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Answer to the question no: 02

The article "Varieties of Religious Freedom and Governance: A Practical Perspective," written by Robert W. Hefner and published by the University of Chicago Press, investigates the various ways that religious freedom exists globally. He thinks that there is no one ideal for implementing religious freedom. Rather, it relies on the political, cultural, and past events. He highlights how important it is to fully understand these differences in order to advance actual religious freedom on a global basis.

Robert Hefner argues against the idea that religious freedom in the West developed consistently or was ultimately linked to liberal democracy. He makes several key arguments:

The Western concept of religious freedom wasn't established on a single concept: Hefner highlights that the journey toward religious freedom in Western Europe was not only one path (Hefner, 2015). It resulted from establishing a balance between several values, some principles, such as maintaining national harmony (no religious conflicts), maintaining that religious groups receive treatment equally, ensuring the government upholds its religious neutrality, safeguarding people's right to moral conscience, etc. This indicates that religious freedom required more than one theory, it required feasible solutions. In the actual world, where people of different ideologies coexisted, it had to remain operational. In the real world, we can see this example. Even though the state in England facilitated the Church of England during the Protestant Reformation, it still needed to figure out how to let Catholics and other Christians coexist peacefully. Over time, they reached compromises rather than offering everyone complete independence at once.

Freedom of religion didn't mean the exclusion of religion from society: Hefner indicates that Western nations did not always exclude religion from political activity or culture. In many Western nations, religious beliefs continue to shape law, politics, and society. To put it another way, religious freedom allows people to freely choose what they believe while allowing religion to remain active and visible in society.

Each of the Western countries created its own perspective on religious freedom: Hefner refers to the condition of balance as "equilibrium." He believes that, depending on its specific history and difficulties, every nation has established a unique method for achieving a balance between freedom and religion. In the West, there is no single framework of religious freedom. Religious freedom in the West was not always universal, it was frequently selective. For example, France constructed an unbreakable barrier between the state and religion. Religion

needed to be kept private. The Netherlands established a system known as "pillarization" in which every faith community had its own independent media, newspapers, and schools.

Religious freedom was not won peacefully but rather via effort, conflicts, and sacrifice:

Western religious freedom was a hard-won victory, built by means of compromise and struggle (Hefner, 2015). Hefner makes it very clear why the West did not choose to grant religious freedom to all people in a peaceful manner. Rather, it came after Wars between the people, churches, and rulers, Social revolutions (such as the French Revolution), and bloody religious conflicts (such as the Thirty Years' War). Many nations excluded minorities while providing favors to their primary religions. People didn't realize they needed an agreement to allow various religions to coexist peacefully until after these tragic or challenging occurrences.

A balanced approach is more significant than a fixed philosophy: Religious freedom depends on establishing a balance between the conflicting moral ideals of freedom, equality, and peace. Hefner emphasizes that since each region has its own historical dynamics, Western models shouldn't be transferred blindly to other regions of the world. Again, Western nations have found a compromise between principles like peace between religions, stability in society, and national unity, in addition to promoting freedom for individuals. People should be allowed to have any beliefs they want, the government should maintain social order and stop violence, and no religion deserves preference or to be subjected to discrimination. Keeping this balance is difficult and evolves with time. The continued existence of religious freedom, however, depends on it.

On the other hand, now let's talk about the idea and circumstances that allowed Europe to achieve religious freedom an equilibrium state, even in the face of controversy.

First of all, according to Hefner, Religious freedom in Europe was achieved by balancing several universal ethical goals. It didn't stick into a single ideological concept (Hefner, 2015). So, it is noticeable that Europe didn't only choose personal liberty. It carried many objectives, for example, Fairness, harmony, and peace. The adoption of religious freedom by European cultures was not only based on impersonal values such as secularism or liberty. Rather, they looked for a workable equality among conflicting ideals like individual conscience, national unity, and social harmony. This task was possible because of communities with a variety of religions. Furthermore, religious freedom was really complicated to win for the West. It was established through sacrifice and conflict (Hefner, 2015). From this, it emphasizes that how religious freedom was not achieved overnight. It developed because of historical conflicts like the Reformation and the ensuing philosophical conflicts, resulting in settlements. It allowed many religions to live united while accepting each other's beliefs. Again, Hefner said that different

European nations have different historical paths and social agreements that inspired the development of various forms of religious rule (Hefner, 2015). This suggests that there was no one-size-fits-all approach to European religious freedom. For example, the United Kingdom kept an established church and tolerance for all faiths, whereas France embraced secularism, which promotes a tight separation between religion and state. The distinct historical and cultural settings of each nation produced these models. Again, Religious freedom was sometimes established through political agreements rather than being written down in law. The amount of freedom that each religion could potentially receive was negotiated, debated, and agreed upon by many organizations (religious leaders, politicians, and socioeconomic classes). Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany in the 1800s were dealing with the government on issues like who would get state funding and what subjects schools might teach. These agreements controlled the practice of religion even if they weren't typically included in the Constitution. For the above reason, Robert Hefner believes that religious freedom in Europe doesn't seem straightforward or universal. It's complex and developed from challenges in real life.

