Chapter 1

Religious Violence: Story so far

From the times immemorial, human history is replete with instances of violence, be it killing of beasts or hostile enemies for self defence or killing of prey for survival. The cave paintings of the Upper Palaeolithic age with hunting scenes circa 13000 BC were discovered in Spain in 1879 and subsequently in other parts of Europe.¹ We also do not find any period in history or even in prehistory when man was without what we may call ‘religion’. The Neanderthal man, the forefather of our species Homo Sapiens, living some 230,000 to 30,000 years ago is found to have the burial after death as a common practice which is “one of the earliest indication of the arrival of religion”² in India the earliest recourse to religion is evidenced from a platform excavated from an upper Palaeolithic settlement at Baghor I (Sidhi district, Jharkahand) which is datable between 25,500 and 10,500 years ago.³ In the recent excavation at Göbekli Tepe in South East Turkey some 11600 years old, temple like structures, have been discovered.⁴ So we can not say with certainty since when religion has been there with our ancestors. Morton Smith said, “[t]he only thing history can tell us about the origin of religion is that it occurred in prehistoric times.”⁵

Now, the question arises that violence and religion being two parts of the social milieu of humanity from the very beginning, could they remain unaffected by each other and if no, what has been the nature of their relationship? Their intimate relationship is manifested in some of the creation myths of various civilizations (the

³ ibid.
word civilization is here and herein after is used in a relatively neutral form for any achieved social order or way of life\(^6\) in different parts of the world. The creation-myth in the Rig-Veda describes sacrifice of Purusha by cutting him into pieces by gods.\(^7\) In the Babylonian creation-myth, man is created from the blood of slain god Ea.\(^8\) One of the creation myths, of American Red Indians, ascribes creation to redistribution of parts from the body of a fallen giant.\(^9\) Joseph Campbell says that in the Chinese, Hindu, and Australian versions (of creation myths), it is the god who is divided, whereas in the Greek and Hebrew, man is split into two by a god.\(^10\) In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Abel, one of the two sons of the first couple of creation is slain by his jealous brother Cain as God did not accept his offering while accepting those of Abel.\(^11\) The phrase “religious violence” used in the title of this research work appears to indicate towards some complex relationship between religion and violence. Therefore, first of all we need to establish the terms of reference or a meaning of “religious violence,” one of the major concepts to be used in this research work but the word “meaning” itself is illusive as it may denote “meaning” in semantic sense, signification, connotation, extension, purpose, intention, motive, implication, quality and reason.”\(^12\) To be precise the word “meaning” will be used in the semantic sense only. First of all, attempt will be made to find whether the phrase “religious violence”

\(^{6}\) Raymond Williams. “Civilization.” Key Words: A vocabulary of culture and society by Raymond Williams. London: Fontana Press, 1988. 59, 57-60. Sometimes it used as a process for this see note 110 below; further, implied superiority of on civilization is visible in the usage as in Huntington at note 258 below.


has an established and well accepted single, definite meaning and if we get the reply
in affirmative then to ascertain what that meaning is. In case we get a negative reply,
then we will have to define it, so that the terms of reference for its use throughout this
work are established.

We do not find phrase “religious violence” as major entry in any of the
available dictionaries and encyclopaedias in English language. “The Penguin
Dictionary of Religions” (1995) and “The Wordsworth Dictionary of Beliefs &
Religions” (1995) do not contain this phrase and even “violence” is not a major entry
there, however, it finds mention in the entry “Ahimsa” in the sense of not-harming
not have entry “religious violence” but in addition to “Ahimsa”, it has entry with title
“Violence” in which it does not define the concept of violence except saying vaguely
“An aspect of human behaviour often bound up with emotions (especially anger),
which religions cannot ignore—and often express. Opinion is divided as to where
violence should be located along the nature-nurture spectrum. Those favouring natural
process or psychodynamic theory hold that religious activities reduce violence if they
function cathartically, but increase violence if they result in frustration. An additional
consideration is that religions often put ‘violence’ – if that is what it is – to religious
ends, example here being sacrifice, head hunting, many male rites of initiation, and
violence in religions are given but the connotations are not given at all. Mircea
Eliade’s “The Encyclopedia of Religion” does not contain any entry with title
“Religious Violence”, however, the entry titled: ‘Violence’ starts as follows,
“Violence may be religious in form, an end in itself, or a dramatic symbol. ... Violence as a means, may serve religious values. ... Limited mundane conflict may escalate into violence when the issues at stake are imbued with religious ultimacy. Violence may be rationalised by the perpetrator’s claim to have exhausted the alternatives of social negotiation.”\(^\text{15}\) However, the phrase “Religious Violence” finds mention when we read further “… Pope Innocent’s twelfth-century “crusade” against the Albigensians is a historical example of European religious violence.”\(^\text{16}\) But surprisingly, no effort is made to define “religious violence.” It is further told that the Albigensians were massacred ruthlessly as they were allegedly involved in incest and sodomy. The example of religious violence given in the above entry is violence by Christians against the Christian heretics and the writer appears to be oblivious of the violence caused by the earlier crusades against the Muslims in the holy land in which massacres of Jews, Muslims and even the Orthodox Christians were performed without any discrimination.\(^\text{17}\) The terms\(^\text{18}\) “violence”, “religion” and “religious violence” have been used so far as what Platvoet calls “diffuse and untidy prototypical.”\(^\text{19}\) We find that no definite and clear cut meaning of the phrase ‘religious violence” is available in the available lexicon.


\(^{16}\) Ibid.


\(^{18}\) Mark C. Taylor. Introduction. *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* Ed. Mark C. Taylor. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. 16, 1-19. The word “term” is derived from the Latin *terminus*, which means boundary or limit as the Roman god of boundaries was Terminus and his statue marked the limits ought not to be transgressed. As such terms, whether conceived in relation to space or time, “function as enabling constraints that simultaneously create possibilities and circumscribe the limits of exploration.”

\(^{19}\) Jan G. Platvoet. “Contexts, Concepts and Contests: Towards a Pragmatics of defining ‘Religion.’” Jan Platvoet and Arie L. Molendijk, eds. (1999), op. cit. fn. 4, 463-464, 463-515. By prototype Platvoet means, “a familiar word (a ‘folk’ concept, or ‘natural language’ category), of which the users of a language have acquired a pre-theoretical intuition of its broad meaning and range in the process of socialisation and language acquisition. That intuition provides them with a ‘feeling’ about how they may use it expertly and correctly in ordinary social communication.... Prototypical
Now, therefore, we examine the usage of this phrase to find how and in what sense this phrase has been used in the past. We find earliest available mention of this phrase in the title of a sermon: “The necessity of religious violence in order to obtain durable happiness” preached by Gilbert Tennent, A.M. and Minister of the Gospel at Perth Amboy (New-Brunswick), in New-Jersey (U.S.A.) on June 29, 1735. The said sermon is said to be “an evangelistic sermon that was designed to encourage people to press onward in the conversion process.” Surprisingly, phrase “Religious Violence” is used only in the titles of the sermon and that of the book containing the said sermon published in 1735 and throughout the sermon “violence” is used in the sense of struggle and striving fervently in seeking the blessings of God. Violence is used in the sense of a forceful struggle against inner and outer temptations and it is also prescribed to be used for praying to God “fervently, affectionately, believingly, argumentatively and importunately.” Here we find that the term was used in the sense of personal-individualistic pursuit towards God and there is nothing interpersonal; the audience were targeted for conversion to Christianity, though, references were made to metaphors of running, wrestling and fighting found in the New Testament.

The next available source of the usage of this phrase is the book titled “Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s De religione laici” (1944) which in its original form was a research work on an early seventeenth century deist, Edward Herbert, 1st Baron

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21 Ibid., 204.
22 Ibid., 353.
23 Ibid., 346.
Herbert of Cherbury, in candidacy for the doctoral degree at Yale University [1942]. We find mention of this phrase twice, first is “… It was, of course, comparatively easy to adopt a theoretic tolerance when Catholicism had no formidable rival within its domain, yet even the religious violence of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries knew some bounds.”24 The second time it is “…whereas the deistic movement must be regarded, in its inception, as a protest against all religious violence and as an attempt to find some practicable formula for bringing that violence to a close.”25 In the first instance it appears to be violence between the adherents of Catholicism and those of other sects of Christianity, however, in the second instance the phrase becomes very ambiguous as it may include ritual violence as well as intra as well as inter sect violence.

In the second half of the last century, the usage of this phrase is found not much in vogue however, we find that Mark Juergensmeyer used this phrase in the title of his article published in 1988.26 In the present century it has not only been used in the texts of the books but in the titles as well for example the sub title of Mark Juergensmeyer’s book “Terror in the Mind of God” is “The Global Rise of Religious Violence.”27 “Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence” by Charles Salengut,28 “Religious Violence between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives” Edited by Anna Sapir Abulafia (2002),29 “The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future” by Martha C. Nussbaum

25 Ibid. 61.
(2007),30 “Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: the case of Aum Shinrikyō” by Ian Reader (2000)31 to name a few. But in all these books we find that generally the term “religious violence” is used without making any effort to define it and we find at two places only what we may call the definitions of the phenomenon indicated by this phrase. First is given by Ian Reader when he says, “I am treating the Aum affair as a case of religious violence: a series of linked criminal acts, many of them producing or centred on violent behaviour, carried out by a religious movement and spurred by religious motifs and images.”32 The second is given by Gavin I. Langmuir in Anna Sapir Abulafia’s book when in his essay he defines it as “the excessive physical force on human beings, whether by societies or individuals, that is primarily motivated, and explicitly justified, by the established beliefs of their religion.”33 In the first case while giving definition, phrases like “criminal acts”, “violent behaviour” and “religious movements” are used but what they mean is not given which makes the definition vague hence its applicability to other cases of religious violence difficult. The second definition, limits violence to use of “excessive physical force,” here, the word “excessive” is left unspecified – open to assumptions and presumptions – also whether the implied function of the said “force” is to cause damage is not clear and, goods and property have been left out of it, all this makes the definition vague, further what the writer means by “religion” is also left unspecified which may lead to ambiguity. Therefore, we find that either the scholars leave the term “religious violence” undefined or they define it in the ways which make the meaning more

32 Ibid., 28.
ambiguous. From the above examples of usage, we find that although the usage gives
meaning, but usage may connote different things to different persons.

The analytical-descriptive definition may perhaps, help in defining “Religious
violence”, a phrase consisting of ‘religious’ – an adjective and ‘violence’ – an abstract
noun, before proceeding further. Here “violence” is being modified by “religious”
which if put before a noun means – connected with religion or with a particular
religion. Hence the dictionary meaning of the phrase ‘religious violence’ comes out
to be ‘violence pertaining to, or concerned or connected with religion or one particular
religion’. Again, we have two words, violence and religion which are to be defined so
that meaning of the complete phrase is made out.

