**Lecture no 1**

**Introduction and Importance of Religion**

Religion is a set of beliefs and practices that often includes a belief in a higher power or deity. It provides a framework for understanding life, death, and the universe, and offers guidance on how to live a meaningful and fulfilling life.

**Definitions of religion:**

The definition of religion varies significantly among scholars, reflecting diverse perspectives and approaches. Here are a few notable definitions:

**1. \*\*Emile Durkheim\*\*:** A prominent sociologist, Durkheim defined religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them¹.

**2. \*\*Clifford Geertz\*\*:** An anthropologist, Geertz described religion as a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in people by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic².

**3. \*\*Ninian Smart\*\*:** A scholar of religious studies, Smart proposed a dimensional approach, identifying seven dimensions of religion: doctrinal, mythological, ethical, ritual, experiential, institutional, and material².

**4. \*\*Paul Tillich\*\*:** A theologian, Tillich viewed religion as the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life³.

**5. ‘William James’** presented the definition of religious experience.

"Feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."

These definitions highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of religion, encompassing beliefs, practices, symbols, and experiences that bind communities and provide meaning to individuals' lives.

Scholars have produced a staggering variety of definitions of religion over the past 150 years , a brief historical account of the origin of the term “religion” and a general taxonomy of the various kinds of definitions (including monothetic, polythetic, substantive, functional, mixed, and family resemblance), along with some brief commentary and criticism.

This entry aims to introduce readers to the ongoing debate about defining “religion,” a concept discussed across various disciplines such as anthropology, history, philosophy, psychology, religious studies, sociology, and cognitive science. Given the diverse fields involved, scholars should adopt a balanced, multidisciplinary approach to defining religion.

اسلام نے مذہب کے لیے دین کا لفظ استعمال کیا ہے۔ ﴿إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ﴾، ﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ الْحَقِّالصف﴾ لغوی تعریف: عربی میں دین کے معنی، اطاعت اور جزا کے ہیں۔ راغب اصفہانی لکھتے ہیں: الطاعۃ والجزاء ”دین، اطاعت اور جزا کے معنی میں ہے۔[1] شریعت کو اس لیے دین کہا جاتا ہے کیونکہ اس کی اطاعت کی جانی چاہیے۔“

**Importance of Definitional Issues**

Guiding Research: Definitions help set the scope for disciplines like philosophy of religion and religious studies, determining what should and shouldn’t be studied. They also clarify whether borderline cases, like Buddhism or Marxism, should be considered religions.

Social and Legal Ramifications: Definitions of religion have significant social and legal implications, such as determining conscientious objector status, tax exemptions, and protections under freedom of religion clauses. These consequences justify ongoing scholarly reflection on how best to define religion.

Interdependence with Theories: There is a close relationship between definitions and theories of religion. It may be impossible to define religion without incorporating a theory of it, and vice versa. A scholar’s definition often reveals their theoretical commitments, mirroring the development of the academic study of religion.

**Historical Context**

The term “religion” to denote a specific body of beliefs and practices is relatively recent. Before the seventeenth century, it often meant “inner piety” or “worship.” During the early modern period and the Enlightenment, the term shifted to denote a body of beliefs that could be true or false. This period saw increased engagement between different faiths and cultures, leading to distinctions between faiths and the conceptualization of one’s faith against others. This era also saw the emergence of the notion of “natural religion,” considered universal and grounded in reason rather than revelation.

**Contemporary Issues**

Some scholars argue that the modern conception of religion, shaped by historical contingencies in Western Europe, has led to confusion, division, and conflict. Questions like “Is Buddhism a religion?” and “Can religion be explained?” highlight these issues, as does the perceived conflict between science and religion.

