UNIT 8 : SOME BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANITY

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Christianity and its development

8.4 Christianity and its fundamental Characteristics

8.5 Christianity and the concept of Trinity

8.6 Let us sum up

8.7 Answers to check your progress

8.8 Further Readings

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8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the teachings of Jesus Christ on Christianity,
- Analyze Christianity as a missionary religion.
- Explain the fundamental characteristics of Christianity,
- Describe the concept of Trinity of Christianity.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Christianity owes its origin from Jesus Christ. It is believed that the life, teachings and death of Jesus Christ at a glance constitute the basic features of Christianity. Jesus was born in a Jewish family in 4 B.C. in the small town of Bethlehem. But his original home was in Nazareth in the province of Galilee. It is believed that Jesus was born miraculously of virgin mother, Mary and Joseph is accepted as the foster father. Jesus is considered as a Messiah. Prophet Isaiah explained the life of Jesus in Chapter 53 as a 'suffering servant of God'. Several sources like the Old Testament, the Apocryphal books of Enoch and Daniel have influenced the

teachings of Jesus. But you will find interesting to know that apart from all these sources, the Christians are inspired from 27 books which constitute the New Testament. The 'Bible' in Christianity means 'a collection of Books'. So accordingly the New Testament is divided into four gospels. These four gospels give a documentation of the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus. The first three gospels record the common contents. But the fourth Gospel is written by St. John. It is called as 'Johannine'. St John here gives vivid information about Jesus and Jesus being the Messiah and the Son of God. You have to be very careful while understanding the terms like 'son of man' or 'the son of God' in the context of religious language of more than two thousand years ago.

Christianity involves adherence to the teachings and Person of Christ. Christians believe that Christianity as a religion is complete and final revelation of God to men. Usually every Semitic religion acknowledges two fundamental features to be very important. They are viz.

1. The Founder as a man and
2. The teachings of the Founder

But in Christianity the life of Jesus is more important than his teachings. It is because the Christians 'hope for salvation only in and through Christ.' Christians consider that Christianity is the 'complete and final revelation of God'. To justify the record that Jesus is the Messiah or Lord's Anointed of ancient Hebrew prophecy, the term 'Christ' is used as the title for Jesus. The term 'Christ' is derived from the Greek word 'Christos'. Christos means Messiah. Therefore, the name 'Christian' is associated for the first time to the followers of Jesus of Nazareth at Antioch in Syria. It is recorded that Christianity from the time of its inception is very intimately related with Judaism.

In the Apostles' Creed the Divine Character and Life of Jesus is briefly described thus: "Jesus was the Only Son of God the Father, and was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell: the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth

at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead".

But there are certain controversies regarding the life of Jesus. Some believers of Christianity refuse to accept the life story as recorded in the Gospel. According to them, Jesus was not a historical character. Many others observe that Jesus was a man who tried to establish morality in the human mind. So, he was a moral reformist. The popular view is that 'Jesus was both son of man and Son of God, the Redeemer of Mankind and that he suffered crucifixion only to atone for the sins of mankind'. Thus you can observe that Christianity is a missionary religion. The vision of this religion is to revolutionize Judaism. Though the prophets of the Jews tried their best to give a universal religion and a religion of heart yet with the advent of time ritualistic and narrow minded spirit of the Jews people brought an eclipse in the original status of Judaism. The last words of Jesus follow just about the time of his ascension as:

'Go, then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples'. (Mt. 28.19)

In support of the missionary zeal of Jesus you will also find that the prophets have also refuted the ritual sacrifices and thus opined:

"The Lord says, 'I hate your religious festivals; I cannot stand them! ..... I will not accept the animals you have fattened to bring me as offerings'. Instead, let justice flow like a stream, and righteousness like a river that never goes dry. (Amos 5.21-24)

As a reaction against animal sacrifice of Judaism, Micah writes that God never allows animal sacrifice. To quote his words:

"What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God" (Micah 5.8)

Jesus therefore advocated and preached the spirit of universal brotherhood of man as sons of loving Father and He is called as God. Jesus preached the spirit of equality of all human beings before God.

Thus you will not find very strict theology or theological instructions in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus himself has worshipped in the Jewish Temples and Synagogues. He respected Jewish rites but vehemently

opposed all those ritualism which emphatically glorified the letter of the Law and not its spirit. Jesus glorified in optimum the principle of monotheism stating that God is one, holy, all-powerful and compassionate'. He strictly honoured the Fatherhood of God and emphasized that to have bliss and peace of mind we have to accept God as the Eternal Father. Jesus always inspired by preaching that just like a father loves every individual child instead by rule of law so also God who is our loving father and as such loves every individual unconditionally and not by any rule of laws. So ritualism never constitutes the nerve of Christianity.

8.3 CHRISTIANITY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

The religious teaching of Jesus Christ was furthermore developed by many other mystics, saints, critics and thinkers. It may be mentioned that the contribution of St Paul has an important and immediate influence on Christianity after Jesus. Many critics and theologians believe that St Paul (the greatest of Jesus' disciple) is credited to have shaped Christianity as a religion because Jesus only tried to be a reformer and attempted to teach the Jews his own conception of 'God as love'. You have to remember here that Jesus only tried his best to 'cleanse Judaism of the rubbish which clustered around it in course of time'. Thus he repeatedly asserted that his attitude is never of destruction of the old faith of the Jews but 'to fulfill the Law and the prophets'.

St Paul following Jesus propagated the teachings of his master with devotion. St Paul formulated and vividly explained the doctrine of Atonement. He honestly supported and introduced certain important principles independently in Christianity. St Paul conceived that the death of Jesus symbolizes a unique act of Divine Sacrifice for the sins of the world. You will therefore come to know that along with Jesus, St Paul also plays an important role in the growth and development of Christianity. But here you will be informed more with Jesus's interpretation of Christianity. Moreover you will find interesting to know that St Paul supports the paradigm that in order to relief mankind from their sinful actions God takes the responsibility

of sending his only begotten son to this world to be a willing victim of sacrifice in the name of 'God's love for mankind'. St Paul has also elaborated the doctrine of Trinity. This concept of Trinity explains that that the 'same godhead appears in three forms: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of Trinity holds that God is the Father. God represents Himself as the Creator. God being all powerful represents Himself as the Ultimate Source of everything. In this particular explanation it is also propounded that God as Son he was incarnated in Jesus and as Spirit he dwells in our hearts and in all creation. Christianity represents a Trinitarian religion. In this chapter you will come to know the fundamental characteristics of Christianity along with the concept of Trinity as propagated by Jesus Christ.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : Mention the fundamental feature of Christianity.

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Q 2 : Name the theologian who is credited to shape Christianity as a religion.

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Q 3 : Fill in the blanks :

a) Jesus was born in a …….…… family.

b) Jesus is considered as a ……

c)

8.4 BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANITY

The following are the basic tenets of Christianity:

1. Influence of Old Testament in Christianity

Along with Judaism Christianity also beholds that Old Testament is the revealed word of God. In addition to this view, Christianity observes that The New Testament is the final revelation of the words of God. Revelation of the words of God becomes possible with the culmination of the incarnation of God in the form of Jesus. Jesus here is believed to be residing still in heaven and still bestows the power of Holy Spirit upon man. Christianity propounds that God reveals His words in and through Jesus because according to Christianity Jesus is the one and only revelation. Jesus' revelation is the absolutely supreme and thus focuses on God's supreme manifestation of redeeming Love.

2. Christianity is monotheistic in nature.

Christianity is fundamentally monotheistic in nature. It believes in one and only one God. Though Christianity supports the concept of Trinity yet it in and out strictly follows the theological concept of only one God-head. God the Father, God the son, and the Holy Spirit therefore these three personifications of the single Godhead are reconciled into one and thus follow the concept of Christian monotheism. Christianity therefore advocates that the one supreme God is of the nature of a pure spirit. Though Christianity preaches of God having a personality but you must be careful in remembering that God here is not an ordinary personality. God is characterized as unlimited, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is regarded as eternal and His existence is necessary. Therefore, God exists and you cannot conceive His non-existence. God is eternal and so He is without beginning and end.

God is the creator and sustainer of this world. God being omnipotent has created the world out of nothing. God in Christianity is believed to be both immanent and transcendent. God is identified with all values of life like kindness, holy, benevolence and love. As such God is never a source of fear and finally sent Jesus as a redeemer of mankind. Therefore, Jesus is

accepted by the Christians as the concrete and living paradigm of God's love.

3. The analysis of the World in Christianity

Christianity supports creation as a Divine Act God and follows 'ex nihilo'. God is the creator of this world, sustainer and finally the world is maintained by God Himself. The nature of the world can never be eternal as the world is ultimately dependent on God. This world is contingent. According to Christianity the contingent effect of the world is real and therefore it makes this world a place for living experiences of human-being and beholding universal brotherhood. The world will cease to exist if God does not sustain and maintain it. The world is evolved with all intrinsic values because God the benevolent and the loving Father had created it. "And God saw the things that he had made, and they were very good."

Christian Genesis (Chapter 2), narrates the creation of Adam and Eve along with other human beings. According to a myth God created the Universe and man out of nothing to justify that God is omnipotent. Consequently it is believed that God created everything out of nothing. Christianity beholds that 'besides God nothing can be co-existent with God'. To quote Bible 'The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the power of God was moving over the water'. (Gen. 1.2). According to Christianity creation is a myth. Hence you cannot raise philosophical questions related with the theory of creation. In Christianity even 'A Creator God' is only a myth. The Bible supports here the creation as a myth and therefore you will find the explanation as: 'the world has been created by God and God takes care of what he has created. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's will (Matt. 5.2; Luke 12.25). And God was happy with His creation (Gen. 1.31).

You must remember here that in Christianity 'A Creator God' is only a myth. In order to justify the omnipotent nature of God, Christianity supports that God created everything out of nothing. Therefore, the world, with its space and time man and his final destiny depends on the will of God. That which is not created is therefore eternal. The Chapter 2 of Genesis, which is considered as the first book of the Bible narrates the creation of Adam

and Eve along with other creation of human beings. God and His Laws in Christianity are accepted as eternal and everlasting. Therefore, man has the potentiality to explore the 'secrets of nature'. It is here you can understand that while exploring the secrets of nature, Christian theology asserts that man through this activity actually can know the will and commandment of God. Bible allows scientific pursuits as nature itself is God's creation. God is revealed and glorified through nature and pursuit of science is considered as sacred. Nature is spiritualized by the intervention of God as a loving Father for the welfare of Human living and its growth and improvement. So it is stated that: 'Be as wise, as the father in heaven is'.

It must be clear enough that by encouraging the pursuit of science in exploring nature, Christianity is not supporting materialism. You will find rather the creation of myth of the Bible is teleological in nature. The world is sacred in nature and therefore the goal of human life is not merely to satisfy one's own individual selfish interest. The world is not prior for man where he lives and has his being. The world has only secondary value. Therefore man has to know God intimately and seek his righteousness and the kingdom of God. Jesus preached thus:

O men of little faith! Why do you worry about food and raiment? Birds do not sow seeds, nor do they harvest. Yet God takes care of them. …….. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things will be added to you. (Matt. 6. 12-21; 24-34).

The world is only a means for human living and the end is to establish the kingdom of God in this world. Thus it is stated:

Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust cannot. (Matt 6.19).

4. Man and salvation in Christianity

Christianity propounds that God created man in the final day of His creation. Accordingly man must strive for ethical holiness. You must understand here that Christianity develops a subtle distinction between the flesh and the spirit. The Christians hold that the Flesh is liable to sin more easily. As the flesh is easily liable to sin so the Fall of man in the Garden of

Eden is considered as the original sin and then and then after human beings are called sinners. But Christianity allows freedom to individual man (i.e. the flesh) in considering himself a sinner. The freedom to strive for holiness by identifying oneself with the Sacrifice of Christ allows the Flesh from the accountability of being a sinner. To make the individual free from the original sin Christianity encourages Grace from God. You have to remember here that Christianity is very emphatic in the tendency of human being in committing sin very easily. Thus the Christians depend on the need of 'Grace and sanctification for the redemption of mankind'. Christianity is not rigid in the concept of sin of the flesh. It creates a flexible attitude regarding the actualization of sin and also for a light of hope to strive for righteousness. Man is thus glorious in his potentialities. The flesh is easily liable to commit sin and on the other hand can even rise higher than the angles with the grace of God.

The concept of sin opens the door for salvation in Christianity. 'Salvation', 'Immortality', 'Life Eternal' and 'Redemption' are the words usually referred to give explanation on human destiny. It is holiness of life which assures man to lead a life free from sin. God the loving Father bestows his pure love to every individual and thus man rises above all sins. 'The Cross is the expression of that Love. God the Son affected the atonement or reconciliation of man by the supreme act of sacrifice love, and thus forever beacons all sinners to follow the path of love and thereby to attain salvation'. Though man has committed the original sin, yet he has the capacity and potentiality to overcome the original sin by surrendering himself to the Divine will of God. Man therefore strives for Divine goodness. The saying flows on thus :

When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places. What is man that you think of him: mere man that you (God) care for him? (Psalm 8.2-3).

5. An analysis of Life after death in Christianity

Christianity advocates the immortality of soul. Accordingly death is not the ultimate end of human life. This particular feature reflects that

there is life after death. To justify this view you have to take into consideration of three fundamental features. They are as follows, viz.

1. The Day of Judgment,
2. Resurrection of the Dead
3. The assignment of Heaven or Hell to human being according to the effect of actions in this earth.

The body gets destroyed with the death of the human life. But the soul survives. The Christians understand that with the final end of the world, there is resurrection of the dead. It is only God who being omniscient has the knowledge of the final end of the world along with the happening of resurrection of the dead. The Scripture justifies that the final end of the world will be followed on by re-arrival of Christ and he will finally judge all men. Here on Christ will preach the universal teachings of the Holy Gospel and will make religion free from all external disturbances. Thus you must understand here that at this juncture Christ will spiritualize religion because with his re-advent in this world religion will never be a bewilderment of rigorous rites and ceremonies. Christ will teach: 'God is my Father and at every moment of life every individual must be free oneself from every temptation.' He also asserted that 'Grace of God is fundamental and it is possible because God is our loving Father'. Therefore, Christ is accepted as the redeemer of mankind. Jesus was crucified and it symbolized God's unconditional love for his creation as Christ revealed that 'I am the Son of God'. St Paul speaks thus:

Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the Scriptures: that he appeared to Peter…… Then he appeared to James, and afterwards to all the apostles.

Last of all he appeared to me (1 Cor.15.3-8).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4 : How God is characterized in Christianity?

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Q 5 : Why the world is evolved with all intrinsic values?

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Q 6 : State whether the following statements are True/ False

(a) Is God immanent and transcendent in Christianity. (True/Yes / False No)

(b) Jesus is not accepted as the living paradigm of God's love (True/ Yes /False/ No)

8.5 CHRISTIANITY AND THE CONCEPT OF TRINITY

Christianity essentially propounds monotheistic theology. But it is also found to accept three persons in one single Godhead. This is the concept of Trinity which holds the view that God is one but God is painted into three persons. The three Persons in one are: God the Father, God the son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is considered as the second person, the son incarnated. The third person is thus the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit symbolizes the spirit of unconditional Love. The Father and the Son is thus followed by the Holy Spirit. Thus in Christianity the idea of Trinity is a mystery. Just like you cannot raise certain philosophical questions regarding the creation of the world as it is a myth in Christianity so also the concept of trinity is not within the periphery of philosophical dimension. Mystical explanation is beyond the dimension of rational enquiry. Mystical explanation has the

strength of inward revelation and clarity. Hence Trinity has the strength of conscious revelation and as such cannot be merely justified only by human cognition.

Often it is highlighted that the idea of Trinity comes very near to Hinduism. In Hinduism also there is the idea of Trinity. The Three Persons are the triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar. Critics hold that the three Persons cannot be one 'no matter how much closer they may be'. But critics and theologians never accept any non-philosophical query about mysticism. The critics hold that Jesus and God are not identical because this identical status between Jesus and God will not allow Jesus to be a man. On the other hand the crucifixion of Jesus also cannot be accepted because God is eternal. Moreover the identical nature of Jesus and God will not be taken into accountability because if so then Jesus' prayer 'God is my Father' becomes meaningless. Thus Jesus is regarded as the 'visible likeness of the invisible God'. (Col.1.15).

The critics and theologians also raise the question that if Jesus is a human being then Christians will be favoring worship of 'idols'. In this case, Christians will be called as 'idolaters' in strict sense if you accept Jesus to be an ordinary human being worshipping God as the creator of this world. This philosophical question become self-contradictory if you consider that 'a being is both finite and infinite'. You will find that Indian interpretation of Trinity is less self-contradictory than the western idea of Trinity. Thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen and many other thinkers opine that the trinity involved in the conception of 'Saccidananda' is less objectionable.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7 : Explain the view on salvation as found in Christianity.

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Q 8 : How Christianity has explained the idea of Trinity?

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Q 9 : Fill in the blanks

(a) In Christianity the idea of Trinity is a …….……

(b) The Holy Spirit symbolizes the spirit of ……..…….. love.



8.6 LET US SUM UP

- Christianity owes its origin from Jesus Christ. It is believed that the life, teachings and death of Jesus Christ constitute the basic features of Christianity.
- The term 'Christ' is derived from the Greek word 'Christos'. Christos means Messiah. Therefore the name 'Christian' is associated for the first time to the followers of Jesus of Nazareth at Antioch in Syria. It is recorded that Christianity from the time of its inception is very intimately related with Judaism.
- St Paul following Jesus propagated the teachings of his master with devotion. St Paul formulated and vividly explained the doctrine of Atonement. He honestly supported and introduced certain important principles independently in Christianity.
- Christianity observes that The New Testament is the final revelation of the words of God. Revelation of the words of God becomes possible with the culmination of the incarnation of God in the form of Jesus.
- God is characterized as unlimited, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is regarded as eternal and His existence is

necessary. Therefore God exists and you cannot conceive His non-existence. God is eternal and so He is without beginning and end.

- The concept of sin opens the door for salvation in Christianity. 'Salvation', 'Immortality', 'Life Eternal' and 'Redemption' are the words usually referred to give explanation on human destiny. It is holiness of life which assures man to lead a life free from sin.
- The Christians hold that the Flesh is liable to sin more easily. As the flesh is easily liable to sin so the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden is considered as the original sin and then and then after human beings are called sinners.
- The concept of Trinity which holds the view that God is one but God is painted into three persons. The three Persons in one are: God is the Father, God the son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is considered as the second person, the son incarnated. The third person is thus the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit symbolizes the spirit of unconditional Love.



8.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Masih, Y. (1989). *A Comparative Study of Religions*. Motilal Banarsidass, Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

2) Tiwari, K.N. (1983). *Comparative Religion.* Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

3) Chatterji, Pritibhushan. (1971). *Studies in Comparative Religion*. Das Gupta & Co. Private Ltd.



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q No 1: The life, teachings and death of Jesus Christ take together constitute the basic feature of Christianity.

Answer to Q No 2 : St Paul is the theologian who is credited to shape Christianity as a religion.

Answer to Q No 3 : a) Jew b) Messiah.

Ans to Q No 4 : God is characterized as unlimited, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is regarded as eternal and His existence is necessary.

Answer to Q No 5 : The world is evolved with all intrinsic values because God the benevolent and the loving Father had created it.

Answer to Q No 6 : a) True b) No

Ans to Q No 7 : The concept of sin opens the door for salvation in Christianity. 'Salvation', 'Immortality', 'Life Eternal' and 'Redemption' are the words usually referred to give explanation on human destiny. It is holiness of life which assures man to lead a life free from sin.

Answer to Q No 8 : This is the concept of Trinity which holds the view that God is one but God is painted into three persons. The three Persons in one are: God is the Father, God the son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is considered as the second person, the son incarnated. The third person is thus the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit symbolizes the spirit of unconditional Love. The Father and the Son is thus followed by the Holy Spirit.

Answer to Q No 9 : a) Mystery b) unconditional



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Question :

Q 1 : What are the two acknowledged fundamental features of Christianity?

Q 2 : Mention only three basic tenets of Christianity.

Q 3: According to Judaism, which is considered the revealed word of God?

Q 4 : What is meant by the 'concept of trinity'?

Q 5 : What does the word 'Christos' mean?

B. Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1 : Write briefly the monotheistic character of Christianity.

Q 2 : Explain briefly the concept of trinity.

Q 3 : What is 'immortality of soul' in Christianity? Briefly explain

Q 4 : How does Christianity explain the distinction between the 'flesh and spirit'? Explain in brief.

Q 5 : How does Christianity explain the concept of salvation? Briefly explain.

Q 6 : How Christianity is influenced by 'Old Testament'? Explain in brief

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1 : Explain the characteristics of Christianity.

Q 2 : Explain the relation between God and Man in Christianity.

Q 3 : Discuss the concept of monotheism in Christianity

Q 4 : How Christianity has explained the creation of the world?

