

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION

100 Questions

Answered in Yumaism



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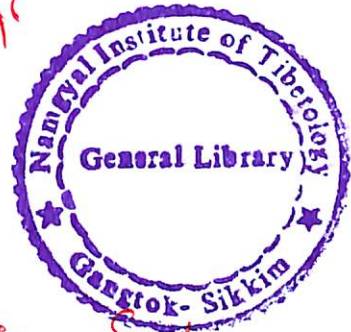
J. R. Subba

Origin and Development of Religion

*100 Questions
Answered in Yumaism*

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J. R. Subba



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Preface

There are myriad questions about the “Origin and Development of Religion” that are easy to ask but difficult to answer. However, we will never be able to know what really happened in the past exactly, a default reality, because of a number of ‘filters’ skewing our understanding of the past. Geological, biological, ideological, sociological, socio-economic, psychological, and cultural ‘filters’ did exist in the past and are reflected in the records of archaeology, anthropology, genes made up of DNA - the string-like code of life, and sacred narratives of numerous societies in the world, although we have not necessarily always been able to identify them correctly and minimize their impact on our understanding of the past. Some of these ‘filters’ still operate today; and are represented in different aspects of our lives, including our thinking and writing about our past. The bottom line is that we have to make efforts to minimize the loss of information through different ‘filters’ at each level of our research or begin to understand what is lost. This book is the answer to some extent about it on the origin and development of religion in general and Yumaism in particular.

This book is basically my life-long analysis on the origin and development of religion, and understanding religious beliefs and rituals in general and Yumaism the religion of the Limboo Society in particular through life observations of religious rituals mostly from Sikkim and Nepal, software documenting (CD), taking photographs, writing articles and books (12 Nos. so far on this subject) on regional languages (mostly Limboo, English and Nepali), and visiting various archaeological sites, religious and historical cultural heritage sites, ethnography and ethno-religious museums of India, U.S.A, U.K., Thailand, Taiwan, and Azerbaijan so far.

There is no society in the world without beliefs and some kind of rituals, and there exist no beliefs and rituals without some Sacred Narratives. In Yumaism, Mundhum represents the religious sacred narratives; and it is also “a collective spiritual wisdom” of the Limboo Society. Yumaism was

originally an “Ancestor Worship” religion originated in Upper Paleolithic Age (50,000 – 13,000 years ago). The adherents believe that they are the blessings of their apical ancestor great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma (Yuma Mang = grandmother goddess) - the dawn of consciousness and thus they exist as intangible spirits since then in the Universe. All their ancestors are forming their gods and goddesses. The intangible life (soul/spirit) is their real life. Their existence on the earth realm with body is simply for purification of impurities caused by curse, incestuous relationship, envy and jealousy, etc. to each other during their existence in the sacred space. They believe that purification of impurities is possible only in the earth realm, where they can practice Suyo-Kheyo (Karma) by following the Yumaism way of life. They also believe that this is the only realm of existence where they acquire Outer Perception System (Ni-Sam = sub-soul of sight, and Khem-Sam = sub-soul of hearing) and Multi or Inner Perception System (Sikkum-Sam = sub-soul of intuition, Ningwa-Sam = sub-soul of mind, and Thona-Sam = sub-soul of wisdom) with flesh, which are essential for Suyo-Kheyo (Karma) practice. Once they get purified, they leave this realm of existence to continue their intangible infinite life. They do not believe on Mokchhya or release as in Hinduism or Buddhism.

Yumaism comprises of three components namely, Ancestor Worship, Shamanism and Totemism. Shaman and Shamanism were evolved from Ancestor Worship, thousands of years later in Upper Paleolithic Age (50,000 -13,000 years ago), as the deceased ancestors constitute the Reincarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shaman Phedangmas worldwide. Since, Shamans and Shamanism were evolved from Ancestor Worship religion, Shamanism was encompassed within Ancestor Worship and interwoven each other in the *first phase of religious development* forming as “Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism” religion. This form of religion was most effective and useful to *the nomadic* ancestors of the entire humanity; and thus the religion dominated the world throughout Paleolithic and Neolithic Age, which is evident from the worldwide spread of Petroglyphs, Pictograms and Logograms as discussed in the introductory questions of religion. This form of religion served the Limboo ancestors in the entire Paleolithic and Neolithic

Age till 200 A.D. inclusive of the Chieftainship Limboo Society of Nepal Valley, ruled by 32 Kirat Kings for 1964 years (between 1,779 B.C. and 185 A.D.).