**Importance of Religion:**

* Moral compass: Religion often provides a moral code, guiding individuals towards ethical behavior and helping them distinguish between right and wrong.
* Community and belonging: Religious communities can offer a sense of belonging, support, and social connection.
* Community and Identity: Religion often fosters a sense of belonging and identity among its followers, creating strong community bonds and support networks
* Meaning and purpose: Religion can provide a sense of meaning and purpose in life, helping individuals understand their place in the world and their ultimate destiny.
* Personal Meaning and Purpose: For many individuals, religion offers answers to existential questions such as the purpose of life, the nature of the universe, and what happens after death.
* Spiritual growth: Religious practices can foster spiritual growth and development, leading to inner peace and fulfillment.
* Cultural and Social Influence: Religion shapes cultures and societies by providing a framework for moral conduct, social norms, and community cohesion. It influences art, literature, law, and politics1.
* Rituals and Practices: Religious rituals and practices, such as prayer, meditation, and ceremonies, help individuals express their beliefs and connect with the divine or the sacred

**Purpose of Life**

The purpose of life is a question that has been pondered by philosophers and theologians for centuries. While there is no definitive answer, many religions offer their own perspectives. Some common themes include:

* To know, love, and serve God: Many religions emphasize the importance of developing a relationship with a higher power.
* Empathy and compassion: Personal and social life needs compassion and ethical consideration to live happily and morally beautiful.
* To achieve spiritual enlightenment or salvation: Some religions believe that the ultimate goal of life is to attain a state of spiritual perfection or liberation.
* To make a positive impact on the world: Many religions encourage individuals to contribute to the betterment of society and help others.
* In Islam Quran mentioned that Allah has created man and jinns to worship.

Purpose of Life:

The purpose of life is different in every set of practices. Even those who do not follow any religion they have it. Those who not have a purpose or goal in life they go astray. Religion give us purpose of life, like

• Hinduism: The ultimate goal of life is to attain moksha (liberation) from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. This can be achieved through various paths, such as karma yoga (path of action), bhakti yoga (path of devotion), or jnana yoga (path of knowledge).

• Buddhism: The goal of life is to end suffering and achieve nirvana (enlightenment). This is accomplished through the Eightfold Path, which includes right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

• Christianity: The purpose of life is to know, love, and serve God. This involves following Jesus Christ and living according to His teachings.

• Islam: The purpose of life is to get the will of Almighty Allah to which Muslims has submitted their will.

**Definition of Worship**

Worship is the act of honoring, reverencing, or adoring a deity or higher power. It can involve various practices, such as prayer, meditation, ritual, or service to others.

**Importance of Worship in Life**

* Connection with God: Worship helps individuals feel closer to God and strengthen their relationship with the divine.
* Spiritual growth: Worship can foster spiritual development and deepen one's understanding of faith.
* Peace and tranquility: Worship can bring a sense of peace and tranquility to the mind and soul.
* Moral guidance: Worship can help individuals align their actions with their religious beliefs and values.

**Concept of Happiness**

Happiness is a state of well-being characterized by pleasure, contentment, and fulfillment. While the pursuit of happiness is a universal human desire, the definition and experience of happiness can vary greatly from person to person.

**Righteous Deeds:**

Righteous deeds are actions that are considered morally good or virtuous according to religious teachings. They often involve acts of kindness, compassion, and service to others.

**Conditions for Acceptable Deeds**

Different religions may have specific conditions for deeds to be considered acceptable. However, some common themes include:

• **Sincerity:** Deeds must be performed with a pure heart and sincere intention.

• **Knowledge:** Individuals must have knowledge of the correct way to perform the deed.

• **Compliance with religious laws:** Deeds must be in accordance with the laws and teachings of the religion.

There are number of righteous deeds mentioned in Quran and Hadees. The people who follow divine commandments and instructions are called Ibad ur Rahman (righteous people) in Quran, there are many places in Quran which describe the social behavior, deeds and good conduct. Like in surah Hujurat and Luqman. There are many laws and norms regarding women presented in surah Al-noor and Al-nisa.

The qualities of Ibad-ur-Rahman (Servants of the Most Merciful) are beautifully described in Surah Al-Furqan (25:63-76) in the Quran. Here are the key characteristics:

**Humility:** They walk on the earth with humility and do not exhibit arrogance.

**Forbearance:** When addressed by the ignorant, they respond with peace.

**Devotion in Prayer**: They spend part of the night in prostration and standing in prayer.

**Fear of Allah’s Punishment**: They pray for protection from the punishment of Hell.

**Moderation:** They are moderate in their spending, neither extravagant nor miserly.

**Avoidance of Major Sins**: They do not commit major sins such as associating partners with Allah, unlawful killing, or adultery.

