

# Dharma Deepthi

[A brief Study of other Religions and Christian Ethics]

L / L HG Dr Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose

(Divyabodhanam Book Series 16)

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## Statement

Dear ones,

By God's abundant grace, the first stage of Divyabodhanam program has concluded successfully. The preparation of ten books on our faith related topics itself is a good achievement.

The program that commenced only in 1984 had 49 centres associated with it. There were 130 women and 210 men who participated in this exercise. His Holiness Catholicose is distributing certificates on August 9, 1986 to those who have completed the course (10 subjects).

Now, we are coming to the second stage. Apart from accepting participants for the second batch of the preliminary stage, new courses are being formulated for those who have completed first stage.

The target for the second stage too is to deepen the knowledge of church members in their understanding of faith. This would be useful equally for parents and youth possessing basic education. This process is a basic requirement for all Sunday school teachers.

What is being looked forward to is ten thousands of members completing this course within the next few years resulting in an all-round progress in the faith centred life of our people. Let these books be instrumental in Holy Spirit to experience the love of God that is expressed with the God coming down as a human in Christ. Let there be showering of Blessings from the Almighty to all of you.

Kottayam,

July 2, 1986

Dr Paulose Mar Gregorioso, President, Divyabodhanam

## Author



L / L HG Dr Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose is known globally as the Apostle of Classless Society. He was the Metropolitan of Niranom Diocese, Vice Principal of Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, President of the Mission Board, President of Marriage Assistance Fund and so on.

He had his BD from Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, MA from Drew University of USA, and STM from Union Seminary. Serambur University honoured him with Doctorate.

He had been associated with the teaching faculty of Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. He was instrumental in establishing St Paul's Mission Training Centre at Mavelikkara, St Paul's Ashram at Puthuppady, Karunagiri Balabhavan at Panayambala and many more.

He was a well known preacher at conventions across the world over. His book, "Theology of a Classless Society" was published from many centres like London, New York, Hamburg and Chennai. He had been very active with WCC taking up leadership roles in many of their projects.

Some books he has authored: (1) We Believe (2) Three Dogmas of Faith (3) Can anyone Prove the Existence of God (4) You, man of God! (5) Daily Bread (6) Salvation in Christ Alone? (7) Call of God (8) Practical Asceticism (9) All Over the World (10) Be a Believer (11) Christian Stewardship. These are books in Malayalam. His known English books are: (1) New Life in Old Church (2) Talks to Modern Youth (3) My Lord and My God (4) Theology of a Classless Society (5) Sin of Being Rich in a Poor World.

## **From the Publisher's Desk**

## **Preface**

There is reason to doubt what has been the approach of Christians towards non Christian religions, particularly whether the relations have been healthy or not. The scripture has stated that everything is from him, through him and into him; based on this we can understand that the virtues of all religions are from God; as Jesus Christ is man in fullness and God in fullness, all virtues come from Christ. Therefore, our outlook has to be really wide. If we hold on to Jesus Christ as a criterion for us, believer of another religion has his freedom to accept his criterion as someone else.

The poet Nalappadan has written about the helplessness of man when he views at this universe. Similarly, N V Krishna Warier has penned a poem touching Hindu philosophical ideologies where he tells that in our days it is Kamsan who assassinates Krishnan. So what we should learn here is that there are good thoughts from other religions also.

This book is titled Splendour of Values because what are discussed here are ethical values and non Christian religious morality and subjects related to them. We are mostly discussing here values contained in other religions.

Many of the ideas contained here may be a little indigestible to capitalists and their followers. But those who follow the principles of liberation theology would enjoy reading this.

My thanks are there to Mathews Mar Barnabas, Fr TJ Joshua and Fr CC Cherian who have gone through the text and contents judiciously as well as to Fr Jacob Kurian for neatly editing it. I am also thankful to Mr M Kurian who has meticulously examined the manuscript.

Dr Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose

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### Unit 1

## Hindu religion and Renaissance

### Lesson 1

#### A Bird's Eye View on Hindu Religion

# Sanatana Dharma # Religious Texts # Fourteen Shastras # Shruti and Smruti # Prasthan  
Thrayam #

#### **Sanatana Dharma:**

Among the active religions of this day, Christianity would be the largest, but Hinduism is the most ancient. The religion of Hinduism doesn't have a historical beginning attached with it and therefore it is often called Sanatana religion. There is an interpretation as to how the term Hindu came into being; those who were living east of River Sindhu were called Sindhus, but the Persians could not pronounce 'S' and thus they came to be known as Hindus. There are scholars who believe that Dravidic religion prevailed in Punjab before the Aryans migrated to India and during BC 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, they had developed a civilization that was unearthed by archaeologists later in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. By BC 1500, the Sanskrit language and the Aryan civilization entered Hindustan from Middle East Asia which caused Dravidic religion and civilization being pushed towards Southern parts. The four Vedas and the religion formulated by Aryans in unison with the Dravidic religion already existed in India resulted in the development of Indian Hindu Religion. May be it is better to call Hinduism a Diaspora with belief in many gods, belief in the trinity of 'Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva', belief in the doctrine of non – duality, belief in the doctrine of dualism, practice of atheism, worshipping the nature, worshipping idols and such multitudes of faith and customs rather than being a religion in itself.

Hindu religion can be understood as an encyclopaedia commencing with the noblest philosophy stretching to the very simple practice of worshipping the nature. Hinduism is sustained in the three dimensions such as hearing, learning and experiencing. Hinduism or Hindu Dharma is more ancient than the Greek philosophy. The word Dharma is inclusive of religion and justice.

#### **Religious Texts:**

Hindu religious texts are not just spiritual and ritualistic texts, but they narrate all aspects of Dharma. In general, they are expressed in a threefold manner. It is exactly the same textual combine expressed in three patterns.

1. The fourteen 'Vidya' parts which include Vedas, Vedangas and Upangas.
2. The hundreds of religious texts being known as Shruti and Smruti.
3. Three sections of religious texts known as Prasthan Thrayam.

### **Fourteen Shastras:**

Vedas: The Vedas are Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. Each of these has four sub divisions called Manthra Samhita, Brahmanam, Aranyakam and Upanishad. The other three are expanded forms of Manthra Samhita. For example, Ithareya Upanishad is a developed form of Rig Veda Samhita. Manthra Samhitas are generally called Vedas. Manthra Samhita and Brahmanam are often called Karma Kanda and Aranyakam and Upanishad are called Jnana Kanda. Most known Upanishads are Easham, Kena, Kadham, Prashnam, Mrundakam, Mandukyiam, Thaitheeyam, Ithareya, Chandokiam, Bruhadaranyakam, Shwethashwatharam, Kausheethaki and Mythtri.

### Vedangas:

1	Shiksha	Phonetics science authored by Panini
2	Grammar	Grammar texts authored by Panini
3	Thiruktham	Dictionary authored by Yaska
4	Chandas	Science Poem authored by Pingla
5	Astrology	Astrological text authored by Garga
6	Kalpam	About customs and procedures of sacrifices

### Upangas:

1. Puranas like Bhagavatha Purana which is also called Bhagavatham, Brahmapuranam and the like.
2. Nyaya – Vaisheshika Shastra which is a philosophical doctrine.
3. Meemamsa Shastra which is a philosophical system of investigation.
4. Dharma Shastras such as Samkhya, Yoga, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Smrutis.

### **Shruti and Smruti:**

Whatever described above is classified into two segments namely Shruti and Smruti. The former means 'which are heard' and the latter 'which are remembered'. Scriptural texts are coming under Shruti and the remaining under Smruti. Bhagavath Geetha which is a part of Mahabharata, Manu Smruti, and Yanjavalkya Smruti are all Smrutis falling under Dharma Shastra.

### **Prasthan Thrayam:**

Prasthan Thrayam are those namely Upanishads, Bhagavath Geetha and Brahma Suthra which are very important for Vedanthis.

### Questions:

1. Why do we call Hindu Dharma as Sanatana Dharma?
2. What are the classifications of Hindu religious texts?

## Lesson 2

### Hindu Religion: Main Teachings and Rituals

# Universal soul and Individual Soul are one # Universe is an Illusion # Desire, Deeds, Rebirth # Incarnations # Who is God? # Religious Rituals # Pointers to Names in Upanishads #

Those who believe in the authenticity of Vedas are theists and those who do not believe are atheists. Buddhism, Jainism and Charvaka Religion are atheism because they are not based on Vedas. We can say that the Indian Philosophy is Hindu Theology, but Western Philosophy is not Western Theology. This difference arises from the fact that Western Philosophy does not accept the authenticity of Scriptures. Keeping these in mind, let us understand the doctrines commonly accepted in Hindu religion.

#### **Universal soul and Individual Soul are one:**

All the souls are eternal. The soul of each individual has originated from the Universal Soul and would return to it in course of time. The water vapour rising from sea falls into the sea itself later as rain; likewise, all souls would merge with Brahman.

In Christianity, eternity rests only with Holy Trinity; Triune God is the creator of all those visible and invisible. Individuals are not merging with God, but are becoming part and parcel of the Divine family. The only one who can say that "I am God" is the eternal son of God who took flesh as a human being and lived among us as Christ. Through that Christ, everyone can become children of God.

#### **Universe is an Illusion:**

According to Shankaracharya, this material world is an illusion and containing material truths only; but Ramanujacharya holds that this world is the body of Brahman.

Christianity teaches that God created this world as an inevitable bucket for the life and growth of mankind. Matter in itself is not evil and therefore incarnation has become possible. Resurrection is possible for this material body of flesh. "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (Romans 8:19).

#### **Desire, Deeds, Rebirth:**

The teachings of Hindu religion advocates that desire leads to deeds and deeds lead to fate and fate leads to deliverance. Each individual soul has four steps namely Salokya, Sameepya, Saroopya and Sayoojya to reach his ultimate fate. One has to accept his fate however hard that may be.

Christian faith has a central place for grace and love; therefore there is communality and mutuality among the believers. Good and evil are not only individual, but communal too. The impact of the tribulations of parents affect the life of children and likewise, Jesus Christ suffered

and died on the cross; he rose from the dead and opened a path of redemption to mankind. "And, by his wounds, we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

### **Incarnations:**

Bhagavath Geetha 4: 6, 7 narrates the incarnations. 'O Arjun, whenever righteousness decreases and evil increases in this world, to protect the righteous and to destruct the evil, these do happen regularly (I keep on incarnating ages over ages).

On that basis, ten incarnations are being taken place namely, Matsya, Koorma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Sri Rama, Balarama, Krishna, Kalki, Janardana.

According to the interpretations of Dr Radhakrishnan, God does not incarnate; instead, man rises as incarnations. Thus, everybody has got incarnations.

Here also, Christian Theology is different. For redemption of entire sins of mankind, God took flesh and came down in body as only in Christ. Other beings of holiness, Christian believe, are saints or symbolic beings.

### **Who is God?**

Shankaracharya has taught that God is 'nirgunabrahma'; Ramanujacharya has taught that God is 'satgunabrahma'. Commonly, Hindu religion has 330 millions of gods and their trinities namely Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In theoretic Hindu religion, Parabrahma is Satchitanandan possessing three natures such as 'sat', 'chit' and 'anandam'. The thought of 'pantheism' that everything is God is also seen in Hindu religion.

In Christianity, God means Triune God which involves oneness and trinity. God that is eternal love can be said to be one family of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in eternal love; the principle that God is love is symbolised in Holy Trinity.

### **Religious Rituals:**

Hindu religion is centred on offering of sacrifices, submission of prayers as recitals and performance of rituals; this could be a reason why that religion is firmly attached to the hearts of their believers. Below, we have some of such rituals performed among Hindus from their birth to death as also certain observances of obsequies.

Auস্যamedhajanam	For longevity after birth
Jathakarmam	Done immediately after birth
Namakarmam	Ten days after birth, the infant is named with caste name
Annaprasadam	Infant is fed after six months: meat for expertise in vocabulary, rice with butter for nobility and fish for fastness
Choulakarmam	Cutting off hair: for Brahmins, at age three, for Kshatriyas at age five and for Vaisyas at age seven
Karnavedam	Piercing the ear with a prayer 'let good alone be heard'
Vidyarambham	Initiating to world of letters
Upanayanam	Commencement of education and wearing 'poonool'
Sambandham	Marriage where 'pudava' is offered
Anthieshti	Funeral ceremony: either cremated or buried in earth

Obsequies	Seven days' observance where Brahmins are offered gifts.
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In Christian faith, there are Sacraments in place of these which are leading believers to kingdom of God and self purification.

**Pointers to Names in Upanishads:**

1	Easha	Easha means God; this Upanishad begins with the word 'Easha'
2	Kena	Kena means by whom; this Upanishad begins with a question 'Keneshitham'
3	Kadham	This is made available from the sage 'Kadhan'
4	Prashna	This Upanishads handles 'problems'
5	Mundaka	This Upanishad is for Mundakas or those whose heads are clean shaved – in other words, for monks
6	Mandookyam	Tradition of the priestly sage 'Mandookan'
7	Thaithareeyam	What the disciple received from Yanjavalkyan in the form of birds
8	Ithareyam	This from the Guru 'Mahidas Ithareyan'
9	Chhandogyam	Chhandogan means one who has learnt Sama Veda and Chhandas in one a who sings
10	Brahudaranyakam	Aranyakam with far and wide thoughts and contents
11	Kaushithaki	Kaushithaki is a king who is a devotee of Surya; Upanishad II: 7:5
12	Shvethashwara	Like a white horse; name of a Guru in Upanishad (see 6:21)
13	Mythri	Completion of Mythrayanisamhitha

**Questions:**

1. Evaluates the main religious doctrines of Hindus based on Christian views.
2. Compare Hindu religious rituals with Sacraments of Christian faith.

**Lesson 3**

**Hindu Religion: Ethical Movements**

# Devotional Movements # Varnashrama Dharma # Six Theories # Kevala Adwaitha and Vishishta Adwaitha # Shankaracharya and Kevala Adwaitha # Ramanujacharya and Vishishta Adwaitha # Dwaitha Vadam of Madhava #

**Devotional Movements:**

Two important devotional movements within the Hindu Dharma are Viashnava and Shaiva movements. Devotees of Vishnu treat Vishnu as their highest god and for devotees of Shiva, their highest god is Shiva. There are two theories of salvation for Vaishnavas, namely markkada

nyaya and marjara nyaya. The former among these are applicable to those in the North and they advocate that a devotee should cling to his god and achieve salvation similar to a baby monkey clings to its mother. For the latter or those in the South, marjara nyaya is the order where the teaching is that god will certainly take care of his devotee at all times similar to a mother cat holds its baby with its teeth wherever it goes. In other words, markkada nyaya emphasises man's efforts and deeds for his salvation whereas marjara nyaya has its emphasis on the grace and mercy of god.

In Christian faith, both these are reciprocal. As we have seen above in marjara nyaya, God is one who protects; likewise, as in markkada nyaya, a devotee submits himself totally to his God.

### **Varnashrama Dharma:**

Varnashrama Dharma has been formed as a system of division in relation to responsibilities aiming at the value based growth of the community. But later, the system was contaminated with differentiation of castes as high and low catalysed by the menace of untouchability. The four Varnas are Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra.

It is not proper to interpret the purusha sooktha of Rig Veda to grade four castes as Brahmin having originated from the head of Brahma, Kshatriya from his arm, Vaisya from his thigh and Shudra from his foot. In the fourth volume of that famous book Republic authored by Plateau, there are three classifications of the people as philosophers who are in governance, the warriors and the ordinary mass. Despite the existence of Varnashrama Dharma, Mahatma Gandhi believed in the possibility of creating a brotherhood. Satyakamajabalan was accepted as a disciple by a Brahmin guru because of his truthfulness in deeds and words. There are many in the Hindu Dharma who had fought against caste based differentiations.

Ashrama Dharma was formulated for integrity of individual ways of life. Each of the four stages of manhood, though different from one to another is noble in itself; these stages are Brahmacharya during one's days of being educated, Gruhasthashrama of the family head, Vanaprastha of the elderly and the Sanyasa of the one who forsakes everything.

Here, it is worth recalling the exhortation of St Paul: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

### **Six Theories:**

Of the six visions, one is the Nyaya Darshana of Gautama; this Darshana deals with Prathyaksham, Anumanam, Upamanam and Shabda Pramanam which are involved with Hindu Religious Logical Realism. There are many sub divisions for these. The Philosophy based on the Vaisheshika Soothra formulated by Kanadan in BC 4<sup>th</sup> century is an atomistic pluralism that narrates the attributes of each of the above sub divisions. The seven attributes are materialism, quality, deed, generality, particularity, inherence and non existence. Samkhya Darshan of sage Kapila depicts the theory of duality as the eternity of man and nature. In this very theory of duality, one can observe singularity in nature or matter and plurality in soul. There are eight stages or angas in the Ashtangayoga Darshana of Patanjali (AD 500); they are Yama (abstentions), Niyama (observance), Asana (posture), Pranayama (control of breath), Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses from their objects), Dharana (attention), Dhyana (meditation) and

Samadhi (concentration). Poorvameemamsa is one of the chief doctrines of the philosopher Jaimini which is an investigation into the Karmakanda of Veda; Utharameemamsa of the sage Badarayana is a Vedanta.

#### **Kevala Adwaitha and Vishishta Adwaitha:**

Poorvameemamsa depends on the Karmakanda of Vedas; Vedanta depends on Jnanakanda. The interpretation of Shankara on the Vedanta Soothra of Badarayana says that Brahma, being above all virtues, is nirguna; but Ramanuja interprets Brahma as satguna. The Vedanta of Shankaracharya (788 – 820) is called Kevala Adwaitha and that of Ramanujacharya (1017 – 1137) is called Vishishta Adwaitha.

#### **Shankaracharya and Kevala Adwaitha:**

Sri Shankaracharya is the most brilliant proponent of Adwaitha Vedanta; he was born at Kalady in Kerala. Shankaran was the lone son of Shivaguru and Aryamba, a Brahmin couple totally immersed in devotion to Lord Shiva. He desired to turn to atheism during his very young age. By then, his mother was a widow and he succeeded in getting her permission and left home. He went to Guru Govindapadar and learnt Vedic philosophy and means of salvation. The Guru was highly impressed with his disciple's extra ordinary talents and used him as his mouth piece of Adwaitha philosophy. Shankaran travelled across the length and breadth of India and earned acclaim everywhere; he wrote many books; he made many youngsters his disciples. He established four monasteries. His main works include the interpretations of Vedanta Soothra, Upanishads and Bhagavath Geetha. Sureshwara, Hasthamalaka, Thottaka and Padmapada were his notable disciples. The monasteries he established are Shringerimadham, Dwarakamadham, Badarinathmadham and Purimadham. He had overcome Sarvajnappeedham of the Sharada Temple in Kashmir, an indication of reaching the zenith of spiritual wisdom. History is silent about any other person who has achieved this. Sri Shankaran passed away at the age of 32, who has been known as a genius in the world of scholars.

The Vedanta Soothra interpretation or the Brahma Soothra interpretation of Shankaracharya has to be presented in a specific system of interpretation; this is called Kevala Adwaitham. Over a period of time, there came up various interpretations to the philosophy of Adwaitha and therefore, Vedic scholars named Shankara system as Kevala Adwaitham just to distinguish it from others. Brahman, universe and the living souls of the universe are not to be seen as different realities, but they are one in absolute form. The 'one' in that absoluteness is Brahman itself who is above the nature of duality. This Brahman, whose nature is non duality, is self revealing within the power of illusion giving rise to universe and living souls. The power of illusion possessed by Brahman is just like the power of a magician. Therefore the living souls should have the wisdom to realise that they are not a reality in themselves, but they are Brahman in the ultimate sense. Those who do not possess this wisdom are living in ignorance as taught by Shankaran. This ignorance can be compared to seeing a rope and misunderstanding it to be a snake. Ignorance is the source of duality, lack of knowledge and meaningless dialogues; one has to rise from such situations by earning wisdom and realise non duality, which is called salvation or moksha.

#### **Ramanujacharya and Vishishta Adwaitha:**

Sri Ramanujacharya was another prominent interpreter of Adwaitha Vedanta. Ramanuja had been brought up under Vaishnava devotional background. Ramanuja was born to Asuri Keshava Perumal and Bhoodevi at Sri Perumbathur; this was the time when the fame of Yamunacharya was at its pinnacle in the Tamil Vaishnava Devotional Movement. Ramanuja was a keen follower of spiritual enlightenment topics right from his young days. Though he got married, he chose to lead a monastic life and engaged himself at Shreerangam as the successor of Yamunacharya. Ramanuja fulfilled the last wish of Yamunacharya to have an interpretation of Vedanta Soothra. This interpretation was named Shreebhashyam. He carried out successfully the works related to the renovation of the Vaishnava Temple at Shreerangam. He worked among the public concentrating his efforts towards upliftment of the low castes and marginalised and propagated strongly against discrimination of castes and religions. He passed away at the ripe age of 120 at Shreerangam.

Vishishta Adwaitham is the specific system of interpreting the Vedanta Soothra of Ramanuja. When the philosophy of Adwaitha is illustrated through a peculiar view point, it is Vishishta Adwaitham. Brahman is God filled with all virtues; the universe and living souls are the real body of Brahman. Thus were the teachings of Ramanujacharya. In man, the spirit lives inside his body; likewise, God lives inside universe and all living souls. Then, it can be said that the universe and living souls are Brahman itself. Therefore, on one hand, universe and mankind are all realities, but on the other hand, they are part of the non dual nature of Brahman. The devotional approach of Vishishta Adwaitham is to worship and adore Brahman who is filled with all virtues as an epitome of love and to experience realisation of Brahman through such meditation in love.