In about 200 A.D. Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang established a Kingdom in Limbuwan, in the Eastern Himalayas. The Limboo ancestors started foraging, hunting and settled agriculture in the Eastern Himalayan Region, in a particular location (Limbuwan) continuously, evolved “Totemism” to segregate, regulate and establish an order of the more complex Chieftainship society; the third component of Yumaism. Totemism was also encompassed within “Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism” and interwoven to form “Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism-cum-Totemism”, in its second phase of development to function as a religion of the Limboo Society. Thus, Yumaism in the present form of religion of the Limboo Society comprises of the above three components, encompassed and interwoven each other in two phases of development of Ancestor Worship.

There are myriads of Mundhums (Sacred Narratives) in Yumaism, existing orally since time immemorial, but most of them now exist in writing, but never attempted analyzing them what they speak about. Once I documented some of them from life-performances and written in black and white some of these important Mundhums of Yumaism (Sumsemba Tongsing Tok Mundhum, Tingding Nahen Mundhum, Idhuklung Samsogha Mundhum, Yehang Se:ma Mundhum, Mi Se:pma Mundhum, Netti Phungwa Chhangma Mundhum, Yplek Sangdok Yeppma Mundhum, Aanguk Saham See:pma Mundhum, Ke-sapmi Nam-sapmi Mundhum, Lahi-Namhi Chellung Khoklung I:ng:ma Mundhum, Menchham Yapmi Chok?ma Mundhum, Tongsing Teekma Mundhum, Tongsing Semma Mundhum, Ponglung Lep:ma Mundhum, Sigi Sosam Phongma Mundhum, Sigi Sosam Phungma Mundhum, Abu Sayit Nakma Mundhum, etc. from Taplezong, obtained Mujoklung Khajoklung recorded cassettes from Kathmandu, Nepal, Tendham Mekkhim, Phungsok Timma, Kambolling Nahangma, Simering Mangenna, Simering Mundhum, Sitongsing Mundhum etc. from Sikkim), I started analyzing them in various ways.

My first analysis work on Yumaism Mundhum was on “Cognitive and Social Functions” which was published in book form as “Mythology of the People of Sikkim” in 2009, from Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, along with such cognitive and Social functional analysis work of all the important religions of Sikkim.

My second analysis work on Yumaism Mundhum was on “Philosophical” and it was published in a book form as “Yumaism, the Limboo Way of Life – A Philosophical Analysis” in 2012, from Sukhim Yakthum Mundhum Saploppa (SYMS), Gangtok, Sikkim.

My third analysis work on Yumaism Mundhum was on “Ethno-Religious Thoughts” and was published in a book form as “Ethno-Religious Views of the Limboo Mundhums (Myths) – An Analysis of Traditional Theories” in 2012, from SYMS, Gangtok, Sikkim.

The present book is on “Origin and Development of Religion” in general with examples based on Yumaism. It is being published in question-answer form to create some interest to the readers in general. The book is entitled “**Origin and Development of Religion: 100 Questions Answered in Yumaism**”, being published from SYMS, Gangtok, Sikkim.

The Question Answers have been divided under eight important topics: namely Introductory Questions on Religion, Analysis on Evolutionary Approaches, Analysis on Functional Approaches, Analyzing the Role and Functions of Religion, Analysis on Functions of Myth, Analysis on Structuralism Approaches, Analysis on Religious Beliefs and Rituals, and Analysis on Religious Symbolism. The Introductory Questions on Religion has fifteen question-answers (1-15) about the elementary issues of religion. The Evolutionary Approaches has 18 question-answers (16-33). The evolutionaries postulated their answers through their numerous evolutionary theories. The Functional Approaches category has 14 question-answers (34-47) and postulated their answers through social functions, Totemism,

etc. The fourth group, is on the Role and Function of Religion in a Society. It has 4 question- answers (48-51), and the functionalists postulated their answers through Functional role of Religion, Identity, Continuity and Solidarity of a Society.