Q 5 : What are the similarities regarding the concept of trinity between Christianity and Hinduism? Discuss

UNIT 9 : ISLAM : FIVE PILLARS

UNIT STRUCTURE

9. 1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 The salient features of Islam

- 9.3.1 Islam is a monotheistic religion or not
- 9.3.2 Doctrine of absolute oneness of God
- 9.3.3 Relation between man and God according to Islam
- 9.3.4 The Question of the Final Destiny of Man (The idea of Heaven and Hell)

9.4 Five pillars of Islam

- 9.4.1 Utterances of Kalima
- 9.4.2 Daily prayers (Namaaz)
- 9.4.3 Fasting (Roza)
- 9.4.4 Alms giving (Zakat)
- 9.4.5 Pilgrimage(Hajj)

9.5 Let us Sum Up

9.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.7 Further Readings

9.8 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain the philosophy of Islam
- discuss the salient features of Islam
- explain whether Islam is a monotheistic religion or not
- describe the doctrine of absolute oneness of God
- explain the relation between man and God according to Islam
- elaborate the idea of Heaven and Hell
- discuss five pillars of Islam
- explain utterances of Kalima
- explain about daily prayers (Namaaz)

- explain fasting (Roza)
- explain Alms giving(Zakat)
- discuss Pilgrimage (Hajj)

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Through many scholars say that Islam is nothing but Judaism added with a missionary zeal, yet it has a number of distinctive features. Being a Semitic religion, it has been influenced by Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. But in spite of these influences, Islam has many features of its own. In respect of the conception of God, the ideas of heaven and hell etc. Islam resembles Christianity and Judaism, but Islam prescribes a distinctive way of life to its followers, and that distinguishes it from other religions.



LET US KNOW

- Zoroastrianism : the ancient pre-islamic religion of Iran that survives there in isolated areas and more prosperously, in India, where the descendants of Zoroastrianism Iranian (Persian) immigrants are known as Parsis.
- Judaism : it is one of the oldest monotheistic religions and was founded over 3500 years ago in the middle east. Jews believe that God appointed the Jews to be his chosen people in order to set an example of holiness and ethical behaviour to the world.
- Christianity : is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion based on life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

9.3 THE SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM

In spite of its being influenced by Judaism, Islam has got certain distinctive features of its own. These features of Islam may be presented as follows—

1) Islam believes in one and only one God, called 'Allah'. It is therefore, a monotheistic religion.

2) It is totally opposed to polytheism, ritualism, idolatry and priesthood.

3) It believes in the reality and authenticity of prophets who are regarded as carrying the message of God to man. It admits that there have been prophets like Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus even before Mohammad, but Mohammad is the last, the greatest and the mightiest amongst prophets and his message is to be respected by all.

4) Islam believes in a life after death comprising of the resurrection of the death on the Day of judgement and retribution of reward and punishment by God in the form of heaven and hell.

1) It teaches an ethics of perfect purity, service of humanity and brotherhood of man.

2) Amongst many ethical and religious duties as prescribed by Islam, absolute submission (Islam) to God in perfect piety is regarded as man's primary duty.

3) Islam takes Quran as the greatest and the most sacred and it is the book on which the entire structure of Islam is based.

4) It believes in the existence of angels and spirits, both of good and evil dispositions. Angels of good disposition always stand at God's call in heaven to carry out his orders. They maintain a record of man's conduct for the last judgement. Besides good angels, Islam also believes in one fallen angel Iblis and his companions. Iblis is the ruler of the hell. Besides angels, Islam also believes in good and bad jins.



LET US KNOW

- Idolatry: the worship of idols.
- Monotheism: The belief in one God
- Polytheism: The belief in or worship of more than one God.
- Polu(Greek word)-many, Theos(Greek word)-God.
- Semitic Religion: the three main semitic religions are- Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They are related by a common belief in God.
- Pietism : A devotional movement in the Lutheran Church; also any attitude to religion stressing piety and faith rather than evidence and reason.
- Prophet: A person who speaks for God or a deity, who is believed to have a special power that allows them to say what a god wishes to tell people, especially about things that will happen in the future.

9.3.1 Islam is a monotheistic Religion

Islam is strictly monotheistic in nature. The Semitic religious tradition of monotheism has been carried by Islam to its furthest logical conclusion. Islam even criticises the Christian concept of Trinity as something opposed to the spirit of monotheism. In the various chapters of Koran the unity of God has been asserted time and again in respect of its monotheism. Islam is different from Hinduism. In Hinduism polytheistic and monotheistic trends are found together. Polytheism and idolatry have no place in Islam. Islam is also different from Buddhism. As a religion early Buddhism is atheistic. But belief in the existence of God is one of the fundamental traits of Islam.

The word Allah is actually a short form of two Arabic words-"Al and Ilah" . This word literally means 'mighty'. There can be only one power who is mighty in the supreme sense. Therefore, it logically follows that there can be only one God.

There are various verses of the Quran in which monotheism is strictly asserted. It is the basic duty of every Muslim to repeat the following line before every prayer "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is His Prophet". The call to prayer, which is given from the entire mosque five times in a day, is as follows- "God is the most great, I testify that there is no God but Allah…….I testify that Mohammad is the prophet of God. God is great" In Koran, polytheism is strongly rejected and various false gods are denied.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. State whether the following statements are true or false.

a) Islam is a monotheistic religion(T/F)

b) Hindu is a polytheistic religion (T/F)

c) Islam is a Semitic Religion(T/F)

Q 2 : Is there any place of Idolatry in Islam?

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Q 3: Fill in the Blanks :

a) Early Buddhism is ……

b) The word Allah is actually a short form of two Arabic words…….....and…….

Q 4 : What is the basic duty of every Muslim before every prayer?

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9.3.2 Doctrine of absolute oneness of God

Perhaps the most important article of faith in Islam is that God has revealed his will to mankind through apostles who brought a written massage. The Koran is the last and most complete divine revelation. Muhammad is the last prophet and the series of prophets have come to an end with Mohammad. But in spite of the point that Mohammad is held in Islam in great esteem, He is not equated with God. Islam says that God is completely transcendent. The idea of divine immanence is completely absence in Islam. The Hindu conception of incarnation is not to be found in Islam. Mohammad was specially chosen by God to receive the divine message.



LET US KNOW

Apostle : messenger, one who is sent out by God.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Who is the apostle of Islam?

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Q 6: Who is the last prophet of Islam?

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Q 7: Whether incarnation is found in Islam or not?

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9.3.3 Relation between man and God according to Islam

In Islamic theology there is a detailed treatment of the topic of the relationship between God and Man. The entire treatment of the topic of the relationship between God and man is ultimately based on the Koran.

Firstly, according to Koran, God is completely transcendent. Moreover; the ways of God are mysterious and inscrutable. God therefore is not the immanent indwelling spirit. Hinduism generally considers God to be imminent (inherent) indwelling spirit. But this is not the way in which Islam conceives the relationship between God and man.

Secondly, According to Islam the relationship between God and man is the relationship between the creator and the created. According to the Koran, man was created by God from clot of blood. There is a famous Surah or chapter of the Koran which is entitled "The Clot".

Thirdly, according to Islam, in relation to God, man has no right but duties. The basic duty of man is to submit to the will of God. The literal meaning of the word Islam is submission. Man is to submit himself completely to God. Therefore, the relationship between God and man is something like relationship between master and slave. Man is first to pray God and secondly to serve God. In the strict sense he cannot ask anything from God. A.C. Bouquet has pointed out that Islamic prayer is not petitionary but only reverential.

Lastly, the relationship between God and man has been represented in Islam with the help of the idea of guidance. Man may pray to God seeking his guidance. According to Islam freedom of will has not been granted to man. The final destiny of every man is completely pre-determined by God. The course of action of every man is also pre-determined by God. Therefore, there is complete pre-determination and no freedom of Will.

It is in this way Islam attempts to give a comprehensive picture of the relationship between God and man. One can see that this picture has a number of affinities with the corresponding Judaic and Christian view.

Mysterious : difficult or impossible to understand, explain or identify, secret.

Inscrutable : impossible to understand or interpret.

A.C. Bouquet : He is the author of " comparative Religion: A short Outline"

Reverential : implying worship-a devoutly religious person feels reverential towards God.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8 : Fill in the Blanks:

a) According to Koran, God is completely ……

b) The ways of God are mysterious and……

c) According to Islam man has no rights only ……

d) Islamic prayer is not petitionary but only……

Q 9 : What is the relationship between God and man in Islam?

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Q 10 : What is the literal meaning of the word Islam?

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Q 11 : Is freedom of will accepted in Islam?

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9.3.4 The Question of the Final Destiny of Man (The idea of heaven and hell)

The question of the final destiny of man has also been discussed in Koran. The idea of Heaven and Hell are found in Islam. For the believers there are seven heavens which God has created for them and for the disbelievers God has appointed hell. Many Muslim thinkers such as Iqbal considered heaven and hell as stages of human spiritual progress.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 12 : Fill in the Blanks :

a) The idea of Heaven and ……..are found in Islam.

b) There are …….. ..Heavens in Islam.

9.4 Five pillars of Islam

The practical teachings of the Koran are equally as important as the doctrinal ones. They can be divided into two main categories. First, there are the religious duties which are laid down for the faithful. Second, there are the ethical and social duties. The religious duties have given shape to Muslim practices through the ages, and help to account for the remarkable cohesion of a movement which has never relied upon a hierarchy of organized priests. They are constituted by the so-called "Five Pillars" of Islam. These are: the repetition of the brief creed of Islam, *La ilaha illa ILLahu: Muhammad resulu ILLah* (There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet): Prayer; Almsgiving; Fasting and Pilgrimage. It is generally said that Islam as a religion is based on "Five Pillars".



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 13 : How many Pillars are there in Islam?

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Q 14 : What is the meaning of *La ilaha illa Allah: Muhammad rasul Allah* ?

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9.4.1 Utterances of Kalima

As a strict monotheistic religion, Islam prescribes it to be the basic duty of every Muslim that before every prayer he should repeat the Kalima. The utterances of Kalima are actually the utterances of the following lines-"*La ilaha illa' llahu, Muhammad resulu' illah*" (there

is no god but allah and Mahammad is the prophet of Allah.) This repetition is intended not merely as a recital of words quite unmindfully but as a reaffirmation of the wholehearted conviction that Allah is the only supreme God and that this important message has been brought to the people of the world by the revered Mohammad.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 15 : What is Kalima?

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9.4.2 Daily prayers (Namaaz)

Prayer is the core of the Muslim's religious life. Daily prayer is an important aspect of the Islamic faith. The faithful Muslim is required to pray five times in a day. The Koran does not lay down as a rule, but there is little doubt that the practice goes back to the Prophet himself. The first prayer is at sunset and it is followed by the early night, dawn, noon and mid-afternoon prayers. According to A.C. Bouquet, the innate psychological skill with which these devotional postures are planned is "Remarkable, and the nearest parallel is to be found in the system of Yoga postures in India" The call to prayers is given from every mosque. The Muslim is expected to pray, facing towards Mecca. Originally the Prophet told his followers to bow towards Jerusalem, but Jewish opposition and other factors induced him to introduce the later rule. The most common prayer is the recitation of the words of the first *Sura* which express the heart of Muslim devotion.

Friday is a special day set aside for devotions. Congregational worship centres on the mosque, which, though simple and

unadorned with images, in accordance with the Muslim view of images as idolatrous, is analogous to a Christian church. In place of the altar there is a semi-circular recess known as the *mihrab*; in facing this the faithful are bowing towards Mecca. Prayers are led by a prayer leader, or *imam*, who recites the words while the faithful prostrate themselves at appropriate times in accordance with his example. It is also usual for the prayer leader to preach, expounding Muslim doctrine. Daily prayers have great importance in Islam. They are regarded as "Keys to paradise". It is said, "God has promised to take into Paradise him who keeps the five prayers and omits none…"



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 16 : How many times Muslims have to Pray Namaaz?

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Q 17 : At what time Muslims offer Prayer?

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Q 18 : Fill in the blanks:

a) The Muslim is expected to pray, facing toward ……

b) …….. is a special day set aside for devotions.

c) Prayers are led by a prayer leader, or ……

9.4.3 Fasting (Roza)

Fasting centres on the great fast of the month of Ramadan. It varies in date, since it is a lunar month, not corresponding with the monthly divisions of the Western calendar. During this period no food or drink may be taken from sunrise to sunset. One important duty is the observance of fasting during day time all through the month of Ramadan. However, children, the sick and travellers are made exceptions. It is believed that this fasting remits all kinds of sin committed during the whole year. This represents considerable effort, especially in hot, dry countries, fasting also enters into the obligations of Pilgrimage.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 19 : In which month Muslims observed fast or Roza ?

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Q 20 : What is the time of fasting?

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9.4.4 Alms giving (Zakat)

Giving alms to the poor and the needy is another essential duty of every Muslims. It was at one time obligatory-one fortieth of one's income was collected on behalf of the community. Various formulas for the giving of alms have been worked out in Islam, sometimes,

one-tenth and sometimes one- twentieth. But this obligation long since fell into disuse. The Koran stressed the importance of giving money to help the poor. It has remained a central part of Muslim charity. Through it, the compassion and solidarity of the community are expressed. It was recommended by Mohammad from the very beginning as a mark of piety and liberality toward the poor, but later on it took the form of a regular religious tax called, Zakat.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 21 : To whom does the Muslims give Zakat?.

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Q 22 : What is the ratio of giving alms to the poor?

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9.4.5 Pilgrimage (Hajj)

The last duty of a devout Muslim is pilgrimage. Every Muslim who is capable of under taking the journey must visit Mecca at least once during his lifetime. The journey is often a hazardous and perilous undertaking. Once within the boundaries of Mecca, every pilgrim must wear a certain sort of plain, white clothing. People of different nations and customs, and people of different social rank are levelled together to a brotherly equality during the period of the main ceremonies connected with pilgrimage. These start with the act of going seven times around the Kaaba, kissing the black stone

on each occasion. Following this, the pilgrims engage in the rite of running seven times between two nearby hills. Then they move off on the eighth day of the feast to Arafat, some twelve miles east of Mecca. During the following day they spend their time on the plain, engaged in meditation. On the way back to Mecca, they stop at Mina, where the ceremony of casting, seven stones is performed by each pilgrim-This is the “stoning of the Devil”. Sacrifices follow, and meat is distributed among the poorer brethren. Fasting and merrymaking give the sequence of prescribed acts a joyous flavour. The pilgrims return to Mecca and circumambulate the Kaaba last time. During most of the period they have been fasting from dawn to dusk, and they must remain sexually constraint. Hair must not be cut; nails must not be pared. No pilgrimage is complete without a visit to the tomb of the prophet at Medina.

The above mentioned five pillars of Islam give a solid foundation to Islam. It is noteworthy that the obligations are laid down for individuals: it is through the willing conformity of the individuals who constitute the community that the ritual traditions carry on. Islam is notable for its lack of an organization of priests. Each man, in principle, stands directly before his Maker, without intermediaries. Thus we may conclude that Islam has a number of distinctive features and as a religion it occupies a unique place among all the world religions. Koran lays down many ethical virtues and duties for the observance of every Muslim in his dealings with others. Muslim ethics, therefore, is mainly social. Hospitality is one of the greatest virtues that Islam teaches. It also preaches the ethics of the brotherhood of man and service to humanity. Furthermore, virtues like obedience to parents; avoidance of adultery, cheating and lying; refraining from stealing, murder etc. are also emphasized.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.23 : What is the last duty of a devout Muslim?.

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9.5 LET US SUM UP

The most important points discussed in this unit are:

- Islam is strictly monotheistic in Nature.
- There are various verses of Koran in which monotheism is strictly asserted.
- Islam is a Semitic Religion.
- Polytheism and Idolatry have no place in Islam.
- Muhammad is the apostle of God.
- According to Koran God is completely transcendent, mysterious and inscrutable.
- According to Islam the relationship between God and man is the relationship between the creator and created.
- The basic duty of man is to submit to the will of God.
- The literal meaning of the word Islam is submission.
- The idea of Heaven and Hell are found in Islam.
- It is generally said that Islam as religion is based on Five Pillars. These Five Pillars are-The utterances of Kalima, Daily Prayer(Namaaz), Fasting (Roza),Alms Giving (Zakat) and Pilgrimage(Hajj)



9.6 FURTHER READINGS

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9.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a) T b) T c) T

Ans to Q No 2 : No

Ans to Q No 3 : a) Atheistic b) Al, Ilah

Ans to Q No 4 : The basic duty of every Muslim to repeat the following line before every prayer “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet”.

Ans to Q No 5 : Muhammad

Ans to Q No 6 : Muhammad

Ans to Q No 7 : No.

Ans to Q No 8 : a) Transcendental b) inscrutable c) duties d) reverential

Ans to Q No 9 : According to Islam, the relationship between God and man is the relationship between the creator and the created.

Ans to Q No 10 : The literal meaning of the word Islam is submission.

Ans to Q No 11 : No

Ans to Q No 12 : a) Hell b) Seven.

Ans to Q No 13 : Five.

Ans to Q No 14 : The meaning of *La ilaha illa llahu: Muhammad resulu Allah* is there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet

Ans to Q No 15 : *La ilaha illa Allah: Muhammad rasul Allah* (there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet) is known as Kalima.

Ans to Q No 16 : Five times.

Ans to Q No 17 : The first prayer is at sunset and it is followed by the early night, dawn, noon and mid-afternoon prayers.

Ans to Q No 18 : A) Mecca b) Friday c) imam

Ans to Q No 19 : Ramadan

Ans to Q No 20 : Sunrise to sunset.

Ans to Q No 21 : Poor

Ans to Q No 22 : One fortieth.

Ans to Q No 23 : Pilgrimage.



9.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions (Make it Block)

Q 1 : What is monotheism?

Q 2 : What is Polytheism?

Q 3: What do you mean by Zakat?

Q 4 : What is Hajj?

Q 5 : What do you mean by Kalima?

Q 6 : What is Roza?

Q 7 : Who is the apostle of Islam?

Q 8 : What are the five times of prayer in Islam?

B) Short Questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1 : Is Islam a monotheistic religion?

Q 2 : Discuss about the relationship between God and man according to Islam.

Q 3 : Write Short Notes on:

a) Hajj

b) Zakat

c) Namaaz

d) Roza

C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain the Islamic concept of discipline. What are the five pillars of Islam?

Q 2: What are the distinctive features of Islam? Explain in details.

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UNIT : 10 HINDUISM, GOD, MAN, AND LIBERATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Sources of Hinduism

10.4 Characteristics of Hinduism

10.5 Hinduism and Law of Karma

10.6 Hinduism and Moksha

10.7 Let us sum up

10.8 Further readings

10.9 Answers to check your progress

10.10 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the nature and characteristics of Hinduism
- Describe the concept of Law of Karma in Hinduism
- Discuss the concept of Moksha in Hinduism

10.2 INTRODUCTION

The core of Hinduism consists of holistic nature of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the scriptures including the two great epics. In Hinduism we also find the Tantras dealing with the esoteric aspects of the spiritual quest and the different systems of oriental philosophy. Hinduism which is one of the most ancient living religions of the world make an enquiry on wisdom which ends with the words 'Tat tvam asi'—'that thou art', meaning that the Atman is essentially Brahman. Therefore, Hinduism which is more a philosophy than religion consists in belief in an eternal indestructible divine Reality on which human being has to meditate on, live and act according to the eternal law of Nature. Upanishads are considered as the fountainhead

of Hinduism. In Hinduism the philosophical perspective of life is more associated because the Sanskrit word 'darsana' or 'seeing' i.e., "see thyself" represents the divine truth of the elevated spiritual consciousness of the great seers. It is not merely an intellectual quest for the divine truth rather deeply grounded on direct perception of the 'Self'. References of sublime spiritual realm of life are found in the Isa Upanishad and for the first time it comes as:

'This entire cosmos, whatever is still or moving, is pervaded by the divine', contains the very essence of Hinduism.

In the Mundaka Upanishad, it is stated that the Upanishads are the vehicles of spiritual realization. We find a verse in this Upanishad citing the role of the Upanishads as:

"Having taken as a bow the great weapon of the Upanishads, one should fix on it the arrow sharpened by constant meditation; drawing it with a mind filled with That (Brahman), penetrate, O handsome youth, the Imperishable as the target."

Furthermore, there is a geographical interpretation of the growth of Hindu thought, its religion and civilization. It can be stated that the Sanskrit word "Sindhu" refers to the river "Indus". Geographically recalling, the word Hinduism is related with the great river 'Sindhu'. On the banks of the river 'Sindhu', the Aryan Rishis used to live. When the Persian and the Greek invaders settled near north-west of India, the first challenge that came to these people is the river 'Sindhu' and its pronunciation. Instead of pronouncing the sound 'S' the Persian invaders pronounced it as 'H', and then onwards, the river 'Sindhu' was called by them as Hindu. These invaders called the people who lived to the east of the river 'Sindhu' as Hindus. Gradually Hinduism became more popularly known as an Aryan-dharma of Hindus. The vast spectrum of faith, culture, literature, religion, custom, rites, rituals and ceremonies that flourished acquired the generic name Hinduism. As Hinduism has never been made but grown with the development of human culture and civilization so it is considered as the 'Sanatana Dharma'. This 'eternal religion' (Sanatana Dharma) represents revealed faith/

knowledge of different preceptors or seers and sages. Hinduism is called Sanatana Dharma because it is a religion which comes down to people through eternity. Unlike many other religions Hinduism claims no definite founder and furthermore no definite and particular religious text. The reason behind this is that Hinduism is more a philosophy than a religion. Following this observation it can be revealed that Hinduism is assisted by various stages of human culture and civilization. In this context we can refer to the words of Sir Charles Eliot: "Hinduism has not been made, but has grown. It is jungle, not a building." Again K.M. Sen says in the book Hinduism, "Hinduism is more like a tree that has grown gradually than like a building that has been erected by some great architect at some definite point in time. It contains within itself the influences of many cultures and the body of Hindu thought thus offers as much variety as the Indian nation itself." The collective wisdom of the sages never reflected strict dogmas rather it inspired the deep rooted philosophy of humanism. The problem of human existence inspired the Vedic sages and through their spiritual insight they were able to take a critical leap and established the philosophy of 'Manava Dharma'. The 'Religion of Man', is the basic tenet that underlies Hinduism and this has become the integral ethos of Hinduism as embedded in the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita. Therefore a pragmatic definition of Hinduism is more cordially follows as:

"The ancient religion, called Sanatana Dharma, founded on the Vedas, which was followed by the people who inhabited the territory of the Punjab and its eastern regions"; and the descendants of those people who profess that religion are "Hindus".



