Central Asia, but many were destroyed by the Soviets.

Shia's have several shrines dedicated to various religious figures important in their history, and several elaborate shrines are dedicated to Shia Saints and religious figures, most notably in Kerbala. Najaf and Samarra in Iraq. and Qum and Mashad in Iran. Other important Shia shrines are located in Mazar-e-Sharif ("the Noble Shrine") in Afghanistan and in Damascus, Syria.

Buddhism

In Buddhism, a shrine refers to a place where veneration is focused on the Buddha or one of the bodhisattvas. Monks, nuns and laypeople all give offerings to these revered figures at these shrines and also meditate in front of them.

Typically, Buddhist shrines contain a statue of either the Buddha, or (in the Mahayana and Vajrayana forms of Buddhism), one of the various bodhisattvas. They also commonly contain candles, along with offerings such as flowers, purified water, food, and incense. Many shrines also contain sacred relics, such as the alleged tooth of the Buddha held at a shrine in Sri Lanka.

Site-specific shrines in Buddhism, particularly those that contain relics of deceased buddhas and revered monks, are often designed in the traditional form known as the stupa.

Hinduism

In Hinduism, a shrine is a place where a god or goddess is worshipped. Shrines are typically located inside a temple known as a mandir, though many Hindus also have a

household shrine as well. Sometimes a human is venerated at a Hindu shrine along with a deity, for instance the 19th century religious teacher Sri Ramakrishna is venerated at the Ramakrishna Temple in Kolkata, India.

Central to a Hindu shrine is a statue of a deity, which is known as a murti. Hindus believe that the deity that they are worshiping actually enters and inhabits the murti. This is given offerings like candles, food, flowers, and incense. In some cases, particularly among devotees of the goddess Kali in northern India, animals are sacrificed to the deity (animal sacrifice is not a part of Hinduism).

At a mandir, the congregation often assembles in front of a shrine, and, led by priests, give offerings and sing devotional hymns.

Taoism

The line between a temple and a shrine in Taoism is not fully defined; shrines are usually smaller versions of larger Taoist temples or small places in a home where a yin-yang emblem is placed among peaceful settings to encourage meditation and study of Taoist texts and principles. Taoists place less emphasis on formalized attendance and ritualized worship than other Asian religions, formal temples and structures of worship came about in Taoism mostly in order to prevent losing adherents to Buddhism. Frequent features of Taoist shrines include the same features as full temples, often including any or all of the following features: gardens, running water or fountains, small burning braziers or candles (with or without incense), and copies of Taoist texts such as the Tao Te Ching, Zhuangzi or other texts by Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu or other Taoist sages.

As with all Taoist worship, Taoist shrines are organized around a sense of appreciation of nature and sunoundings that inspire meditation on, and living in accordance with, the Tao ("Way" or "Path", a concept of living harmoniously with one's natural surroundings and environment) and the Three Jewels Of Taoism (different from Buddhism's concept of Three Jewels) - compassion, moderation, and humility.

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Fundamentalism, Communalism and Secularism

Structure

14.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with :

- The concept of Fundamentalism and Communalism
- About Ethnic Violence
- About Communal Violence
- Features of Communal Riots
- The Concept of Secularism

14.1 Introduction

Whenever we talk about Fundamentalism in India we are concerned with religious fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a movement or belief for a return to the basic texts or fundamentals of revealed religion—usually contrasted, therefore, with modernism and

liberalism in religion. In India fundamentalism is related to Hindu fundamentalism and Muslim fundamentalism. There is ideology of conservative political parties, which go back to rigid Hinduism—Ram Mandir and mythological heroes. The Muslim fundamentalism on the other hand looks back to Babri Masjid. These two fundamentalists do not agree on Mosque or temple.

14.2 Conflict between Hindu and Muslim Fundamentalists

The present day Hindu-Muslim conflict is not really a religious conflict, nor is it rooted in medieval history, as is often assumed. Political conflict between the likes of Aurangzeb and Shivaji and religious persecution of the Hindus by certain Muslim rulers notwithstanding, India does not have a history of devastating, centuries-long religious denominational wars. Nor do we have a chronic history of Hindu-Muslim riots in pre-British India. Following the period of Islamic invasions, the conflict with the invading Afghani, Mughal and Turkish Muslims came to be settled rather creatively in India.

Among the many other attempts at accommodation, the Bhakti movement, within the Hindu fold, and Sufism within the Muslim fold, built enduring bridges between the two contrary faiths and softened some of their confrontations on many theological issues. Kabir, Nanak, Rahim, Ravidas, Tukharam as well as many Sufi saints challenged the religious bigotry and tyranny of those claiming to speak in the name of God. They created a corpus of shared beliefs between the follower of Hinduism and Islam by preaching that a life of piety and love was the true religion—not sectarian rituals or following the priesthood blindly.

Almost all saints, bhakts and Sufis had common following among the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs. They influenced the language and belief system of popular religion and helped evolve humane norms for living together. Despite all the bloody Hindu-Muslim conflicts of the twentieth century, it is noteworthy that none of the prominent disputes are of a theological nature. The contemporary Hindu-Muslim conflict is primarily the product of late nineteenth and twentieth century politics.

Communalism is the outcome of the conflict between Hindu-Muslim fundamentalists. Outside India communalism is ordinarily defined in one of the following ways : (1) It is a theory of government in which virtually autonomous local communities are loosely bound in a federation., (2) A belief in or practice of communal ownership of goods and property, (3) Strong devotion

to the interests of one's own ethnic group

rather than those of the society as a whole.

It is noteworthy that the word communal is mostly used in a positive sense in the west. But in India it is always used in the pejorative term to denote a person with religious bias. There are parties in India, which have hijacked religious symbols for electoral and other political purposes shows that their concern is not religious at all.

14.3 Communalism

The rising trend of communalism and the accompanying violence have created a feeling of insecurity among the religious minorities. Muslims, Sikhs and Christians in particular, fear discrimination and confrontation in the days to come. This may just be a fear, but the nation cannot afford to let about one-fifth of the country's population to fall victim to panic suspicion and insecurity. The events between 1984 and 1999 in Kashmir, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi give ample evidence and taste of the destructive outcome of the communal virus in its varied forms. Religious minorities in India are protected by the Constitution which provides for justice, tolerance, equality and freedom. But in an age in which religious fundamentalism is getting transferred into religious bigotry, intolerance and narrow-mindedness, the notion of 'Ram Rajya', is not infrequently misinterpreted by the minorities, especially Muslims, to mean the rule of Lord Ram i.e. Hindu rule. The presence of police in and near religious shrines to keep an eye on and check the hide-outs of terrorists (as in Amristsar in 1985 and in Kashmir in November 1993 and May 1995) is viewed as interference in religious faith. Therefore, to prevent damage to the peace and integrity of the nation, there is need to analyse and debate the problem of communalism and communal violence. It has become absolutely important to define 'communalism'. Also, it is equally pertinent to discover who is 'communal.'

Concept of Communalism

Communalism is an ideology, which states that society is divided into religious communities whose interests differ and are at times even opposed to each other. The antagonism practiced by the people of one community against the people of other community and religion can be termed 'communalism'. This antagonism goes to the extent of falsely accusing, harming and deliberately insulting a particular community and

extends to looting, burning down the homes and shops of the helpless and the weak, dishonoring women, and even killing persons. 'Communal persons' re those who practice politics through religion. Among leaders, those religious leaders are 'communal' who run their religious communities like business enterprises and institutions and raise the cries of "Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism or Christianity in danger", the moment they find that donations into their holy 'corporations' have begun to dwindle, or their leadership has come to be challenged, or their ideology has been questioned. Thus, 'communal' is not one who is a man of religion but one who practices politics by linking it with religion. These power politicians are not good Hindus nor Good Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis or Buddhists. They can be viewed as dangerous political 'scum.' For them, God and religion are merely instruments to be used to live luxuriously as the 'king parasites' of society and to attain political goals (Day After, June, 1990:35-36).

T.K. Oommen (1989) has suggested six dimensions of communalism: assimilationist, welfarist, retreatist, retaliatory, separatist, and secessionist. Assimilationist communalism is one in which small religious groups are assimilated '/ integrated into a big religious group. Such communalism claims that Scheduled Tribes are Hindus, or that Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists are Hindus and they should be covered by the Hindu Marriage Act. Welfarist communalism aims at the welfare of a particular community say, improving living standard and providing for education and health of Christians by the Christian associations, or Parsi associations working for the uplift of the Parsis. Such communal mobilization aims at working only for members of one's own community. Retreatist communalism is one in which a small religious community keeps itself away from politics: for example, Bahai community, which forbids its members from participating in political activities. Retaliatory communalism attempts to harm, hurt, and injure the members of other religious communities. Separatist communalism is one in which one religious or a cultural group; wants to maintain its cultural specificity and demands a separate territorial state within the country, for example, the demand of Mizos and Nagas in Norh-East India or Bodos in Assam, or of Jhakhand tribals in Bihar, or of Gorkhas for Gorakhaland in West Bengal, or of hill people for Uttrakhand in Uttar Pradesh, or of Vidharbha in Maharashtra. Lastly, secessionist communalism is one in which a religious community wants a separate political identity and demands an independent state. A very small militant section of Sikh population demanding Khalistan or some Muslim militants demanding independent Kashmir were engaged in practicing this type of communalism. Of these six types of communalism, the last three create problems engendering agitation, communal

riots, terrorism and insurgency.

Communalism in India

The pluralist society of India is composed of many religious groups; however, these groups are further divided into various sub-groups. Hindus are divided into sects like Arya Samajis, Shivites, Sanatanees, and Vaishnavas while Muslims are divided into Shias and Sunnis on the one hand, and Ashrafs (aristocrats), Azlafs (weavers, butchers, carpenters, oilmen), and Arzals on the other. Strained relations between Hindus and Muslims have existed for a long time, whereas some Hindus and Sikhs have started viewing each other with suspicion only during the last fifteen years or so. Although in a few states, we now hear of some conflicts between Hindus and Christians and Muslims and Christians too, yet, by and large, Christians in India do not feel deprived or exploited by other communities. Among Muslims Shias and Sunnis too are prejudicial attitudes towards each other. Here, we will mainly analyse Hindu-Muslim and briefly Hindu-Sikh relations.

Hindu-Muslim Communalism

Muslim attacks on India started in the tenth century, but early Muslim conquerors were more interested in looting rather than establishing religious dominance. It was when Qutubdin became the first Sultan of Delhi that Islam found a footing in India. Later, it were the Moghuls who consolidated their empire and Islam in the process. Some of the policies proselytisation efforts, destruction of Hindu temples and construction of mosques over these temples by Moghul rulers aroused communal bickering between Hindu and Muslim communities. When the British established their dominance in India they initially adopted the policy of patronizing Hindus, but after the First War of Independence in 1857 in which Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder, the Britishers adopted the policy of 'divide and rule' which resulted in deliberately fostering communal clashes deliberately for keeping their hegemony intact. The relations between Hindus and Muslims were further strained when during the freedom struggle, power politics came into play. Thus, though antagonism between Hindus and Muslims is an old issue, Hindu-Muslim communalism in India can be described a legacy of the British rule during the freedom struggle. This communalism operates today in a significantly changed social and political milieu. It is the single largest threat to the secular ideals that are enshrined in our constitution.

Let us examine the genesis and historical roots of Hindu-Muslim communalism after the First World War in order to provide some understanding of this phenomenon in its contemporary context. What were the religious and political ideologies and aspirations of the political parties that participated in the freedom struggle? The nationalist appeal was to address itself to two important factors to unite the diverse groups : first, freedom from the exploitation of colonial rulers, and second, democratic rights for all citizens. But the major political parties such as the Congress, the Muslim League, the Communist Party and the Hindu Maha Sabha did not share these sentiments in the thirties and forties of the twentieth century. The Congress from its very inception adopted a policy of 'unity from the top' in which the effort was to win over the middle-class and upper-class. Muslims who were accepted as leaders of the Muslim community, leaving it to them to draw the Muslim masses into the movement. This 'unity from the top' approach could not promote Hindu-Muslim cooperation in fighting imperialism. All serious efforts between 1918 and 1922 at bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity were in the nature of negotiations among the top leaders of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities and the Congress. Quite often, the Congress acted as an intermediary among the different communal leaders instead of acting as an active organizer of the forces of secular nationalism. There was, thus, an implicit acceptance within the early nationalist leadership that Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were distinct communities which shared only the political and the economic concerns but not the religious, social and cultural practice. This is how seeds of communalism were sown in the first and second quarters of the twentieth century. However, the Muslim League and the Hindu Maha Sabha remained fairly weak organizationally till 1936. In the 1937 elections, the Muslim League won only 22 percent of the total seats reserved for Muslims (482) in the provincial assemblies. It did not fare well even in the Muslim majority provinces. It was only after 1942 that the Muslim League emerged as a strong political party and claimed the right to speak for all Muslims; Jinah described Congress party as a 'Hindu' organization, a claim that the British supported. Within the Congress itself, some leaders like Madan Mohan Malviya, K.M. Munshi and Sardar Patel took up pro-Hindu positions. Thus, the Congress could not purge its ranks of communal elements.

