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Effects of the Blasphemy Movements on Pakistan and its Community

Pakistan inherited the blasphemy law from the British rulers of the Subcontinent. At present, there are several sections in Pakistan's Penal Code regarding blasphemy laws. But the most critical section is 295-c, which says that "Use of derogatory remarks, spoken, written, directly or indirectly, etc. defiles the name of Muhammad or other Prophet(s) is punishable to Mandatory Death and fine". Those who are accused of blasphemy may be subject to harassment, threats, and attacks. Ten blasphemy cases were reportedly heard in court in the 58 years between 1927 and 1985, but since then more than 4,000 cases have been handled. However, yet to execute anyone for blasphemy. Asia Bibi's is the first such case to be heard by the Supreme Court under section 295-C.Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah, Tehreek-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwat and Sunni Tehreek are the most active Religious parties in favoring the Blasphemy Laws. Protests, demonstrations, and marches have disrupted daily life across the country and even led to the death of many protesters and public. The paper will analyze the effects of the Blasphemy movement on Pakistan and its community locally and globally.

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Buddhist Interpretation of Human/Animal Relations

While there are several branches of historic and modern Buddhism, all share an acknowledged compassion for non-human life, especially for animal life. Amongst the revolutionary teachings of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha, or the Shakyamuni Buddha, was the dharma which teaches that the continuous cycle of rebirth and its associated cycle of suffering can be broken by an enlightened awakening to the reality of the nature of life. While the Shakyamuni Buddha laid down the philosophy to be followed by the nascent Buddhist community, subsequent proponents such as Emperor Ashoka, one of the earliest rulers to take up Buddhism, made edicts codifying Buddhist beliefs and behavior. Prominent among the laws Ashoka decreed were specific rules to express compassion and loving kindness to animals; for example to do no intentional harm, the cessation of animal sacrifices, and the protection of several wild species.

This paper surveys both canonical doctrine and actual practice in two diverse Buddhist societies in order to examine how Buddhist interpretations of animal/human interaction shape both thinking and behavior.

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Keywords: Judaism, race, ethics, Germany, religion, humanism

Between Religion and Race: The Regeneration of Judaism

My paper analyses the German Jews' discourse on the renewed meaning of Jewish religion. It focuses on the late nineteenth-century, and is based on the examination of contemporary scholarly works, newspapers, and diaries.

Assaulted by radical nationalists, who merged together Germanic Christianity with racial concepts, Jews tried to rehabilitate their imposed inferior status. Their response highlighted the need to foster Jewish

identity through a different understanding of religion, and by accommodating new categories for Jewish regeneration. As Jewish scholars of the period contended, modern Judaism should not adhere merely to religious practices and teaching. It should rather combine Jewish culture - perceived primarily in terms of religion and tradition - with social hygiene and healthy reproduction. In this sense, Jewish religious laws serve as sexual ethics that thwarts the mixing of races. For not few Jewish scientists, assimilation proved to be unsuccessful and detrimental to the future of Judaism. As I will demonstrate, this trend among Jews continued well into the Nazi period and helped them to oppose allegations against their destructive racial essence. However, when invoking the racial nature of their religion, Jews' ideas were not of biological determinism, as those of modern racists. For them, the religious teaching of Judaism also had a universal and humanistic message: all people and races were created in the image of God, and all were descendants of Abraham. And although various races might have diverse qualities, it should be remembered that the Jewish religion and ethics are not about discrimination, but tolerate human diversity. The modern meaning of the Jewish religion was, therefore, a synthesis of cultural, moral and historical factors that enabled the Jewish people to preserve its biological relations, but at the same time it was required by the same religion to avoid any sense of superiority.

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  Keywords: Sermon, Moral, Teachings, Luqman, Advice

  Evoking Religious Submission to God, Fragmenting of Moral Discourse: Sermon of Luqman to His Son Mentioned in Holy Quran

  Sermons are a powerful means by which religious, spiritual, moral and traditional ideologies are propagated. Their influence is derived from an irresistible synergy of both ancient and modern civilization. Luqman was well known as a wise and learned man in Arabia. He has been mentioned in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poets like Imra'ul-Qais, Labid, A'asha, Tarafa and others. Quranic text in regard to the sermon has been described to train its audience. In the sermon of Luqman the same training has been discussed for the moral education and character building discourse.

  Objective of this research is to highlight sermon of Luqman as a literary example to deliver moral education. Methodology of the article explores the processes that have allowed Islam to gain great appeal as a community-building idiom through submission to God and moral discourse. The article analyzes sermon of Luqamn to his son initially but when mentioned in Holy Quran as a symbolic expression of moral teachings from an intellectual mind for the public at large. Findings of the research a beautiful picture of Quranic text in the form of sermons. Consequently, sermons which usually are tagged to religious leaders and religious teachings promotion but in Quran the sermon of Luqman has been described as an example of literature and poetry to deliver moral education.