Religious freedom cannot be completely transferred from the West to the Global South in a single or universal manner (Hefner, 2015). Hefner makes it obvious that nations in the Global South, such as South Asia, Africa, or the Middle East, cannot simply adopt the religious freedom models that were formed in the West, especially as in Europe or North America. Additionally, Hefner states that rather than being the result of a single ideal plan or piece of law, religious freedom in the West was gradually established via lengthy discussions and sometimes acts of violence. On the other hand, Hefner argues that some fundamental principles are still beneficial even when it is impossible to directly replicate Western patterns. For instance: the concept that the state shouldn't be dominated by any one faith, the view that individuals ought to have the freedom to think or not think, the significance of public engagement, negotiation, and the law.

After reading all those things, I totally agree with Robert Hefner. Because all civilizations can benefit from the same eventual goal. For example, freedom, justice, and peace, despite the differences in form. Equal rights, religious freedom, and the separation of the state from religion are all admirable Western concepts, but they cannot be imposed on nations with diverse social and religious contexts. We can take the example of India. The Indian Constitution emphasizes religious freedom and secularism. However, problems between Muslims and Hindus frequently arise in real life. Strictly adopting a Western-style secularism may actually make matters worse. Rather, India requires local approaches that honor plurality.

Answer to the question no : 03

The article "Saved by the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India," written by Anna Bigelow and published in The Journal of Asian Studies, looks into an unusual circumstance of Malerkotla, a Punjabi princely state that maintained its peaceful existence during the terrible 1947 division of India and Pakistan. The article analyzes how the town's identity as an example of peace and unity is shaped by its collective memory, which is focused on the Sufi saint Haider Shaikh.

There are several arguments made by the locals in favor of the harmony that exists there. First of all, the town was originally founded in 1454 by the Sufi saint Haider Shaikh, which is one of the primary contributing factors why people think Malerkotla is peaceful. According to the people, the town is considered to be secure and safe because of Haider Shaikh's blessings. In Anna Bigelow's article, she told the people of Malerkotla a time talk about a significant historical story. During the Mughal era, a Mughal officer imprisoned Guru Gobind Singh's sons and planned to kill them. Malerkotla's Nawab protested against the murder of Guru Gobind Singh's sons. Then the town was blessed by the Guru, because he was really grateful after knowing that a muslim tried to protect his sons.

Again, bloodshed was the foundation for both Pakistan and India. Many Muslims and Hindus lost their lives during the riots, regional cleansings, and cross-border migrations that took place during the division of the Indian subcontinent (Verghese, 2018). But on the other hand, no one was killed in Malerkotla during the 1947 division, despite the fact that Punjab witnessed terrible bloodshed (Bigelow, 2009). This is an extremely proud moment for the people, as the whole country was facing several issues. But, people of Malerkotla didn't faced any major problems during the 1947 partition.

Another reason is, the residents of Malerkotla treat one another with respect. They attend each other's celebrations and pay respects at each other's sites of worship (Bigelow, 2009). For example,

- The Muslim shrine is frequently visited by Hindus.
- Sikh festivities involve the participation of Muslims.
- Political parties also encourage shared solidarity.

- Every religion's children attend the same schools.
- Regardless of religion, everyone turns to the saint for a helping hand.

Moreover, Women are more likely to show up at Haider Shaikh's shrine, where they often develop spiritual and emotional connections that go beyond religion. They gather for blessings because they think the saint aids in marriage, childbirth, and health issues. Women who seek aid for family as well as personal problems recognize the shrine as an extremely powerful place(Bigelow, 2009). This type of everyday communication creates trust, bonding, mutual respect, a helping mentality, builds a community of different different religions.

Furthermore, now let's talk about pilgrimage and possession rituals that highlight their importance in bringing a wide range of individuals together in ways that minimize tensions.

Visiting the Shrine of Haider Shaikh: Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs visit the shrine to offer prayers for children, health, or assistance with life's challenges. Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus all frequently perform rituals at the shrine(Bigelow, 2009). No matter what their religious beliefs, people think the saint will help. Even if they are not associated with a religion, people have faith in the shrine's guardians or spiritual leaders (for example, pirs or babas). People think that everyone can benefit from Haider Shaikh's blessing (barkat). Instead of concentrating on religious identification, many trust in the saint's power.