While the slogan of Pakistan was first articulated by the Muslim League in 1940, the Congress leaders accepted partition of the country in 1946 which led to displacement of millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs amid bloodshed and carnage.

Even after the partition, the Congress failed to come to grips with communalism. It could, thus, be said that Hindu-Muslim communalism in India had politico-social origins and religion alone was not the cause of the conflict between Hindus and Muslims, Economic interest and the cultural and social mores (such as festivals, social practices and lifestyle) were factors that further divided the two communities.

Sixteen cities in India have been identified as more vulnerable to Hindu-Muslim communal riots. Of these, five (Moradabad, Meerut, Aligarh, Agra and Varnasi) are in Uttar Pradesh; one (Aurangabad) in Maharashtra; one (Ahmedabad) in Gujarat; one (Hyderabad) in Andhra Pradesh, two (Jamshedpur and Patna) in Bihar, two (Silchar and Gauhati) in Assam, one (Calcutta) in West Bengal; one (Bhopal) in Madhya Pradesh; one (Srinagar) in Jammu and Kashmir; and one (Cuttack) in Orissa. Since eleven cities lie in the northern belt, three in the eastern belt, and two in the southern belt, could it be presumed that the Muslims in South India are culturally better assimilated because of their involvement in trade and commerce, which calls for goodwill withal communities? Strangely, this fact applies to the five cities in U.P. also. We have therefore, to search another explanation for this phenomenon.

The Hindu-Muslim antagonism can be ascribed to a complex set of factors: These are : (1) Muslim invasions in which the invader looted property and constructed mosques over/near Hindu temples, (2) British encouragement of Muslim separatism for their own ends during their imperial rule, (3) The behaviour of some of the Muslims in India after partition, indicating their pro-Pakistan attitude. Such behaviour creates a feeling among the majority community that Muslims are not patriotic. The stereotype image of an Indian Muslims which is entrenched in the Hindu psyche is that of a bigoted, inward-looking outcaste. A Muslim similarly looks upon a Hindu as a conniving, all-powerful opportunist and he views himself as victimized by him and alienated from the mainstream of society, (4) A new aggressiveness on the part of the Muslim political parties in an effort to find a place in the country. Reports are rife about some Muslim xtremists obtaining 'foreign money', turning into foreign agents, indulging in a well designed plan to soil the secular ideal of the country, and attempting to incite Indian Muslims and resolve their problems is perhaps due to frustration because they have been influenced by the wave of Islamic fundamentalism sweeping West Asia and Pakistan. The leaders have only exploited the numerical strength of the Muslims (especially in Kerala, Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh)to strike barter deals, secure a chunk of Muslim

seats in parliament and legislatures and seek power and pelf for themselves and their friends. (6) The government is also responsible for neglecting Muslims, large sections of whom feel alienated and consequently become willing victims of selfish leaders. The ruling elite merely preaches religious amity and have little understanding of the real problems of the Muslims. The Hindu leadership only deals with those Muslim leaders who toe their line.

The Indian Muslims, not surprisingly, tend to consider their future as a question of 'Us' versus 'They'. When they make their demands known, as any segment of society would do to voice their grievances, it more often than not explodes into an orgy of Hindu-Muslim violence which leads to the accusation of foreign incitement. Should the Muslim problem be perceived only as a communal problem? Is it note a fact that the Hindu-Muslim issue is not any different from the anti-Brahmin agitations in Tamil Nadu, or the intercaste conflicts in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and some other states, or the Bengal-Assames trouble in Assam, or theMaharashtrian-non-Maharashtrian conflict in Maharashtra? The problem in reality is one of social and economic interest and rigidity and change in values.

The militant Hindus maintain that Muslims in the country are being pampered. The Ramjanam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid issue in 1992-93 further affected the delicate balance of communal harmony. After getting disillusioned with the Congress, Muslims developed faith in the Janata Dal (1990) in the Samajwadi Party (1995), in the Bahujan Sama Party, and in the United Front (1996). The break-up of the Janata Dal (November 1990) followed by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi (May 1991), coming to power of Bharatiya Janata Party in November 1993 elections in four states (Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh), and at the Centre in 1998, and Janata Dal in Karnataka and Telgu Desham in Andhra Pradesh in 1994 elections, and Shiva Sena and BJP in Maharashtra and BJP in Gujarat in March 1995 elections, break down of coalition Ministry of SP and BSP and of BJP and BSP in Uttar Pradesh, failure of SP and BSP to get majority in Uttar Pradesh elections in Octobr,1996, and failure of Samajwadi Party to support Sonia Gandhi in forming Ministry at the Centre after Vajpayee's defeat in Parliament in April 1999—all these have created confusion. The Muslims today feel far more concerned about their safety and security than before.

Hindu-Sikh Communalism

The Sikhs constitute less than 2 pew cent of India's population. Though dispersed widely over the entire country and even abroad, their largest concentration is in Punjab, where they form the majority of the state's population.

The Sikh agitation started in Punjab in the early eighties. The number of killings increased and the Sikh protests became organized, militant and increasingly violent. In 1984, when the military launched Operation Blue Star for seizing weapons and arresting militants from the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the Sikhs reacted violently. In October 1984 when Indira Gandhi was assassinated and thousands of Sikhs wee killed in Delhi and other states, and their property was looted, burnt or destroyed some Sikh militants became so agitated that they killed hundreds of Hindus in trains and buses, destroyed their property and forced many Hindus to leave Punjab. In May 1988, when operation Black Thunder was launched once again by the military to clear militants from the Golden Temple in Amritsar which remained under their control for about ten days, the Sikhs retaliated by exploding bombs, killing Hindus and looting banks. The relations between Sikhs and Hindus thus remained strained for about one and half decade. However, the militancy of extremist Sikhs in Punjab has now been suppressed and from 1993 onwards, there has been considerable improvement in the relations between the people of the two communities. There is goodwill and respect among them for each other's religious beliefs and places of worship.

11.4 Ethnic Violence

Besides the Hindu-Muslim conflicts and Hindu-Sikh skirmishes, how do we perceive relations between different ethnic groups, say between he Assamese and the non-Assames? In Assam, for nearly 150 years the economic development of the state was fuelled by he labour and enterprise imported from outside the state. Over this period spanning a century and a half, Assam has been home to generations of the so-called 'outsider', who have known no home, no land other than the soil of Assam itself. Some have indeed grown rich, but most have remained desperately poor. The Assamese have now raised the question of nationality. The All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Parishad (AAGP) agitation (which fathered the AGP as a political party) confused 'outsiders' with 'foreigners' (including Bengali refugees from the Bangladesh). Fantastic figures were brandished ranging from five million to seven million as the number of foreigners (*bahiragat*)

illegitimately lurking in the state. This issue of ridding Assam of foreigners held the state to ransom for six years—from 1979 till the Assam accord on 15 Aaugust, 1985. Hatred was stoked up against the Bodos, the Bengalis, the Marwaris and the non-Assames Muslims. This secessionist movement was responsible for thousands of innocent deaths. The massacre of 1,383 women and children and some men in ten villages in and around Nellie in Nowgong district was a part of this ethnic violence. The AGSP which remained in power between 1985 and 1990 could not contain the ethnic tension.

The ULFA militants launched a movement which became so strong that President's rule was imposed in the state in November 1990 instead of holding elections due t in January 1991. The army and the security forces launched an operation to round up; rebels and recover weapons. The President's rule was, however, lifted in June 1991 when the new Congress government assumed power in the state. But the ULFA militants jolted even the new government by kidnapping some government servants including few top ONGC officials from different parts of the state on the very first day of the government's tenure. The May 1996 elections also did not prevent reprisals from the Bodos. The militants are yet to realize that Assam is like all other states in India, and it belongs to all the legitimate citizens of India, whatever language they speak, whatever religion they follow and whatever rites and rituals they practice. The Bodos—a tribe which comprised about 49 per cent of Assam's population in 1947 and about 29 per cent in 1991 and which ruled over Assam until around 1825—are now demanding autonomy. Though an accord was signed by the Assam government and the Bodo leadership represented by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and the Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) in February 1993 yet the problem still remains unresolved.The Bodo leaders and the state government have failed to arrive at an agreement on the boundary issue and transfer of about 3,000 villages to the Bodoland Autonomous Council. The Bodos also do not want that Assamese language should be thrust upon indigenous tribals. The Bodo movement in the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s and the 1990s operated in fits and starts, however, it has gathered momentum now. The Bodos now demand a Union territory called 'Udayachal'. Violent activities like bomb blasts and blowing up roads and railway bridges by the Bodo militants point out the domestic and 'foreign' and aid to the militants and the need for firm action by the government to contain insurgent activities.

Communal Violence

Communal violence involves people belonging to two different religious communities mobilized against each other and carrying the feelings of hostility, emotional fury, exploitation, social discrimination and social neglect. The high degree of cohesion in one community against another is built around tension and polarization. The targets of attack are the members of the 'enemy' community. Generally, there is no leadership in communal riots which could effectively control and contain the riot situation. It could thus be said that communal violence is based mainly on hatred, enmity and revenge.

Communal violence has increased quantitatively and qualitatively ever since politics came to be communalized. Gandhi was its first victim followed by the murder of many persons in the 1970s and the 1980s. Following destruction of Babri structure in Ayodhya in December 1992, and bomb blasts in Bombay in early 1993, communal riots in Maharashtra Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala have considerably increased. While some political parties tolerate ethno-religious communalism, a few others even encourage it. Recent examples of this tolerance, indifference to and passive acceptance of or even connivance of the activities or religious organizations by certain political leaders and some political parties are found in attacks on Christian missionaries and in violent activities against Christians in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Allahabad. Emergency ofthemid-1970s commenced the trend of criminal elements entering mainstream politics. This phenomenon has now entrenched itself in Indian politics to such an extent that religious fanaticism, casteism and mixing of religion and politics have increased in varied dimensions. Political parties and political leaders adopt 'holier than hou' attitude in relation to each other instead of taking a collective stand against these negative impulses affecting our society.

The Hindu organizations blame Muslims and Christians for forcibly converting Hindus to their religions. Without indulging in the controversy whether prosylitisation or religious conversions were coercive or voluntary, it may only be said that raising this issue today is patently irrational fanaticism. Hinduism has been tolerant and talks about all humanity being one family. Therefore, it has to be accepted that the doctrine of *Hindutva* blighting Indian political leaders and political parties ignore political and electoral considerations and condemn and take action against those religious organizations which disrupt peace and stability through statements and threaten the unity and pluralistic identity of India.

11.5 Features of Communal Riots

A probe of the major communal riots in the country in the last five decades has revealed that: (1) Communal riots are more politically motivated than fuelled by religion. Even the Madan Commission which looked into communal disturbances in Maharashtra in May 1970 had emphasized that "the architects and builders of communal tensions are the communalists and a certain class of politicians—those all-India and local leaders out to seize every opportunity to strengthen their political positions, enhance their prestige and enrich their public image by giving a communal colour to every incident and thereby projecting themselves in the public eye as the champions of their religion and the rights of their community. (2) Besides political interests, economic interests too play a vigorous part in fomenting communal clashes. (3) Communal riots seem to be more common in North India than in South and East India. (4) The possibility of recurrence of communal riots in a town where communal riots have already taken place once or twice is stronger than in a town in which riots have never occurred. (5) Most communal riots take place on the occasion of religious festivals. (6) The use of deadly weapons in the riots is on the ascendancy.