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Keywords: Buddhism, Disciplinary rules, Sex, Human rights,

Does Buddhism Violate Sexual Freedom of Man? An Investigative Study with Reference to Theravada Buddhist Disciplinary Rules

The objective of this research paper is to find out whether Theravada Buddhist disciplinary rules violate the sexual freedom of man (monk) since they appear as teachings that violate the sexual freedom of man because of their strict nature. Accordingly, both monks and nuns must completely refrain from any kind of sexual activities. In this context, it is true that Buddhism has violated the sexual rights of man. Then, Buddhism can be marginalized as a religion that violates sexual freedom of man. Therefore, disciplinary rules in Theravada Buddhism are analyzed here to find out whether they violate sexual freedom of man.

Disciplinary rules like, defeat (Pārājika), formal meeting (Saṅgādisēsa), undetermined (Aniyata) and expiation (Pācitta) etc. depicted in Vinayapiṭaka which appear as rules that violate the sexual right of man are discussed and analyzed in this research paper. Next, investigates why Buddha prohibited sexual activities for monks and nuns while admiring the practice of celibacy. And also enquires how those rules violate the sexual freedom of man (monk). Even though the above practices violate the human rights, their utility for achieving the expected final goal of Buddhism will also be discussed.

According to the modern human rights, complete prohibition of sexual activities of a man is a violation of his rights. But, the above disciplinary rules do not directly violate the sexual freedom of man because it is a practice undertaken by one to oneself. In conclusion, it should be mentioned here that Theravada Buddhist disciplinary rules seem to violate the sexual rights of man but it depends on 'will' and 'choice' of him, since he enters into the Buddhist dispensation with a firm determination for eradicating suffering, he will have will to be free from worldly desire.

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Vedic Medical Astrology and Relevance to Essential Hypertension Management

Background: Vedic Medical Astrology is a specialised branch of Vedas combining Astrology and Ayurveda; which use astrological intervention for the management of diseases or disorders. Vedas are world's most ancient scriptures, Jyotish (Astrology) has been first mentioned in the Rig Veda, and references were also made in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and Bhagavad-Gita. Jyotish is revered as one of the most important limbs of the Vedas. It does not promote a passive acceptance of fate; rather astrology takes account of strengths, weaknesses and various tendencies, and the choices of actions available.

Review of literature: Previous studies have explored the correlation and impact of astrological events in relation of diseases, health concerns and relationship between birth chart and disease risk. Cardiovascular conditions, sleep and fertility were found significantly associated with moon phase. However, to best of our knowledge no study has documented the impact of astrological intervention in disease management.

Methods and Results: First experimental study was undertaken to assess the impact of medical astrological intervention in placebo-controlled settings. Sixty-eight clinically diagnosed essential hypertension patients were recruited from outpatient's clinic, NMP Medical Research Institute, India and randomly allocated to intervention or placebo group. Both groups were advised to substantial weight loss, reduced sodium intake, and increased physical fitness. Intervention groups assigned to the established plus medical astrological interventions. Results show the feasibility of comprehensive Vedic astrological interventions and their beneficial effects on BP and hypertension control. Benefits extend to stable psychological distress and stress levels.

Concussion: Vedic Medical Astrology is an ancient approach to manage and treat clinical conditions. First data from clinical trial could be pilot work for future studies.

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Cosmopolitanism and the Goddess Tradition in Bengal: Situating Mukundaram's Candimangalkavya in the Context of Nineteenth Century Bengal

This paper tries to draw a connection between the Candimangalkavya of Mukundaram Chakraborty and the emergence of cosmopolitan goddess in the form of Durga , Kali and Jagaddhatri during the nineteenth century Bengal. Bengal had a long tradition of goddess worship. This regional tradition had taken shape into two phases: with the coming of the Brahmins during the fifth and the sixth centuries and also between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the composition of the Mangalkavyas. This paper mainly relied on the literary narratives like the Mangalkavyas , Bengal Puranas and also the different vernacular texts. The paper would highlight four objectives : to relate the Mangalkavyas with the goddess tradition in Bengal secondly to analyze Goddess's role as a granter and legitimiser of royal power ,thirdly the making of the cosmopolitan city and its cultural heritage, and lastly goddess and urbanity .On the basis of the ongoing discussion it can be suggested that Bengal happened to be a cult region. Indeed it was on the shared understanding of a variously represented common cult which laid the foundation of Bengal's regional tradition. In the absence of a central monitoring agency such as the temple of Jagannatha , the cult of regional goddess , conceived and promoted by the Bengal Puranas, helped to create a common focus and to integrate the highly stratified rural society in Bengal. The annual worship of Durga Puja also repeatedly in the Bengal Puranas but not popularised before the late medieval period, now functioned as the supreme signifier of the religious culture of the Hindu Bengalis to the 'outsider.'