Violence

The mere mention of the word “violence” may arouse imagery associated not
only with bestiality, bloodshed, brutality, brute force, cruelty, destructiveness, ferocity,
fierceness, fighting, force, frenzy, fury, murderousness, inflicting injury, pain and
harm, subjugation, injustice, exploitation, pillage, plundering, arson, rape, trauma etc.
but also that of challenging, thwarting, countering and/or making right any or all the
above phenomena. Violence may be related to the creation and perpetuation of an
exploitative and discriminatory socio-political order in the hands of the tyrant and the
same violence in the hands of a revolutionary and liberator may destroy such order.
The questions relating to: origin – whether in human nature or in the social conditions
or both or some where else or, nature – an outrage or a necessity, pathological or
voluntary, may not get definite answers. This ambivalence in the nature of violence

makes it not only one of the most enigmatic and at the same time most serious phenomena but also “one of the most elusive and most difficult concepts in the social sciences.” Violence is a complex human phenomenon which not only requires being defined appropriately with clear description but also explained, differentiated and assessed as it occurs in various contexts and socio-political environments and while doing so moral overtones can not be ignored. This phenomenon is part of almost daily headlines in media, whether print or electronic – it may be large scale damage caused by a suicide bomber, ongoing battle or riots in some part of the world. So, it may be perpetrated by an individual, a group or a state and may result into physical injury, death, damage to property, deprivations of different types – physical as well as well psychological. It may be result of action or sometimes of even inaction. Same act may have different reactions depending upon the perspective of the person involved, the most glaring example of such ambivalent reaction was terrorist attack on the U.S.A. on 11th September, 2001 when some people condemned it as a “barbarous violent assault” while others took it as a reaction to the United States’ own policy of violence. With progress in the modern system of legal provisions and increase in social sensitivity the things earlier considered normal are now treated as manifestations of violence – corporal punishment, domestic violence and sex without consent even in marital relations is termed as rape. The word “violence” is part of our daily discourse and here also excessive familiarity due to the “prototypical” use creates hindrance in the proper understanding of the concept as well as the

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37 Peter Imbusch (2003), op. cit. 13.
38 Wilhelm Heitmeyer and John Hagan (2003), op. cit. 5.
39 Sara Mills. Discourse. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007. 8-9. Sara Mills gives three contexts of usage of “discourse” i.e., culture theory, linguistics and critical discourse analysis/social psychology. In cultural theory under the influence of Foucault’s work, it is a general domain of the production and circulation of rule-governed statements. “Discourse” has been further defined in Chapter 4 of this work (see chapter notes 35 and 36 in that Chapter).
phenomenon it represents. Therefore, the first effort to be made is to define the concept and the starting point is etymology.

As per the Online Dictionary of Etymology this word is in vogue since the late 13th century in the sense of physical force used to inflict injury or damage and it originated from Anglo-French and Old French “violence” which came from the Latin violentia in the sense of vehemence, impetuosity which in turn originated from violentus “vehement, forcible,” probably related to violare (violation) and its usage in the weakened sense of “improper treatment” is attested from 1590s. It further says that ‘Violation’ is in vogue since “early 15century, from Latin violationem (nom. violatio) “an injury, irreverence,” from violatus, pp. of violare “to violate, treat with violence, outrage, dishonor,” perhaps related to vis "violence, strength." The Random House Dictionary of English Language & The American Heritage Dictionary link the etymology of “violence” to Latin root “vis” in the sense of “force” through Latin “violentus.” Burleigh Taylor Wilkins traces the etymology of this word to two Latin words, vis and latus which mean “force” and “carried” respectively [as latus is past participle of the word ‘fero’ – to carry] respectively and from this he concludes that violence is “force plus something else, and this something else has to do with the way that force is carried out or applied. Violence violates necessarily, while force does not, at least not necessarily.” Actually, the word “violation” has the very same etymological root which suggests the idea that violence is violation of something. The etymology indicates two

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44 Newton Garver. (2009), op. cit. 171.
possible roots – one in the sense of application of force and the second in the sense of violation which have been basis of how the concept has been defined.

    Peter Imbusch says that violence in the sense of “violentia” was first codified in the late sixteenth century in Austrian municipal law and was defined as “existing in every legally unjustified violation of another person’s body and possessions.” But the concept has been used in the senses other than the above also, such as violence by the state or “progressive violence” a term coined by Robespierre for use “explicitly towards the achievement of particular political goals” or in the sense used by Sorel when he said, “Sometimes the terms force and violence are used in speaking of acts of authority, sometimes in speaking of acts of revolt. It is obvious that the two cases give rise to very different consequences. I think it would be better to adopt terminology which would give rise to no ambiguity, and that term violence should be employed only for acts of revolt.”

    The Random House Dictionary of English Language, while giving one of the widest range of meanings of the word “violence” gives the following usages: 1. swift and intense force: “the violence of a storm”; 2. rough or injurious physical force: “to die by violence”; 3. an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power, as against rights, laws etc.: “to take over a government by violence”; 4. a violent act or proceeding; 5. rough immoderate vehemence, as of feeling or language: “the violence of his hatred”; and 6. injury, as from distortion of meaning or fact: “to do violence to a translation.” Other dictionaries of English language follow suit with some variations such as is evident from the following meanings given among others in The

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45 Peter Imbusch (2003), op. cit. 16.
American Heritage Dictionary: 1. Physical force exerted for purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing: *crime of violence*. 2. An act or instance of violent action or behaviour. 4. The abusive or unjust exercise of power;\(^{49}\) in The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: 1. *violence* (against somebody) violent behaviour that is intended to hurt or kill somebody: crimes / acts / threats of violence;\(^{50}\) and by Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: 1. behaviour that is intended to hurt other people physically.\(^{51}\) If the figurative meanings and those relating to natural forces are left apart and our concern remains with the human actor(s) only, we can enumerate meanings of “violence” in the sense of unjust or unwarranted, illegal, rough or injurious physical force/ force or power exerted for purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing rights of persons or things; it is an act or instance of violent action or behaviour or proceeding (against somebody) that is intended to hurt other people physically or kill somebody: crimes / acts / threats of violence – again we find the two strands of acts of force and acts of violation and a third one in their synthesis.

Though some words like rough, unjust, illegal, crime and rights can be understood in their prototypical senses, however, some concepts such as force and power with some additional concepts such as conflict, coercion and aggression need to be defined and differentiated from violence before we proceed further.

Wolf defines force as “the ability to work some change in the world by expenditure of physical effort,”\(^{52}\) but it is also used in different senses: capacity to do work or cause change; strength and power or power made operative against resistance.\(^{53}\) Weber quotes Trotsky – “Every state is founded on force” and then says,

\(^{49}\) “Violence”: The American Heritage Dictionary. 1350.
“state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory.” Audi says that force is there when one gets someone to do or abstain from doing something and while comparing violence with force, terror, brutality, cruelty, aggression and political oppression, he says that force can be used without violence or even threat of violence – to force someone to pay debt by selling something when his salary is attached; another example is blackmail which may not involve violence. Therefore, force is the capacity to bring change in the other people’s behaviour even without their willingness and in this way it comes closure to power and authority. Power is defined as the ability or capacity to act or perform effectively. Weber defines power as “... every chance of getting one’s way within a social relationship, including against resistance, no matter what this chance is based upon... All a person’s conceivable qualities and conceivable combinations of factors can put someone on a position to get their way in a given situation.” Where force involves physical efforts, power may or may not involve physical efforts and it leads to the question of means or ways. Violence is by no means the only way of getting one’s will, but it is one of the ways and as calculated force, violence becomes a very effective way of exercising power because it enforces obedience directly and overcomes resistance. But at the same time, instead of compliance, it may lead to defiance and confrontation also.

Using the conceptual framework developed by Weber, Wolf says that power is the ability (of a person, a group or institution) to make and enforce decisions whereas,

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56 “Power”: The American Heritage Dictionary. 971.

57 Peter Imbusch. (2003), op. cit. 18.

58 Ibid.
authority is not ability but a right – right to command making imperative the right to be obeyed.\textsuperscript{59} Regarding source of power there is an oft repeated dictum of Mao Tsetung: “Power grows out of the barrel of a gun” but Arendt says that the role of violence in history is secondary, first come the inner contradictions of a society and power comes from the role of ruling class in the process of production.\textsuperscript{60} But all claims to authority can not be justified and authority has to be converted into compliance otherwise, it is no authority, therefore, two more concepts are there – \textit{de facto} (Latin – “according to the fact”\textsuperscript{61}) and \textit{de jure} (Latin – “according to law, by right”\textsuperscript{62}). De facto authority is “\textit{the ability to get one’s authority claims accepted by those against whom they are asserted} [whereas] ‘\textit{De jure} authority’ then will refer to \textit{the right to command and to be obeyed}.”\textsuperscript{63} Therefore, de facto authority is derived from de jure authority which is primary, de facto authority is nothing but a form of power, by which its possessor can enforce his decisions. Wolf defines violence as, “\textit{the illegitimate or unauthorised use of force to effect decisions against the will or desire of others.”} \textsuperscript{64} Here he keeps the use of force by authorities out; however, subsequently he breaks the myth of legitimate authority’s right to use force.\textsuperscript{65}

Conflicts has been defined as the social facts involving two or more parties who have different social positions and/or interests whereas violence in itself not being a conflict can be just an indication of conflict, for it can be either merely a trait of conflict or a form of conflict resolution, but not the only one.\textsuperscript{66} Social coercion aims at “social control of people by people” and being a device of control, it becomes

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\textsuperscript{59} Robert Paul Wolf. (2009), op. cit. 52.
\textsuperscript{61} “\textit{de facto}” The American Heritage Dictionary. 374.
\textsuperscript{62} “\textit{de jure}” The American Heritage Dictionary. 377.
\textsuperscript{63} Robert Paul Wolf (2009), op. cit. 53.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 55.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 63.
\textsuperscript{66} Peter Imbusch (2003), op. cit. 18.
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identical to exercising power, but violence is not its necessary part as in the strict sense it may “be understood to mean the threat of physical assault or a particular means of enforcing compliance” which can be termed as the initial stage of violence where “perceived threat or pressure suffices to achieve particular behaviour, and actual violence is not required,” however, where social coercion turns into compulsion and hindrance in the natural development of achievement of goals by individuals, it becomes what Galtung calls structural violence which we discuss in a next part.67 Aggression, a term derived from psychology, is defined as a manifest action the aim of which is to cause physical or psychological damage; however, it may also “denote a latent potential or disposition to such an action or such behaviour.”68 From the above discussion we find that though, violence is distinct from all the above said concepts, its relationship with them is complex and mutually aggrandising and in the words of Arendt we can says that all these words indicate the means by “which man rules over man; they are held to be synonymous because they have the same function.”69

Now we take some of the definitions of violence given by various scholars involving “force” as well as “violation.” Heinrich Popitz says that violence is an act of power “leading to intentional physical injury of another, regardless of whether its purpose for the agent is actually in carrying it out (purely to demonstrate power) or whether the action is intended to be translated into threats and lead to lasting subjugation (as binding power).”70 Wolin says that violence implies application of intensified power over unwilling subjects, unpredictably and with unusual amount of

