

The Brief History of Religion

(Lecture# 05)

Brief History of Religion

- **Origin:**

- There are two theories about the origin of religion.

- 1) Evolution Theory
- 2) Religious Theory

1) Evolution Theory:

- Humans unaware of religion
 - Matriarchal society into Patriarchal society
- a) The Sun & the Moon (Osiris, Horus, Ashore, Suria puja, King Mikado- the avatar of the sun)
 - b) Planets or celestial bodies (the imp. Of Cynosure or Polaris-A North star)

“I am the one who preside over the central pole of the heaven and all powers of the gods belong to me.”-Horus

- c) Mountains (Kailash Parbat, Mount of Saehuun or Zion, Mount Sinai or El Tor)
 - d) Trees-Johnny Harrison’s seven sacred trees,
 - e) Fire-one of the mostly worshipped element amongst all four elements of life.
- Fire- the supreme symbol of purity, sacred fires maintained in temples (Agiaries).

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- These fires represent the light of God (Ahura Mazda), the illuminated mind.
 - No Zoroastrian ceremony performed-without it.
 - Vesta- virgin goddess of the hearth, home and family in Roman religion.
 - Likewise water has also been worshipped as the second most.
 - Nile in Egypt, River Tigris & Euphrates in Iraq, Indus, Ganga & Jumna in India and Huang He in China were art of religious civilization.
 - Hapi was the god of the annual flooding of the Nile in ancient Egyptian religion. The flood deposited rich silt (fertile soil) on the river's banks, allowing the Egyptians to grow crops. ... Some of the titles of Hapi were "Lord of the Fish, Birds of the Marshes" and "Lord of the River Bringing Vegetation".
- f) Air
- g) Sexual organs (i- sexual pleasure, ii- breeding)
- h) Zoo theism (Composite gods, geenish jee, wishnu in Indians, Japanese bear
Egypt & India
- f) Totemism (Ojibwa, found mostly in old North Americans)
- g) Hero worship
- English writers books like Albert Churchward's "The origin and Evolution of Religion", Pascal Boyer's "Religion Explained: The Evolutionary origins of Religious thought" & Jack Miles's "Religion as we know it: An Origin story" have explained this theory of evolution in details.

2) Religious Theory

- According to the Quran & Torah:
- Like human's physical needs Allah has fulfilled his spiritual need as well but through prophets who taught them the lesson of "Tauheed" & worship of God.
- So first religion of human beings was actually "Tauheed".
- Prophets basically gave the lesson of Tauheed to their nations as Quran says:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ۖ

"For We assuredly sent amongst every People a messenger, (with the Command), "Serve Allah, and shun Evil (or false gods)."

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ۝

This verse reveals that Tauheed & Allah's worship are correlated to one another in such a way that they become inseparable.

- Likewise it was the religion itself that gave humans their purpose of creation and their purpose of being sent to this world of which they were unaware before.

As Quran says:

خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ۝

"I have only created Jinn and men, that they may serve Me."

- According to Bible: " God has created man with resemblance to His face."

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- Western researchers now seem agreed upon giving up the Evolution theory and are tilted towards the Quranic philosophy.
- Professor Wilhelm Schmidt in his book “The Origin and Growth of Religion-Facts & Theories” admits that the old concept of evolution of religion has now become worthless. The colossal chain of the orderly connected links designed for showing the growth of religion has shattered now into pieces and new historical trends have thrown it away.
- He further says that the super being of human’s primal imagination was in fact the Only God of the monotheistic belief and the human’s religious belief originated from that was completely a monotheistic religion.
- So this simply means that the primitive religion of humans was monotheism and when people got diverted from it and they straggled in the dark valley of paganism and pantheism then prophets were sent to each and every nation for reformation of human’ souls and beliefs.