<b>Kevala Adwaitha</b>	<b>Vishishta Adwaitha</b>
“Nethi, Nethi” means Brahman is above virtues	‘Nethi, Nethi’ means there are no evil; Brahman possesses all good virtues
Brahman has no person; living soul is eternal soul	Brahman has a person; living souls is not merging with eternal soul
Illusion added to Brahman is god	Brahman and god are the same
Brahman alone is realistic	Brahman, living soul and eternal soul are realistic
Universe is material only	Universe is body of Brahman
Universe is not evolutionary	Living soul and eternal soul are dependent on Brahman
Ignorance is internal illusion; illusion is external ignorance	Illusion is not ignorance, but transformation
Way of wisdom is knowledge of non duality that proposes Brahman and living soul are one	Devotion, deeds and wisdom should end up in acts leading to total submission
Emancipation is through salvation; emancipation is redemption from illusion and complex thoughts	Emancipation is heavenly experience of total submission through the means of deeds

#### **Dwaitha Vadam of Madhava:**

According to Madhava Bhashyam (1199 – 1278), Vishnu Narayan is god as proposed by Ramanuja. God and external universe are eternal. There are differences between god and souls, one soul and other souls, god and matter, soul and matter and between matters. God, souls and

universe are eternal. But god alone is free, epitome of nobility and wholeness of all virtues. God takes up incarnations. For emancipation, what is needed is the path of devotion. Nature is not eternal. This universe is formed from self being, dust and darkness. Though not created by Brahman, nature, universe and souls are dependent on Brahman.

In all these philosophical thought processes, so long the Christian teachings about creation are not there, it has to be inferred either that the universe is the body of Brahman or it is an illusion. Christian faith holds that universe is a creation of God which is indebted to God, but it is not God. Christianity doesn't teach that universe is an illusion or it is God because of the reason that it is a creation. The image of God that man possesses is his thirst towards God, the source. Created image of God prompts man, the creation to be in relation and in reliance to the creator and the universe. Man is the exalted factor that keeps the creation and the creator connected. Thus, God, man and created universe are different, similar and related. Creation, being a topic of importance, has to be thought of as a subject for dialogues with our Hindu brethren.

**Questions:**

1. Evaluate Varnashrama.
2. Compare Kevala Adwaitha and Vishishta Adwaitha and carry out a critical assessment of them.
3. Do you agree with the evaluation of Christian view point that in Hindu Dharma, reality of creation is not correctly accounted for? Why?

**Lesson 4**

**Architects Hindu Renaissance 1**

# Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Brahma Samaj # Debendranath Tagore (1817 – 1905) # Keshub Chandra Sen (1838 – 84) # Dayananda Saraswati (1824 – 83) # Sreeramakrishnan (1834 – 86) # Vivekananda (1862 – 1902) #

William Carey arrived at Serambur on January 1, 1830 which turned out to be the beginning of a new era in India. The presence of missionaries made innovative changes within the Hindu religion. The introduction of English education, entry of western culture and the related new ideologies woke up a sleeping Hinduism. The East India Company was not in favour of these missionaries then because it was necessary to keep good terms with Hindus to protect their commercial interests. After the military revolution of 1857, the British government took over the governance of India which turned out favourable to missionaries. Western missionaries attempted to enlighten the Hindu intellects about those senseless rituals such as Sati, child marriage, caste differences, Devadasi system, and idol worship. Consequently, the liberalists within Hinduism tried to initiate innovations within the religion whereas the conservatives decided to protect the prevailing practices. The following pages introduce some of the then reformists of this religion.

**Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Brahma Samaj:**

In some circles, Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772 – 1833) used to be called 'Father of Modern India'. He was born to Brahmin parents of whom his father was one who had been a person of spiritual enlightenment; his mother was a devotee of the 'goddess of power'. Thus, his childhood days were filled with perceptions of religious thoughts and therefore, there would have been a sort of internal readiness within Raja Ram preparing him for setting up the movement 'Brahma Samaj'. While he was 16, he wrote an article against idol worship which met with strong objections from the traditionalists, forcing him to move away from his home. He travelled a lot and learnt different languages like English, Persian and Sanskrit. He worked with East India Company for some time. In 1815, he set up a spiritual community in Calcutta. When he saw his sister in law committing Sati, he was so upset that he came up against the ritual itself. His persistent propaganda against Sati ended up with Lord Bentinck proclaiming Sati as against law in 1820. The same year, his book, 'The Precepts of Jesus, Guide to Peace and Happiness' was released. The approaches of Serampur missionaries at that time were not acknowledging the positives of Hinduism and therefore, Raja Ram Mohan Roy used to oppose them. He opposed the teachings about Holy Trinity also. The 'one God faith community' established by him gradually turned 'Brahma Sabha' and later, 'Brahma Samaj'. The main teachings of Brahma Samaj included religious tolerance, one God faith, individual and common worship, no idols, opposition to caste based differentiations, worship and sermon on Sundays similar to that of Christian Unitarians, opposition to the faith of rebirth, social reformation and education of womenfolk. In 1830, Raja Ram Mohan Roy went to England to represent the abandonment of Sati before the House of Commons and died there after three years.

**Debendranath Tagore (1817 – 1905):**

Debendranath Tagore was the son of Dwarakanath Tagore, one of the best friends of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and also the father of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. He had studied at the educational institution set up by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was born to an aristocratic family but got attracted towards Brahma Samaj. While he was 18, his grandmother passed away. With this he lost all interest in wealth and became comfortable with meditation. He appreciated the teachings of Brahma Samaj, particularly the 'one God faith' and their objections to idol worship. He studied Upanishads at depth and started a community named 'Thathvaranjini'. He joined Brahma Samaj in 1842 while he was 21 along with his nineteen friends. He formulated a service order for Brahma Samaj named 'Brahmopasana' with a view to systemise the community. His activities within Brahma Samaj included publication of 'Thathvabodhini' and setting up a school with the same name. He strongly opposed the mission activities under the leadership of Alexander Dough. He had no belief in the infallibility of Hindu Vedas. He published 'Brahma Dharma' choosing acceptable portions from the Vedas. Later, he shifted to Simla and Keshub Chandra Sen took over the leadership.

**Keshub Chandra Sen (1838 – 84):**

Keshub Chandra Sen joined Brahma Samaj while he was 19 and became its Joint secretary along with Debendranath at 22. The same year, he visited Ceylon and after returning, released pamphlets for propagating activities of the Samaj. Next year, he organised a 'Sangath Sabha'. He removed the idol of Durga from Tagore's house and converted that room for common family prayers. The Samaj

started initiating themselves towards social activities also. A periodical 'Vamabodhini' was published with a view to promote woman welfare. Mixed marriages were encouraged. Another publication 'Indian Mirror' was also started. At age 24, he became the Brahma Samaj Acharya. Within the next four years, five branches were set up in Bengal, two in North East provinces and one each in Madras and Bombay. With more schools being established, Brahma Samaj became an all India movement. As Debendranath Tagore was more conservative and Keshub Chandra Sen a liberalist, there were ideological differences and the Samaj split into two. Priests wearing the sacred thread were active at Tagore's residence which came to be called Aadi Brahma Samaj and those opposed it became Bharatheeya Brahma Samaj. Debendranath gradually came to be called a sage. He laid the foundation for Shanti Nikethan which was completed by his son Rabindranath Tagore. Keshub Chandra Sen became closer to Christ. He conducted a preaching tour across the length and breadth of the country on the subject, 'Jesus Christ – Europe – Asia' and exhorted Europeans and locals to accept the ethical teachings of Christ. He published 'Shloka Samgraham' including hymns from the enlightenment tradition and also quoting from various religious texts. He succeeded in strengthening Bharatheeya Brahma Samaj and Prayer Samaj. He had an unprecedented deep devotion to Christ. He spoke to the young generation Hindus, "Jesus, the King comes, let India prepare itself to receive him". He established 'The Church of the New Dispensation' or 'Navavidhan' which contained many of the Christian principles. He considered Holy Trinity at par with Sat-Chit-Anand. He used to be called a Christian who had not become a Christian.

#### **Dayananda Saraswati (1824 – 83):**

The original name his father had given to him was Moolasankar. His father Ambashankar was very rich and a devotee of Lord Shiva. He had a marriage proposal at age 21 and to escape from this, he ran away from his home. Using his friendship with some of the Sanyasins, he joined the Saraswati sect and accepted the name, 'Dayananda'. Principle of Vedanta did not quench his thirst and therefore, he believed that the universe is not an illusion and that soul and god are different. From age 44, Dayananda Saraswati started propagating his innovative ideas. He set up his Aria Samaj in 1875 when he was 51. He toured different parts of North India opposing the teachings of Islam and Hinduism. In 1882, a movement for protecting cows was also formed.

The earlier reformists were favourable to contain Christianity, but Dayananda Saraswati was against it. He accepted only the Veda Samhita parts within the four Vedas. The one god, various souls and nature are eternal. God created universe from nature. Even if one is emancipated through rebirth, there is no question of merging with Para Brahma. Idol worship, animal sacrifice, remembering the departed and pilgrimage are meaningless. Wealth acquired through just means alone is wealth.

To be a member of Aria Samaj, one has to accept the teachings of Dayananda Saraswati and the ten commands provided he has completed 18 years of age. There is a local committee whose membership strength is 1 for every 20 members.

The worship of Aria Samaj was formulated in the line of Christian worship. Their worship order consists of singing of hymns, reading of scriptures, sermon, reciting a doctrine of faith and burning of things producing fragrance.

Through a ritualistic purification process, they readmit those who had once left Hinduism. They strongly oppose all other religions just like an army confronts alien forces.

When there was a vertical split of Ario Samaj, those who were non vegetarians and considered modern in outlook turned out as Dayananda college segment based at Lahore and the vegetarians turned preceptors' Mahatma segment based at Hardwar. Now, Delhi is their head quarters. Movements such as Jana Sangh, RSS are all indebted to Ario Samaj.

#### **Sreeramakrishnan (1834 – 86):**

The childhood name of Sreeramakrishnan was Gadadhar. Right from his birth, he was attracted to a life that was centred in devotion. He had no interests in schooling or worldly comforts. His prime interests were confined to reading religious texts, performing rituals in temple, being in togetherness with Kali, Christ and Nibi through meditations to assimilate the enjoyment caused by extreme pleasure, serving the pilgrims and so on. In 1885, he became a priest at the Temple of Kali built by a wealthy person at Dakshineswar located four miles north of Calcutta. It was after this, Gadadhar started experiencing Kali Darshan and the related aesthetic experience. He considered Kali as his own mother and was mostly under meditation. But when he was aged 25, under pressure from his parents, he had to marry Sharada, who was just five years old. However, after the marriage, he returned to the Temple of Kali. In emulation to Hanuman, he meditated Seeta and had the aesthetic experience of Seeta Darshan. Later, he met a Tantric Sanyasin and from him learnt sadhana and Tantric texts. He had Balaram Darshan and Krishna Darshan. This was followed by his learning mediation from a Sanyasin of Puri Sri Shankara Ashram that was based on non duality system. With this, he took the name Sreeramakrishnan. In 1886, he submitted himself to a Muslim devotee as a disciple and within three days, had Nibi Darshan. In 1874, he took a Bible from a Christian and learnt it. After seeing a picture of Jesus sitting on the lap of Mary, Sreeramakrishnan was overcome with affectionate obeisance and had a revelation of Christ. Based on all these experiences, Sreeramakrishnan taught that all religions are one and the same.

#### **Vivekananda (1862 – 1902):**

Vivekananda was the most prominent of all disciples of Sreeramakrishnan. Narendranath (his original name) was born in a noble family of Calcutta and took graduation in Economics from the Mission College. In 1889, Hasty, his English Professor had told that as far as he knew, Sreeramakrishnan was the lone mystic in the world. Hearing this, Vivekananda paid a visit to Dakshineswar; this visit turned out to be an innovative experience for Vivekananda and Hindu religion. Without completing his studies of law, Vivekananda became member of Brahma Samaj and had a mystic experience with that visit of Sreeramakrishnan turning out to becoming his lifelong disciple. He was a good orator, good singer, a great scholar and a fascinating personality. He travelled through the length and breadth of India and in 1893, addressed the World Religious Conference at Chicago with a speech that reflected the minds of scholarly world for long. Since then, he was in United States of America for three years delivering lectures at prominent centres like St Louis, Detroit, Boston, Washington, New York and many more earning lots of disciples in the process as also collecting contributions. He established a Sreeramakrishna Mission in the name of his Guru Sreeramakrishna Paramahansa. He went to England in 1895 for a treatment, but there also, his oratory was so powerful that many were attracted towards him. In 1896, a centre was set up in New York. He rechristened two Americans and entrusted them with the responsibility of this centre. Ms Margaret who came into association with Vivekananda in England joined Ramakrishna Mission after being renamed Sister Nivedita. Vivekananda paid visits to other European countries such as

Switzerland, Germany and Holland to deliver lectures. He then travelled back to India with some of his European disciples, visiting Colombo on the way. Vivekananda was accorded a very warm and royal welcome on his return to India. With contributions from his friends from the West, he established monastery at Belur in Calcutta which is now a globally known centre and the head quarters of Ramakrishna Ashram. In his second missionary tour of the west, a mission centre was established at California and also addressed the World Religious Conference at Paris. He also paid visits to mid Europe and Egypt. On returning to India, he had a short tour of Assam after which he died at the Belur Ashram at a young age of 39.

What does Ramakrishna Ashram convey? The teachings of Sreeramakrishnan can be read in “The Gospel of Sreeramakrishna” and the collection of books authored by Vivekananda. It can be summarised like this: commencing from duality (soul of life and eternal soul are different) passing through Vishishta Adwaita (though two, one in reality) reaching Kevala Adwaita (soul of life and eternal soul are one) has to be understood as the self realisation expressed by religion. Once time and space disappears, universe is just an illusion. Birth and death are for mind. Soul is eternal. God is not eternal. Brahman alone is eternal.

**Questions:**

1. Compare Brahma Samaj and Arian Samaj and evaluate them.
2. Evaluate the contributions of Vivekananda and Sreeramakrishna Mission towards Hindu renaissance.

For further reading:

1. Rev P T Thomas, ‘Modern Religious Thoughts of India’, CSS, Tiruvalla
2. The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance (by MM Thomas, CLS, Madras, 1970)

## **Lesson 5**

### **Architects Hindu Renaissance 2**

# Aravinda Ghosh (1872 – 1950) # Mahatma Gandhi (1860 – 1948) # Acharya Vinoba Bhave (1895 – 1981) # Ramana Maharshi (1870 – 1959) # Dr S Radhakrishnan (1888 – 1975) #

**Aravinda Ghosh (1872 – 1950):**

All those whom we discussed in the previous chapter were born in Bengal except Dayananda Saraswati who was from Kathiawar. Aravinda Ghosh too was born in Bengal. His father Krishna Dhār Gosh was immensely rich and was considering western culture and language nobler than those of the east. He had educated his children the European school in Darjeeling and also in England. Both his children had been in England from age 7 to 21 for their studies. Aravinda appeared for ICS examination and was successful, but was not chosen to the service as he refused to learn horse riding.

But the son was rich in love for his mother land contrary to his father. While he was 15, he became the secretary of Indian Majlis, a students' organisation in Cambridge; through this forum, he used to criticise vehemently the imperialistic policies of the British government. In 1893, he returned to India and was employed in the state of Baroda for 13 years. During this period, he got his main interests confined to independence of India and self realisation.

Aravinda was an extremist in politics. As such, his leaders were Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Lal and such politicians. He was serving as Vice Principal at the Baroda College drawing a pay packet of Rs 750/- per month. Without any hesitation, he resigned this position and joined Bengal National College as a Professor in English, but at a salary of Rs 150/- per month and shifted to Calcutta. He spread his extremist ideologies through the news paper 'Vande Mataram'. Shortly, he resigned his job at the college and became a full time politician. He was arrested in 1908 and spent a year at the Alipore jail.

At the age of 29, he married Mrilanidevi, but they lived together very rarely. Certain Developments in the Indian political scenario made him re locate to Pondicherry. Later, he turned to spirituality and became an ascetic and a pilgrim.

A new chapter was opened in his life at Pondicherry. He set up an ashram there with the help of his disciples mostly from abroad including Mira Richards and her husband. Mira Richards came to be called as 'Mother' in course of time; the ashram came to be known all over the globe as Aravindashram. Aravinda Ghosh had authored lot of very valuable books of which 'The Life Divine' throws light on his philosophical insights.

The superman thinking of Nietzsche and the evolution thoughts of Sheridan are seen in the Samagra Yoga of Aravinda Ghosh also. He taught involution and evolution based on his own experiences as well as Vedas and his western background. In the evolution of Satchitanandan, all the three Sat, Chit and Ananda are present. Chit is not consciousness alone, but also the energy of consciousness. Satchitanandan evolves super mind by energy of consciousness possessing two status namely absoluteness and divinity. Involution of a noble mind is over mind. In involution, just below the over mind, there is mind, then life and at the lowest, the matter. When involution is completed in matter, evolution is integration. Ghosh doesn't accept the thought of non duality that matter is illusion. Super mind is the medium for evolution and involution. Samagra Yoga can transform not only individuals, but the whole universe.

### **Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948):**

The Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, the main strength behind our attaining freedom from the British, has been a core Hindu in essence, but at the same time one who has been highly impressed by the sacrificial life of Jesus Christ.

Mohandas was born in Kathiawar; his father was Karam Chand Gandhi and mother, Putlibai who never used to eat anything till the traditional Pooja was done. Mohandas married Kasturbai when he was 13. At 19, he had been to England for studying Law. Before sailing, he vowed before his mother that he wouldn't touch meat or liquor. After completion of his education, he returned to India and shortly proceeded to South Africa to conduct a case for a Muslim industrialist. He was there for 21 years and underwent persecutions of the whites to a good extent. Yet, he organised Indians there

and set up a Tolstoy Farm; gradually, the great weapon of Satyagraha was formulated. The thought of Sarvodaya developed there being inspired from John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last'. He returned to India when he was 46 and as directed by Gopalkrishna Gokhale, conducted an all India tour. Shortly, he commenced the struggle for independence. 33 years since, he was assassinated.

According to Gandhian thought processes, nishkamakarma or action done without desiring any reward is one's responsibility; God is truth; ahimsa and brahmacharya are the means. Satyagraha is a form of agitation where there is no confrontation with the opponent. All vocations are noble. A scavenger is as noble as a teacher; a doctor or the mother of a child certainly touches faeces. Initially, Gandhi was for caste based vocations, but later, he withdrew from that. He got convinced that so long caste differences persisted, untouchability cannot be discarded. Education shall have to be in the mother tongue and vocationally oriented. He held strong views that swadeshi movements should be strengthened that village industries could be brought up. He highlighted the thoughts about common ownership of land and trusteeship thereof.

The contributions of Mahatma Gandhi are arguably purity in politics along with religious practices in their true holiness. Being a core Hindu, he followed the teachings of Christ. However, he strongly criticised the way Christianity is practiced based on his experiences such as his being thrown out of a Christian worship centre in South Africa based on his caste, the life of Christians that has nothing worthy to emulate, the mannerisms of Christian missionaries attacking Hindu ideologies without convincing reasons, the lack of respect towards opponents shown by missionaries and so on. On the other hand, he regarded people like C F Andrews in very high esteem throughout his life keeping friendly and warm relations with them.

#### **Acharya Vinoba Bhave (1895 – 1981):**

His name was Vinayak Narapuri. He was born in the village Gagode in Kolaba district of Maharashtra. He inherited religious piety and truthfulness from his parents. His childhood was spent with his grandfather Shabu Rao Bhave. He strictly adhered to two noble virtues of his mother throughout his life, namely (1) one who shares knowledge is godly and the one who retains it for himself is a demon and (2) if an ideal family life can be settled with paternal debts, an ideal celibacy can lead forty generations to emancipation.

He satisfied his mother's desire of translating Bhagavath Geetha to Marathi in 1930, though he could do it only after her death. He spent two months and a half at Kashi in 1916 and joined Gandhi's ashram the same year. He retired temporarily for a year on health grounds, but returned to Sabarmati. His name Vinoba was a gift of Gandhi. In 1921, he shifted to Wardha ashram. He was jailed while he was 42 for his participation in the Flag Satyagraha at Nagpur. He gave leadership in the Vaikam Satyagraha and succeeded in opening the temple to Harijans. During his detention days in Dhulia jail, he authored 'Geethapravachanam'.

After Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave formed the Sarvodaya Samajam in 1948 and took up its leadership. While he was travelling across Andhra Pradesh, the idea of Bhoodan struck him. On April 18, 1951, a youth offered 100 acres of land for this movement. 27, 53, 465 acre of land were handy by March 25, 1951. Bhoodan had grown up as gifting villages, taluks and districts. Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Shantisena was experimented by Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan through Sarvodaya.

During his last days, he advocated movements for banning cow slaughter. Though this idea can be questioned, his commitment was worth appreciating. In the end, we can see Vinoba Bhave as a Brahmachari, Gandhian, proponent of Bhoodan movement, one who sacrificed his life, a political ideologist, a prophet of Geetha, a Shanti Senadhipa and in such umpteen roles with distinction.