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Hennah Arendt (1970), op. cit. 43.
70 Peter Imbusch (2003), op. cit. 17-18
destruction.\textsuperscript{71} He further says that the new scientific weapons of destruction have increased the intensity of violence whereas, tolerance for violence has drastically decreased.\textsuperscript{72}

Audi defines violence as “the physical attack upon, or the vigorous physical abuse of, or vigorous physical struggle against, a person or animal; or the highly vigorous psychological abuse of, or the sharp, caustic psychological attack upon, a person or animal; or the highly vigorous, or incendiary, or malicious and vigorous, destruction or damage of property or potential property.”\textsuperscript{73} He further elaborates (physical) ‘vigorous abuse’ of a person as – “very rough treatment, especially shoving, punching, dragging, slapping, stabbing, slashing, trampling, crushing, burning, and shooting” and in the psychological abuse he includes the psychological counterpart of these abuses which may be accompanied by “sharp tones, screams, insults, threats, nonverbal threatening gestures and written words.”\textsuperscript{74} Audi attempts to segregate violence and cruelty and says that violence may not be cruel, and there can be some instances of cruelty, such as deprivation of food, that may not be violent, however, he concludes that in the vast majority of clear cases of violence there is some cruelty, which implies that all cases of violence are at least potentially cruel but vice versa may not be true.\textsuperscript{75} At another place Audi says – to say what violence really is, not merely to give a psychological account of its causes, its effects, and the typical details of its occurrence, but includes the philosophical task of its conceptual analysis also.\textsuperscript{76}

Newton Garver, defining violence said, “The idea of violence in human affairs is much more closely connected with the idea of violation, than it is with the idea of

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{73} Robert Audi, op. cit. 143.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 143-144.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 150.
force. What is fundamental about violence in human affairs is that a person is violated;” and violation of a person is through the violation of the rights a person has to his body, dignity or autonomy.\textsuperscript{77} He classified violence into four kinds – personal (mugging, rape, murder) or institutionalized (corporal punishment of children, ordinary police activity, war, riots, slavery, colonial oppression, life in ghettos) and whether the violence is overt (mugging, rape, murder) or a kind of covert or quiet violence (psychological – loss of autonomy due to threat of overt physical violence, terror, manipulations, degradation and Freudian rebuff, slavery, colonization).\textsuperscript{78} Garver says that the institutional form of quiet ‘violence operates when there is depravity “without any individual act being violent in itself or any individual decision being responsible for the system.”\textsuperscript{79} Bufacchi says that any act can be said to be violating someone’s rights which makes violence “ubiquitous and therefore meaningless” and he quotes Joseph Betz who said, “If violence is violating a person or a person’s rights, then every social wrong is a violent one, every crime against another a violent crime, every sin against one’s neighbour an act of violence.”\textsuperscript{80}

In a similar vein and almost at the same time when Garver was defining violence as institutional, Johan Galtung came out with his concept of structural violence and said, “violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.”\textsuperscript{81} In other words, Violence is defined as the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is or that “which increases the distance between the potential and the actual and that which

\textsuperscript{77} Newton Garver (2009), op. cit. 172.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 172-179.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 180.
impedes the decrease of this distance.”

It is not that he confined violence to structural violence only, he gave typology of violence as such which can be intended or unintended and manifest or latent and has mainly two types i.e., personal and structural each of which could be physical or psychological and with or without object. In his subsequent essay Galtung put forward the concept of cultural violence which he defines as “those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence.” But he warns that only certain aspects of a culture can be examples of violence and the culture as such can not be termed as violent. Using the geometric imagery, he calls direct-structural-cultural violence as three corners of or top to down strata in the vicious triangle of violence in which direct violence is an event; structural violence is a process with ups and downs; cultural violence is an invariant, remaining essentially the same for long periods, given the slow transformations of basic culture. Here it becomes imperative to define culture, Galtung indicates that culture is dynamic, C. W. Watson gives a very comprehensive definition of culture as “a process of constant adaptation of people to historical circumstances which requires them, as a condition of their own survival, to engage sympathetically with new ways of understanding the world and responding to it.”

Galtung says that direct and structural violence create needs-deficits, the sudden happening of which generates trauma even in a group or a collectivity and can sediment into the collective subconscious and become raw material for major

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82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., 85
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid. 43.
historical processes and events because ‘violence breeds violence’. Violence is needs-deprivation which may generate varied reaction – direct violence or a feeling of hopelessness, a deprivation/frustration syndrome that shows up on the inside as self directed aggression and on the outside as apathy and withdrawal. Galtung’s concept has been criticised as somatic or mental incapacitation can be caused by excessive exertion or by intake of a drug which can not be termed as violence. He bases his theory on some sort of hurt or injury caused by personal/direct and structural violence but the type of harm and the conditions of its production are very different. Social injustice (i.e., ‘structural violence) and restricted violence within, or between, communities are matters for moral concern but the ways in which each relates to morality seems to be different; Coady says that on the whole, the allegation that some procedure or activity is unjust is a more appropriate moral condemnation than the criticism that it is violent. Galtung or Garver were not first to come out with institutionalised or structural violence, Plutarch made a point that a person who could save another from death but did not is as guilty as the murderer. Engels had similar feelings in his mind when he wrote:

> When one individual inflicts bodily injury upon another such injury that death results, we call the deed manslaughter; when the assailant knew in advance that the injury would be fatal, we call his deed murder. But when society places hundreds of proletarians in such a position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death, one which is quite as much a death by violence as that by the sword or bullet; when it deprives thousands of the necessaries of life, places them under conditions in which they cannot live –

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90 Ibid., 253-254
forces them, through the strong arm of the law, to remain in such conditions until that death ensues which is the inevitable consequence – knows that these thousands of victims must perish, and yet permits these conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual; disguised, malicious murder, murder against which none can defend himself, which does not seem what it is, because no man sees the murderer, because the death of the victim seems a natural one, since the offence is more one of omission than of commission. But murder it remains.  

John Harris says that deaths caused by the indifference and neglect of society or its rulers must be seen as being as much a part of human violence as the violent acts of revolutionaries. He defines violence when he says, “an act of violence occurs when injury or suffering is inflicted upon a person or persons by an agent who knows (or ought reasonably to have known), that his actions would result in the harm in question.” Here action includes both commission as well as omissions which Jeremy Bentham had more appropriately called “negative actions.” Coady says that Harris is not only interested in extending the notion of violence; more generally, he does not want to include any reference to the manner in which harm or injury is done, other than its being done knowingly.

Jamil Salmi says violence [is]... any avoidable action that constitutes a violation of a human right, in its widest meaning, or which prevents the fulfilment of

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93 John Harris (2009), op. cit. 185.


95 John Harris (2009), op. cit. 189.

96 C.A.J. Coady (2009), op. cit. 252.
a basic human need. Salmi gives four main analytical categories with further various forms:

1. Direct violence i.e., deliberate injury to the integrity of human life – a) Homicide which includes genocide, massacre and murder; b) brutal acts which include torture, rape and maltreatment; c) restrictions or physical constraints which include forced removal of population, kidnapping, taking of hostages, imprisonment and forced labour.

2. Indirect violence i.e., indirect violation of the rights to survival – a) violence by omission (non-assistance of human beings in danger; non-satisfaction of vital material needs) which includes lack of protection against social violence (hunger, disease, poverty), lack of protections against accidents, lack of protection against natural violence (hurricanes, earthquakes); b) mediated violence (dangerous modifications of natural and social environment).

3. Repressive violence i.e., deprivation of fundamental rights – social rights (trade unionism, social equality, participation in social and economic life, and, protection of material individual and, collective property), civil rights (protection from state) and political rights (democratic participation in political life).

4. Alienating violence i.e., deprivation of higher rights – a) alienating living conditions (at work, home, school); b) social ostracism (hostility against certain members and groups of society: for example, women, old people, gay people, immigrants, ethnic groups, carriers of Aids virus) and c) ethnocide which he defines as “the policies or actions that significantly alter the

prevailing material or social conditions under which the cultural identity of a

group of people, or of whole community, is guaranteed.”

Hannah Arendt in her book, On Violence says that violence has remained “the
final merciless arbiter in international disputes” since time immemorial but now it has
lost much of its effectiveness and all of its glamour because its implements (weapons)
on which it always depended have developed to such an extent (of destruction
capacity) that single use some of them will leave no second chance for humanity. This destructiveness has reversed the Clausewitzian dictum that war is “the
continuation of politics by other means” to peace is the continuation of war by other
means. “Violence”, Arendt says, “is distinguished by its instrumental character.
Phenomenologically, it is close to strength, since the implements of violence, like all
other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength until,
in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it.” For Arendt, individual is never successful in inflicting violence, it is a function of collectivity as
she says, “single men without others to support them never have enough power to use
violence successfully.” In contemporary world, a single suicide bomber may rip off lives of a large number people, but still he has backing of some terrorist organisation
that sponsors such attack.

From the above discussion we find that violence is an ambivalent phenomenon,
because the same acts can have different consequences in different social contexts and
political systems. Violence is said to be negative where it involves the destruction of
human beings and humanity; it may be; positive where the focus is on the
preservation or restoration of humanity. Both the destruction of order and the creation

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98 Ibid., 312-18.
99 Hennah Arendt (1970), op. cit. 3-4.
100 Ibid., 9.
101 Ibid., 46.
102 Ibid., 50-51.
of order can involve violence.\textsuperscript{103} But the fact remains that either way it has to damage or kill somebody, so the point is from whose point of view it is being defined. As most of the times, parties on the both sides have some points which they try to justify; can there be a third agency, an unbiased observer, who can define violence? Arendt says that violence by nature is instrumental and like all other means, “it always stands in need of guidance and justification through the ends it pursues.”\textsuperscript{104} So, there is always a question – whether violence in particular context is justified? Arendt has her answer which split the question into that of legitimacy and justification as she says that legitimacy appeals to the past, while justification is for an end that lies in the future and “violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate.”\textsuperscript{105} Arendt provides a very sharp insight into the whole phenomenon of violence when she says: “Violence does not promote causes, neither history nor revolution, neither progress nor reaction; but it can serve to dramatize grievances and bring them to public attention.”\textsuperscript{106} Arendt is not in favour of the use of violence as she says that the “practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world.”\textsuperscript{107} Though, violence is not desirable still it gives some outlet, some sense of performing some special act to the masses who are otherwise frustrated, Arendt says, “much of the present glorification of violence is caused by severe frustration of the faculty of action in the modern world. It is simply true that riots in ghettos and rebellions on the campuses make “people feel they are acting together in a way that they rarely can”.” \textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{103} Wilhelm Heitmeyer and John Hagan (2003), op. cit. 6.
\textsuperscript{104} Hennah Arendt (1970), op. cit. 51.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 52.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 80.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid. 83.
From the above, it can be said that we can not have a monolithic concept of violence with a clear cut single meaning, as it is having many intermingled strands. Its ends are also equally varied ranging from preventing power from slipping from the hands by the people in authority to giving vent to frustrations of and feeling of working in concert to the underdog as well as attracting attention towards their grievances. Imbusch gives seven strands of the definition of violence by proposing seven questions to be asked\(^\text{109}\) which are discussed as below:

1. *Who* exercises violence – the subject or perpetrators as agents whether they are individuals, groups, institutions or structures. Collective violence is more or less planned clash and in case of institutions and organizations one sided enforcement is attempted with coercion.