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Common Fundamentals of Religions

(Lecture# 06 & 07)

Common Fundamentals:

(w.r.t Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity & Islam)

- Theoretical & Practical(i.e. Beliefs, thoughts & practices of worships)
- Historical Background
- Doctrines And Beliefs
 - The doctrine of God/ supernatural beings/ forces
 - The doctrine of evil & good
 - The doctrine of reward & punishment
- The System of worship
- The Places for worship
- Rituals
- Adherents/ Followers

**Rituals/ The System of Worship/
Places/ Adherents**
Lecture# 08

- **Rituals and The System of Worship in Hinduism:**
- Every religion in the world whether divine or man-made has some sorts of worship. Likewise, Hinduism has some types of worship and religious rituals. Mostly, the worship in Hinduism is associated with idols.
- The most popular worship in Hinduism includes:
- **Puja:** Ritual worship, especially of the deity.
- **Arti:** The greeting ceremony with lamps, etc.
- **Bhajan** or **Kirtan:** Hymns and chants (often during Arti).
- **Darshan:** Visiting a deity or holy person.
- **Prasad:** Offering and eating some sacred food or sweets that are presented to idols.
- **Pravachan:** Talk or lecture on the scriptures.
- **Havan:** The worship of sacred fire.

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- **Japa/Meditation/Prayer:** Internal practices of worship.
- **Parikram/ Pradakshina:** Circumambulation or moving around a sacred object or idol.
- **Selva:** Active service, to the deity, holy people, etc.

❑ **Worship of Shivlingam**

In Hinduism, Shivlingam and Yoni are worshipped, Lingam and Yoni in Sanskrit means the male and female sexual organs respectively. Hindus are allowed to worship anything, including the sexual organs. It is common among them to name their children as Shiva Lingam (God Shiva's sexual organ) or Rama Lingam (God Rama's sexual organ).

In some places in Karnataka, the gods demand both male and females to pray naked together. Devadasi (Religious Prostitution), the Devadasi system was set up, according to a Times of India's report (10-11-87), as a result of conspiracy between the feudal class and the priests (Brahmins). The latter, with their ideological

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and religious hold over the peasants and craftsmen, devised a means that gave prostitution their religious sanction. Poor low-caste Hindu girls, initially sold at private auctions, were later “dedicated” to the temples. They were then initiated into prostitution even to this day this religious prostitution blessed by Hindu religion is still alive in Karnataka and Maharashtra.

❑ **The Kama sutra**

Brahmins have also created Kama sutra; a set of instructions on how to have sexual intercourse. Some of the postures detailed in Kama sutra are so complex that they can only be performed with the help of one or more assistants! Some Hindu temples have stone carvings of Kama sutra sexual poses and Hindus worship them. One feels shame to visit those naked idols lonely not to mention with family.

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❑ **The Devadasi System**

Times of India, 10th Nov 1987, confirms that the practice of dedication young Harijan (Hindu) girls (Mahars, Mangs, Dowris and Chamar) at childhood to a goddess, and their initiation into prostitution when they attain puberty continues to thrive in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and other parts of South India. This is largely due to social backwardness, poverty and illiteracy. The Brahmins with their ideological and religious hold over the Hindu community devised this practice which acquired religious sanctions.

In fact, the word Devadasi has a religious sense as the word Dev denotes a deity or god and Dasi means a female slave, thus Devdasi means a female slave of god. Those girls were devoted to the gods and dedicated to satisfy the carnal desires of priests in the name of god and worship of god. Human mind disdains to ascribe such system of worship to Ishvar, rather it's more deserving to be attributed to some selfish priests who have invented such heresies under the name of religion and worship.

Rituals and The System of Worship in Judaism:

❑ **Worship in Judaism**

➤ *Prayers*

- Prayer builds the relationship between God and human beings.
 - When people pray, they spend time with God. To pray is to serve God with your heart, obeying God's commandment:

“...to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Deuteronomy 11:13)
 - Jews, like other people of faith, pray in many different ways.
 - They pray so that their hearts can reach out to God.
 - They pray to express and exercise their beliefs.
 - They pray to share in the life of a worshipping community.
 - They pray to obey God's commandments.
- ### ➤ *The important things about prayer are:*
- You should do it with total concentration on God-there should be nothing else in your mind.
 - The prayer should be completely from the heart.

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➤ *Three Times a Day*

- Jews are supposed to pray three times a day; morning, afternoon, and evening.
- The Jewish prayer book (it's called a siddur) has special services set down for this.
- Praying regularly enables a person to get better at building their relationship with God. After all, most things get better with practice.
- There are three different sorts of prayer, and Jewish people use all of them.
- These are prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of praise, and prayers that ask for things.
- Jews believe that God will take action in response to prayer, and a teaching from the rabbis tells us that the more we ask God to help us, the more God will love us. (Midrash Tehillim 4:3)
- Prayer changes our faith, and it changes us too.
- Praying with heart and mind and soul takes a person into a state of being that is different from their everyday awareness.
- Prayer enhances a person's closeness to God.
- Prayer enhances a person's closeness to their fellow Jews.

