

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

**Unit I**

Philosophy of Religion: Nature & Concerns

Religion & Theology, Religion & Morality, Religion & Science

1. What is Philosophy of Religion?

Ans: Philosophy of religion is the philosophical examination of religious themes, concepts, and beliefs—such as God's existence, the nature of reality, and the problem of evil—using reason rather than faith. It critically analyzes religious worldviews and alternatives (like secularism) to evaluate their truth, rationality, and meaning.

2. What is Religion?

Ans: Religion comes from the Latin word 'religio' (to bind). Literally speaking, religion is a principle of unification and harmonization. Any discipline which binds us all together in a wholesome way is religion. It is not mere belief but behavior; not mere conviction but conduct; not mere faith but functioning. In religion, the whole of a human being's personality is involved.

3. Define Religion according to different thinkers.

Ans: Many different definitions have been proposed. William James defines religion as "The feeling, 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." Hoffding defines religion as, "the conservation of values." Again according to Alexander "Religion is faith in deity". To Patric "Religion is the consciousness of our practical relation to an invisible spiritual order." "Religion", says Whitehead, "is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things." W.T Stace defined "religion as the hunger of the soul for the impossible, the unattainable, the inconceivable." According to Kant "Religion is a matter of the will, it being understood and identified with practical reason, that is to say certain acts ought to be done or that certain attitudes ought to be adopted."

4. What is the relation between Philosophy & Religion?

Ans: Although different definitions are given to explain philosophy and religion, basically they do not contradict each other. Philosophy and religion are the two modes under which the human psyche apprehends the universe. Philosophy and religion may differ to some extent but in fact they are complementary to each other. Ultimately both philosophy and religion raise the life of man and society to a higher and nobler level. A man needs a better philosophy and a better religion. Philosophy and religion have only one purpose i. e of seeking unity through diversity. In philosophy the purpose is peace, harmony, adjustment, salvation. Philosophy and religion thus deal often with the same ideas, such as the soul, its

origin and density, God and creation. At all events, we see that the relation between religion and philosophy is most intimate.

5. Explain the concept Philosophy of Religion.

Ans: The term “philosophy of religion” has persisted in our language as the name for scientific study of religion. It is an intellectual and logical interpretation of religious experience. It is an antidote to all the dogmatism, irrationalism and superstitions in religion. The philosophy of religion merges in philosophy so far as its philosophical thinking about religion is concerned.

Philosophical thought is always rational and very deeply intellectual. It is a rational analysis of religious experience. All its problems – God, faith, worship, prayer, tradition, revelation and immortality – are the determining factors of the religious experience. However, religious experience cannot be explained by intellect without the use of figures, symbols and analogies.

The truth of religion cannot be essentially different from truth as the object of philosophical inquiry. This is what Hegel really meant when he identified the *vorstellungen* (ideas, manner or less pictorial) or religion with the *Begriffe* (pure intellectual notions) of philosophy, the difference being a difference of form rather than of content. The philosophy of religion is not an organ of religious teaching. Religious practices, rituals, worship, prayer, etc., need not be undertaken from the standpoint of philosophy of religion.

All these are the activities of religion like the religious teaching, but in philosophy of religion we have to observe the philosophical aspects of all these organs of religion. Not only the theist, but the atheist and the agnostic can philosophize about religion. The philosophy of religion is not necessarily a branch of theology, the theory of religious belief, but a branch of philosophy. However, it studies the concepts, propositions and arguments of theologians.

6. What is the nature and concern of Philosophy of Religion?

Ans: 1. Philosophy of religion generally committed on reason and rationalism. Aristotle originally suggested that man is a rational animal and it is rationality that makes him different from animals.

2. Philosophy of religion is more than affair of head than the heart. Heart is the place for faith, emotion and feeling. But head is for knowledge, understanding and reason.

3. It is logical and rational analysis of religious phenomena. A rational religion is more philosophical in its approach than the infra-rational aspect, viz., instincts, impulse, sensation, crude emotion etc. Reason can very well help us to reject superstitions and blind belief from the religion. Thus it plays an important role in the field of philosophy of religion.

4. Philosophy of religion must be based on religious experiences. The faith, feeling and the emotional attachment of religion cannot describe its experience, because the mystical part of religion is ineffable and inexpressible. Religious experiences can be stated and verified through symbols, figures and visions. However, the religious experiences of different religions are included in the study of philosophy of religion.

5. Philosophy of religion must cover the study of some major religions such as Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Shintoism, etc. It must also study primitive religions such as animism, animatism, naturalism, etc. the philosophy of religion must find a synthesis of different religions.
6. The philosophy of religion is always based on philosophical foundations viz – way of life and the form of life which refer to prospects, position, knowledge, and creation of one's life.
7. The philosophy of religion is based on idealism as the fundamental principle of knowledge. It emphasizes on ideas and explains the spiritual aspects of the universe.
8. Philosophy of religion involves the epistemological and ontological problems of the world. It observes the nature of religious knowledge and examines the nature of ultimate reality.
9. It seeks to analyze concepts such as God, liberation, worship, prayer, creation, eternal life, customs, beliefs. Hence we have to study the philosophical aspects of all these concepts. The different theories of God in relation to its problems of existence and its relation to the world become its scope and ground of observation.
10. In the philosophy of religion the values of man become the object of philosophical inquiry. The proper study of mankind is man. And the study of man can never be complete unless it includes the study of religion.
11. Spirituality is the core of philosophy of religion. The awakening of spiritual hunger is the very beginning of religion. But that does not include the supernatural things, nor the observation of certain external ceremonials coupled with physical austerities. The spiritual realization is the aim of philosophy of religion.
12. The idea of a philosophy of religion, the science of the facts of the inner world of man, as upheld in ancient thought, also becomes a study of philosophical and spiritual tradition. The philosophy of religion is a matter of inner experience, a coming in touch with spiritual facts, and not a matter of belief or dogma or conformity.
13. In the philosophy of religion there is not only 'ought' but also the 'it'. It is both union and unity, truth and reality, restraint and release, destination and destiny. It is what makes for the advancement, growth and liberation of all.
14. Objectively speaking, philosophy of religion means those spiritual principles through which one attains perfection, illumination, God-vision or liberation. These spiritual principles are truthfulness, purity, self-control, non-violence, forbearance, detachment, equanimity, straight-forwardness, dutifulness, compassion and love of God.
15. Subjectively speaking, philosophy of religion means not a some-time, but an all-time religion in a person's life. When religion courses through our blood, vibrates in our nerves, when it becomes the very breath of our life, religion has become true for us.