2. *What* happens when violence is exercised i.e., phenomenology of violence or its effects such as injury, harm or other effects on people and/or objects on the basis of its spread, scale and intensity, here comes the role of third parties (society, its institutions, elites or other circle) as to whether they are abetters, hinderers or uninterested.

3. *How* violence is exercised i.e., the ways in which violence is exercised which includes the means as well as circumstances and whether the means are physical, psychological, symbolic or communicative. Imbusch says that culture and civilization have greatly increased the potential for violence, their artefacts and institutions make violence more effective and they provide reasons and justification for their use; however, in the later part of his article he says that during the process of civilization through which human beings

\(^{109}\) Peter Imbusch (2003), op. cit. 20-22.
became cultural beings, “means and ways of stemming down violence and preventing it from becoming endemic” were found in the long run.\footnote{Ibid., 35.}

4. *Who* are the objects of violence i.e., the victims and whether they are people or objects. The victim’s side is also important as the victory of one is the suffering or/and death of the other.

5. *Why* it is exercised i.e., causes and reasons such as interests, possibilities and contingencies, and the forms of its justification, interestingly, violence can be an end in itself – it may occur irrationally, without any purpose.

6. *Why* or for what goals and motives it is exercised i.e., whether: it is situational and thus unique or rational as a means to an end, or it has expressive and communicative dimensions? There are three types of factors – a) interests as they always give violence a purposive character and justification; b) possibilities of the chances and options to use violence; c) contingencies to know the risk and danger potentials; these factors are to be differentiated to explain violence.

7. *Why* it is exercised i.e., what is its justification or whether it is deviating from or corresponding to norms that is to say whether it is legal or illegal, or legitimate or illegitimate, but all this depend upon prevailing norms of a given society.

So far we have discussed the concept of violence as delineated by various scholars with the various elements thereof. On the one hand we have a) agents (subjects), b) what happens – injury, harm or other effects (phenomenology), c) means and circumstances (ways in which violence is exercised), d) victims (objects), e) interests, possibilities and contingencies (causes and reasons), f) goals and motives
(degrees of expedience) and, g) deviating from or corresponding to norms (models of justification); and on the other hand we have different levels of violence which have abstract or metaphorical use of word violence suggesting power or superiority of forces of nature, emotions or impressions and ritualised violence (fencing or *gatka* in Sikhism), communicative forms such as shouting, abusing, offending, slandering, libelling, discrediting, belittling etc.\(^{111}\) and symbolic violence (annual killing and burning of *Ravana* on the festival of Dusahira in Hinduism) at the other end. Some times violence acts as discourse as in the case of natives in a colonial system, best depicted by Fanon, and by state as well as by the rebels, as delineated by Birinder Pal Singh.\(^{112}\) However, the central place/space is held by what has been termed as the violence “proper,” the various forms depending on the perpetrators – direct violence via agents who may be individuals or groups or, institutional violence via institutions or, structural violence via structures and all these being legitimised, interpreted/misinterpreted, obscured or made invisible by cultural violence are object related and main forms are physical or psychological. Whereas, direct violence may be against people or objects and can be open and visible or concealed, institutional violence is more concerned with legal-illegal and legitimate-illegitimate and it may be progressive or reactionary. The structural violence may be sometimes without object and can be open and visible or concealed.\(^{113}\) Violence may be manifested in any of the myriad forms mentioned above and at many times, shades of two or more forms may present a more complex picture. Violence is not something that just happens but it is

\(^{111}\) Ibid., 25.
\(^{113}\) Peter Imbusch (2003), op. cit. 26.
something that people do and do within a social context.\textsuperscript{114} This is how we can define violence as any definition with a single aspect may not do justice to it.

\textbf{Religion}

Religion is the second concept to be defined to arrive at the meaning of the phrase “religious violence.” But the task is again not very easy as Jacques Derrida termed ‘religion’ as “the clearest and most obscure single word.”\textsuperscript{115} In similar vein Professor John Bowker says, “A strange thing about religion is that we all know what it is until someone asks us to tell them.”\textsuperscript{116} Hent de Vries calls it:

\begin{quote}
“a phenomenon or set(s) of phenomena whose elements and forms in– and for – the twenty-first century seem, paradoxically, both more prominent and less identifiable, let alone totalizable, than ever before. In recent years, “religion” has attracted increasing attention and acquired unceasingly political weight in modern Western and non-Western democracies.... Yet it is less and less apparent what, exactly, “religion” is about, just as it is far from clear what makes it tick, how it operates, where it is headed, and who (at least rhetorically) endorses or (also financially) sponsors it, for whatever reasons, and with which (unintended) consequences for all directly and indirectly affected.”\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

It appears that to define what religion is to remove the opaqueness hinted at by Vries. However, Andrew Lang gave the following advice: “No attempt to define the word is likely to be quite satisfactory, but almost any definition may serve the purpose of an argument, if the writer who employs it states his meaning frankly and adheres to

\textsuperscript{114} Vittorio Bufacchi (2007), op. cit. 33.
it steadfastly.” 118 But how anyone can give ‘any’ definition until unless the definiendum is clearly identified and demarcated, moreover correctness and appropriateness matters more than the frankness in defining any concept or phenomenon. Perhaps that is why Max Weber said that “[t]o define “religion,” to say what it is, is not possible at the start of a presentation...[d]efinition can be attempted, if at all, only at the conclusion of a study,”119 it is another matter that when he reached the conclusion, he left this task untouched. There is another problem, as some ancient and modern philosophers and scholars consider religion as not a normal human phenomenon but a disease, as Empedocles in fifth century B.C.E. called it “a sickness of mind”, Herakleitos in 6th century B.C.E. called it a sacred disease.120 In 1927, Sigmund Freud defined religion as the “universal obsessional neurosis of humanity” which was destined to be eliminated as the humanity matures.121 Feuerbach said that there was nothing divine in religion as “[t]he essence of religion is the immediate, involuntary, unconscious contemplation of human nature as another, a distinct nature. But when this projected image of human nature is made object of reflection of theology, it becomes inexhaustible mine of falsehoods, illusions, contradictions and sophism.”122 Karl Marx called it as a means of exploitation and justification for status quo and he wrote “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.”123 In all these cases what have been called definitions are nothing more than particular

120 Quoted in S. Deshmukh (1998), op. cit. 5-6.
functions or effects as visualised by the particular philosophers. Moreover, despite these negative epithets religions is still there and in our study it is linked with violence as well as dialogue i.e., the problem as well as one of the probable solutions. Therefore, we can not proceed further before attempting to define religion.

“Religion” as a word referring to a system or phenomenon is a Western\(^\text{124}\) construct and many scholars have reservations to apply this word universally as in the Western societies, prior to its distinctive modern uses, it was employed to refer to a particular virtue of rendering due service and obedience to God, the actions and attitudes directed to were thought of as being of a different kind from those towards worldly or ‘secular’ things and it is from here originated the idea of separateness of religion in human life which influences the modern uses of ‘religion’ but it is “an idea doomed to be disappointed and to mislead in study of many non-Western societies.”\(^\text{125}\) It is pertinent to mention here that in respect of the eastern societies including those of India, it is said that there is/are no such word(s) that can represent what in English is known as “religion” however, in Indian tradition, the most appropriate word and nearest in meaning appears to be “Dharma”\(^\text{126}\) which is derived from the Sanskrit root \textit{dhr} meaning to “sustain, support, uphold” in the sense of truth, ceremonial or traditional, moral obligation, ethical and legal; it has been used in the sense of the divine law of maintaining cosmic harmony, where all things and persons

\(^{124}\) Raymond Williams. “Western.” Raymond Williams (1988), op. cit. 333-34. The terms “Western” or “the West” have frequently been used in the international political description however, their current usage and meaning got finalised in the post World-War II period as the free-enterprise or capitalist societies were differentiated from the socialist or “closed” economies. Now, these terms are used for the United States (being in hegemonic position) and its allies (countries like the United Kingdom, France, and Germany etc.) from the Western Europe. Some people take them as misnomers, but accepting their usage, we will use these terms to refer to conglomeration of these countries as the poor or non-hegemonic states, though being in the west, have another tag – “South” in North-South nomenclature representing the dichotomy of the rich and the poor. The division of the world on religion based civilizational fault lines will be taken in the end of this chapter while discussing the thesis of the clash of civilizations propounded by Samuel Huntington.


\(^{126}\) S. Deshmukh (1998), op. cit. 20.
have proper place and function. Derra (way) was another Sanskrit word close to Dharma. Derrida says that these traditions did not separate the religious from the mundane aspects of social life whereas in the Roman-Judeo-Christian traditions there is “a sharpened specificity of the concept of religion.” Though, there may be separation of sacred and profane in the occident, however, four goals of life in Hinduism are Dharma (life lived according to truth and customary laws), Artha (economic activities of the householder), Kama (pleasure and desire) and, Moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death) which show that there has been some segregation. But in all these traditions also, the term “religion” is mainly used whenever, the communication is in English language.

Jonathan Z. Smith says that the etymology of “religion” is uncertain although he gives three possible roots i.e., “to bind”, “to reread” or “to be careful” and, Jacques Derrida while exploring what he says is the “problematic etymology” of the word religion from its Latin root, ‘religio’ gives two possible etymological sources of the word religio: (a) religere, from legere (‘harvest, gather and (b) religare, from ligare (‘to tie, bind) and the Online Etymology Dictionary tracing its origin to circa 1200 from Anglo-French Religium (11century), from Old French religion “religious community” from Latin religionem (nominative Religio) gives three roots, the first root is ascribed to Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43BCE) according to whom religio was derived from relegere “go through again, read again,” from re- “again”
+ legere “read” originally “to gather, collect, pick out, choose” from Proto-Indo-European leg- “to pick together, gather, collect”, the second and more popular etymology originated from the Christian scholars such as Tertullian [c. 160 – c. 220 CE] and Lactantius [c. 240 – C.320 CE] which connects it with religare “to bind fast” from the root leig meaning to “bind”, via notion of “place an obligation on,” or “bond between humans and gods,” and the third possible origin is from religiens meaning to be “careful,” and which is opposite of negligens.134

The pre-Christian relegere used by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43BCE) refers to “repetitive veneration practices typical of his Roman religion” whereas, religare used by the Christian theologians of the early centuries indicated that “there is a close tie between God and humankind.”135 Platvoet says that in the early period of Christianity, it was severely persecuted by the Roman state as a superstition (superstitio) but the early Christians also coined certain vocabulary such as “our Christian way of worship” (nostra religio Christiana) and termed their cultus dei (worship of God) as religio vera (true worship) and the equated the cultus deorum of Roman state with false rituals (religiones falsae), therefore, in Latin Patristic Christianity religio remained “a concept of confrontation” instead of becoming the central concept of self understanding and its meaning remained confined to cultus (worship); he refers to Lactantius as having said that the true worship was instituted by God and given to man by Christ as “‘bond of piety’ – by which God had bound man to himself” and this inward attitude of ‘piety due to God’ was on “the grounds of justice.”136 Though, the etymology of the word ‘religion’ is really problematic as it dose not lead to any conclusion or helps in “understanding the modern meaning of

religion as a technical term applicable to all religious traditions...”\textsuperscript{137} however, the confrontationist nature of religio and its relation to identity formation is indicated.