**Ramana Maharshi (1870 – 1959):**

He was born at a village Tiruchully, 30 miles away from Madurai as the son of Sundara Iyer and Agalammalu. His childhood name was Venketaraman. When he was 16, he heard the name Arunachalam accidentally. Next year, he left home and reached Arunachalam near Tiruvannamala after leaving out all he had. Here, he became known all over the world as Raman Maharshi.

Before leaving home, he was staying with his father's brother where, one day, fear of death felled him as a tough disturbance. He lied down as if dead and a revelation came through his mental faculties; 'After a while, this body would be cremated; would I be cremated? No, I am a deathless soul'. This revelation turned out to be a spiritual experience that would have come after lengthy meditation. His brother had given him five rupees. He took three rupee from it and left the balance at a place which his brother could see. He also placed there a letter and left the place as if he was going out to attend his tuition classes. His destination was Tiruvannamala. He travelled in train, by foot, through temples and forsook his address. He had a pair of ear studs worth twenty rupees which was pledged for four rupees. On reaching Tiruvannamala, he shaved off his tuft of hair on the top of his head. The balance of cash he had was thrown away into a temple pond along with his pooonool. From there, he came to be known as Ramana. He started mediation in a hall with thousand pillars, but stray children started throwing stones on him. Then he shifted to a nearby cave called pathalalingam. Here too there was no respite and therefore the monks who were there took Ramana to the Temple of Subramanian not far away. After a year, he changed his abode to a mango garden. By now his family members located him and wanted to take him back, but he did not budge. He entered a cave close to Arunachalam hill and continued his meditation. Seekers of God started approaching him more often. There, he translated 'Viveka Choodamoni' of Shankara Acharya to Tamil. Ganapathi Shastri, a Sanskrit scholar used to be a regular visitor from 1903 to 1907 to whom Ramana Maharshi explained the meaning of meditation like this: 'from wherever the idea of 'I' comes, in that if one is immersed totally, his mind merges there. This is meditation'. This was a revelation of Ganapathi Shastri and he proclaimed Ramana as Maharshi. His mother came to him after her pilgrimage to Banaras and Thiruppathi; again, she visited him for a second time and accepted saffron dress and became a chinna swami. She passed away in 1922. At the spot where she was cremated, a temple and Ramana Ashram was set up. Ramana Ashram grew up and became globally known. Many took discipleship, natives and foreigners. A school for teaching Vedas was established. Another shed for housing cows were also made as well as a printing press. He lived at Tiruvannamala till his end having passed away while he was 71.

The 'Updeshasamgraha' authored by him was Adwaita Vedanta. Sacrificing 'self' in the fire of wisdom is sacrifice. Our body of flesh is nothing more than a cage. True emancipation is the experience of Satchitanandam.

**Dr S Radhakrishnan (1888 – 1975):**

Dr Radhakrishnan who was the President of India was better known as a Hindu philosopher. He served as a Professor with Presidency College, Madras till 1971. He had his higher education at Christian College Tambaram. He was a class mate of Sri K C Chacko of Union Christian College, Aluva. He also served as Visiting Professor at some of the Indian universities and at Oxford. In 1975, he was chosen for the Templeton Award worth US \$ 100,000/- He taught that there was an integral intuition as part of one's religious experience. His teachings were centred on Adwaita Philosophy. He succeeded in convincing western scholars about the nobility of Hinduism and introduced many of the ancient texts to them. His thought processes are revealed through his books 'Eastern Religions and Western Thoughts', 'An Idealist View of Life' and 'Hindu way of Life'. Though he became the President of India, he was known globally as a reformist of Hindu Religion. His 'Indian Philosophy' is inclusive of western thoughts also.

**Questions:**

1. Compare the contributions of Aravinda Ghosh and Mahatma Gandhi.
2. How can we continue with the nobler contributions of Acharya Vinoba Bhave for Hindu renaissance?
3. Find out the lessons those are applicable to Christianity from Ramana Maharshi.
4. Make a comparison of family life and ascetic life.

**Lesson 6****Architects Hindu Renaissance 3**

# P C Mazumdar # M G Ranade # Ramdas # Mahesh Yogi # Radha Saomi Satsang # Satya Sai Baba # Sreenarayanaguru #

**P C Mazumdar:**

The Prarthana Samaj that was already functioning in Bombay since 1864 was initiated by Keshub Chandra Sen; this was strengthened by Mazumdar in 1872. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar was a close associate of Sen in the organisation New Dispensation. During his first visit of America in 1863, he released by a book namely The Oriental Christ. What he attempted to drive home through this book was that the West understood Christ in a distorted manner and only those in the East could accept him as a divine human. He explained Christ, Holy Spirit and Holy Trinity through Hindu thought process. The man in Christ possessed a divine manhood that was far superior to the nature of normal manhood. He accepted the unrivalled nature of Jesus Christ as an incarnation in its wholeness and as an eternal model. Like Keshub Chandra Sen, P C Mazumdar too was a Christian not christened as Christian.

**M G Ranade:**

M G Ranade lived during second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was well known as an efficient Judge of the Bombay High Court, as an artist, as an activist in the field of education, as an economist, as one of the founding leaders of Indian National Congress and above all, as an intellectual giant. He was a man of great piety who succeeded in enlightening other Hindus through forums like the Prarthana Samaj. He believed that the invasion of Mughals resulted in enhancing the discipline within Hinduism as well as creating a research mind within the Christian Mission. Once this process of self disciplining reaches its fullness, he believed, India would turn out to be the Promised Land. Along with Pundit Rama Bai, Ranade worked hard for the liberation of women. He tried to increase the minimum marriage age for women as 12. Consequent to his efforts in this direction, the Imperial Legislative Council adopted a resolution to this effect in 1891.

**Ramdas (1884 – 1973):**

After Ramana Maharshi, Ramdas could be accepted as the widely known Sanyasin from the South. He was a devotee who forsook a handloom industrial house owned by him and gave up his name Vittal Rao to adopt a new name Ramdas; as one who sacrificed everything he had in possession, Ramdas travelled across the length and breadth of India. He was inspired by three known books namely Bhagavath Geetha, the New Testament and the Light of Asia; the latter of these contained the teachings of Buddha. He set up his Anandashram at Kanhangad in southern Karnataka; this ashram attracted many devotees even from the West. He believed that the invocation taught by his father, “Om Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram” need be simply recited and there is no need to interpret or explain it. The submission taught by Mohammed Nabi and the Love advocated by Jesus Christ are inevitable. One should find joy at its extremity only from God and not from anywhere else. Noble love is related to Spirit that is invisible. The attitude Ramdas had about religion was broad minded.

**Mahesh Yogi:**

Transcendental meditation was an innovation of Mahesh Yogi. He had over half a million disciples in America and Europe as well as universities and many meditation centres. In 1958, he travelled through the West and the musical group Beatles accepted his advice; with this he shifted his centre from Madras to the West. He taught that through transcendental meditation, stress and tension in each individual could be detached thereby leading to peace in the world. The background of this can be summed up thus: Swami Brahmananda Saraswati was the guru of Mahesh Yogi for 13 years at Jyothirmath of Kedarnath. Whatever was so learnt there was spread all over the world by Mahesh Yogi through different western media like television, radio, telephotography, books, universities, talks, interviews and so on thereby earning substantial wealth. The strategy was to induce creative intelligence by retaining an invocation in secrecy and reciting it so that the unconscious mind and the essence were enlightened resulting in a feel of joy. Transcendental Meditation had to be learnt from a guru for a week at one hour a day. It was claimed that this was a science and this would change the universe to heaven. These claims were doubtful. He did not teach sacrifice. Many in America and all were disappointed after learning this and had been criticising Mahesh Yogi later.

**Radha Saomi Satsang:**

This is the name of an organisation which means the good fellowship of Sri Krishna, the swami of Radha. This had Shivdayal Sahib as its founder who used to be known in two names Radha Saomi Dayal and Saomi Maharaj. He authored two books Sarbachan and Essential Utterances. He and his wife used to be dressed as Krishna and Radha and the pictures thereof were given to devotees. He was born in a family devoted to Vishnu and was educated through teachings of Vishnu. Saligram Sahib was the second guru who was known as a great scholar. In 1878, he passed away and Rai Bahadoor became the third guru. Before his demise in 1898, he authored 'Mathprakash' in English. The fourth guru of the fellowship was a Bengali, by name Brahma Shankar Mishra MA who formulated a constitution for the fellowship. The teachings of this fellowship include Vaishnava theories and certain ideas from Sikh religion. Radha Saomi is considered as the eternal true Sant Sat Guru. The fellowship is centred at Agra. Their core teachings can be summed up as: the positive flow from the solar system enable plants and human beings to rise up as angels; the negative flow under submission to material forces and move down. Spiritual arena is the noblest. The material field is always subjected to spiritual – material confluence and the spiritual field to material – spiritual confluence. Though this fellowship is too small in size, has been attracted by many.

**Satya Sai Baba:**

While alive, Satya Sai Baba was a Sanyasin known all over India. Among his disciples, there are the big wigs of the country like ministers, governors, judges and other intellectuals. Disciples have established a Sai Baba Trust which manages schools, colleges, hospitals, balabhavans and such organisations. Thousands of people had been worshipping him considering his 'divinity'. He used to claim that he was the incarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi who died decades ago and that the next incarnation would be at Mysore. His followers believe that his birth was associated with miraculous incidents and that he creates ash and sword and such things from the atmosphere for gifting to his devotees. They also claimed that he took up the deceases of sick devotees on his body and healed them. He had humility, love, mercy, non violence, work, worship and wisdom as his ideologues. He managed to perform miracles to prove the presence of divinity in him; Christ did not fall to such temptations, but showed signs of mercy.

**Sreenarayanaguru:**

Sri Shankaracharya has been accepted as the greatest of all reformists of Hindu religion and noblest of all philosophers born in Kerala. However, looking to modern Kerala, Sreenarayanaguru, born to Madan Ashan and Ammalu at Chembazhanti, a village east of Trivandrum is unquestionably the greatest Hindu reformist, who passed away at 71 and was buried at Varkala. He learnt Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit to read, write and talk and translated 'Tirukkural' to Malayalam. He was educated at the Sanskrit school at Puthuppally, near Karunagappally till he turned 22 and learnt grammar, science of logic and interpretations of Vedanta. After this, he returned to his village and set up small schools. He was one who was very particular to observe fasts as well as to perform religious rituals. He entered matrimony to please his parents, but he was not at all keen to lead a family life. He left his house saying, "in this world, each being has to achieve something; so, you look into what you have to do; let me look into my affairs". He never returned to his home thereafter and accepted monkhood at the age of 29. He met his needs through begging and learnt Yoga from Ayyav Shastri. From there he went to Maruthuamala and practiced yogasana. His disciples claim that he attained

emancipation there. After this, Sreenarayanaguru travelled across Tamil Nadu and Kerala and ultimately, settled down at Aruvippuram. By now, visitors started flowing to him and some of them accepted his discipleship. He made Aruvippuram and Varkala his centres of activities and continued his sojourn through the interiors of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Ceylon. He was born as an Ezhava, but his main teaching was to take stand against caste differences. By 1912, he established Sharada Mandir, a Shiva Temple and an English school at Shivagiri in Varkala.

He used to advise eight things to the pilgrims flocking Shivagiri; they are, education, cleanliness, devotion to God, organisation, agriculture, trade, handicraft and technical training. The pilgrims move over to Shivagiri usually on 1<sup>st</sup> of January in yellow attire and their number keep on increasing. He set up an Adwaita Ashram at Aluva. Rabindranath Tagore said once, "I could not see anyone who is above Swami Sreenarayanaguru of Malayalam based on spirituality". His teachings can be summed up thus: one caste, one religion and one God for man; he was teaching Adwaita Siddhanta. Each of Brahman, Truth, Jagam, Mithya, are unparalleled. Let us not seek one's caste, let us not say our caste, and let us not even think about castes. To those who seek truth, religion is a sign post; those who have been emancipated do not need a religion.

He objected to consumption of liquor to the best of his ability. Those who were engaged in toddy tapping as a vocation were persuaded to withdraw from that. He established SNDP and strengthened Ezhava community through social development, political willpower and education. Also, he reduced the expenses for marriages by avoiding lavishness.

SNDP was established as a secular organisation with no religious touch to it. Therefore, Guru recorded in his Will, "after the days of Bodhanada, this organisation and its assets would be inherited by a monk elected by majority from among my entire disciple community and such right of inheritance would sustain with the community of monks continually". The sect of such monks is called Sreenarayana Dharma Sangham.

Natarajaguru, (son of Dr Palpu) had acquired a doctorate and set up a gurukulam which has been an attraction to many pilgrims including foreigners. He had toured foreign nations many times. After him, Nitya Chaitanya Yati took over the gurukulam and managed it till he passed away. Sreenarayanaguru, through his deeds proved that even people of low castes could start temple and perform all rituals. This was one reason behind the proclamation opening Temples to all in Kerala with no bar on castes.

Sreenarayanaguru succeeded in arresting the flow of Ezhavas to Christianity. Yet, Jesus Christ was considered by him as a noble master.

**Questions:**

1. Conduct a study of all the reformists introduced in this lesson and prepare a comparative illustration.
2. Give a brief note about Sreenarayanaguru, Chattampi Swamikal and Manthupadmanabhan.
3. Prepare an essay about the peculiar events in Hindu renaissance in Kerala like Temple Entry Proclamation and the right for lower castes to perform rituals in temples.

4. Write brief notes about the recent Hindu leaders like Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Nitya Chaithanya Yati and Mata Amritananda.

Books for further reference:

- a. Fr Zacharias; Hinduism, Aluva Pontifical Seminary
- b. TMP Madhavan: Outline of Hinduism
- c. Rev PS Daniel: Religious Movements in India (Malayalam); TLC / CLS Thiruvalla
- d. Rev PT Thomas: Modern Religious Thoughts in India (Malayalam); CLS Thiruvalla
- e. MM Thomas: Christ of the Indian Renaissance; CLS Madras

## Unit 2

### Other Religions

#### Lesson 1

#### Islam Religion

# Before Mohamed # Mohammed Nabi (570 – 692) # Four Basics # Five Pillars of Ethics #

After Christianity, Islam has the most number of followers across the globe. The literal meaning of this word Islam is obedience and submission.

#### **Before Mohamed:**

Arabia prior to AD 6<sup>th</sup> century was in darkness culturally, religiously and economically. Those were days when the women were not equal with men. To contain population, female children used to be buried alive. Polygamy and polyandry were the order of the day. There was a system of marriage called 'Mutta' according to which wife was to stay at her home when the husband was away on business and trade needs and the like, but she would be accepted as wife on his return. According to Nikah rules, wives were taken paying a price or during a war or during a process of looting in other territories. It was in the above background Mohammed suggested having up to four women as wives for those who had enough resources to protect them permanently. There were interpretations to

this command of Mohammed to keep all four wives on equal terms meant in reality that there could be only one wife. Those were days when Muslims used to worship many idols and therefore it was kept in place that pilgrimages could be only to Kabba, the black stone. Mohammed was born in Arabia where idol worship, animal sacrifice, belief in many gods and faith in evil spirits were common. Let us see Mohamed and his teachings in such background.

### **Mohammed Nabi (570 – 692):**

Mohammed was born in Medina as the son of Abdulla, a trader in Mecca and Amina. But before the delivery of the child, Abdulla passed away. Mohammed was thus brought up by his grandfather Abdul Motalib initially and later by one of their relatives Abutalib who was very rich. When he was 25, he married Khadija who was a rich trader. During his many journeys for business needs, Mohammed befriended some Christians in Palestine. Though they taught him many facets of Christianity, they didn't touch on the deep meaning of Holy Trinity. At the age of 40, he was in the cave called Hira in fasting. It was the month of Ramadan. The traditional legend says that Koran written in Divine hand was sent to him wrapped in a silk clothe through the Arch Angel Gabriel. Gabriel taught him reading and writing. (It is also said that Gabriel recited Koran to Mohammed for him to take down the text over a period of time lasting a few years) Mohammed informed Khadija about this vision and told her that he was either crazy or he had a revelation. Khadija affirmatively convinced him that it was indeed a revelation.

Mohammed lived in Mecca as a trader till he was 40 and had two sons and four daughters in Khadija, but both the sons died young. In the first three years, he made all his family members to accept Islam as their religion. Uthman was one among them who became the third Caliph later.

The next ten years were quite tough for Mohamed and his followers because there were sorcerers trying various means to destroy him. To save from these, Mohammed ran away to Medina in AD 622 at the age of 62 with a helper. It is from this event, the Muslim calendar Hijra commences. Shortly, he returned with armed forces and ruled over Mecca and Medina; he destroyed everyone who stood against Islam. He was one possessing extraordinary calibre. Muslims treat him as Rasool, the final prophet as well as the special messenger of Allah. He handed over the reins of Islam to capable successors.

### **Four Basics:**

For Christianity, there is just a single foundation that includes Holy Bible and traditions. But there are four foundations for Islam namely Koran, Sunna (tradition), Ijma and Qiya. Of these four, Koran is the most important. The meaning of that word is 'recite'. Islam accepts Koran as error free scripture and as direct revelation from Allah though one can say that it contains a collection of selected portions from Old Testament, New Testament, Deuterocanonical and other Apocryphal texts, other traditions, myths, rituals of Persian religion, astronomy and magic. There are 114 chapters the largest one having 286 verses and the smallest just three verses. Koran teaches convincingly the unitary nature, righteousness, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of God. Heaven, Sheol and Judgment are explained akin to the contemporary experiences of this universe. Koran is the criterion for Islam morality that allows up to four wives. We can see in Koran a portion that was added by Uthman Caliph in AD 656. As directed by him, other texts of Koran available then were destroyed. As such, there are no manuscripts containing any differences whatsoever. There are

mentions of Messiah at eight places and about Christ at twenty five places. Koran accepts the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and his second coming, but do not subscribe to his death and resurrection. Other than chapter 9, all others commence with a phrase 'in the name of Allah, the compassionate and merciful'. Most of the books in Arabic language have some mention or other about Koran.

The traditions Sunna is considered as important as Koran by the Sunni segment of Islam which is the largest in number. Sunna consists of compilation of the words of Mohammed and other early leaders which are not seen in Koran. These were compiled 200 years after the death of Mohammed and four schools were established attached to the names of four Imams; they are Hanbali, Maliki, Sahfii and Hanfi.

The third among the foundations Ijma is the codification of unified views of Muslim scholars (mujahidin). In case there comes up a difference in interpreting an aspect of Koran of Sunna, a common view of all Muslim scholars and Imams are to be obtained. The word Ijma literally means 'collect'. Abubaker was made Caliph according to Ijma. Conservative Muslim view opines that there are no mujahidin that can have a uniformly acceptable stand after the first four Imams.

Qiya means guess or inference. This refers to a final decision taken based on the above three foundations.

#### **Five Pillars of Ethics:**

We can say these are their rituals of ethics. Mohammed has taught five crucial things a Muslim believer has to perform which are considered as pillars.

- a. Creed of faith: There is no God other than Allah. I proclaim that Mohammed is an apostle of God. This proclamation is Islamic creed of faith. Any child born should hear this verse first. One who dies should die hearing this. This has to be recited in all the prayers five times a day. Once a person is newly accepted to Islam, this has to be recited. This creed is not seen in Koran at one place together, but is seen separately at many places (47:21. 46:29). One need not study Koran to become a Muslim, but this Creed has to be proclaimed. Any Muslim can initiate this to be recited by a new entrant.
- b. Praying five times a day (salat): It is obligatory for any Muslim to offer prayers five times a day. This can be done at the appropriate time at a mosque or wherever one is, but has to be done by kneeling down. The times are early morning, noon, at three in the afternoon, after sunset and before sleep. There are 14 laws for cleansing face, hands and other parts of the body three times. Prayers are to be offered facing Mecca. Now there are special watches that show the direction to Mecca.
- c. Zakat: 2.50% of one's income has to given away as gift. Koran 9:60 illustrates eight segments of the society to whom Zakat is to be given. They are the poor, the needy, those who collect Zakat, who have joined Islam, liberation of slaves, the debtors, divine purposes and journey. Zakat should not be used for constructing a mosque or for burial of dead body or to settle debts of the dead or to buy a slave. A debtor need not pay Zakat.
- d. Rosa: The fasting during the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the calendar Ramadan is the fourth pillar. Fasting need be done only during the day. Children and the sick are exempted. A sick person shall do a fasting called Koda once he recovers. There are special prayers at the beginning of a day's fast as well as at its end. The day of commencement is decided on the basis of appearance of

moon. Pregnant women are also exempted; they too should do Koda fasting after delivery. The savings in fasting should be given as Zakat. The time of fasting has to be utilised for reading Koran. It is a fact that Muslims take fasting more seriously than Christians which should prompt Christians for introspection.

- e. Hajj: All Muslims should carry out a pilgrimage to Mecca which is called Hajj once in a life time unless it is too difficult for them (3:9). One who cannot carry out such a pilgrimage can do it through a proxy. After completion of Hajj one becomes a Hajji. During the performance of Hajj, all should wear similar dress as a semblance of brotherhood. They have to take seven rounds of the black stone Kabba of Mecca and run from the Safa hill to Marwa hill. Those who are physically weak can ride on donkeys (2:153). Hajj has to be performed in the 12<sup>th</sup> month. During Hajj, there are sermons in Mecca.