#### 7. What is the relation between Philosophy of Religion & Theology?

Ans: Religion and theology are differing in their scope and nature. When we use the term philosophy of religion, there is no doubt about the field of study to which we refer. It is religions, as a universal phenomenon in human experience, which we are proceeding to examine. But the word theology, used to denote, the theory of religious belief. The further

query will follow: what is theology? Is it Jewish, Christian, or Mohamadeian? If it be Christian, we have still to find out whether it is Roman Catholic or Protestant. The term therefore requires qualification, are we understand definitely what is meant. In its nature a theology is an articulated system of religious beliefs or doctrines which we has been developed from historical religions. The proper office of theology is not to criticize the religious experience, out of which it grew, but rather to deal faithfully with that experience, and report what is implied in it. What is called Speculative Theology, which seeks to raise religious doctrine to a philosophical form by exercising a free criticism upon them, is better ranked with religious philosophy.

The significance of theology in relation to religion will be better appreciated if we indicate briefly the process by which it comes to birth and develops. Theology always presupposes the existence of a living religion, and religions which have advanced to a certain stage naturally produce theological doctrines. Theology is anticipated and prepared for by tendencies which exist in the early forms of religion. The centre of religion is the cults, and the primitive way of explaining the traditional acts done in the cults is to recite myths or legends about them.

Primarily religious doctrines are designed to set forth the values of religious experience; but in the higher stages of culture, theology seeks to invest religious beliefs with a degree of reasonableness. It strives to become a system whose parts cohere with and mutually support each other. From the nature of the case, theology cannot be philosophy. The theologian passes beyond the original view of his office, which was to report faithfully the working conceptions and values implied in a given religion. He seeks to unfold a world-view, based on religious postulates, but for which he also climes rationality. The motives that inspired this movement are not difficult to discern: the methods of explanation used in science and philosophy could not be altogether ignored by the theologian. Hence we find theology offering expiations of the nature of God, the certain and development of the world, and the origin of the man.

Theology is enter into some kind of organic relation with a philosophy of religion, and to prove a connecting link between faith and reason, the principle of authority which it invokes should be wider and more convincing than documentary evidences. In practice, it may be granted, it will sometimes be difficult to keep theology strictly apart from a philosophy of religion. For they deal with the same materials, and the exposition of the meaning of a theological dogma passes easily into a philosophical interpretation of it.

#### 8. What is the relation between Philosophy of Religion & Science?

Ans: The relation between religion and science has been a subject of study since classical period. The nature of the relation with these two is addressed by philosophers, theologians, scientists, and others. Perspectives from different geographical regions, cultures and historical epochs are diverse, with some characterizing the relationship as one of conflict, others describing it as one of harmony, and others proposing little interaction. The extent to which science and religion may attempt to understand and describe similar phenomena is sometimes referred to as a part of the demarcation problem. Science and religion generally pursue knowledge of the universe using different methodologies. Science

acknowledges reason, empiricism, and evidence, while religions include revelation, faith and sacredness.

Science and religion are fundamentally opposed in spirit. Science, it is said, is rational, while religion is purely matter of faith: the one draws sober inferences from facts, the other makes a venture on trust. Though this description is not entirely wrong, but it is an exaggeration about the relation between religion and science. Faith and reason are not to be sharply separated and opposed in this fashion; religion is not anti-rational, and science itself involves faith. We conclude, therefore that neither in its method nor its temper is science necessarily hostile to religion; and if science is not anti-religious neither is religion antiscientific. An abiding conflict between religion and science is impossible, unless, indeed, the human mind is in some inexplicable fashion at discords with itself.

#### 9. Define Theology.

Ans: The word theology, used to denote, the theory of religious belief. In its nature a theology is an articulated system of religious beliefs or doctrines which has been developed from historical religions.

#### 10. Define Morality.

Ans: Morality is a system or set of ideas about right vs. wrong and good vs. evil behavior; it is subjective rather than objective, and is part of the philosophical study of ethics. Throughout history, philosophers and scholars have explored ethics and morality and understood and practiced in specific social contexts.

#### 11. What is the relation between Philosophy of Religion & Morality?

Ans: There are many types of religious values. Frameworks such as utilitarianism, humanism, and others with secular values work together with religion. Modern monotheistic religions define what's right and wrong by the rules and laws set forth by their gods, which their respective religious leaders interpret within the respective faith, such as Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Polytheistic religious traditions are less absolute. In Buddhism, the individual's intentions and circumstances determine whether an action is right or wrong.

The Christian Ethics Dictionary of Westminster (Modern Source) says: Religion and morality are the same or cannot be separated from the thoughts of most religious people; for them, either morality is a section in their religion or religion is morality. While others are non-religious, religion and morality are distinct and separable; religion may have moral or do not have moral. Some people find religion and morality to be separable and different. The relationship between religion and morality is also important for questions of practical moral decision. Religious ethical systems have often been developed with an eye to their 'preachability', which means that religious ethicists have a long record of attempting to relate theory to practice in moral discussion. The ability of a moral system to provide practical guidance is especially important during times of extensive moral confusion.

## Unit II

### Metaphysical Theories of Religion: Monotheism, Deism, Pantheism, Marxism, Agnosticism

#### 1. Define Deism.

**Ans.** This theory states that God is existing apart from the world. He is completely external or transcendent of the world. The term has originated from the Latin word “Deus” which means that God creates the world and after its creation denies the possibility of any relation between God and Man.