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Tragedy and Disenchantment under the Shadows of God

Following the diagnosis of the "shadows of God" realized for F. Nietzsche, this work wants to focus in the role of religion in society, and his link with moral teachings. Although the meaning of religion is analized in terms of practical reasons, thus, beyond a social pact or goal there is nothing but tragedy, made up concepts and a disenchanted world.

The research objective focus in the subjectivity of moral debate of SXX and its consequences. This debate is shown and taken by many intellectuals who wonder about the existence of such thing as an absolute moral, thus, an absolute fundament for religion.

The main goal of the paper is to show the variety in moral perspectives, with this, in religion. Linking both concepts. Concluding in a non-substantial entity or fundament for such things, but an empty, disenchanted and tragic reality: a gregarious pact.

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Religiosity, Spirituality, Faith and the Sacred in an International Setting

The present symposia will explore the manifestation and the composition of religiousness, spirituality, faith, and the sacred in two eastern cultures: specifically, China and Taiwan. A review of Chinese and Taiwanese culture will be presented which particular emphasis on the social, cultural, and political aspects which shape these constructs. A comparison of statistical methodologies and analyses will be presented which will explore the composition of religiousness, spirituality, faith, and the sacred as well the similarities and differences between these two cultures.

While religiosity and spirituality are frequently understood and assessed within westerns cultures such as the United States, less is known about the nature of these constructs within Asian cultures such as Taiwan and China. Despite this gap in the research literature, a 4-factor solutions comprising religiosity, spirituality, faith, and the sacred, can be proposed. These four elements are expected to be heavily interrelated and strongly correlated with one another.

The Meaningful Existence scale is a 18 item measure designed to assess the manifestation of these latent traits within Taiwanese and Chinese participants. This instrument was tested on two different samples of Chinese and Taiwanese individuals to further explore the nature of these constructs as well as to assess any potential differences within these samples. Data was factor analyzed using Maximum Likelihood estimation and Promax rotation as the factors were assumed to be strongly correlated. While a four-factor solution emerged representing religiosity, spirituality, faith and the sacred, there was considerable cross-loading between items whereby many items assessed multiple different factors. Additionally, the composition of these constructs varied across cultures where Chinese individuals saw religiosity as more organizational and God as more supernatural.

To further explore the differences between how these cultures, view these constructs, discriminant function analysis and logistic regression analyses were conducted. Though the assumptions of the discriminant function analyses were not met, one significant discriminant function emerged where Taiwanese participants saw these constructs as a critical nexus in life while Chinese participants saw these constructs in very immaterial ways. Logistic regression analysis revealed that Taiwanese participants saw these constructs as related to organized religion while Chinese participants saw these constructs in more effective ways.

As such, these constructs do appear to manifest as unique but highly related latent traits, though there are considerable differences between these cultures.

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Jonathan Edwards and the Dogs of War: A Pastoral Presentation of Just War Theory during King George's War (1744-48)

Jonathan Edwards, famous for his participation in the Great Awakening, ministered on the frontier of the British colonies during times of inter-colonial conflict with the French and their Native allies in America. Between 1744 and 1748, Edwards preached a series of fourteen martial sermons that provided his parishioners with a framework for understanding the conflict between the Protestant English succession and the "papist" French monarchy. One of these sermons was used to bolster enlistments while another outlined a Jus In Bellum Just War Theory; still another of these sermons connected the military events of his day with the need for revival. These sermons developed more than a philosophical "Just War Theory"; Edwards provided a framework within which the laity in his congregation understood the cosmic conflict between three religious arenas—Protestant, Catholic, and Native.

Drawing on Edwards's sermons—including some unpublished—this paper will outline Edwards's theology of warfare as presented to his local congregation. These parishioners were not theologians or clergy; many of them—such as Col. John Stoddard, Major Seth Pomeroy, and Captain John Baker— served as officers or enlisted soldiers in the local militia. These soldiers who sat under Edwards's teaching developed two uniquely American martial practices: the use of dogs to track Natives and the practice of scalp bounties. While these practices were controversial even in their day, they were consistent with the Just War Theory promoted by Edwards in his sermons. This paper will outline Edwards's theology of warfare and the martial practices his thought facilitated in order to demonstrate the role clergy played in driving and shaping military conflict in eighteenth-century New England.