The fifth group, Analysis on the Functions of Myth, has 4 question-answers (52-55), and formulated their answers through Cognitive and Social Functions of Myth with elucidation of Mundhums of Yumaism as an ideal example. The sixth group, Analysis on Structuralism Approaches has 21 question-answers (56-776), and the Structuralists seek their answers through mythic or symbolic structure and social structure of a society.

The seventh group, Analysis on Religious Beliefs and Rituals has 11 question-answers (77-87), and talk about various aspects of religious beliefs and rituals of a society. The last group, Analysis on Religious Symbolism has 13 question-answers (88-100), and discuss about the religious symbolism with a particular reference to Yumaism.

I hope, the book will be useful to the general readers, research scholars, religious institutions, the religious and Social groups / Societies to understand the “Origin and Development of Religion” in general, and Yumaism in particular.

J. R. Subba

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I acknowledge my sincere thanks to all those resource persons whose books and articles has been mentioned on the Endnotes and References of this book. I also acknowledge my thanks to myriad website owners as I have freely downloaded them for this study. Without the work of these resource persons, publishers and websites, this book has never seen the light of the day. I acknowledge my thanks to Sikkim Akademi for ISBN Number too.

I also acknowledge my thanks to my daughters and son-in-laws presently working in Azerbaijan and USA for arranging my travel and visits to these countries. Without them I could not had opportunities to visit numerous such important archaeological sites, UNESCO World Heritage Centres, and Archaeology and Ethnology Museums abroad.

J. R. Subba

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Introductory Questions on Religion

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2. What are the three key elements of a Religion?
3. What is Yumaism?
4. What are the four important implications of religion from the sociological point of view?
5. What are the three sociological approaches of religion?
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Q1 What is Religion?

Religion is defined as a Socio-Cultural system of commonly shared beliefs and rituals that provides a sense of ultimate meaning and purpose by creating an idea of reality that is sacred, all-encompassing and supernatural.^{1,2,3,4}

Q2 What are the three key elements of a Religion?

There are three key elements in the socio-cultural definition of a religion:

(a) Religion is a form of Culture:

Culture consists of the shared beliefs, values, norms and ideas that create a common identity among a group of people.

(b) Religion involves beliefs that take the form of ritualized practices:

Belief is an idea, which refers to a state of mind in which one consigns trust in some person or thing. Ritual is a symbolic series of repeated actions and sacred words or patterned activity oriented towards control of human affairs. All religions thus have a behavioural aspect – special activities in which believers take part and that identify them as members of the religious community.

(c) Perhaps most important, religion provides a sense of purpose:

It provides a feeling that life is ultimately meaningful. It does so by explaining coherently and compellingly what transcends or overshadows the everyday life, in ways that other aspects of culture (such as an educational system or a belief of democracy) typically cannot explain.³

Q3 What is Yumaism?

Alike other religion, Yumaism is a collective beliefs and practices of the Limboo Society. Yumaism comprises of three important components of religion, namely **Ancestor Worship, Shamanism and Totemism**, encompassed and interwoven each other to form a religion

known as Yumaism. Ancestor worship is the custom of worshipping or venerating deceased ancestors who are considered still a part of the family, clan or society, and whose spirits are believed to have the power to intervene in the affairs of the living and thus worshipped as Gods and Goddesses. Yumaism is the ancestor worshipping name of religion of the Limboo Society, which encompass all the three components mentioned above, with collective beliefs and practices as in any case of a religion.⁴ Yumaism or *Yuma Samyo* (*Yuma* = grandmother, *Samyo* = religion in Limboo language) or *Yuma* religion shares all the three elements of a religion described in a religion.⁵ For example, Yumaism is a form of culture, consists of the shared beliefs, values, norms and ideas that create a common identity among the Limboo Society. The members of the Trinitarian Monotheistic Yumaism adherents believe in the existence of a Supreme Great Feminine Goddess –”Tagera Ningwaphuma”, Her matriarchal component *Yuma Sam*, Her Patriarchal component *Hang-Sam* or *Thoba Pa-Sam*, a host of spiritual external forces or energies – *Sammangs* (divinities) and *Sammang-Chyangs* (progenies and retinue of divinities); take part in all the ritualized practices (action on the beliefs) of *Mangenna*, *Nahangma*, *Tongsing*, *Yagrangsing*, *Sappok Chomen*, *Yangdang Phongma*, *Metkkam*, *Sam-sa:ma*, *Sam-choamma*, *Sitongsing Khema*, etc. identifying them as the members of Yumaism adherents.^{6,7,8}