Spiritual connection at the Shrine: Some guests report feeling "possessed" by a spiritual power or the saint during specific prayer sessions. Particularly with women, this often happens. They deliver instructions through the saint or ask for assistance regarding problems at that exact moment. Female followers, possession by the saint assists in demonstrating the saint's power and active presence(Bigelow, 2009). In Malerkotla, people embrace one another, provide consolation, and join in devotion rather than thinking this as odd.

Rituals for safeguarding and curing: Some pilgrims drop lockets for safekeeping. They believe this will help them avoid bad things. Also, people tie threads to trees because they believe their wish will be fulfilled by doing this. People from numerous backgrounds participate in rituals such as lighting candles or distributing sweets.

Sharing Rituals to decrease tensions: These rituals frequently reduce possible conflicts through allowing several religious identities to live together in one sacred area(Bigelow, 2009). The common faith in the saint takes precedence over an individual's religious identification. For

instance, if a Muslim healer gives a Hindu woman a blessing or special water, she thinks it will work. This indicates that a person's or saint's faith is more significant than their affiliation with a specific religion. This also creates bonds between different religions individuals.

Urs holds a shared celebration: Thousands of people from different faiths came together for the Urs of Haider Shaikh(Bigelow, 2009). Every year on the anniversary of the saint's death, Urs is celebrated. It seems like a large fair where people gather to pray, dine, and witness performances.

People from different different religions seek guidance with concerns related to relationships, marriage, family affairs, examinations, and sickness. Everyone is standing next to one another, worshiping the same saint by doing the exact same acts. Since it makes no difference what religion you practice, this common spiritual experience promotes togetherness. For example, A Sikh man, a Muslim man, and a Hindu girl may all be there pleading with the saint for assistance with various issues, but they all share a common emotion because they are looking for peace. They perceive one another as fellow humans in pain rather than as enemies, which eases religious tension. The question, "What religion are you?" is not addressed. They are basically helping all the religious people together. A Muslim visitor won't make fun of or interrupt a Hindu when they light a lamp. People feel accepted, and the atmosphere is kept calm by their respect for one another. This friendly setting promotes cooperative collaboration among different groups of people.

Anna Bigelow highlights that communities can learn from Malerkotla's example how to remain in peace and fight against the division myths. People of Malerkotla truly believe their harmony is safeguarded by mutual respect, history, and their special cultural tradition. The customs serve as an interface between religions, reducing conflict and developing deep unity. Moreover, at the shrine, individuals develop a sense of belonging and trust as a result of worshiping, mourning, eating, and supporting one another. Their connection at the shrine serves as a reminder when anything goes wrong in town. Even during challenging times, this reduces the possibility of fights or acts of violence.

Answer to the question no: 04

The article "Why Are You Mixing What Cannot be Mixed? Shared Devotions in the Monotheisms", written by Dionigi Albera, examines the phenomena of monotheistic religions—Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, sharing practices related to religion, especially in the Mediterranean geographical region. Albera mentions many examples of how believers of many religions participate in collaborative devotions at shared places of devotion.

The Middle Eastern Shrines of the Virgin Mary: Muslim women and Christian women travel to shrines honoring the Virgin Mary in places like Syria and Lebanon. Although these sites are Christian, many Muslims also go there because Mary is highly regarded in Islam. For Muslim people, Maryum and for Christian people know her as Mary. She is highly regarded in both Christianity and Islam. She has a spiritual and emotional connection with both Christians and Muslims. Women bring themselves to the shrines to offer prayers for their families' well-being, children, and security (Albera, 2008). This highlights the potency of a common figure like Mary as a religious unity. Despite their lack of communication, these women pray together and have the same problems and ambitions. Rather than concentrating on religious arguments, many come because they think the place or individual can be helpful.

Now, if we talk about challenges, even if people have a spiritual connection to the location, people may be scared of criticism or negative responses. Conservative religious leaders occasionally call such actions "superstition" or accuse individuals of betraying their faith. Additionally, there is a chance that even peaceful locations could be the focus of distrust or hatred during tense political times. This is not accepted. We deserve freedom from these types of issues.

Moreover, a sense of humanity is created when two communities offer prayers to the same person in the same location. This indicates that religious needs are similar. Mutual respect can gradually replace religious rivalry as a result of this type of undercover cooperation. These shrines turn into gathering places where religions connect with one another rather than separate from one another. These shrines highlight that people may live in harmony when they prioritize love, care, and healing over disputes regarding religious identity.