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Mention the literal meaning of the word 'darsana'.

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Q 2: Why Hinduism is considered as the 'Sanatana Dharma'?

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Q 3: State whether the following statements are true or false

a) In Hinduism the words 'Tat tvam asi'—'that thou art', means that the Atman is essentially Brahman.

b) The 'Religion of Man', is not the fundamental tenet of Hinduism.

10.3 SOURCES OF HINDUISM

Let us here ponder on an important issue related with the sources of Hinduism. So to understand on the issue related with the sources of Hinduism, we can say that the philosophy, beliefs, practices, customs and traditions of Hinduism are derived from numerous sources. Inspite of its numerous sources, the Vedas, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads constitute the core sources of Hinduism. So let us examine the fundamental sources of Hinduism and their importance in the growth and development of Hinduism.

Broadly speaking the ritual and spiritual knowledge of Hinduism are derived from three sources namely the Seers, sectarian works of the Vedas and the Upanishads and literary sources like the two great epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita, the Puranas and so and so forth. To be more analytical the Vedas are undoubtedly the most indisputable sources of Hindu belief system. The Vedas are considered as eternal because the Vedas are considered as beginning less (Anadi) and the code of Hinduism starts with the Vedas. The Upanishads embodied in themselves the essential philosophical principles of Hinduism and are often

known as the Vedanta. In the Upanishads we find the 'universal principles of Truth' and because of its uniqueness for the quest of eternal Truth, the Upanishads have sustained the changes of Time, aggressiveness of science and materialism. The sustainable strength of the Upanishads is made possible only because of the universal attitude towards the eternal Truth.

The Seers and the Rishis for a long time played a significant role in promoting the knowledge of Hinduism. They brought to light the secret teachings in the principal texts of Hinduism. You have to remember that the Seers and the Rishis are the god-head or teacher traditions of ancient classical Hindu society. They represent the speculative attitude of Darsana or the oriental philosophy. The Seers and 'the Rishis are not the authors of what they transmitted to their disciples. They were merely the spokesmen of the divine message which they received through meditation or revelation. The words are the words of God; the Rishis merely communicated them to their disciples, according to their individual realizations. In addition to the teacher traditions, Hinduism also witnessed the profound rise of ascetic movement. Ordinarily speaking, asceticism is a philosophical way of life-skill which characterizes an individual life to keep oneself abstained from various worldly pleasures for pursuing spiritual goals. Theistic tradition in India is influenced fundamentally by asceticism and encouraged renunciation sensual desires and material possessions of life. This ascetic movement in India inspired the sacred texts of Hinduism. Consequently in due course of time the theology and spiritual philosophy was enriched by this ascetic movement. In this context reference can be made to the major Indian religions like Buddhism and Jainism. In ancient India, asceticism became the essence of Hinduism because it propounded the doctrine that to attain salvation or freedom, an individual must attain purity both mentally and physically. Again our knowledge of Hinduism also comes from Hindu sects like Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Tantra. Though these sects have their independent development yet as they became integrated into the Vedic tradition so they have contributed richly to the philosophical speculation of Hinduism.

To follow on the growth and development of Hinduism we can once again highlight that Hinduism exclusively does not rely only on scriptures but it enriches its inspiration from various literary sources. Along with the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas we have the sutra literature, important commentaries (bhashyas), law books or Dharmashastras. Hinduism as a philosophy of life orientation depends more thoroughly on the works of various schools of philosophy (Darshanas). It flourishes itself more emphatically depending on the literary and secular works such as those of Kalidasa, the philosophy of Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhava and many others. To be very specific in this context, we can refer here very keenly that traditionally, the Smritis, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutra are considered as the three most important sources to corroborate the philosophy of Hinduism. In fact the Bhagavad Gita is described as 'the divine commentary on the Vedanta' because it represents the quintessence of the Vedanta. It is true that in Hinduism we do not find any definite founder. There is no definite or exclusive text. In Hinduism we find people beholding various beliefs. For instance, a person believing in many gods i.e. a polytheist can be a thoroughgoing Hindu or have faith in Hinduism. On the other hand, a person believing in one and only one God, i.e. a monist can be a staunch Hindu and interestingly enough even an atheist who does not believe in the existence of a personal God can too be a strict believer of Hinduism. Therefore Sir Charles Eliot says very rightly that Hinduism is like a jungle and not a building. Thus it is quite impossible

In conclusion we can say that though Hinduism draws its inspiration from numerous sources, the sacred texts such as the Vedas can be considered as the fundamental sources of its beliefs and practices.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What are the sources of the spiritual knowledge in Hinduism?

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Q 5: Why the Upanishads play an important role in the development of Hinduism?

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Q 6: Name two religious sects of Hinduism which support asceticism.

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10.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF HINDUISM

The basic features of Hinduism are very difficult to mention because of its diversities in beliefs, practices and its diversified philosophical sources yet there are certain common features which bind the religious and philosophical thoughts of Hinduism. The features are as follows.

1. Hinduism embodies the universal experiences of great Sages and Rishis at different times and culture.

Hinduism sustains the odds and values of all culture and civilization because of its universal and impersonal nature of development. Hinduism is considered as revealed religion because there is no creator. As we all know therefore that Hinduism never popularized the exclusiveness of the religious interpretation of one single Prophet. In Hindu religion 'Truth is universal'. It advocates that this Truth if urged can be realized by every individual. In this process of realization, Hindu religion has never universalized any experience of Truth rather emphatically states that diverse experiences of Truth is the strength for the quest of Truth. This reminds us of the words of Sri Ramakrishna that every spiritual experience of Truth which is eternal leads to God. His words are on spiritual experience: "as many views, so many are the paths".

Again the Vedas and the Upanishads are said to be the fundamental sources of Hinduism and the words of these sacred texts are the revealed truths of spiritualism of Rishis of ancient India. Upanishads are therefore considered as the illuminating (revealed) research experiences of our Rishis on different issues of life orientations. The Rishis shared very thoroughly their super-sensuous revealed knowledge amongst their disciple generation after generation and the Seers remarkably demonstrated their spiritual experiences at the strength of agreement on fundamental problems and arrived at fundamental and non-debatable conclusions. Hinduism reveals the realization of the 'Ultimate Reality' and unlike many other sectarian religions Hinduism never allows mere faith on religious dogmas alone. Bernard writes in 'Hindu Philosophy' that Hinduism is a matter of realization. The principles of Hinduism withstand the debate of reasoning and verification of cognitive mind. Therefore, 'Each of the Upanishads gives reason as it proceeds step by step, and it is because of this logical foundation, that numerous Rishis meditating individually, could arrive at certain agreed propositions which have been gathered as the 'essence of Hinduism' in this work'.

1. *Hinduism is intertwined with Hindu religion*

   Philosophical speculation and inward religious consciousness is intertwined with each other within the peripheral dimension of Hinduism. As you have already come to know that the religious scriptures of different Hindu religions have accepted the authority of the Sruti, the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas. It is perhaps of this essential feature, we find the spirit of catholicity and elasticity in Hinduism and in various Hindu religions. Hinduism as such makes no distinction between 'Atmanam Viddi' (i.e. 'know thyself') and the religious practices of Hindu religion also blend with it thoroughly. Hence there is no difference between 'Universal Truth of Hinduism and Dogmas of religious consciousness of various cults like Sakta, Vaishnava and many others'. You can feel here the underlying essential unity of these undivided aspects of Hinduism only if you can ascertain the 'essential doctrines of Hinduism'.

We can logically justify the fact of this essential unity of Hinduism only when we conclude that 'it is the same Vedic religion which has evolved, through the ages, into various cults'. The religious thinkers are concerned more with the pertinent principles of life like morality, salvation, doctrine of karma, life after death etc.,etc., and acceptance of diverse ways for higher speculations of life. Hinduism therefore is not a spiritual code but also a social code and it retains that Hinduism is the oldest living religion. It is because of this reason Hinduism uniquely claim the epithet 'sanatana' or eternal. This epithet follows because Hinduism has no beginning nor it has no end and in it we find a binding force of 'Universal Principles'.

1. *Hinduism follows the principle of union with the Absolute of the finite existence*.

The essential teaching of Upanishad advocates the divinity of the self. The finite self is the manifestation of the Absolute. In the Isha-Upanashad, it is stated: "Oh God! Take me there where lies the source of everlasting universe, which is indestructible, where immortality resigns supreme and make me immortal". The most fundamental postulate of Hinduism is the concept of 'the all- pervasive Brahman'. The Upanisadic view supports this explanation by the cardinal concept as that all that exists is a manifestation of the divine. This philosophy of unified-force theory of Hinduism supports the scientists who desperately probe into the theory that 'whatever exists is really the same energy'. The post-Einsteinian scientists, recognized that exist may appear as matter or energy or as a particle or as a wave, it is essentially the same energy. So, in this context we can refer to this interpretation of science to the spiritual counterpart regarding the concept of the all-pervasive Brahman of the Upanishads. The all-pervasive philosophy of Hinduism follows as: 'The greatest realization is to see the Brahman everywhere, wherever you look above or below, to the right or to the left, within or without. This is the first important concept of Vedanta i.e. the all-pervasive Brahman, the essence of monotheism.

Therefore you will understand that in Hinduism along with its counter-part, i.e. Hindu religion advocates that Brahman resides within each individual consciousness and this individual consciousness is the Atman or the spiritual self and is not ultimately separated from the Brahman. Flowing from this we find the phrase of the Upanishads that 'amrtasya putrah (children of immortality). It is the greatest sin to call ourselves as sinner because Hinduism never supports the concept of sin. Hindu religion upholds the spiritual reflection of life existence. There is no conception of any unseen or hidden heaven rather it accepts the fact that we are the children of immortality. We are the manifested power of purity, wisdom, bliss and light. The spiritual existence is within our consciousness.

To realize this spiritual unified-force the key-note of yoga stands here and thus the whole of Vedanta teaching resolves around the idea that is directed towards bringing 'the union between the all-pervading Brahman without and the immortal Atman within. 'Atman is immortal', is the essence of Bhagavad Gita. Interestingly enough, the immortality of the soul clearly indicates that the doctrine of Rebirth is only a corollary of the Hindu theory of creation. 'It is an eternal process in cycles, never having a beginning nor end'. It is also believed that the doctrine of Rebirth is a logical offshoot of the Hindu theory of Creation. Here it is considered that if the world creation is in a process of constant evolution and degeneration then every existence must be an integrated part in the eternal process. The process of rebirth must continue aided by spiritual elevation unless and until every existence merges into the eternal creation. Therefore in the Chandogya Upanishad, it is taught 'Tat tvam asi'— 'that thou art' which means the Atman is essentially the Brahman. Thus to quote: 'The individual soul, as we shall see, is a participant of this Eternity, emerging out of the Infinite and ultimate merging into the Infinite'. The realization of 'Unity in diversity' is the most fundamental spiritual discovery of Hinduism.

2. *Hinduism never represents mere faith on spirituality but encourages pragmatism in social life.*

The essential unity of the Atman with the Brahman is one of the fundamental tenets of Hinduism. This identical nature of existence in this world of material existence justifies that the supreme goal of life lies in spiritual realization. The realization of endless and eternal nature of Atman brings a new dimension in the life of human sufferings, old age and death. Karmic accountability of human life here is justified as a moral law of conservation of energy. Again the law of karma demands sufficiently that every individual has to take responsibility of one's own action. Therefore the famous saying follows: 'As you sow so shall you reap'. Again the Newton principle: 'Every action has its equal and opposite reaction'. Therefore, Hindu religion logically supports the concept of causality, the law of karma and human destiny.

3. *Human life is a means of higher end*

Hinduism firmly believes in the essential feature of moksha or liberation in human life. Moksha is defined as attainment of freedom from the cycle of birth and death. To actualize human life through individual actions for higher ends, Hindu religion supports the possibility of three paths of yoga. It beholds that liberation from the cycle of birth and death, is possible through by adopting the path of knowledge, the path of disinterested action, the path of devotion or the path of control of human psyche. When the individual life aims for higher end, that is moksha, the soul becomes free from all worldly sufferings. In this state of human existence (Moksha), the individual soul realizes its own limitations created by one's own ignorance of the blissful nature of the self. The blissful nature of the Self is realized through any of the Yoga followed by the individual. Spirituality surpasses over the physical world and makes it more meaningful. In this higher state of human mind, the surplus is realized as in the words of Rabindranath Tagore. This is the Religion of Man. The

Bhagavad Gita repeatedly enjoins service to mankind while advocating the philosophy of nishkam karma and this is the threshold of the philosophy of humanism. In fact Upanishads teaches that every individual is the manifestation of the ultimate reality and therefore to give service to the human society is to realize the ultimate reality. This reminds us of the practical Vedanta of Vivekananda where he propagates before the global world the action oriented slogan: "Jiva is Siva". That human life has a higher end makes Hindu religion more pragmatic and worldly and enhance the secular nature of this religion.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Why Hinduism is intertwined with Hindu religion?

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Q 8: How does Hinduism explain monotheism?

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Q 9: What is the meaning of the term moksha in Hinduism?

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10.5 HINDUISM AND LAW OF KARMA

In Hinduism the law of causation forms an integral part of Hindu philosophy and Hindu religion. The law of cause and effect is coined as 'Karma'. The Hindu doctrine of rebirth and law of karma constitute the doctrine of freedom and perseverance. The doctrine of law of karma illuminates the hope of an individual to improve the moments of one's living experiences carried through his thoughts, words and deeds. As you have come to know that the law of karma opens the door of inspiration supported by the law of causation. Hinduism supports the Law of Karma from the aspect of moral law of causation. The saying justifies that 'As you sow so you reap'. This makes you to understand that every action that we do reap its own result. Therefore every individual has to take the responsibility of one's own action. We have to take the decision of performing right action as it will yield good consequence. Otherwise there will be adharma or demerits in the social order. Every wrong action performed will yield inevitably bad result. The accountability of result yield from every action finally resides in the soul in a subtle form of energy.

In Hinduism it is concluded that performance of any prescribed duty yields merit (punya) or virtue (dharma) in the soul. Again it is stated that violation of the performance of any forbidden duty yields demerit (papa) or vice (adharma) in the soul itself. Dharma and adharma both are taken into consideration as unseen agencies (adrsta) which result in bearing the condition of future life. Dharma produces happiness and adharma produces unhappiness or sufferings in future life. The two unseen agencies (adrsta) of individual karma i.e. (dharma and adharma) actually constitute the predisposing causes of happiness and sufferings while external situations and material objects boost up the two unseen (adrsta) agencies. There is no question of escaping the law of karma. The fruits of moral action or immoral action have to be reaped either in this life or in the future life. Hence you will always find that Hinduism supports the theory of law of karma in association to the theory of rebirth. The theory of law of karma cannot be

logically explained without the law of rebirth. Hence it is understood that meta-psychosis which is also known as transmigration of the soul is a corollary of the law of karma.

It is often believed that karma is associated with action or work or deed. Law of karma in Hinduism is also believed to be the spiritual principle of cause and effect and in this spiritual principle the intent of the individual as well as the action of the individual creates the future result of the action. Good motive of the action and good action result into good karma and simultaneously contribute to future happiness. On the other hand bad motive of the action and therefore bad action result into unhappiness in future. As Hinduism supports the principle of rebirth so the law of karma is a corollary of the principle of rebirth. Interestingly enough, the fundamental difference between the Semitic religions like Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism is that in Islam and Christianity the individual commit sin against the law of God where as in Hinduism the concept of sin does not arise as it preaches that the individual has to take the responsibility of one's own action. The Semitic religions propound the theory of creation so sin is justified while not abiding the moral law giver i.e. God. Thus the concept of heaven and hell take an important problem in Islam and Christianity. Hinduism on the other hand propounds the theory of manifestation where the jivatma is accepted as the manifestation of Brahman itself. Hence it is stated that the soul is eternal and therefore cannot be perished. In this context, the concept of heaven and hell find less justification in Hinduism.

Ancient India teaches the philosophy that karma is synonymous to sacrificial or ritual acts of the Vedic cult. It encouraged that 'Karmakanda' refers to performance of ritualism while sacrificial ceremonies performed by the individual refer to be a part of social responsibility. Hence performance of sacrificial ceremonies became an integral part of moral obligation of an individual. Gradually the fact of karmic accountability of an individual spontaneously became associated with every intention of human action and thus their consequences.

In the Bhagavad Gita it is stated: "The self-controlled person, moving among objects, with his senses free from attachment and malevolence and brought under his own control, attains tranquility." (II.64)

Thus, you will find interesting to know that the theory of karma has a similarity with the Newton's law of motion. Newtonian principle states that 'every action produces an equal and opposite reaction.' This justifies that whenever we do an action either mentally or physically we create a cause of an action and this cause of an action finally bears the fruit of the action. This cyclic order of cause of an action and thus its bearing the fruit of consequence leads to the concept of samsara and the law of birth and death. Therefore Hinduism propounds that the 'karma in the present affects one's future as well as the nature and quality of future lives— one's samsara'.

10.6 CONCEPT OF GOD AND MAN IN HINDUISM

Hinduism believes in the principle that 'God exists'. Faith on the existence of the Supreme Being is the essential and comprehensive analysis of all Upanishads. Existence of God is accepted as self-evident. This is the simple theistic proposition in most religions of the world. But in Hinduism this simple proposition is the foundation-stone of spiritualism and to be more emphatic it is more than mere theism. Hinduism which is more a philosophy than a religion, as already been stated, can withstand all inscrutable and unquestioned mysteries of Nature while analyzing comprehensively this principle that 'God exists'. You should always remember here that the existence of God as the first and necessary axiom distinguishes Hinduism from Buddhism and Jainism. Buddhism and Jainism being non-Vedic or heterodox system of Hinduism do not find their faiths on the existence of God (Supreme Being) as the First Cause. Hinduism accepts that the first cause which is the Universal Soul i.e. the Supreme Being is manifested in and through every form of existence. This is the thrust of spiritualism that Hinduism beholds while encouraging the philosophy of monotheism.

Thus, the concept of God is very comprehensive and mystic. Often controversies arises in the mind of the critics that whether Hindus believe in Personal or Impersonal God, whether Hindu religion believes in monotheism or polytheism or even atheism but there is no confusion or dispute to the question in the Hindu scriptures that there exists the Supreme Conscious Spirit. This Spirit or Soul is called as 'Brahman'. This 'elan-vital spiritual Supra Consciousness is eternal, one, absolute and the emancipated alone'. Hinduism allows pantheism because it advocates that 'God is in every existence'. This is the monotheistic attitude of Hindu religion stating that Brahman permeates through the entire creation through eternity.

Thus Hinduism makes Nature only a part and parcel of the Infinite Cosmic propeller of the Universe. Here the material effect of nature is made limited to the First cause of the universe i.e. God. This is the true significance of 'Pantheism'. Thus Nature is neither blind nor Nature is the first cause of this universe. The seers made deep speculation to the question that: 'what is the source of all material existence?' and logically concluded through meditation the existence of an unseen and unknown factor which is none else than the First cause. This First Cause is coined as 'God' in Hindu religion. God therefore is considered as the Creator, Preserver and ultimately Destroyer of the Universe.

Thus in Mundaka Upanishad (1.i, 3) it is stated:

When all is known, something yet remains and hence arises the query—
"What is the thing, O Sir, by knowing which
We may know all that is to be known?"

Again the reply to this question is stated in Chandogya Upanishad (VI, I,3) as:

"That knowledge,— the knowledge of the Supreme Being—
Through which what was unheard becomes heard,
What was unthought of becomes comprehended,
What was unknown becomes known."

It may be added here that Hindu religion in general accepted the universal form of deities in a triad of three gods. They are namely, Brahma,

Visnu and Mahesvara or Siva. These gods represent respectively god of creation, god of preservation, and god of destruction. This is the concept of trinity in Hinduism. The concept of trinity is the symbolic expression of the Impersonal Supreme Consciousness or the Supreme Being. God thus represents the only power that subsists in an all changing, perishable Universe. God represents the master of Nature and thus the Regulator of all its forces. Thus, Hindu religion concludes that matter on its own has no power of creation and as such the power of creation is attributed to Divine Conscious Power and it is called Brahman. This reminds us of Herbert Spencer who concludes 'that the power which manifests throughout the Universe is a conscious power'. Thus from the perspective of 'Impersonal Being Conscious Existence' the Seers call it as Brahman on the other hand from the perspective of 'Personal Being Conscious Existence' a theist calls it as the Supreme God. Henceforth, the Absolute Reality (Brahman) is both Impersonal and Personal. The Impersonal Brahman takes the role of a Personal God to fulfill the purpose of creation, preservation and destruction. Thus, in Hinduism, polytheism logically merges into monotheism. You must remember here that 'the Impersonal Brahman and the Personal Iswara are not separate entities. Out of the formless Brahman emerges the Almighty Creator, and yet Brahman remains as full as before'. Noss explains in this reference as "Brahman-Atman, the impersonal ultimate reality, achieves a religiously significant threefold manifestation or Trimurti through the three personal deities who represent the divine functions of creation, destruction and preservation respectively."