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❑ **Public prayer and blessings**

➤ *Public prayer*

- Much of Jewish prayer consists of reciting the written services aloud in synagogue.
- Praying in public affirms that a person is a member of a community, and when they do so, an individual puts themselves into the context of other Jews, and to some extent puts their own particular situation aside to put the community first.
- It's also an act of togetherness with Jewish people who are doing the same all around the world.
- And attending regular services, and following the order of the prayer book, is a valuable spiritual discipline, and a mechanism that enables a person to spend time with God on a regular basis.

➤ Blessings/ Berakhot (Baraka)

- Observant Jews will say a blessing over everything they eat or drink, and in the face of many natural events. Doing so acknowledges that God is involved in everything.
- So before drinking wine a Jew would say (in Hebrew):
 - “Blessed are You - the Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.”

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- Or on seeing trees blossoming for the first time in the year:

“Blessed are You - the Lord our God, King of the universe, who has withheld nothing from His world, but has created in it goodly creatures and goodly trees for the enjoyment of human beings.”

➤ *Worshipping in the synagogue*

- Orthodox synagogues hold three daily services in Hebrew. The person leading the congregation faces the aron hakodesh. Men and women sit separately, and men cover their heads with a skull cap or kippah. Married women wear a scarf over their head, which shows respect for God. Orthodox Jews often sway, which helps them to concentrate on the words being said.
- Jewish men cover their heads with a skull cap or kippah to show respect for God.
- Orthodox Jewish men wear a tallit and often a tefillin. The tallit reminds Jews that they are obeying God’s word whenever they wear it. The tefillin makes them concentrate on God when they are praying.

Remaining Part

Lecture# 09

Rituals and The System of Worship in Christianity:

- **Overview:** Prayer, Bible study, baptism, Eucharist (Communion), church on Sundays, numerous holidays.
- **House of Worship:** church, chapel, cathedral, basilica, meeting hall
- **Day of Worship:** Sunday
- **Clergy/Leaders:** priest, bishop, archbishop, patriarch, pope, pastor, minister, preacher, deacon
- **Holidays:** Easter, Christmas, saints' days (some denominations)

☐ Christian Practices

- Christian practices vary by denomination, but common elements include a Sunday worship service, private and corporate prayer, study and reading of the Scriptures, and participation in rites such as baptism and communion (known as sacraments).
- Christian worship services generally include singing, prayer and a sermon. Most churches have a special ritual for ordination, or designating a person fit for a leadership position in the church. At home, most practicing Christians pray regularly and many read the Bible.

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- Many Christians will have been baptized, either as an infant or as an adult, and regularly participate in communion (also called the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist). Baptism and communion are considered sacraments - sacred rituals instituted by Christ himself.
- **Baptism**
- Baptism is one of the two most important sacraments in Christianity. At its most basic, it involves application of or immersion in water, a blessing, and the pronouncement, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Some Christian denominations baptize both infants and adults, but others believe that baptism is only rightly performed on adults. Views of baptism vary, but common views of the rituals include: it grants or symbolizes salvation, commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, fulfills the command of Christ to baptize, cleanses away sins, confers grace, and publicly expresses one's faith.
- **The Eucharist**
- The Eucharist, also known as Communion or Lord's Supper, is a sacrament (so-called by Roman Catholicism) or ordinance (so-called by Protestantism) carried out in Christian churches as an act of obedience to the instructions of Jesus Christ about commemorating his death on the cross given the night before he died.

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- The Eucharist elements are bread and wine; the bread recalls Christ's body and the wine recalls his blood.
- The word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word for "thanksgiving."
- **Fasting in Christianity:**
- Practiced in many religions, including Christianity, fasting is an act which is most accurately defined as an abstention from meat, drink and all natural food for a determined period. So it is defined by the Church of England, in the 16th homily, on the authority of the Council of Chalcedon and of the primitive church generally.
- Towards the beginning of the 5th century we find Socrates (439) enumerating (H.E. v. 22) a long catalogue of the different fasting practices of the church. The Romans fasted three weeks continuously before Easter (Saturdays and Sundays excepted). Others (the Constantinopolitans) began their fasts seven weeks before Easter, but fasted only on alternate weeks, five days at a time.