#### 2. Define Atheism.

**Ans:** Atheism means that either there is no God, or if there is, He cannot in any way affect human existence. The atheistic conception is that the questions that formally were answered in terms of God can now be answered in terms of scientific knowledge.

#### 3. Explain with criticism Deism.

**Ans:** This theory states that God is existing apart from the world. He is completely external or transcendent of the world. The term has originated from the Latin word “Deus” which means that God creates the world and after its creation denies the possibility of any relation between God and Man.

Deists believed that God is the *cause sui*, first cause of the universe, who created the world out of nothing, by His will at a particular time. After creation the world runs independent of Him with these secondary causes viz., wills, forces and energy.

God also performs the functions of a protector and creator of the world. God exists beyond time and space. The deistic conception of God is that the world of ours is an independent reality outside of God and that the wills of men enjoy absolute freedom. However on certain occasions world depends on Him and His interference is necessary.

Relation between God and the world is indicated by this theory on the analogy of the watchmaker and the watch he makes. The relation of the watchmaker with the watch ends when it has been finally made. Just in the same way all relations of God with his creation end when he has finished making the world. This theory was supported by the Western philosophers i.e. John Toland, Mathew Tingal and Thomas Chubb during the 16th and 17th centuries. However, it is not a sound theory and is not accepted by all.

### Criticism

- i. It is difficult to understand the time and the purpose of creation. God created this world in a particular time according to deism. But we cannot determine the time and purpose of His creation.
- ii. Deism states that God has created this universe out of nothing, which is logically inconsistent. Logic says out of nothing, nothing comes.

iii. It involves a dualism between God and the world. It is not clearly stated whether God is real or the world is real. Both cannot be real at the same time.

iv. It is logically unsound because some philosophers state that God is independent and free from the world. Again according to some it is the world which is completely independent and free.

v. It does not say the relation between God and the world. If one is infinite and real and other is finite and unreal, then how can there is relation?

vi. Further God, after creating the world, leaves it alone with the secondary causes. Thus God is external and out of the world. This creates difficulties in the religious attitude of man. It is spiritually inadequate too.

#### 4. Define Pantheism.

Ans: Pantheism comes from Greek terms 'Pan' which means all and 'Theos' which means God. So literally its meaning is that all is God. More commonly it means that the world is God, and God is the world. This theory is opposed to deism and it is a reaction against it. It conceives God as absolutely immanent in the world.

#### 5. Explain with criticism Pantheism.

Ans: Pantheism regards God and the world as necessarily coexisting and immanently present in all that makes up the world; God without world being a substance without quality and world without God being an absolute nullity. Everything, every event, every mind and every mental function, all are God and nothing else. Not only that God is present in all existence, but He is the sole reality. If God is the only one and the only reality, and there is nothing other than God, the whole multiplicity is reduced to an unreal appearance.

According to Spinoza, God is Substance and Substance is God. This Substance is one absolute spiritual reality. Like Spinoza Hegelian form of Idealism is Pantheistic in character. Hegel considers Reality as the Absolute mind or Will. Nothing falls outside the Absolute and everything is the Absolute. God is infinite and omnipresent. This theory is related with the Upanishadic saying "*aham Brahmasmi*" and "*sarvam khalavidam Brahma*".

The world, like God is without beginning, limited neither by time nor by space. Hence we can observe the principle of Vishishtadvaita of Ramanuja. God is coextensive with the universe.

#### **Criticism**

i. If God is real and infinite then world cannot be real. When world is finite and temporary then how can we say God is the world and world is the God. World and God cannot be identical.

ii. If we believe that all is God and God is all, then there would not be the problem of evils in the world. If He is in the world then He having some evils and defects. And no one would be responsible for His acts.

iii. According to Pantheism if God is immanent and if He is within this world, then how can God be real, eternal and infinite? All these are not explained in the theory.

- iv. This theory overlooks the distinction between cause and effect which is a logical mistake.
- v. Pantheism says that God is real and independent. It implies that finite self has no independence and freedom. This provides a blow to morality and the nature of the self.
- vi. Lastly this theory creates religious difficulties in the society. In Pantheism God is not a personal Being. So also man is not having distinct personality of his own for religious activities. Thus it is not a satisfactory and sound theory.

#### 6. Define Monotheism.

Ans: Monotheism (one – God – ism) is the belief that there is but one supreme Being, who is personal and moral and who seeks a total and unqualified response from human creatures. This idea first came to fully effective human consciousness in the words, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” As these historic words indicate, the Semitic understanding of God, continued in Christianity and Islam, is emphatically monotheistic.

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The Hebrew Scriptures (which also constitute the “Old Testament” in the Christian Bible) document the rise of monotheism in constant but never fully resolved struggle with polytheism and henotheism. The God of the Hebrews was originally worshiped as a tribal god, Jahweh of Israel, over against such foreign deities as Dagon of the Philistines and Chemosh of the Moabites. But the insistent, though at first incredible, message of great prophets of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries before the Christian era (above all, Amos, Hosea, first Isaiah, Jeremiah, and second Isaiah) was that Jahweh was not only the God of the Hebrews but the Maker of heaven and earth and the Judge of all history and of all peoples. The Hebrew prophets taught that although God had indeed summoned their own nation to a special mission as the living medium of his revelation to the world, he was not only their God but also Lord of the gentiles or foreigners. A great biblical scholar said, “Hebrew monotheism arose through the intuitive perception that a God who is righteous first and last must be as universal as righteousness itself.” The service of such a God must involve a responsibility not only to fellow members of the same “household of faith” but to all one’s fellow creatures of every race and group.

It is a corollary of the prophets’ teaching concerning the lordship of God over all life that there is no special religious sphere set apart from the secular world but that the whole sweep

of human existence stands in relation to God. Thus religion is secularized, or – to put it another way – ordinary life takes on a religious meaning. In the words of H. Richard Niebuhr: The counterpart of this secularization, however, is the sanctification of all things. Now every day is the day that the Lord has made; every nation is a holy people called by him into existence in its place and time and to his glory; every person is sacred, made in his image and likeness; every living thing, on earth, in the heavens, and in the waters in his creation and points in its existence toward him; the whole earth is filled with his glory; the infinity of space is his temple where all creation is summoned to silence before him.

