

Concept and Elements of Religion

According to Sanskrit semantics, the word dharma is derived from the root Dhrāna meaning meaning. Which means to hold, therefore the basic meaning of dharma is that which is to be worn or that which sustains personal and social life. It is the natural and basic property of matter in general, which is present in it as eternal. The very essence of a thing is called its religion.

1. Religion in Indian Perspective –

Vyasa says that “araat dharma ityahu” means that it is said that dharma is that which is adopted. Religion is the belief that a person makes or holds towards life in the society. Dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root "Dhri" which means to wear. When it becomes clear what to wear, it becomes a religion. In a way, religion can be said to possess some socially useful and self-useful things or qualities through duties. James has said - "In religious life, self-surrender and sacrifice are encouraged and unnecessary things are discarded so that happiness can increase." In this way, it makes those things easy and convenient, which are necessary in every condition of life.

Dhriti pardon damosteyam shauchamindriyanigraha.

Dhee Vidya Satyamakrodho Dasakam Dharma Lakshnam.

The ten characteristics of Dharma are Dhriti, Kshama, Dama, Steya, Cleanliness, Indriya control, Dheera, Vigya (knowledge), Truth, Akrodha (emotional imbalance).

The word 'religion' in English originated from two Latin words - ri and lager. It means "to bind back" which means "to establish a relationship". Thus, religion is that which establishes relationships. Gisbert wrote – “Religion establishes a double relationship: first between man and God, second between man and man, being the children of God”. In the inner side of religion comes the thoughts, beliefs and feelings of man related to God. Prayers and religious rituals come in the left side. Dasson has clarified - "Whenever and wherever man experiences dependence on such external forces, which are considered to be mystical and higher than the powers of man, that is religion." According to Gisbert - "Religion Man feels himself dependent on God or services, is dynamic, has faith and self-surrender.

2. Religion from the spiritual side-

According to Heigle- "Religion is the universal philosophy of a religion." Taylor is of the opinion that - "Religion is the belief in spiritual beings." Expressing this type of view, Heithead wrote that "Religion is one. There is a vision of an element that lies behind and within us—that which is real (truth) and which awaits realization—that element whose ultimate ideal is to be discovered without hope." Religion from the spiritual point of view. Discover and hold values.

3. Religion as Policy –

Kant has said - "Religion asks us to recognize duties as divine orders." Thus Dharma is duty-performing. In many contexts in Ramcharitmanas, duty has been termed as religion. The meaning should be drawn that "religion is the source of morality. Where the person is moral, in which there is a sense of religion. But morality is a part of religion.

4. Religion as Emotion -

Religion is nourished by the feelings of man. Hawking called religion "that spirit or nature which is accompanied by inspiration. Salomon Reinas wrote that-"Religion is the sum of desires that hinder the free use of our intellectual powers." While Freud said - "Religion is defined as a universal mental disorder inspired by the suppressed feelings of humanity." It is the feeling that created fanaticism in religion, which is an unresolved confusion before the world society at present and it has put the human race of the world in danger many times.

5. Religion as an Institution –

Religion can also be seen as an institution because it has been collectively created by the society and their ideological, emotional, traditional and practical unity is found, which is followed by the followers of that religion or the members of the organization. Dharma should always be accepted in the broadest sense as it consists in the performance of various duties towards humanity as individuals and social, moral, spiritual and both in the worldly and transcendental forms. By imbibing Dharma, both the existence and personality of a person becomes complete. Religion creates an all-encompassing, cosmopolitan, all-time approach to life. Grandmaison writes that - "Religion is the sum total of personality and social beliefs, enduring attitudes and practices, having a purpose of its own, a force which man considers to be the greatest, upon which he depends and with whom he establishes relations. may or may have established a relationship.

Main features of religion

1. Belief in supernatural power -

Religion is related to many such beliefs which are related to some supernatural power. Some groups see this supernatural power as a corporeal form, while in some groups the form of this power is considered to be formless. People believe that it is this supernatural power that gives them various types of happiness and sorrows, profit and loss or successes and failures in life.

2. A theoretical arrangement -

Religion does not consist only of beliefs, but these beliefs are developed in the form of many principles in such a way that the belief of a person in supernatural power can become more firm. These principles are the basis of 'religious ideology'.

3. Inclusion of religious activities and rituals -

In every religion, there are different methods of worship, sacred practices and different types of rituals are included. People believe that only through these actions and rituals, the desired result can be obtained by appeasing the supernatural power. Worship of God, self-restraint, pilgrimages, pious work, sacrificial life and fulfillment of sacraments are different forms of religious activities and rituals.