14.6 Secularism

The word 'Secular' in dictionary refers things which are not religious or spiritual. The concept of 'secular' in fact was first used in Europe where the church had complete control over all types of properties and nobody could use property without the consent of the church. Some intellectuals raised their voice against the practice. These people came to be known as 'secular' which meant 'separate from 'church' or against church. In India, this term was used in a difference context after independence. After the partition of the country, the politicians wanted to assure the minority communities, particularly the Muslims that they would not be discriminated against in anyway. Hence the new Constitution provided that India would remain secular in the Constitution which meant that (a) each citizen would be guaranteed full freedom to practice and preach his religion, (b) state will have no religion, and (c) all citizens, irrespective of their religious faith, will be equal. In this way, even the agnostics were given the same rights as believers. This indicates that a secular state or society is not an irreligious society. Religious exists, their followers continue to believe in an practice the religious principles

enshrined in their holy books, and no outside agency, including the state interferes in the legitimate religious affairs. In other words, two important ingredients of a secular society are : (a) complete separation of state and religion, and (b) full liberty for the followers of all religions as well as atheists to follow their respective faiths.

In a secular society, the leaders and followers of various religious communities are expected not to use their religion for political purposes. However in practice Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other religious communities do use religion for political goals. Each political party labels other political parties as non-secular. After the demolition of Babri Masjid structure at Ayodhya in December 1992, a case (popularly called S.R.Bommai case) was filed in c court for the dismissed of the State governments run by the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). The judges constituting the nine-judge bench dwelt upon the term 'secularism' and averred that though the term was embedded equal treatment to all religions and state governments were to regulate the law in order to enforce secularism. As such, on legal consideration the plea for dismissal of BJP governments was not accepted. No wonder, some people say that S.R.. Bommai's case in the Supreme Court was just ganging up against one political party (BJP). In a another case involving the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the Supreme Court had held that an appeal to Hindutava was permissible under the Representative of the People Act. What was banned was the criticism of the other party's religion. It may thus be said that secularism for political parties has implied the creation of a vote bank comprising Muslims and the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In the elections for the Lok Sabha on May 1996 and for Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha in October 1996, where the BJP emerged as the largest single party at the centre as well as in Uttar Pradesh, political parties with vested interests joined together in describing the BJP as a communal party. Communalism, thus, is neither a political philosophy nor an idealogy nor a principle. It came to be imposed on the Indian society with a political objective. The communal-secular card is now being played for political motives only. The bogey of communalism is being kept alive not for checking national disintegration but with a view that minority vote bank does not dissipate itself into the larger Indian ethos. Even those political leaders who are too corrupt and who extensively practise casteism accuse political leaders of opposite parties for being communal. The power seekers thus use secularism as a shield to hide their sins, thereby ensuring that people remain polarized on the basis of religion and

India remains communalized.

Many of the arguments in support of secularization are based on the assumption of the existence of 'truly religious societies' in pre-industrial times. As Larry Shiner notes 'those who argue that the social significance of religion has declined have the problem of determing when and where we are to find the supposedly 'religious' age from which decline has commenced'. The anthropologist Mary Douglas argues that the use of supposedly 'religious' small-scale non-literate societies as a basis for comparison with modern 'secular' societies is unjustified. She states that the contrast of secular with religious has nothing whatever to do with the contrast of secpticism, materialism and spiritual fervour are to be come to the range of tribal societies.

Charles Glock argues that researchers have been unable to measure the significance of religion because 'they have not given adequate attention to conceptualizing religion or religiousness in a comprehensive way'. Until they have clearly thought out and stated exactly what they mean by religion and religiousness. Glock maintains that the secularization thesis cannot be adequately tested. In an attempt to solve this problem, Glock and Stark define five 'core dimension of religiousness'. First, the belief dimension - the degree to which people hold religious belief. Second, religious practice - the degree to which people engage in acts or worship and devotion. Third, the experience dimension - the degree to which people feel and experience contract and communication with the supernatural. Fourth, the knowledge dimension - the amount of knowledge people have of their religion. Fifth, the consequences dimension - the degree to which the previous dimensions affect people's day-to-day lives, Glock and Stark argue that a clearly defined system in which to classify people in religious terms is necessary before any scientifically valid statement about religiousness can be made. Only when different researchers use the same conceptulization of religion can their results be compared with any degree of validity.

Even though Glock and Stark's scheme may represent an improvement on previous research degrees, it does not solve a basic problem of research methodology. It is unhitch that any research technique will be developed to

accurately measure subjective factors such as the strength of religious commitment takenover with any degree of certainity, the meanings and motives which he behind social action.

Assignments

Q. 1 Define Fundamentalism.

Q. 2 Discuss the conflict between Hindu fundamentalism and Muslim fundamentalism.

Q. 3 How fundamentalism is related to ideology?

Q. 4 Define the concept of communalism.

Q. 5 Write a note on communalism in India.

Q. 6 Describe Hindu-Muslim communalism.

Q. 7 Characterize the Hindu-Muslim antagonism.

Q. 8 Discuss the attitude of militant Hindu communalists.

Q. 9 Describe Hindu-Sikh communalism.

Q.10 What do you understand by communal violence?

14.7 Further Readings

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UNIT-IV **LESSON No. 15**

Socio-Religious Movements

Structure

15.0 Objectives

The main objective of this lesson is to equip you with

- Religio-Reform Movements
- Socio-Religious Movements among Muslims.
- Other Muslim Reform Movements

15.1 Introduction

Religion is not sterile. It brings forth social change. Functionalists have always been talking about religion as a vehicle of social transformation. In Europe there have been several religious movements. Catholicism has motivated a large number of upheavals in Europe and America. Historians have recorded specific period for social reform. Calvin, Martin Luther King and other have headed several reform movements. In India also there were social religious movements for the change of religion. Bengal has been a cradle of religious movements. In Punjab and Haryana there was Dayanand Saraswati who rejected the caste system; in Maharashtra Jyoti Ba Phule worked against caste system. Ambedkar himself we as a social reformist. All the movements show the dynamic aspect of religion. It must not be forgotten that from Marxian point of view religion comes in the way of social change. There is an anecdote that there was a famine in USSR. Some charitable institutions distributed woolen shawls to the poor people. It was reported to Lenin who responded on it : "Stop this charity immediately. It will take the revolutions steam from the poor people. Let them suffer to the extreme. And, people would be ready for committing revolution."

Socio-religious movements in India can be understood with reference to India's nationalism. In the premodern colonial India the Britishers also wanted to bring some reforms in Indian society so that they could establish themselves. The Britishers brought about some reforms. During Mughal period also Akbar wanted to establish himself as a reformist leader. This country has a history of multi-pluralities. In such a society some reforms were essential to bring about social unity and cohesion. There were about 3000 castes which had to be brought together to bring an empire. Akbar's effort for Din-E-Elahi was nothing but an effort for socio-religious reform.

A.R. Desai in his powerful book on the Social Background of Indian Nationalism (1948), argues that the religious reform movements in India very amply show the expression of national awakening. He observes :

> The national democratic awakening of the Indian people found expression also in the religious sphere. The contradiction between the old religious outlook, practices, and organization, on the one hand, and the new social and economic reality on the other, gave rise to various religio-reform movements in the country. These

movements represented attempts to revise the old religion in the spirit of the new principles of nationalism and democracy, which were the conditions for the development of the new society.

The spirit of nationalism was needed to unite the people into a joint effort to solve problems, which had become national due to the political and economic unification of the Indian people, for the first time in their history, under the British rule. To advance the economic and cultural evolution of the Indian society, now become a single whole, as also to combat restrictions which the British rule put on this evolution, constituted the principal task set to itself by the rising Indian nationalism. It is true that the early pioneers of Indian nationalism, the early social and religious reformers, had hopes o getting these restrictions removed under the guidance of British Democracy. Still, they did recognize that the British rule, in spite of its early progressive character, handicapped the Indian national development.

Democracy was another principle which the reformers, the early pioneer nationalists like Ram Mohan Roy. Debendra Nath Tagore, Keshubchandra Sen, Telang, Ranade, Fulley, and the founders of the Arya Samaj, in varying degrees extended to the sphere of religion. Modern society established in India by the British conquest was a capitalist society resting on the principles of individual liberty, freedom of competition, contrast, and freedom of the individual to own and manipulate property at will. Individualism was its keynote in contrast to the pre-capitalist society which was authoritarian in character; maintained social distinctions based on birth and sex, and subordinated the individual to caste and the joint family system. The new society demanded, as the very condition of its development, the abolition of privileges based on birth or sex.

The early religious reformers strove to extend the principle of individual liberty to the sphere of religion. In fact, these religio-reform movements, the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Arya Samaj and others, were in different degrees endeavors to recast the old religion into a new form suited to meet the needs of the new society. It is true that some of their leaders (especially of the Arya Samaj) had the misconception that they were reviving the old pristine social structure of the Vedic Aryans that they were returning to the Golden Age. In reality they were engaged,

in varying degrees, in adapting the Hindu religion to the social, political, economic and cultural needs of the contemporary Indian nation. History records instances where the consolidators of new societies were imaging that they were returning to the past 'and reviving the best social forms existing in the old periods. In fact, the early religio-reform movements in India were attempting to build a religious outlook which would build up national unity of all communities, the Hindus, the Muslims, the Parsis and the rest, for solving such common national tasks as the economic development of India on modern lines, the removal of restrictions put on the people's free evolution, the establishment of equality between man and woman, the abolition of caste, the abolition of the Brahmin as the monopolist of classical culture and sole intermediary between God and the individual. Nevertheless like the leaders of the European Protestant and other movements comprising the Religious Reformation, the Indian religious reformers were not rehabilitating any pat period of society but only consolidating the rising new society.

15.2 Religio-Reform Movements

Before the attainment of Independence there were religio-reform movements but they were characterized for the rule of the aristocracy. Liberalism, the philosophy of capitalism preached democracy and government by the people. Medievalism including medieval religion stood for privilege based on birth. Liberalism attacked all such privilege as unjust and proclaimed the principles of individual liberty, equal right and pre-competition. Medievalism demanded faith from the people in the divine origin of kingship, in the sacrosanct character of the social structure, and in the God-ordained nature of whatever exists. Liberalism substituted critical religion for faith. Every institution and principle must be subjected to the test of reason.

Sometimes old gods and goddesses were interpreted in a way suitable for rousing national sentiments and hopes among the people. This interpretation of the old images of gods and goddesses has imparted a new meaning to the current ceremonialism of the country, and multitudes, while worshipping either Jagat Dhatri or Kali or Durga, accost them with devotion… with the inspiring cry of "Bande Mataram." All these are the popular objects of worship of the Indian Hindus … And the transfiguration of these symbols is at once the cause and the evidence of the depth and strength of the present movement. This wonderful transfiguration of the old gods and goddesses is carrying the message of new nationalism to the women and masses

of the country.

Thus the religio-revival movement, too, like the religio-reform movement, was inspired with a national ideal.

Another characteristics of the religio-reform movements was that their programme was not restricted to the task of merely reforming religion but extended to that of the reconstruction of social institutions and social relations. This was due to the fact that in India religion and social structure were organically interwoven. Caste hierarchy, sex inequality, unsociability and social taboos, flourished because of the sanction of religion. Social reform, consequently, constituted a part of the platform of all religio-reform movements. While rationalizing religion to a greater or less degree, these movements also aimed at rationalizing social institutions and relations to a greater or less degree. Nowhere in the world did religion dominate and determine the life of the individual as in India. His economic activity his social life, his marriage, birth, and death, his physical movements, all were strictly and minutely controlled by religion. It was indispensable for the religio-reform movements to have an all-embracing programme of religious, social and even political reform. They fought the caste system and Theban ongoing to a foreign country as much as polytheism and idolatry. They attacked caste privilege, as much as the monopoly rights of the Brahmin in the sphere of religion. They attacked all this because they were obstacles to national progress which required, as its vital pre-conditions, national unity based on the principles of equality and liberty of individuals and groups.

The motive of the movements was national advance. The first national awakening of the Indian people took predominantly a religious form. This awakening deepened and broadened in subsequent decades and found increasingly secular forms. We discuss below some of the socio-religious movements which were launched against the medieval religion.