E. Feil, a German scholar says that even the Christians of ancient and medieval times did not speak of their religion in terms of ‘religio’ which was used in the sense of “the basically concrete character of the meticulousness of [cultic] action in respect of God”\textsuperscript{138} and rather used terms like “fides (belief), secta (line to be followed) or lex (law).”\textsuperscript{139} He also said that between 1550 and 1650 religio started being used in the modern sense.\textsuperscript{140} The process of globalisation initiated by colonisation\textsuperscript{141} in of the large parts of this earth in the medieval period by the Europeans having Christianity (whether denominated by Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Calvinist or Lutheran or any other sect) as the dominant religion accelerated the world-wide spread of the usage of the term “religion”. The first reaction of the European colonisers about the natives was that they did not have any “religion” however, subsequent observation of native practices and then interaction leading to comparison of the same with Christian religion and practices lead to imposition of the same terminology on the native cultures. Instead of trying to know the native nomenclature (if it was there at all), the colonialists imposed the category “religion” on some aspects of the native cultures as they perceived some natural, universal characteristics to construct a generic category which instead of being theological was anthropological and which described human thoughts and actions, in terms of belief and norms of behaviour.\textsuperscript{142} The native “ceremonial behaviour” or

\textsuperscript{138} Jan G. Platvoet. (1999), op. cit. 482.
\textsuperscript{140} Ernst Feil. “From the classical Religio to the Modern Religion: Elements of a Transformation between 1550 and 1650.” Ibid., 33, 31-43.
\textsuperscript{142} Jonathan Z. Smith (1998), op. cit.
“rituals” became the first categories to attract attention of the colonialists and “Religion” was defined as the belief system that resulted in “ceremonial behaviour.”

Gradually, this term was applied to other religious traditions of Europe and with the global increase in the Anglo-American influence or what Derrida calls “globalatinization,” “religion” became a common term of reference in English and other European languages, to indicate some historical phenomena observed universally in all cultures and societies of all times though they have been very heterogeneous and varied. The phenomenon or phenomena it refers to is a human one and whatever is human is destined to undergo change, therefore, the definiendum and the definition, both could not remain static.

By the nineteenth century the questions such as: “Are the diverse “religions” species of a generic “religion”? Is “religion” the unique beginner, a summum genus, or is it best conceived as a subordinate cultural taxon? How might the several “religions” be classified?” were started being asked. There was a spurt of published works claiming to have knowledge about all the religions past and present including Christian denominations. But the major classifications limited themselves to the four categories of the Christian, the Jews, the “Mahometans” and the Pagans/Idolaters/Heathens. The Muslims were labelled, though wrongly, in the name of the founder of Islam, in the similar vein new nomenclature started emerging in Europe for newly encountered traditions such as “Boudism” (1821), “Hindooism” (1829 which Smith says replaced the earlier seventeenth-century usages “Gentoo [from “gentile”] and “Banian religion”), “Taouism” (1839), and “Confucianism”

143 Acosta as quoted in ibid., 270.
144 Jacques Derrida (1998), op. cit. 11.
146 Ibid., 275.
147 Ibid., 275.
But there was a bias which found expression in the total discourse, as Christianity, Judaism and Islam were covered under an umbrella term “Abrahamic religions” and were placed against “an undifferentiated other” as is evident from the following lines, “It is indeed probable, that all idolatrous systems of religion, which have ever existed in the world, have had a common origin, and have been modified by different fancies and conceptions of different nations. The essence of idolatry is everywhere the same. It is everywhere “abominable” in its principles and its rites, and everywhere the cause of indescribable and manifold wretchedness.” The dehumanisation of the natives by the settlers and treating them as a much inferior monolith perhaps sowed the seeds of the bias of the Christian West against the rest of the world.

The anthropological researches in the nineteenth century came out with the term “natural religion” ascribed to people called primitive, thought having been frozen in the initial stages of the evolutionary scale. It led to new nomenclature such as “fetishism, totemism, shamanism, anthropomorphism, preanimism, animism, family gods, guardian spirits, and ancestor worship” etc. The interest in classification went along with efforts to define “religion” and in one such effort Cornelius Petrus Tiele’s article “Religions” appeared in the ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia of Britannica (1884) in which he presented classification of religions on the basis of “stage of development” each religion had attained, and he divided religions into: “natural religions” and “ethical religions” and his classification starting from the religions of the savage or uncivilised ended at the three universalistic

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148 Ibid., 276.
149 J. Newton Brown (1835) as quoted, ibid.
150 Ibid., 277.
151 Ibid.
religions i.e., Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. 152 Though the declared point of view was scientific however, the bias against rest of the traditions became conspicuous when he said that “Christianity ranks incommensurably high above both its rivals.” 153 This was not a chance or sporadic expression, before this Hegel had put Christianity above Judaism and regarding Islam he had said, “the religion of Islam is essentially fanatical.” 154 Rudolf Otto also claimed superiority of Christianity over all other religions in its ability to express the mystery needs for atonement in its completeness 155 and in salvation above when he said, “the Christian experience is supreme above Brahma, Vishnu, Ormuzd, Allah, as also above the Absolute in the form of Nirvana, Kaivalyam, Tao, or whatever other name it may be given.” 156

The discussion so far, does not brings out the salient features of the phenomenon called ‘religion’ so that on one hand ‘religious’ is differentiated from what is political, juridical or economic and on the other, from what is ‘not religious’ as Emile Durkheim says that we need to “indicate a certain number of external and easily recognisable signs, which will enable us to recognise religious phenomena wherever they are met with, and will deter us from confounding them with others.” 157 Now the next question is: are there or can there be “external and easily recognisable signs” or some thing internal which may be called the “essence” of religion and if the answer is in affirmative, can the same be identified? Various scholars have attempted to answer these questions and the results were surprising, as there appeared to be as many definitions of ‘religion’ as many scholars were there in this field. Frustrated by

152 Ibid., 279.
153 Ibid.
156 Ibid., 171.
such large number of definitions, James H. Leuba gave around fifty definitions of this
term in the appendix to his book, “Psychological Study of Religion” to concluded that
“the effort clearly to define religion in short compass is a hopeless task,” but Jonathan
Z. Smith says that “the moral of Leuba is not that religion cannot be defined, but that
it can be defined, with greater or lesser success, more than fifty ways.” 158 Each and
every definition of religion given so far can not be found and compiled, however, the
broad spectrum may be gauged.

Samuel Johnson in his Dictionary of the English Language (1755), defined
‘religion’ as “virtue, as founded upon reverence of God, and expectations of future
rewards and punishments.” 159 This is a very narrow definition and the selection of the
words such as virtue, reverence, God, future rewards and punishment makes it
confined to the Judeo-Christian traditions only. In the first edition of the
Encyclopaedia Britannica (1771), in the entry “Religion or Theology” the definition
of ‘religion’ was given as “To know God, and to render him a reasonable service, are
the two principal objects of religion....Man appears to be formed to adore, but not to
comprehend, the Supreme Being.” 160 This is again a definition originating from the
Christianity but the choice of terms makes it sound the impact of transition began by
reformation “figures such as Zwingli and Calvin who understood “religion” primarily
as “piety” 161 being manifested more forcefully.

In the recent times efforts appear to have been made to give a more
comprehensive definition. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language
gives the following meanings of the word ‘religion’ (as noun) “1. concern over what
exists beyond the visible world, differentiated from philosophy in that it operates

159 Ibid., 271.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
through faith or intuition rather than reason, and generally including the idea of the existence of a single being, or a group of beings, an eternal principle, or a transcendent spiritual entity that has created the world, that governs it, that controls its destinies, or that intervenes occasionally in the natural course of its history, as well as the idea that ritual, prayer, spiritual exercises, certain principles of everyday conduct, etc., are expedient, due, or spiritually rewarding, or arise naturally out of an inner need as a human response to the belief in such a being, principle etc. 2. a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects: *the Christian religion*...” 162 The first definition, though, being very exhaustive does not specify whether, whatever is stated there is essential in-toto to constitute what is called “religion” in general and there is/are no other additional factor/s required to be included. The second definition is easier as it says that ‘a religion’ is a system of faith or a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism etc. But the situation becomes again complicated when it is found that certain groups/ congregations having substantial number of followers, despite their outer resemblance with ‘religion’ are not recognised as religions by the authorities to be and the adherents of the main dominant religions. Such groups are some times called sects, cults etc. or are not recognised at all as a religious group as has been the case with the mainstream Sikhism vis-à-vis various Deras in Punjab and Haryana states of India; another such example is of Ahmadiya in Pakistan who won their case for Muslim identity in 1953-54 through court but in 1974, government declared them as non-Muslim minority. 163

This aspect again and again indicates the conflict generation even during the

nomenclature and identity formation on religious lines. Therefore, our concern (if possible) is with the definition of uncountable noun, religion which is genus because only such definition can help in identifying the specific examples of religion and also whether the given movement can be termed as religious movement or not.