#### **Questions:**

1. Evaluate the innovations of Mohammed in comparison with the Arabic culture that was prevailing before him.
2. Compare the Christian approach and the Muslim approach towards performance of rituals related to ethics.

## **Lesson 2**

### **Islam Religion (Continued)**

# Islamic Theology # Sub Sects #

#### **Islamic Theology:**

The Islamic Theology is not deep and wide as Hindu Philosophy or Christian Theology. The reason for this lacuna is their reluctance to learn about other religions and books and their exclusive reliance on Koran as absolute. The Islamic teachings can be summarised in just six facets.

Faith in Allah: There used to be the system of worshipping any number of gods in Arabia and this would be the reason for Islam stressing the oneness of Allah, perhaps emphasising this a bit too much. Their clarion call from mosques five times a day contains the exhortation 'Allah is great, there is no God other than Allah, join for prayers'. The one God faith of Christianity has its essence in Holy Trinity and therefore it can be said to be 'inclusive' faith. But Islam's one God faith does not consider Trinity or the fellowship of love within Trinity and thus it has come out as 'exclusive' faith.

Angelology & Demonology: There are angels and demons in Islamic faith. Angels are entrusted with specific assignments to guard the Divine Throne, to protect the fire of Sheol from not being put off, to comfort the faithful, to receive the departed souls and to sound the trumpets during the final

Judgment. Arch Angel Gabriel has never again visited earth after having come to receive the soul of Mohammed. There are angels to note down the good deeds of each individual on the right side and the bad deeds on the left. Demons like Iblis and Gin have no authority to appear in the form of angels. The army of demons cause ruins and evil to believers.

Scriptures: It is said that 104 texts were sent from Heaven; of these, Adam received 10, Seth 50, Enoch 30 and Abraham 10. Subsequent four Scripture texts are Torah for Moses, Sabur (Psalms) for David, Good News (Gospels) of Jesus Christ and Koran for Mohammed. Koran is the most important of all these which Mohammed received in 23 years part by part. Compared to the first 100 texts, the four later scripture texts are more important and among these four, the fourth one is more significant. Koran contains the Word of God and Will of God error free.

Prophets and Apostles: Of the 124000 prophets, 6 are considered greater than the remaining; they are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed. Among these, it was Mohammed who came for the entire mankind.

Judgement and Resurrection: On that Day of Judgment and resurrection, all the human skeletons would be livened in 40 days of rain and would be resurrected; all would be subjected to judgement. Muslims would gain entry into the golden Paradise. They would enjoy there all sorts of fascinating meals and all sorts of material comforts. The infidels would be dumped into Sheol as punishment with Satan.

Pre determination: Islam believes that some are predetermined by Allah for Heaven and some for Sheol. Good and evil are all pre determined by Allah. The Muslim scholar Al Barkavi says, 'Not that heaven and Sheol are liked, but are pre determined'. Only Allah knows the answer to that question why evil has been pre determined.

Sub Sects: Sub sects are evolved in Islam mainly based on disputes of succession issues after Mohammed. There are many such sub sects, but the most prominent two are Sunni and Shia. Of these, Sunnis are more wide spread across many countries and they hold on to traditions; they are more in number. The four Imams we discussed earlier are all Sunnis. Sunnis are very particular about the five pillars, as many pilgrimages to Mecca as possible, charities after such pilgrimages, special prayers, and obligations between members of each family. They consider Sunna taught by Mohammed as good as Koran given by Allah. Wahhabi is a sub division within Sunni.

Shia sect is found mostly in Persia. We have their presence in North India and Pakistan. They accepted Ali who succeeded Mohammed on equal terms. May be, we can even see them treating Ali who had once saved Mohammed from an attacker in a higher position; Ali is the son of Abutalib who grew up Mohammed and later became Mohammed's son in law. Though Ali has been the fourth Caliph, Shia sect give him prime position. They do not accept the three Imams prior to Ali namely Abubaker, Ummar and Uthman. They were not of Mohammed's family or clan. Among these, one sub division hold on to a stand that the Imam series ended up in 770 with the seventh Imam whereas another sub division insists that the series of Imams ended only in 870 with the twelfth one. The 'Sha's of Persia are treated as invisible Imams. The Ahmadiyahs in India are another sub division of Shia sect.

Another important sub sect is Mut'ah Selites. They believe in personal freedom. Though they advocate democratic means, they are very few in numbers.

Sufis are the Muslim monks and mystics. Their monastic movement can be said to have commenced in AD 750 in Syria. Al Gassali was a prominent writer among them. Mohammed himself was mystic as stated in Koran (94). This movement gives importance to self sacrifice, meditations, poverty and endeavouring to be one with God. Their teachings are that evil is nothing but denial of good and God alone is everything.

**Questions:**

1. Compare the views of Christians and Muslims about God.
2. How does Islam teach about salvation?

Books for further reading:

- a. Gibb HAR, Mohammedanism, Oxford, 1950
- b. Gragg K, The Call of the Minaret, Oxford, 1956
- c. Jones I Bevan, The People of the Mosque, YMCA Calcutta, 1932
- d. Houlsme, MT, The Encyclopaedia of Islam, (Four Volumes)
- e. Samarth S J, Christian Muslim Dialogue, (Broumana Papers WCC, 1973)

### **Lesson 3**

#### **Sikh Religion**

# The Founder Guru Nanak # Ten Gurus # Characteristics #

Number of those in Sikh religion is less than Christians in India. But Sikh religion is a powerful entity here, which started in 16<sup>th</sup> century by Guru Nanak (1469 – 1538). Though the religion was born in Punjab, their presence is felt all over India as also outside.

**The Founder Guru Nanak:**

He was born as a Hindu in Khatri caste at Talwandi on the south west of Lahore. In his middle age, he forsook his wife and two sons; he went on pilgrimage to Ceylon and Mecca and started preaching. He had taken with him a Muslim boy as personal helper. He held on to ideologies like faith in one God, no caste discrimination, no idol worship, no difference between Hindu religion and Islam and propagated these. He combined these two religions in him as one.

Among their ten gurus, the first four were peace loving. Arjun Singh, the fifth guru authored the scripture text for Sikhism namely 'Aadi Granth' in Gurumukhi language. 37 compositions are

included in this such as hymns and teachings of Nanak and hymns of Kabir and some of the Sufis. Their tenth guru Govind Singh transformed Sikhism as an armed religion.

**Ten Gurus:**

1	Guru Nanak (1538)	Founder
2	Guru Angad (1552)	Formulated Gurumukhi script
3	Guru Amardas (1574)	Commenced work of Amritsar
4	Guru Ramdas (1581)	Commenced work of Golden Temple
5	Guru Arjan (1608)	Completed work of Golden Temple
6	Guru Har Govind (1638)	Allowed weapons for one's own safety 12 years in Mugal jail
7	Guru Har Rai (1660)	Grandson of 6 <sup>th</sup> Guru
8	Guru Har Kishan (1664)	Became Guru at the age of six
9	Guru Tegh Bahadoor (1675)	Jailed by Aurangzeb
10	Guru Govind Singh (1708)	Decided, henceforth there shall be no human Guru

After this, Guru Granth Sahib became eternal guru.

Sikh religion is a combination of Hinduism and Islam. They adopted rituals, concept of rebirth and invocations from Hinduism and faith in one god, Golden Temple of Amritsar like Mecca, Granth Sahib like Koran, Guru Nanak in place of Mohamed and objections to idol worship from Islam.

**Characteristics:**

Sikhs confronted attacks of Muslims with a stand bolder than Christians. When Mugal invasion took place, their tenth guru transformed the Sikh community fearless and strong warriors. His two sons became martyrs as they refused to join Islam. Later, guru himself was assassinated by a fanatic Muslim. Guru Govind Singh encouraged all to wear a sword for self protection.

Their five characteristics: Long hair, a comb, a bangle, a short sword and a short pant should always be in possession of a Sikh. The literal meaning of the word Sikh is lion and that of Singh is disciple. The term Granth Sahib means 'the Book, our Lord'. Granth Sahib occupies the position as a guru and God. Granth Sahib is placed in a room with decorations as if an icon and it is respected and honoured.

Among Sikhs, there is a sect called Namdhari. They accept Balak Singh as 11<sup>th</sup> guru and their founder Sat guru Ram Singh as 12<sup>th</sup> guru. This sect was founded in 1857. Other Sikhs treat Namdhari sect as heretics. Their number exceeds a million. They have in Amritsar thrones called Anantapur Sahib, Ratna Sahib and Husur Sahib; there is one more throne called Damdami Sahib at the Gurudwara which gave asylum to Guru Govind Singh.

**Questions:**

1. Briefly narrate about the gurus of Sikh religion and their teachings.
2. What are the possibilities of a common religious movement that has their emphasis on one god faith and human brotherhood?

## Lesson 4

### Buddhist Religion and Religion of Confucius

# Buddhist Religion # Gautama Buddha # Teachings of Buddhism # Scriptures # Mahayana – Heenayana # Religion of Confucius # Lessons in Morality # Divinity and Worship #

#### **Buddhist Religion:**

Buddhism attained more global acceptance than Jainism. Those who follow Buddhist religion abroad outnumber the followers in India. This religion has substantial following in Tibet, Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

#### **Gautama Buddha (BC 560 – 480):**

Gautama Buddha also known as Shakyamuni was born in Kshatriya caste in Shakyamuni clan at a township Kapilavasthu in Nepal. He was brought up in all royal comforts. For his only son, Gautama's father had constructed three palatial bungalows by the time he reached 16. He got married at the age of 19, but had no children in ten years of matrimony. However, he was blessed with a son while he was 29; strangely, in the thick of darkness, Gautama left his palace while his wife and son were sleeping; he left for a life in the forest. He chose such a turn in life because of four thought provoking scenes; these scenes were an aged woman, a Sanyasin, a yogi seemingly in the worst property, a dead body and a monk. He undertook a hard meditation for the next six years. At his age of 35, while he was meditating under the shadows of a Bodhi tree, he had enlightenment and understood four eternal truths. They are:

- a. Life is full of sorrow
- b. Desire causes sorrow
- c. Sorrow ends when desire is contained
- d. Desire can be controlled through eight means leading one to emancipation.

The eight means are: proper vision, purpose, talk, deeds, means of life, endeavour, mind and meditation.

After the enlightenment, from his age of 36 to 80, he was active in religious preaching. First, he went to Saranath near Banaras and his preaching there caused five of his former returning to him who had

left him earlier. Buddha had used the parables, which Christ used to tell later, in contexts those were different, which were those of the prodigal son, the farmer sowing seeds, the mustard seed and so on. 500 disciples were near him when he breathed last. His last words were: 'Brethren, all are perishable, focus yourselves in your deeds for emancipation'.

### **Teachings of Buddhism:**

His disciples were brought into three categories of submission or reliance.

- a. **Buddham Sharanam Gaschami:** Buddha had forbidden worshipping him, but disciples had been reciting that they were in submission to him. The disciples were taught that there were Buddhas earlier also and there would be in future too. For the followers, Buddha is a saviour who leads them out of these worldly comforts.
- b. **Dharmam Sharanam Gaschami:** Followers take refuge in Dharmam, the sum total of those truths stated above. Ahimsa is very important. There is no soul, but only Panchaskandangal. Liberation from these Panchaskandangal is salvation. Those enlightened followers after having earned their liberation from worldly comforts do not attempt for salvation, but continue in this world to be a relief to others in their sorrows.
- c. **Sangham Sharanam Gaschami:** Here, followers submit themselves to Sangham that is a community of disciple formulated by Shakya Muni himself. Buddhist Sanyasa involves clean shaving of their head, wearing yellow attire and carrying a begging bowl. The eligibility norms to join Sangham include completion of 20 years of age and being free from all illness. Though initially, Sangham was only for men, women were allowed later to have a separate Sangham.

Buddhism believes in karma and rebirth. One has to face the consequences of his deeds himself; till such time one is freed from desire, person keeps on undergoing rebirths (not the soul).

Salvation, though seems to have negativism, is an experience of joy as it involves liberation from worldly comforts. But there is no answer to the question who or what is being saved in the absence of soul. Salvation in Buddhism seems to be an act similar to blowing off a burning lamp.

### **Scriptures:**

Both Mahavira and Buddha had denied the authenticity of Hindu texts of scriptures. In Buddhism, 'Tripitaka' is the main text of scripture written in Pali script. This is a canonical text of the sect Heenayana. Tripitaka has three parts namely Suttha, Vinaya and Abhidharma.

### **Mahayana – Heenayana:**

There are two sets within Buddhism somewhat similar to Catholics and Protestants within Christianity. Mahayana sect is mostly seen in China and Japan. They have elevated Buddha as god. They say that the body of Buddha is a holy body that has undergone Theosis. Heenayana sect is mostly seen in southern countries like Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. . For them, Buddha is not god. The Lama cult we see in Tibet is Mahayana with which localism is merged.

### **Religion of Confucius:**

Confucius is the most revered person in China from the earlier days. He was a contemporary of Shaky Muni and Mahavira and had objected to faith in god as a person. Till 1905, examinations to civil services were by and large centred on the writings of Confucius. As narrated in a historical text of Confucius, Chinese history commenced in BC 2556 and even then there used to be system of responsible governance which took care of social justice and common welfare. Religious worship and governance of the nation were moving hand in hand. Near about BC 500, it was Confucius who formulated a common religion for China.

The place of birth and death of Confucius (551 – 479) has been observed as a place holiness in China. These places are in the province Shantung. He lost his father while he was just 3 years and therefore had to work hard from very tender age for their twelve member family. His education commenced at age 15 and got married at 19. We do not have much information about his mother but for the information that she too died when Confucius was young. As a teacher, Confucius was highly reputed and he worked so till his 51<sup>st</sup> year. He started a school which had 3000 students. There was no fee for children from poor background. But they were insisted to work hard. The coverage of topics included history, poetry, literature, behaviour, governance, natural science, music and many more. He encouraged those who showed good skills in literature, oratory and governance. He had his chance to reign over the nation four years. During this period, he saw to it that all officials were on their toes to fulfil their duties. Consequent to some confrontations with a neighbouring country, he resigned. During his age 55 to 68, he travelled a lot like Socrates and worked hard to reform people to good nature. He believed that he was protected by an external force during the days of difficulties in life. His disciples never left him alone. 'Confucian Classics' are his texts authored during his age 68 – 72. Some of them are compilations. 'Spring and Autumn' is own creation. His end was disappointing, but disciples observed mourning for three years. One disciple stayed at the graveyard for six years in a state of mourning. Even the rulers worshipped him. People gave him honorary titles like Head of China, Emperor of China and President of Chinese Republic. He used to tell that he had not been giving anything new, but just reproducing what others had given and that he was not a law giver.

Scriptures: By and large, proponents of new religious orders are not seen to have authored many texts, but Confucius had codified and written quite a good number of such texts. In the former category, we have five or six canonical classics covering history, poem, invocations, behaviour, localised history and virtues. The latter consist of four texts namely Great Virtues, Mid path, Mid path of Confucius and Verses of Confucius; there are interpretations to these also. These texts are not claimed to have any sort of divine intuitions. Yet, they have been helpful in the character formation among the Chinese.

### **Lessons in Morality:**

The one line moral lesson he had taught was that you were not to anything to another you did not want another to do on you. This silver line is seen six times in Chinese scriptures. The same can be seen in Matthew 7:12 also. This doctrine has to be observed in five relations as shown below:

Ruler and the ruled # Father and son # Husband and Wife # Elder brother and younger brother # Friend and Friend #

Among these five relationships, Confucius had been emphasising more on 'ruler and the ruled'. There are 105 instances where nobility in humans is discussed. A noble person should possess qualities such as correct behaviour, sincerity in dealings, faithfulness, interest to learn, righteousness, consideration for others, respecting other beings, keeping cool and remaining truthful. There is just one mention about woman and that is not with any respectfulness. Though his teachings were more on governance than spirituality, a predominant feel of some supreme power behind morality was always evident.

#### **Divinity and Worship:**

Human nature has been made good by God; man is born as good. God has been expressed in three names such as a great ruler, heaven and judgment. Those following the religion of Confucius worship many gods. There are temples in China with deities like heaven, earth, sun, moon and a Chinese empress.

Government officials are carrying out priestly duties also though there is no separate class of priests in China. They worship their departed ancestors; this has developed as a continuation to respecting parents. There are no teachings of Heaven or Sheol after death.

There are disputes whether Confucianism is a religion or it is a treatise on ethics. It doesn't have many characteristics of religions. But people of China possess interest in religions and Christianity has been showing some growth during the last few decades.

#### **Questions:**

1. Compare the concepts of 'Moksha' and 'Nirvana'.
2. What would be your reaction to a comment that Jesus Christ was aware of the teachings in Buddhism?
3. Compare Buddhism and Jainism.
4. Explain the life and teachings of Confucius.
5. Evaluate Confucianism based on the principles of Christianity.

#### **Books for further reading:**

1. Hume, R E., The World of Living Religions, N Y 1959
2. Jai Singh Herbert, My Neighbours. CIRS, 1969
3. Dalu K S, The Message of Zarathustra, New Book CO Mumbai, 1959
4. Humphreys Christmas, Buddhism, Penguin, London, 1955

## Lesson 5

### Zoroastrianism and Jainism

# Zoroastrian Religion (Parsi) # Jain Religion #

#### **Zoroastrian Religion (Parsi):**

Zoroaster was a person belonging to Iran who lived during BC 660 – 538; but he had followers claiming that he lived in BC 6000. He had undergone persecutions from Persian sorcerers. He had to preach for a period lasting up to ten years to get his first disciple. Shortly, another 93 persons including a king Vishtaspa joined his religion with which this religion started spreading. He had three wives and three sons and three daughters. One of his sons Kurzed Chihar became the Chief of Army under the reign of Vishtaspa. The army of Vishtaspa had to wage battles against enemy forces for 20 years in which Zoroaster also took part and he was killed while he was 77 in the invasion of Turanians. His followers honour him as the greatest personality of history. He is worshipped along with the Persian god Ahura Mazda.

They have their scriptures contained in a text called Avashta. The language of this text is something looking like Sanskrit. There are 17 Psalms in a section called Yasna which means sacrifice. These are accepted as authored by Zoroaster. There is a prayer called Visparad in the above text addressed to all lords. Another section in this text is called Vendidad, containing laws against demons. There are other smaller sections also in this.

Though they believe in one god Ahura Mazda and teach the believers to be so, they also teach about an evil spirit or Satan who is the cause for all evil; this spirit is called Angra Mainyu. Angra Mainyu is the cause for all evil in the world. Ahura Mazda is the creator, the omnipotent and the one who visualises everything. He loves all and is always righteous. He is compassionate and is the father of good mind called Vohu Manah. Angra Mainyu is cunning and is the father of falsehood. Ahura Mazda creates, Angra Mainyu destructs. Ahura Mazda provides health, Angra Mainyu causes illness. Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu are not created beings. There is continuous fight between the two or we can say eternal fight till the end of the world. Good mind, righteousness, might, love, eternal life are all eternal angels. On the other hand, hunger, thirst, anger, greed for wealth, pungency, coldness, prostitution and life are demons. For one to get freed from Angra Mainyu, worshipping fire and continuous prayer is needed.

Creed of morality: As we read in Old Testament, Zoroastrianism too believes that goodness should happen to good people and evil should happen to bad people. Foes should be defeated in battles at any cost. Holiness is absolutely needed. Those who adore Ahura Mazda stand for good thoughts, good deeds, and good words.

Funeral: The ritual for funeral is really peculiar for Zoroastrians. The washed dead bodies are placed on 'silent towers' for the eagles to eat. In Bombay, there is a place for this that is secluded by walled enclosures.

Life after death: They believe in life after death. For the good and the bad, Heaven and Sheol would respectively be allotted at the Day of Judgment. Righteous would get through a metallic vessel that is purified in fire.

The Parsis who are concentrated mostly in Bombay and also in Surat follow Zoroastrianism as their religion. People like Tata who are from this faith has been engaged in activities such as running hospitals and all are doing so to please Ahura Mazda.

### **Jain Religion:**

Vardhamana Mahavira (BC 599 – 527) was one who intended to bring about innovations within Hindu religion; Jain Religion is known centred on him. The Jain Pillar at Mathura in North India is one of the earliest of constructions. The engravings on this pillar points out its origin to very early days of Christian era. The Jain temples at Ahmadabad, Ellora, Ajmer, Mount Abu and Kailgamala of South India are attracting visitors from abroad simply because of the peculiar sculptures seen there.

The life story of Vardhamana Mahavira was written some 1000 years after his demise and therefore lots of exaggerations have cropped in. For example, before Vardhamana was born in a royal family, his mother Trisala was said to have fourteen dreams according to which a great man would be born to her and that with his birth, the family would become very prosperous. He was born in Vaishali, a town in present day Bihar. His father's name was Siddhartha. He married from another royal family of good fortunes. He had a son and led a luxurious life till he was 30.

At age 30, after the demise of both his parents, he discarded his princely attire and started wearing simple dresses of monks. He plucked away his hair in just five pulls. He gave up food and stated wandering as a full Sanyasin. Shortly, clothing too was discarded. He spent twelve years in meditation undergoing harassments and attacks of humans and animals. In the thirteenth year, he became a Jinan thus becoming a superior monk qualified to teach others Sanyasa. After delivering 55 sermons on Karma, he passed away without showing any signs of pain or any discomfort.