15.3 Brahmo Samaj Movement

The Brahmo Samaj, established in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), who can be correctly described as the Father of Indian Nationalism, was the first movement of this kind. The Raja was essentially a democrat and a humanist. In his religio-philosophical and social outlook, he was deeply influenced byte monotheism and anti-idolatry of Islam, Deism of Sufism, the ethical teachings of Christianity and

the liberal and rationalist doctrines of the west. He tried to interpret and assimilate into himself the highest elements of Islam, Christianity, and modern Rationalism or Humanism, and transformed them into a single creed which he found n the ancient Upanishadic philosophy of his own community.

He attacked the polytheistic degeneration of ancient Hindu monotheism. He attacked the idol worship of the Hindus as degrading and expounded the conception of One God of the religions and humanity. His attack on polytheism and idolatry was motivated by national and social-ethical considerations as much as by philosophical conviction. 'My constant reflections on the … injurious rites introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindu idolatry which more than any pagan-worship destroys the texture of society, together with compassion for my countrymen, have compelled me to use every possible effort to enable them to contemplate … the unity and omnipresence of Nature's God.'

Raja Ram Mohan Roy stood for a rational approach to religion. The individual should study the scriptures directly without the priest as the intermediary and assess the rational character of a religious doctrine. He must subject religious principles to the test of his own ethical reason and reject those which contradict the test.

Since the Hindu society was dominated and governed by religious conceptions of Hinduism, no religio-reform movement could avoid a socio-reform section in its programme. According to Raj Ram Mohan Roy and early religious reformers, religious renovation was the vital condition for revising the social structure from a decadent to a healthy basis. That is why the socio-reform programme became a part of the total programme of religio-reform movements.

The Brahmo Samaj under the leadership of the Raja, launched an offensive gainst the caste system branding it as undemocratic, inhuman, and anti-national. It crusaded against suttee and child marriage. It stood for the freedom of the widow to remarry and equal rights of man and woman.

The Brahmo Samaj valued the modern western culture and organized educational institutions in the country for its spread among the people. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was an admirer of the liberal democratic culture of the west.

The Raja considered the British rule in India as a good thing. He admired it for inaugurating progressive measures of social reform such as the abolition of suttee and

infanticide, for establishing modern educational institutions and a free press, and others. This was natural since the British rule in India, during the first half of the nineteenth century, had historically speaking, a progressive aspect.

In spite of his great admiration for the British, Raj Ram Mohan Roy organized protest movement against the measure to restrict the freedom of the press. He also criticized the British government for excluding the Indians from higher posts.

Since the Brahmo Samaj was not merely a religious movement but also included in its programme items of social and political reform, it was the precursor of the subsequent social reform movement started by Ranade and others and the political reform movement initiated by the early Indian National Congress. The religious reform movement thus prepared for purely secular social and political reform movements in the country. That is the historical significance of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj he started. Raja Ram Mohan Roy inaugurated the Modern Age in India.

Debendra Nath Tagore (1817-1905) who succeeded as the leader of the Brahmo Samaj developed skepticism about the infallibility of the scriptures and finally repudiated it. He substituted intuition for the authority of the scriptures. By means of intuition he located sections of Upanishads which served as the religio-ideological basis of the doctrines and programmes of the Brahmo Samaj.

Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-84) was the next leader of the Brahmo Samaj. Under him, the doctrine of the Brahmo Samaj was more and more adapted to the doctrine of pure Christianity. In later state, he propounded the doctrine of Adesha, according to which God inspires knowledge in some individuals whose word must therefore be considered infallible and true. A section of Brahmos did not accept this doctrine, left the Samaj and stated the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

The Brahmo Samaj was the pioneer of the nationalist movement, which by the workings of history, began as a religio-reform movement aiming at liberating the individual from the deadweight of an authoritarian religion which strangulated their initiative and stultified both the individual and collective mind.

The Brahmo Samaj inaugurate anew era for the Indian people by proclaiming

the principles of individual freedom, national jnity, solidarity and collaboration and the democratization of all social institutions and social relations. It was the first organized expression of their national awakening.

15.4 Prarthana Samaj

The Prarthana Samaj was founded in 1867 in Bombay by M.G. Ranade. It had a aprogramme of religious and social reforms on the same lines as those of the Brahmo Samaj. Its founder Ranade was one of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Indian Social Conference, which held their first sessions in 1885 and 1888 respectively.

15.5 Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj founded in Bombay in 1875 by Dayanand Saraswati, though embodying the first upsurge of Indian nationalism was a movement of quite a different type. It had a more revivalist character. It declared the Vedas infallible and, further an inexhaustible reservoir of all knowledge, past, present, and future. One must know how to understand and interpret the Vedas, which contain all information, philosophical, technical, and scientific. By making adequate endeavour, one can discover in the Vedas all modern chemistry, engineering and even military and non-military sciences.

Since the Vedas were proclaimed infallible, the word of the Vedas and not the judgment of the individual was the final criterion. The Arya Samaj by postulating the infallibility of the Vedas did not and could not permit the individual judgments to override.

The repudiation of the authority of the Brahmin, the denouncing of the infinite number of meaningless rites and the worship of the images of different gods and goddesses which split the people into numerous belligerent sects, and the crusade against the mass of religious superstitions which kept, for many centuries, the Hindu mind in a state of mental befogging and spiritual degradation—these were the progressive elements in the programme of the Araya Samaj. Its slogan Bark to Vedas was inspired with the urge to bring about national unity and to kindle national pride and consciousness. However, since it retained its narrow Hindu basis, the national unity it proclaimed could not gather into its fold the non-Hindu communities such as the Mohammedans and the Christians. It became a semi-rationalized

form of Hinduism.

The Arya Samaj had a programme of social reform also. Though opposed to the hereditary caste system, it stood, however for the four-caste division of society to be determined by merit and not by birth. Since the Vedas laid down such a division and since the Vedas could not err, the Arya Samaj couldn't proclaim the death of the caste system itself.

The Arya Samaj stood for equal rights of man and woman in social and educational matters. This was a distinct democratic conception. It however, opposed co-education since in the Vedic period co-education did not exist.

The Arya Samaj organized a network of schools and colleges, in the country, both for boys and girls, where education was imparted in the mother tongue. The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College was founded in 1886.

The conservative section of the Arya Samaj thought the education imparted in this college to be not sufficiently Vedic in character. Its members led by Munshi Ram, therefore, started Gurukul at Haradwar, where the education, both in content and method was given in the ancient Vedic manner.

In all its activities, the Arya Samaj was generally inspired with the spirit of nationalism and democracy. It attempted to integrate the Hindu by destroying the sub-castes. It spread education among the people, proclaimed the principle of equality irrespective of the distinctions of caste, creed, community, race, or sex. It tried to destroy their inferiority complex, the inevitable product of their status as a subject nation.

The Arya Samaj in spite of its narrow Hindu as is of its rational declaration that all knowledge is enshrined in the Vedas, drew to itself hundreds of nationalist Indians. In fact, once the Arya Samaj was one of the main targets of political repression. It is hardly surprising therefore, that when Sir Valentine Chirol visited India on behalf of The Times to investigate the causes of unrest after 1907, he looked upon the Arya Samaj as a serious menace to English and sovereignty.

The Arya Samaj represented a form of the national awakening of the Indian

people. Restricted to a narrow Hindu basis and with a negative attitude to Islam, it in course of time, led the Muslims to mobilize on a corresponding communal basis. It played a progressive role in the earlier stages when the national awakening was just sprouting. The Arya Samaj had two aspects, one progressive, and the other reactionary. When it attacked religious superstitions and the sacerdotal dictatorship of the Brahmin, when it denounced polytheism, and when further it adopted the programme of mass education, of the elimination of sub-castes, of the equality of man and woman, it played a progressive role. But when it declared the Vedas infallible and a treasure house of all knowledge of the cosmos past, present, and future when it stood for the division of society into four castes though based on merit, it was playing an anti-progressive role. No knowledge could ever be final in the infinite and eternally evolving social and natural world. So the Vedas could not be the embodiment of all knowledge. Further, all knowledge is historically conditioned and is limited by the level of social and economic development of the epoch in which it is born. As such, subsequent generations have to critically carry over all inherited past knowledge and subject it to the test of reason and social usefulness. Here comes the role of individual judgment. One the Vedas were eulogized as infallible, the individual as well as the generation he belonged to, were denied the right to exercise their own independent judgment and pronounce upon the ancient scriptures. This was intellectual enslavement of the individual and the generation to the scriptures. It was a departure from the principles of Liberalism.

Again, the Arya Samaj could not be a national or cosmopolitan religion since it demanded of its followers the recognition of the principle of the infallibility and the omniscience of the Vedas.

However, as mentioned above, the Arya Samaj played a progressive role in the earlier stages of Indian nationalism. However, when the national awakening broadened and deepened, when the national movement reached greater and greater secular heights, it became a hindrance to the growth of Indian nationalism by contributing though unconsciously to the creation of a belligerent religio-communal atmosphere.

15.6 Ramakrishna Mission Movement

The national awakening of the Indian people found expression in the movement

inspired by Ramakrishna, a great Hindu saint, in direct line to such saints as Chandidas and Chaitanya. It primarily based itself on the principle of Devotion of Bhakti. Its principal propagandist was Swami Vivekanand, a discipline of Ramakrishna and an intellectual of a very high caliber who, after the death of the saint, founded the Ramakrishna Mission to propagate his teaching.

The Ramakrishna Mission aimed ate protecting India from 'the materialist' influence of western civilization. It idealized Hinduism including its practice of idol worship and polytheism. It aimed at the spiritual conquest of the world for revived Hinduism.

One of the harmful results of the foreign rule in India has been to create a tendency among the Indians to disorient from the modern western culture, a historically higher form of culture than the pre-capitalist culture on which the conscious life of an average Indian was based.

There were other religio-reform movements of smaller magnitude, which also expressed the new awakening. Hinduism began to organize itself on a national scale in revivalist or reformist forms. These movements spread to various groups comprising Hindu society.

Thus, the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Society having for its programmes the reforming of the Hindu religion and dissemination of religious and non-religious education among the Hindus was started in 1902. In 1890, Shri Narayan launched the movement of the Tiyas, a community which worshipped demons and formed one of the lowest castes of the Hindu society, with the programmes of building of temples and establishing schools for the community.

Theosophy

Theosophy introduced in India by Madame Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott in 1879 and mainly popularized by Mrs. Annie Besant was another religio-reform movement started in India under the impact of the new Indian and international conditions. The uniqueness of this movement consisted in the fact that it was inaugurated by a non-Indian who was a great admirer of Hinduism. Theosophy subscribed to the spiritual philosophy of ancient Hinduism and recognized its doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. It preached universal brotherhood of men irrespective of distinctions of caste, creed, race or sex. It stood for the

development of a national spirit among the Indians. The needs of India, Mrs. Besant wrote in 1905, are among others, the development of a national spirit, an education founded on Indian ideals and enriched not dominated by the thought and culture of the West. Theosophy stood for making a comparative study of all oriental religions. However, it considered ancient Hinduism as the most profoundly spiritual religion in the world. Theosophy, however, failed to strike deep roots in the country. There were minor religio-reform movements aiming at readjusting Hinduism to the social needs of the contemporary Indian people such as the Deva Samaj and the Radha Swami Satsang. Like their major counterparts, these movements too, aimed at integrating the Hindus round the original principles of Hinduism, democratizing social relations among them, and firing them with a national emotion. They represented in religious form the new national awakening of the Hindus.

Religious Reforms by Eminent Political Leaders

In addition to these organized national religio-reform and religio-revivalist movements, individuals of outstanding capacity and political pre-eminence, such as Bepin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, Tilak and Gandhi without organizing any distinct movements, contributed to the work of religious reform. Nationalism in Bengal was though becoming increasingly secular, for some time religious in character. It was influenced by the Neo-Vedantic movement of Swami Vivekanand. Hence the attempt on the part of the Bengalee Nationalists to base the movement for Swaraj on the ancient Upanishadic ideal of the search for the metaphysical Absolute in one's own innermost self. Hence, the worship of the Mother—the country symbolized as the Goddess Kali.