There are certain definitions which have been often used as aphorism by students and experts of religious studies. Some of which we discuss as follows. In 1912, Emile Durkheim defined religion as “A religion is unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”\(^\text{164}\) A.N. Whitehead defined religion in 1926 when he said, “Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness;” and he further elaborated his meaning when he said, “Thus religion is solitariness; and if you are never solitary, you are never religious. Collective enthusiasms, revivals, institutions, churches, rituals, bibles, codes of behaviour, are the trappings of religion, its passing forms.”\(^\text{165}\)

In 1871 Edward B. Taylor gave the minimum definition of religion as “the belief in Spiritual Beings.”\(^\text{166}\) Earlier, equating religion to morality, Kant had said that “looking upon all our moral duties as divine commands, constitutes religion”, Fichte defined religion as knowledge\(^\text{167}\) and Hegel defined it as spirituality.\(^\text{168}\) Robert N. Bellah defined religion as a “set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence.”\(^\text{169}\) Rudolf Otto explained religion in terms of

\(^{164}\) Emile Durkheim (1969), op. cit. 62.
\(^{167}\) S. Deshmukh (1998), op. cit. 10.
\(^{168}\) G.W.F. Hegel (2007), op. cit. 164.
experience of or encounter with the numinous (holy) which creates a mental state in human being which is “sui generis” and is irreducible to any other, this state generates the feeling of dependence or being creatures which he calls “mysterium tremendum” i.e., mystery and awfulness and at the same time it creates fascination or attraction. This definition is based on what is called experience of the “Wholly Other” or mysticism, “it can not be ‘taught’, it must be ‘awakened’ from the spirit.” Each and every adherent of a religion can not claim to have such experience which is, more over, “ineffable, unutterable” and is revealed through a prophet or seer. But when such are the things how Otto could claim the Christian experience to be “supreme and unparalleled”? The work of defining religion is started as a sublime task is thus flawed before Otto completes the same. How anyone can say that his experience which he can not express is better than whatever experience the other person had and is also ineffable? The problem with such a large number of definitions is that they “usually reflect the viewpoint of the defining subject more than the essence of the defined object.” Moreover, “Definitions are not meant to be norms; rather, they must be abstractions from the wealth of historical phenomena.” The problem with one word substitutes is that then instead of “religion”, they require to be defined, therefore, they are of no help.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith after examining the whole issue in depth and detail suggested that “what men have tended to conceive as religion and especially as a

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171 Ibid., 8-9.
172 Ibid., 12.
173 Ibid., 31.
174 Ibid., 25.
175 Ibid., 62.
176 Ibid., 65.
177 Ibid., 126-127.
178 Ibid., 146.
180 Ibid., 5.
religion, can more rewardingly, more truly, be conceived in terms of two factors, different in kind, both dynamic: an historical ‘cumulative tradition’, and the personal faith of men and women;” and suggested that the terms like Christianity, Buddhism and the word “religion” be dropped all together.\textsuperscript{181} This he said could mean “for the devout a truer faith in God and truer love of their neighbour; and for scholar, a clearer understanding of the religious phenomena that they are studying.”\textsuperscript{182} Though the usage of both the suggested replacement can be found in the subsequent literature, but not without prefixes like Hindu, Christian etc.\textsuperscript{183} which further beg the question as to what meant when we say Hindu/Christian faith or tradition, moreover, none of them is static monolith which rules out “the same” faith, experience or world view of all the adherents of any “faith.” As such the task of defining still remains there to be accomplished.

Sometimes, scholars try to avoid the term “religion” as the title of Ninian Smart’s book published in 1996 is “Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World’s Beliefs” but the effort stumbles in the introduction itself he claims the book to be on “a phenomenology of religion,”\textsuperscript{184} he further writes, “But this book is something else: it is intended to delineate the various manifestations of religion in complex ways.”\textsuperscript{185}

Apparently Melford E. Spiro has such short comings in mind when, referring to Hempel, he says that there have been two broad types of definitions i.e., nominal and real definitions; by nominal definitions he means ones in which “a word whose

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 195.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 2.
meaning is unknown or unclear is defined in terms of some expressions whose meaning is already known,” however, elaborating real definitions, which according to him instead of arbitrarily assign meaning to linguistic symbols, are conceived to be true statements about entities or things, he defines religion “Viewed systematically, religion can be differentiated from other culturally constituted institutions by virtue only of its reference to superhuman beings. All institutions consist of belief systems, i.e., an enduring organisation of cognitions about one or more aspects of the universe; action systems, an enduring organisation of behaviour patterns designed to attain ends for the satisfaction of needs; and value systems, an enduring organisation of principles by which behaviour can be judged on some scale of merit. Religion differs from other institutions in that its three component systems have reference to superhuman beings.”

In this definition, on one hand, the question arises as to whether, there are only three systems in all institutions, if there are others; can we ignore them and what is meant by superhuman beings on the other? Talcott Parsons defines religion when he says:

A religion we will define as a set of beliefs, practices and institutions which men have evolved in various societies, so far as they can be understood, as responses to those aspects of their life and situation which are believed not in the empirical-instrumental sense to be rationally understandable and/or controllable, and to which they attach a significance which includes some kind of reference to the relevant actions and events to man’s conception of the existence of a “supernatural” order which is conceived and felt to have a

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fundamental bearing on man’s position in the universe and the values which give meaning to his fate as an individual and his relations to his fellows.¹⁸⁷

The entry “Religion” in the Penguin Dictionary of Religions starts as:

A general term used in most modern European languages to designate all concepts concerning the belief in God(s) and Goddess(es) as well as other spiritual beings or transcendental ultimate concerns. It is also common denominator for the institutions/bodies representative of these concepts and/or concerned with their propaganda, including typical ways of human behaviour as an experience or a consequence of this belief. Thus, Christianity is labelled as a religion in this modern sense and, by extension, the term is also applied to other religious traditions of humankind such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. The implicit presumption of this labelling is that there is something in common in all cultural traditions of all times which justifies speaking of them in of religion(s). The presumption is, in fact, threefold: it supposes that the term is not limited to modern times only but can also be used for former times of Europe’s religious history; it suggests that it might be applicable to non-European traditions as well; and it suggests a common reference system for all of them...¹⁸⁸

The above description of ‘religion’ comes out with what Peter Byrne calls its denotation and connotation when he says, “The denotation of ‘religion’ is given by listing all those systems of belief, or whatever, we would normally agree on calling religions or examples of religion. Its connotation includes the properties or features of

these systems we take to be constitutive of their being religions.”¹⁸⁹ But the purpose of definition is to identify the denotations from connotations which in turn are taken from denotations, so there becomes a vicious circle as each suggestion go well with commonly accepted religious traditions and their connotations or characteristics. But what will happen to decide about cases at the margins such as Confucianism, voodoo, or the religions of the aboriginals or tribals or the new religious movements? To overcome these difficulties and in an effort to establish as broad genus for “religion” as possible Byrne defines religion as an institution having four dimensions: “the theoretical (e.g. beliefs, myths and doctrines), the practical (e.g. rites, prayers and moral codes), the sociological (e.g. churches, leaders and functionaries), and the experiential (e.g. emotions, visions and sentiments of all kinds).”¹⁹⁰ But he further elaborates his definition when he says that it is an institution which may be further distinguished by three types of differentia which qualify the dimensions making up its genus. These may be specified as the object of this complex, its goal and its function. He sums up his definition as: “a religion is an institution with a complex of theoretical, practical, sociological and experiential dimensions, which is distinguished by characteristic objects (gods or sacred things), goals (salvation or ultimate good) and functions (giving an overall meaning to life or providing the identity or cohesion to a social group.”¹⁹¹ He uses article “a” instead of “no” article and in further discussion he himself admits that this “operational definition” does not state in unambiguous terms the necessary and sufficient conditions for something’s being a religion – i.e., “a list of precise features such as that if a institution lacked them, it could not be

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 7.
¹⁹¹ Ibid.
classified as a religion, and if it did possess them, it could not fail to be a religion."\(^{192}\) Realising that making such list will not be practically possible he introduces the term of “family resemblance” which was introduced by Wittgenstein in his Philosophical Investigations in the context of language and game.\(^{193}\) But it makes the issue more ambiguous as here again “we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities in details”\(^{194}\) make the identification dependent of intuition, however, it provides “limitless scope for novelty and for receptivity to the differing influences of time and place amongst human beings.”\(^{195}\) So, can we say that religions have one/some common essence which is manifested differently at different places and times?

A very exhaustive and what Talal Asad calls “universalistic”\(^{196}\) definition was given by Clifford Geertz when he said, “Without further ado, then, a religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”\(^{197}\) He further explained all the parts in detail. But whereas on the one hand, Asad says that “there can not be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes”\(^{198}\) and on the other this definition is criticised as it puts “too much emphasis on the cognitive role of symbols as contributing to

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192 Ibid., 10.
193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
195 Ibid., 12.
198 Asad Talal (1993), op. cit. 29.
conceptions of the order of existence, thus bypassing rituals, social and other non-cognitive roles of religion” besides, it is “inadequate with respect to philosophical complexities of representation and truth”\textsuperscript{199} as “clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” indicates that religion is not representation of the factuality. But we are concerned with the real human beings as actors or subjects. Here, as Asad says, “it comes resemble the conception Marx had of religion as ideology – that is, as a mode of consciousness which is other than consciousness of reality, external to the relations of production, producing no knowledge, but expressing at once anguish of the oppressed and a spurious consolation.”\textsuperscript{200} While explaining the last part of his definition, Geertz says, “no one, not even a saint, lives in the world religious symbols formulate all the time, and majority of men live in it only at moments.”\textsuperscript{201} So it is the experience during those moments that brings out what the religious experience is and determines religious convictions. We are back to square one, to the questions posed by Vries as quoted in the beginning of this section but now we have above discussion, therefore, attempt can be made to give replies in its light:

1. what, exactly, “religion” is about – It is/may be about mystery, “the Wholly Other” or Absolute, the transcendental realities, other worldliness and the human spirit but all this acts as a prism which colours this worldly aspects of human life. The seers or prophets or Gurus or founders propound and the common people follow. Therefore, it is also cultural phenomenon, originated and evolved among human beings, thus it is about people of this world and their feelings, thinking or relation with the transcendence; for it is not the gods but the adherents who make a religion, and in the process, boundaries are

\textsuperscript{199} William B. Drees (2008), op. cit. 465.
\textsuperscript{200} Asad Talal (1993), op. cit. 46.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 119.
drawn, truth claims are made and all endeavours are made to defend them steadfastly. But drawing boundaries, making claims and attempting to defend the same does not mean that religion is a static phenomenon, rather it is a dynamic and ever developing – with the passage of time, as the cultural values and needs undergo some change – religion also change, though due to its colossal stature, such changes are not immediately visible, some reformist may accelerate the pace of change, new religious movements may emerge, some of which may be accommodated as new sects in the already established religion(s), others may grow into new religions claiming to be totally different from the already established religion(s) and some may go into oblivion with the passage of time.

2. *what* makes it tick – it is the effervescence created by the distinctiveness, and special bond created or perceived to be created with the deity or the founding father/prophet/reformist or the central principle(s) or something else that make a religion tick. But depending upon other circumstances, some times, these buoyant feelings turn into what Nehru called “narrow loyalties, petty jealousies and ignorant prejudices engaged in mortal conflict” and what he said about language may be equally true about religion i.e., it (is perceived as if it) “stood for and represented culture, race, history, individuality, and finally a sub-nation.”

3. *how* it operates – it operates through creating collective identities – of “us” and of “other(s)”. On one hand religions unite human beings in such groups that the individual existence is left behind and such cohesiveness is reinforced and maintained for millennia and generations through highly esteemed

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symbols, metaphors, and practices so that even migration and extensive challenges time and place pose can not break the bonds. On the other hand, religions divide humanity into competing tribal identities, defined over and against one another, which have often produced conflict.

4. *where* it is headed – it is part and parcel of the human culture from the times immemorial, its future is with the future of humanity. It will live till the human species survives on this earth. Though the values of society change with the passage of time, so do those of religions in some invisible ways, but still it continues to be part of each culture – be it in the private movements of individuals or in the public gatherings.

5. *who* (at least rhetorically) endorses or (also financially) sponsors it – every person living on this earth (whosoever is in his/her senses) endorses it though financial support to different religions is given by the respective adherents of respective religions. Even an atheist, when he/she asserts his/her position, has some view what religion is. It is always due to the presence of the “other” if not of that of the “Other” (God).