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- Some abstained from all living creatures; others ate fish; others fish and fowl. Some abstained from eggs and fruit; some confined themselves to bread; some would not take even that. Some fasted till three in the afternoon, and then took whatever they pleased. “Other nations,” adds the historian, “observe other customs in their fasts, and that for various reasons. And since no one can show any written rule about this, it is plain the apostles left this matter free to every one's liberty and choice, that no one should be compelled to do a good thing out of necessity and fear.”
- **Confirmation:**
- In Christianity, confirmation is either considered a sacrament or rite - depending on the beliefs - of the practitioners, ceremonially performed in a church, which signifies the faith and commitment of a person, who desires to publicize their convictions to their family, friends, and church, such as one being undergoing baptism or one coming of age (e.g. a teenager).
- Generally, Roman Catholic churches and Eastern Orthodox churches consider confirmation a sacrament, believing it to dispense grace (but not necessarily saving grace), while Protestant churches, including Anglicanism, teaches that it is a rite, meaning it is symbolic, though still very important.

Rituals and The System of Worship in Islam:

❑ *Islamic way of worship:*

- Through sincerity, repentance, and direct prayer to God, Muslims strive to establish a personal spiritual relationship with their Creator all throughout the day. This prayer includes physical motions of bowing and prostrating, which were also performed by Jesus, Moses, and the prophets before them.
- Worshipping God is a comprehensive concept within Islam. Along with traditional rituals, such as praying and fasting, it also consists of any lawful action a person does with God-consciousness and in the hopes of earning reward from Almighty God. Therefore, devoting oneself to God in Islam does not require a person to enter a place of worship nor embrace monasticism. Rather, fulfilling this purpose of life is an active daily pursuit from the Islamic perspective. Hence, a Muslim can be engaged in worship throughout the day, be it at home, work or anywhere else.
- *Foundations of Worship*
- Certain criteria determine whether an act can be considered worship. For instance, Islam teaches that the merit of a person's action depends on the intention.

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- Muslims believe that God looks at people's hearts, not just their physical deeds. For an action to be regarded as worship, it must be performed with the pure intention of pleasing God. Therefore, the concept of worship in Islam encourages people to connect with God in every action they take, strengthening their bond with their Creator. In doing so, a person gains a sense of true peace that comes with carrying out their purpose in life.
- In addition to purifying one's intention, a person's deeds must also be consistent with divine guidance. While God has inspired an intuitive moral sense in every individual, people do not always act in a just and ethical manner. In fact, our ability to judge between right and wrong can often be muddled by external influences, outward appearances or ulterior motives. Hence, having a moral compass alone does not enable one to internalize righteousness or bring one closer to God.
- In order to guide humans to His worship and to truly differentiate between good and evil, God sent prophets as teachers and role models. He also revealed Holy Scriptures which provide us with knowledge directly from God and serve as manuals for virtuous living.

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- The combination of prophetic examples and divine scriptures reinforces our moral inclinations and equips us with the knowledge to discern between right and wrong. They also provide us with the criterion which enables us to assess our own motives and deeds. Above all, they teach us how to worship God and to lead a life that pleases Him.
- Rites of Worship
- Indeed, every single aspect of a person's life can fit under the umbrella of worship in Islam, so long as the person's intention is to please God and the action is consistent with the Quran and prophetic example. At the same time, certain core rituals form the basis of a Muslim's worship of God.
- Quran
- The Quran, which literally means the 'oft-repeated,' is, according to Muslim belief, the final revelation of God to humanity. It provides guidance in all areas of life. The recitation, study and memorization of Quran form a central facet of worship for Muslims. The Quran is also recited during every prayer. Although it is widely read in its original Arabic, various translations in numerous languages are also available.

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- Prayer
- Islam enjoins Muslims to offer five prayers throughout the day at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and night. Prayer enables Muslims to physically and mentally take a break from their worldly activities to connect with God several times a day. The prayers consist of praising God while standing, bowing and prostrating, maintaining the practice of Muhammad, Jesus, Moses and all the other prophets, peace be upon them all. On Fridays, Muslims attend a special congregational noon prayer, complete with a brief sermon.