Tilak reinterpreted the Gita and declared Action to be its central teaching. The very kernel of the Gita's philosophy, he said, was missed by the Indian people who had, as a result, sunk into inertia and fatalistic moods. The Indian nation could be roused to dynamic effort only if they recognized this.

Thus, the national movement aiming at national freedom from the British rule and the establishment of an Indian society and state on a democratic basis and on the basis also religious movement. Nationalism was expressed in religious terms and clothed in religio-mystical form. Indian nationalism with its further development however, progressively freed itself from the religious element with which it had been

permeated. It became increasingly secular.

15.7 Socio-Religious Movements among Muslims

Islam across out of the democratic ferment of the common people of Arabia against the privileged strata of society. As such, it has a democratic ring. Islam preaches the principle of social equality. This makes the propaganda of international socialism more successful among the Muslim rank and file.

In spite of this relative inertia of the Muslims, from the point of view of their development on nationalist lines, there sprang up, in course of time, a number of religio-revivalist and even religio-reform movements among them. These movements were however not so powerful as their counterparts among the Hindus. Besides, most of them lacked the national note. There were four such main movements started by (1) Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi, (2) Saiyid Ahmad of Bareli, (3) Shaikh Karnamat Ali of Jaunpur and (4) Haji Shariat-ullah of Faridpur. These four movements were more of a revivalist character.

52.8 Ahmadiya Movement

The Ahmadiya Movement founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed in 1889 was more or less based on Liberal principles. It described itself as the standard bearer of Mohammedan Renaissance. It based itself, like the Brahmo Samaj on the principles of a universal religion of all humanity. The founder was greatly influenced by western liberalism, theosophy, and religio-reform movements of Hindus.

The Ahmadiya Movement opposed Jehad or the sacred war against non-Muslims. It stood for fraternal relations among all peoples. The movement spread western liberal education among the Indian Muslims. It started a network of schools and colleges for that purpose and published periodicals and books, both in English and vernaculars. In spite of its liberalism, the Ahmadiya Movement, like Bahaism, which flourished in the West Asiatic countries, suffered from mysticism. It however, represented an attempt on the part of Islam to assimilate the principles of western liberalism.

Due to historical causes, the Muslim community embarked on a career of national democratic progress later than the Hindus. The tragedy of the great revolt in

1857-8 marks the death of the old order, and brought political, economic and cultural disaster to the Indian Muslims. It made their sullenness, their, aloofness their suppressed hatred for the new order more marked than ever…The key to the whole situation was adaptation to the new environment, use of the new forces that had come into play, acceptance of the new instrument of progress that had been created through English education.

This recoil from the new reality could not last forever. Soon, the Muslims took to education and created an intelligentsia. They also appeared in the field of commerce and industries. The progressive elements among these new educated Muslims and Muslim merchants and industrialists steadily evolved a national outlook and took to the road of nationalism in politics and democratic reform in social matters.

15.9 Aligarh Movement

The first national awakening among the Muslims found expression in a movement, which aimed at making the Indian Muslims politically conscious and spreading modern education among them. Saiyad Ahmed Khan was the founder of this movement. He had such able collaborators as the poet Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, and Maulvi Shibli Numani.

The liberal social reform and cultural movement founded by Sir Saiyad Ahmed Khan is known as the Aligarh Movement because it was at Aligarh that the Mohamedan Anglo-Oriental College was established in1875. This college developed into the Aligarh University in 1890.

The Aligarh Movement aimed at spreading the western education among the Muslims without weakening their allegiance to Islam. The religious seduction reinforced the secular education, which was imparted in the educational intuitions it started. The movement aimed at evolving a distinct social and cultural community among the Indian Muslims more or less on modern lines. It condemned polygamy and the social ban on widow-remarriage which, though permitted by Islam, had crept in among some sections of the Muslims who were recent converts from Hinduism.

After the starting of the Aligarh movement, independent more or less progressive movements sprang up in Bombay, Punjab, Hyderabad, and other places.

Sir Mahmud Iqbal

Sir Mahmud Iqbal, the poet of world celebrity, played an important role in the history of the Indian Muslims. Though he supported the Liberal movement, he asked the Muslim Liberals to be on guard so that the broad human principle which Islam stood for was not thrown in the background by emphasis on the nation and the race. Iqbal described the European civilization as inhuman, rapacious, predatory, and decadent. He even quoted such writers as Nietzche, Schopenhauer, Spengler, and Karl Marx holding conflicting view to denounce its different aspects. He passionately attacked the European civilization in poems, which are pearls of Persian and Urdu poetry. He was essentially a humanist and considered Islam as a religion of broadest humanism. In the later phase of his life, Iqbal exhibited a reactionary tendency. He opposed democracy as a system and became hostile to the Indian nationalist movement.

15.10 Other Muslim Reform Movements

In course of time, the movement for the emancipation of the Muslim women and for combating such institutions as purdhah, came into existence. Tyabji an enlightened and progressive Muslim, was the founder of this movement in Bombay. Shaikh Abdul Halil Sharar (1860-96), an outstanding author and journalist, organized a veritable crusade against purdah in the United Provinces.

With the spread of Liberal ideas among the Muslims, the movement to improve the social position of the Muslim women and to abolish customs which were determined to them began to gain strength. Polygamy began to diminish as also child marriage. Individual Muslims and Muslim organizations established an increasing number of educational institutions for the Muslim women all over India. Education began to spread among the Muslim women. Thus the religio-reform and socio-reform movements grew and gathered momentum among the Muslims also. The rise of Turkhish and Arab nationalism and the establishment of a national secular state in Turkey, had the effect of broadening the outlook of the Indian Muslims. The rise and development of the Indian national movement also increasingly brought the Muslims into the orbit of the Indian nationalism. The independent workers and peasants movements which developed

rapidly in India later on and were mostly led by the communists, the socialists and the Left nationalists like Nehru, had the effect of making the Muslim masses national-minded and class-conscious. These movements became the training ground for the masses of both communities and spheres of collaboration to serve national and common class tasks. The economic structure and the existing foreign rule urged them to come together and co-operate for common liberation.

Assignments

Q. 1 What was the objectives of social movements which took place in medieval period?

Q. 2 Discuss the objectives of religio-social movement during colonial times.

Q. 3 Why did religious-social movement take place in post independent India?

Q. 4 Write a critical note on Brahmo Samaj Movement.

Q. 5 Critically examine the objectives of Arya Samaj Movement.

Q. 6 What did Ramkrishna Mission Movement do for Indian national awakening?

Q. 7 Write about Ahmadiya Movement.

Q. 8 Discuss the role of Sir Mahmud Iqbal.

Q.9 Write a note on Aligarh Movement.

Q.10 How religio-social movements are related to liberalism?

15.11 Further Readings

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Globalization and Religion

Structure

16.0 Objectives

After going through this Chapter you will be able to understand :

-- Concept of Globalization

-- Its Sociological Understanding

-- Globalization and Religion

16.1 Introduction

Globalization was not simply about the rise of a global culture that all people of the world would supposedly share, rather it was more about how people increasingly formed local cultures, traditions and identities in terms of general global models. It broadly referred to the condition of complex connectivity, currently found in the world

and seen in terms of both the compression of the world and the intensification of global consciousness. Some theorists held that globalization had been occurring throughtout history, only its form had changed over the different historical periods. Sociologists of the classical period had identified globalizing solvents in terms of capitalist commodification (Marx), differentiation (Durkheim) and rationalization (Weber). Contemporary sociological theorists especially Robertson, Giddens and Wallerstein saw globalization largely throught the mediating category of Modernity.

By the 1990s, this connectivity was seen largely in terms of the rise of global markets. Today, this connectivity is being looked at in terms of the rise of a global culture. Cultural approaches to Globalization focused on several factors, one of them being religion. Religion had played a significant role in the process of globalizatioon, initially through the expansion of the world religions of Islam and Christianity, and later through the secularizaton process in Protestantism. Recent developments were however, challenging the secularization thesis. What was instead being observed was the resurgence of religion in terms of what were being generally called fundamentalist movements. Fundamentalism was seen by Robertson as an attempt to declare a social identity, a search for a new consciousness in the face of the infinite fragmentation that was taking place in global society. Scott saw fundamentalism as a modern form of a 'politicized religion', an attempt by those who called themselves 'true believers', to resist the marginalization of religion in a global society. Fundamentalists identified and opposed the agents of secularism and sought to restructure the political, social, cultural and economic relations and institutions, according to traditional religious beliefs and practices. Fundamental movements were both apolitical and of a political nature and could be categorized into (i) the emergence of new religious movements, and (ii) the wave of religious nationalist movements. Niklas Luhmann held that the globalization of society, while structurally favouring the privatization of religion, provided fertile ground for the renewed public influence of religion. We look in greater detail at a sociological understanding of globalization and its effects on religion. What was the future role of religion in society ?

15.2 Globalization

Just as post-modernism was the concept of the 1980s, 'globalization' could

be called the concept of the 1990s. It had begun to replace terms like 'internationalization' and 'trans-nationalization' as a more suitable concept for describing the ever intensifying networks of cross-border human interaction (Hoogvelt, 1997:114). Globalization referred to an empirical condition of the complex connectivity evident everywhere in the world in recent times. Complex connectivity involved overcoming cultural distances through penetrating experiences provided through education, employment, consumer culture and the mass media and had been described as being more significant than technological advances and physical mobility (Tomlinson, 1999:32).

Held, McGrew and others were of the view that globalization was neither a wholly novel, nor primarily a modern social phenomenon, only its form had changed over time and across the key domains of human interaction. However, although important continuities with previous phases of globalization existed, contemporary patterns of globalization were unique and consisted of a distinctive historical form, which was itself a product of a unique meeting of social, political, economic and technological forces. They presented the progress of globalization over four broad periods of human history, namely, the pre-modern, early modern, modern and contemporary periods : (i) In the pre-modern period (pre 1500 C.E.), the key agents of Globalization were three-fold : political and military empires, world religions and the migratory movements of nomadic groups, the steppe peoples and farming socieites. In this context, globalization was seen as inter-regional and inter-civilizational encounter. (ii) In the early modern period (1500-1800 C.E.), there were several agents of globalizatiuon. What had been broadly called the rise of the West, was regarded as the key agent of Globalization. This included the historical process that produced the emergence and development of the key insitutions of European modernity, the acquisition of technologies and power resources that had exceeded those available to any other civilization and the subsequent creation of European global empires. (iii) The modern period (circa 1850-1945), witnessed an enormous acceleration in the spread and enterenchment of global networks and flows that had begun in the early modern period. Exploiting these innovations, the reach of western global empires and thus, of western economic power and cultural influence exploded. This era saw very extensive, intensive and socially significant patterns of globalization. (iv) In the

contemporary period (from 1950 onwards), globalization was shaped profoundly by the structural consequences of the second world war and the emergence of a world-wide system of nation states, overlaid by multi-lateral, regional and global systems of regulation and governance. This era also experienced extraordinary innovations in the infrastructures of transport and communication and an unparalleled density of institutions of global governance and regulation. This era not only quantitatively surpassed earlier periods, but also displayed qualitative differences (Held, 1999 : 414-430).

Several efforts had been made to define globalization. It was best described as complex connectivity, that referred to the rapidly developing inter-connectedness and inter-dependencies that characterized modern social life. Giddens defined globalization as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations, which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occuring many miles away and vice versa' (Giddens, 1990 : 64). This was a dialectical process because local happenings could move in an obverse direction, i.e., from the very distanciated relations that shaped them. McGrew also spoke of globalization as 'simply the intensification of global inter-connectedness' and stressed the multiplicity of linkages it implied - goods, capital, social-institutional relationships, technological developments and ideas that all readily flowed across territorial boundaries (see Tomlinson, 1999 : 2). Dwelling on the complexity of the Globalization process, Robertson observed that globalization increasingly imposed constraints but it also differentially empowered. He defined globalization as a concept that referred, 'both to the compresson of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (Robertson, 1998 :8). We look in greater detail at Robertson's definition of globalization.