In fact to many of your surprising queries that whom does the Hindus worship? Again it is a common understanding that there are 33 crores of gods and goddess in Hinduism. The simple reply to this naive understanding is: 'The Hindus worship a number of deities, and yet believe that God is one'. From the Vedic Cult, the Hindus worship many gods and goddesses. These Gods are the personifications of Nature. Natural phenomena were represented through the personification of gods and goddess. The most popular amongst the gods representing the natural phenomena are Indra,

Mitra, Varuna, Agni etc. At the same time in the Vedic era itself the seers realized that the different deities are the manifestation of the Absolute Supreme Reality. Therefore the Vedas conclude that the same reality is called by various names (Ekam sadvipra bahudha vadanti). Maxmuller observes that this tendency of the Vedic culture of polytheism piercing towards monotheism symbolizes the character of henotheism.

God is revealed in the hearts of the Hindus as 'Antaryami'. God is the spiritual indweller of mystic feelings. God is the substratum of all divine values. God is thus omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. God is Holy. God is Wisdom. God is Bliss. God has the dual condition of cit (consciousness) and acit (unconsciousness) in Himself. God is therefore called as the Purusottama in the Bhagavad Gita. The quintessence of Hinduism anchors in the glory: "To Attain God, You Must Be God-like yourself".



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10 : What is the core essence of Hinduism?

Ans.....

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Q 11 : Why Hinduism accepts the concept of Trinity as a symbolic representative of the Impersonal God?

Ans.....

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Q 12 : Fill in the blanks :

a) In Hinduism Gods are regarded as the personifications of .....

b) God is revealed in the hearts of the Hindus as .....

10.6 HINDUISM AND MOKSHA

Hinduism believes that the physical death of an individual is not an end of life. The immortal soul of man transmigrates from the past life to a new life and this is the concept of rebirth in Hinduism. The soul has to be reborn according to one's past action. Bhagavad Gita says in this context: "Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new even so does the embodied souls cast off worn-out bodies and take on others that are new." If you remember that the doctrine of rebirth is fundamentally related with the doctrine of karma. The law of karma in Hinduism gives rise to a basic postulate of the attainment of moksha and it is the goal of human life in Hinduism. Moksha is that fundamental principle of life which explains that human life is the means for a higher end. Moksha in this becomes the end of human life and law of karma becomes the means because it is our karmic accountability which makes the life liberated. It is disassociated human karma which allows liberation from the process of transmigration of the soul i.e. from the process of continuous birth and death.

You have already come to know that it is association with human karmic accountability which leads to human sufferings in life. Moksha i.e. freedom from the cycle of birth and death refers 'to let loose, or let go'. In Hindu faith it is stated that the Jiva (empirical self) in its liberated state reveals its condition of being divine i.e. So'ham, 'I am already that Brahman itself' and as such the Jiva (empirical self) realizes consciously the divine qualities of wisdom, purity, tolerance, kaivalya and nirvana. This conscious awareness of the pure self (the Divine self) brings an end in the cycle of repeated death and rebirth (reincarnation) in the Jiva. Therefore Moksha is called Mukti (freedom) by the Yogis. Here you should remember that the literal meaning of the word 'Yoga' is union i.e. 'spiritual union of the individual soul with the Universal Soul and is used in this sense in the Vedanta'. Yoga is also defined as the cessation of the modification of chitta. So it can be said that in the state of salvation or mukti (Moksha) the chitta is free from all

different types of mental modifications. Hence Yoga is also popularly known as 'Raja Yoga'. Ordinarily speaking the Jiva is associated within the realm of the physical law of nature (Samsara) and thereby allows modifications in the Chitta and consequently there arises different kinds of sufferings in the life of the individuals. The individual self in the process of bhava- chakra (cycle of birth and death) subjects itself to bondage. On the other hand when there is that conscious inner urge to free oneself from the cycle of birth and death all mental modifications are arrested. Here the individual realizes pure consciousness in the Chitta and this is the life of a Yogi.

In the Bhagavad Gita this spiritual union is possible through different processes. They are namely, through the process of right knowledge (jnana), or devotion (bhakti), or right action (desire-less karma), or through raja yoga. According to Hindu faith, purity, self-control, truthfulness, ahimsa, tolerance and compassion for all living existence are very much fundamental to lead a spiritual life. Hence it is acknowledged that self-realization is the keynote or the best means to achieve moksa or freedom in the life of the individual.

In addition to these four means of spiritual activities there are four purusharthas in the Hindu philosophy of attaining moksa. On this issues related with ethics and morality, in Hinduism we have the different sources like the philosophical scriptures, the Puranas, the two great epics, like Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as the Dharmashastras. The four purusharthas that constitute the supreme ends of human life actually form the social system of Indian culture. Hinduism shapes the culture of Indian society with a definite value system with the purpose of cultivating the total transformation of the life of an individual. Thus we find the four purusharthas as viz. desire for happiness (kama), wealth (artha), virtue (dharma), and liberation (moksha). Desire for happiness encourages action (karma). Any moral standard which explains the right and wrong of individual actions from the practical standpoint never overlooks the necessity of satisfaction of worldly desires and therefore the consequences of happiness. To be more emphatic on the issue of the necessity of satisfaction of worldly desires there must be a proper rule or means to attain happiness. The second end

is wealth. Wealth is very important to uplift the society. Wealth allows virtue in human attitude towards the social outlook of 'lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world'. Wealth or artha can be also used in the context of an individual skill in life. It is through individual skill in life one can perform activities for social welfare. A skilled individual can be moral in performing the desired activity because artha or skill provides confidence in the life of an individual. The third end is virtue which refers to dharma or the standard for morality. It is virtue or dharma which regulates social life. In Hinduism it is understood that happiness is superior to wealth on one hand and on the other virtue is superior to happiness and wealth. Virtue is an end in itself as Hinduism advocates the philosophy that every jiva is the manifestation of the Brahman itself. Divinity of the self allows that morality is an end in itself and therefore purusharthas become the means to attain a blissful life in the worldly life. In Hinduism we find that virtue or moral standard is a value of the conscience of the individual. Virtue beholds the intrinsic value of the conscience. In Bhagavad Gita you will find that it is the question of 'ought' which is accepted as paradigm for moral standard. The reply for the question: 'What ought I to do to follow the moral standard?' the reply is: ' I should do that which will pursue for 'lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world'. You should remember that ''lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world' does not support utilitarianism i.e. greatest good for the greatest number because virtue or moral issues is related with dharma in Hinduism. In hedonism, we know that utilitarianism supports pleasure as an end of moral standard. But in Hinduism, 'lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world' is above human pleasure as it supports Dharma as that value which binds human social existence. Dharma or virtue induces bliss or contentment in human life. Therefore the last stage is moksha or freedom. This is salvation. Salvation is mukti from the empirical bondage. Empirical bondage leads to sufferings as in this state of mind the individual hankers for individual self-vested interest. While in the liberated state the individual performs every activity for 'lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world' and thus attains bliss in the 'Being-Existence'. Thus Hinduism advocates that to attain liberation is the

only goal or the highest end of individual life. Man realizes the spiritual existence of the 'Self', i.e. realizes of Sat-Chit-Ananda is possible in the state of liberation. Jiva thus consequently gets free from the bondage of life after death.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 13: What are four purusharthas in the Hindu philosophy?

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Q 14: How does Hinduism explain the theory of karma?

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Q 15: What is the meaning of 'lokasamgraha' in Bhagavad Gita?

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10.7 LET US SUM UP

- The core of Hinduism consists of holistic nature of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the scriptures including the two great epics.
- Hinduism which is one of the most ancient living religions of the world make an enquiry on wisdom which ends with the words 'Tat tvam asi'—'that thou art', meaning that the Atman is essentially Brahman.

- Geographically recalling, the word Hinduism is related with the great river 'Sindhu'.
- Hinduism as a philosophy of life orientation depends more thoroughly on the works of various schools of philosophy (Darshanas)
- In fact the Bhagavad Gita is described as 'the divine commentary on the Vedanta' because it represents the quintessence of the Vedanta
- In Hinduism we find different sources like the philosophical scriptures, the Puranas, the two great epics, like Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as the Dharmashastras.
- Moksha i.e. freedom from the cycle of birth and death refers 'to let loose, or let go'. In Hindu faith it is stated that the Jiva (empirical self) in its liberated state reveals its condition of being divine i.e. So'ham, 'I am already that Brahman itself' and as such the Jiva (empirical self) realizes consciously the divine qualities of wisdom, purity, tolerance, kaivalya and nirvana.
- Divinity of the self allows that morality is an end in itself and therefore purusharthas become the means to attain a blissful life in the worldly life. In Hinduism we find that virtue or moral standard is a value of the conscience of the individual. Virtue beholds the intrinsic value of the conscience.



10.8 FURTHER READINGS

1) Brahma, N.K. (2007). *The Fundamentals of Religion*. Prentice Hall of India, Pvt. Limited, New Delhi .
2) Chatterji, Pritibhushan (1971) *Studies in Comparative Religion*. Das Gupta & Co. Pvt. Limited, Calcutta.
3) Madan, T.N. (1991) *Oxford in India Readings in Sociology and Social anthropology*.
4) Sinha, J.N.(2006) *Outlines Of Indian Philosophy*. New Central Book Agency (P) LTD. Calcutta Reprinted.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q No 1 : The literal meaning of the word 'darsana' means to see i.e., "see thyself". It represents the divine truth of the elevated spiritual consciousness of the great seers. It is not merely an intellectual quest for the divine truth rather deeply grounded on direct perception of the 'Self'.

Answer to Q No 2 : Hinduism is called as the 'Sanatana Dharama' because it has never been made but grown with the development of human culture and civilization This 'eternal religion' (Sanatana Dharma) represents revealed faith or knowledge of different preceptors or seers and sages. Hinduism is called Sanatana Dharma because it is a religion which comes down to people through eternity.

Answer to Q No 3 : a) Yes b) No

Answer to Q No 4 : In Hinduism spiritual knowledge is derived from three sources namely the Seers, sectarian works of the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is also derived from the literary sources like the two great epics namely the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Bhagavad Gita and the Puranas are considered as fundamental sources of Hinduism.

Answer to Q No 5 : The Upanishads embodied in themselves the essential philosophical principles of Hinduism and are often known as the Vedanta. The Upanishads play an important role in the development of Hinduism because we find that all the Upanishads try to explore and analyse the 'universal principles of Truth'. It is because of its uniqueness for the quest of eternal Truth, the Upanishads have sustained the changes of Time, aggressiveness of science and materialism along with Hinduism. The Upanishads are therefore nerve of Hindu philosophy.

Answer to Q No 6 : Buddhism and Jainism

Answer to Q. No. 7 : Hinduism is more a philosophy than religion because the philosophical speculation of Hinduism constitutes the fundamental backdrop of the inward religious consciousness of Hindu religion. But ultimately both philosophy and religion are intertwined with each other quite comfortably and within the dimension of reason and understanding in Hinduism. Moreover the religious scriptures of different Hindu religions have accepted the authority of the Sruti, the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas which are also the sources of Hinduism. It is perhaps of this essential feature, we find the spirit of catholicity and elasticity in Hinduism and in various Hindu religions.

Answer to Q. No. 8 : The most fundamental postulate of Hinduism is the concept of 'the all- pervasive Brahman'. Herein lies the essence of monotheism in Hinduism. Monotheism has developed in Hinduism fundamentally along with the essential teaching of the Upanishads. The Upanishads advocate the divinity of the self. The finite self is the manifestation of the Absolute itself. Monotheism reveals in Hinduism because in Hinduism, it is conceived that Brahman resides within each individual consciousness and this individual consciousness is the Atman or the spiritual self and is not ultimately separated from the Brahman. Thus from this we find the phrase of the Upanishads that 'amrtasya putrah' i.e. children of immortality.

Answer to Q. No. 9 : Moksha is defined as attainment of freedom from the cycle of birth and death. When the individual life aims for higher end, that is moksha, the soul becomes free from all worldly sufferings. In this state of human existence (Moksha), the individual soul realizes its own limitations created by one's own ignorance of the blissful nature of the self.

Ans. to Q. No. 10 : Hinduism believes in the principle that God exists. Existence of God is accepted as self-evident. Existence of God is the first and necessary axiom in Hinduism and it is the Universal Soul or the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is manifested in

and through every form of existence. This is the core essence of Hinduism.

Ans. to Q. No. 11 : Hindu religion in general accepted the universal form of deities in a triad of three gods. They are namely, Brahma, Visnu and Mahesvara or Siva. These gods represent respectively god of creation, god of preservation and god of destruction. This is the concept of trinity in Hinduism. The concept of trinity is the symbolic expression of the Impersonal Supreme Consciousness or the Supreme Being. Thus Hinduism accepts the concept of Trinity as a symbolic representative of the Impersonal God.

Ans. to Q. No. 12 : a) Nature b) Antaryami

Answer to Q. No. 13 : The four purusharthas in Hinduism are viz. desire for happiness (kama), wealth (artha), virtue (dharma), and liberation (moksha).

Answer to Q. No. 14: In Hinduism the law of causation forms an integral part of Hindu philosophy and Hindu religion. The law of cause and effect is coined as 'Karma'. The Hindu doctrine of rebirth and law of karma constitute the doctrine of freedom and perseverance. The doctrine of law of karma illuminates the hope of an individual to improve the moments of one's living experiences carried through his thoughts, words and deeds.

Answer to Q. No. 15: In Bhagavad Gita the question of 'ought' is accepted as paradigm for moral standard. The reply for the question: 'What ought I to do to follow the moral standard?' the reply is: ' I should do that which will pursue for 'lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world'. Therefore the Bhagavad Gita states that ''lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world' does not support utilitarianism i.e. greatest good for the greatest number because virtue or moral issues is related with dharma in Hinduism. In Hinduism, 'lokasamgraha' or 'well-being of the world' is above human pleasure because it supports Dharma as that value which binds human social existence.



10.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very short questions

Q 1: Write the meaning of 'Tat tvam asi'.

Q 2: Mention the river out of which the word 'Hindu' has been evolved.

Q 3: Mention one of the characteristics of Hinduism.

Q 4: What is the essence of Hinduism?

Q 5: What is meant by lokasangraha?

Q 6: What are the four purusharthas?

Q 7: What is pantheism?

Q 8: What is trinity?

Q 9: Write the meaning of 'Ekam Sadvprabahudha Vadanti'.

Q 10: State the meaning of 'Antaryami'.

Q 11: Name some deities of Hinduism.

B. Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Why Hinduism is called as Sanatan? Briefly explain

Q 2: Write a note on the concept of moksha in Hinduism.

Q 3: Write a note on the doctrine of law of karma in Hinduism.

Q 4: Explain briefly the concept of lokasangraha.

C. Long questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the characteristics of Hinduism.

Q 2: How do you understand that Hinduism is more a philosophy than religion?

Q 3: How does Hinduism explain the Law of Karma?

Q 4: How does Hinduism explain the concept of rebirth?

Q 5: Discuss the concept of liberation in Hinduism.

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UNIT 11 : THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 What is evil?

11.4 The Basic Problem

11.5 The Existence of Evil

11.6 “Evil”: different views

11.7 Why do Evil and Suffering Exist?

11.8 Let Us Sum Up

11.9 Further Readings

11.10 Answers to Check your Progress

11.11 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of evil
- Discuss the existence of Evil
- Describe evil from different viewpoints
- Explain why Evil does and Sufferings exist.

11.2: INTRODUCTION

“Both good and evil belong to the relative world, to phenomena”- Swami Vivekananda. Throughout the ages the problem of good and evil has been discussed by philosophers and religious teachers of both the East and the West, and many and varied have been the solutions offered. The two oppositional forces, evil and good, are at war with each other. We find this conflict everywhere in the universe, within us and outside us. The two forces are so intermixed that it is impossible to separate them. Man’s life is a mixture of good and evil. Good and evil are correlative facts.

Therefore any attempt to understand evil by itself apart from the idea of good is an impossible matter.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Both good and evil belong to the relative world, to phenomena"- Who said this?

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11.3 WHAT IS EVIL?

Both good and evil are found to be very prominent in Christianity. God had created man good, but he turned to the flesh and became subject to evil and sin. The first man's original sin was transmitted to all men-his descendants. All the forces of evil and sin came to be personified in Satan. Thus in traditional Christianity, two beings seem to be functioning-God, the force of all good, and the Devil, the source of all evil.

The Vedanta philosophy declares that God or the Supreme Being is unaffected by evil and stands above relative good which is the correlative of evil. Both relative good and relative evil have a common origin. They are two-fold manifestations of the same cosmic power, universal energy on the plane of phenomena.

According to Plato, the world of pure, unchanging ideas is the world of good. The world of sense, the world of change is evil.

The Sophists held that "Man is the measure of himself", and so each man could frame his own code of good and evil-a theory which is undoubtedly most dangerous to follow in life.

Leibniz considered evil to be due to the imperfections that are inherent in the construction of the finite elements of the universe.

Bosanquet says, "There is nothing in evil which cannot be absorbed in good and contributory to it, it springs from the same source as good and value."

According to Philip and Alexandrian, God was perfect purity and the source of all good. Matter was the source of all evil. Spinoza says that evils are due to our narrow outlook on things, that evil appears as such only because we look at things from the standpoint of a particular interest, but disappears into nothingness when we enlarge our outlook and learn to look at things from the standpoint of the whole or God.

According to Hegel evils are only irrational elements tending to become good or rational, because Reality which is rational through and through must see that the irrationality or evil is rationalised. Both Spinoza and Hegel particularly denied the reality of evil.



LET US KNOW

- Plato: Greek philosopher who drew a strict distinction between appearance and reality, developed the theory of forms as an account of immutable truth, and argued that only the wisest members of a society should be trusted to rule.
- Sophists: Pre-Socratic philosophers who offered to teach young Athenians how to use logic and rhetoric to defeat opponents in any controversy.
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz(1646-1716):German philosopher, mathematician , and polymath. Some of his books are- Discourse of Metaphysics (1685), Theodicy(1710), Monadology(1713) etc.
- Bernard Bosanquet(1848-1923): British philosopher who defended a modified version of Hegel's absolute idealism in Logic, or the Morphology of Knowledge (1888). According to Bosanquet, all contradictions are merely apparent and are wholly harmonised as part of the Absolute, a process said to account for the possibility of judgements about beauty in his History of Aesthetics(1892)

- Benedict de Spinoza(1632-1677) : Portuguese-Dutch Jewish philosopher who developed a monistic account of the universe as a single infinite substance (God or Nature) whose essential features flow with logical necessity and include, as modes, every finite being.
- George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel(1770-1831): German philosopher who employed a dialectical logic(moving from thesis to antithesis to synthesis) and its corollary analysis of historical inevitability, in support of an idealism in which human culture is properly seen as a manifestation of the self-consciousness of the Absolute.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2 : State whether the following statements are True or False

a) Only good is found to be very prominent in Christianity. (T/F)

b) The Vedanta philosophy declares that God or the Supreme Being is unaffected by evil and stands above relative good which is the correlative of evil. (T/F)

c) According to Plato, the world of pure, unchanging ideas is the world of good. (T/F)

Q 3 : Fill in the blanks

a) The Sophists held that “Man is the ……. of himself”.

b) …….considered evil to be due to the imperfections that are inherent in the construction of the finitely elements of the universe.

Q 4 : What is Bosanquet’s view on Evil?

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Q 5 : What is Spinoza's view on Evil?

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Q 6 : What is Hegel's view on Evil?

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11.4 THE BASIC PROBLEM

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, all-wise and all good, yet He has 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 virtue or sin of anybody. He does not punish the wicked or reward the virtuous. Our intelligence being covered, as it were, with the cloud of ignorance and relatively deluded as we are, we imagine, on account of our imperfect understanding, that God creates good or evil that His creation is good or evil, that He punishes or rewards

There are many of other questions, e.g., Will there always be evil? Is my sickness due to my sin? Does God heal everybody who has faith? Is demon possession another name for psychiatric disorder? These are entirely legitimate and important matters, but they are not what are at stake here. We wish to know whether the existence of evil disproves the existence of God or whether the existence of evil makes it unreasonable or implausible to disbelieve in God.

Rather than attempt to define 'evil' in terms of some theological theory, it seems better to define it ostensively, by indicating that to which the word refers. It refers to physical pain, mental suffering, and moral wickedness. The last is one of the causes of the first two, for an enormous amount of human pain arises from people's inhumanity. As a challenge to theism, the problem of evil has traditionally been posed in the form of a dilemma: if God perfectly loves, God must wish to abolish all evil; and if God is all-powerful, God must be able to abolish all evil. But evil exists; therefore God cannot be both omnipotent and perfect loving.

From above discussions we have come to know, "The problem of evil" labels a unique problem that arises in the context of theism. Essentially, it is the problem of explaining how evil can exist if God exists. We can formulate the problem most economically as an inconsistent triad. (An inconsistent triad is a set of three statements, the truth of any two of which implies the falsity of the third.) The inconsistent triad relevant here can be formulated as follows:

i) God is all-powerful;

ii) God is all-good;

iii) Evil exists.

Evil is understood here to mean the intrinsically regrettable-anything that is in itself negative, anything that the world would be better off without. Physical pain and suffering are generally acknowledged to be examples of evil in this sense. It seems quite obvious, then, why many philosophers think (i), (ii) and (iii) form an inconsistent triad (i) implies that God could

prevent any instance of evil; (ii) implies that God would want to prevent any instance of evil; so if (i) and (ii) are true, (iii) should be false.

There are two other possibilities. Suppose (i) and (iii) are true-that is, suppose that, despite that existence of an all-powerful God, evil exists. It then looks as if (ii) is false-that is, it looks as if it is false that God wants to prevent evil. Finally, suppose (ii) and (iii) are true-that is, that is, that evil exists despite God wanting to prevent it. It then looks as if God cannot prevent evil, which means that (i) is false.

An inconsistent triad is a set of three statements, the truth of any two of which implies the falsity of the third.