The name of their scriptural text is called 'Agamas' or 'Siddhanta'. This has twelve 'Angas', but the twelfth one is lost. These are authored 200 years after the demise of Mahavira. 37<sup>th</sup> volume mentions that Mahavira had passed away 980 years ago. Sthanakavasi sect among Jain religion accepts only 33 texts as canonical. But Swethambara sect has 45 volumes as canonical. Earlier volumes were in some barbaric languages originally, but are re written into Sanskrit later. Four volumes are translated in 'Sacred Books of the East'. Jain believers do not read these scriptures, but they just recite the names of the different volumes.

True wisdom, true faith and true deeds are taught as three jewels. Emancipation has to be achieved through these three jewels. Karma and re birth are forming part of their doctrines of faith.

According to their faith, there is no God. Mahavira had denied the multiple god faith of Hindu religion. The Jain monks are expected to say the clouds transformed as rain and not that God caused rains. For a man his friend is only man and not God. But psychologically, a human being needs a God and therefore followers of Jainism worship Mahavira as God.

Mahavira had placed twenty four Theerthankaras as equivalent to god and incarnations. Literally, the term 'Theerthankaras' means those who row boats used to cross people from one bank of a river

to the other. Performance of Pooja should be in honour of these Theerthankaras. Mahavira is the last among them. Temples can be constructed in their names. Each individual has to face the impacts of his deeds. Param Dharma or Ahimsa emancipates you from Jeevan Vasthu and Karma.

The noblest doctrine for morality in life according to Jain teachings is Ahimsa. They have banned even ploughing on the agricultural field for fear that some insects would lose their lives. Therefore, the marwadis who follow Jainism resort to trade and employment for a livelihood. The concept of Ahimsa in Jainism is much tougher than that in Buddhism. There are followers in Jainism who drink water sieving through clothes to ensure that no insects are falling into mouth. Similarly, some carry a broom while they walk to see that they do not stamp on insects. They do not eat any sort of food made from meat.

Each monk should follow the five commands for Sanyasa as a contract and follow them as a penance. These commands are: I won't kill, I won't lie, I won't steal, I won't seek sex, I will be detached to world. Of these, the first one is considered the noblest. A Sanyasin has to get up early morning and has to confess sins to his guru; has to check whether there is any insect on his clothing; has to attend the temple. From 10'clock, he has to move out seeking alms. He has to see that he accepts alms or food only after the needs that household is satisfied. Afternoon time has to be spent learning scriptures. If food is there, that has to be eaten before sun set.

Within Jainism, there are two different sects; Swethambara sect can wear white clothing whereas Digambara sect, being clothed by skies, is not to wear any clothing. However, in course of time, Digambara sect too started taking on to clothing. Sthanakavasi formed in 17<sup>th</sup> century is a sub sect of Swethambara sect, who hates idol worship. Though they teach against caste differences, there are such differences persisting among them.

There are about 200000 believers in Jainism and they are mostly marwadis of very high fortunes.

**Questions:**

1. Make comparison of Zoroastrian religious concepts and Jewish religion.
2. Evaluate the emphasis of Ahimsa in Jainism on a Christian point of view.

## Lesson 6

### An Evaluation of Other Religions

# Christianity in its Wholeness # Christianity has its Coexistence Based in Contradictions # Christian Theology is Love Based # Christianity is a Missionary Religion # Equality is Truth in its Fullness rather than Oneness # All Religions are Respectable as they Seek Truth # Sin should be viewed as a Reality # Heaven is for All #

One can see religions across the globe in two dimensions based on, one, how they look at the needs of man and, two, what do they emphasise. This can be understood from the table of comparison given below.

<b>Religions Looking to Theosis</b>	<b>Religions Looking to Humanisation</b>
Example: Hinduism	Example: Islam, Buddhism and the like
Man and God are one	God is not man
Importance to Mysticism	Importance to Prophecies
Brahmam is Truth; World is Illusion	World is Truth
In all religions, thoughts of God lead to Brahmam at the end of it.	Secular Thoughts are sufficient; Reciprocity is needed always.

#### **Christianity in its Wholeness:**

In its wholeness, Christianity can be understood as the humanisation of man and his Theosis; this can be understood as a direct consequence of the humanisation of God. Jesus Christ is God in its fullness and at the same time, complete man in one person; this means that humanisation and Theosis are not two, but one. It is an eternal truth that Triune God at the same time is one and three; this shows that mankind is a community based on love, but this community should exist not just as a family, but above that, it should be akin to Holy Trinity, the Divine family. Christianity has its goal set not on Adwaitha, but to achieve the wholeness of heavenly kingdom.

#### **Christianity has its Coexistence Based in Contradictions:**

Coexistence of Christianity based in contradictions can be expressed in a way as popular Hinduism against theoretical Hinduism and Kevala Adwaitha against Vishishta Adwaitha being taken together in unison. Christian Theology has in it the logic of philosophy and the religious lessons of experience, but it doesn't teach that God can be contained in logic. One who doesn't have birth is born; one who doesn't have death is dead; God took flesh as man; teachings of Christianity that God coming down to earth as human has its contradictions as admitted, but such an admission is not by seeking pardon on such contradictions; if logic is above God, God is logic. Therefore, Holy Trinity, the ultimate truth has to be mysterious. Contradictions have to be unavoidable. This is indeed the logical divine truth that for certain is beyond all logic.

#### **Christian Theology is Love Based:**

- a. Why did God create this universe?

The loving God created universe because of His nature of overflowing gratification.

b. Why did God take flesh and lived among us as a human?

God is love; He is eternal; He could not bear His children created in His own image going astray. So he took flesh and came down as a man to open a path for their redemption by sacrificing himself.

c. Why did God send His Holy Spirit and established a Church in this universe?

Holy Spirit was sent to establish the Church so that love, the fruit of Spirit, could be expressed before this universe leading to its redemption.

d. Why do we pray for the departed?

By death, love doesn't cease; therefore it has to be seen that in the eternal horizon of love, all the departed are present that they are led in repentance.

e. God is Trinity. Why?

Love is impossible in one. Love is possible, in duality, but would be incomplete. Love is possible in Trinity, and it would be complete. Therefore, those who worship this Holy Trinity in Spirit and in Truth would experience love in its unexplainable wholeness.

#### **Christianity is a Missionary Religion:**

In the above chart, there are mystic religions which in their essence are not missionary religions; this is because of their exclusive stand that all religions are ways and means of Theosis and therefore each one should attain Theosis by himself, which is only a half truth. Christianity has in it mysticism and prophecies at the same time; therefore, it cannot be satisfied with individual Theosis. "For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20); this shows that no one can enter heaven all by himself. "You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you" (Genesis 43:5); this was what Joseph warned Reuben and others. Indeed, this would exactly be what God is going to tell us too. Jesus has advised us that the second command 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' is as important as the first command 'Love God in wholeness'; this advice of Jesus carry very deep meaning. Love has no selfishness in it; one can find joy through sharing of love. Just similar to parents sharing their wealth with their children, a true devotee would share the Good News with others. Mission really means 'exodus of love'. Without my brother achieving Theosis, I have no Theosis; this makes mission inevitable. The love of Trinity moved in flesh and travelled through this universe as well as even to the subterranean world. Mission is indeed the love of humanisation reaching whole of this universe as Church. Without mission, Church has no life, no growth and no enlightenment.

#### **Equality is Truth in its Fullness rather than Oneness:**

Once everything is merged in Para Brahma, then there is only oneness; there is no love or equality thereafter. In Christianity, our eternal goal is oneness in pluralism, pluralism in oneness and equality in both. In a family, father, mother and child are three, but they share joy and sorrow equally. The question as to who is big here is irrelevant. All the three are equally big, all are inevitable and all are one within their circle of love. In its reality, welfare and prosperity of everyone in society is

ideological, but Christianity teaches the very same thought based on trinity. If this can be brought up through the Church, it would find acceptance with the whole world. Presently, caste differences, heights and depths of positions, economic inequality, political exploitation, employee – employer confrontations, sectarianism and selfishness are very much having their presence even in the Church; but these are all in total contradiction with Christian Theology; it is really shameful that these evils find place in the Church. The only solution is emulating Holy Trinity.

#### **All Religions are Respectable as they Seek Truth:**

The missionaries of 19<sup>th</sup> century had dumped other religions as darkness and Christianity alone as the source of light; this approach was totally senseless. “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him” (John 1:10). The statement here about the God, the Word is meaningful. There are virtues in all religions; there are virtues among aesthetics. Source of all these virtues are God, the Word. This Word is Christ, who has taken flesh and came down to earth. Therefore, looking into 13:28 of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad which searches truth, it has to be most humbly presented before others that such searches would lead to Jesus Christ; instead, blaming other religions and their scholars can never be justified under any circumstances. Jesus Christ has to be presented to the universe as the redeemer of the whole universe rather than as a monopoly of Christians.

#### **Sin should be viewed as a Reality:**

St Augustine has taught that a human is born as a mass of sin; Kevala Adwaita as taught that sin is internal ignorance and external illusion. Both these teachings are wrong and should be corrected. Sin is not an illusion; it is real. But the image of God is present in a sinner also, albeit distortedly. God hates sin, but loves sinners. Sin has the impacts of individual deeds on the one hand, but it has also a social relevance on the other hand. This is something even the proponents of Brahma Samaj have accepted. What is planted by one is harvested by another. The punishment for my sin is experienced by others also. I settle the debts incurred by my parents. One donates blood and another survives. Vicarious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is filled with grace in abundance opening paths of redemption to the whole mankind. We are healed through the tribulations of Jesus Christ. Sin is never a simple phenomenon. It is a serious trap for which solution rests with God only. There is redemption in Jesus Christ for all. There is a predominant tendency of viewing desire, deeds, impacts of deeds and rebirth as totally individual. But Jesus Christ has solutions to all these.

#### **Heaven is for all:**

Picking up certain Biblical portions, one can prove the advice on Sheol, but St Paul and St Peter have exhorted Christian hope through their epistles. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth” (Philippians 2:10) clearly pin points Christian hope. “For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit” (1 Peter 4:6; 3:19). Jesus went down to Sheol to preach the Good News that nobody should be eternally punished, but saved for eternal life. The Church has no teachings that non Christians are for Sheol; those who do not believe today has the opportunity

after they leave this world. The Church has to face punishment for not spreading the Good News and the world won't be punished for this as we see in Ezekiel 3: 18. Those who travel through various ways would at the end enter heaven through Jesus Christ, the sole path to redemption. Therefore, we should not judge anyone till the end. Judgment has been entrusted to Son. "He has done everything well" (Mark 7:37). "The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Revelations 22:17).

**Questions:**

1. Why do we learn about other religions? Explain.
2. Sreenarayanaguru used to say that whatever be one's religion, the significant issue was that the mankind has to be good. Do all religions make man equally good?
3. Does Christianity possess anything nobler than other religions? If so what are they? What are the short comings?

Books for further reading:

1. R Panicker, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism, London, 1964
2. Jones Stanley E, Christ of the India Road, London, 1925

## **Unit 3**

### **Ethics of Christianity in the Light of Scriptures**

#### **Lesson 1**

##### **An Introduction to Christian Ethics**

This topic is known in many names like Code of Ethical laws, Ethical Jurisprudence, Moral Theology, Christian Ethics etc. Hindu religion is even called Hindu Ethics sometimes. Thus, the Theology of each religion is invincibly related to its Code of Ethics. Most of the epistles of St Paul have Theology as its first part and Ethics that arises out of it in the second part.

Socrates is the one who taught Philosophical Ethics for the first time. His disciple Aristotle (BC 384 – 322) started to write a treatise on this which came out as 'Nicomachean Ethics' because his son Nicomachus had completed it. According to this, goodness makes all people happy whereas bad things cause pain to all. He advised to follow ethics of the mean or middle position rather than being extremists. Plato (BC 427 – 343) took the stand in his 'Republic' that only philosophers can identify good and evil and govern a nation righteously. Relying on the theory of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas worked out a Code of Ethics titled 'Secunda Secundae'. This can be seen in Part II of the second volume of his text 'Summa Theologica'. The Code of Ethical Laws worked out by Karl Barth is based on Holy Bible. This can be seen in his 'Church Dogmatic'.

The word Ethics has come from its Greek root Ta Ethica. Nature, acquaintance, behaviour pattern and such meanings are attributed to the word Ethos. Whatever we do according to our will and decision would not be a subject of Ethics. For example, if a person chooses to blacken his white hair, it can be questioned right or wrong, but greying of hair in old age is nobody's fault. If anyone asks you over phone about your availability at home, and if you are very much available, an answer 'no' is wrong. But if you are not sure of your availability for the next hour or so, the answer 'no' is not wrong. On the other hand, if he is asked to wait for a minute and after you look into your plans and then informing him 'yes' or 'no' would be more appropriate.

Ethics and Moral theology are often used with same meaning, but looking at them closely there is a difference. Ethics contain more studies on social evils whereas Moral Theology has greater emphasis on cleansing individual ways of life. The term 'social' can be used as an adjective to Ethics, but never to Moral Theology. Usually, Protestant Seminaries use the phrase Christian Ethics but Catholic Seminaries use Moral Theology. Whatever that be, it is the need of these days to handle social issues in seminaries in a perspective as wide as possible. Therefore, study on Ethics assumes greater importance.

These are days where morality has stooped down; people prefer short cut methods even at the cost of others to achieve what they desire. The new day community called Permissive Society has deteriorated to such a level because of their staying away from religions. These days are even called Post Christian Era in Europe and America. Deceases like AIDS should be understood as a punishment for moral degradation. The moral standards of the West are so decayed that even adultery and lesbianism are being accepted as right. Human nature has been transforming to beastly nature. Because of these characteristics of the society, of late, there are thoughts towards introduction of Moral Science and Religious Instruction as topics of curriculum in educational institutions; not only that, such studies have to find a place in families also. When the elders say something and act differently, the young generation tend to deviate from the right path to immoral ways, detaching from God and religion. The old saying in Malayalam that a female elephant follows a male elephant is quite meaningful in these contexts.

In 1938 Frank N D Bookman had organised a movement in the Oxford University called Moral Rearmament aimed at a renaissance in morality; now it is time for formulating such a movement globally on a wider canvas. These days, truthfulness, purity, selflessness and love are losing their significance in our community. At the same time, exploitation, injustice, favouritism, intoxication, bribery, corruption and enjoyment are increasing. The rich are growing richer; the poor are turning poorer. Therefore what is needed is not only taking up studies of morality but also following a nobler way of living.

If you study medical science well, you can become a good doctor; similarly, one who studies engineering well becomes a good engineer. But the personal life of a good doctor may be shattered and even immoral. Such a picture is depicted in the famous novel 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' by RL Stevenson; Dr Jekyll is an excellent person during day time, an epitome of all sort of virtues; but during night, he transforms to a man of highest immorality. Though Dr Jekyll is a fictional character, we have many such persons in real life now.

Ethics is a science but not one like Physics or something of that sort. We can say that Ethics is a science that is centred on goodness at its highest echelon. A student who works hard for a whole

year to pass his examinations confronts the situation of his mother's illness turning critical on the eve of his examination; here, he has two options namely, one, leaving his mother at her sick bed and attending the examination and, two, forsaking the examination and sitting with his mother at her sick bed. Of these two, the latter one would be more appropriate because goodness at its highest echelon lies there.

According to the definition of Dr McKenzie, Ethics teaches what is good and what is right in character. Here, one question rises; how do you know what is right is really good also? What is ultimately right depicts goodness. In Christian view, will of God alone is goodness. Will of God also depends on one's conscience. There is a system in western countries that people who believe it wrong to join war voluntarily go for a term in jail; this is called pacifist imprisonment. And this they do according to their conscience. May be, the government should respect conscience too.

Immanuel Kant has been advocating that duty should be for the sake of duty and it should not be for result. The same message we have in Bhagavath Geetha too. Kant teaches that a good intention is good in itself. In his view, whatever one wants to do, he should let others also to do and this alone is right. Quoting Kant, "There is nothing in the world or even out of it that can be called good without qualification except a good will". What comes in the conscience is God given according to Kant. He proved that the existence of God, existence of soul and existence of eternity are all evidenced through conscience. Starry sky above and Moral law within has made Kant exciting.

Social pressures have not caused categorical imperativeness of conscience. On the other hand, it is the knowledge about good and evil gifted by God to His creations that has caused the categorical imperativeness of conscience. Studies about truth, goodness and beauty are respectively called Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics.

Science is an objective study of matter; it is not bothered about moral laws. What is an object is studied in science and what an object should be is studied in ethics.

We cannot say that ethics is an art. Art forms come from external exercises; ethics turn internal thoughts to goodness. It is wrong to encourage a form of art that is not ethically justifiable. Freedom, freedom of choice and responsibility are crucial as far as moral sciences are concerned. Military rule and slavery restrict freedom and therefore goodness prompted by a citizen's conscience cannot be implemented practically. Democratic governing system gives importance to human freedom and therefore that should be the choice we should prefer. Freedom is associated with responsibility. Freedom has to move hand in hand with respect for opposition, protection of social justice and taking care of the freedom of others.

**Questions:**

1. Define Christian morality.
2. Evaluate critically the Moral Rearmament movement.
3. Discuss the 'Law of Conscience'.

## Lesson 2

### Various Doctrines on Morality

Cardinal Virtues based on logic are the theoretic criterion of doctrines on ethics. Plato had taught four fundamental factors of life namely wisdom, courage, self control and justice. St Paul has taught three divine virtues namely faith, hope and love. St Augustine had highlighted faith and hope above cardinal virtues and love at the topmost. The first three cardinal virtues namely wisdom, courage and self control are personal and the fourth one justice is social; love integrates individuals with community.

Study of ethics is seen in schools and at other places and these are all studies on virtues.

Rudimentary Ethics: This is study on how the barbarians distinguished good and evil even before modern religious concepts were even born.

Hindu Ethical Justice: In short, we can say that having liberated from ignorance of illusion and attaining the stage of Jeevan Mukta through performance of deeds and rebirth is ethical justice in Hinduism.

Christian Ethical Justice: One has to live like Christ enlightened with the divine love revealed through him as strengthened by Holy Spirit. Christian ethics looks at the climax of love in Holy Trinity and modelled on the Sermon on the Mount, aim to become wholly virtuous as God.

Judaism and Islam: These two religions, based on their faith in a single God, follow their religious doctrines to give emphasis on brotherhood within them; thus, they advocate a life style that is in total submission to God.

Parsis: According to Zoroastrian religion, Ahura Mazda is the source of goodness and Angra Mainyu is the source of evil. Therefore, one has to follow Ahura Mazda and engage in deeds of goodness and health.

Doctrines of morality can perhaps be classified into four categories.

Legalism: These are doctrines based on Ten Commandments and the 613 laws from Old Testament and the life pattern following these laws. The life advocated by Koran also comes under this. Here, goodness is seen by following laws in its literal sense.

Antinomianism: This is totally contradictory to what is seen above. Here, the guiding factor is doctrines formed by one's own conscience; there is no role for any external laws.

Contextual Ethics: Dr Joseph Fletcher who authored 'Situation Ethics' (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 14<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1974) is the main proponent of this. His suggestion is to distinguish good and evil on the basis of love that is an eternal virtue. Though this ethical science has misguided many, some others have succeeded in understanding true responsibility of freedom. However prioritising Contextual Ethics over Divine Morality or Morality as per the Will of God is dangerous.

Doctrine of Morality according to Will of God: This surely happens to be nobler than what has been discussed so far. The belief that Holy Spirit guides us in all truth forms the foundation of this doctrine. Laws, conscience and situations should help us to realise the Will of God. Whatever we decide in different contexts should have the will of God ruling over or in other words, it should be possible for us to seek the Will of God before we decide on anything. A person who has been divinised through prayers, meditations, study of scriptures, Church life and Christian fellowship alone can take such decisions matching the Will of God. Holy Spirit would guide us to choose what is good and what is right.

What we have discussed in this lesson is just a preface to different doctrines of morality. It often happens that we are not able to decide on something based the Word put in writing; under such circumstances, the question 'which is the right way' is very crucial. If you follow the command, "though shall not kill" in its literary sense, nobody can join armed forces of a country. Those who join armed force out of their patriotism are judged wrong doers by the group 'Pacifists'. On the other hand, those who join army shall not judge Pacifists as wrong either. According to Bertrand Russell, a politician who accepts bribe is causing damage to the community thousand times worse than that of a prostitute (Why I am not a Christian, page 33). But this opinion can never be used to justify that act of prostitution.

**Questions:**

1. What are the rights and wrongs in Legalism?
2. Is it proper to decide good and evil according to situations?
3. Can we distinguish evils that damage individuals and community?
4. How can we choose what is good based on the Will of God?
5. How are Theology and Doctrines of Morality related with each other?