The first part of the definition, i.e. global compression, included arguments of theories of dependency and of world systems. Compression led to proximity, which could be seen in terms of the shrinking of distances through the dramatic reduction in time taken either physically (in travel) or representationally (throught information technology) to cross distances. It also referred to spatial proximity via the idea of 'stretching' social relations across distances; the transofrmation of spatial experiences into temporal existene leading to simultaneous and instantaneous experiences. Global proximity resulted from a 'shrinking world' or in McLuhan's terms, the wrold was reduced to a 'global' village'. The United Nations preferred the term 'global

neighbourhood'. Phenomenologically, proximity was being descrigbed as a common conscious appearance of the world that was more intimate and more compressed. Metaphorically, it implied an increasing immediacy and consequentiality, thereby reducing real distanciated relations (Tomlinson, 1999 : 3). Global compression that led to proximity also referred to an increasing level of interdependence betrween national systems by way of trade, military alliance, domination and cultural imperialism. While Wallerstein (1974) maintained that the globe had been undergoing social compression since the beginning of the sixteenth century, Robertson argued that its history was much longer (Waters, 1995 : 41). Hoogvelt asserted that world compression was not a new idea. What made it a novelty in Robertson's work was that he argued that world compression intensified 'global consciounesss' (Hoogvelt, 1997 : 117).

The second component of Robertson's definition was more important, i.e., the idea of an intensification of global consciouness, which was a relatively new phenomenon. This implied that individual phenomenologies would be addressed to the entire world rather than to local or national sectors of it. Not only in matters of mass media and consumer preferences, but in all issues - military - political issues, position of women and so on. For the first time in history, the globe was becoming a single social and cultural setting. Thus, in all spheres of life, issues could not longer be looked at independently from a local perspective. Globalization had connected the world. Local was raised to the horizon of a 'single world'. There was both an increasing interaction between and a simultaneity of frames of reference. Robertson clarified that this did not imply greater integration but greater unification or systematizatij, where similar institutions and processes emerged say in banking, political governance or national experssions (national flag, museums, libraries); in other words, there was more connectivity. Nor did Robertson imply more harmony; he was careful to state that while it was a single system, it was divided by conflict and there was not universal agreement on what shape the single system should take in the future. In fact, conflicts could be more unmanageable than the previous disputes between nations. Neither did global unity imply a simplistic uniformity like a world culture. It did not imply wholeness and inclusiveness that was total and encompassing. Rather, it was a complex social and phenomenological condition in which different aspects of human life were brought into articulation with one another. It could lead to cultural differences becoming more accentuated precisely as it was identified in relation to the 'world as a whole'. In its

peculiar twentieth century manifestation of a holistic consciousness, Globalization involved the relativization of individual and national reference points to general and supranational ones; it involved cultural, social and phenomenological linkages between the individual self, national society, international system of socieities and humanity in general (Wates, 1995 : 42).

16.3 Globalization : A Sociological Understanding

Sociologists had been at the forefront in the effort to give globalization a consistent and rigorous theoretical status. Curiously Globalization, or a concept very muck like it, had appeared early in the development of the social sciences. Saint Simon noticed that industrialization was inducing commonalties of practices across the disparate cultures of Europe. Durkheim's legacy to globalization was his theories of differentiation and culture. The state and the collective consciousness had progressively become more weak and abstract in order to encompass intra-society diversity. All this implied that industrialization tended to weaken collective commitments and to open the way for dismantling the boundaries between societies. Just as Durkheim had identified differentiation, Weber identified rationalization as the globalizing solovent. Weber's concern with the success of rationalization and with its spread from the seed-bed origins of Calvinistic Protestantism to infect all Western cultures, implied a homogenization of cultures as well as reduced commitment to such values as patriotism and duty. But even this globalizing effect was restricted to Western Europe. Weber saw no prospect of the spread of rationalized cultural preferences to say India or China, which he regarded as inevitably mired in religious traditionalism. Of all the classical theorists, Karl Marx was most explicitly committed to a globalizing theory of modernizaztion. Globalization caused an enormous increase in the power of the capitalist class because it opened up new markets for it. The establishment of a 'world market' for modern industry gave a cosmopolitan character not only to production but also to consumption (Waters, 1995 : Robertson, 1998 : 15 - 18).

In the contemporary period, the development of the term 'globalization' as a specifically sociological concept owed by far the gratest debt to Roland Robertson of the University of Pittsburg. Robertson stressed that globalization needed to be understood as involving contradictions, resistances and countervailing forces and as involving a dialectic of opposed principles and tendencies - local and global, particular

and universal, integration and differentiation. Robertson's chief rival for the mantle of parent of the concept of globalization was Anthony Giddens. We look at the contributions of each of these theorists. One of the theoretical debates of globalization in contemporary sociological theory surrounded when it began. Two broad patterns were suggested : (i) The emergence of a New Age (ii) Through the powerful mediating category of modernity.

(I) *Emergence of a New Age :* Martin Albrow (1997 : 6) accepted Globalization on its own terms and in its own time. He spoke of 'The Global Age', that he argued had replaced 'The Modern Age'. The Modern Age had been supplanted and superceded by a new Global Age, with its own axial principles and specific cultural imaginary. The 'epochal shift' from pre-modern to modern to global, lay in th axial principles that put communication, mobility and connectivity at the centre of human lives (see Tomlinson, 1999 : 38 - 48).

(II) *Through the mediating cateogyr of modernity.* Under this pattern, three posibilities could be specified.

(i) *Globalization was seen in the historical context of modernity.* Robertson was a strong proponent of this view. Only within the historical appearance of key modern institutions of capitalism, industialism and urbanism, a developed nation-state system, mass communciation and so on, could the complex network of social relations characteristic of globalization arise. Thus, modernity, understood as the nexus of these institutions, was the essential historical context of globalization. Prior to this period, the socio-institutional conditions and the resources of cultural imagination emnabling connectivity were simply not in place. Robertson did not subscribe to Giddens' (1990) view that modernity had led directly to globaliation of the contempor4ary type was set in motion long before modernity; in the economic sphere it predated even the rise of capitalism. He did not however, deny that certain aspects f modernity had greatly amplified globalization, i.e., modernization tended to accelerate the globalization process (Robertson, 1998 : 170, Hoogvelt, 1997 : 116).

(ii) *Globalization was seen as a consequences of modernity.* Giddens first (1981, 1985) addressed the issue of the emergence of a global system in a general critique of Marxist theory in which he challenged the view that the development of the capitalist system alone determined the modern history of human societies. Giddens asserted that the development of the nation-states and their capacity to wage war on each other also determined the modern history of human societies. For Giddens, as also for Robertson, the ascendancy of the nation state, which had become a universal political unit, was simultaneous with the development of globalization. Each was impossible without the other. The world was seen as a network of national societies in a global system of international relations. Later, in his book *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990), Giddens offered one of the most sophisticated analyses of modernization and its inherently globalizing properties. Giddens approach to Globalization was historically discontinuous in contrast to Robertson's approach that was historically continuous. Using the concepts of time-space distanciation, disembedding and reflexivity, he explained how complex relationships developed between local activities and interaction took place across distances. He saw globalization as the result of the inherently expansive characteristics of modernity and listed four such institutional characteristics or 'organizatinal clusters' : (i) A capitalist system of commodity production (owners of private capital and labour); (ii) industrialization (technology required a collective process of production); (iii) administrative competence of the nation-state (a good surveillance system); and (iv) military order (for centralization of control within an industrialized society). He explained that his discussion of globalization focused on modernity, since he saw globalization as a consequence of modernity. Modernity implied universalizing tendencies that made possible global networks ofr relationships and more basically extended termporal - spatial distance of social relationships. Giddens was critical of the undue reliance that sociologists placed on the idea of 'society', where this

meant a bounded system. He was of the view that this should be replaced by starting points that concentrated on analyzing how social life was ordered across time and space (Giddens, 1990 : 64; Waters, 1995 : 48 - 50).

(iii) *Globalization was the result of the begemony of modernity.* Wallerstein saw globalization in its strategic role of the maintenance of western cultural dominance and its universalizing and hegemonic tendencies. The concept of globalization was an obvious object for ideological suspicion, becuase like modernization, a predecessor and related concept, it was bound up intrinsically with the pattern of capitalist development as it had branched out through political and cultural arenas. It did not imply that every culture / society had to become westernized and capitalist, but it implied that they had to establish their position in relation to the capitalist West. Wallerstein concentrated on the emergence and evolution of the modern European world system, which he traced from its late medieval origins of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the present day. Capitalism functioned in relation to the long-term cyclical rhythms, the central one of which was the regular patern of expansion and contraction of the whole economy, which over the years 'have transformed the capitalist world economy from a system located primarily in Europe, to one that covers the entire globe' (see Waters, 1995 : 23 -26; Hoogvelt, 1997 : 65 - 67).

The search for identity was a basic sub-concern of globalization, where the creation of viable identities was a fundamental issue. Modernization, Giddens maintained, with its basic tendency to differentiation, increased the possibolities of choice, but on the other hand created problems of identity formatiuon at both the individual and collective levels. MacDonald (1999) also argued that both inviduals and groups that were marginalized by globalization struggled to establish coherene identities that wee being threatened by contradictory social imperatibves (see Bendle, 2002:3). Other scholars, exploring the crises of identity in the context of high modernity or globalization, argued that the fragmented nature of identities in the face of

differentiation, led marginalized groups to particpate in social movements in a search for new identities. In other words, one of the responses to globalization was the participation in projects to change the system.

Identity in pre-modern societies was seen as synonymous with the 'core' or centre of existence. Post modrenist views rejected the notion of 'core' and considered identity to be conceived of as something more superficial, transient, multiple and manipulable, something more superficial, transient, multiple and mainpulable, something that emerged as a paroduct of discourse. Giddens (1991) saw the transformation in self-identity as one of the requirements in the dialectic of the local - global conditions. In other words, the greater the detrationalization of a society, the more ws the need to negotiate lifestyle choices from the diversity of options (ibid : 7).

The formation of identity also became the key component in the social dynamics of high modernity or globalization as discussed in the works of Heelas, Lash and Morris (1996). Heelas explained that in traditional societies, identity was incribed and based on an authoritative taken-for-grantedness, whereas in a detraditionalized society, identity was constructed and persons acquired opportunities to critically reflect upon and even reject what traditional society generally offered. Identity was no longer seen as involving the self's non-reflective, unquestioning 'incription' within a tradition, rather it was seen as emerging in a discourse. It was seen in a globalized society as a shift from the passive level of acceptance to the active level of reflexivity and critique (see Bendle, 2002 : 7).

16.4 Globalization and Religion

With this brief introduction to globalization in the context of modernity, we now look at the response of religion to the globalization process. How had the process of globalization effected religion ? And how had religion respondent ? Religion was one of the areas where, in the breakdown of familiar boundaries and power balances in a globalized situation, efforts were made to restructure new communities. Religion became one of the bases for social transformation both at the level of people's everyday lives and at the national level. If religion was seen as one of the most fundamental means of organizing human life, then the seeds of globalization could be found in religion itself. Some scholars had suggested that the idea of globalization was put

forward by the 'hyper-globalization' of some religions, such as the Catholic Church that supported the idea of the world as one place (Hopkins, 2001 : 1, 4).

A global focus on religion had emerged because of a cluster of issues : (i) the debate about whether societies were becoming more or less secularized, (ii) the resurgence of religion (or the diffusion of religion as a category), and (iii) the emergence in the 1970s and the 1980s of church-state and religion-politics conflations and tensions across much of the globe, commonly referred to as 'fundamentalisms'. One of the myths of modernity was that religion would be abolished, i.e., the world would be secularized. Instead there emerged a proliferation of religions. Mendieta claimed that globalization not only acceleraged the process of emergence of new religious movements and th awareness that religion could nto be abolished, it also led to religion taking on a new character, i.e., movements of both religious revival and religious activism (Mendieta, 2001 : 46). These fundamental movements that were emerging were regarded as a search for a new consciouness, the search for an identity in response to the new demands of contemporary society. Cultural survival was regarded as being the main cause of religious revivalism. But first we look at the role of religion in the emergence of globalization.