The difficulty involved in maintaining such a faith in practice, even within a culture that has been permeated for centuries by monotheistic teaching, is evidenced by the polytheistic and henotheistic elements in our own life. A religiously sensitive visitor from another planet would doubtless report that we divide our energies in the service of many deities – the god of money, of a business corporation, of success, and of power, the status gods, and (for a brief period once a week) the God of Judaic-Christian faith.

When we rise above this practical polytheism, it is generally into a henotheistic devotion to the nation, or to the American way of life, in order to enjoy our solidarity with an in-group against the out-groups. In this combination of elements there is no continuity with the pure monotheism of the prophets and of the New Testament, with its vivid awareness of God as the Lord of history whose gracious purpose embracing all life renders needless the frantic struggle to amass wealth, power, and prestige at the expense of others.

#### 8. Define Marxism.

Ans: Marxism approaches religion not as a set of true doctrines, but as a socio-economic product (or "superstructure") arising from, and reinforcing, the material conditions of an unequal society. While generally viewed as a critique of religion, Marxist views on religion also function as a form of "meta-religious" interpretation, analyzing the psychological and social functions of faith.

#### 9. Explain Marxism.

Ans: Marxism (a conflict theory) views society as upholding the capitalist values of the upper class (bourgeoisie) who own the means of labour, with social institutions built on cementing this ideology in the working class (proletariat), who are exploited, to prevent uprising or revolt. However, Karl Marx predicts that at some point in the future, workers will realise their exploitation and overthrow the upper class to create an equal, classless, communist society. Religion is used as an instrument of oppression by the ruling class, but a coping mechanism by the working class. Religion is a conservative force, by that it means to keep things the same, maintain the status quo or prevent change.

Marx argues religion exploits the proletariat and maintains the social class divide to keep the bourgeoisie in power. Religion is an ideological weapon, a drug to distort our perception and impair the chances of a revolution. Naming it the 'opium of the people'. It is used to justify inequality and suffering as inevitable or even virtuous. Such ideas create a 'false consciousness' – a distorted view of reality that prevents the poor from acting to change their situation.

Marx (1844) sees religion as a product of alienation, where we become separated from or lose control over something that one has produced or created. Under capitalism, workers are alienated as they do not own what they produce and have no control over the production process. Therefore, they use religion as a form of consolation, or linking to Lenin's definition, as an opiate to dull the pain of exploitation. Masking the pain, rather than preventing the cause (the ruling class's exploitation of the working class), distracting away from revolution.

10. Define Agnosticism.

Ans: Agnosticism is the philosophical view that the existence of God, the divine, or the supernatural is unknown or inherently unknowable.

11. Explain Agnosticism.

Ans: Agnosticism, (from Greek *agnōstos*, "unknowable"), strictly speaking, the doctrine that humans cannot know of the existence of anything beyond the phenomena of their experience. The term has come to be equated in popular parlance with skepticism about religious questions in general and in particular with the rejection of traditional Christian beliefs under the impact of modern scientific thought.

The word agnosticism was first publicly coined in 1869 at a meeting of the Metaphysical Society in London by T.H. Huxley, a British biologist and champion of the Darwinian theory of evolution.

Huxley's statement brings out both the fact that agnosticism has something to do with not knowing, and that this not knowing refers particularly to the sphere of religious doctrine. Etymology, however, and now common usage, do permit less limited uses of the term.

The essence of Huxley's agnosticism—and his statement, as the inventor of the term, must be peculiarly authoritative—was not a profession of total ignorance, nor even of total ignorance within one special but very large sphere. It is the same principle as that later proclaimed in an essay on "The Ethics of Belief" (1876) by the British mathematician and philosopher of science. Applied by Huxley to fundamental Christian claims, this principle yields characteristically skeptical conclusions: speaking, for example, of the apocrypha (ancient scriptural writings excluded from the biblical canon).

Agnosticism in its primary reference is commonly contrasted with atheism thus: "The Atheist asserts that there is no God, whereas the Agnostic maintains only that he does not know." This distinction, however, is in two respects misleading: first, Huxley himself certainly rejected as outright false—rather than as not known to be true or false—many widely popular views about God, his providence, and man's posthumous destiny; and second, if this were the crucial distinction, agnosticism would for almost all practical purposes be the same as atheism. It was indeed on this misunderstanding that Huxley and his associates were attacked both by enthusiastic Christian polemicists and by Friedrich Engels, the co-worker of Karl Marx, as "shame-faced atheists," a description that is perfectly applicable to many of those who nowadays adopt the more comfortable label.

Agnosticism, moreover, is not the same as skepticism, which, in the comprehensive and classical form epitomized by the ancient Greek skeptic Sextus Empiricus (2nd and 3rd

centuries ce), confidently challenges not merely religious or metaphysical knowledge but all knowledge claims that venture beyond immediate experience. Agnosticism is, as skepticism surely could not be, compatible with the approach of positivism, which emphasizes the achievements and possibilities of natural and social science—though most agnostics, including Huxley, have nonetheless harboured reserves about the more authoritarian and eccentric features of the system of Auguste Comte, the 19th-century founder of positivism.

### Unit III

#### Theories of the Origin of Religion : Anthropological and Psychological

#### Immortality of Soul

##### 1. What do you mean by theories of origin of religion?

Ans: In the secular-based theories of the origin of religion the thinkers consider religion as an empirical entity that can be traced historically and mapped geographically. All the religions are human creations whose history is part of the wider history of human culture. They trace the development of the concept of a religion as a clear and bounded historical phenomenon. There is speculation that the first religions were a response to human fear. They were created to give people a feeling of security in an insecure world, and a feeling of control over the environment where there was little control. There are different theories, e.g. naturalistic, anthropological, psychological, sociological and sociopolitical theories of the origin of religion.