ACTIVITY 11.1

How would you describe, in your own words, what the "problem of evil" is?

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Who created the world?

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Q 8: Fill in the blanks:

a) It is natural to ask how evil entered the world if it has been created by a ……..power.

b) There are many of other questions, e.g., Will there always be ……? Is my sickness due to my ……..? Does God ……. everybody who has faith?

c) As a challenge to theism, the problem of evil has traditionally been posed in the form of a ……..

Q 9: What is the inconsistent triad?

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11.5 THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL

Some philosophers have indeed held that above mentioned (iii) is false. Many complicated and subtle arguments have been advanced over the centuries to “explain away” the apparent existence of evil. Is it possible that something like pain should turn out not to be evil? What argument could possibly show that? It is sometimes argued either that pain serves a function, or that pain is necessary (and thus turns out not to be evil). How should this approach be evaluated?

First, even if pain serves a function (alerting organisms to negative states of their bodies), this does mean that the pain itself is not intrinsically regrettable. True, we might be inclined to tolerate something that is in itself evil if it does us some good, but an evil we tolerate in this manner is not transformed into something good. And although nature might not have been able to do so, God (being both omniscient and omnipotent) could presumably have devised a warning system that did not involve pain.

Second, even if pain is necessary, this does mean that pain is not an evil; all it means is that pain is a necessary evil. Most of us do think some pain is a necessary evil. In this spirit, I allow the dentist to cause me pain because I believe the pain is necessary for my long-term dental health (which in turn means, among other things, a future with less pain). Humans of good will try to eliminate pain where they can, though obviously much pain remains. Whether there is any pain God could not eliminate is a difficult question, and one not answered in the same way by all philosophers.



ACTIVITY 11.2

1. What answer would you give to someone who raises "the problem of evil?"

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11.6. EVIL : DIFFERENT VIEWS

There is no gain saying the fact that evil and suffering do exist in this world and they do on a sufficiently large scale; that is one of the main reasons for the existence of religion, ethics or state. This fact leads to some important questions: Why do the evil and suffering exist? Is the world all suffering or all evil or is there any place for good in it also? Who is responsible for this? What can be the measures for eradicating or controlling the evils? Theologians and political philosophers have given theoretical bases for different moral codes advocated by them that vary from universal love to some lunatic doctrines of racial superiority, nationalism, caste divisions, etc. A brief review of some of them is necessary for drawing the final conclusions.

Hindu Thought:

Hindu thinkers have ignored the problem of evil and suffering, for the world is unreal and consequently the existence of evil should not be of much concern. The proper course for the human soul is to seek *Moksa,* Liberation or union with God by renouncing and discarding the vain show of appearance called the world. Since the world is only a dream, the evil in the world cannot be of a more enduring substance. So a man of religion should not be worried about evil. Suffering in the world is a hard fact; nobody can deny. Opinions differ regarding their causes and consequently their remedies.



LET US KNOW

Moksa: (Sanskrit) liberation from the cycle of existence (samsara) .

Buddhism :

In Buddhism the very existence is considered to be an evil; life means sorrow and the only escape from sorrow is to escape from life. There is no God; there exists only an impersonal and inexorable Law of *Karma* which attaches fitting consequences to a merit and demerit. When a disciple ceases to desire he escapes and attains *Nirvana.* Life is thus evil and suffering.



LET US KNOW

Nirvana: According to Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy in Buddhism, the perfect or beatific state, characterized by the extinction of desires and passions, and the transcending of the separate existence of the self. Free from bondage.

Islam :

In Islam we find a counterpart of Satan in the fallen angel Iblis, although his position is a bit different from that of Satan. Iblis simply refuse to obey God when God commanded all the angels to worship man as the highest creation. Iblis dared to refuse but said that he so loved God that he could not bow down before any other creature, even though he was the best creation of God. So Iblis was a devil who worshiped God and therefore it is not an operative principle of Evil. The evil doer of the Quran is not the man who believes in Evil but the man who does not believe in God. So the dualism of God and Satan establishes one fact that the Semitic religions believe in principle of evil.

Sāmkhya :

This dualism is found in certain philosophic systems of India also, as **Sāmkhya**, which hold spirit and Prakṛti *(Māyā)* to be separate eternal entities, the love of *Māyā* resulting in Evil and that of the spirit in good, each having no control over the other.

Semitic religion :

The Semitic religions believe in the principle of evil, which is represented by Satan. The presence of this negative, defiling and diabolic principle is considered to be as eternal as God. The good and Evil exist side by side, each supported by supreme power, God in case of the former and the Satan in case of latter. It was Satan, according to Christian mythology, who through a serpent made Eve eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which resulted in all kinds of evils and sufferings in the world. Zoroastrianism believes in two different Gods: Ahura Mazdah also known as Ormuzd of good and Ahriman of evil.



LET US KNOW

St. Augustine: Theologian and philosopher. Augustine of Hippo was the first to develop theodicy. He rejected the idea that evil exists in itself, instead regarding it as a corruption of goodness, caused by humanity's abuse of free will.

He believed in the existence of a physical hell as a punishment for sin, but argued that those who choose to accept the salvation of Jesus Christ will go to heaven.

The Irenanean Theodicy :

Even from before the time of Augustine another response to the problem of evil had already been present within the developing Christian tradition. This has basis in the thought of the early Greek-speaking Fathers of the Church, perhaps the most important of whom was St. Irenaeus. He distinguished two stages of the creation of the human race. In the first stage human beings were brought into existence as intelligent animals endowed with the capacity for immense moral and spiritual development. In the second stage, human beings through their free will make themselves into the divine likeness.



LET US KNOW

- **Theodicy :** theodicy in its most common form, attempts to answer the question why a good God permits the manifestation of evil.

- **Irenaean Theodicy :** this is a Christian theodicy designed to respond to the problem of evil. As such, it defends the probability of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God in the face of evidence of evil in the world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10 : Fill in the blanks:

a) Hindu thinkers have ignored the problem of …….. and ……, for the world is unreal and consequently the existence

of evil should not be of much concern.

b) In Islam we find a counterpart of …… in the angel ……, although his position is a bit different from that of Satan.

c) **Sāmkhya***,* which hold ……..…… and *Prakrti (Māyā)* to be separate eternal entities,

Q.11: State whether the following statements are True or False.

a) The Semitic religions believe in the principle of evil, which is represented by Satan.(T/F)

b) Zoroastrianism believes in two different Gods: Ahura Mazdah also known as Ormuzd of good and Ahriman of evil.(T/F)

c) Schopenhauer, a French philosopher.(T/F)

d) Thus Augustine could say, “All evil is either sin or the punishment for sin” (T/F)

11.7. WHY DO EVIL AND SUFFERING EXIST?

The answer lies in the constitution of man. Man consists of five senses and Ego; lust, anger, avarice, attachment and pride are a part of his nature. Besides these, man is gifted with intellect, mind and spirit. With the help of intellect and guidance of spirit he can judge whether a certain thing is good or bad. He has been endowed with free will and he can avoid the evil if he so likes. So the nature has thrown the whole responsibility of action on him; suffering is his own creation. The suffering ends when the individual achieves union with God by pulling down the wall between the not-Self and Self. Man took the responsibility on himself when Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

Most of the degenerative diseases man suffers from are due to the fact that the civilized human beings do not live in harmony with the Divine Nature. They love to intensify their physical selfhood and separateness through gluttony, excitement, craving, over stimulation, chronic anxiety over money etc. along with all these alternatives there is another choice available — the

desire to unite with God. So it is the wrong use of intellect and the free that leads to suffering. Those who fall prey to these wrong motives suffer; others do not.

This brings us to the need of Ethics and sound basis of society. Neither natural science, nor philosophical intellectual speculation can rescue man from suffering. The world is not illusion to sleep over human suffering. Something must be done to alleviate the suffering of common man, especially the suffering for which an individual cannot be held responsible. The social evils have to be fought tooth and nail. A religion, closing eyes over such ills in society, cannot remain a living religion; it loses its right to be a religion. It must establish some socio-ethical values compatible with its teaching and methods to enforce them.



11.8. LET US SUM UP

We have discussed in this unit the problem of evil. The most important points are:

- Man's life is a mixture of good and evil. Good and evil are correlative facts.
- Both good and evil are found to be very prominent in Christianity.
- Vedanta philosophy declares that God or the Supreme Being is unaffected by evil and stands above relative good which is the correlative of evil. Both Spinoza and Hegel particularly denied the reality of evil.
- There is a problem of explaining how evil can exist if God exists.
- Hindu thinkers have ignored the problem of evil and suffering. The proper course for the human soul is to seek *Moksa.* Suffering in the world is a hard fact; nobody can deny.
- In Buddhism the very existence is considered to be an evil; life means sorrow and the only escape from sorrow is to escape from life. Life is thus evil and suffering.

- The evildoer of the Quran is not the man who believes in Evil but the man who does not believe in God.
- The dualism of God and Satan establishes one fact that the Semitic religions believe in principle of evil.
- The Semitic religions believe in the principle of evil, which is represented by Satan.
- Schopenhauer, calls the world a will and therefore it must be a world of suffering.
- The main traditional Christian response to the problem of evil was formulated by **St. Augustine (354-430 A.D)**.
- According to Augustine , "All evil is either sin or the punishment for sin"
- Man consists of five senses and Ego; lust, anger, avarice, attachment and pride are a part of his nature.



11.9. FURTHER READINGS

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11.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK UR PROGRESS

Ans/ to Q No 1 : Swami Vivekananda

Ans to Q No 2 : (a). False b) True c) True

Ans to Q No 3 : (a) Measure b) Leibnitz

Ans to Q No 4 : According to Bosanquet **"**There is nothing in evil which cannot be absorbed in good and contributory to it, it springs from the same source as good and value."

Ans to Q No 5 : According to Spinoza , evils are due to our narrow outlook on things, that evil appears as such only because we look at things from the standpoint of a particular interest, but disappears into nothingness when we enlarge our outlook and learn to look at things from the standpoint of the whole or God.

Ans to Q No 6 : According to Hegel evils are only irrational elements tending to become good or rational, because Reality which is rational through and through must see that the irrationality or evil is rationalised. Both Spinoza and Hegel particularly denied the reality of evil.

Ans to Q No 7 : God

Ans to Q No 8 : a) Benevolent b) Evil, sin, heal c) dilemma

Ans to Q No 9 : An inconsistent triad is a set of three statements, the truth of any two of which implies the falsity of the third. The inconsistent triad relevant here can be formulated as follows:

i) God is all-powerful;

ii) God is all-good;

iii) Evil exists.

Evil is understood here to mean the intrinsically regrettable-anything that is in itself negative, anything that the world would be better off without. Physical pain and suffering are generally acknowledged to be examples of evil in this sense. It seems quite obvious, then, why many philosophers think (i), (ii) and (iii) form an inconsistent triad (i) implies that God could prevent any instance of evil; (ii) implies that God would want to prevent any instance of evil; so if (i) and (ii) are true, (iii) should be false.

There are two other possibilities. Suppose (i) and (iii) are true-that is, suppose that, despite that existence of an all-powerful God, evil exists. It then looks as if (ii) is false-that is, it looks as if it is false that God wants to prevent evil. Finally, suppose (ii) and (iii) are true-that is, that evil exists despite God wanting to prevent it. It then looks as if God cannot prevent evil, which means that (i) is false.

Ans to Q No 10: a) Evil, suffering b) Satan, Iblis c) Spirit

Ans to Q No 11: a) True b) True c) False d) True



11.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very short questions

Q 1 : What is the problem of evil?

Q 2 : Who is Plato?

Q 3 : Write the name of two German philosophers.

Q 4 : Which one is the only dualistic system of Indian Philosophy?

B) Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Write short note on:

a) Hindu thought on the problem of evil

b) The Augustinian Theodicy

Q 2 : What is the view of Buddhism about the problem of evil?

Q 3 : Explain briefly the concept of evil.

C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 : Can an omnipotent being do everything? If so, what can't an omnipotent being do?

Q. 2 : Explain philosophical beliefs about the origin of evil and the role of human free will.

Q. 3 : Explain the theodicy of Augustine.

Q. 4 : "The existence of natural evil proves that there is no God"-Discuss.

Q. 5 : Explain the Irenaean theodicy.

Q. 6 : Why do evil and suffering exist? Discuss

UNIT 12: PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD: CAUSAL AND TELEOLOGICAL

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

12.2 Introduction

12.3 The Causal Argument/ The First Cause/ Cosmological Argument

- 12.3.1 The First Cause
- 12.3.2 Aristotle's First Cause Argument
- 12.3.3 Russell's View
- 12.3.4 The Argument from Contingency/ Thomas Aquinas's view
- 12.3.5 Thomist's view
- 12.3.6 Some Steps of Cosmological argument
- 12.3.7 Criticism of the causal argument

12.4 The Teleological Argument for The Existence Of God

- 12.4.1 Plato's view
- 12.4.2 Kant's view
- 12.4.3 Henry More's View and others view.
- 12.4.4 13.4.4 F.R. Tennant's View
- 12.4.5 Criticism of teleological proofs for the existence of God

12.5 Let us Sum Up

12.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.7 Further Readings

12.8 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Explain Causal proofs for the existence of God.
- Discuss Aristotle's First Cause Argument.
- Describe Russell's View.

- Discuss The Argument from Contingency/ Thomas Aquinas's view.
- Describe Thomist's view
- Explain Some Steps of Cosmological argument
- Discuss critically the cosmological argument.
- Explain Teleological proofs for the existence of God.
- Discuss Plato's view on teleology proof
- Discuss Kant's View on teleological proof
- Discuss Henry More's View on teleological proof
- Explain F.R. Tennant's View.
- Discuss critically the teleological argument.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

The notion of God has close relation with religion. Generally we think that religion always includes the concept of God. But along with belief in God religion is concerned with prayer, ritual, customs and other matters. A belief of God does not by itself constitute a religion. Religion includes much more concepts besides it. For example, Buddhism and Jainism are considered as a religion though they do not believe in God.

However, we cannot avoid the concept of God in religious field. Most of us believe in God who is considered as a supernatural being. He is beyond the totality of natural processes. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He has another characteristic that is He is benevolent. Regarding the belief in God all systems are called theism. On the other hand who does not belief in the existence of God is called atheism. It is seen that except few systems every religion accepts the existence of God. They strongly believe that there is a God who is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of this world. He has some supernatural power and so, he is finite.

Philosophers have devised many proofs for the existence of God. In philosophy, we evaluate these proofs by the same standards of logic and

rationality that we apply to any other arguments. Thus, the beliefs in God need some proofs for the existence of it. There are various arguments put forwarded by various philosophers in this context. These arguments are,

1) Cosmological Argument/ Causal Argument/The First Cause
2) Ontological Argument
3) Teleological Argument/ Design Argument
4) Moral Argument



LET US KNOW

- Omnipresence: The capacity of God to be presents everywhere at once
- Omniscient: The property of knowing everything.
- Omnipotent: The word omnipotence derives from the Latin term "Omni Potents" , meaning " All-powerful"



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the traditional proofs for the existence of God?

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12.3 THE CAUSAL ARGUMENT/ THE FIRST CAUSE/ COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

In its elementary form the Cosmological argument was first formulated by Plato. The cosmological argument is one of the traditional arguments for the existence of God. The argument is deductive and based on the world is an event, or effect; therefore it must have had a cause,

outside itself, sufficient to account for its existence. In the widest sense of the term, any theistic argument that proceeds from the world to God can be describe as cosmological, including the design argument. Its premises are that all natural things are dependent for their existence on something else; the totality of dependent beings must then itself depend upon a non-dependent, or necessary existent, being, which is God.



LET US KNOW

Cosmology : The study of the origin and structure of the universe.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2 : What is the first cause, according to Aquinas?

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12.3.1 The First Cause :

Those who believe that God is the first cause of the universe must determine the nature of that first cause. There must be a cause of the series of causes that we experience. Is God the efficient or the material cause? Perhaps He is both efficient and material cause of the universe.

The label cosmological argument really applies to a family of related arguments, all of which begin with observed (or otherwise obvious) features of the universe, or cosmos, and try to show that the only way of explaining these features is by postulating the

existence of God. Motion, cause and effect, contingency are the features most commonly used in this type of argument. Here in condensed form, one sample of cosmological argument:

1) Things move;
They don't move themselves;
Their movers don't move themselves;
This series of movers cannot be finite;
Therefore, there must be a first unmoved mover, whom we call God.

2) Most things are effects;
Their causes are in turn effects;
The cause/ effect series cannot be finite;
Therefore, there must be a first uncaused cause, whom we call God.

These arguments have generated many thousands of pages of commentary, friendly and unfriendly, supportive and critical. It is probably safe to say that few contemporary philosophers accept these arguments. It claims to prove the existence of God from a certain character of things and events, that is, they have dependent origination, conditional or contingent existence. For example, I am not the cause of my own existence. My existence is caused by or is dependent on something outside of me. My birth depends on my parents and my parents' birth is dependent on their parents and we may go as far as possible, we cannot find in this unending causal chain any satisfactory explanation of my birth. It is the demand of the causal principle that we posit a being as cause who is not dependent on any other existence and is sufficient in itself, that is, God.

This argument is further strengthening. It is pointed out that we may admit that the events in the universe have causal explanation in other events in the universe, but what is the universe itself. The causal principle demands of us to accept God as the cause of the total chain of events called universe. It is clear this argument rests on causal principle, i. e., the series of cause and effect must have a cause outside the series that is itself uncaused, i. e. God



LET US KNOW

Cosmos: (Greek, kosmos): The whole world, especially conceived as ordered and law-governed, whether by destiny, fate, justice, divine command, or rational necessity.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3 : Fill in the blanks :

a) It is clear this argument rests on causal principle, i. e., the series of cause and effect must have a cause outside the series that is itself uncaused, i. e. …….

b) Those who believe that God is the first cause of the universe must determine the nature of that

12.2.1 Aristotle's First Cause Argument :

In the Aristotelian – Thomistic tradition, as represented by Catholic theologians the cosmological argument for the existence of God has been given considerable emphasis. We must, it is affirm, differentiate between the accidental and the essential features of reality, or between the temporary objects of experience and those that are permanent. Every event or change pre-supposes a cause. Logically, we must go back to an uncaused, self-existent cause or to a self-existent Being. God is thus immanent in the principle. God is the condition of the orderly development of the universe, as well as its permanent source or ground.

The cosmological argument was first clearly put forward by Aristotle in the west. Aristotle gave the conception of the unmoved mover. The first cause of creation is the 'First Mover' or the Prime

Mover, according to Aristotle. He distinguishes between actuality and potentiality. On the basis of this distinction Aristotle came to the conclusion that something actual is logically prior to whatever is potential. The fact of change must imply the existence of something actual, something purely actual without any mixture of potentiality. According to Aristotle, God is conceived as pure actuality. To Aristotle first cause argument is known as cosmological because according to him everything that happens has a cause, and this cause in turn has a cause, and so on in a series that must be infinite and that infinite cause is known as first cause.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4 : What is the first cause of creation according to Aristotle?

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Q 5 : State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) The cosmological argument was first clearly put forward by Aristotle in the west.(T/F)

b) Aristotle distinguishes between actuality and potentiality.(T/F)

12.3.1 Russell's view :

The greatest philosopher, Bertrand Russell, makes the point clear by an instance. Every one of us has a mother. But it is meaningless to ask who is the mother of the mankind or totality of men. The totality of all men is not a man about whom it is meaningful to ask what the cause of it is. Since the universe is the name for totality of things and events, it is meaningless to ask the cause of it. But it is meaningful to ask the cause of the existence of God, for

God is an entity. Russell tells us that we can say that every human being has a parent, but certainly we cannot say that humanity too has a parent. Hence Russell holds that every event has a cause, but the totality need not have any. Some theists, therefore, try to get out of this situation. They hold that God is not an entity, not a being, he is being of beings. He is the ground of all beings.



LET US KNOW

Russell : (1872-1970): English mathematician and philosopher whose work ranged widely, including attention to formal logic and the philosophy of mathematics, epistemology and metaphysics, and vigorous commitment to unpopular political causes.

12.3.1 The Argument from Contingency/ Thomas Aquinas's view:

The assumption of the cosmological argument from contingency is that existence is prior to essence or idea. The assertion of Aquinas in this context is that the existence of God is not implied by God's essence, but that God's essence is the same as his existence. The causal argument for the existence of God was put forwarded by Thomas Aquinas. According to him there are some general features of the world around us and there could not be world with these particular characteristics unless there were also the ultimate realities, which we call God. Aquinas thinks that if we don't recognize the beginning in series of events, we cannot explain the presence of things in the world.. Aquinas thinks that an infinite series is just a long series. But a series however long it may be is not an infinite series. To deny God is only to deny that there is any first number in the series which is not itself an effect of earlier cause. In an infinite series, no event is denied cause, what is denied is that

it is caused by something which itself is not an effect. The causal argument is based on his second notion that is known as first cause argument. According to Thomas Aquinas every happens or events has a cause and this cause also based on other cause. Thus, there are links of various events to cause, cause-to cause and so on. Aquinas mentioned five ways of proving divine existence. These were,

1) From the fact of change to a prime mover,

2) From the causation to a First Cause.

3) From contingent beings to a Necessary Being.

4) From degrees of value to Absolute Value.

5) From the evidences of purposiveness in nature to a Devine Designer.

Aquinas said that these series causation must have a starting point. According to him this starting point of cause or the first cause is none but God. Aquinas third notion contingency of the world which also known as the cosmological argument formulates the causal arguments in a different way. According to Aquinas everything in the world about us contingent. It is true of each cause that it might not have existed at all or might have existed differently. The proof of this is that there was a time when it did not exist. According to him everything depends on its previous factors and everything points beyond itself to other things. He believes that if we look back considering contingent relation then we will find there would have been a time when nothing existed. Since, there are things in existence there must therefore, be something that is not contingent and this is God. The argument of Aquinas can be more simply put into the following step:

1) All the things of the world are contingent, which is one by one each of each of them at one time can pass away.