Robertson who had been credited with first analyzing globalization from a sociological perspective, had a dominant interest in trying to isolate the period during which contemporary globalization reached a point, when it was so well established that a particular pattern or form prevailed. According to Robertson, the expansion of the world religions of Islam and CHristianity had an important role in this process. The expansion of Islam took place with the expansion of the Arab and the Ottoman empires from the twelfth to the fifteenth centureis. By the eighteenth century, it had achieved a presence in diverse regions. Christianity had to wait for the military and colonial expansion of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to acquire a global presence. Prior to this period, the globalizing consequence was the incorporation of tribal peasants into large-scale political systems. These two universalistic religions of Christianity and Islam, both derivatives of the Abrahamic faith, became universalizing religions and most effective globalizers because of their claims that the world was created by a single God and that humanity was a common force of existence in relation to that God. It led to the argument that humanity constituted a single community that

disvalued geographical localities and political territories, that there was a single value reference for every person in the world and that this God proposed a single set of legal and moral laws.

By the sixteenth century, a newer and far more important globalizing religious force had emertged, namely, Protestantism. Catholicism had blurred the relationship between state and Church so that a series of conflicts emerged between kings and Popes. The Reformation resolved the dispute between state and Church by either subordinating the Church to the State (as in England), or by secularizing the state (as in USA and France). The state could now rely for its legitimazation on the political process of nationalism rather than on religious legitimations. The power of the state thus grew and was itself a pre-requisite for globalization (Waters, 1995 : 127 - 128). This view of the central role of the nation-state in the development of globalization was expressed by both Giddens and Robertson as seen earlier. One was impossible without the other.

In the modern period, since the 1960s, many sociologists had put forward the notion that religion in the contemporary Western world had become increasingly privatized. Most prominently T. Parsons (1966 : 134), P. Berger (1973 : 133f), T. Luckmann (1967 : 103) and R. Bellah (1970 : 43), had interpreted secularization in the modern world to mean that traditional religion was now primarily the concern of the invidual and had therefore lost much of its 'public' relevance. Privatization referred to the limitation of the relevance of religion to the private sphere of the individual's life, where in some cases the common universe of meaning was limited or fragmented only to the level of the nuclear family. This implied that the 'religious preference' could be as easily rejected as it was adopted (Berger, 1973 : 137). Institutional differentiation (which Luhmann called funtionally differentiated societal sub-systems) and pluralistic individual identities were basic features of modern societies. Secularization was the consequence of the relative independence of these initial sub-systems of society from religious norms, values and justifications, i.e. religion now had a limited legitimizing role in a highly differentiated society; it suffered the fate of compartmentalization.

What did this imply for religion in general ? For an answer, Beyer looked to Niklas Luhmann's (1982) thesis, which he felt allowed a clear examination of the problems and potential of religion in a contemporary global society. The Luhmannian

thesis held that the globalization of society, while structurally favouring privatization of religion, also provided fertile ground for the renewed public influence of religion, i.e. religion not only retreated from important aspects of local life, it also developed an institutionally specialized sub-system of its own. By public influence, he meant that one or more religions could become the source of collective commitment; collective action in the name of specific religious norms now became legitimate (see Beyer, 1999 : 373). In the Luhmannian scheme, the rise of the expert in modern society reflected a socio-structural situation, in which professionals became the prime public representatives of societal sub-systems. Thus, public importance of a system rose and fell with the public influence of its professional. The question that followed was under what circumstances, would individual persons listen to religious leaders, to a new revelation or to a revival of the old beliefs ? Religion needed to provide a service that not only supported and enhanced the religious faith of its adherents, but also by which it could impose itslef, by having far-reaching implications outside the strictly religious realm. It was in this context that contemporary religious movements were of particular interests (Beyer, 1999 : 377 - 78). These religious movemnets are discussed below under the title 'Fundamentalist Movements'. Robertson saw fundamentalist movements as a means to establish and identity, where the search for local identities in a global world was becoming unified.

16.5 Fundamentalist Movements

The contemporary religious movements that were challenging the secularization thesis could be observed in what was broadly and generally being called fundamentalist movements. Fundamentalism, as John Hawley explained, was an embattled term. It frst arose in the United States in about 1920s as a term of self-reference, adopted by a group of Protestant Christians who supported a series of pamphlets called 'The Fundamentals' (1910 - 1915). These writings criticized the evils of modernism, especially scientific rationalism, an 'uncritical' use of higher criticism of the Bible and perceived lapses in moral values. They favoured returning to 'the fundamentals' of Christian belief and practice, the 'eternal pillars of an idealized past'. In time, the liberal Christians and modernists of a more secular nature began to use the term 'fundamentalist' in a rather broader sense, to designate these groups which they saw as naive enough to believe that they could reverse the course of history in favour of a

mythical, dogmatic and socially homogenous Christian past. (These positions were articulated by conservative Christian groups, mainly evangelical Protestants) (Hawley, 1999 : 3).

The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, put the term 'fundamentalism' into wide use for the first time. It subsequently referred to religious groups that took political action to reject Western secular modernism in its various forms. As Robertson explained, the term 'fundamentalism' was hardly used outside the United States of America till as late as the 1970s, and then only on a limited scale. Only in the wake of the Iranian Revolution of 1978 - 79, did there arise the tendency to speak of a globe-wide fundamentalism. Eventually, this term was adopted by people and movements moving across the globe and came to represent an ancient and a narrow rigid mentality. Some of the indigenous movements around the globe adopted and accepted some of the diagnosis that fundamentalisms were fuelled by basically religious and spiritual orientatons (Robertson, 1998 : 169).

These days, the term 'fundamentalism is being applied to two different categories of religious movements : (i) to the emergence of what were termed new religious movements that were revitalizing old religions, and (ii) to a wave of what were called religious nationalist movements, expressing themselves as religio-political movements that were explicit attempts to create a public influence for religion. We look at each of these recent developments separately.

(i) *The New Religious Movements*

Social theorists observed that by the 1960s, contrary to the earlier secularization theory, religion was not receding unilaterally from human life. However, religion was not the same any more either. A new religious consciousness was emerging that was not simply a reassertion of traditional religiosity; it was a search for a 'new consciousness', a search for a new religious identity and for new meanings in the face of fragmentation and differentiation in a modern world; a search for an identity that had a profound, religious quality to it. These new religious movements, as this emerging new religious consciouness was being termed, were the response of contemporary humans to the contemporary social conditions, just a traditional religion had been the response of humans to the social conditions of that time. The ideology of equality and

democracy, the emphasis on youth, the new relativism in human thinking, the search for the renewal of self, were all characteristic of the new religious movements.

The term 'new religious movements' was initially applied by social scientists to refer to a wide variety of spiritual enthusiasms that had emerged in the West after the 1960s. However, it was later being used chronologically to refer to all types of religiojns that had established themselves in Western Europe, North America, India and Japan since 1945 and in Africa since the 1890s (Clarke, 1988 : 907). The term was being used as an umbrella for the diversity of phenomena ranging from cults, sects, spiritual groups or alternate belief systems to doctrinal deviations within world religions and major churches, to passing fads and spiritual enthusiasms of a questionable religious kind. The term had also included a spiritual renewal of self and millennial groups. Some of the new religious movements in India included ISKON or International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Rajneeshism, Transcendental Meditation and Sai Baba Movement. Japan had an estimated two hundred indigenous or non-indigenous new religious movements. The more popular wee Soka Gakkai or Value Creation Society, Tenrikyo or Heavenly Wisdom and Risshokoseikai. Africa had some twenty thousand movements, some with only twenty members, others with several thousand. Some of the larger ones were Godianism, Deima and Aladura. In America, the new religious movements were largely known as 'Jesus' Movements or Pentecostal Movements (Wilson, 1982; Clarke, 1988). Globalization was enabling the spread of some of these movements, which were using the advanced technology presently available to become globally accessible. The nature of these new religious movements has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

(ii) *Religious Nationalist Movements*

In the 1990s, scholars sensitive to the problem of the emergence of religious groups, which took political action leading even to national revolutions, had suggested a series of alternate terms to designate these conservative, neo-traditionalist and often militant religious groups. One such term favoured by writes such as Peter van der Veer and Mark Juergensmeyer was 'religious nationalism'. Juergensmeyer explained that when a religious perspective was fused with the political and social destiny of a nation, it was referred to as religious nationalism.

Religious nationalists were not jsut religious fanatics. For the most party they were political activists, who were seriously attempting to reformulate the 'modern' language of politics in order to provide a new basis for the nation-state. They were concerned not so much about the political structure of the nation-state, as about the political ideology underlying it (Juergensmeyer, 1994 : xiii; D'Souza, 2000 : 29). Robertson saw this religious nationalism as an assertion of a deep particularity, a declaration by a local group of a political identity in the face of globalization. Nikkie Keddie, who questioned whether nationalism was always the main focus of such efforts, had proposed the term 'new religious politics' (see Hawley, 1999 : 3).

Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, in a famous Chicago study titled Fundamentalisms Observed (1991), had elaborately developed the characteristics of Fundamentalism (which we are here terming 'religious nationalism'). The explained fundamentalism as s reaction by the emerging nation-states of the non-western world against the invasive, intrusive and threatening features of modernity. For example, Islamic fundamentalism represented a delayed reaction to the hegemony of European colonial rule after they became independent nation-states. Religious identity was used as a protective shield against the onslaught of globalization, which was marked by the entry of integrated 'market systems', which came along with a variety of commodities, values, beliefs and styles of being. The fear of extinction and the threat to survival both as a people and as a culture and the loss of distinctiveness in the rise ot homogeneity, resulted in the introduction of a comprehensive social system based upon religious principles that embraced law, policy, osciety, economy and culture. Thus, fundamentalism tended to be totalitarian in its practice and encompassed all areas of private and public life. Religion was declared not just a faith but also a way of life. Fundamentalism of this nature was not religious in the classical sense of the term, but was a variant of secular faith couched in religious language.

Religious nationalist movements, it was further observed, often invoked authenticity and 'authentic culture' as a weapon against what was foreign and alien. However, this authenticity was questionable, as it became difficult to prove what was authentic and what was not. The invoking of certain traditions and the denying of other required a reconstruction of history, if nt its destruction. Historians took pains to

demonstrate that historically inter-cultural exchange, trade and conquest had rendered any notion of authenticity highly problematic. Fundamentalist movements then relied a great deal on invented traditions (Marty and Appleby, 1991 : 814-837).

However, fundamentalism was not a total rejection of the modern. Rather, it had been seen to draw selectively on both tradition and modernity and to employ every available method of modern science and technology to further its own ends of establishing a distinct identity. Tradition was invoked in areas of dress, treatment of women, family systems. In an edited book titled, Religious Fundamentalism and the Human Rights of Women, (1999), Hawley wrote that until recently it was infusfficiently appreciated that issues of gender played a crucial role in the language of fundamentalism. 'What is being championed is a divinely sanctioned vision of natural differences between the sexes that make it appropriate for women to live within boundaries and to live under men's protection, even surveillance' (Hawley, 1999 : 3). Modernity was invoked in the form of modern technology and scientific developments, information technology, modern weaponry, arms, computers, internet and mass public education. Fundamentalism itself had been supported by foreign capital, whle professing and propagating indigenization (a contradiction). Marty and Appleby observed that in its strategies and methods, fundamentalism displayed a closer affinity to modernism than to traditionalism. Thus, while fundamentalism resented or envied the powers and influence of modernity, it shrewdly exploited its processes and instrumentalities. It had sometimes used democratic processes to come to power (Marty and Appleby, 1991 : 827). Lechiner contended that where the discontents of modernity were felt more keenly and defined more sharply, new and stronger Fundamentalist movements were likely to emerge (see Robertson, 1998 : 170).

Fundamentalism, then, was driven by the affinity-identity passions of ethnic communities and religious groups, often thirsting for self-esteem and dignity. Fundamentalism, as seen above, was an effort to 'neutralize the other' and establish one's own identity. In other words, the question of 'cultural survival' was at the core of the issue of religious revivalism. This process could be observed in the East European countries that belonged to divergent cultural communities and ethnic groups after the demise of the Soviet Union. Their demand for economic autonomy and preservation of cultural identities resulted in the ethnic conflicts between majority Muslim and

Christian minority Srebs in Bosnia, between minority Christian Serbs and majority Muslims of Albanian origin in the Kosovo province of Yugoslavia. This process can also be observed in parts of Indonesia today. In India, religious-cultural and ethnic clashes are being experienced in the efforts of those of the Hindutva ideology, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) or 'Sangh Parivar', to create a communal divide between the Hindu majority and the Muslim and Christian minority communities in India.