##### 2. Define Anthropological theory of the origin of religion.

Ans: The naturalistic interpretation of religion gained support from the developing science of anthropology. The ideas of Edward Burnett Tylor inspired other thinkers like James George Frazer and Salomon Reinach to formulate the anthropological theory of the origin of religion. Tylor makes two assumptions. (1) human culture – including knowledge, art, religion, customs and the like – has its laws which can be studied scientifically. Like in nature, in culture too we can find the uniform action of uniform causes. (2) the various grades of culture found in the human race can be exhibited as stages in a process of development or evolution. Another idea to which he draws our attention is the phenomenon of ‘survival’. An idea or a custom, once it has got established, tends to persist, and it may continue on into later stages of culture where it has become meaningless.

##### 3. Explain Anthropological theory of the origin of religion.

Ans: Edward Burnett Tylor’s main contribution was his theory of “animism” i.e. the belief in spiritual beings. Confronted with the phenomena such as death, sleep, dreams etc., primitive man accounted for them in terms of a spirit separable from the body. He believed in other spirits throughout all nature, some of these spirits having the rank of powerful deities. Since these spirits were supposed to control events and to affect human lives, it was natural that men should revere them and seek to propitiate them. According to him here we have the beginnings of religion, with the belief in spiritual beings as its minimal condition.

The higher religions have developed out of the matrix of primitive animism. The superiority of the higher religions consists in their moral ideas, which are almost entirely lacking in primitive religion and these moral ideas have turned out to be the abiding fruit of animism.

According to James George Frazer we can distinguish three stages in the mental development of mankind magic, religion and science and each of these do not follow one another in a clear-cut succession. At the magical level man depends on his own strength to overcome the difficulties that trouble him in his attempt to gain the ends. He believes that there exists a certain order of nature which he thinks he can learn and manipulate by occult means. But experience teaches him that he is mistaken and there he turns to religion. In religion man no longer relies on himself but seeks the help of invisible beings. He believes that these beings possess that power to control natural events which magic failed to gain. The religious attitude supposes that there is some elasticity in the course of nature, but experience teaches man that man is mistaken again. The rigid uniformity of nature is discovered, and religion, regarded as an explanation of nature, is displaced by science. In science man reverts to the self-reliance but not through occult means but by through the rational methods.

Salomon Reinach, defines religion as a sum of scruples which hinder the free exercise of our faculties. With this definition he wanted to eliminate from religion the concept of God, spiritual beings, and the infinite. These scruples have arisen from the irrational taboos of primitive societies where they were associated with an animistic view of the world. Those scruples which have proved useful have persisted, and have tended to be transformed into rational rules of conduct and those which have shown no such usefulness have sunk into the background. Thus human progress has taken place through the gradual secularizing of elements which were originally all enveloped in the sphere of animistic beliefs. This process has taken place not only in the transformation of taboos into moral rules but also in the development of science out of magic. Religion was the very life of nascent societies, and out of it has come our civilizations. He visualizes further progress in the direction of education and the extension of the rational outlook.

#### 4. Define Psychological theory of the origin of religion.

Ans: The naturalistic interpretation of religion received further stimulus from the development of the psychology of religion. The main proponent of this theory is Sigmund Freud. According to Leuba the reason for the existence of religion is not the objective truth of its conceptions, but its biological value. The inner experience instead of establishing the existence of a personal God show how belief in such a God has arisen from the gratification it provides for affective and moral needs. He pays special attention to mystical experience which is considered as the pinnacle of religious experience of God. He tries to explain it in psychological and physiological terms.

#### 5. Critically explain Psychological theory of the origin of religion.

Ans: Sigmund Freud, the originator of psychoanalysis, regarded religious beliefs as illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strongest, and most insistent wishes of mankind. He

considered religion as a mental defense against the more threatening aspects of nature – earthquake, flood storm, disease and inevitable death. However, human imagination transforms these forces into mysterious personal powers. Impersonal forces remain eternally remote. But if the elements have passions that rage as they do in our souls, if everywhere in nature there are beings around us of a kind that we know in our own society, then we can breathe freely, can feel at home in the uncanny and can deal by psychical means with our senseless anxiety. We can apply the same methods against these violent supermen outside that we employ in our own society. We can try to adjure them, to appease them to bribe them, and, by so influencing them, we may rob them of part of their power.

Freud supposes that the primitive times human beings lived in small groups, each under the domination of a father who possessed all the females. The sons were driven out or killed as they excited the father's jealousy. But they grouped together and killed the father, and partook of his flesh so as to share in his power. This was the primal crime, the parricide that has set up tensions within the human psyche out of which have developed moral inhibitions, totemism, and the other phenomena of religion. Having slain their father, the brothers are struck with remorse, at least of a prudential kind. They also find that they cannot all succeed to his position and that there is a continuing need for restraint. The dead father's prohibition accordingly takes on a new (moral) authority as a taboo against incest. This association of religion with the Oedipus complex, which is renewed in each individual, is held to account for the mysterious authority of God in the human mind and the powerful guilt feelings which make men submit to such a phantasy. Religion is thus the return of the repressed. The idea of God is the magnified version of the image of the human father.

The psychology is a most valuable study, but it does not and indeed cannot be determinative for the validity of religion. We tend to believe what we want to believe. Yet psychological criticism of belief can be carried only so far or it ends up in skepticism which engulfs the psychologists himself, and makes rational arguments impossible. Freud by tracing the history of the idea of God in the projecting of the father figure, he discredits belief in God. But his theory is not applicable to religion in general. But only to those religions which recognize some kind of 'Father God'. Even if men think of God in terms of father figure, they use it in the analogical language. The question whether this analogue stands for any reality, or if it does so, worthily represents it, is one which the psychoanalysis fails to give an answer.

6. What do you mean by immortality of soul?

Ans: The belief in life after death, which is maintained by each of the Abrahamic religions, raises the metaphysical question of how the human person is to be defined. Some form of mind-body dualism, whether Platonic or Cartesian, in which the mind or soul survives the death of the body, has been favoured by many theologians. Others have claimed that some version of physicalism or materialism is most consistent with scriptural ideas about the resurrection of the body. The former group has a tendency to disparage or downplay the importance of embodiment; the latter group, however, faces the problem of giving an account of the continuity of the person across the temporal gap between bodily death and bodily resurrection.