Even after examining the broad spectrum under which various definitions of religion have been propounded, answer to none of the above questions can be given with certainty. However, we find that religion as a generic concept is manifested through its different species, each of which is product of the culture in which it originated and that/those of its adherents/converts and this human, cultural phenomenon can be defined as the concern over what is believed/perceived to exists beyond the visible world and which operates through faith or intuition rather than reason, and generally including the idea of the existence of a single being, or a group of beings, an eternal principle, or a transcendent spiritual entity that has created the
world, that governs it, that controls its destinies, or that intervenes occasionally in the natural course of its history, as well as the idea that ritual, prayer, spiritual exercises, certain principles of everyday conduct, etc. and all this makes a prism through which the worldly affairs of the individual adherents as well as those of the moral community of the adherents as a whole get their hues to grant them distinct identity different from other such communities and from those of other (secular) aspects of cultures. Like the every host culture, religion is a dynamic phenomenon – ever developing, though such changes may not be visible and even welcomed immediately and efforts are always there to preserve the originality. New religious movements emerge now and again which are resisted and opposed fiercely by the power that be in the existing religions, as a result some of these may relegate again into the mainstream religions, some may be accepted as new sects of the existing religions and some may become new religions themselves. Perhaps, such concept of religion as a source of cultural identity and assertiveness to create such new identities is all that in religion which makes a person or a group of persons die or kill without any second thought or remorse.

**Religious Violence**

Now when violence and religion both have been defined (within broad outlines), religious violence may be defined as all those phenomena where the religious identity and affiliation of the subject(s) or object(s) is the reason behind individual or collective violent behaviour and it may include violence by religiously affiliated individuals, groups and institutions against objects of any kind i.e., adherent(s) and/or their property, institutions, buildings and sites etc. of the same or any other religion or secular, as well as, violence by individuals or any group whether affiliated religious or not, against objects that are explicatory religious including
adherent(s) and/or their property, institutions, buildings and sites etc. and which has express or latent sanction from the religious authorities. Religious violence may be of any form i.e., ritual violence, symbolic violence, sporadic violence between individuals and collective religious violence. Jon Pahl identifies seven types or aspects of violence connected with religious systems: 1) at the most basic level he says is the ritual or symbolic violence found within “the language and practices (e.g., myths and rituals) in almost all religions as concept of cosmic conflict/war between good and bad or positive and negative powers, sacrifice, rites of initiation, asceticism etc.; 2) second level is the division between the “insiders” and “outsider” or “pure” and “impure” which is at the base of formation of the religious identity through segregation of “us” and “them” which is at play in most cases of physical violence; 3) the third is preventive and catalytic relationship between religion and ethics which makes restraints on individual behaviour but the same restraints are reversed in certain circumstances [thou shalt not kill (rape or steal) becomes thou must kill ... !]; 4) systematic persecution or punishment of particular religious group(s) by another dominant group is the fourth level; 5) next comes the “systematic exclusion, or religiously-legitimized social violence”, surprisingly many religions ideologically oppose such discrimination but the actual practices are not as professed – caste system in Indian society defying even the egalitarian ethos of some of the religious affiliation and gender bias are examples of such discrimination; 6) organized retaliatory violence by individuals as well as by groups – communal frenzy and terrorism, supported by teachings of revenge comes next and, 7) last come the holy wars which have been legitimised by most of the major religions.\textsuperscript{203} Some of these will be subject matter of the next chapter in this work.

Our concern in the present research is neither ritual or symbolic violence nor individual violence but the collective religious violence which is perpetrated within the context of society and is legitimated at least by a subset of society or some religious authority and always has some political dimension. It is not necessarily always perpetrated by a group; a single suicide bomber’s attack is collective religious violence if it fulfils the condition of legitimisation as mentioned above. The religious violence so defined may be direct violence via agents or, institutional violence via institutions or, structural violence via structures and all these being legitimised, interpreted/ misinterpreted, obscured or made invisible by cultural violence are object related and the main forms of violence are physical or psychological.

As we have seen above the process through which new religion(s) and new religious movements originate, may involve some conflict with the adherents of the existing religions and the process of defining itself is most of the time conflict generating. As seen above, the scholars like Rudolf Otto could not save themselves from claims of superiority of their religion over all others. Hector Avalos says that most of the violence among religions is due to “scarce resources, real or perceived,” and creation of “new scarce resources.”\(^{204}\) One may say that similar are the reasons for most of the conflicts in the secular arena also but the religious conflicts, he says, rely “solely on resources whose scarcity is wholly manufactured by, or reliant on, unverifiable premises (and) when truth or falsity of opposing propositions cannot be verified, then violence becomes a common resort in adjudicating disputes.”\(^{205}\) Here the purpose is not to go to the reasons for religious violence (as it will be done in the next two chapters) but to see how it has emerged among various religions so far. But


\(^{205}\) Ibid.
so far it is indicated that conflict may generate in the very emergence of a new religion because in religious matters what matters is not the actual threat of some scarcity or dominance but the mere perception of the same may lead to one. Regina M. Schwartz says that it is the scarcity which is “encoded in the Bible as a principle of oneness (one land, one people, one nation) and in monotheistic thinking one deity, it becomes a demand of exclusive allegiance that threatens with the violence of exclusion.”206 She refers to the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis and says that God could accept the offerings of only one and that was Abel, the rejection infuriated Cain who murdered Abel and thus the monotheistic God is monotheistic “not only because he demands allegiance to himself alone but because he confers his favour on one alone.”207 Again story from Genesis of stealing of blessings of Esau by his brother Jacob from their old blind father, Isaac is cited to emphasise that even blessing is scarce.208 Point made by her is that it is monotheism more than polytheism that has caused violence. She says, “The danger of a universal monotheism is asserting that its truth is the Truth, its system of knowledge the System of knowledge, its ethics the Ethics – not because, as in particularism, any other option must be rejected, but because there is simply no other option.”209

Gavin I. Langmuir coins a term “polymonotheism” which he alludes to the “fact that different people can and do have their own different one and only gods which are equally and equally monotheistically valid for them.”210 He says that religious violence is inspired by anger or fear or both due to the perception of existence of disbelief at the frontiers of their faith which have serious implications as

207 Ibid., 3.
208 Ibid., 4; 80-83.
209 Ibid., 33.
their faith is no more the only unchallenged truth, they become conscious of their
limits and also of the omnipresence and omnipotence ascribed to their god; he further
says that mere fear or anger are not sufficient causes, as the anger must be supported
by ability to muster sufficient physical force so that the threatening people are
attacked and this is the reason, he says, that most of the violence between Christians
and Jews was “overwhelmingly Christian.”211 This also explains why the Christians
remained pacifist during the first 400 years and it was only after the persecution was
stopped and royal patronage was given that Ambrose could claim Roman victories
only due to his god’s help.212 Peter Partner clarified the matter when he said, “far
from being a pacifist or even a necessarily pacifist religion, Christianity was from the
beginning of fifth century well prepared to act as the religion of societies that accept
war as a social duty”213 and says that since then, Christians have indulged in religious
violence – be it long and bloody campaigns of Charlemagne against Saxons in around
the end of the eighth century, those of Alfred the Great against the Danes around 878
CE, the conquests were always ended in the conversion of the defeated people to
Christianity.214 The Jews, being in minority and scattered, remained at the receiving
end, in spite of having their own concept of holy war, though there was no major
incidence of violence against from 600 to 1096, and the massacres of Jews in and
after 1096, after the first Crusade was preached by pope Urbane-II, ushered a new era
of violence215 which was some what retarded after Pope Calixtus II issued bull around
1120 to the crusaders not to harm Jews and the same was renewed by later popes
also.216 In addition to crusades to the areas under Muslim dominance in the middle

211 Ibid., 138.
212 Ibid., 141.
213 Quoted in Ibid.
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid., 140.
216 Ibid., 149.
east where sometimes, no discrimination was made between the Muslim, the Eastern Orthodox Christians and the Jews in inflicting violence and crusades against Christian heretics in Europe, a new form of torture in the shape of the Inquisition was invented and the heretics or alleged heretics were condemned and burnt at stakes so that deviant religious thought was crushed.\textsuperscript{217} The special Inquisition trial tribunals derived their power directly from Pope as such their decisions were final and the whole process which has been called “hideous caricatures”\textsuperscript{218} of justice by Walter Ullmann as mere suspicion could lead anyone to stakes.

Charles Selengut says that holy war is essential part of virtually all religious systems which are justified and legitimised despite religious teachings of peace and brotherhood by interpreting/reinterpreting theological assertions to show that such violence is supernatural undertaking and can not be explained by using “human logic and secular reasoning.”\textsuperscript{219} Along with Jewish and Christian concepts of holy war, he mentions Muslim concept of Jihad but does not mention the concept of Dahrmayudha in Hinduism and Sikhism, these concepts will be discussed in details in the second chapter of this work. Selengut also refers to various conflicts where religion has played/is playing a significant role such as Christian- Muslim conflict in Philippine, Muslim-Orthodox Christian conflict in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Chechnya, Muslim-Christian conflict in Nigeria, Hindu-Buddhist conflict in Sri Lanka, Arab-Israel conflict in Philistine and, above all the Muslim-West conflict having global ramifications, to name a few.\textsuperscript{220} These and some other conflicts will be examined in the Chapter 3 of this research.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 148.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 126-142.
There is always a curious interplay of the above said manifestations of violence and the religious systems which helps us not only to know the intricacies of this kaleidoscopic phenomena but also to the various other factors which may affect it. The intensity of brutality of violence in such cases is generated (some times) due to what John R. Bowen calls the “‘deep-seated, ancient feelings of hatred’ handed down from generation to generation.”

But before, we proceed further; a quick view of the major paradigms underlining these relations may be of some help. There can be four main paradigms ascribed to Marx, Freud, Weber, and Durkheim under which various scholars have put forward their views on the relationship between religion and violence.

In the Marxist critique of religion it is a class driven oppressive system which opiates the people and masks the real conflict. But in recent times in Latin America, Poland and South Africa religion has played a librating role. Robert Mc Afee Brown who wrote primarily for the American Christians while defining violence as “any violation of personhood” with or without force, put forward three forms of violence – violence of injustice for which he relied upon Aquinas who had said that unjust laws were nothing but violence; the second was violence in response to injustice which according to him was understandable (even) if not justified religiously; and third was repression by the authorities.

He said, “those who enjoy the benefits of the structure [of violence], and are rendered comfortable and secure by them, are to that degree implicated in the violence to which those structures lead.”

But the Marxist concept of violence is based on the concept that violence consists not only of positive actions but the “negative actions” as deliberate neglect is violent to the same extent if not

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222 Jon Pahl (2003), op. cit. 325-327.
223 Ibid., 326.
224 Quoted in ibid.
more than the violence by revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{225} In the Marxist struggle though, violence has a role but terrorism has a very limited role in the mass proletariat struggle, however, “violent response on the part of the exploited and oppressed is justified.”\textsuperscript{226} This is what comes out as just-war theory in religion where fighting a tyrant becomes moral duty.