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Birth and Rebirth in terms of Continuation and Innovation of the Buddha's Teaching

This article aims to present birth and rebirth in Buddhism in terms of continuation of the Buddha's teaching and three innovative approaches based on Venerable Master Di-Chiao's practice of Earth Store Bodhisattva's compassion. Buddha Shikyamuni had perceived the deterioration of human beings before nirvana and had bid Earth Store Bodhisattva to take over responsibility to help and liberate all sentient beings. Following the Buddha's teaching, Venerable Master Di-Chiao has been practicing Earth Store Bodhisattva's compassion and vows and has been dedicated all her life to helping, saving and educating sentient beings. She teaches people the law of cause and effect, and the merits of repentance as well as the importance of upholding the Five Precepts and practicing the Ten Good Deeds. This qualitative study gathers data from interviews with Venerable Master Di-Chiao, books and online feedbacks pertinent to true stories from some of those helped by the Master through their difficulties, and observation at the Dharma services. The findings are three innovative approaches concatenated to interpret birth and rebirth, in accordance with the needs of modern people. The first stresses Three Buddhalization: Buddhist wedding, Buddhist prenatal education and Buddhist family, which help construct meaningful a new life and a harmonious society. The second relates to the lantern pole, illustrating the Master's great compassion in granting salvation for the non-human beings. The third is concerned about the pursuit of going to the inner court of Tusita Heaven afterlife, where Maitreya Bodhisattva is residing and will eradicate nine billion karmic felonies for the ascended ones and help cease reincarnation. The conclusion reveals that continuation of the Buddha's teaching and the three approaches do help people achieve the true practical concept of birth and rebirth in the world of saṃsāra.

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Moral Law, Virtue & Moral Decency

Drawing upon insights from both Greek Orthodox moral theology as well as Anscombe's moral philosophy, this paper will examine the possible compatibility of deontology and virtue ethics in an attempt to lay the foundations of a Christian Ethics in which duty, sentimentality and self-transformation are all given due regard. In Greek Orthodox Christianity it is said that 'Law is the Schoolmaster of Virtue.' This statement implies that while the decalogue is indeed an important feature of the ethical life, to simply uphold the commandments dutifully without simultaneously experiencing an authentic transformation of one's desires and dispositions will not suffice if the ultimate telos is the transfiguration of both persons and the world in the image of a loving and benevolent God.

It will be argued that a deontological framework establishes the criteria for moral decency while a virtue-based framework establishes the criteria for moral goodness. If deontology is the schoolmaster of virtue, then it would seem that we need a solid understanding of moral psychology not only to establish the set of virtues we ought to endorse, as Anscombe has suggested, but also in order to establish a code of decency that will simultaneously be the most useful code to regulate immoral conduct as well as one that will be useful in cultivating virtuosity in those who abide by it. In Christian ethics this implies that the Divine Moral Laws are not "right" because they are divinely-commanded, but rather because they are the best instruments that persons can use to cultivate goodness in their lifetime. On this interpretation, Christian ethics is not a form of Divine-Command theory but is rather a Virtue ethics that also encompasses a pragmatically and pedagogically valuable deontology within its moral purview.

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Binationalism as Political Theology: Judah Leib Magnes & Martin Buber

During the 1930s and 1940s, American Reform Rabbi and Hebrew University administrator Judah Leib Magnes, and prominent Jewish thinker Martin Buber, were the leading proponents of a binational solution to the political situation in Palestine. On March 1946, Magnes and Buber testified together on behalf of Ihud in front of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, outlining their proposal. My aim in this paper is to reveal and contrast the theological underpinnings of the binational solution as proposed by Magnes and Buber, and to explore the possibility that their respective approaches to binationalism can be constructed as political theologies.

Buber was, from the 1920s, committed to a prophetic-moral solution to the conflict in Palestine. This coincided with his theopolitical understanding of Zionism as the political realization of the covenant between the God, the land and the people, and the "Arab Problem" as the moral-political acid test of Zionism. Nevertheless, there was an apparent lack of conviction in his relation to the binational cause, fueled by his aversion of excessive nationalism, statehood and politics at large. As for Judah Magnes, his binational program was the outcome of a pragmatistic American belief in the power of political structures and agreements to enforce political equality, together with a prophetic imperative and the centrality of reform ethical-monotheism in his religious worldview. For Magnes, binationalism offered a political program that was – in accordance with his religious conviction – genuinely committed to justice and morality.