**Repentance:** They repent for their sins and strive to do righteous deeds.

**Truthfulness:** They do not bear false witness.

**Mindfulness:** They avoid idle talk and engage in beneficial conversations.

**Family Responsibility:** They pray for their spouses and offspring to be a source of comfort and strive to be leaders of the righteous.

Righteous deeds in both social and personal circles are essential for fostering a harmonious and fulfilling life. Here are some examples and their virtues:

**In Personal Life**

**Honesty and Integrity**: Being truthful and maintaining integrity in all dealings.

Kindness and Compassion: Showing respect, empathy and kindness to family, friends, and oneself.

**Self-Discipline**: Practicing self-control and avoiding harmful behaviors.

Regular Worship: Consistently performing prayers and other acts of worship.

**In Social Life**

**Helping Others:** Assisting those in need, whether through charity or support.

Fairness and Justice: Treating everyone with fairness and standing up against injustice.

**Community Service**: Engaging in activities that benefit the community, such as volunteering.

**Good Manners**: Displaying good etiquette and respect towards others.

Virtues and Effects

**In This World:** Righteous deeds lead to a good life, alleviate distress, and answer prayers1. They also foster strong relationships and a supportive community.

**In the Hereafter**: These deeds result in the forgiveness of sins, immense rewards, and a good end in paradise1. They elevate one’s rank with Allah and ensure a favorable return.

Righteous deeds are not just about individual piety but also about contributing positively to society and maintaining ethical standards in all aspects of life1

* **Judaism:** *Mitzvot* are commandments that Jews are obligated to follow. These include commandments related to worship, morality, and social justice.
* **Islam:** *Ihsan* is the concept of doing good for the sake of Allah. It involves performing acts of kindness, charity, and service to others.

**Laws of Allah (SWT) and Effects of Sins:**

Allah (SWT) is the Arabic term for God in Islam. Islamic law, known as Sharia, is based on the Quran (the holy book of Islam) and the Sunnah (the teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad).

**Sins** are actions that violate Islamic law. The effects of sins can include:

• **Divine punishment:** Sins may result in punishment in this life or in the afterlife.

• **Spiritual harm:** Sins can damage one's relationship with Allah and hinder spiritual growth.

• **Social consequences**: Sins can have negative consequences for individuals and society.

* **Islam:** The Quran and the Sunnah provide guidance on Islamic law. Sins are classified into different categories, such as major sins and minor sins. The effects of sins can include divine punishment, spiritual harm, and social consequences.
* The existence of human society and crime is a natural thing. Through its teachings, Islam has encouraged and commanded human beings to stay away from oppression and crime and live a peaceful life. For Islam, peace is of fundamental importance as the word Islam itself includes the concept of peace and security. But it is also an indisputable fact that evil cannot be eradicated, though it is certainly possible to suppress evil and block the means by which it spreads, Islam prescribes severe punishments for specific crimes, which are called hudood. The purpose of this concept of punishments is to prevent crime so that human society can live in peace.
* The term “Hadd” the plural of which is “Hudood”, is an Arabic word when used as an infinitive means “to limitize” (Rahman, 1965). In Arabic language, the ‘Gatekeeper’ is called haddad(ُداَّدَح) because he limitizes people to enter into a building etc (Ahmad, 2020).Encyclopedia of Islam defines Haddas: “Haddhas become the technical term of the punishment of the certain acts which have been forbidden or sanctioned by the punishment of the Quran and have thereby become crimes against religion” (“Hadd”, n.d.).The word hudood in the Holy Quran appears in a few passages and does not imply fixed punishments, but its literal meaning is "limits", or precision, hudood Allah: "the limits of Allah": in other words, the limits of human behavior as determined by Allah. This definition is clear from the paragraphs in which the word appears as well as from its individual context in relation to "the limits of Allah":i. Fasting during Ramadan ii. Procedures of Marriage and divorc

**The laws defined by Hudood Allah**

**تِلْکَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰہِ ط وَمَنْ یُّطِعِ اللّٰہَ وَرَسُوْلَہ یُدْخِلْہُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِیْ مِنْتَحْتِھَا الْاَنْھٰرُ خٰلِدِیْنَ فِیْھَا ط وَذٰلِکَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِیْمُ ہ١٣**

They save community from disastrous situation i.e: fitna o fasad, big sins. The term Hudood Allah (حدود الله) refers to the limits or boundaries set by Allah in Islamic law. These boundaries encompass various aspects of life, including moral, social, and legal dimensions. In the context of Islamic jurisprudence, Hudood often refers to specific punishments prescribed for certain offenses, which are considered to be fixed by divine command1.