2) If there were a complete void at any one time, then even now there should have been a void, for out of nothing, nothing comes.

3) In the finite series of time, all things, one by one, at one time should have ceased to exist. Therefore, at one time, by this time, there should have been nothing. Hence, there should have been a complete void already by this time.

4) But there is something. This something, therefore, is based on something, which is not contingent, i. e., it is a Being, which at no time can cease to be the infinite series of time.

5) This something, which contains the ground of its own existence, is a necessary being. It is this necessary being which is at the basis of all contingent things and which does not allow things in the infinite series of time to pass into nothing.

6) This necessary Being is called God.



LET US KNOW

Thomas Aquinas: Italian Dominican Philosopher and theologician.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6 : What are Aquinas' five ways of proving divine existence?

Ans :.....

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12.3.5 Thomist's view :

The followers of Aquinas who are known as Thomist reformed the above mention view of Aquinas. They considered the series of causes as an endless and eternally inconclusive regress of explanations. According to them if fact A is made intelligible by its

relation to B, C and D and if each of these is in turn rendered intelligible by other facts, at the back of the complex there must be a reality which is self explanatory. This reality constitutes the ultimate explanation of the whole. According to them such reality is God. If God does not exist, then the universe is a mere unintelligible brute fact.

Thomist compares the relationship of world and God to a watch. According to them though a watch consists of different parts, its interlocking wheels gets movement from the spring. So, in order to be a world of contingent realities, there must be non-contingent realities, there must be a non-contingent ground for their existence. Only a self-existent reality containing in itself the source of its own being can constitute an ultimate ground of the existence of anything else. According to Thomists such an ultimate ground is the "necessary being" which is called as God.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7 : Fill in the blanks :

a) Thomist compares the relationship of world and God to a ……...

b) According to Thomists such an ultimate ground is the "…….. " which is called as God.

12.3.6 Some Steps of Cosmological argument:

Philosophers considered that though there are series of causes of God is beyond it. He created the universe out of nothing and thus caused the first event. After that all events follows. Thus, the series of events reaching into the past comes to a stop with God. According to followers of the causal arguments God is root

cause of universe. He is omnipotent and so he can create it. Today there is an important neo –Thomist group of thinkers who hold that there are valid forms of the cosmological argument; some of most important writings from this point of view are listed in note.

Cosmological arguments have the following step s:

1) Every event has a cause, and no event in this world would be without cause.
2) Events keep on happening. The present event A is caused by previous event B , and B in turns by C, C in turns by D , and so on.
3) Quite obviously the causal series is interminable. But in order to understand the whole series of causes and effect, we have to posit a first cause , which in its turn does not imply its further cause.
4) This First Cause, which produces the whole series of causes and effects, is the Mover only and cannot be in turn moved by anything else. This Prime Mover may be called God.
5) Hence, the world of causal series requires God to explain it. Thus God exists as its own cause and in turn as the cause of the world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: Fill in the blanks:

a) Every …… has a ……, and no event in this world would be without cause.

b) Events keep on ……..

12.3.7 Criticism of the causal argument

The casual argument is criticised in following ways,

1) If we accept that everything has a cause, then God cannot remain being uncaused. **Hume** and his followers ask the following questions –If every event must have a cause then what is the cause of the so- called first cause? We may well assumed that casual chain is simply beginning less.

2) Causality or our knowledge of causes lies entirely with the realm of spatio temporal things, processes and events. If God is the cause of this universe He must be limited to spatio temporal relation. But we considered him as beyond all these factors.

3) Every event has a particular cause. The universe is the collection of various events. Therefore, one God cannot concern with all events.

4) God is not the first member of a casual series but the reason why there is any series at all.

5) It is difficult to relate god with the finite casual series. If God is the first cause then He is under the finite casual 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.

6) The famous British empiricist, **Hume**, hold that both the cause and effect are limited. If it is true, then it leads to the conclusion that God is also limited.

7) **Kant'**s objection is more formidable. Causality being a category of the phenomena, cannot take us beyond the phenomena. And within phenomena, the concept of God remains. So it implies the finite regress.

8) 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 efficient and the earth is the material

cause, according to Aristotle. if we say that God is 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.

9) The theists admit that science in its study of events in the universe has discovered no first cause, which is not an effect. But they argue that our understanding is not limited to our empirical experience. We have a prior reason in us, which tells us that everything has a cause and therefore, the world must have a cause, otherwise the world remains unintelligible. We point out to the theists as to why do they stop short at God. Why do they not ask for the cause of God. And if they assert that God is without a cause , why should they hesitate to accept that the world is without a cause.

10) Aquinas thinks that an infinite series is just a long series. But a series however long it may be, is not an infinite series.

11) The cosmological argument reduces God simply to an efficient cause. As a result the relation between God and the world is turned to an external, mechanical relationship. Such a God who is only externally related to the universe does not ultimately satisfy the religious consciousness.

12) Some philosophers point out that this argument assumes without proof that causal monism, rather than causal pluralism is the true view of causal series.

Even though this argument is not sound yet it's historical significance cannot be denied.

The cosmological argument is fallacious. But let us assume that its true. Even then it does not prove the existence of God as defined. God is defined to be not only uncaused cause of the world of existence, or necessary being, but also all good and all knowing. A God who lacked goodness will not be the God whom theists worship,

or Brahman which lacked positive value character of anand would not be the Brahman in whom the Vedantin seeks his absorption



LET US KNOW

Hume :(1711-76) David Hume was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist, who is best known today for his highly influential system of radical philosophical empiricism, scepticism and naturalism.

Kant : (1724-1804): German philosopher who revolutionised modern philosophy, in an effort to counter the sceptical arguments of Hume and provide a firm basis for human knowledge and morality. Kant used transcendental arguments to show that human beings apply synthetic a priori judgements as the preconditions for any possible experience.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9 : who are the critics of Cosmological argument?

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12.4 THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The teleological argument of the existence of God is also known as the argument from design in the world. This argument attempts to arrive at the conclusion that God exists by help of empirical proofs. Accordingly, the world is understood as consisting of various contingent realities which are not self sufficient in nature and refer to something beyond them as these

are means toward some end or objective. Thus it appears to common sense that behind this world, there is a purpose for which world is created. For this purpose the world is designed or organized in a different way. Therefore, if there is a purpose then there must be a purposer or designer of the world. The teleological argument is a philosophical device of systematically organizing this common sense belief as logically justifiable as an attempt at rationalizing this belief as a legitimate evidence for the reality of design and to postulate an intelligent designer-someone who 'engineered in' all the purposiveness we see in nature.



LET US KNOW

Telos : *Telos* is the Greek word for Goal, purpose, or end.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10 : What is the other name of teleological argument?

Ans :.....

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12.4.1 Plato's view

Naturally this form of the argument, the so called teleological or the design argument, is one of the oldest devices for justifying belief in God. Perhaps it has its earliest roots in the thought of **Plato**, who argued that the physical universe is unintelligible apart from mind. According to Plato the designer of the world could never be

the first cause, it has a conditional and a borrowed reality and its incompleteness and imperfections are revealing of something, which is the true reality. This argument may take many forms, establishing sovereignty of a divine creator as both the immanent and the transcendent cause of the world, or in the form of dualism of maker and the made, understanding creation out of void or zero or out of preexisting materials giving them form or shape in accordance with a plan. The main contention of the teleological argument is that the universe is not mere aggregate of events but it is a meaningful as an organized whole, in which there is order, harmony and discipline. For the believer this leads to justification of faith in an intelligent designer who has created the universe with strong conviction that the supreme cosmic designer can only be God and nothing else.



LET US KNOW

Plato: (427-347 BCE) Greek philosopher who drew a strict distinction between appearance and reality, develop the theory of forms as an account of immutable truth, and argued that only the wisest members of a society should be trusted to rule.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 11 : State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Perhaps it has its earliest roots in the thought of **Plato**, who argued that the physical universe is unintelligible apart from mind. (T/F)

b) Naturally this form of the argument, the so called teleological or the design argument, is one of the oldest devices for justifying belief in God.(T/F)

12.4.2 Kant's View

Among all the traditional theistic proofs, the design (or teleological) argument is, as **Kant** acknowledges it, the oldest, the clearest, and the most accordant with the common reason of mankind, even though he remained a severe critic of all the proofs for God's existence, including the argument from design. Earlier thinkers often borrowed examples of such purposiveness, or 'good design,' from astronomy. From the nineteenth century onward, the most popular examples could come from biology. Using biological organisms as our example, we can try reformulating the teleological argument as follows: Organisms have features that are purposive; Purposive features must be the result of design; Organisms don't design themselves; and are not designed by humans; Therefore, there is a nonhuman designer, whom we call God.

The teleological argument refers to some features of the universe which are unique and this uniqueness and novelty and complexity in organisms and things rules out any human, who is also made or caused, becoming the designer or the maker of this vast universe. Therefore there must be a divine and a non-human designer. Just as we can infer the nature of the changes in the earth's crust during the past million of years on the basis of geological evidence, in a similar way we can infer the existence and nature of a designer on the basis of certain features of the universe in general. The teleological argument further justifies the fact that the universe is product of designer, as the making of the universe requires a being with intelligence and enough power to shape the materials of the universe in accordance with a plan. The order and the progress in the universe disclose an immanent intelligence and purpose. Let us take, for example, the long process of development leading to the human brain and the mind of man. The process has produced minds that began to understand the world, and it has produced thought

and understanding. How could this occur unless the course of evolution is intelligently directed? That proofs that there must be a supreme being who finally guides the course of evolution. That Supreme Being is called God.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 12 : Fill in the blanks :

a) The order and the progress in the universe disclose an immanent intelligence and ……..……..

b) That proofs that there must be a supreme being who finally guides the course of evolution. That Supreme Being is called ..……...

12.4.3 Henry More's View and Others

There is also other ways of presenting the argument in various forms, with reference to findings in sciences and life sciences. Now, we do find in the world things, like human eye, in which parts are so shaped that they work together to give us sight. From this, we can infer that there must be intelligent cause of the construction of the eye. Let us hear **Henry More**: Now why have we three joints in our legs and arms as also our fingers but that it was much better than having two or four? And why are our fore-teeth sharp like chisels to cut but our inward teeth broad to grind (instead of) the fore-teeth broad and the other sharp? Again, why are the teeth so luckily placed or rather why there are not teeth in other bones as well as in jawbones? But the reason is that nothing is done foolishly or in vain; that is, there is a divine providence that orders all things.

This type of argument has lost its value as the theory of evolution could explain to us why we have the most convenient number of joints in our fingers and why our teeth are in the jawbones. Mutation and Natural Selection explain the adjustment of parts to each other for the purpose of survival. It is true that Darwin's theory is not the complete explanation of the teleological order, it tells us only how some cases develop from other cases. If we think of the structure of the universe on the pattern of a living being like a tree or an animal, instead of on the pattern of a machine, we have no reason to posit a God. A tree in a jungle is not made like a watch. The whole process is purposive but instinctive, with no need of any intelligence or design behind this great show, all is as mechanical and arbitrary as anything chaotic could be.

Further, if there are beneficent adjustments in the universe, say grass for the lamb, there are evil maladjustments too, for there is wolf for the lamb, too. Let us look at the destructiveness in the animal world, where one species is out to destroy the other. There is cruelty and injustice in the jungle where the innocent animals live in terror or suffer death at the hands of strong and forceful animals. Man is heir to diseases, which are not due to his intemperance. No reasoning can wash clean the tragic deaths and sufferings in the human world due to natural calamities like flood, earthquakes, epidemics etc. If there are beautiful cases of valuable adjustments, there are tragic facts of maladjustments, too, and hence it is illegitimate to infer from facts in the world that it is a creation by a *perfectly good God.*

In general the mere struggle for life supports and sustains the higher life forms and all sub serve ultimately to conscious existence. Insects and worms are the victims of small birds; reptiles of still higher and larger birds; the smaller fish of the greater or of the marine mammalian; the carnivorous animals remain the prey of the feline order. Finally, it is in the chase of these, or in conflict with

them, that man learns his first arts, and wins his place at the head of all terrestrial races. This is how Martineau concludes that the design-argument is not based on mere resemblance in nature to the human contrivance, but on the special character of this resemblance.

Because of these critical points many philosophers have attempted to offer certain refined versions of the teleological argument. The most impressive twentieth-century restatement of the design argument is that of **Richard Swinburne** in *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), offering a complex argument based upon Bayes's theorem in probability logic.

12.4.4 F.R. Tennant's View

In the modern period a distinguished philosopher of religion **F. R. Tennant** has offered an influential version of the teleological argument. In his book *Philosophical Theology* Tennant has mention six kinds of adaptation. The whole universe may be considered as a system of adaptations. The basic kinds of adaptations are according to F. R. Tennant, are as follows:

1) The intelligibility of the world. The world and the human mind are so related that we can learn more and more without limit.

2) The adaptation of living organizes to their environments.

3) The ways in which the inorganic world is conducive to the emergence and maintenance of life. Life is possible only certain kind of chemical processes go on, etc.

4) The aesthetic value of nature. Nature is not only suited to penetration by the intellect. It is also constitute so as to awaken valuable aesthetic responses in man.

5) The ways in which the world ministers to the moral life of men. For example, through being forced to learn something about the

uniformities in natural operation, men are forced to develop their intelligence, a prerequisite to moral developments. Moral virtues are acquired in the course of having to cope with the hardship one's natural environment.

6) The overall progressiveness of the evolutionary process.

Having mentioned these six basic types of adaptations Tennant points out that none of them establishes the theistic hypothesis conclusively. But the most reasonable course of things would be to accept the theistic hypothesis as highly probable.

Perhaps the major problem facing the design argument as thus reformulated centers upon the concept of probability that it involves. Tennant's conclusion is that in view of the various considerations which he presents, it is much more probable that there is a God than that there is not. It has often been pointed out that the statistical concept of probability, which is used in the sciences, cannot be applied to the unique case of the universe as a whole in order to be warranted in saying that the probability of our universe being God-produced. When the argument takes this form, it is no longer subject to competition from scientific explanations of the same facts. If our basic datum is a certain configuration of the universe as a whole, science can, by the nature of the case offer no explanation.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 13: Who is the author of *Philosophical Theology?*

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Q 14. What are the basic kinds of adaptations are according to F. R. Tennant?

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12.4.5 Criticism of teleological proofs for the existence of God

Apart from this 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. The watchmaker prepared the watch out of the pre-existing materials; is it applicable in the same way to God? Kant pointed out that the design argument proves the existence of a contriver or an architect of the worlds, not its creator and this designer, as the architect, unlike the creative author, is constrained by the world, which does not keep room for divine freedom.

To overcome these difficulties teleology 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. But there are some general criticisms against such reformulations:

1) That the teleological argument does not prove the existence of a necessary being, a first cause, or even a creator of the universe out of nothing; at best, it could only give evidence that the universe is the product of design which requires a

designer; if He exists He should be called 'God'. Traditionally, we give the name 'God' to a spontaneous creator than an artificial maker.

2) The word 'order' is not very clear, as it is a relative term. The object, which seems orderly to one person, will not be the same to another. Nor is it clear that universe is orderly in any specific sense. In the world there are lots of disorders, disharmonies and disasters. In nature all things are not properly arranged or designed. The order or purpose is not the result of design. Here the defender of teleological argument would reply that the design or order of plants and animals is not the same as in case of watch or house. The order and design of the Divine designer is not relative but absolute.

3) According to Hume we cannot repose perfect confidence in reasoning by analogy. There is a wide difference between the universes on the one hand, and the finite things like machines, houses etc. on the other. The analogy between the world and human architect, such as a watch or a house, is rather weak. The universe is not like a vast machine.

4) Even if we could validly infer a divine designer of the world, we would still not be entitled to postulate the wise God and intelligent God. Besides, from a finite world we can never infer an infinite creator.



12.5 LET US SUM UP

- There are cosmological, ontological, teleological and moral arguments for the existence of God.
- First cause of creation is the 'First Mover' or the Prime Mover, according to Aristotle.

- Aquinas mentioned five ways of proving divine existence. These were, (a) From the fact of change to a prime mover. (b) From the causation to a First Cause. (c) From contingent beings to a Necessary Being. (d)From degrees of value to Absolute Value. (e) From the evidences of purposiveness in nature to a Divine Designer.
- Thomist compares the relationship of world and God to a Watch.
- According to Thomists such an ultimate ground is the "necessary being" which is called as God.
- Every event has a cause, and no event in this world would be without cause.
- Events keep on happening. The present event A is caused by previous event B , and B in turns by C, C in turns by D , and so on.
- Quite obviously the causal series is interminable. But in order to understand the whole series of causes and effect, we have to posit a first cause , which in its turn does not imply its further cause.
- This First Cause, which produces the whole series of causes and effects, is the Mover only and cannot be in turn moved by anything else. This Prime Mover may be called God.
- Hence, the world of causal series requires God to explain it. Thus God exists as its own cause and in turn as the cause of the world.
- Hume and Kant are the two critics of Cosmological Argument.
- The teleological argument of the existence of God is also known as the argument from design in the world.
- Perhaps it has its earliest roots in the thought of **Plato**, who argued that the physical universe is unintelligible apart from mind.
- There are some basic kinds of adaptations are according to F. R. Tennant.



12.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

Ans. to Q No 1:

Arguments are,

1) Cosmological Argument/ Causal Argument/The First Cause

2) Ontological Argument

3) Teleological Argument/ Design Argument

4) Moral Argument

Ans. to Q No 2: God

Ans. to Q No 3: a) God

b) First cause.

Ans. to Q No 4: The first cause of creation is the 'First Mover' or the Prime Mover, according to Aristotle.

Ans. to Q No 5 : a) T b) T

Ans. to Q No 6: Aquinas mentioned five ways of proving divine existence. These were,

1) From the fact of change to a prime mover.

2) From the causation to a First Cause.

3) From contingent beings to a Necessary Being.

4) From degrees of value to Absolute Value.

5) From the evidences of purposiveness in nature to a Devine Designer.

Ans. to Q No 7: a) watch.

b) necessary being.

Ans. to Q No 8: a) event, cause

b) happening.

Ans. to Q No 9: Hume and Kant.

Ans. to Q No 10: Design Argument

Ans. to Q No 11 : a) T

b) T

Ans. to Q No 12 : a) Purpose

b) God

Ans. to Q No 13 : F.R. Tennant

Ans. to Q No 14 : The basic kinds of adaptations are according to F. R. Tennant, are as follows:

1) The intelligibility of the world. The world and the human mind are so related that we can learn more and more without limit.
2) The adaptation of living organizes to their environments.
3) The ways in which the inorganic world is conducive to the emergence and maintenance of life. Life is possible only certain kind of chemical processes go on, etc.
4) The aesthetic value of nature. Nature is not only suited to penetration by the intellect. It is also constitute so as to awaken valuable aesthetic responses in man.
5) The ways in which the world ministers to the moral life of men. For example, through being forced to learn something about the uniformities in natural operation, men are forced to develop their intelligence, a prerequisite to moral developments. Moral virtues are acquired in the course of having to cope with the hardship one's natural environment.
6) The overall progressiveness of the evolutionary process.



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12.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Question

Q 1: Who is the founder of cosmological argument?

Q.2: what is the first cause, according to Aquinas?

Q 3: Who are the supporters of cosmological proof for the existence of God ?

Q 4: Who are the supporters of teleological proof for the existence of God ?

Q 5: Who are the critics of cosmological proof for the existence of God ?

Q 6: Who are the critics of teleological proof for the existence of God ?

Q 7: Who mentioned teleological argument in ancient Greek ?

B) Short Questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1. What does Aquinas meant by Prime Mover?

Q 2. What is Aquinas's view about First Cause Argument?

Q 3. Why did Aquinas say God is necessary and categorical being?

Q 4 What is the main theme of teleological Argument?

Q 5 What is Martineau's view on teleological argument?

Q 6. How does Hume complain against teleological argument?

C) Long Questions (Answer in a 300-500 about words)

Q 1. What are the traditional arguments for the existence of God? Discuss.

Q 2. Explain and examine the cosmological argument for the existence of God.

Q 3. Discuss the causal argument for the existence of God. Is it satisfactory?

Q 4. Explain critically the teleological proof for the existence of God.

Q 5. Explain and examine the cosmological argument for the existence of God.

Q 6. How does F.R. Tennet advocate teleological argument?

Q 7. Critically discuss the teleological argument for the existence of God.

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UNIT 13 : PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD: ONTOLOGICAL AND MORAL ARGUMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Ontological Argument

- 13.3.1 St. Anselm's View
- 13.4.2 Descarte's view
- 13. 3.3 Criticism of the ontological argument

13.4 The moral argument for the existence of God

- 13.4.1 Kant's view
- 13.4.2 Indian Conception God (Moral Argument)
- 13.4.3 Three general approaches of Moral Argument:
- 13.4.4 Criticism of the moral argument

13.5 Let us Sum Up

13.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.7 Further Readings

13.8 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain ontological proofs for the existence of God.
- discuss St. Anselm's View.
- explain Descarte's view.
- discuss critically ontological argument.
- explain the moral argument for the existence of God.
- discuss Kant's view.
- discuss Indian Conception God (Moral Argument)
- discuss critically moral argument.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

For hundreds of years philosophers, scientists and theologians have been bringing forward arguments either to show that there is such a being as God or to deny His existence entirely. This is one of the problems in the philosophy of religion, because belief in God has always occupied a central position in religious faith and practice. We need at this point to make clear the close relation between the ideas of God, the nature of God and the types of arguments for His existence. One can have the ideas and nature of God only when one observes the relation of God and the world, religions of the world and the arguments for the existence of God.