**Lesson 3**

**Old Testament Ethics**

# God at the Beginning # As I am Holy, so You be # Ten Commandments as a Model of Morality # The First Four Commandments # The Next Five Commandments #

### **God at the Beginning:**

Old Testament begins with the Divine revelation 'God in the beginning'. Koran establishes the existence of God due to 'such and such' reasons. Philosophers too bring in various arguments to prove God. What the Bible sees are not reasons but God before reasons. If someone proves God, then God is smaller and subsequent to the one who proved God; the first verse in the Book of Genesis is not that God is there in the beginning, but that "God created". The question of whether there is God or not, doesn't arise here. These issues cannot be proved logically; the believers use their logic to prove that God is there and the non believers or atheists use their logic to prove that there is no God. But both these sects use logic to prove God this way or that way, gut logic is a creation of God. God is not a creation; logic has not created God. God is eternal and self created; God is the initial reason for all reasons; God is the lone surviving truth after all creations perished. God has no limitations in contrast to man who has a beginning and an end. For atheists, they are their God. For rational atheists, logic is God. But how can man be God who can't even create self? God is eternal reason; without this eternal reason, there is no sky or earth or man. So God proves; He is not to be proved. God is not our logic, but He is eternal truth far ahead of logic. The narration of creation in the Book of Genesis doesn't mention that God has created Satan or evil. Whatever God created, 'He saw as good' (Genesis 1:31). Church teaches that Satan is fallen angel. But a question arises here also: from where did the temptation come that caused the fall of angel? Possibility of a need to fall is necessary for the wholeness of freedom. God is light; God is father of lights. Satan is evil; Satan is father of evils. As in the beginning, God remains the creator at the end also. Towards, the end of the Book of Revelations, we see God as one who has created the new heaven and new earth; the darkness of Satan is the absence of Divine light. Isaiah 45:7 reads thus: "I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I the Lord do all these things". From this we have to comprehend that light and prosperity are formed and darkness and disaster are created; there is goodness as ultimate and evil penultimate till before the end. God alone is ultimate; evil was not there at the beginning and it will not be there at the end too. Satan who came to Eden was there to tempt Adam and Eve; he did not appear till then because he was not capable to create, but he could destruct. Book of Revelations 20:2 says that Satan would be bound which is showing the eternal actions of God. "The light shines in the darkness but darkness has not understood it" (John 1:5) means that evil cannot overpower goodness.

### **"Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Leviticus 19:2):**

God has entered into covenant relationships with Israelites through Noah, Abraham and Jacob to earmark them as His people; this is the basis that they have to be Holy as their Lord is. This covenant is eternal (Genesis 9:16: 17:13, 19: Leviticus 24:8; 2 Samuel 23:5; Isaiah 24:5; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 37:26; Hebrews 13:20). People of God are to be understood as a segment of people earmarked for God. The status, the tribe of Leviticus has been enjoying, is given to all those who accept Holy Baptism in the New Testament (1 Peter 2:9). Proponents of Contextual Ethics propagate that Doctrines of Morality can be changed according to varying situations. But, based on the Old Testament covenant with God, Doctrines of Morality are eternal. Our basic responsibility is to God and not to situations or surroundings. Even within the midst of changes, the unchanging God has

provided unchangeable laws of ethics to men. The ethical degradation of the West has been caused due to God becoming unreal with their way of life; any generation that discards worship, learning of scripture and theology would have to confront a situation of moral degradation. The new generation should be called upon to return to God before returning to morality. When we think of Church or the tabernacle and a pious human being or the temple let us remember the Word: "See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain" (Exodus 25:40; 26:30; 27:8; Hebrew 8:5).

### **Ten Commandments as a Model of Morality:**

The Ten Commandments we see in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 are a treatise of Morality and Ethics. The first four are exhorting us to continue the covenant with God and the remaining six are to carry out our responsibilities to other men. God wrote the first four on the first stone tablet and the next six on the second stone tablet which indicates that these commands are given by God. They are highly influential in the progressive history of this universe; these are specific directives to upkeep of ethical and moral values in Christian and Jewish culture. Their significance in ensuring maintenance of morality is live even this day. Any efforts of this modern world to retract from these Commandments will not meet with success as they are so deep rooted in human conscience.

### **The First Four Commandments:**

1. 'You shall have no other gods before me'. This indicates the sovereignty of God. If there are many gods, none of them are gods.
2. 'You shall not make for you an idol..... You shall not bow down before them or worship them'. God alone is uncreated. Any manmade thing is not God; anything created by God is not God. God alone is worthy to worship.
3. 'You shall not misuse the name of the Lord, your God'. Name of God shall be uttered with reverence, fear and respect. God is Father and not a playmate.
4. 'Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it Holy'. Deuteronomy chapter 5 has given a detailed explanation on this command. This is related to the Israelites' liberation from Egypt. Old Testament has earmarked seventh day for God, but New Testament has done this for the first day. Thus we understand that all days are for God. God has been commanding to provide relief to labourers who toil hard all the days. Employees are allowed rest on the seventh day as an expression of thanks for their liberation from Egypt.

### **The Next Five Commandments:**

5. 'Honour your father and mother'. This provides long life (Exodus 20:12) and this makes you good (Deuteronomy 5:16). When we come to the second half of the Ten Commandments, this comes as the first one because parents are the link to fraternity of God. If children have to worship God, parents should be respectful to them.
6. 'You shall not murder'. Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:22) has modified this as not to take anger because anger leads to murder.

7. 'You shall not commit adultery'. Christ has advised us that anyone who looks at a woman with desire has committed adultery on her; this is the first step to sin. Sin commences with thought.
8. 'You shall not steal'. Sermon on the Mount is silent on this, but enters into the next command that one shall not give false testimony; the reason may be that if one doesn't have false thoughts and false words in him, he would not venture to steal.
9. As 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> commands are combined above, here we have the 10<sup>th</sup> one. 'You shall not covet your neighbour's house'. Our Lord has made a change here by discarding its negativity and transforming it as creative. He exhorts us to love our neighbour. We share with those whom we love where stealing has no place.

**Questions:**

1. Compare Koran and Old Testament and point out the differences and similarities in doctrines of morality.
2. Faith in one God has grown from regional levels to global scenario; likewise, find out the growth in doctrines of morality comparing Old Testament and New Testament.
3. Compare the Ten Commandments with the Sermon on the Mount of our Lord (Matthew chapters 5 to 7).

**Lesson 4**

**Moral Justice: Prophetic and Poetic Books**

# Doctrines of Justice from Prophets # Doctrines of Justice in Psalms # Doctrines of Justice in Proverbs #

There are many more laws those are to be followed apart from the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:23 – 23:19). There are laws basically for farmers. Moses would have written these in BC 1200, but before this, Hammurabi (BC 18<sup>th</sup> century) was seen to have given laws similar to these in Babylon. Laws similar to those of Moses are seen in ancient stone plates excavated from Babylon and nearby areas. Deuteronomy 30:15 – 19 has warned people that strictly following Torah would provide them prosperity, abundance of children and long life; discarding those laws would subject them to destruction and sin. After Moses, there were Priestly Codes advocating religious rituals based on holiness and lack of holiness (Book of Leviticus). The law 'eye for eye' (Exodus 21:2 – 25) was

changed by our Lord to show one's left cheek also to the one who beat on the right cheek (Matthew 5:38).

### **Doctrines of Justice from Prophets:**

It can be said that with prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, a new era has commenced. Of these four, Amos was the one who raised his voice maximum for righteousness. Theologians of modern times should study with interest the issues raised by Amos against the rich segments of the society.

Look into these verses: exploitation against the poor (2:6, 7; 4:1; 5:11). A man and his father in law approach the same woman (2: 7, 8). Worship of unrighteous men is worthless (5: 21 – 27). Craziness after pleasure is punishable (3:14; 4:1; 6:4 – 11). Alcoholism should be stopped (4:1 – 6:6). Falsified weighing machine and dilution of Sabbath are condemnable (8: 4 – 7). Verse 6:8 of Micah is worth noting: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God". "He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (Micah 4:3). Along with this, Isaiah 11: 1 – 10 has to be studied. These are days when we spend exorbitant amount towards warfare. Had Micah and Isaiah resurrected now! The prophets during those days were really courageous that they boldly spoke against evils in the community.

Jeremiah lived in the seventh century BC; he was beaten up by the then priest Pashhur and was bound in chains (Jeremiah 20:12). Yet, Jeremiah shouted against injustice at the top of his voice. He prophesied that sinners would be punished forthwith and that such punishments would not be passed on to the coming generations (Jeremiah 31: 29 – 31).

Ezekiel who was of the seventh century BC prophesied that the wicked would meet death and that those who did not remind the evil doers of their fate would also be punished (Ezekiel 31:8 – 19; 33: 5 – 20). Punishment was not for sinners alone but would also be for those who did not counsel the sinners.

When we come to Isaiah II, the prophecies about the suffering servant was fulfilled in Messiah (42:1 -4; 49:1 – 6; 50:4 – 9; 52:13; 53:12). Sinless Messiah suffered and laid down his life for sinners; similarly, we are also expected to suffer and lay down our lives. In the Book of Jonah, God is seen to be compassionate towards those 120000 men and women who were not even able to identify their left hand from their right hand. Prophets were always proclaiming God's justice and mercy even at the cost of their lives. Arch Bishop Romero was assassinated for similar proclamations.

### **Doctrines of Justice in Psalms:**

The book of Hebrew hymns popularly known as Psalms of David commences with the proclamation that those who do not walk in the counsel of God and do not stand in the way of sinners, but keep his delight in the law of the Lord are blessed. Psalm 15 narrates the deeds of righteousness needed for dwelling in the house of the Lord. We see the wrath of God on those who lend their money at exorbitant rates of interest discarding the law not to lend on interest. We cannot justify those who place their earnings with financiers popularly called 'blade companies'. Psalm 37 illustrates the

beauty of the reward for the righteous and the punishment for the wicked. Psalm 41 explains the blessings to those who honour the humble. Psalm 119 narrates 176 times similes of law and the joy and reward of those who follow them. Psalm 139 explains the omnipresence and omnipotence of our Lord and prays for deliverance towards the right ways away from sorrows.

#### **Doctrines of Justice in Proverbs:**

Many valuable gems are available about wisdom, righteousness, justice, and truth in Proverbs. These are all coming under prudential ethics. The nobility of love we see in New Testament is not seen in Old Testament in such abundance. But there are lessons of a Lord who is just and righteous. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

#### **Questions:**

1. The prophecies of Amos are rich in social justice; compare this with Liberation Theology.
2. Explain how God is pictured in Psalms as God of revenge and at the same as the source of abundant mercy.
3. Evaluate how the Old Testament laws are relevant even today which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

## **Lesson 5**

### **New Testament Ethics: Gospels**

# John, the Baptist and the Apostle James # Jesus Christ and the Justice in Kingdom of God # Sermon on the Mount # the Four facets of Sermon on the Mount #

The teachings of our Lord we come across in New Testament are being interpreted as Doctrines of Morality of the Kingdom of Heaven and thus are dismissed by some Christian groups as impractical in this world. Reinhold Niebuhr, in his book 'Moral Man in an Immoral Society' has pictured these as impossible possibilities. As organisations and individuals are immersed in sinful ways of life, achieving a totality in life is just impossible. Even if this has become possible for certain individuals, the structure would remain sinful. At the same time, Mahatma Gandhi and Leo Tolstoy have accepted the Sermon on the Mount as a model to follow in this world. The teachings of Jesus Christ are so noble that anyone who examines his life in comparison with Sermon on the Mount as a

standard would certainly fall into repentance as opined by Vincent Taylor. Albert Schweitzer has been evaluating Sermon on the Mount as a sign that eschatological days are near. Whatever may that be, no masters or proponents of new religious orders have not so far pictured a criterion for morality as noble as this in its wholeness. Only those who have rose higher from the valley of life can adopt Sermon on the Mount as a practical way of life. There are no other reformers or leaders who have their inner eyes open as much as our Lord. "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35); who else has made a statement of this value? The teachings of Jesus Christ have been based on this universe as one family.

#### **John, the Baptist and the Apostle James:**

Both these men, for a long period of their life, would have been with the Qumran community which was known for sharing everything. Once we understand their teachings, it can be inferred that they are not matching a capitalist environment. They have demonstrated the basic doctrinal characteristics of a socialist system. See some of the moral doctrines of John, the Baptist: "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same" (Luke 3:11). He advised the tax collectors, "Don't collect anymore than you are required to" (Luke 3:13).

Soldiers were advised, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely – be content with your pay" (Luke 3:14). He was quoting Isaiah 40: 3 – 5 while delivering these talks. "Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low, the rough ground shall become level". Here valley shall be understood as the poor, the mountains and hills as the rich and the rough ground as injustice.

He told Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife" (Mark 6:18) and as a result of this, John, the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded. Yet, Herod feared him because he knew John was righteous and holy (Mark 6:20).

#### **Jesus Christ and the Justice in Kingdom of God:**

Most of the metaphors of our Lord illustrate the moral doctrines of Kingdom of Heaven. The metaphor of Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25 – 37) has been taught to dismantle the boundaries of castes and creeds. The metaphor of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16: 19 – 31) has demonstrated judgment awaiting those who are heartless among rich people. The Pharisee who was justifying himself was shown his way out whereas the tax collector who had been repenting was shown his way to eternity. The narration about final judgment (Matthew 25: 31 – 46) highlights the need for love and compassion towards the marginalised and down trodden extending help in their need. Our Lord too had preached like John, the Baptist, "Repent and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15) which shows that without true repentance, one cannot be a child of God. Either you have fame, wealth, position and this world or you have humility, poverty of spirit, self-sacrifice and Divine Kingdom. Synoptic gospels use the terms heavenly kingdom or divine kingdom which stand for eternal life in the gospel according to St John. Modern thought processes treat history as most important whereas there is a paradoxical thought that redemption rests with the second coming of Christ; none of these thoughts are seen in New Testament. "Kingdom of God is within you, but thy Kingdom come"; this prayer shall have to continue till eschatological days. Eternal life commences now, but is fulfilled beyond history. The justice of Divine kingdom is to establish will of God in earth as also in heaven. There is no place for heights and depths, enmity, war or exploitation in Divine

Kingdom; every resource is shared amicably. According to St Paul, such a system expresses justice, peace and joy in Holy Spirit (Romans 14 – 17).

### **Sermon on the Mount:**

The Sermon on the Mount is comprehensively collected and placed in chapters 5 to 7 in the gospel according to St Mathew whereas they are scattered in the gospels according St Mark and St Luke. St Matthew introduces nine blessed categories of people whereas St Luke confines this to four (Luke 6: 20 – 23). Still, there are differences of opinion whether Jesus has taught 'Blessed are the pure in spirit' as stated in St Matthew or 'Blessed are you who are poor' as stated in St Luke. May be, while St Matthew collected the pieces to place them together, some modifications would have been introduced. Whatever that may be, both are Holy Spirit induced and therefore both are equally important. Whether one is spiritually poor or physically poor, both indicate shortcomings. One who possesses everything is not poor. One who has to beg for everything is poor. True devotees even after their spiritual enrichment possess the feeling that whatever they have are all gifted and that they are all owned by God. Here, we find true blessing and true joy. Being poor in spirit are signs of piety.

### **The Four facets of Sermon on the Mount:**

5: 3 – 16: Running after matters relating spirituality, feeling sorry about others and self, expression of meekness, being hungry after justice, feeling compassion for others, being pure at heart, establishing peace and being happy despite being harassed or insulted as if a wrong doer though deeds are good are the eight signs of joy, rewards and blessings for citizens of Divine Kingdom. They are like salt of earth that makes surroundings tasty and strong. They are like the city founded on the hilltop; they are like a lamp that provides light to the world.

5: 17 – 46: Here, what is expressed is how the Ten Commandments are fulfilled according to the outlook of Jesus Christ. Our Lord enters each of the Commandments at their full depth and presents them in the noblest manner. Negativism is made creative. Deeds are made purposeful. According to the Sermon on the Mount, if you have a pure heart, not only that you won't deny the Commandments, but you would be following them in a natural manner.

6: 1 – 18: How do we do deeds of goodness, how do we pray, how do we fast? All these three are to be done exclusively in privacy. When you do something good with your right hand, your left hand need not know about that. When you pray, enter your room, close the doors and pray in person to your Heavenly Father. It is good to learn the interpretations of our Lord's Prayer. When you fast, apply oil on your hair, wash your face and fast in such a way that only your God knows about it. But how distanced are these thoughts from the realities we are in!

6:19 – 7:27: We can see Ten Commandments in the Sermon on the Mount also as summed up below.

1. Have your deposits in heaven and not in earth; this would be possible in a life enriched with good deeds.
2. Let the light in you do not turn dark; sustain till the end and earn your throne of life.
3. Do not serve two masters; let God alone be sufficient.

4. Do not get anxious over what to eat, what to drink and what to wear; disappointment is atheism.
5. Do not judge others that you are also not judged.
6. Do not mix the sublime with ridiculous.
7. Seek, search and knock.
8. Proceed through the narrow path; wide path is that of sin.
9. Beware of false prophets.
10. It is not sufficient to call me Lord, Lord; you have to do the will of God.

As a conclusion, it is warned that those who obey his commands alone would survive storms and tempests.

**Questions:**

1. Compare the sermons of St John, the Baptist with that of the epistle of St James.
2. The relevance of Sermon on the Mount is tough in a capitalist environment. Discuss.
3. Even in a socialist system, selfishness of men can spoil the show. What can be done to ensure effectiveness thereof?

## **Lesson 6**

### **New Testament Ethics: Epistles**

# St Paul's Values of Ethics # St John's Moral Outlook # Approach of St James # A Comparative Study of Old Testament and New Testament #

**St Paul's Values of Ethics:**

The old man has to be buried that a new man is raised through Holy Baptism to walk in a renewed life (see the interpretations of Romans 6: 1 – 4; 12: 19; Colossians 2:12). The epistle to Romans, particularly the early chapters thereof, stresses the principle that all are sinners. To emphasise the aspect that redemption through Jesus Christ is inevitable (Romans 3:23, 5:15, 11:32), it was specifically taught that the then generation was spiritually weak (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:41, 13: 1 – 5; Matthew 17:11). Similar to what our messiah has highlighted, St Paul too has been emphasising more on love (1 Corinthians 13). No power can detach us from the love of God in Jesus Christ (Romans 8: 37 – 39). Holy Spirit teaches us in Romans chapter 8 that the thought of flesh is death and the thought of spirit is life and peace. "The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

Romans 12, Galatians 5 and 6, Ephesians 5 and 6 are scriptures exhorting the Church on lessons of ethical doctrines which should be deeply studied with the help of authentic commentaries. The fruits of Holy Spirit narrated in Galatians 5:22 are also to be assimilated well.

St Paul is understood to have used the term 'in Christ' 164 times. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17); if so, the life in Christ has to be like the life Christ has been living (Galatians 2:20). We are called to be holy and without blemish before him (Colossians 1:22).

The law enhances burden of sin. But through our Lord Jesus Christ we have redemption from flesh that is corruptible (Romans 7: 21 – 25).

Romans 13: 1 – 7 is a portion that has raised controversies. Authority comes only from God. In chapter 13 of the Book of Revelations, early Church realised that the authority of anti Christ is not from God and therefore they did not bow before the beast. This portion alone shall not be taken as a criterion for political ethics. Before we give to Caesar what due for Caesar, it is necessary that the conscience, a reflection of the image of God in us, be given to God. According to that conscience, one can choose to pay or not to pay taxes (Matthew 22:17 – 22).

The treatise on love seen in 1 Corinthians 13 is perhaps the noblest of its kind among world classics. St Paul has penned this in the back drop of Christian fellowship (Romans 12:9 -13; 15 – 16; 14:1 – 15; 1 Thessalonians 4: 9 – 12; 5:12 – 14; Galatians 6: 1- 5). The characteristics of Christian fellowship or Koinonia are reflected in Christian love.

St Paul taught that the Christian love should find its way to non Christians too (1 Corinthians 5:10; 10:32; Romans 12:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Colossians 4:5). Some of his doctrines of morality are applicable to Christians and non Christians. The principle we see in Romans 2: 14 – 15 is beyond the thoughts of caste and creed. Like Christ did, St Paul also taught that if your enemy was hungry, you should offer him food (Romans 12:20). Christian love flows from God and therefore it has no boundaries. In contrast to what Shankaracharya taught, the revelation "God is Love" is not to impose limitations to God.

#### **St John's Moral Outlook:**

St John is considered as the Apostle of love and whatever we see in him are emanations of love. "We love because he first loved us" (1 St John 4:19). He has repeated in his letters and his gospel the command that we should love each other (John 13:14; 15: 12 – 14; 15:17; 1 John 1:7; 2: 9 – 11; 3: 11 – 14; 4: 7 – 8; 4: 11 – 12; 2 John 5). "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only one son" (John 3:16). He gave his life for us and revealed his love; likewise, we should give our life for our brethren. He also advises to share our possessions with our brethren to satisfy their needs in difficulties. The healings our Lord has done on Sabbath days have been justified by John (7: 22 – 23). His gospel has given a detailed narration of Jesus cleansing the feet of his disciples (Chapter 13). This too is reflection of love.

#### **Approach of St James:**

The doctrines of ethics brought out by St James have their relevance in this modern era. He has strongly criticised the practice of honouring the rich coming to temple for worship and the poor being neglected (2:1 – 8). "Your deed of favouring someone is a sin" (2:9). "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder" (2:19). "You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?" (2:20). "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God?" (4:4). Rich men, you have to weep that you are facing tribulations as you have kept with you the wages of the labourers (5:1 -6). "God opposes the

proud, but gives grace to the humble” (4:6). “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, love your neighbour as yourself” (2:8). “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (1:27).

**A Comparative Study of Old Testament and New Testament:**

As a comparative study, certain observations between Old Testament and New Testament are given below.

