

NAME- DR. AKANKSHA
GUEST FACULTY
P.G DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
PATNA UNIVERSITY, PATNA
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MOBILE NO: 7839270596, 7979872919
E-MAIL ID : sakanksha806@gmail.com

The scope of philosophy is any critical appraisal of religion. It is an ancient discipline, being found in the earliest known manuscripts concerning philosophy, and relates to many other branches of philosophy and general thought, including Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic, and History. We related to the scope and relevance of philosophy of religion in the following ways.

There is no organized religion Can stand up to honest criticism and come' out of it with an unblemished report card.

None of the mainline religions has proved itself to have been always and everywhere a reliable friend of 'people struggling for liberation and emancipation. Often religions have added to the oppression, discrimination and blood-letting that have plagued the world since time began. The subjugation of women has often been given religious sanction. The most cruel and bloodthirsty wars have been inspired by religious differences, with each side proclaiming an exclusive. *Gott mit uns* (God with us)., while hailing all opponents as hirelings of Satan incarnate. Religion has often opposed scientific research and sided with obscurantism and

superstition, against trends of enlightenment. And politicians, especially in Third World countries, have learned that religion is the easiest handle with which to manipulate impoverished and oppressed masses, stirring up all kinds of mob violence and building up their “vote banks”. Indeed, religious leadership seems to be the last bastion of male exclusivism, determined to holdout against “female incursions” by all manner of pseudo-theological philosophical and sociological argument, so. as to preserve power in the hands of men only. The priestly Conquerors. Club is a very powerful and jealously guarded coterie of old men who, with bulldog tenacity, clings with alarm to its ever shrinking list of “privileges and prerogatives.”

Above all, it stands ready to flash its magic wand of “God’s will” and “the divinely established scheme of things” to justify and protect the status quo (heavily loaded in its favour).and block any attempt at reform which just might among other things, help towards a more authentic encounter with GOD.

On the other hand, religions have also inspired many to selfless service of the downtrodden, have given the human race a rich legacy of art and beauty as well as played a not insignificant role in opening our eyes to the essential dignity of the human person, irrespective of race, colour or sex; Some religious personalities - Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, Mahatma Gandhi, Oscar Romero, Desmond Tutu - have been true friends to liberation movements.

Yet, when all is said and done, it would appear that some kind of institutionalization or organisation of religion is inevitable - unless we are quite prepared to accept the consequences of reducing it to some sort of private, abstract and “spiritual” preoccupation. In fact, we can cite at least three major reasons why some kind of organization in religion is not merely to be tolerated an unavoidable, but even accepted as inevitable.

Firstly, inasmuch as we are embodied beings, we cannot be satisfied with an intangible something, which remains at that level. Anything that we take seriously must be embodied, “tangibilised” in some way, through some manner of institutionalization, just as our love for our country has to be given tangible expression in flag-hosting and march pasts and our love for our family and friends has to be rendered incarnate in birthday parties and family gatherings. Anything less would but touch us lightly and leave us with a profound sense of frustration. Secondly, if religion is to have some social significance, if it is to have some transformative, reformatory impact upon society - inspiring people to work for justice and peace, or in support of the environment - it require some kind of communitarian expression.

Finally, if it is not to become a fleeting, fly-by-night sort of thing, here today, and gone tomorrow, coming to birth and dying with each individual’s alleged encounter with the powers that be, it must have some concrete form to ensure the sharing, preservation and development of its tradition.

Actually, if we look a bit more closely at the objections against organized religion, it would probably become clear

that these objections are not so much aimed at the very fact that religions are organized but at rigid authoritarian way in which they have been organized. That is the real villain.