7. Explain the concept of immortality of soul.

Ans: "Atman is immortal." \_Gita. In the age of science people enjoy all the pleasures of life, make the best use of everything and do not think what will happen after death. During the short span of our life on earth, some of our hopes and aspirations are unfulfilled. Again and again it has been asked, why the human beings live for some time, fulfill certain desires, perform marvelous deeds, display some wonderful power, and unexpectedly pass away being forced, as it were, to leave their plans and projects of their lives half finished and half fulfilled? No one desires his end to come early. Rather since attempts to provide long and healthy life to people. It is stated that "Art is long, Life is short" and during the short span of life one cannot fulfill his desires. Therefore the idea of immortality has been an ever-haunting desire for humanity. Scientists, philosophers and the logicians have all put their heads together to solve the mystery of death and immortality. In other words man's desire for immortality is a genuine one.

Ordinarily we understand the immortality of soul, which can remain forever and can enjoy material goods and experiences or it can get liberation. The existence of matter and the existence of knowledge depend upon the consciousness of the soul. If the soul continues to exist, what will become of it afterwards, and what will be its destiny? Modern science does not help us in answering this question. It is too deep, because the question of immortality is a very difficult problem for a common man. The actual meaning of the immortality of soul lies in the Bhagavad- Gita which says that Atman is eternal, divine, changeless and everlasting one. Certain arguments have been offered to justify our belief in the immortality of soul, but these cannot be considered as proofs in any sense.

#### Unit IV

Arguments for the existence of God : Ontological, Cosmological, Teleological and Moral

1. Define Teleological Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: The teleological or design argument is very ancient one. It perhaps has its earliest roots in the thought of Plato, who argued that the physical universe is unintelligible apart from mind. It states that God is an intelligent designer of evolution; it is observed that there is a purpose or an end in the natural order. This universe has a purpose which governs the world. Where there is purpose, there must be a proposer. So also where there is design there must be a designer. But who is that designer? What is the nature of that designer? These are the questions discussed under the Teleological Proof for the existence of God.

2. Define Cosmological Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: The cosmological or casual argument proceeds from the idea of the world as effect to God as its first cause. In the widest sense of the term, any theistic argument that proceeds from the world to God can be described as cosmological, including the design argument. It states that everything has a cause. If this is accepted as per the law of causation, then the

universe itself must have a cause. That cause is God. Therefore, God exists. Hence God must be the Infinite First Cause of the Cosmos.

3. Define Ontological Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: The ontological argument attempts to prove the existence of God from the ideas or human experience. This argument was first put forth by St. Anselm, a mediaeval philosopher. Anselm said that we have an idea of perfect being, and that this is what we mean by God.

4. Define Moral Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: The Moral Proof (or argument) for the existence of God contends that the presence of objective moral values and duties—standards that are binding regardless of personal opinion—necessitates a moral lawgiver, which is God. It posits that objective morality cannot exist through naturalism alone, making God the best explanation for human moral awareness.

5. Explain Teleological Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: The teleological or design argument is very ancient one. It perhaps has its earliest roots in the thought of Plato, who argued that the physical universe is unintelligible apart from mind. This argument attempts to prove the existence of God by empirical means. It states that God is an intelligent designer of evolution; it is observed that there is a purpose or an end in the natural order. This universe has a purpose which governs the world. Where there is purpose, there must be a proposer. So also where there is design there must be a designer. But who is that designer? What is the nature of that designer?

The universe is not mere aggregate of events, but is an organized whole, in which there is order, harmony and discipline. This implies that there must be a supreme intelligent and wise designer who has created the universe. That supreme cosmic designer can only be God and nothing else.

Further instances can be given: there is orderly design which prevails the entire phenomenal world. Millions of stars in the heaven behave in an orderly manner. There are thousands of nerve cells functioning properly in the complex living organism. So also there is order in the life of plants and animals. The above instances imply the existence of a wise designer of the world.

Paley's analogy of watch conveys the essence of the argument. Paley argues that the world is a complex mechanism, which is being designed by a supreme designer and that designer is God. David Hume's in his "Dialogues on Natural Religion" claim of the argument from design is that the world, being a great machine, runs orderly and perfectly. In case of human achievements, such as watches and houses, the cause is thought, wisdom and intelligence. Therefore, there must be some kind of intelligent deity who is the author or cause of the effects in the universe. That is God who has planned all the objects carefully.

However, there are some objections raised against this Argument. The design argument conceives the relation between God and the world in the manner of the relation between a human being and a machine. Both human being and machine are objective phenomena and

they are temporary, finite and limited. In the same manner if God is the designer like the watchmaker there He is also limited by the world. Kant pointed out that the design argument proves the existence of a contriver or architect of the world, not its creator and this designer is limited by the world. To overcome these difficulties theology has been conceived as immanent and not as transcendent. It is not that God remains outside the materials supplied to him. He is not the outward contriver but the indwelling shaper of things according to some definite plan and design.

6. Explain Cosmological Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: The cosmological or casual argument proceeds from the idea of the world as effect to God as its first cause. In the widest sense of the term, any theistic argument that proceeds from the world to God can be described as cosmological, including the design argument. Those who believe that God is the first cause of the universe must determine the nature of that first cause. Is God the efficient or the material cause? Perhaps He is both efficient and the material cause of the universe.

This first cause of creation is the 'First Mover' or the Prime Mover, according to Aristotle. It states that everything has a cause. If this is accepted as per the law of causation, then the universe itself must have a cause. That cause is God. Therefore, God exists. Hence God must be the Infinite First Cause of the Cosmos.

This argument too has some limitations. It is difficult to relate God with the finite causal series. This means that God being an effect must have a cause. If He is beyond the casual chains then it is impossible to find any relation between Him and His creation.