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- Mosques
- The house of worship in Islam is called a mosque. Many Muslims congregate at mosques for prayer while others choose to pray at home, work or wherever they may be. While the primary use of a mosque is prayer, it also serves as a community center with people gathering to listen to lectures, attend study groups or enjoy communal dinners. Mosques are especially active on Fridays for the congregational noon prayer and during Ramadan for the nightly prayers.
- Ramadan
- Muslims fast during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, by refraining from eating, drinking and sexual interaction from dawn to sunset. Fasting instills self-restraint, provides spiritual cleansing and strengthens one's willpower. While fasting, Muslims strive to increase charitable acts and control bad habits such as foul language, gossip and anger.

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- Charity
- Muslims must give 2.5% of their annual savings to help the poor, the needy and the oppressed. This act of devotion acknowledges that all wealth comes from God and purifies the soul from material greed. In addition, Islam encourages voluntary acts of charity, be they monetary or physical. A famous prophetic tradition states, 'Smiling is charity.'
- Hajj
- The pilgrimage to Mecca must be performed by every Muslim once in their life if they are physically and financially able. It symbolizes the unity of humankind as Muslims from every race; nationality and social status assemble together in equality to worship God, following the traditions of Abraham.
- Holy Days
- The two Eid festivals mark important holy days for Muslims. Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated at the completion of Ramadan while Eid-al-Adha falls during the days of Hajj. Both occasions begin with a congregational prayer and a sermon; these are followed by festive meals, gift-giving and socializing.

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- Supplication
- Muslims supplicate to and address God directly for their needs and desires anytime and anywhere. This direct relationship is an essential element of worship in Islam. Whether asking for guidance, seeking solace or beseeching God for forgiveness, Muslims reach out to God at any time, without an intermediary. The practice of confession to another being does not exist in Islam.

The left over...

- **Ten Commandments:**

- 1. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.
- 2. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.
- 3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.
- 4. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

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- 5. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
- 6. You shall not murder.
- 7. You shall not commit adultery.
- 8. You shall not steal.
- 9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

A brief history of Religions

Lecture# 10

i) A Short history of Hinduism

- According to Ex- Governor Mumbai:
- According to Dr. Laiban (Renowned French scholar)
- According to Pandat Jawahir Lal Nehru:
- The Aryans
- The Aryan's land of Origin
- The Aryans entrance into the Sub-continent
- The early doctrine of Aryan nation
- The impact of old tribes on Aryans

ii) A short history of Judaism

- Etymology
- Short history
- Yahuda
- Hazrat Yousuf (Joseph)
- The state of Bani- Israel
- Yushwa
- Saul & Goliath (1050 B.D)

Cont...

- The decline of the state
- Hazrat Suleman A.S(Solomon)
- The destruction afterwards
- The life of Hazrat Musa A.S(Moses)
- His passage to Madain
- Marriage
- Departure to Egypt
- Prophet hood
- Allah's wrath on the Egyptians
- The ouster of Bani Israel from Egypt
- A decree to march towards Palestine
- Today's position of Jews

Lecture# 11

ii) A short history of Christianity

- Religious & spiritual life of the Jews
- Political life
- Wait for a new messenger
- Prophecies about Hazrat Esa A.S(Jesus Christ)
- Birth

Cont...

- **Phases/ Stages of Christianity:**

- 1. The Early Christianity**

- The phase of poverty & oppression
- The state's official religion

- 2. The Dark Age**

- 3. The Medieval Age**

- 1st Period (800- 1073)
- 2nd Period (1073- 1294)
- 3rd Period (1294- 1517)
- Great Schism
- Crusades
- Popedom
- Malpractices of Popes
- Moral standards of cathedrals & European Christians
- Indulgences
- **Reformation Movements**
- Peter Waldo
- JohnTauler
- John Wycliff
- Martin Luther

Lecture# 12(left over)

- Hulrich Zwingli
 - John Calvin
 - John Knox
 - Catholic counter reformation
 - Church of England
 - **Christianity & the New age**
 - According to Herbert. J. Muller
 - New trends regarding Bible
-
- **A short history of Islam**
 - The spreading/ prevalence of Islam
 - Caliphate (khilafat)
 - Islam & the modern world