René Girard interpreted violence in the Freudian perspective, however, where Freud predicted demise of religion, Girard says, “[t]here is no society without religion because without religion society can not exist.”\textsuperscript{227} For him violence is essential part of every society and “if left unappeased, violence will accumulate until it overflows its confines and floods the surrounding area.”\textsuperscript{228} He takes the “spirit of revenge” as an “intolerable menace” for humanity which becomes “an interminable, infinitely repetitive process”\textsuperscript{229} if not checked, and violence and sacred being inseparable,\textsuperscript{230} the process of sacrificial violence “prevents the spread of violence by keeping vengeance in check.”\textsuperscript{231} He defines religion “in broadest sense” as “another term for that obscurity that surrounds man’s efforts to defend himself by curative or preventive means against his own violence” the violence of one member of society against the other\textsuperscript{232} and to contain the violence a collective rite of sacrifice is performed where rivalry is placated by transferring its violence unto a “scapegoat” which Girard calls a surrogate victim.\textsuperscript{233} It turns the violence of all against all into violence of all against one and thus religion restrains violence but it does so through violence only. Girard appears to be mainly concerned with the intra-societal violence. The other concepts developed

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\textsuperscript{225} John Harris (2009), op. cit. 185.
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{233} Ibid., 106.
\end{flushright}
by Girard are mimetic desire – “man is subject of intense desire ... he desires being, something he himself lacks and which some other person seems to possess.” The shared desire which is result of imitation of the other, leads to rivalry for the same object which can not be obtained as being possessed by the other and leads to a situation what Girard calls “double bind” - the object is desired because the other possess it who seems to challenge – you can not take it because I possess it – this mimetic rivalry is basis of all human relationship most probable cause of violence including religious violence also.

The third theoretical paradigm (which may be termed as Webberian to some extent) for understanding relation between violence and religion has been developed by Mark Juergensmeyer who developed notions of “religious nationalism” and “cosmic war” through which religious violence is legitimated by its perpetrators. Powerful imagery of past is used to interpret the present. When Osama bin Laden declared war on America and the European West in 1996 he compared their presence in the Middle East with the Crusades and colonialism. The imagery of cosmic war between evil and good, faith and lack of faith has been used by many religious leaders, Juergensmeyer gives examples – the activist leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale encouraged his followers to resort to real acts of violence when he said that mean tactics were had been initiated from all sides to destroy religion and beseeched the young men to fight and defend faith; Ayatollah Khomeini, emphasising that fighting is basic to human existence and is at par with religious commitment said,

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234 Ibid., 155.
235 Ibid., 156.
237 Ibid., 214.
238 Ibid., 9.
239 Ibid., 214.
“life is faith and struggle”\textsuperscript{240} a Sri Lanka Buddhist Bhikkhu views the world in terms of \textit{dhamma} and \textit{adhamma} and a right wing Jewish activist in Israel spoke of God’s vengeance against the “Palestinian Gentiles”\textsuperscript{241} whereas a Hamas leader justified \textit{intifada} (rebellion) as a sign from God and simply as an expression of a larger, hidden struggle.\textsuperscript{242}

R. Scott Appleby, indirectly refers to Durkheim’s appreciation for the function of religion to cohere and solidify social order when he says, “by shrinking time and space through communications and transportation technologies, modernity has made it much more likely that Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Muslims and nonbelievers live in close proximity to one another, especially in large urban areas around the world” and it is only the small minority which is threatened by the new pluralism.\textsuperscript{243} He uses a new term ““weak religions” – faith communities that are chronically vulnerable to manipulation by external agents” and it is the minorities in such religions which are vulnerable to religious extremism in the form of \textit{ethnoreligious chauvinism} because religion has been either suppressed or neglected over a period and they feel threatened by pluralism.\textsuperscript{244} The ethnic groups are “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarity of physical types or customs or both, or because of the memories of colonization and migration” and it is not dependent on kinship as its basis is presumed identity.\textsuperscript{245} To the question why ethnic groups seek to achieve nationhood, he first gives meaning of “nation” which he says, is “derived from the past participle of the Latin verb \textit{nasci} (“to be born”) and noun \textit{nationem} (“breed” or “race”)” and instead of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{240} Ibid., 215.
\item \textsuperscript{241} Ibid., 216.
\item \textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 219.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Quoting Max Weber, Ibid., 59.
\end{itemize}
signifying a “concrete political unit” it represents an “intangible psychological reality
perceived (or “imagined”) by the people who are joined together, and differentiated
from others, by their shared perception.” He further says that when the state and
the “nation” are not analogous, it creates conflict between the state and the ethnic
groups living within its jurisdiction and religion invariably plays role(s) in these
conflicts. We will discuss these concepts in detail in Chapter 3. however, we find
that Appleby has based his analysis on certain preconceived notions, for example it is
not only the minority that feels threatened and deprived but the substantial section of
the majority nourishes on this presumption that their deprivation is on account of the
presence of the minority which has usurped which, otherwise, belonged to the
majority. Whether these facts are real factors for deprivation or only perceived, can
not be decided through assumptions and presumptions as we will see in the next two
chapter.

In all these paradigms we find the ambivalence of religious groups on the
question of violence as on one hand, transcending individualism, they preach
collectivism most of the time they preach peace and effort is always to bring the
fellow beings together in peaceful co-existence and on the other, they divide humanity
into competing “tribal identities defined over and against one another” resulting in
conflicts and there is valorisation of and sanction for violence so much so that
“religiously-inspired acts of violence have been among the bloodiest and most brutal
in human history.”

But instances are generally found to prove that members of different groups
often lived in harmony and only became enemies in the course of ethnicisation of the

\[246\] Ibid., 59
\[247\] Ibid., 60.
\[248\] Pahl Jon. (2003), op. cit. 327.
political conflicts.\textsuperscript{249} Conflict can be defined as a violent and armed confrontation and struggle between groups, between the state and one or more groups, and between two or more states where some of those involved are injured and killed and which can last anything from six months to over twenty years.\textsuperscript{250} The religious violence or what he calls “fundamentalist pattern of militance” is ascribed by Appleby\textsuperscript{251} to religious factors such as:

1. penetration of religious community by secular or religious outsiders which necessitates fortification of communal boundaries which leads to generation of a sense of being in exile in one’s own land;

2. a selective retrieval of the sacred past – lines or passages from the holy book, traditional teachings of a guru or prophet, or heroic deeds or episodes from a mythologized golden age – for the purpose of legitimization innovative ideology and program of action to save the “fundamentals” of religion under threat;

3. organization around male charismatic or authoritarian leaders and recruitment of rank and file members from professional and working class of both genders but the new recruits from among young, educated, unemployed, or under employed males;

4. imposition of strict codes of personal discipline, dress, diet, and other markers which serve to set the group members apart from others;

5. considering only the sacred truths as foundation of all genuine knowledge and religious values as the base and summit of all morality;

\textsuperscript{249} Adreas Wimmer, and Conrad Schetter (2003), op. cit. 249.


\textsuperscript{251} R. Scott Appleby. (2000), op. cit. 87-89
6. division of world into realms of light and darkness peopled by the elect and reprobate, the pure and the impure, the orthodox and the infidel;

7. belief of living in a period of crisis, danger, or apocalyptic doom;

8. (with the combined effect of the above factors) ability of religion to inspire ecstasy – literally to lift the believer psychologically out of a mundane environment to see logic of religious violence\textsuperscript{252}.

Appleby says that the leaders like Bhindranwale used the above factors and advocated use of extreme measures at the exceptional times as the “Hindu imperialist rulers of New Delhi” wanted to annihilate Sikh people as their intentions were manifested in open support to “apostate” Nirankari sect and in exploitation of rural and urban Sikhs. The doctrine of \textit{miri-piri} of Guru Hargobind and that of \textit{dharma yudha} propounded by Guru Gobind Singh were used along the tenth Guru’s saying “when all else fails, it is righteous to lift sword in one’s hand and fight.”\textsuperscript{253} He exhorted the Sikhs by saying, “\textit{For every village you keep one motorcycle, three young baptized Sikhs and three revolvers. These are not for killing innocent people. For Sikh to have arms and kill innocent person is a serious sin. But Khalsaji [O, baptized Sikh], to have arms and not to get your legitimate rights is an even bigger sin.}”\textsuperscript{254} From the above discussion we see that except Robert McAfee Brown all other scholars confine their analysis mainly to religious factors.

In the last decade of the last century the rhetoric of “clash of civilizations” took over the Western media. The term, though made popular by Huntington in 1993\textsuperscript{255} was originally coined by Bernard Lewis.\textsuperscript{256} Huntington saw the world through

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid., 89.
\textsuperscript{254} Quoted ibid.
\textsuperscript{256} Ibid., 213
political civilizational lens and predicted future clash on this basis as he divided world into “the West and the rest.”\(^{257}\) The West in a missionaries like zeal, believe that the non-Western people should cherish the Western value of democracy, free market, human rights, and individualism etc. but all this, that the West considers as universalism is “imperialism to the rest.”\(^ {258}\) At the same time the double standards of the West are no secret as the much cherished values are nothing but propagation of self interests.\(^ {259}\) The West does not allow other countries to have nuclear weapons lest they become powerful, whereas Iran is under constant threat of non-proliferation, there is never such condition for Israel. “Terrorism” says Huntington, “historically is the weapon of the weak, that is, those who do not possess conventional military power.”\(^ {260}\) We will examine this assertion in the next chapter while discussing terrorism in detail. He further says that when nuclear weapons and terrorism are combined, the non Western weak will be strong, that is why since 1988 when President Rafsanjani declared that his country must have nuclear weapons for self defence, there is Western rhetoric of “Islamic bomb” being developed by Iran.\(^ {261}\) The West believes that democratization was most successful in countries where Christian and Western influences were strong and in the Muslim republics its prospectus are bleak, the rest of the world fall in between.\(^ {262}\) Huntington made division of the world at what can be said macro level into the West, Islam, Sinic (China), Hindu (India), Latin America, African, Japan, orthodox (Russia) by mixing identities on the politico-religio-cultural lines only.\(^ {263}\) Huntington has placed a map in his book where the Eastern Boundaries of Western Civilization are shown and while doing so, the areas

\(^{257}\) Ibid., 183.  
\(^{258}\) Ibid., 184.  
\(^{259}\) Ibid.  
\(^{260}\) Ibid., 187.  
\(^{261}\) Ibid., 188.  
\(^{262}\) Ibid., 193.  
\(^{263}\) Ibid., 245.
with Orthodox Christianity and Islam have been kept out. Though, Huntington’s theses appears to be very attractive, but on closer examination it is found that he made a reading of the human history in a very unhistorical way. Amartya Sen says that it is “an oddly artificial view of history, according to which these distinct civilizations have grown separately, like trees on different plots of land, with very little overlap and interaction,” whereas their mutual interaction since times immemorial is not a sane question to be debated. We, the human beings have multiple identities, therefore, binding with one identity tag may make the analysis simple but the end result is worthless as we have to face what is there despite our wishes and whims as no identity is a monolith, rather any effort in this direction is an assertion one’s power status to define others. Violence is intrinsic part of every such assertion as the ultimate aim always remains to establish the hegemony over the other.

264 Ibid., 159.