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Whether 'Tis Nobler: The Relationship Between the Sanctity of Life and Suicide

Shakespeare asks us to consider whether it is morally permissible, even preferable, to end one's own life rather than suffer unbearably. Suicide has been popularly referred to as an "epidemic," a crisis to be solved. Yet many jurisdictions have chosen to pass "death with dignity" laws, based at least in part on the belief that people ought to have control over the shape and quality of their lives. This paper will explore the tension between those two ideas, with a particular focus on related religious questions. Research will draw from the body of scholarly literature as well as the presenter's own original research findings. Intended for a diverse audience, the work will provide a general understanding of legal and religious views on suicide, as well as offer suggestions for resolving the tension between the need to protect life and the need for mercy.

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Keywords: Catholic Education, Solidarity, Poor

Catholic Education in Solidary with the Poor

First, let us consider the thesis of Mary Perkins Ryan in her book: Are Parochial Schools the Answer? "In trying to provide a total Catholic Education for as many of our young people as possible, we have been neglecting to provide anything like an adequate religious formation for all those not in Catholic Schools, and we have been neglecting the religious formation of adults." Mrs. Ryan suggests that the resources of the Church could be better used where the public schools provide for general education. Then, let's modify Mrs. Ryan's thesis to establish my own which I summarize as follows:
"A preferential option for the poor" should be maintained in our Catholic Schools. If we find that we cannot afford to keep our schools open to the poor, the Church should be ready to use its resources for something else which can be kept open to the poor.
Practically speaking, the Catholic Schools must give up general education in those countries where the State is providing it. The resources of the Church could then be focused on "Confraternity of Christian Doctrine" and other programs which can be kept open to the poor. These resources could then be used to help society become more human in solidarity with the poor. Remember, the Church managed without Catholic Schools for centuries. It can get along without them today. The essential factor from the Christian point of view is to cultivate enough Faith to act in the Gospel Tradition, namely, THE POOR GET PRIORITY. The rich and middle-class are welcome too. But the poor come first.

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Keywords: God, Augustine, Hebrew, Human, Formed, Create, Soul, Image, Rashi, Breath, Significance

The Fingerprint of God

The author references rabbinical and Christian sages, interpreting the Hebrew text, to assert that humans have significance, and their animated, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual existence is more than arbitrary.

Looking at the narrative texts in Genesis regarding the beginning of humankind, emphasizing the possible intent of the ancient author, looking at the cultural nuance, and challenges that influenced the writings.

"In our image" is one Hebrew word betzalmeinu. The root is tzalam, and refers to the original image or imitation. In the ancient Near East, the ruling king was often described as the "image" or the "likeness" of a god which served to elevate the monarch above ordinary mortals. In the Bible, this idea became democratized. Every human being is created "in the image of God"; each bears the stamp of royalty. Thus, the description of mortals as "in the image of God" makes humankind the symbol of God's presence on earth.

The preamble "Let us make man" indicates that humans were created with great deliberation and, brought into being with the deepest involvement of divine providence and acumen, emphasizing human significance. If this is true, how should we live?

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Worship (Ibadat) in Nasir Khusraw's Doctrine

Nasir Khusraw (11 cent.) is one of the most bright and famous Ismaili philosophers. The research of his philosophical views is based on his treatises in Persian.

According to Islam, the aim of human's life is worshipping the God (ibadat). According to Nasir Khusraw's views, the worship consists of two parts: worship by action (amal) and worship by knowledge ('ilm). The first part, worship by action, deals with religious Islamic law, shariah, and it is external, formal part of worshiping. Every man should prefer good deeds and avoid bad deeds. Why is it so important to worship not only by action? Isn't it enough to follow the formal rules and practices of Islamic law? The idea of two-part worship goes back to meta categories of Arab-Muslim culture, a pair of "demonstrative - hidden" (zahir - batin). Only in connection these two parts can create the true, realistic thing. For example we can speak about "deed" (amal) as a union of opened, formal "action" (fi'l) and hidden, internal intent (niyya). Nasir Khusraw suggests the same way of understanding "worship" (ibadat). "Worship" is a union of visible, manifest deed (amal) and internal, hidden knowledge ('ilm).

As regards to the worship by knowledge, Nasir Khusraw says that human being is the only being, who possesses an intellect and is able to perceive the knowledge of the Revelation. This kind of worship is hidden, esoteric. First of all it is necessary to comprehend the rules of this physical world, and on the base of structure and interrelation of this material world we can construct spiritual world in our mind. It must be noted that only for Ismaili Imam whose family belongs to descendants of Prophet Muhammad and who possesses a specific kind of knowledge - knowledge supported by God.