4. Symbols and Mythology -

In all religions religious beliefs are explained by certain symbols. For example, in Hinduism the idol is a symbol of supernatural power, while in Christianity the 'cross' symbolizes the faith of Jesus Christ. Ramayana, Bible and Quran etc. are symbols of divine knowledge. Silk clothes are symbols of purity, while flowers and incense sticks are symbols of spiritual fragrance. Mythological tales explain the relationship between man and supernatural power in the form of many stories.

5. Expressed furiously -

People express beliefs related to religion in the form of many agitated behaviours. Praying and dancing passionately, showing one's faith in a supernatural power with physical pain, making great atonements for a religious error, and developing a feeling of fear for a supernatural power are examples of violent expression. Such behavior has nothing to do with intelligence and logic.

Religious activities

A study of the fundamental tenets of different religions reveals that each of these religions has a belief in a supernatural, almighty power. At the same time, there is a provision of various means to take advantage of this power by pleasing it and to avoid its wrath. These means can be termed as religious activities. These religious activities are mainly-

1. Prayer –

The place of prayer as a religious activity has always been important in almost every religion. At the higher levels of civilization, prayer becomes an integral part of religious practice. Praying is done to please the supernatural power to get its blessings, to escape its wrath, to seek forgiveness for offenses and to attain material happiness, prosperity or success.

2. Mausoleum –

By meditating, meditating on that supernatural power, doing pranayama, samadhi, yoga sadhna etc. come under this category. The main purpose of these actions is to get the vision of supernatural power and try to get absorbed in that eternal power etc. The religious history of India is full of examples of such activities. It is often seen that in temples, mosques or churches etc., many people gather together and do worship, kirtan, prayer, worship etc. For a long time, when a collective religious action is repeated again and again, it becomes a part of a particular

religion. That is why we find that the followers of Islam come together to offer prayers and Christians attend congregational prayers in the church.

3. Collective Actions -

Every religion has definite guidelines and norms regarding proper and improper conduct. Almost every religion justifies those actions which are against the society and God. No religion includes stealing, lying, greed, becoming an atheist etc. It places great emphasis on virtue, honesty, honest conduct, etc., and considers some such conduct as exemplary, whose observance is given special attention. On the other hand, there are also some such prohibited acts, for which there is a law of punishment in religion.

4. Sacrifice –

The history of religion also reveals about many types of sacrifices. These sacrifices can be mainly classified into two categories – honorific sacrifice and sinful sacrifice. When something is offered in his honor to please the supernatural power, it is called 'honorable sacrifice'. Offering prasada, offering bhog, offering food and clothes etc. comes under 'honorable' sacrifice. Conversely, when an animal, bird or animal is sacrificed to atone for one's sin or to quench the fury of a supernatural power, it is called a 'sinful sacrifice'. In this regard, it is to be remembered that the practice of offering this type of sacrifice is decreasing with the development of civilization.

5. Tantric Actions –

Efforts are made to subdue the gods and goddesses and demons who cause trouble or harm to man by tantric actions. These activities were very popular in ancient times. These include sorcery and sorcery. Healing diseases by mantras, raining water and harming enemies, and giving children through talismans or tantric rings are the various manifestations of tantric actions.

Theories of the origin of religion

Scholars have different views regarding how religion originated in human society. According to evolutionary writers, modern civilized society is a progressively developed form of tribal or primitive societies, due to which religion must have originated in tribal societies first. Therefore, many scholars try to find the origin and early form of religion by analyzing the life of the tribes. Some theories of the origin of religion will make this fact even more clear-

1. Tyler's Theism of the Origin of Religion –

According to Tyler, "the concept of the soul is the basis of the philosophy of religion from primitive men to civilized men." This Spiritism is divided into two broad beliefs—the first is that the human soul exists after death or the body remains even after destruction and the second is

that apart from the souls of human beings, there are other souls of the mighty gods. According to Tyler, spirits range from spirits to powerful gods. These transcendental souls are not only immortal, but they also control and direct all the happenings in this material world and the direction of human life. Apart from this, keeping these souls happy can bring benefits to a man and harm if he is unhappy. That is why it is necessary to pray or worship them, so that they do not harm us. With this belief, primitive humans started praying and worshiping ancestors etc., and this later developed in the form of religion.

2. Max Müller's Naturalism on the Origin of Religion –

According to Max Muller, it was natural to have fear, terror, surprise etc. Due to these mental feelings, he started fearing nature as if he was afraid of any creature and that is why feelings of reverence, devotion etc. came in his heart towards him. Based on this, the famous scholar of culture and philology, Max Muller, concluded that the first stage of the origin of religion was the worship of various substances of nature like sun, moon, fire, air etc. This idea was corroborated by excavations in Egypt and elsewhere. The greatest deity in Egypt was Ra, meaning the Sun. It is said that the understanding of various objects of nature as beings and the feeling of reverence, love or fear towards them was born out of faulty language. It is often said that the sun rises or sets', 'the storm is blowing', etc. But in reality the sun neither rises nor sets. Be that as it may, the primitive man bows before this vastness of nature and the first foundation of religion is laid.