<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>New Testament</b>
Part by part	In its wholeness
Through Prophets	Through Son
Law	Gospel
Many Commandments	One Command: Love
Work for redemption	Believe and act
Many prohibitions	Purify thoughts and goals
Heavy loads	Soft yoke
To Moses on Mount Sinai	Sermon on the Mount to disciples
Based on laws	Based on Holy Spirit induced creativity
Like Slaves	Freedom of Children
Commandments suitable for the world	Guidelines for the citizen of Kingdom of God
Contemporary laws and eternal laws	Holy Spirit helps to make contemporary
Seventh day for God	First day onwards for God
Format for religion	Wind blows to where it likes (Flowing beyond formatted system)

**Questions:**

1. What are the characteristics of Agape, the Christian love?
2. Compare the lessons of ethics propounded by St John, St James and St Paul
3. Compare the ethics of Old Testament and New Testament.

## Unit 4

### Christian Ethical Views

#### Lesson 1

#### Christian Ethics through History

# Monks # St Augustine # Thomas Aquinas #

##### **Monks:**

Just like oscillations of the pendulum of a clock left and right, the ethical doctrines had been seen to oscillate this way or that way when we go through the Church history. History never sustains with exclusive conservatism or exclusive liberalism. The call towards wholeness is always live in the Church, but only very few are prepared to pay the price for that and follow the Messiah. The three men we see in Luke 9: 57 – 63 were not ready to pay that price and returned without opting for discipleship in its wholeness. Luke 18: 18 – 30 also introduces another man, a rich one who called Jesus ‘ good master’ and sought his advice to achieve eternal life with a claim that he has been following all the commandments sincerely; Jesus answered, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me”. He was not prepared for this. But St Pachomios and St Antonius were milestones in the progressive growth of the Church. With the Milan Edict of Emperor Constantine in 4<sup>th</sup> century, Church gradually turned to materialism but monks of those days raised their objections to the shift being initiated in the Church and chose to live in forests spending their time in meditation, thereby opening a new and different path for the Church. Athanasius and Basilios encouraged and organised them codifying rules and regulations to systemise such movements. This caused an upsurge in ethical standards. Right from those days, monastic communities hold on to the three vows namely poverty, chastity and obedience. In the western tradition, Franciscan monks and Dominican monks resorted to poverty and followed Christ. The monastic movement of Eastern churches are active even this day in Mount Athos. However, some of these movements have turned rich these days consequent to worldly support which may possibly result in a setback. In Russia, fixed assets of monastic movements are nationalised like those of the Church which would be a reaction from the government that the Church had shifted their orientation to right of the centre. The preset progress of the Church is such that there is doubt whether Church would heed to the call of Liberation Theology that Church should be for the poor, attempting to turn Church away from conservatism. It is high time to carry out a scientific study in its essence as to whether the materialism, wealth and institutions of the Church are for its good or otherwise. The question as to whether a rich Church is following Christ or is it the poor Church is pertinent. The poor Church in modern China is a challenge for Churches in rich countries.

**St Augustine:**

Though St Augustine is a theologian of the Western tradition, it was with him Christian Ethics touched new heights. In his text, 'Morals of the Catholic Church', he introduces four basic virtues as servants of love in its 15<sup>th</sup> chapter. He explains victory over desire is maintaining our love exclusively for God without malice. Fortitude is suffering everything for God happily. Justice is serving only God and subjecting the rest to man and ruling the best way. Prudence distinguishes what guides us to God and misguides us away from God. In its 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, he says from his Platonic background that truth, beauty and virtues are from God and therefore, enlightening our neighbours with them is Christian love. In Hindu philosophy and in certain Christian thought processes, man is indebted only to God. But the commandments Christ has given us emphasises the point that loving one's neighbour is as good as loving God. These comprehensive teachings of our Lord should be the foundation of our life. Yet, it needs to be admitted that loving God certainly stands ahead in priority.

Among what St Augustine had taught one cannot accept that the intimacy between husband and wife through sex comes under sin. Marriage is noble and bed is pure. Reason for being 'born in sin' (original sin) is not that my mother conceived me in sin but because of my leaning towards sin after birth. Even the terminology of 'born in sin' is not seen in Bible; it is not seen in the teachings of our early fathers. The sexual relations between husband and wife are their participation in the process of creation entrusted by God for which they are blessed and called. This is a responsible position. But such relationship outside marriage is not so. In his book, 'Confessions' Augustine has accepted the virtues in all creations of God. Whatever is not good will not sustain. 'Whatever be in any degree is, is good'. In his famous book 'City of God' he says that Satan has become evil because he is made to be so.

**Thomas Aquinas:**

During the mid centuries, Thomas Aquinas wrote 'Natural Ethics' based on the thoughts of Aristotle and the breach caused by it in the Church history is continuing even now. What he did was to add theological virtues of faith, hope and love to those four basic virtues discussed earlier namely wisdom or prudence, fortitude, victory over desire and justice; this paved way for two circles namely Natural and Supernatural. The thought of placing divinity above materialism ignores the truth that by Word taking flesh, materialism has been made at par with Divinity. The unfortunate separation prevailing even now that worship is Divine whereas agriculture, trade, industry and the like are material has to be attributed to Thomas Aquinas as its main proponent. In its absoluteness, the vocation of a Christian is such that his whole time and energy are submitted to our Lord and hence remain holy (Romans 14: 7 – 8; Galatians 2:20).

Aquinas has justified the doctrine of keeping personal wealth based on natural law. Our early Church fathers have been teaching that personal wealth came consequent to the fall of man. What the Bible says is, "The earth is Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalms 24:1). God, our Father has all wealth and His children have reasonable rights over them; being so, possessing personal wealth has to be seen as an invasion over the ownership of God. Adam was entrusted to work in the Garden of Eden and to take care of it (Genesis 2:15); but Adam disobeyed here and made everything his own resulting in sin. Therefore, Aquinas has to be corrected. If laws of nature can be codified by all men by logic, then it has to be said that this logic is not corrupted by falling in sin. The stand that revelations are only for Church and its climax gifts hope, faith and love, then it

has to be admitted that outside Church, these three virtues have no place. This sharp differentiation is not seen in the documentations of Second Vatican Council. The Holy Spirit which enlightens the world on sin, justice and judgment acts among those who are within the laws of nature. There is differentiation of Divine and Satanic, but nothing like Natural and Super Natural.

Among the teachings of St Augustine and Aquinas, their Just War Theory\* is another one that has to be corrected. May be, once upon a time, there would have existed Just Wars and Unjust Wars. But in these days of Hydrogen bombs, it has to be taught affirmatively that there can be no argument that would justify wars.

“For from him and through him and to him are all things” (Romans 11:36); based this doctrine, law of nature and law of revelations need not be seen in two dimensions. The propositions of Aquinas have to be codified in the light of Christian revelations to view nature also as a gift of God and accept it as supernatural. Leaving certain things to man and certain others those cannot be handled by man to God in effect limits God. As we glorify asceticism, family life too should be glorified. It needs to be taught that call of God is there for asceticism as also for family life.

\*[Note: War should be for self protection. Once self protection is accomplished, war should be stopped. The weapons used in war should be lawful. Expenditure for war should not exceed what is needed for being protected. If anyone of these is broken, such a war is unjust]

#### **Questions:**

1. How should we interpret the three vows namely obedience, poverty and chastity those are part of the ethical doctrines of asceticism under the contemporary scenario?
2. What are the inadequacies contained in the ethical teachings of St Augustine?
3. What are the doctrines of ethics needed to be corrected from the teachings of Thomas Aquinas?
4. Ascertain the innovative thoughts contained in the documents of Second Vatican council related to Ethical Doctrines?

## **Lesson 2**

### **Christian Ethics through History (Continued)**

# Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) and John Calvin (1509 – 1564) # Carl Barth and Emil Bruner # Liberation Theology #

#### **Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) and John Calvin (1509 – 1564):**

Luther and Calvin are the pioneers among proponents of Protestant Ethical Doctrines. These two agree among themselves on many counts. Consequent to the fall of man, his will too has become distorted and therefore, the barbarian man is not strong enough to choose goodness. These two protestant leaders combined Divine Vocation and daily Work to formulate a Protestant Work Ethics through which the nobility of work and enthusiasm were inculcated. Once we accept them as Divine Vocation, tent making, mason work, engineering profession and medical profession are all equally noble. Luther had made justification through faith as a basic doctrine and therefore believers were

placed in a level called 'justified'. St James taught that faith without deeds is dead; Luther should have lent his ears to this advice also. God saw that man being alone was not good and therefore gave a companion to man; based on this, Luther taught that family life is nobler than asceticism. Probably, his own personal experience too would have made him arrive at such an inference. Monastic communities do not remain secluded, but live as a community akin to family life sharing joy and sorrow. The love of Holy Trinity is an epitome of sharing and Agape is the central inspiration. Marriage and asceticism are equally important in their faithfulness to Divine Call. However, 1 Corinthians 7: 32 – 38 indicates ascetic life as nobler.

Similar to what happened to Aquinas, the Feudal system had imposed limitations to Luther and Calvin which led them to picture personal wealth as a divine system. They went to the extent to teach that the call of a government was to protect individuals' rights on personal assets. But now, people have learnt more on social justice and therefore they expect government to be responsible for providing employment, food, shelter, clothing, education, facilities to commute, medical support, freedom of citizenship, entertainment facilities and cultural development and so on. Justice cannot be implemented relying only on charity. In his book, 'Justice and Social Order', Emil Bruner justifies personal wealth as a facet of God's image in man, based on the thoughts behind freedom. It is high time that we raise this vital question: can the human creation break the will of God and right of God to give his assets to all His children by simply making interpretations to man's free will? Capitalism may deteriorate to such an extent to thrash one's freedom using another's freedom; however, once justice is put in place through socialism, you can work for individual freedom, but never can you nullify social justice. Freedom and justice can move together only in the kingdom of heaven. Man has selfishness deep rooted in him which forms barriers for mankind to own up goodness and love; such selfishness is sin.

#### **Carl Barth and Emil Bruner:**

To come to know about the views of these two on Ethics, one has to study their books 'Church Dogmatics' (Volume II Part II) of the former and 'The Divine Imperative' by the latter. Carl Barth argues that all logical propositions of barbarian men are dirt covered; but Bruner doesn't agree to this. However, Barth is said to have based his thoughts on the Word of God. Commandments are being given by Jesus Christ who is the Commander in Chief. To obey these commandments in its true sense, guidance from Holy Spirit is needed. Barth agrees that man is man and not cat. But man is not God and he has fallen down steeply by competing with God and therefore man cannot rise without being redeemed by Jesus Christ. If the image of God in man is lost totally, Barth will have to admit that there is no difference between man and cat. Therefore, gradually, Barth realised the presence of remnants of God's image in man, even after his fall, though distorted. Consequently, the views of Barth at the end differ from what it was at the beginning.

In economic ethical sciences, Barth shows some sort of leniency towards socialism, but Bruner doesn't show anything of that kind. Bruner has not been having any awareness of freedom either. What he says is this: 'Justice finds a place only in an orderly world'. But love is between individuals. This duality of arguments is not acceptable these days. Justice that is not based on love would be tough and ruthless. The love parents have towards their children, the love the superior of an Ashram has towards the inmates or the love between members of families are individual oriented as also socially oriented. Reinhold Niebuhr says, "All the achievements of justice are diluted as well as

fulfilled through love". Here too, we see the limitations of Protestantism. Globally felt justice brings out Agape that is of God's nature. There is no one outside the circle of Agape. Love unites the entire mankind in its widest canvas and individuals in their wholeness of fullest depth, thereby mankind and nature becoming one in love. Joseph Fletcher says, "Love and justice are one; justice distributes love". [Bonhoeffer, Dietrich: Ethics, Macmillan, NY, 1955].

### **Liberation Theology:**

Gustavo Gutierrez from Peru wrote the book, 'Theology of Liberation' which was made available in English in 1973; the contents of this book have been causing vibrations across the universe. The letters of Bonhoeffer can be seen as a forerunner to such tremors. He wrote that churches should sell off their golden crosses and pass on proceeds thereof to poor. The liberation theologians fight for social justice on one hand and advocate that Church should stand with the poor on the other hand. They also encourage the poor to organise and fight for their liberation. They teach further that the Church leaning towards left is inevitable, the evaluation done by Marx on capitalism is acceptable and that a process of Christ centred liberation has to be initiated. [Gutierrez Gustavo: Theology of liberation, Orbis, NY, 1973]

The Old Testament model of liberation theology is the exodus of Israelites from Egypt. Even now, God hears the cry of the poor and the persecuted; He brings up characters like Moses from the comforts of palaces and converts them as shepherds to be in unison with the poor and to be with them for their liberation. The wealth accumulated by the Pharaohs was not belonging to them in the real sense and it was for this reason, Israelites were allowed to take them away. Wealth held by the rich are the fruits of the hard work put in by the poor and therefore should reach the poor at the end; the poor are to be made aware of this.

Had the Israelites followed the jubilee commandments contained in chapter 25 of the Book of Leviticus to carry out liberation of slaves and equitability of wealth every 50 years, the Jewish population would not have been divided into two classes of poor and rich as we see today. Nazareth manifesto (Luke 4: 18) is a call for the liberation of the poor. The second part of the Song of Mary is a prophecy that our Lord would topple the strong from their thrones and raise those who are remaining low. In the kingdom of God, there would not be a scenario of some rich and more poor. As of now, 80% of the wealth of the world is enjoyed by 20% of the population. USA, after their independence, passed a bill in 1776 called Virginia Bill of Rights. This states that all are created equal and that the rights and privileges are equal for all to enjoy life, freedom and joy equitably as envisaged by the creator. In order that human rights are achieved by the poor and to make them strong and courageous, theology of liberation has pin pointed theological foundations beyond what we see in Communist philosophies through these Biblical verses: Deuteronomy 1: 16 – 17; Amos 5: 21 – 24; Micah 6:8; Isaiah 1: 1 – 17; Jeremiah 22: 15 – 16; Acts 2: 43 – 4: 32 – 37. If we give priority to the command of our Lord 'love your neighbour as yourself' above other commands we see in the Old Testament and New Testament, social justice would be established. If the love of individuals turns global, justice would not be needed to be forced upon, but mankind being selfish, it would be necessary to form adequate laws and implement them through the constitution to achieve social justice. It is here, theology of liberation exhorts to use politics in a refined and purified format. The Church has no politics, but the political stands of individual members of the Church have to be made

Christian and the Church has a constructive role here. The goal of Church includes formation of new heaven and new earth where justice prevails. Political means should be made conducive to that.

**Questions:**

1. Find out how the Ethical teachings of Martin Luther and John Calvin, who were front line proponents of Protestantism, strengthened and weakened Protestantism.
2. The proponents of Neo Orthodoxy namely Barth, Bruner and Niebuhr had their own ethical empowerment models. How can these be made mutually complementary to be presented in a modernised manner?
3. Carry out a critical evaluation of the teachings of theology of liberation towards social justice.

### Lesson 3

#### Some Moral Issues and Solutions

# Medical Ethics # Mercy Killing # “You shall not Murder” #

**Medical Ethics:**

Any doctor before entering this profession takes an oath, a very old one at that, called Hippocratic Oath. This is taken in the open or in private. The modern version of this reads as: *“I swear to fulfil, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant: I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow. I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures [that] are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism. I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug. I will not be ashamed to say “I know not,” nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery. ” I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know. Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. If it is given to me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God. I will remember that I do not treat a fever chart, a cancerous growth, but a sick human being, whose illness may affect the person's family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the sick. I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure. I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those of sound of mind and body as well as the infirm. If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help”.* This oath includes the welfare and wellbeing of a patient. Can a Doctor who has taken this oath treat a patient resulting in a poor patient to pledge his assets for raising money to meet the expenses? Can a doctor take the stand that he would start the treatment only if payment is made in advance? Can he charge a patient exorbitantly? Can a doctor give a preferential treatment to a rich patient expecting more

fees and ignore another one because he is poor? Where should a doctor place his priorities? Should he focus on the healing of a patient or on the fees he would receive?

Abortion: Though Medical Ethics has banned doing abortions, many countries have allowed it as a part of family planning. Some doctors do it because an abortion may be necessary to save the life of a mother. There are people who advocate that abortion can be carried out till three months of pregnancy. But the right course is not to do abortion whatever be the circumstances. Word took flesh at the moment of annunciation and not after three months.

Sterilisation: Many doctors compel carrying out sterilisations. In family planning, this is one of the methods to check pregnancy where only loss of sperm happens before conceiving a baby and based on this, Protestants generally allow this. But the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Church did not concur with sterilisation because their stand was that the gift of pro creation God has given to mankind could not be discarded permanently as man has no right for that. If sterilisation can be retracted, this objection would not be there.

### **Mercy Killing:**

Ethics of Roman Catholic Church opposes mercy killings. Medical Science too does not favour this. Even if a patient who suffers unbearable pain and there are no chances of the patient getting healed, subjecting him to mercy killing is not the correct way; there are people who hold the view that in such situations letting the person die by withdrawing medicinal support is not wrong. Yet, it is necessary that the near relations of the patient should agree to this in writing and a written consent from the patient to this effect in his proper senses should be held on record as this too is a sort of Mercy Killing or Euthanasia. Also, after subjecting the patient to Euthanasia, there shall not have a situation to regret if a medicine invented thereafter could have healed the patient. Bonhoeffer had objected to Mercy Killing totally. He would have been well aware of the situation of six million Jews having been killed by Hitler. On the basis of the commandment 'you shall not kill', even doctors have rights only to support life and not to take it away. But a question comes up here: can't be there some justification for Mercy Killing when there are situations quite often having no chances at all for a patient to survive and also the expenses being incurred are too exorbitant? There is no answer of any clarity to this complex question. Therefore, the only way out is to seek the will of God in each situation and ascertain proper solutions without any prick of conscience.

### **"You shall not Murder":**

Those belonging to Jainism and Buddhism advocate that the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment that "You shall not murder" has to be followed literally as this has a relation to principles of Ahimsa. To ensure that Ahimsa is not broken, there are followers of Jainism who filter water each time before drinking and carry a broom always to see that even ants are not killed. A sect called pacifists is claiming to be peace loving and are not joining armed forces because of killings in war. There being varying interpretations of 'killings', can one justify a patient taking injections that would be annihilating disease spreading germs inside his body? Even if waging a war is wrong, when one's own country is attacked by an enemy, many accept it patriotism to join armed forces for self protection. Vegetarians blame non vegetarians based on the arguments that living beings cannot be killed; but modern scientific studies teach that even plants are living organisms.

The theory of dualism believes that human souls and other living beings are the same soul. But Christianity believes in creation and therefore teaches that even human beings are creations and not Brahman. Jesus Christ has not been a vegetarian. According to St Paul, if it offends your brother, better not to eat meat (1 Corinthians 8:13). To join armed forces and to take part in war is an issue that has to be left to the conscience of individuals. Early Christians chose not to take part in wars. After Emperor Constantine, there were Christian kingdoms which had made serving in the armed forces mandatory. This cannot be accepted as correct. Witnessing by those who do not favour war is always a need, particularly in these days where possibilities of nuclear war are very much there. Killing during a war is wrong, but if it has been arguably accepted as an unavoidable wrong. But it is really doubtful whether there can be a war of justice. There are many developed countries which allow capital punishment. But there are many countries which do not allow this. There are arguments that if life imprisonment the maximum punishment, murders will increase in the society and therefore the convicted murderers have to be hung to death or electrocuted which would be a lesson for those with criminal mind set up. We have murderers convicted for life repenting and turning good after they come out of jails, but there are also incidents of convicts repeating murders after getting released from jails.

Despite the commandment not to commit murder, Israelites had killed many in different battles. Based on this, the commandment not to commit murder has been interpreted as not to murder an innocent and thereby murdering a convict is being justified. There are people who justify capital punishment on the argument that Jesus Christ modified the law 'eye for eye' by asking one who is beaten on his right cheek to show his left cheek too to be beaten again as if this is addressed to citizens of kingdom of God. But the courts of justice view these as to save a convict by handing over punishment to him as a lesson. If so, there must be renovations within the set up of jails where there are facilities to impart means for learning and acquiring virtues. The social conscience should be against capital punishment; according to Christian view, right to live should be protected even to the one who has committed murder or such heinous crimes.

**Questions:**

1. Examine the commandment "you shall not murder" and find out what all actions fall into this and also those which do not.
2. Explain with proper reasoning what are the things that need to be opposed in medical ethics.

**Lesson 4**

**Some Moral Issues and Solutions (Continued)**

# Do not commit adultery # Do not steal – Economic injustices #

**Do not commit adultery:**

What are all coming under adultery? How can crimes related to sexual offences be reduced? There are many who suffer from AIDS and keep on dying. Most of them were having lesbian relationships. Many go to brothels and get contaminated with syphilis and such other sex related diseases. They suffer badly for most part of their residual span of life. Many developed countries are now regretting

that they took stands that premarital sex was not wrong. Most of the developed nations hold on to stands that a man having sexual relations with one wife alone has not been practical. There are people who think that sexual relations of married people with others is adultery and premarital sex is fornication. Situation Ethics teaches that Ten Commandments cannot be taken as ultimate legalism. Those who advocate that law is not the important factor do not follow laws at all. Proponents of Contextual Ethics say that people have their right to take decisions on each issue as and when they come across. But those who believe that will of God is most crucial under any circumstances, do accept the commandment not to commit adultery, as banning all pre marital sexual relations as well as all extra marital sexual relations.