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Paganism and Anti-Pagan Literature: Identity, Ethics, Memory

This research looks at anti-pagan literature of Medieval European countries and Russia. The goal is to show how interpretations of paganism made by the Christian authors were connected with religious and national identity-building process as well as moral education. This study draws upon mostly primary sources including homiletic works and chronicles of European and Russian authors from 6 to 14 A.D. both published and obtained from manuscripts collection of Russian National Museum, Russian State Library, Russian National Library and Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. With the examination of the texts, it becomes clear that the scribes observed 'national paganism' by the pattern of Biblical history – that's why pagan Slavic and German tribes 'became' literally Hebrews at the Exile or Egyptians. However that specific perception of history included the impressive ethic aspect – the 'heathen' image meant lechery, hard drinking, gluttony and other sins with 'pagan' roots. An analysis of the primary sources also shows that the purpose of their 'history' and moral regulations was to mark out new pure 'Christian people – our people' from 'pagan – aliens' regardless of their true nationality. The creation of this anti-pagan ideology coincided with the appearance of new states in Western and Eastern Europe at early middle ages. At the same time the research points out the evidences of compassionate and merciful feelings towards 'pagans' in such sort of literature. It means that one should not analyze it within the negative framework only because the perception of 'aliens' had a complex nature. Also through showing the peculiarities of medieval anti-pagan ideologies, this research highlights the broad, secondary and even artificial use of the term 'paganism' today.

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Just Pot Luck? Why Humans are Special

Recent discoveries in palaeoanthropology and paleogenetic, combined with positivist, reductionist methodology have greatly influenced the modern secular interpretation of humanity (MSIH). Humans are seen, not as fallen angels, but rising beasts (Peacocke). We have evolved using the same process as all other species and while today we are without contemporaries, we were not always alone in the world (van Huyssteen). Neanderthals, AI, and extra-terrestrials question our distinctiveness and with it our value. There is no set of characteristics that are distinctively human. All past candidates; rationality, morality, relationality etc. are actually and potentially present in other species. Our procession is simply a matter of degree, nothing more.

Human uniqueness is a key issue for Abrahamic religions. The imago Dei, the great bastion of human distinctiveness and the foundation of human rights, has been stormed by the bourgeoisie of secular intellectualism. Its faltering defences begs the question: if we are not unique can we argue that we have inalienable universal value and dignity?

This paper will critically explore two attempts in recent Christian theology to defend human uniqueness and dignity. The first, proposed by Morris, is a modified doctrine of election. Human beings, of all creatures, are elected as God's special representatives. The second is Kelsey's theory of the beloved: we have value, not because we are unique, but because of the unique ways we are loved by God.

Both models offer value yet present challenges. Since God has many beloved creatures, are we simply one of many? Why were we elected? Was it pot luck? And what about the concrete human beings with

which we are faced? Is our value purely eccentric or is there anything intrinsic to Homo sapiens? To address these challenges, this paper will present a limited number of theological desiderata.

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Saints and Selfies: Reclaiming Social Media for Interreligous Encounter & Combatting Hate Crimes in the United States

Meet the Neighbors is a hyperlocal interfaith project that maps out the religious landscape of the Inland Pacific Northwest, a region plagued with white supremacist enclaves.

This project utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, but is rooted in a qualitative epistemological position that recognizes the importance of locating the research within a particular social, cultural, and historical context. It also takes seriously the social construction of these contexts and the identities participants construct within them.

My research methodology requires gathering relevant data from the specified documents and compiling databases in order to analyze the material and arrive at a more complete understanding of hate crime responses that are conducive to governmental and law enforcement agencies, as well as not-for-profit organizations and religious communities. It is my hope to shed light on the following questions through my research: Can the use of technology, specifically social media lead to combat hate on and offline? Can social media facilitate accurate and respectful religious literacy education programs?

By using cutting-edge social media research, the project has led to a 45% decrease in hate crimes in the region as well as 47% increase in religious literacy in the general population. The project has the potential for replication and scalability for religious conflict zones around the globe.

Highlights of this session will include case studies of using social media to effectively to foster interreligious understanding and engagement on and offline as well as using social media to develop proactive and reactive responses to hate crimes.