According to law of causation everything has a cause, and if that is true, then God must have a cause. And if God does not have a cause, then it is not true that everything has a cause. We know that there are two causes – material and efficient – which are necessary for the production of things. In the case of pot, the potter is the efficient and the earth is the material cause, according to Aristotle. If we say that God is the efficient or instrumental cause of the universe, then it would have been impossible for Him to create without the help of the material cause or matter. If, on the contrary, the material cause be meant by First Cause, then He must have gone through all changes of evolution like the finite things of the world.

7. Explain Ontological Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: The ontological argument attempts to prove the existence of God from the ideas or human experience. This argument was first put forth by St. Anselm, a mediaeval philosopher. Anselm said that we have an idea of perfect being, and that this is what we mean by God. The argument proceeds as follows: "God is a being than which no greater can be conceived." Now we have the idea of such a being. If he did not exist, He would not be as great as if He did exist, and by definition He is the greatest being that can be conceived. Therefore, such a being exists.

It is clear that by 'greater' Anselm means more perfect, and the highest and the supreme. Instead of describing God as the most perfect being that there is, Anselm describes God as the being who is so perfect that no more perfect can even be conceived.

In the ontological argument Anselm pointed out that the most perfect conceivable being must exist in reality as well as in the mind. He said that the God is a necessary existence, so it is impossible to conceive of Him not existing. For something can be thought to exist that cannot be thought not to exist.

Descartes made some changes in this argument. He said that God must be the cause of this idea of an all perfect Being. Perfection means to him the attributes, power, goodness, knowledge and also existence. Hence anything less than God cannot be the cause of such an idea, which according to Descartes, is an innate idea.

Kant made seven criticisms to this argument. According to him we cannot reduce the reality of anything from a mere idea of it. But if a thing is to exist it must be given in experience. This ontological argument ignores the proper distinction between thought and existence. Kant points out that from the idea of one hundred dollars in my mind I cannot prove their existence in my pocket. In the same way, we have the idea of God in our mind, it does not follow that, therefore, God really exists.

#### 8. Explain Moral Proof for the existence of God.

Ans: Moral arguments for God's existence form a diverse family of arguments that reason from some feature of morality or the moral life to the existence of God, usually understood as a morally good creator of the universe. Moral arguments are both important and interesting. They are interesting because evaluating their soundness requires attention to practically every important philosophical issue dealt with in metaethics. They are important because of their prominence in popular apologetic arguments for religious belief. Evidence for this can be found in the amazing popularity of C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*, which is almost certainly the best-selling book of apologetics in the twentieth century, and which begins with a moral argument for God's existence. Many ordinary people regard religion as in some way providing a basis or foundation for morality. This fact might seem to favor religious arguments for morality rather than moral arguments for religious belief, but if someone believes that morality is in some way "objective" or "real," and that this moral reality requires explanation, moral arguments for God's reality naturally suggest themselves. The apparent connection between morality and religion appears to many people to support the claim that moral truths require a religious foundation, or can best be explained by God's existence, or some qualities or actions of God.

After some general comments about theistic arguments and a brief history of moral arguments, this essay will discuss several different forms of the moral argument. A major distinction is that between moral arguments that are theoretical in nature and practical or pragmatic arguments. The former are best thought of as arguments that begin with alleged moral facts and argue that God is necessary to explain those facts, or at least that God provides a better explanation of them than secular accounts can offer. The latter typically begin with claims about some good or end that morality requires and argue that this end is not attainable unless God exists. Whether this distinction is hard and fast will be one of the questions to be discussed, as some argue that practical arguments by themselves cannot be the basis of rational belief.

## Unit V

### Problem of Evil, Faith, Reason and Revelation, Mysticism

#### 1. What is Problem of Evil?

Ans: It is believed that the world is created by God. It is natural to ask how evil entered the world if it has been created by a benevolent power. If evil was present before the world was created then God is limited by its presence. If God is all-wise and benevolent why should such a God allow evils, both physical and moral, to happen in his creation? It may be that although He is absolutely good and wise, yet He is limited in power to prevent evils. Or it may be that He is all- powerful, allwise and all-good, yet He was instituted evils into His world only to teach mankind to be morally good by way of warning. If God is infinitely good how shall we explain all the pain and evil, all the sin and sorrow and suffering and all the thwarted plans and disappointed hopes which are evident everywhere?

#### 2. How many kinds of evil are there? What are they? Explain.

Ans: There are three kinds of evil. They are called, (i) metaphysical evils; (ii) Physical or mental evils; and (iii) moral evils.

Metaphysical Evil: the metaphysical evil is called the natural evil. It is independent of human volition. It depends upon the operation of the laws of nature. Earthquakes, cyclones, drought, hurricanes, famine and flood, etc. are natural calamities which are treated as metaphysical evils. They bring misery and distress to mankind. All these evils are beyond our control. However, scientists are making attempts to check these evils.

Physical or Mental Evil: All physical and mental suffering and pain are included in this form of evil. One has to experience suffering and pain. Man with flesh and blood will certainly suffer due to physical and mental elements. Physical deceases and decay cannot abolish altogether from our body. Mental anxiety, sorrow, excitement, tension, uproar, etc. create mental evil in the mind of a person. Physical and mental evils are being checked and suppressed by science. Physical evils have ceased to be source of suffering and have turned into founts of fortune and felicity.

Moral Evil: Moral evils are no less real, and demand much more acute analysis at the present stage of social evolution. Moral evil is a direct consequence of man's free will. It consists in the violation of moral laws. Moral evils are sin and wickedness, etc. The problem of moral evil is created by men and so it must be solved by men. The movement towards moral perfection is not an automatic process.

#### 3. Define Revelation.

Ans: Revelation is the revealing or disclosing of some form of truth or knowledge through communication with a deity or other supernatural entity or entities. This is an act of divine or supernatural disclosure to humans of something relating to human existence.

#### 4. Define Faith.

**Ans:** Faith is confidence or trust in a person or thing, deity, in the doctrines or teachings of a religion, or view (e.g. having strong political faith) even without empirical evidence. It can also be belief that is not based on proof or as confidence based upon varying degrees of evidential warrant.