Tunisia's Ghriba Synagogue: Ghriba Synagogue is the site of a yearly special pilgrimage by Jews from Tunisia, along with other nations. It is a sacred site mainly for Jews on the island of Djerba in Tunisia, but Muslims also come here to pray and make offerings. Every year, during the Jewish pilgrimage to the site, many Muslim neighbors participate by bringing candles, offerings, and sometimes even joining in rituals (Albera, 2008). Despite their differing religious

views, Muslims and Jews both cherish the holy atmosphere and faith in the place's power. This illustration highlights how commonplace devotion could exist in people's everyday lives. Visiting a Jewish holy place for blessings is not seen as wrong by many Muslims. Muslims have also made the yearly pilgrimage to this synagogue and poured oil into the saint's lamp (Albera, 2008).

But, Religious leaders might try to prohibit it by raising fear or claiming that it is against religious law because they believe that this is an improper form of "mixing" religions. Sometimes, people worry that they are "mixing exactly what should not be mixed," as Albera mentions in his article. Even if people believe in common areas, they may discontinue going because of disturbances in politics.

However, some people are more sensitive. They are more concerned with blessings, healing, and peace among people. In a country where Muslims are most prevalent, if there is trust between individuals and an interconnected cultural environment, people may appreciate and even take part in the ceremonies of other religions without meeting any problems. It emphasizes to us that human connection, culture, and goodwill may exceed religious rules and regulations.

These examples indicate that religious differences are not essential. It has the power to unite individuals. By examining various examples, Albera demonstrates that shared religious spaces and practices reveal a level of theological and devotional continuity that transcends doctrinal divisions. He presents the conception of "shared devotions," where followers of various religions engage in religious activities in the same holy sites.

Furthermore, I believe that Bangladesh should have places of shared worship. Bangladesh is a country of rich diversity of religions. Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, almost all religious people are there. There are possibilities as well as challenges for the construction of shared worship places due to a variety of religions.

Reasons for supporting shared worship places in Bangladesh: Love, not hate, is created when individuals respect the same area or pray together. It eliminates misconceptions and fear. Despite efforts by official religion to keep devotions apart, some people still share the same worship places (Albera, 2008). It has the ability to maintain cultural heritage, for instance, many of Bangladesh's ancient Hindu temples and Sufi shrines already possess a mixed past. Additionally, many individuals already really appreciate different religions, particularly in rural areas. Muslims may attend Hindu festivals like Durga puja, and Hindus are welcome to visit Muslim

dargahs (shrines) in rural regions. This demonstrates that our people are capable of being gentle and honest. Again, People gain knowledge when they witness one another's rituals closely. This knowledge reduces fear and increases adaptability. We can see the example of Shah Jalal Dargah in Sylhet has been visited for decades by the Hindu villagers in the area. Their belief in the saint's supernatural abilities leads them to pray for blessings and healing. The majority of visitors are also Muslims. In time, it becomes an area that is shared by different religious people, but not formally. As Albera's article demonstrates, collective shrines like these may promote empathy and social peace.

Challenges of building shared worship places in Bangladesh:

Shared worship may be hampered by significant differences in ideology, since some religious followers may see such activities as hurting their beliefs. People who follow their religion from ancient history they will not like shared worship places. Many religious educators may argue that people of different religions shouldn't mix. They might label communal worship as "sinful" or "haram." For political purposes, some groups promote hatred through religion. These groups may target shared worship places, destroy these shared worship places. Again, if shared places are not managed carefully, they may turn into points of tension for conflicts between different religions, particularly if a particular group feels excluded. The time periods, melodies, and prayer styles of many religions vary. It's difficult to handle these with equality. Additionally, mutual respect and careful preparation are necessary when coordinating daily worship timetables, ceremonies, and rituals across various religious communities. Thus, logistical problems could arise.

Shrines frequently transform into locations where actual human behavior and feelings move beyond theological boundaries (Albera, 2008). One example would be the Shah Jalal Dargah in Sylhet, which is visited by both Muslims and Hindus. So long as we remain polite and united, respect all religions equally, establish suitable rules for their use, and safeguard these places from hate and politics, I think that shared places of worship are feasible in Bangladesh.

Additionally, Strong values are necessary for our nation if individuals want religion to promote peace rather than hatred. Some values are:

Respect: Respect should be shown to all religions. Showing others respect is being kind to them, rather than making judgments.

Equality: All religions should be treated equally by the state. There should be no bias for one faith over another.

Religious Freedom: Without fear, everyone should be able engage in activities, celebrate, and adhere to their religion.

Tolerance: Recognize that various people might have different opinions. Even if anyone disagrees with someone else's religious opinion, we have to remain calm.

Pluralism: It means we have to accept that multiple religions can coexist. We have to show respect to all the religions.

Humanity: We have to prioritize care, respect, empathy, and helping others over strict religious beliefs.

If we try to spread those values this will going to end hate speech, acts of religious conflicts. Also it will promote intercommunal trust and mutual respect. Again, it will help to build shared worship places, make everyone feel like a complete citizen of the nation, regardless of their religious beliefs.

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