Some of the offenses that fall under Hudood include:

**Zina** (unlawful sexual intercourse)

the law of hadd-i-zina was revealed. The Quran says:ٍُ

اَلزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِىْ فَاجْلِـدُوْا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْـدَةٍ ۖ وَّلَا تَاْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَاْفَـةٌ فِىْ دِيْنِ اللّـٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُـمْ تُؤْمِنُـوْنَ بِاللّـٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ۖ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَـآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

ّFlog the adulteress and the adulterer, each one of them, with a hundred stripes.” (Surah Al-Noor:2).

**Theft (serqa)**

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقۡطَعُوۡۤا اَيۡدِيَهُمَا جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَسَبَا نَـكَالًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيۡزٌ حَكِيۡمٌ‏ ﴿5:38﴾

(5:38) As for the thief -male or female - cut off the hands of both.60 This is a recompense for what they have done, and an exemplary punishment from Allah. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

**Drinking alcohol (khamar)**

The prohibition of drinking intoxicants was revealed in a gradual process. The following Quranic verse was revealed which finally prohibited the act of drinking:

“O believers, drinking, gambling, idols and dividing arrows are but abominations. So turn wholly away from each one of them so that you may prosper. Satan desires only to create enmity and hatred between you by means of drinking and gambling and to keep you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you, desist (from these acts)?”(Surah Al-Maidah:90).

**Armed robbery (harabah)**

Haddor armed robbery (Harrabah) is mentioned in Quran in the following words:

“Certainly the punishment of those who fight against Allah and His Messenger and are actively engaged in creating disorder in the land is that they should be decapitated or hanged or their hands and their feet be chopped off on alternate sides or they should be placed under arrest or expelled from the land” (Surah Al-Maidah:33)

**False accusation of zina(qazaf)**

**وَ الَّذِیْنَ یَرْمُوْنَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ یَاْتُوْا بِاَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوْهُمْ ثَمٰنِیْنَ جَلْدَةً وَّ لَا تَقْبَلُوْا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً اَبَدًاۚ-وَ اُولٰٓىٕكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ(4)**

“As for those persons who charge chaste women with false accusations but do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes and never accept their evidence afterwards, for they themselves are transgressors”,

Note:The punishments for these offenses are severe and are meant to serve as a deterrent. However, the application of Hudood punishments requires very stringent evidentiary standards, making their actual implementation rare.

**Tazkiyyah:**

Tazkiyyah – The Purification of Heart

Tazkiyyah is an Islamic term that refers to the purification of the heart from sin and negative qualities. It involves various practices, such as prayer, repentance, and seeking forgiveness from Allah. The goal of tazkiyyah is to achieve spiritual purity and closeness to God.

Tazkiyyah involves practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), *salat* (prayer), *sawm* (fasting), and *zakah* (charity). The goal is to purify the heart from sin and develop positive qualities.

**Authentic Materials:**

* **Hinduism:** The Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Ramayana are considered sacred texts.
* **Buddhism:** The Pali Canon, which includes the Suttas, Vinayas, and Abhidhamma, is the primary source of Buddhist teachings.
* **Christianity:** The Bible, consisting of the Old Testament and New Testament, is the holy book of Christianity.
* **Judaism:** The Torah, consisting of the Five Books of Moses, is the most important sacred text of Judaism.
* **Islam:** The Quran, the holy book of Islam, is considered the direct word of God. The Sunnah, which includes the Hadith (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), is also a primary source of Islamic teachings.

**Note:** These are just a few examples, and there are many other religions and denominations with their own specific beliefs and practices. It is important to consult authentic sources and engage in dialogue with knowledgeable individuals to gain a deeper understanding of these topics.

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