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Tantra in the early Vishishta-advaita tradition (based on "Agamapramanya" of Yamunamuni)

We treat the term "tantra" as traditions, beliefs and ritual practices, which help a human being to discover a source of divine energy in himself and to get a final realization (moksha), and which are based on a certain type of texts (like tantras, samhitas, agamas etc). In this sense it's rather interesting to see what kind of religious practices and beliefs, named as a tantra, we have in the early period of vishishta-advaita-vedanta. That question becomes more interesting if we take into consideration that originally the main task of this philosophical system was to include some non-Vedic traditions (Pancaratra) into the orthodox Brahmanic tradition (Vedanta). The angiographics tells us that the last will of Yamunamuni (X century), who can be considered as a founder of philosophical system of vishishta-advaita-vedanta, was to ground the basic principles of this system with the help of philosophical argumentation (alongside elaboration and promotion Vishnu-beliefs) and thus to integrate some vernacular Vishnu cults into the philosophy of Vedanta. Taking into account this fact, it's rather interesting to see how Yamunamuni himself tried to

ground Pancaratra-tradition from the philosophical point of view in one of his works, named "Agamapramanya". Among his works this text is very significant, but in comparison with his other works (for example 'Siddhitraya') is less investigated. By the way we have only one valid English translation (with critical edition of its Sanskrit text) which was prepared by van Buitenen. But for the whole vishishta-advaita-vedanta tradition the text of "Agamapramanya" has a key role, because, as we know, Ramanuja doesn't concern at all about doctrines and religious practices of Pancaratra. Meanwhile we can find some agamic elements in his teaching (prapatti doctrine etc.). The paper deals with Yamunamuni's philosophical argumentation of the thesis that texts of Pancaratra Agama have the same authority as the texts of Vedas. It demands, however, a deep investigation of religious practices and beliefs of Pancaratra, some of them will be clarified in this paper.

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Islamic Studies

Islam is also a religion that claims the victory of mankind here and also in hereafter like other religions. Its study calls Islamic studies which consist on Faiths, worships and affairs.

Faith: This is the basic aspect of Islamic studies by which it explains to have faith on Almighty, angels, all sky's books, all messengers of Almighty, hereafter and every pain and peace comes from Almighty. So it is obligatory to be a Muslim to admit that; all prophets and books of all religions are true and exact in their respective limitations.

Worships: Its religious sense is to be submissive before God in every aspect of life, to attain this environment Muslim performs five times prays in a day, pays 2.5 percent of his total wealth per annum (Zakat),Fasting of one month in a year and pilgrimage minimum once in a life.

Affairs: Two kinds:

1. Islamic lawfully affairs: How we have to deal with ourselves and with mankind, it is categorically predicated in Islamic literature, which calls Islamic jurisprudence also. Its main sources are; 1, Holy Quran. 2, Hadith (saying of Holy Prophet PBUH). 3, Consuetude (Collection of Islamic scholar's consensus of opinions on any issue which is not categorically explained in Quran and Hadith). 4, Supposition (apply a rule on another same causes issue). These all are moving to protect the religion, life, honor, generation and property of a man and men. These are also the goals of Islamic law.

2. Cosmogonic affairs: How we have to deal with this cosmos; there are available some basic keys in Islamic studies to understand and utilize this universe.

Conclusion: In short a man can't satisfy in this world until he joins a religion, as others religions are satisfying their followers so Islamic study is also providing a complete satisfactory of its followers.

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Advaita Vedanta and Counselling for Women Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence: Impact on Women's Health

Violence has immediate effects on women's health, which in some cases, is fatal. Physical, mental and behavioural health consequences can also persist long after the violence has stopped. Violence against women and girls occurs in every country and culture and is rooted in social and cultural attitudes and norms that privilege men over women and boys over girls. intimate partner violence, dowry-related violence, forced and child marriage, femicide and the killing girls or women in the name of 'honour', and female infanticide and deliberate neglect of girls is most common violence in India society by the name of culture or social practices. The health consequences of violence can be immediate and acute, long-lasting and chronic, and/or fatal. Research consistently finds that the more severe the abuse, the greater its impact on women's physical and mental health. In addition, the negative health consequences can persist long after abuse has stopped.

This situation was never been part of Indian tradition. Women have been very honoured and treated equally in the Vedic society. There had been family and social responsibilities which were shared by both man and woman, but women were acknowledged for their great significant contribution in each Dharma and Ashramas. Post vedic period, women were put under rigorous norms of morality as compared to men and expected to follow it throughout their life failing in which attracted severe criticism and punishment. These inequality and violence in any form has been refused by traditional vedic schools of thought. Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati Ji, introduced many programs in order to reinstate traditional and cultural norms in Indian society today.

Present work shares the impact of arsha vidya counselling for women who has been victim of violence. We randomly allocated 102 women who were eligible for inclusion to either arsha vidya intervention or counselling by psychologist. We detected significant difference in quality of life, behaviour, physical health and mental health SF-12 at 3 months. For secondary outcomes, we detected significant between-group difference in anxiety at 3 months. Our findings can inform further research on spiritual counselling for women disclosing intimate partner violence in primary care settings. Our findings suggest that, on basis of improvement in quality of life, spiritual counselling can reduce anxiety, depression and distress.