16.6 Hindu Nationlism

Hindu nationalism emerged in context of the freedom movement in India. As Pandey observed, Hindu nationalism or communalism developed in the late colonial period, arising concurrently with nationalism, if not being projected as a counterweight to it (Pandey, 1994 : 13). In the nineteenth century, we see the beginnings of the growth and development of the national freedom movement. Hindu nationalism emerged at that phase, where religion was sought to be made the basis, not just of the political struggle for freedom, but also as the basis of the emerging identity of India. The Hindu nationalists were mainly politically roented persons, who had sought to politicize religion and identify India exclusively as Hindu, to the disregard and exclusion of the other religious communities in India. The struggle for nationalism in India was takking place within the context of colonialism.

At the turn of the century, the precursor of Hindu nationlism was Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), in Maharashtra. But he did not create a Hindu organization inside or outside the Congress and instead remained within the Congress party as an 'extremist' (Jaffrelot, 1996 : 17). From within the Congress, Tilak sought to politically mobilize the masses of India, in ordre to achieve political freedom, and he used religious symbolism for the same. His organization of the Ganpati festival in 1893, and the Shivaji festival in 1895 (Chaudhary, 1978 : 29), led to the alienation and antagonism of the Muslim section of India's population. By this time, to a section of Indian politicians, the spirit of Indian nationalism was assuming a Hindu character with a note of exclusion in it (DeBary, 1991 : 140; Embree, 1989 : 158; Majumdar, 1965 : 478). As Varma explained, Tilak was a sanatanist Hindu, who in a speech said, "The term Sanatan (eternal) Dharma shows that our religion is very old-as old as the history of the human race itslef. Vedic religion was the religion of the Aryans from a very early

time- Religion is an element of nationality ..... During Vedic times, India was a self-contained country. It was united as a great nation' (Varma, 1963 : 220-265).

The marriage of politics and religion was complete in the formation of the Hindu Mahasabha. The pro-Muslim bias of the British administration - seen in the granting of various important concessions, one of which was the setting up of separate electorates in 1909-led to the Arya Samaj in Punjab taking a militant, nationalist turn. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who later became the first vice-chancellor of the Benares Hindu University, together with other leading Arya Samajists, founded the Hindu Mahasabha in 1915, which soon developed into a right-wing militant Hindu political party (Madan, 1997 : 218; DeBarry, 1991 : 159; Klostermaier, 1989 : 403).

In 1909 Lala Lajput Rai, an activist and senior member of the Arya Samaj in Punjab, declared that 'the Hindus are a 'nation' in themselves, because they represent a type of civilization all their own' (Jaffrelot, 1996 : 19). He was calling on the use of the German word 'nation', whch connoted a people, implying a community possessing a certain civilization and culture. THis view clearly called on the ethnic natinalism as opposed to a territorial nationalism. Soon after, in the 1911 census, as contrasted to the census of 1891, the Arya Samajists declared themselves not as 'Aryas', but as 'Hindus'.

While the Congress Party, influenced by English universalistic concepts, defined the Indian nation as consisting of all individuals, of all communities, living within the frontiers of the British - Indian realm (a territorial nationalism), some militant Hindus, especially certain Arya Samajists, were more in sympathy with German definitions giving an ethnic basis for nationalism (Smith, 1983 : 217), and jseeing the development of a race as the organic expression of an essential spirit (Graham, 1993 : 44). Thus, the territorial definjition of nationalism was sought to be replaced by an ethnic nationalism by the Hindu nationalists. India's nationhood had been classified by Smith as a territorial, post-independence integration, and not as an ethnic nationalism. Smith however, classifed German nationalism as an ethnic, pre-independent, pan nationalism (Smith, 1983 : 223, 229).

Initially, the Hindu Mahasabha funtioned as a pressure group within the Congress. However by 1937, the Hindu Mahasabha was excluded from the Congress

on account of its communalism. By the 1920s, the Hindu Mahasabha had acquired a more clearly Hindu nationlist orientation under the pretext of a return to the Vedic Golden Age. It sought to maintian the *'Chaturvarna',* a distinctive feature of Aryan civilization, and yet evolve a union and solidarity among the various 'water-tight (caste) compartments, each having a social culture and life of their own' (Jaffrelot, 1996 : 19 - 25).

V. D. Savarkar (1883 - 1966), a Maharashtrian Brahmin and future president of the Hindu Mahasabha from 1937-42, was instrumental in bringing about this qualitative leap of the Hindu Mahasabha through his book, Hindutva : Who si a Hindu ? first published in Nagpur, in 1923. It served as a basic text for nationalist 'Hinduness' (the generally accepted translation of Hindutva). For Savarkar, culture was inextricably linked to territory and he claimed that membership of the Hindu nation depended upon an acceptance of India as, both fatherland and holyland. He held that Muslims and Christians looked outside India for the sacred places of their religion and therefore did not regard India as their holyland. In defining Hindu nationality, he underlined the importance of Hindutva, a religious, racial and cultural entity (Graham, 1993 : 45). He bitterly opposed Nehru's concept of a secular state and continued agitating for a total Hinduization of India. The Hindutva of Savarkar was conceived primarily as an ethnic community, possessing a territory, sharing the same racial and cultural characteristics and united by the common flow of blood into 'our' race - three attributes which stemmed from the mythical reconstruction of the Vedic Golden age, having originated from the 'Aryan' race (Klostermaier, 1989 : 403; Graham, 1993 : 43; Jaffrelot, 1996 : 28).

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or RSS, was founded at Nagpur in 1925, under the leadership of Hedgewar (1889 - 1940), who was medical doctor but who never practiced medicine. He sought to unite Hindus to stand upto the Muslims and also to radicalize the Hindus to hasten British withdrawal. Due to the divisiveness of Hindu society, the RSS had concentrated on the Hindu sanghatan (Malkani, 1980 : 24, 26). Hedegwar (or Doctor Ji, as he was called) sought to define the nation in exclusively Hindu terms (Madan, 1997 : 221). However, under the leadership of Golwalkar, who took over the leadership of the RSS in 1940 on the death of its founder Hedgewar, the first, coherent exposition of doctrine of Hindu nationalism

emerged. In, We, or Our Nationhood Defined, published in 1939, Golwalkar, like Savarkar, argued that a nation was the product of a number of factors, including a sense of territory, racial unity, religion, culture and language, bu that the factor of special importance was religion. Golwalkar, or Guruji as he was called, claimed Bharatvarsha had been a *'rashtra'* since Vedic times and upheld that 'the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and religion and must entertain no ideas but those fo the glorification of the Hindu race and culture - claiming nothing, deserving no privileges - not even citizen's rights' (Malkani, 1980 : 42; Embree, 1974 : 115; Graham, 1993 : 45 - 46). 'This Hindu nation' wrote Malkani, 'was born with *'sanatan dharma'*. The sanatan dharma, that is nationalism'. 'Hindu' is not a religion, it is a nationality, and all those who live in India are Hindus, whatever their religion (Malkani, 1980 : 187, 191). 'Like Savarkar's Hindutva, Golwalkar's definition of Hindu is political rather than religious' (Heehs, 1998 : 117).

Hindu nationalism then, emerged in India in the 1920s, in the writings of Savarkar and Golwalkar and as Pandey observed, has led to the communalizing of politics in India. For the nationalists, locked as they were in the 1920s and 1930s, in a bitter struggle to overthrow the colonial regime, communalism appeared as a great political threat, a source of danger to the cause of nationalism. Hindu nationalism or communalism was seen as nationalism gone wrong (Pandey, 1994:914).

The RSS was strictly organized from the very beginning, was the most powerful and the most controversial Hindu organization of the times. It claimed to be a cultural organization and was not a registered political party. The RSS gave birth to a great number of front organizations like the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sabhs, a trade union and the Viswa Hindu Parishad, a religious organization founded in 1964, which attempted to articulate a kind of universal Hinduism that would embrace the different sects and at the same time possess a basic common creed and common practice. Other organizations included the Bajrang Dal.

After Golwalkar's death in 1973, the supreme leadership of the RSS or post of *'sarsanghchalak'* passed on to Madhukar Dattatreya, also known as Balasahed Deoras. He was a bachelor and a member of the RSS, since he was twelve years old. He echoed Savarkar when stating, 'We do believe in one culture and one nation,

Hindu Rashtra. But our definition of Hindu is not limited to any particular kind of fatith. Our definition of Hindu, includes those who believe in the one-culture and one-nation theory of this country. They can all form part of the Hindu-rastra, so by Hindu we do not mean any particular type of faith. We use the word Hindu in a broader sense' (see Klostermaier, 1989 : 407).

Many Indians who subscribe to the idea of a secular, democratic state with equal rights for all its members, regardless of race, creed or sex, consider the RSS to be a threat to this State. The RSS and its front organizations remain the msot visible manifestation of extremist and radical political Hinduism on the national level. Though there are others, they are not very influential like the Ram Rajya Parisad or 'Kingdom f God Party' founded in 1940 by Swami Karpatriji Maharaj. Others were only at the state level, like the Shiv Sena whose basis of identity was Maharashtrian and not necessarily religion (Klostermaier, 1989 : 407).

16.7 Sum Up

In his initial understanding about the relationship of globalization to fundamentalism (seen more generally as the search for fundamentals), Robertson saw fundamentalism as an attempt to express the identity of a society, a felt necessity to declare a social identity. This aspect saw fundamentalism as a reaction to globalization resulting from the compression of an inter-societal system. Fundamentalism was about differentiations and distinctions between the self and the other. In his recent attempts to grasp analytically the more general problem of fundamentalism, Robertson saw Fundamentalism more as an aspect of, or a cretion of globalization, rather than a reaction to it. It was an assertion of a deep particularity, i.e., a global construction and dissemination of ideas concerning the value of particularism, a declaration of a particular identity. He saw it in the context of the apparent paradox of globality- locality. The idea of Fundamentalism as a reaction or resistance to globalization was not discarded, only it was built into the general process of globalization. He preferred to see fundamentalism as a 'search' for fundamentals' in the context of the compression of the world, which was a more respectful acknowledgemet of peoples' real practices rather than the term 'extrmism'. Fundamentalism thus constituted ways of finding a

place within the world as a whole, ways that frequently involved attempts to enhance the power of the groups concerned. It was not necessarily, anti-global. It actually involved a quest for community, for stable values and beliefs and was an assertion of power. Robertson explained it in terms of a two-fold process - particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular. This idea of the right to identity,'the struggle for recognition' as Fukuyama (1992) described it, was widespread. Fundamentalism then was a product of globality, and even though it took ostensibly anti-global forms, it tended to partake of the distinctive features of globality (Robertson, 1998 : 175 - 178).

In conclusion, it could be observed that for the majority of cultures around the world, religion remained a permanent constituent of human life. In a globalized situation, the coexistence and interweaving of religion and the secular was observed, not a false divide between them. Religion had remained on one hand the foundation for national differences, and on the other hand the basis of achievement of full humanity. Religion thus, both furthered and resisted Globalization; in fact globalization had revitalized religion (Mendieta, 2001 : 621). The term 'fundamentalism' is being applied today to two categories of religious movements. One, to new religious movements and spirtual enthusiasms that are seeking a 'return to fundamentals' or are a new religious response to social conditions of contemporary society. And two, to religious nationalisms that are more of political expressions by religious leaders seeking a political identity for a religious culture. Religion in the world seemed to be going on in both conservative and liberal directions, i.e., concentrating on ministering to private religious choices and entering the political and public arena. It is better today to speak of global fundamentalisms rather than a single world-wide fundamentalist movement and to acknowledge the agenda of each as being discrete in its local setting.

Looking at the future role of religion in society, we observe that religion and politics had been separated in a post-Enlightenment period of the secular west, which may not have been viewed in this manner in a pre-Englightenment period of western culture. (In India such a separation may not have existed at all as held by T. N. Madan, 1983). Socio-cultural gaps of our uneven modern world would continue to evoke varied responses from both religious and secular ideologies. The first step in

coping with Fundamentalisms was to appreciate the fundamentalist dilemma. The symbolic and emotive power of Fundamentalism was as authentically modern as it was persistently disruptive (Lawrence, 1999 : 99). Understanding the present role of religion in a globalized society may then require a shift from the Enlightenment period paradigm, without a reductionist approach in any direction - religion, politics or culture.