#### 5. Define Mysticism.

**Ans:** Mysticism, a doctrine or discipline maintaining that one can gain knowledge of reality that is not accessible to sense perception or to rational, conceptual thought. Generally associated with a religious tradition, mysticism can take a theistic form, as it has in Jewish, Christian and Islamic tradition, or a non-theistic form, as it has in Buddhism and some varieties of Hinduism.

The term 'mysticism,' comes from the Greek *mystikos* meaning "to conceal." In the Hellenistic world, 'mystical' referred to "secret" religious rituals. In early Christianity the term came to refer to "hidden" allegorical interpretations of Scriptures and to hidden presences, such as that of Jesus at the Eucharist. Only later did the term begin to denote "mystical theology," that included direct experience of the divine. Typically, mystics, theistic or not, see their mystical experience as part of a larger undertaking aimed at human transformation and not as the terminus of their efforts. Thus, in general, 'mysticism' would best be thought of as a constellation of distinctive practices, discourses, texts, institutions, traditions, and experiences aimed at human transformation, variously defined in different traditions.

#### 6. What are the different categories of Mystical and religious experiences ?

**Ans:** Mystical and religious experiences can be classified in various ways, in addition to the built-in difference between mystical super sense-perceptual and sub sense-perceptual experiences. This section notes some common classifications.

**Extroversive and Introversive:** When any experience includes sense-perceptual, somatosensory, or introspective content, we may say it is an extroversive experience. There are, then, mystical extroversive experiences, as in one's mystical consciousness of the unity of nature overlaid onto one's sense perception of the world, as well as non-unitive numinous extroversive experiences, as when experiencing God's presence when gazing at a snowflake. Sometimes, the term "extroversive" is reserved for experiences that pertain to a perceived character of the natural world with no added phenomenological data. When not extroversive, we may say an experience is introversive. An experience of "nothingness" or "emptiness," in some mystical traditions, and an experience of God resulting from a disengagement from sense experience, would be examples of introversive experiences.

**Theistic and non-theistic:** A favorite distinction of Western philosophers is between theistic experiences, which are purportedly of God, and non-theistic ones. Non-theistic experiences can be allegedly of an ultimate reality other than God or of no reality at all. Numinous theistic experiences are dualistic, where God and the subject remain clearly distinct, while theistic mysticism pertains to some sort of union or else identity with God.

**Union with God:** “Union” with God signifies a rich family of experiences rather than a single experience. “Union” involves a falling away of the separation between a person and God, short of identity. Christian mystics have variously described union with the Divine. Generally, medieval Christian mysticism had at least three stages, variously described, in the union- consciousness: quiet, essentially a prelude to the union with God, full union, and rapture, the latter involving a feeling of being “carried away” beyond oneself.

**Identity with God:** Theistic mystics sometimes speak as though they have a consciousness of being fully absorbed into or even identical with God.

7. What do you mean by reason and revelation?

Ans: Reason and revelation represent two distinct sources of knowledge: human intellect or observation and divine disclosure. Reason involves logic, experience, and scientific inquiry, while revelation is truth transmitted through sacred texts and prophetic sources. They often interact in theology and philosophy, sometimes acting as complementary tools for understanding reality, and at other times, posing conflicts that prioritize either faith or human logic.

8. What is Reason?

Ans: The reason is to actively use logic by drawing inferences from new or existing knowledge to discover the truth. It is strongly related to uniquely human activities, such as philosophy, science, language, mathematics, and art, and is often seen as a distinctive human skill. The reasoning is linked to the activities of thinking and cognition, and it entails using one’s mind. The study of how people may utilise formal reasoning to construct logically correct arguments is known as logic. In conclusion, reasoning, like habit or intuition, is one of the methods for moving from one notion to another.

9. What a note on Faith.

Ans: Faith is a broad phrase used in various contexts to communicate a variety of ideas. At its most basic level, ‘faith’ is synonymous with ‘trust.’ When people cannot see or touch anything when God’s work does not correspond with human concepts when it is beyond human reach, faith is the real belief and sincere heart that humans should possess. This is the faith we are referring to. People require faith through adversity and refinement, and faith comes after refining; refinement and faith are inextricably linked.

10. Are Religion and Faith Interconnected?

Ans: In the context of religion, faith may be described as “belief in God or the principles or teachings of religion.” Faith is generally thought of as confidence based on a perceived degree of the warrant by religious people. Yet, faith is often thought of as belief without proof by non-religious people.

Faith and religion somewhere have some differences:

- i. Complete trust and confidence in something or someone are defined as faith. Religion refers to a set of beliefs or practices, frequently accompanied by a set of ethical and philosophical principles.
- ii. Faith is a personal experience. Religion is an activity or expression that takes place from outside the person.
- iii. Many religions are founded on faith. Without faith, religion cannot exist or expand.
- iv. Faith is an illogical concept that is difficult to articulate and convey to others. Religion is a way for people to communicate their religious beliefs.
- v. Religion is founded on faith, yet religion is not necessarily founded on faith. Some individuals begin attending church or performing religious rituals because their social and cultural milieu influences them rather than because they are inspired by faith and trust. On the other hand, faith may drive some individuals to religion, but it cannot be coerced or forced onto one person by societal and cultural dogmas.
- vi. The notions of faith and religion are inextricably intertwined, as is the concept of spirituality. While faith is a personal and individualistic emotion connected with trust and belief that might be difficult to describe, religion offers the means to communicate what is ultimately inexpressible. Even though the globe is home to hundreds of different faiths, faith is universal, and people frequently utilise various religious traditions to communicate the same ideas. Religion is built on rituals, public services, art, music, history, structures, and locations, whereas faith is often experienced and expressed in a more private context.

The goal of faith is to believe in oneself and enable God to enter and govern one's life. Finding an indisputable truth is critical to your belief. Having reasons to guide us will assist us in answering our moral questions regarding what is good and evil. Revelation is vital for understanding God's things. God's things cannot be learned only via study and reasoning. Religion and faith sociology are important abstracts that people know about.

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