Here we shall present certain traditional theistic arguments for the belief and existence of God.

13.3 ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

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 medieval philosopher. The supporters of this argument are St. Anselm, Rene Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Hegel etc.

13.3.1 St. Anselm's View

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 that which no greater can be conceived"

Now we have the idea of such a thing. But existence is necessary to the concept of such a being. If he didn't exist, he would not be as great as if 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 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 this 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 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.

The sample version here is similar to that given by St. Anselm.

The concept of God is of a being no greater than which can be conceived;

But a being which exists is greater than a being which is merely conceived;

If God did not exist, God would not be a being no greater than which can be conceived;

Therefore, God exists.

We may sum up Anselm's ontological argument into the following points-

Firstly, being God an object of worship must be the highest or greater than whom nothing can be conceived.

Secondly, Existence is a state of the highest perfection that can be conceived as a predicate or a quality like omnipotence, omniscience.

Lastly, God is a necessary existence, which is enclosed in the idea of a being greater than which nothing can be conceived. We cannot ever be thought of the non-existence of God. To think God as non-existent is to lead self-contradiction. Therefore, God must exist.



LET US KNOW

St. Anselm: (1033/4-1109) Medieval philosopher and theologian. His two principal theological treatises are the Monologion and the Proslogion. The former contains versions of the "cosmological argument and argument from the existence of goodness to the existence of a supreme good. The latter contains the famous "ontological argument for the existence of God. Anselm also wrote many dialogues concerned with particular problems in logic and theology



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who first put forth ontological argument?

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Q 2: Who are the supporters of ontological argument?

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Q 3: Who is the writer of the book 'Proslogion'?

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Q 4: "God is a being that which no greater can be conceived" who is the propounder of this view?

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13.3.2 Descartes' view

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.

Descartes tried to hold by saying that from the notion of God one can deduce His existence. Descartes deduce the existence of God from His perfection; the idea of God is that of a perfect being, is an innate idea which is clear and distinct that cannot be doubted. The idea of God is clear and distinct "innate in me".

According to Descartes, while one can have a clear and distinct idea of numbers or figures similarly, one can have an idea of God and as Descartes sees it, the idea of God is the idea of supremely perfect being which also can be seen to have an actual and eternal existence, So, God exists.

According to Descartes, just as 'the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles' follows from the definition of a triangle similarly, the existence of God follows from the very idea of Him. We cannot conceive God without existence, then it follows that existence is inseparable as of Him, therefore, He exists. Descartes notifies us that one can think of a will not to exist, but one cannot even think of God as non-existent. For Descartes, the existence of God, reality of God and unchangeability of God etc. can occur from the idea of God. Therefore, undoubtedly God Exists.

We may sum up Descartes ontological argument into the following steps-

a. The idea of God is a perfect Being.
b. That lacks no positive qualities.
c. Existence is a positive quality.
d. Thus, God lacks no existence. God exists.



LET US KNOW

Descartes, Rene (1596-1650) French philosopher. Descartes's efforts to achieve certainty in the face of scepticism mark the origins of modern epistemology.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: "Descartes supports ontological argument for the existence of God" is it true?

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Q 6: What is Descartes ontological Argument?

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13.3.3 Criticism of the ontological argument

The ontological argument for the existence of God i.e. the existence of God deduces from the idea of God has been criticized by many philosophers, like St. Thomas Aquinas, Kant, Ayer and others. Among the critics, Kant is remarkable. But his opinion against of both Anselm and Descartes is not reasonable, argued by Hegel and others. Criticisms are as follows:

1. Kant made seven criticisms to this argument. According to him we cannot reduce the reality of anything from 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.

2. Gaunilon, a monk of France, claimed that Anselm's reasoning would lead to absurd conclusions if it is applied in other fields. He set up a parallel ontological argument for the most perfect island. He spoke of the most perfect conceivable island, but his argument could be rephrased in terms of the latter idea. Given the idea of such an island, by using Anselm's principle we can argue that unless it exists in reality it cannot be the most perfect conceivable island. Similarly, if God does not exist in reality, it cannot be conceived as the perfect Being.
3. If existence is a 'perfection' and God is most perfect, then God's existence must be granted. But existence is not an attribute or quality. In order to have an attribute a thing must exist first. But his existence cannot be proved from his perfection.
4. Descartes' ontological argument claims that existence must be included among the defining predicates of God, just as the fact that the internal angles are equal to two right angles, which are necessary characteristics of a triangle. But Kant replies that the subject, with its predicates actually exists. What is analytically true is that if there is a triangle, it must have three angles and if there is an infinitely perfect being he must have existence. As Kant says, "To posit a triangle, and yet to reject its three angles, is self-contradictory; but there is no self-contradiction in rejecting the triangle together with its three angles. The same holds true of the concept of an absolutely necessary being." (Kant, J., Critique of Pure Reason, tr. K.N. Smith, chap.3,Sec. 4.)
5. The definition of God describes one's concept of God, but we cannot prove the actual existence of any such being. We can utter the term like table, cow, house, etc. which implies all these things actually exist in the world. Similarly if we say 'Unicorn' or Unicorn exists, or gold mountain exists, it does not ascertain its existence. Because in fact unicorn and Gold Mountain are

negative existential statements, so they do not exist. Similarly God is negative existential statement and does not exist.



LET US KNOW

- Kant: (1724-1804): German philosopher who revolutionised modern philosophy, in an effort to counter the sceptical arguments of Hume and provide a firm basis for human knowledge and morality. Kant used transcendental arguments to show that human beings apply synthetic a priori judgements as the preconditions for any possible experience.

- Hegel, Georg W.(1770-1831): German philosopher who employed a dialectical logic (moving from thesis to antithesis to synthesis) and its corollary analysis of historical inevitability, in support of an idealism in which human culture is properly seen as a manifestation of the self-conscious of the Absolute.

- Thomas Aquinas: Italian Dominican Philosopher and theologician.

- AYER (1910-1989): English philosopher. After studying with numbers of the Vienna circle, Ayer published Language, Truth and Logic(1936), an excellent statement of the central views of logical positivism, including the use of verifiability as a criterion of meaning, the rejection of metaphysics and theology as meaningless and emotivist ethical theory. His later works include Foundations of Empirical Knowledge(1940), The Problem of Knowledge(1956), Logical Positivism(1966) and The Central Questions of Philosophy(1972)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Who are the critics of ontological argument?

Ans :.....

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13.4 : THE MORAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The moral argument for belief in God is based on man's moral nature and religious experience. This moral argument begins with Kant, who in his *Critique of Practical Reason* argued that the existence of God is a postulate of the practical or moral reason. In the critical philosophy of Kant the moral argument occupies a very significant position. Kant severely criticised all arguments except the moral one. According to Kant God must exist if the moral order is to be intelligible. Thus, in Kant's philosophy this argument has a very special status.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8 : Who is the author of *Critique of Practical Reason?*

Ans :.....

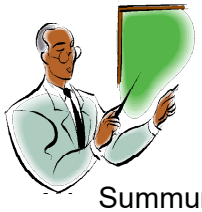
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13.4.1 Kant's view

According to Kant the existence of God is a postulate, or presupposition of the moral life. Kant, in his theory of complete good, points out that it is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken as good without qualification, except 'goodwill'. In short, it is our duty to promote the highest good, the *summum bonum.* For him, the existence of God is a priori of morality. Our moral consciousness demands that the virtuous must be rewarded with happiness. But the virtuous are hardly ever happy. Kant, for that reason argues that there must be a Supreme Being or God who will reward the virtuous with happiness in the next world. We can make ourselves virtuous, but we cannot make ourselves happy, because happiness depends upon outward favourable conditions which are beyond our control. But God can make the virtuous happy in the next life, because He is the controller of the kingdom of spirits and nature.



LET US KNOW

Summum bonum : Latin phrase meaning 'highest good'



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9 : Fill in the blanks :

a) According to Kant the existence of God is a ……, or …….. of the moral life.

b) It is our duty to promote the highest good, the ……...

13.4.2 Indian Conception of God (Moral Argument)

According to *Nyaya* system religious actions produce merits and wrong actions produce demerits. Merits and demerits reside in the soul. These merits and demerits are called *adrishta*, which is unconscious. Hence it requires some conscious agency to govern it. The individual soul cannot be this agency because the souls are unconscious of the merits and demerits. God who is omniscient is the moral Governor, the Governor of the *adrishta.* He rewards the virtuous with happiness and punishes the vicious with pain and suffering. Therefore it implies that there is God.



LET US KNOW

Nyaya : One of the six orthodox Hindu schools. The Nyaya school concentrates upon our knowledge of reality.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10: "According to Nyaya system religious actions produce merits and wrong actions produce demerits." Is it true?

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Q 11: "merits and demerits are called *adrishta*, which is unconscious" Is it true?

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13.4.3 Three general approaches of Moral Argument

The moral argument for belief in God is based on man's moral nature and his sense of values. The argument has been stated from a number of points of view. We shall mention very briefly three general approaches which have been developed in philosophical literature.

1. One form of this argument is based on man's moral nature and his sense of obligation, or sense of duty. If man were merely an aspect of nature a command to obey nature's ways or to depart from them would be meaningless. The sense of duty at one time may even lead man to deny the will to live. Man's sense of duty implies a God as its source and the guarantor of the significance of the moral life.
2. We may proceed to another version of the moral argument. Moral goodness and happiness should go together in a reasonable and just world. The man who is morally good should be happy and the man who is morally bad should be unhappy. But as a matter of fact there is no such correlation. Therefore, there must be a God who will ultimately uphold all the moral values and will ultimately make the good man finally happy.
3. The third version of the moral argument is one of the most popular versions of it. This version of the moral argument is ultimately based on the notion of objectivity of values. Man and his values are part of the process of nature. They are not subjective. They have objective existence of their own. Man's moral standard develops within the process of evaluation. They are in fact expressions of the process of evolution. They are an aid to the survival and enrichment of life. In arguing that our activities of appreciation are responses to an intrinsic meaning and value established that this order is no less real than the physical order.

The moral argument is generally accepted as the strongest argument offered to establish the existence of God. Kant said that God must exist if the moral order is to be intelligible.

13.4.4 Criticism of the moral argument

1. Moral life of a person does not necessarily depend on the existence of God as Kant has argued. The pre-supposition made by Kant that the good actions should be rewarded with good results will not hold good at all times. There is no necessary connection between highest good and 'God'.
2. Kant's summum bonum is possible and for its possibility God must exist as a moral and omnipotent Being. But what does 'possible' mean in this contest? It may merely mean 'logically possible'. But in fact Kant's argument demands that when we affirm the summum bonum to be possible we are affirming is to be factually (and not merely logically) possible
3. According to moral argument the moral laws presuppose a law-giver, which cannot prove the existence of God, since we know that natural laws do not presuppose a law giver. If at all a law is necessary for us, then he may be a finite being like us; not necessarily He is God. All such conceptions of God as the natural law-giver or moral law-giver are rejected by scientists and thinkers.
4. Moral laws and values can prevail only in the world of moral order. In the world order we cannot expect moral or immoral activities. But we observe that gradually people are disregarding moral values and moral laws. So also if there is moral order created by God, then how are there are evil and disorder?
5. The religious experience, miracles, prayers, worship and grace are purely psychological and man-made. They do not guarantee the truth of the factual world. It may be some form of a hypnotism or magic which does not prove the existence of God.



13.5 LET US SUM UP

- The supporters of ontological argument are St. Anselm, Rene Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Hegel etc.
- Anselm said that we have an idea of perfect being, and that this is what we mean by God.
- For Descartes, the existence of God, reality of God and unchangeability of God etc. can occurs from the idea of God. Therefore, undoubtedly God Exists.
- Ontological argument is criticized by many philosophers, like St. Thomas Aquinas, Kant, Ayer and others.
- The moral argument for belief in God is based on man's moral nature and religious experience.
- According to Kant the existence of God is a postulate, or presupposition of the moral life.
- According to *Nyaya* system religious actions produce merits and wrong actions produce demerits.
- Merits and demerits are called *adrishta*, which is unconscious



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13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : St. Anselm.

Ans to Q No 2 : The supporters of ontological argument are St. Anselm, Rene Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Hegel etc.

Ans to Q No 3 : St. Anselm

Ans to Q No 4 : St. Anselm

Ans to Q No 5 : True.

Ans to Q No 6 : We may sum up Descartes ontological argument into the following steps-

a) The idea of God is a perfect Being.

b) That lacks no positive qualities.

c) Existence is a positive quality.

d) Thus God's lacks no existence. God exists.

Ans to Q No 7 : Ontological argument is criticized by many philosophers, like St. Thomas Aquinas, Kant, Ayer and others.

Ans to Q No 8 : Kant

Ans to Q No 9 : a) Postulate, presupposition.

b) Summum Bonum

Ans to Q No 10 : True.

Ans to Q No 11 : True.



13.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Question

Q 1: "God is a being than whom nothing greater can be conceived" This is the view of teleological/ontological/ cosmological argument.

Q 2 : Name two supporters of ontological argument.

Q 3: Name two critics of ontological argument

Q 4: Who was regarded as the propounder of the ontological argument for the existence of God?

Q 5: Write the name of two critics of the moral argument.

B) Short Questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Discuss two defects of ontological argument.

Q 2: Write short notes on:

a) Ontological argument

b) Moral argument

c) *adrishta*,

C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300- 500 words)

Q 1: What are the traditional arguments for the existence of God? Discuss.

Q 2: What are the traditional arguments for the existence of God? Discuss.

Q 3: What is ontological argument for the existence of God? Examine.

Q 4: What is the moral argument of Kant? Is it satisfactory argument for the existence of God?

Q 5: What is the view of Kant for the existence of God? Discuss.

Q 6: What is the satisfactory proof for the existence of God? Explain and Examine.

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UNIT 14 : THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 The problem of religious language

14.4 Various approaches to the problem of religious language

14.5 Symbolic nature of religious language

14.6 Let us sum up

14.7 Further reading

14.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.8 Model questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of religious language
- discuss the problem of religious language
- explain various approaches to this problem
- describe the view of religious language as symbolic in nature.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Language has occupied a very important place in the lives of human beings. Language may be defined as something that differentiates human beings from other animals since the former has the ability to communicate through language while the later does not have that ability. Human transactions of emotions, feelings and the like in every field whether social, political, economic, moral, cultural or religious are possible through language. Religion is an indispensable part of human being. Almost every man existing on the globe entertains particular kind of religious beliefs and practices.

Language has been an indispensable medium for human transactions in religious matters. So far as religious language is concerned, it refers to the statements or claims made about God or gods. It is generally the language used with regard to religious practices such as prayer, worship, thanksgiving, confession, ritual, preaching, instruction, exhortation and so on and so forth. However, one important point to be mentioned here is that there is no specific language reserved for religious purpose. In other words, religious language is not something different and distinct from other languages. Every human being has an idea about God in one way or the other and everyone has expressed this idea through language understandable to him. In short, what we term as 'religious language' is nothing other than the ways of our expressing the Divine.

14.3 THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

It has already been mentioned that whenever we make any claim about God or statements about God or describe God, we do not use any specific language that is primarily reserved for it; we do the same through the use of our ordinary day-to-day language. We use the same language to describe God, to talk about God which we use to refer to finite, corporeal, temporal creatures of the world. God is generally conceived as infinite, incorporeal and timeless being. In such a situation, ordinary secular language that we use to describe finite creatures might not adequately describe God. This is the problem of religious language arising from the difficulty in accurately describing God. This is the problem of how and whether God can be meaningfully spoken about at all. When we say that "God is good" and "Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi is good" then a difficulty arises with regard to whether the attribute 'goodness' which is generally attributed to finite creatures has the same meaning when applied to God. In other words, whether God is good in the same sense in which prime minister Narendra Modi is good. This difficulty led us to determine the degree that attributes used for finite beings can be used for God and what these attributes mean when they describe God. The ambiguity in meaning regarding the terms

predicated of God is the problem of describing or speaking about or naming God.

14.4 : VARIOUS APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

Language has always been a concern of philosophers. Philosophers have always shown an intense interest in language more specifically with regard to the problem of meaning and reference. So far as religious language is concerned, it has also been a major concern for philosophers. The key issues of philosophers with regard to religious language are—how we can speak meaningfully about God? To what does the word God refer if anything? And does it need to refer in order to be meaningful? What creates the problem of religious language is our very attempt to describe something that is radically different from those about which we normally use language. There are various approaches or solutions to the problem of religious language which may be classified into two groups. According to one, religious statements or statements about God do not have any meaning, they assert nothing while according to the other, religious statements have meaning, and that is, we can speak meaningfully about God. Under the first group, we may bring the name of the empiricist philosopher David Hume. He has brought up one of the clearest objections to religious language. He refuses to allot any meaning to God-talks. In the empirical counterpart of Hume, belief in God is conceived as nothing more than sophistry and illusion. Hume, being a thorough going empiricist, limits human knowledge to experience and consequently, brings the requirement that claims about reality must be verified by evidence or experience. Since talks about God cannot be thus verified, therefore, they are devoid of meaning. Next to Hume comes A. J. Ayer as well as his logical positivist movement. Ayer holds that a statement in order to hold any meaning must be possible to verify its truth or falsity by means of empirical evidence. In logical positivist counterpart, empirical verification is the only criterion of determining the truth or falsity of any statement. So far as religious statements are concerned, Ayer points

out that they cannot be verified as either true or false and hence, meaningless since only those statements are meaningful which have the ability to be judged as true or false. Thus, the first group has tried to solve the problem of religious language by concluding that statements about God have no meaning.

So far as the second group is concerned, philosophers and theologians belonging this group assert that religious statements have meaning and accordingly, they have shown ways of describing God in human terms. Within this group, first comes the view that whatever we predicate of God is to be interpreted equivocally. In other words, when terms are used to describe God and His attributes, those terms are equivocal, that is, completely different with respect to what they mean in reference to God and what they mean in reference to finite creatures. For example, when we say that "God is good" and "Hari is good", then according to this view, God is not good in the same sense in which Hari is good. God's goodness is completely different from the goodness of a finite creature like Hari. However, inspite of this tremendous difference in kind, human beings can speak about God through negation. In other words, human beings can refer to God through what God is not. Jewish philosopher Maimonides is the most famous proponent of this view. He asserts that positive descriptions of God are misleading and they should be avoided. For example, saying "God is love" will make people think of human love which has faults like jealousy and inconsistencies. Therefore, describing God in positive terms cannot give accurate description of God. Hence, Maimonides proposed that statements about God must be taken negatively, for example, "God lives" should be taken as "God does not lack vitality". The second view proposed that God-talks is to be interpreted univocally. In other words, when terms are used to describe God and His attributes, those terms are univocal, that is, exactly in the same sense with respect to what they mean in reference to God and what they mean in reference to finite creatures. Therefore, for this view, God's goodness and Hari's goodness is the same. God is good in the same sense in which Hari is good. Next comes the view which holds that God-

talk is to be interpreted neither equivocally (with completely different sense) nor univocally (with exactly the same sense), but analogically. St. Thomas Aquinas is the exponent of this view. According to him, when the word 'good' is applied to God and to Hari, then God's goodness is not to be interpreted as completely different from the goodness of Hari nor is to be interpreted as completely similar with Hari's goodness. God is good in an analogous sense to Hari's goodness. In other words, 'good' applied to both God and to Hari would signify the same thing, but in different modes, that is, when 'good' is applied to Hari, it picks out a property of Hari, but while applying to God, it refers to the unity that is God's essence and not to an individual property. 'Good' belongs properly to God and more so to God than to creatures since any goodness that could be found in a creature is derived from God as the creator. We could say "Hari is good" and also say "God is good". Here, 'good' is included in God's essence in a higher mode and to a greater degree than the property 'goodness' belongs to Hari. Thus, terms used analogously are not entirely different or entirely similar; rather they signify the same thing in different modes.

Next comes the view in which the main theme of the present unit consists. This view holds that religious language is symbolic in nature, that is, religious language is to be interpreted symbolically, not literally. The present unit is going to deal with this view elaborately in the following section.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is religious language?

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Q 2: What is the problem of religious language?

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Q 3 : Why does Ayer deny meaning to religious language?

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Q 4 : What is Thomas Aquinas' approach to religious language?

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14.5 : THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

The doctrine of religious language as symbolic is associated with Paul Johannes Tillich (1886-1965), the German Lutheran theologian. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential theologians of the 20th century. While dealing with the problem of religious language, that is, with the problem of how we can speak meaningfully about God, Tillich holds that we can speak about God symbolically. In other words, according to him, religious statements have symbolic meaning; they are not to be interpreted literally. Whenever we make any statement about God such as "God is good", here we must not treat 'good' in its literal sense, that is, not in its usual or exact or original meaning, but in symbolic sense. We can use language symbolically while speaking about God.