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Globalization and Religious Changes in China — Global or Chinese Christianity

In the period of globalisation, we have witnessed the revival of Christianity in China over the last three decades. It is said that China will have the world largest Christian population by 2030. This is partly due to the result of fast but uneven economic growth and to the relaxation of tight religious policy during the reform period. This also reflects the growing interests in religion and spirituality throughout the profound changes of Chinese society. The nature and function of religion in society have been under speculation but have become an increasingly more vital and pervasive force in both personal and public life. This requires scholars to examine how Christianity has interacted with the Chinese social, political, cultural and educational spheres, and how its indigenization has taken place in China. Surprisingly, one half of China's current Protestants are estimated to belong to underground, illegal churches. China as a nation-state, however, is ruled by an officially atheistic Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The powerful party-state authority formed the united front with the religious community and has recognized 'official' and

'unofficial' Church. Such official divide is attributable to the debate about whether China is becoming 'Christianized' or the authority well protects the influence of foreign Christian groups and how 'Chinese Christianity' based on CCP authority is being established. The CCP seeks continued domination over society and Christianity is often seen to generate potential suspicion deriving from its western ideology of 'democracy' among political elites, and often traced back to the historic memories as foreign imperialists. The party-state authority continues to regulate all religions matters under the flag of socialism and patriotism. The rise of China as Christian country cannot be explained by single causal mechanism but be considered as complex, contradictory and more multi-dimensional social, political, cultural and educational changes. This paper discusses the changing nature of Christianity in contemporary China.

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A Case for Character Ethics in Job

Christian theologians often underscore humanity's incapacity for moral goodness; as Paul reminds his audience in Romans 3:10, "no one is righteous." Particularly in the Protestant tradition, the emphasis on "sola gratia" may tempt one towards moral laxity. If humans are incapable of moral goodness, why pursue such an endeavor? Talk of character is rare in contemporary public discourse, and, it seems, a number of societies are paying the price. In this paper, I argue that the Bible promotes something akin to "character ethics" and reveals that moral goodness is available to those who stand outside traditional faith communities.

The book of Job reveals an eminently virtuous individual who receives God's attention for his upright character. Job is a non-Israelite who lived before the formation of any specific Israelite covenantal traditions, yet moral goodness is attributed to this individual. The expectations of "living rightly" for Job, however, are expressed not in terms of Torah obedience, but in terms of virtue: wisdom, compassion, courage, righteousness, and justice.

Job, chapter 31, in particular, carefully details Job's integrity and provides a comprehensive picture of moral goodness for this "outsider." Drawing on an Aristotelian virtue ethics approach, I assess moral goodness in this text, which suggests that Job is responsible for and has direct agency over the shaping of his character. Biblical Hebrew does not have specific terms for "virtue," yet the idea resides in the metaphorical language of the "heart" and "eyes," evidenced in 31:1, 7, and 9. At the same time, and in departure from Aristotle, moral purity includes an intimate relationship with God, according to Job (31:26–27). My work on character ethics and Job stems from my monograph Friendship and Virtue Ethics in Job (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming, 2019). This study on Job 31 is not included in that work.

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Religious Conflict and Change in Appalachia as Microcosm of the Modernist controversy, or How Arminius Killed America

The southern and central portions of the Appalachian mountain region possesses a distinctive form of Protestant Christianity. Early white settlers, who displaced the indigenous peoples, brought with them

specific doctrines that were not universally approved of by the larger society. They then proceeded to blend and develop these into "Appalachian Christianity."

Their Calvinism and adamant adherence to congregational polity fostered a strong sense of community and dependence on the Divine. Key characteristics of this faith included a strong doctrine of the Holy Spirit, belief in the centrality of Grace, and an emphasis on the virtue of humility. These put them at odds with most of the rest of the nation when the pointedly Arminian second Great awakening swept through the new country.

The divide between the mountain religions and national society as well as among Appalachian churches manifested itself within the Baptist faith in the missionary crisis. Calvinistic congregations saw the attempt to win souls as bordering on blasphemous. In Appalachia the schism resulted in the creation of Free Will and Missionary Baptist sects on one hand and the Regular and Primitive on the other. [Primitive Baptists, as in original.]

The rift between the "traditional" churches and the "modern" national denominations grew in intensity. By the end of the century Home Missionaries were sent into the Appalachians in order to "Christianize" its inhabitants. Nearly every scholar of Religion in Appalachia writes of this move with disapproval. That disapproval may reflect more than defending against the ongoing attacks on the culture.

In Western culture individualism is raised to the point of idolatry, while the sense of community collapses. We may, or may not, need God to be good, but civilization cannot survive without community. Can more traditional religions bind us back together (re-ligare) and enable us to be a better people?