One of the reasons why sexual sins are becoming rampant is the availability of condoms at very cheap price and that too far and wide. The birth of infants outside marital relations is on the increase in America; from 1940 to 1968, the rate has gone up from 7 in 1000 to 24 in 1000. In other words 239% increase in 28 years [De wolf L Harold, Responsible Freedom, Haiper, NY, 41, page 25f]. This illustrates the increase in way ward style of living in that country. True spinsters and youth who have not fallen into sexual sin are extremely rare there. This can possibly spread to India too unless we keep our family relations intact.

Islam religion has allowed polygamy that one is allowed to have upto four wives; their woman is demanding monogamy. Countries where divorces are frequent have their young generation in great dilemma. Families are betting collapsed due to prevalence of sexual anarchy. Brothels are flourishing. Womenfolk are treated like cattle. Children are forced to seek treatment from mental hospitals. Society is spoiled. Human beings turn beastly in nature.

To arrest the tendencies of divorces, the sanctity of family life has to be preserved; lifelong nature of family life has to be inculcated; true love should rule the relationship; couples should be trained in divine family life pattern; there must be a habit of praying together every evening and morning. Husband and wife should learn how to forget and forgive; it is not individual, but family has to reflect Holy Trinity. "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name" (Ephesians 3:14).

Once divorce rules are diluted, divorces will increase. If divorce is made impossible, some families will continue in lifelong distress. "Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mark 10:9). Matthew 19: 3 – 12 allows divorce for the reason of adultery, but Mark 10:1 -12 do not allow divorce for whatsoever reason. Here, there are people who ask a question as to why can't man separate what is not really joined by God. There are men who register their marriage as per civil law and then to please one's parents, enter matrimony with another woman in Church. Among these, which is the one God has joined? Also, there are marriages arranged in a hurry and later found to have failed.

#### **Do not steal – Economic injustices:**

The basis of capitalist philosophy itself is stealing. If you love your neighbour as yourself, you cannot have more wealth than what your neighbour has. If there are two neighbours of which one is a labourer and the other a land owner, the former toils hard in the land and live with wages he is paid whereas the latter accumulates all the profit generated out of the hard toil of the former. God has not created two categories of people like this. God created a family. The whole family has the

responsibility to take care of the garden and work there. If wages are the source of livelihood, the land owner too should be satisfied with wages alone. The ownership of land rests with God and therefore, that has to be shared with all. If some of God's children have become rich, no doubt, they have stolen what is marked for the poor. So long capitalism survives, freedom, equality and brotherhood would not go together. But a capitalist would never agree that earning wealth is a sort of stealing because capitalism has made them blind. The questions how wealth is accumulated and why wealth is accumulated are pertinent. If you follow the command that one who do not work should not eat, is it not a wrong thing to make money through lotteries? Many poor are tempted that they would earn large sum of money and are made to join the lottery; and when only one gets the benefit of that high money, is not a stealing from others who joined the exercise? Those who have deposited money with private banks popularly known as 'blade' banks earn exorbitant interest. Is not such interest a robbery from those who have borrowed money to meet their needs? Those who draw huge salaries are really stealing money every month that should have gone to the jobless multitudes. The meaning of one's desire to become rich in a poor world itself is to steal what belongs to the poor and make life merry. Whatever resources are created by God out of nothing was meant for all His children; if so, the entire wealth has to be nationalised and everyone should be accommodated. Those who acquire the assets of their neighbours even at a cost are disobeying the commandment, "you shall not set your desire on your neighbour's house or land". There are incidents where some are registering sale deeds in such a way that the seller doesn't have even a cent of land balance with him; this too is stealing. Those who are desirous of sustaining capitalism should formulate appropriate laws to contain it within reasonable levels. There must be laws that a couple who do not have children should not be allowed to construct luxurious bungalows with many rooms; need be, amendments must be incorporated in the constitution. In our country, black money is made white by resorting to build big houses. There are at least some who make money through illegitimate means as indicated above and spend part of it for charity or donations to temples and churches, quite often ensuring that their names are promptly displayed among those who donate; this can be said to be a modern innovation of stealing. It would have been with these in mind our Lord has commanded that whatever is given by your right hand should not be made known to your left hand. There are youngsters from poor family background who study hard by selling of their assets in part or even full, but remain jobless as they have no penny to pay as donations to the institutions who can employ them; instead, such jobs are grabbed by the rich paying huge donations albeit their comparative poor grading in university examinations thereby degenerating the standard and value of education. There people who comment that the government steals in communism and the individuals steal in capitalism. Under such background, those who are familiar with both these systems should propagate for an order above these two where a responsible society and a statutory set up are put in place. The capitalist always propagate that each individual would work hard only with a goal that each one has to come up in life. With this ideology, the capitalist shuts the possibilities against those who stay in slums and huts in pathetic living conditions targeting his own welfare and growth. Those who support a socialist system to contain unrealistic accumulation of wealth also are reluctant to share their wealth with the needy. With these reasons haunting us, it is for the youngsters to come forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to establish a new socio economic political system. They should team up with leading economists and find a way out. Social justice established in China has reduced stealing there, but there are situations of capitalism rising up here and there. Yet, China seems to be heading towards socialism where there is freedom and not moving to the old capitalism as far as the present trend goes. It must always be understood that Holy Spirit guides

history and therefore we have to attempt formulation of a system based on justice where stealing by the state and individuals have to come to an end. By proper legislations and constitutional provisions, it should be made possible that all citizens should have at least a dwelling place.

Questions:

1. To arrest the increasing trend of sexual sins, what sort of initiatives can be taken by Churches, schools and families?
2. How can we change the feeling prevailing now that economic sins are not that serious?
3. The commandment "You shall not steal" is ignored quite often in private and in the open. Explain where and how?
4. In our prayers before Holy Confession, is it necessary to add economic offences and sins also? Give reasons for your answer.

## Lesson 5

### Some Moral Issues and Solutions (Continued)

# Colour differences, Caste differences, Communalism # Labour Disputes, Employee welfare, Solutions to Unemployment # Some Suggestive Solutions # How can we change the stiffening of Conscience #

#### **Colour differences, Caste differences, Communalism:**

The colour differences in South Africa and the caste differences and communalism in India are not publicly justified these days as it used to be earlier. Yet, men fail to see other men as their own brethren as much as needed. Against the provisions of the Constitution of India, not only colour differences but even torture of Harijans and Girijans are on the rise. An argument of 'sons of soil' is creating obstacles to the fundamental nature of the constitution. The Dravidian movements in Tamil Nadu are raising their objections against Hindi as a sequel to their fight against Aryan dominations. Even people of Kerala are failing to see India as one. Political parties who do not encourage communalism are very rare. The thoughts of different classes of people like barbarians, Jews, Greek servants or freed ones are wrong (Galatians 3:28; Acts 10:36; Colossians 3:11; Romans 10:12; 3:22, 29). Yet, we see more such differences in Christianity than what is seen in Islam. A Syrian Christian family is normally not agreeable for matrimonial relations with newly converted families. Economic imbalance is also a reason behind this.

The suggestions for maintaining equality as envisaged in the constitution are: educating people against caste differences, imposing democratic principles against communalism, ensuring integrated liberation of the poor, education for all, implementing socialistic principles against economic exploitations, setting up cosmopolitan hostels, art forms to enlighten people against the evils of caste – colour differences, dialogues between different religions and so on.

#### **Labour Disputes, Employee welfare, Solutions to Unemployment # Some Solutions:**

Computers are needed for our equitable competitions against rich nations, but employment opportunities would be affected. Even in Japan, 10 % are unemployed. In 1956, India had 5.3 million

people in the unemployed category which increased to 27.5 million by 1986. This is an indication that unemployment is on the increase. 'A lazy brain turns out to be a workshop for devil'. This point out that unemployment is factor that enhances evil tendencies in the community. In capitalist system, employees have to join together and fight for their rights to be established; without such struggles, they would not get reasonable wages. Therefore, collective bargain becomes a necessary evil. But Kerala is a state where employee agitations are often for unwanted causes; therefore, those who have wealth are reluctant to make investments in industries. There are systematic procedures within the labour department to settle employee – employer disputes, but there are instances where labour leaders stand in between to exploit situations to their personal gains at the cost employees. Political interferences often cause employees and employers to suffer. The low level employees are not paid according to their hard labour, but higher ups like contractors and well paid officers earn substantially to lead luxurious lives. Unemployed ones and those with low wages carry on their lives in distress.

**Some Suggestive Solutions:**

- a. Vocational education, technical education
- b. Self employment generation
- c. Capital funds at low interests
- d. Agencies to sell and export products
- e. Atmosphere conducive to industrialisation
- f. For development of villages, develop rural based industries
- g. Ban import of commodities those are available in India
- h. Zamindari system and black money to be eradicated
- i. Top class salaries to be reduced and low level wages to be enhanced
- j. Trade unions to avoid unnecessary striking of works
- k. Organise planning and projects aiming at employment to all

**How can we change the stiffening of Conscience?**

We should make an attempt to study what is conscience in Biblical context. Before laws were given, laws were written in the hearts of men through conscience. It is this conscience that judge our deeds (Romans 2: 12 – 16). St Paul possessed a conscience that was clear with God and man (Acts 24:16). Testifying of conscience was credit for him (2 Corinthians 1:12; 4:2, 5; 11:2; 1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:5, 19).

However during his earlier days, he had persecuted Christians which too was with a good conscience. Luther had written once that conscience was sometimes a wild beast or an evil demon, which also was right. Many religious fanatics killed men in the name of religion and their conscience were made satanic not with their knowledge.

There are many means to transform evil conscience to a divine one.

- On the weighing balance of logic, weigh the suggestions coming from conscience
- Compare the suggestions of conscience with the teachings of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount

- Try to emulate the doctrine proposed by Immanuel Kant, “If all do whatever I do, a good world would be formed”.
- Whatever one does and feels sorry about the impact of the same are to be accepted as bad; whatever makes others happy are good. Carry on your life with this realisation
- Without giving too much attachment to the suggestion, “goal justifies means”, see that goal and means are always just.
- Through meditation identify whether one’s own beastly desires and interests are guiding one or is it the will of God
- Hitler propagated his ideologies based on the advice of Goebbels that a lie if repeated many times would be accepted by people as true. Likewise, evaluate whether wrong doings, favouritism and teachings of own religion can be proved right by repetitions
- Holy Spirit guides one to all truth; learn scripture like that and bring scriptural truths within the ambit of Holy Spirit.

**Questions:**

1. Discuss the Christian approaches on colour differences, caste differences and communalism.
2. How can a Christian approach help the employment sector to establish a healthy scenario?
3. What are the suggestions to wake up conscience from its stiffness so that it is purified?

**Lesson**

**Political Morality**

# Church and Government # Avoidance of Liquor or Prohibition or Control # Non Violent Revolution or Permissible Revolution against Injustice # War and Peace # Vocation is Divine Call #

**Church and Government:**

Christ did not show any sort of obligation to Pilate. He chose not answer to questions from Pilate. Jesus told Pilate in no uncertain terms, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above” (John 19:11). Colossians 2:15 says that the whole creation is through Christ and for Christ. Under such situations, children of God have to be obliged only to God in the end. Consequent to the fall, man has become a sinner and therefore, if he has a choice to opt for heavenly citizenship or state citizenship, he should go for the former. However, since this choice is by a sinner being redeemed, there could be errors in the thought processes. As indicated earlier, the variation we see between Romans 13 and Revelations 13 are pointing out the difficulties of proper options. On the strength of Divine authority, standing against will of God is allowed by Church and government. When Luther said, “Here I stand”, it was against the Pope of Rome. Martyrs have laid down their lives for Christ against the whims of Roman powers. The theory that ‘My Country Right or Wrong, I will back it’ is not right. Government is duty bound to establish justice (1 Peter 2: 14 – 17). If a government stand against justice, the people should vote against it to bring to down from power

and entrust governance to alternative set up; this sort of democratic system has to sustain so that autocracy is kept under check.

The feeling that I will support my Church whether it is right or wrong is also not a correct way of approach. In a country where there are many religions and many Churches, minority rights should not come in the way of human rights. At least a national humanity should develop which shall be a forerunner to global humanity. If any Church establishes an educational institution, it should be for the benefit of the entire population of that area; instead, if it is for the members of that Church alone, they are misusing minority rights as favouritism to own people.

Government and Church are two arms of God and therefore they should extend support mutually; they should stand for glory of God, freedom of citizens, equality and brotherhood but sustain their distinctive features. Government should not interfere with freedom of worship, freedom of propagating one's religion and freedom to practice a religion of one's choice. Churches and religions should cooperate with the government to maintain Law and Order. Justice cannot be put into practice unless anarchy is eradicated.

As pointed out by Bonhoeffer, family and work commenced at the paradise. Government and Church should cooperate with each other that this is sustained till eternity and ensure sharing of resources as one family.

In Islamic nations, government and religion stand as one which is called theocracy. Here, other religions are not treated equally and they do not have enough freedom. The governance is based on Koran. The reason for Fascism and Nazism to have retracted can be attributed to the theory called Machiavellianism of Hitler and Mussolini, Second World War being forced upon the people and viewing religion and Church as enemies.

There was a notion that Church and religion would be against a classless society imagined by Carl Marx which ultimately made him a material atheist. Church is looking forward to the creation of a divine kingdom that includes Marxian ideology. It is certain that the Divine kingdom will sustain in submission to God, and at the same time with no fear of capitalism or communism.

#### **Avoidance or Prohibition or Control of Liquor:**

One of the crucial reasons for the fall of Roman Empire was their high level liquor consumption. The opium trade by China started spoiling the modern culture. It is high time that we wake up and do something to eradicate spreading of intoxication in our community. Our laxity here will end up our culture in total damage without much delay.

We have to read these portions of the scripture and discuss how best, the situation can be addressed: Matthew 11:19; Luke 21:34; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:7; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:3. In John chapter 2, we read that Jesus Christ had transformed water into wine; St Paul had advised Timothy to consume a little wine to get relief from his indigestion problem. Based on these two Biblical portions, there are people who justify their habit of drinking; unfortunately, they do not read the narrations fully. A true believer resorts to the habit of drinking to be relieved of his disappointment in life when he fails to have his supreme joy in God; reasons for increased consumption of liquor and drugs can be attributed to a good extent to the failure of Church to carry out its call.

Had Church taken more of its initiatives in bringing up its children through Holy Confession, Holy Qurbana, learning of scripture, carrying out virtuous activities, engaging in spiritual fellowships, doing gospel works and spreading the message of love, our youngsters would not have gone after liquors and drugs. Even our college going children these days are addicted to liquor and drugs.

There are many reasons for people going after liquors and drugs. Some of the common reasons are abundance of money, more physical strain, unemployment, family tussles, health issues, bad companionship, life going off the track, wasting time without utilising it for good things, mental strains, disappointment, stress in family life, lack of good friendship, lack of good models worthy to emulate, drinking habits among parents, temporary relief from drinking, indebtedness, temporary relief in mental struggles by consuming opium, no learning of scripture in schools and colleges, lack of people who lead virtuous lives, politics in colleges, misbehaviour of teachers and so on.

Many start with occasional drinking and then increase to regular drinking ending up as alcoholics. The dictum, 'once an alcoholic is always an alcoholic' is appearing true in many.

Those who get addicted to LSD or heroin spoil them totally and become a burden to their family as well as to the society. Therefore, they should be identified and nursed to the proper path before they get to the stage of addiction.

Avoidance of liquor would be more effective than prohibition because prohibition would give rise to fake liquor which can result even in death. Government has to do a lot here by properly checking the movement of foreign liquors and being proactive to arrest the damages. There are people who stand strongly for prohibition.

Solutions: (a) Educate the evils of liquor and drugs (b) Provide spiritual happiness (c) Form the organisation 'Alcoholic Anonymous' (d) Christianise our homes. Apart from these, the best option is to lead all to the joy of Holy Spirit.

#### **Non Violent Revolution or Permissible Revolution against Injustice:**

The majority declines violence; the majority accepts order. But how far this is right? Discrimination of colour, exploitation and injustice are issues leading many millions of children starving to death and if the society of today accepts this as order, can we say that this is not violence? Police and military often use force against the poor and the unarmed. The economic exploitation of capitalism is a system where the majority favours violence. In states like Bihar, those being killed are Harijans and those who kill are people of high castes. When the call is there that the black shall not use violence, the practical call is that let the white continue their violence. When our Lord used a whip to cleanse the temple, the punishment carried a touch of love.

In French Revolution, American War of Independence and Chinese Revolution, violence was very much associated with, but then, that was a necessary evil. In this sinful world those who hold positions would deliver speeches after speeches condemning violence, but they hide within themselves their violence of injustice. Gentleman's slow violence is the cause for people's sudden violence.

The parental love towards their children is often revealed in the form of a stick. Loving God is a consuming fire as we read in Hebrews 12:28.

All religions and righteous people are holding a singular view that bloodshed should be reduced as much as possible. Not killing insects those harm human life like snakes and all is impractical; likewise, not punishing injustice also is impractical.

### **War and Peace:**

Today the possibility of nuclear wars are looming large and therefore, as Christians, we have no other alternative but take firm stand against was. The atom bomb that annihilated Nagasaki and Hiroshima in no time is just like a toy these days. We are in possession of far dangerous bombs to destruct this universe totally within seconds. Once they are used, the victorious one and the loser would not survive. War has got itself redefined as a process akin to global suicide. The star wars can never be used and if used, global destruction is the result; unfortunately, men are mad after star wars and nuclear wars.

Pacifism was a theory objected by many during earlier days and prompted a few to take anti war stands out of their prick of conscience, but today, there are different types of pacifists.

- a. Those who advocate to overpower evil with goodness and therefore not willing to join wars
- b. Those who allow the Police to resort to mild attacks, but stay away from joining the armed forces
- c. Those stand with Political Pacifism which hold that war will destruct all governments and therefore wars should be banned
- d. Those who object wars based on Gandhian principle of Ahimsa
- e. Paul Tillich argued for Symbolic Pacifism; those who wish a wholeness in this world stay away from wars which is an indication of goodness
- f. There are vocational pacifists who say that they have no divine call to join war
- g. All right thinking people of this era would be part of anti nuclear pacifism; but this difference is irrelevant as once war commences, it would turn nuclear

The WCC Assemble held at Amsterdam in 1948 classified the antiwar approaches of Christians into three categories:

- Those who think that modern war methods cannot establish justice and therefore modern wars are never just wars
- Those who opine that wars may be necessary to check autocracy
- Those who advocate that there can never be wars. Many scientists who are Nobel laureates have proclaimed their stands openly against wars. The totally destructive bombs are said to be never put among ammunitions; if so why can't e desist from making them? Nations across the globe have to give an answer to this.

“Blessed are the peace makers, for they will be called sons of God”.

### **Vocation is Divine Call:**

The common notion is that there is a divine call to be a monk or a priest; but it is thought that those who choose vocations such as trade, agriculture or service with government or private firms go so as per their personal choice. This is a totally wrong understanding. An infant discards Satan and accepts God; if so, he has no authority to choose a satanic vocation. When we look at a true Christian, all his

endeavours, let them be them entertainment, service, financial dealings, politics or worship are always Christian witnessing. The saying "Work is Worship" means that any work one does has to be for glorifying God and therefore joyful and holy. "For none of us lives for ourselves alone and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord" (Romans 14:7, 8). A slave puts in all his hard labour for his master; likewise, whatever we do should be for glorifying the one who had shed his blood for redeeming us.

The advice of St John, the Baptist, "Do not collect more than what is commanded" illustrates that each vocation has to be carried out based on the will of God (Luke 12:14). Those who freeze their conscience and extract bribe or such illegal gratifications forget that a child of God has to follow the will of God. When a child of God is placed in a tricky situation, he has to think what would have been the course of action Jesus Christ would have followed had he been in a similar scenario; thus he can arrive at the correct decision. When we say that all vocations are holy, it doesn't mean that a child of God can manage a toddy shop or he can invest money in 'blade' banks at unjust interests or manage such institutions or run a brothel; his Christian conscience would not allow him to do so. If running a 'blade' bank is wrong, depositing money there too is wrong. Those who buy lottery tickets are also doing wrong because it amounts to breaking the command not to eat without working.

The thought that certain vocations are nobler than others too is not correct. Our Lord served as a carpenter at Nazareth for 18 years; this was to illustrate the nobility of all professions.

Again, the notion that a Pope or a bishop can be holier than a layman needs to be corrected. It has to be remembered that the anointment of Holy Mooron is done only once, that is, at the occasion of Baptism. Whatever ordinations are done later, there is no anointment of Holy Mooron.; an ordination does not provide any opportunity to be holier than believers at large. But through ordination, the authority to celebrate the Holy Mysteries is given to those chosen for that. Mother of God is placed above apostles.

A monk who is insincere stoops lower than a sincere family man and a family man who is insincere stoops lower than a true monk. Commitment to the call is what is crucial. After being called to be a monk, it is an act of insincerity to break the oath for entering a family way.

Call of God means work and rest are to be utilised to glorify God.

**Questions:**

1. What should be the relationship between Church and political system of governance?
2. How do prohibition, control and avoidance help to tackle the menace of intoxication?
3. Explain briefly the Christian approach towards non violent revolution and war.
4. What is the significance of seeing all vocations as call of God?

Read: Emil Bruner, Divine Imperative, page 198.