While going to discuss the nature of religious language, Tillich first deals with the meaning of symbol and he does it by showing its difference from sign. Signs and symbols are similar in the sense that both refer to something other than themselves, that is, they mean something else. However, there is a crucial difference between the two. Tillich maintains

that so far as the signs are concerned, they do not participate in what they symbolize. For example, the traffic lights 'red' means 'stop' while 'green' means 'go'. Apart from this, they have no other effect. A sign signifies that to which it points by arbitrary convention or agreement.

in contrast to a sign, a symbol, according to Tillich points out the participates in the meanings and powers of that to which it points. Symbols are powerful and they actually take part in the power and meaning of what they symbolize. For example, a flag not only represents a nation, but also participates in the power and dignity of the nation that it represents. Similarly, cross '+' is the symbol of Christianity; it does not only represent Christianity, but also immediately reminds the Christians the sacrifice Jesus has made on the cross for them. Moreover, it reminds them of their beliefs about God and His plane for the salvation of mankind. Hence, according to Tillich, symbols communicate much more powerfully with that symbolized. Because of this inner connection with the reality symbolized, symbols are not arbitrarily instituted like conventional signs. In his book "Dynamics of Faith", Tillich wrote that symbols grow out of the individual or collective unconscious and consequently have their own span of life and their decay and death. A symbol cannot be invented except when the unconscious of a group accepts the symbol. On the other hand, when the relation between this inner situation of the group with a symbol disappears that symbol dies. According to Tillich, a symbol performs four functions-i)symbols point to something other than themselves, ii) symbols participate in that to which they refer, iii) symbols open up levels of reality which otherwise are closed to us and iv) symbols unlock dimensions and levels of our soul corresponding to the new aspects of the world that it reveals.

Having outlined these functions of symbol, Tillich has opined that religious language operates as a symbol. Religious language is a symbolic way of pointing towards the ultimate reality or God. Tillich calls God "Being-in-itself" which is that upon which everything else depends for its being. Tillich believes that we can have knowledge of this Being through symbols which direct us to it. Tillich argues that since a symbol points to a meaning beyond itself, therefore, symbolism is the best possible way to express

transcendent religious beliefs. Tillich insists that human language cannot be used univocally or literally while speaking about the ultimate. He argues that since our terms can only be derived from finite human experience, therefore, they cannot be adequate in relation to God; when they are used theologically, their meaning is always partially "negated by that to which they point". Therefore, the only way of expressing the ultimate is through symbols. People always use the language of symbols while discussing religious matters. In the words of Tillich, "Whatever we say about that which concerns us ultimately, whether or not we call it God, has a symbolic meaning. It points beyond itself while participating in that to which it points. In no other way can faith express itself adequately. The language of faith is the language of symbols." (Dynamic of Faith, p-42)

Thus, in the counterpart of Paul Tillich, whatever we say about God or the ultimate reality is non-literal symbolic in nature. However, Tillich also recognizes that there is one and only literal, non-symbolic statement that can be made about God. This statement is—"God is Being-itself". Beyond this, all religious claims that we make about God such as "God is powerful", "God is good", "God is eternal", "God is the creator", "God loves His creatures" etc. are all symbolic.

Although God-talks have their root in human experience, yet they are ultimately used in a different way from their secular use. They are same yet different. Tillich calls it symbolism. He believes that religious language is non-cognitive and symbolic and symbols are the best way to confer meaning in God-talks.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What is the nature of religious language according to Paul Tillich?

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Q 6: What is the similarity between symbol and sign?

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14.6 LET US SUM UP

- Religious language refers to statements or claims made about God or gods. It may be regarded as talks about God or the ways of describing God.
- Whenever we describe God or talks about God, we do not use any specific language primarily reserved for this purpose; rather we use the ordinary secular language.
- The problem of religious language is the problem of how we can accurately describe or speak about God. This is the problem of how and whether God can be meaningfully spoken about at all.
- There are various approaches to the problem of religious language which may be regarded as various attempts to solve this problem. One group tries to solve the problem by denying any meaning to religious statements as for them, religious statements cannot be verified as either true or false by means of experience. This group includes primarily empiricist David Hume and logical positivist A. J. Ayer.
- On the other hand, there are philosophers and theologians who sought to solve the problem by assigning meaning to religious statements and accordingly shown ways of describing God. Some of them assert that God-talks have meaning and this meaning is completely different (equivocal) from its meaning in secular use. That is, whenever we say something about God in human terms such as “God is good”, here the meaning of God’s goodness is completely different from human goodness.

- Again, some others assert that God-talks have entertained exactly the same meaning (univocal) as its secular use hold. That is, whenever we say something about God in human terms such as "God is good", here the meaning of God's goodness is completely identical with human goodness.
- Again, according to another approach taken by Thomas Aquinas, religious statements or God-talks are to be interpreted neither equivocally nor univocally, but analogically. That is, whenever we attribute goodness to both God and human being, then they are neither entirely different nor entirely similar. They signify the same thing in different modes.
- While dealing with the problem of religious language, Paul Tillich asserts that religious statements have symbolic meaning; they are not to be interpreted literally, that is, not in its usual or exact or original meaning, but in symbolic sense.



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14.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Religious language is talk about God or statements or claims made about God. It is way of describing God.

Ans to Q No 2: The problem of religious language is the problem of how and whether God can be meaningfully spoken about.

Ans to Q No 3: According to Ayer, only that statement is meaningful which is able to be verified either as true or false by means of experience. Since religious statements cannot be thus verified, therefore, they are devoid of meaning.

Ans to Q No 4: According to Thomas Aquinas, religious statements are to be interpreted analogically, that is, they refer to the same meaning in different degrees.

Ans to Q No 5: According to Paul Tillich, religious language is symbolic in nature; they are not to be interpreted literally.

Ans to Q No 6: The similarity between sign and symbol is that both of them point to something other than themselves.



14.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Question

Q 1: What is religious language?

Q 2: What is problem of religious language?

Q 3: Do we use any specific language for religious language?

Q 4: Why the problem of religious language arises?

Q 5: What is David Hume's response to religious language?

Q 6: What is Ayer's approach to religious language?

Q 7: What does it mean when we say that religious language is equivocal?

Q 8: What does it mean when we say that religious language is univocal?

Q 9: What is Thomas Aquinas' solution to the problem of religious language?

Q 10: What is the difference between sign and symbol?

Q 11: What is the only non-symbolic literal statement about God according to Paul Tillich?

B. Short Questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Why does the problem of religious language arise? Briefly explain.

Q 2: Write a note on sign and symbol with example.

Q 3: How does Paul Tillich distinguish between sign and symbol?

Q 4: What are the functions of symbol outlined by Paul Tillich?

A. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Give an account of the problem of religious language.

Q 2: How do philosophers deal with the problem of religious language?

Q 3: “Religious language is symbolic in nature”. Explain after Paul Tillich.

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UNIT 15 : RELIGIONS TOLERANCE

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 Rise and development of religious tolerance in the West.

15.4 Tolerance in some of the main religions of the world.

- 15.4.1 Tolerance and Christianity
- 15.4.2 Tolerance and Islam

15.5 Let us sum up

15.6 Further readings

15.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.8 Model Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain religious tolerance and its nature
- discuss the rise and development of religious tolerance in the West
- define tolerance in some of the main religions of the world
- discuss tolerance and Christianity
- explain tolerance and Islam
- analyse the concept of tolerance in Indian culture and in Hinduism

15.2 INTRODUCTION

Religious tolerance is the condition of accepting or permitting others' religious belief and practices which disagree with one's own. The concept of religious tolerance can be understood clearly only with reference to religious intolerance. When any religion claims that it possesses the whole truth and also the only right method of contemplating and worshipping the

Almighty, then it becomes naturally intolerant of other creeds and modes of religious practices. They try to impose their views on others either by persuading them towards a willful acceptance or even by use of force. That all must be forced into mosque or chapel or temple to join in a public worship betray an instance of intolerant attitude. It occurs not only between Judaism and Christianity, Christianity and Islam, Islam and Hinduism or between polytheism and monotheism but may also be amongst different trends of the polytheistic Hinduism or also between different methodologies of the same monotheistic trends. Tolerance leads to cooperation in a spirit of freedom and understanding while intolerance leads to conflict in an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and jealousy.

15.3 RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIONS TOLERANCE IN THE WEST

The central problem of toleration itself in western history was for centuries the problem of religious toleration. Although the birth of religious tolerance in Western Europe dates back to the Renaissance in the 15th century, it is learnt that during its early period also many Christian Fathers advocated toleration, though, may be, it was only on principle. The bigotry which appeared among the fathers of the 4th century was not allowed to prevail without protest. Many persons condemned persecution and even denounced it as an atrocious crime as it went so far as killing.

During the period of Renaissance and Reformation the spirit of Doubt and liberal ideas paved way for culture of religions tolerance. ***Castellio***, a Frenchman argued that “if the end of Christianity be the diffusion of a spirit of beneficence, persecution must be its extreme antithesis, and that if persecution can be the essential element of a religion, that religion must be curse to mankind. “

The Christian Reformation which led to diverse version of Christianity caused the need for tolerance. But the parallel authoritarian approaches of

the Protestant Leaders like Luther and Calvin indirectly led to intolerance. Again, we see that the rise of Counter Reformation created the darkest era of intolerance as the west was soon to witness the horrors of the Thirty-Year War (1618-1648). This filled the pages of history with information of religious persecution and mass destruction.

Religious intolerance was always opposed by the large-minded persons. For instance, we may speak of ***John Robinson*** who drew up a covenant for the Pilgrim Fathers who founded New England. The first instrument of this covenant conferred equal religious rights on every member of the commonwealth. Then a charter from Charles I granted toleration to Roman Catholics as well as to Protestants. Its first law runs as follows:

"No person professing to believe in Jesus Christ shall be in any way molested or discountenanced for his or her religion, or in the free exercise thereof."

Again, we find that opposing the persecution of the ***Presbyterians*** Cromwell ordered the 'triers' not to molest godly men who preached the gospel, whatever their ***ecclesiastical principles*** might be, and he gave the Jews a legal footing in England. During the time of Cromwell, ***Jeremy Taylor*** developed a theory of toleration. He held that diversity of belief is necessary.

Spinoza the monist, by realizing the truth that the imposition of belief on a people leads to strife, argued for toleration with respect to all beliefs, political as well as religious. He said that the state was to provide its citizens the security to hold any opinion or belief.

The horrors of the *Crusades* fighting for the sake of saving souls consequently led to the passing of the act of toleration in 1689. Of course, it did not grant complete religious liberty. The same causes prepared Western Europe mentally and emotionally to listen to the philosophy of tolerance preached by John Locke. Locke the empiricist was also the father of British democracy and the humanistic conception of the dignity and rights of man as such. His *letter concerning toleration* (in Latin) was published in 1689. In these letters Locke clearly expressed his view that intolerant or

persecuting acts like depriving persons of their estates, maiming them with corporal punishments, starving them in prisons etc. are “more contrary to the glory of God, to the purity of the Church and to the salvation of souls than any conscientious dissent from ecclesiastical decision, or separation from public worship whilst accompanied with innocence of life.” According to Locke, such cruel acts of moral vices and wickedness of intolerance are known by all to be diametrically opposite to the profession of Christianity. Toleration of those that differ from others in matters of religion is in conformity with and agreeable to the gospel of Christianity.

Voltaire and Rousseau expressed views for cultivation of toleration and strived for ‘rejection of intolerance’.

Francis Guizot advanced the thesis (*History of Civilization* in Europe, 1828) that tolerance is an essential element in Christianity, and that periods of intolerance are perversions there of.

But in spite of such teachings of the broad - minded persons tolerance fails to flourish. There are some persons who frankly oppose tolerance. For instance, ***Donosco Cortes*** (1809-1853) in his **Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism** attacked some of the preachers of toleration. To him, toleration is simply a false ideal. He says, “Man is of course fallible; but the Church is infallible, its dogma is the truth. Those who deny it are in error, and error cannot be tolerated.”

Tolerance fails to grow for some other reasons also. A man of principle cannot tolerate a contradictory creed also due to the fact that ‘virtue’ cannot tolerate ‘vice’. But we may say that intolerance is rooted only on partial knowledge of the scriptures. For instance, the Hebrew Bible says: “Thou shalt have no other gods but me”. It also says that God is transcendent, above all, and is eternal. That is why the Jews condemn as impious all who, with perishable materials, try to bring the Lord into human shape. No image can be put at the temple. So they become intolerant of the idol worshippers. This intolerance is caused by partial knowledge. For, they forget the teaching of their scripture that one should not have hate in one’s

heart for one's brother or one's neighbour. The same scripture teaches that "If a man said, I love God and hate his brother he is a liar."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is religious tolerance?

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Q 2: Name two Protestants who had embraces intolerance attitude?

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Q 3: Who is the author of the book, "Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism"

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Q 4: Whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Voltaire and Rousseau have tried to remove intolerance.

b) According to Francis Guizot tolerance is one of the most important elements of Christianity.

c) Hebrew Bible says: "Thou shalt have no other gods but me".

15.4 : TOLERANCE IN SOME OF THE MAIN RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

The major religions of the world namely, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism etc. have put forward their views regarding the concept of tolerance. Let us discuss these views are:

15.4.1 Tolerance and Christianity

The early fathers of the Christian Church themselves were cruelly persecuted by the Romans. Naturally, they were in favour of religious tolerance. But when Christianity became the state religion them the persecutors of the earlier days became the persecuted. Nevertheless, there were many Christians who preached for religious toleration. St. Angustine advocated that the death penalty for heresy was wrong. But there were many Christians who opposed toleration. They argued that God is offended by heretical practices and is likely to inflict disasters on the whole community as a punishment. Heresy is a crime and crime cannot be tolerated. To tolerate an erring man is to leave him in a state of sin to face eternal damnation in the life to come. So punishment is necessary to reform the erring soul.

The nature of tolerance in Christianity can be studied from the history of its two sects - the Catholics or the traditionalists and the Protestants or the reformists. According to the Catholics the Church and Pope are the divine authority but according to the Protestants the mediation of Church is not needed for one's salvation and 'priesthood of all believers' is to be accepted within the Church. Naturally, one set fails to tolerate the practices of the other. Again, there are differences in faiths and practices even amongst the different divisions of the Catholics like that of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodoxy. These differences lead to rivalries resulting in lack of mutual tolerance amongst them.

Similarly, there are also many sub-sects amongst the Protestants like the Lutherians, Calvinists, Presbytarians, Anglicians, Congregationalists and so on.

Thus, the history of Christianity is replete with instances of oppositions not only its basic opposition with the earlier religion of Judaism but also its opposition with itself. Its sub-sects show intolerant activities resulting in persecution and crusades.

However it is true that Christianity could preach peace and devotion only due to its inherent tolerating attitude. We meet advocates of toleration in different phases of the development of Christianity during the periods like early, mediaeval as well as that of Renaissance and Reformation.

15.4.2 Tolerance and Islam

The concept of toleration may be considered in Islam or Mohammedanism in two aspects, toleration for non-Muslim and toleration within Islam.

There are such sayings attributed to Mohammed which would show his religion to be the most tolerant. Mohammed said, “Difference of opinion in my community is a manifestation of divine mercy”. Again, there is also the injunction, “Let there be no compulsion in religion.”

The recognition of rival religious systems as possessing a divine revelation gave to Islam from the outset a theological basis for toleration for the non-Muslims. Judaism and Christianity were recognized as primitive faiths taught by a series of prophets. Mohammed permitted the Jews in Medina to practice their own faiths. When the Arab rule was extended into Persia, it was averred that Mohammed had given directions that the Zoroastrians were to be treated exactly like “people of the book”.

The Quran condemns idolatry severely and so it seems that its followers do not tolerate idol-worshippers. But by paying 'jizyah' the idol-worshippers were able to retain their own practices. In the reign of Harun, Muslim law had granted the privilege of paying 'jizyah' to idolaters, the worshippers of idols, fire, and stones and thus gave them a place among the tolerated class.

History witnesses that during the later Mohammedan conquests in India, there was a considerable destruction of Hindu temples. But it is also a fact that many Mohammedan rulers respected the state endowments granted by the former Hindu rulers to religious foundations. It was seen in the case of the temple of Brahmanabad in the province of Sind, where Mohammedan rule was first established in India. Again, we see that in the 16th century the Mohammedan government of Bengal raised the large sum of £100,000 a year by licensing the worship of Jagannath in Orissa (w.w. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal* xvii (London 1877) p 190). Even Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan made grants of money to the monastery of Sringeri.

15.4.3 Tolerance in Indian Culture and In Hinduism

India is recognized as the home of toleration from the ancient days. It is justly proud of its long tradition of religions tolerance as she is hospitable to the foreigners. Jews and Christians, Parsee, Armenians have survived and flourished for centuries in India.

The history of Hinduism, the main religion of India, speaks of its embracing the various regional and ethnic religious traditions within its fold. Mahatma Gandhi says, "Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it there is room for the worship of all the prophets of the world... Hinduism tells everyone to worship God according to his own faith or 'dharma' and so it lives at peace with all the religions', (M. K. Gandhi, *Young India* (October 26, 1921).

Hinduism includes so many trends believing in one supreme deity alone, a couple of deities, five deities or plurality of gods or none at all and it is due to or the Vedic dictum “The same Reality is spoken of differently by different names” or “All the pluralities are the different manifestations of the same reality”.

The ancient period saw the growth of Aryan culture which absorbed many new elements and changed itself in the process. Classical Hindu Culture means ancient Aryan Culture and the term ‘Aryan’ gradually began to possess a cultural or religious connotation rather than a racial one. Though the cultural solidarity of Hinduism was always maintained yet it was not uniform throughout the length and breadth of the country. The Aryan and non-Aryan elements combined in different proportions to form the Hinduism of today. This speaks of its tolerant attitude.

According to Hinduism, ‘dharma’ means the right course of conduct within its social framework. The goal of ‘dharma’ also is conceived differently like merging of the individual in the Absolute or the union of the soul with a personal God or as the dissolution of the personality in an indescribable state, or as the complete separation of spirit and matter.

‘Varnashrame dharma’ gave ample scope for the growth of the same Hindu Dharma through various methods amongst different categories of individuals. Hence, there was ‘religious tolerance’ which did not mean ‘religious equality’.

Within the fold of Hinduism itself there are some people who are to carry out for the dirtiest and menial tasks. They are generally treated as untouchables. But Mahatma Gandhi who preached religious tolerance to the greatest extent called these people ‘Harijans’ or people of God.

In the monotheistic religions of the west we see that a man is either saved or damned, either a believer or a heathen. Jehovah

said, “Thou shalt have no other Gods but me”. In Christianity and Islam also the same idea prevails. In Hinduism Lord Krishna says in the *Gita*, “Whatever God you may worship, I answer the prayer”. Some such basic thoughts gave the spirit of tolerance to Hinduism. This led to the rise of the bhakti tradition of Saint Sankaradeva or Caitanya Deva where we find cultivation of love and respect for all religions. Ramakrishna says, “All religions are one.” In this statement we find the liberal tendency of Hinduism.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5 : What are the two different types of Christianity associated with the concept of tolerance?

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Q 6 : What are differences between Catholics and Protestants?

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Q 7 : What are the different sub-sections found under Protestants?

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Q 8 : Whether the following statements are true or false

a) Judaism and Christianity can be regarded to be the two primitive faith created by their saints.

b) Hinduism tells everyone to worship God according to his own faith or 'dharma'.

c) Ramakrishna says that all the religions are one.



15.5 LET US SUM UP

- This unit shows that religious tolerance is a most important concept which needs to be emphasized in discourse of religion.
- It is quite obvious that religious intolerance causes problems like fanatism, fundamentalism etc. These problems not only terrorize people, but also distort mutual understanding among people of different religions.
- The concept of religious tolerance reminds us that the main objective of all religions is salvation or moksa. That is why this concept paves the way for the study of religion from the approach of comparative religion.
- The concept of religious tolerance gives us the clue that although all religions take different paths to achieve the main objectives of religions, still the essence or destiny behind all religions is same.
- Religious tolerance is the condition of accepting or permitting others' religious belief and practices which might disagree with one's own.
- Tolerance leads to cooperation in a spirit of freedom and understanding while intolerance leads to conflict in an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and jealousy.
- Voltair and Rousseau expressed their views for cultivation of toleration and they strived for 'rejection of intolerance'
- Francis Guizot advanced the thesis (*History of Civilization* in Europe, 1828) that tolerance is an essential element in Christianity.

- The nature of tolerance in Christianity can be studied from the history of its two sects - the Catholics or the traditionalists and the Protestants or the reformists.
- There are also many sub-sects amongst the Protestants like the Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Congregationalists and so on.
- According to Hinduism 'dharma' means the right course of conduct within its social framework.



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15.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : Religious tolerance is the condition of accepting or permitting others' religious belief and practices which may disagree with one's own.

Ans to Q No 2: Martin Luther and Calvin

Ans to Q No 3 : Donosco Cortes

Ans to Q No 4 : a) True b) True c) True

Ans to Q No 5 : The Catholics or the traditionalists and the Protestants or the reformists.

Ans to Q No 6 : According to Catholics, the church and the Pope are divine authority. But according to the Protestants, the mediation of church is not needed for one's salvation. That is why, they are called reformists.

Ans to Q No 7 : Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Anglicans and Congregationalists.

Ans to Q No 8 : a) True b) True c) True



15.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q 1: According to whom, tolerance is the essential element of Christianity?

Q 2: Who is the author of the Essay on Catholicism?

Q 3: Mention some names who frankly oppose the concept of tolerance.

Q 4: Who says- "tolerance is a false ideal"?

Q 5: Who says "All religions are one"?

B. Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Write short notes on: a) Tolerance

b) Tolerance in Christianity

c) Tolerance in Islam

d) Tolerance in Indian Culture.

Q 2: How does Christianity explain the concept of tolerance? Briefly explain.

Q 3: How does Islam explain the concept of tolerance? Explain in brief.

C. Long Questions

Q 1: What is religious tolerance? How was the concept of religious tolerance developed in the west? Discuss

Q 2: How do you discuss the concept of religious tolerance in Christianity? Explain

Q 3: Do you find the concept of 'tolerance' in Islam? Explain

Q 4: Explain the concept of tolerance in Indian culture and in Hinduism.

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