3. Fraser's theory of the origin of religion –

According to Fraser, first of all, primitive humans tried to fulfill their purposes by controlling nature through magic, and after failing they assumed that there is someone more powerful than them in the 'world', who made their efforts in vain. And because of this it is never possible to rule that power through witchcraft. As a result of this belief, he renounced the desire to rule over that power and started worshiping it and from this religion originated. In short, according to Fraser, the initial primacy of religion was witchcraft. Disappointed by witchcraft, people took refuge in religion. Thus religion is the result of an attitude defeated by nature.

4. Durkheim's theory of the origin of religion -

Durkheim presented a complete social explanation regarding the origin of religion, mentioning the shortcomings of many scholars. According to you 'society' is the root cause of the origin of religion. Religion is a reflection of the 'society' itself.

According to Durkheim, all the things of collective life, whether they are simple or complex, real or ideal, can be divided into two main parts - (1) ordinary, (2) sacred. All religions are concerned with holy things. But this does not mean that all sacred things are divine or related to religion, although everything or thoughts related to religion must be sacred. These sacred objects are the symbols or community representatives of the society. In primitive societies, the individual finds his power completely meaningless before the collective power and therefore bows before it. This collective power is felt during public rites and festivals etc. Primitive man considers this collective power to be sacred and is therefore influenced by it. The people of the society always try to keep what they consider to be holy, unholy and away from the ordinary, and for the fulfillment of this purpose, they give birth to many beliefs, practices, rites and festivals. Religion

is the result of these efforts. Since there is consent and pressure of the whole society behind the beliefs, conduct, rituals etc. related to these efforts, due to this man has to bow down before that collective authority of the society. The foundation of religion falls from there. If analyzed minutely, it will be clear that religion did not originate due to any one particular reason, multiple reasons have contributed to its origin.

1. Sense of Holiness- Durkheim laid special emphasis on the fact that religion is concerned with all those beliefs, things and conduct which are considered sacred. That is why all things and actions related to religion are kept separate from impure things and unholy practices. This notion of holiness binds all those people in the thread of unity who believe in the same religious beliefs.

2. Lack of logic - Religion is related to supernatural beliefs, because they cannot be proved by any test or scientific knowledge. Faith is the foundation of religion. This is the reason that religion is not related to the logical side of human life but to the emotional side.

3. Incorporation of rules and prohibitions - In every religion, some special rules of behavior are included. These rules are related to purity, honesty, kindness, justice, renunciation and truthfulness. Religious rules make it clear how a person should behave in different situations. Prohibition refers to those rules which prevent a person from deceit, fraud, immorality, dishonesty and misconduct. These rules and prohibitions play an important role in controlling the behavior of individuals.

4. Religious strata- In all the religions of the world there is a clear hierarchy of highs and lows between different individuals. In this level, the highest place is given to those persons who have special knowledge of their religion. Dharmacharyas, Popes, Imams and Exorcists etc. belong to this category. The persons living near these religious representatives have a second place in the religious hierarchy. According to religious rules, people who lead a restrained life get the third place. At the bottom of this stratum are those who are either not considered holy or who have no faith in religion.

On the basis of the above characteristics of religion (Anderson) has concluded that "religion is a moral-spiritual institution, a combination of many ideas, beliefs and passions which are expressed towards some supernatural power."

Importance of religion in human life

In 1933, Mahatma Gandhi has described religion as a great power in human life and said - "Religion is that power which keeps a person honest in big trouble and it is the last resort of hope of a person in this world as well." The following functions of religion can be stated in human life-

1. Religion determines the personality and existence of a person.
2. Religion provides the basis of life.
3. It calms the human mind and instills hope in the heart.
4. Religion keeps human life moral by providing mental firmness.
5. It connects the human group in a behavioral, ideological, traditional and emotional way.

6. Religion provides the basis for the creation and sustenance of culture and civilization to man.
7. It keeps the person connected with family, society and country.
8. Religion has given a new shape to the entire history of human life.
9. Religion shows man the path of spirituality and morality.
10. Religion communicates the power to man to fight with real life situations.

11. To attain the ultimate truth (moksha) of life, the first step is of religion.

12. Religion provides the basis for the physical and spiritual progress of a person. It has also been said- Yato Abhyudaya-Nishreyas Siddhi: Sa Dharmah. (Dharma is that which leads to physical and spiritual progress of a person)

13. Confirming that religion has an imprint on the entire history of human beings, Gisbert has written - "Religion had its imprint on the American and French revolutions and by 9 January 1905 there was a strong religious influence on the Russian revolutions as well. Religion is the basis of great social and economic movements in modern times under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

We can say in a nutshell that religion is an all pervasive force which affects the individual and society in many ways.