The second component of Yumaism is **Shamanism**. Ancestor worship was followed by Shamanism. It is a technique of ecstasy. If the invocation of a new shaman is examined in Yumaism, the teenage boys and girls become shamans when their patrilineal or matrilineal ancestor soul reincarnate through life spirit possession; and they form their non-physical guide known as *Sam Sire* or *Yeming*, in the first phase of Yumaism development. The shamans so invocated are trained by the senior shamans on the techniques of ecstasy at least for three years to acquire the ability to function as independent shaman. Through the life

possession of the reincarnate ancestor divinity, the new shaman starts conducting hierophany rituals of shamanism. Thus in Yumaism, ancestor worship began first, which was followed by shamanism and it was not *vice versa* as the deceased ancestors constitute the Reincarnate Divinities of Incarnate shaman Phedangmas.^{4, 7, 8}

The third component of Yumaism is **Totemism**. Totemism is a belief in relationship between a group of people and totems or hierophany (plants or animals). In Yumaism, Totemism was encompassed and interwoven within Ancestor Worship-cum- Shamanism in the second phase of Yumaism development only after foraging or settling the ancestors of the Limboo Society in the Eastern Himalayas when Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang established Limbuwan Kingdom about 200 A.D.

Yumaism adherents believe in afterlife; if they follow the Yumaism way of life, they get an opportunity to go to the promised land and enjoy happiness at *Sangram Pedang Den* (heaven / Sacred land) with their apical ancestor great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma. While if they fail to follow the Yumaism way of life and commit suicide or any heinous crime, they have to suffer in afterlife; they will be sent to *Khema Yongsong Den* (hell or a purgatory world) for retribution. They get another opportunity to come and improve their *Suyo-Kheyo* or *Karma* only after their extreme negative *Karma* gets burnt away in that purgatory world. With this in view, it is important for the Yumaism adherents to follow Yumaism way of life and perform ritual practices such as *Mangenna*, *Nahangma*, *Tongsing*, and a host of rituals for purification of impurities from time to time to renew or refresh their life **through hierophany (death and resurrection)** rituals or soul journey to the sacred place established during the mythical age. The religious thoughts of Yumaism are based on two contrasting spaces known as sacred and profane dichotomy. The sacred has reality and value while the profane has no reality and value. Thus the members of Yumaism

adherents have to perform Eliade's "*Eternal Return*" while living to obtain reality and value and renew, purify or refresh their life after every six month, every year or every three year through participation in transcendent reality of the rituals while living. The adherents also perform afterlife rituals at death known as Eliade's "*Philosophical Eternal Return*" to enjoy the benefits of good karma at the promised land "*Sangram Pedang Den*" with the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma through Her patriarchal component "*Hang-Sam*" or "*Thoba Pa-Sam*". Thus, every adherent of Yumaism in this world has a sense of purpose in life too. Thus, Yumaism is a socio-cultural system of the Limboo Society.⁹

Alike other religions, Yumaism consists of a body of beliefs, a set of practices and a range of moral prescriptions. Yumaism experiences are social experiences, not only because they are experienced in a group of Yumaism adherents, but because Yumaism beliefs and practices are a part of Limboo culture. Yumaism invariably involves a belief in supernatural forces as stated above, which is set apart from daily life. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) calls the phenomenal world - the Sacred and the nominal world - the Profane.¹ The Sacred world is a source of comfort in the face of uncertainty. It lies down and provides norms, ethics and code of behavior. Thus, it provides a sense of identity to a group. It is woven into the social life in the form of beliefs, rituals and organization, and it influences our understanding of the way of the world and the pattern of our interaction with fellow human beings.

Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society believes **on infinity of life**. They believe that the human soul (intangible life) is the real form of life being lived since the dawn of consciousness, as it (the soul) is the blessing of the Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma (*Yuma Mang* = grand-mother Goddess) an apical non-human ancestor of the dawn of consciousness (mtDNA). The body (physical form / tangible life)

on the earth is just for purification of impurity of soul by adopting the Yumaism way of life and thus earning *Suyo* (positive *Karma*) through intentional acts, deeds, thoughts, words, speech etc. which they can practice only with their Outer Perception System (OPS) (*Nisam* and *Khemsam* sub-souls) and Multi or Inner Perception System (M/IPS) (*Sikkumsam*, *Ningwasam* and *Thonasam*) which they acquire with flesh in their physical form (body) on the earth realm. They believe that sequence of stay in the three realms of existence namely *Sangram Pedang Den* (heaven); *Iksading Khambek Den* (the earth) and *Khema Yongson Den* (hell) is temporary. They have to come to *Iksading Khambek Den* (the earth realm) again and again for purification of their infinite life by earning positive *karma* (*Suyo*) required for longer stay as an intangible existence at *Sangram Pedang Den* (heaven). They believe that *Suyo* or positive *Karma* is just like money deposited in a bank. You are allowed to enjoy happiness in the sacred space (*Sangram Pedang Den*) as long as your *Suyo/Karma* account permits you. Once your *Suyo/Karma* account is exhausted you have to take rebirth on the earth realm (*Iksa Khambek Den*) again. This is the only realm of existence where you can practice *Karma* to earn *Suyo* or positive *karma* with OPS and M/IPS with flesh. Existence is a continuum stretching through birth, a life spent in tangible form on earth, followed by death and intangible existence as a soul or spirit (as it was there before coming to a tangible life on earth) in another realm in the subsequent generation cycle. This is required for **purification of impurity** of their life (soul). That impurity could **happen while living for a long, long period** in the Sacred realm of existence - *Sangram Pedang Den* (heaven) due to incest (as caused by incestuous relationship of *Sutchhuru Suhangpheba* and *Tetlara Lahadongna*, mythical non-human ancestors), envy and jealousy (as of gods and goddesses), curse (as caused by curse of gods and goddess, as seen in the myth of goddess *Mujina Kheyongnama*), and a host of other reasons, which are the causes to get exhausted your *Suyo* or *Karma* account. They believe that

Goddesses Tagera Ningwaphuma is the purest, followed by other *Mangs* (*Sijoingmisa* or gods and goddesses), and the human beings are in the bottom line of impurity. They believe that “**Soul is for continuity of life and body is for purification of soul or real life of human beings; and that purification is possible only through practice of *Suyo* or *karma* on the earth realm of existence.**”

Further, like Hinduism, it is a ritualist religion and philosophy whose central theme is the transmigration of soul. It believes in the transmigration of soul infinitely to the sacred space *Sangram Pedang Den* (heaven) after purification of the soul. However, unlike Hinduism and Buddhism, Yumaism of the Limboo Society does not believe in liberation of soul or *Mukchhya*. It believes in the infinity of life and no death or release. The shaman religious priest Phedangmas just help the living and deceased’s souls and guide them for purification of impurities of life through Eliade’s “eternal return” while living and accompany soul journey to the Sacred realm of existence and handover the soul to the *Hang-Sam* through Eliade’s “philosophical eternal return” at death. Thus, Yumaism provides a deep sense of purpose of life to its adherents.^{4, 7, 9, 10}

Q4 What are the four important implications of a Religion from the Sociological point of view?

Religions have four important implications from the sociological point of view. We often think of theism, a belief in one or more supernatural deities, as central to religion, but this is not necessary from the sociological point of view. Some religions, such as Buddhism, believe in the **existence of spiritual forces** rather than a particular **God**. There are several implications of religion from the sociological point of view, of which the most important four are as follows:

- (i) **Sociologists are not concerned with whether religious beliefs are true or false.** From a sociological perspective, religions are regarded not as being decreed by God but as being socially constructed by human beings. As a result, sociologists put aside their personal beliefs or personal spirituality (e.g., Darap Yuma or Sigtam Sirijunga of Sikkim) when they study *religion*. **Sociologists are concerned with the human rather than the divine aspects of religion** and beliefs and rituals. Sociologists are concerned with the religious organization, its principal beliefs and values, its relation to the larger society, and its success or failure in recruiting and retaining believers.³
- (ii) **Sociologists are especially concerned with social organization of religion.** Religions are among the most important institutions in society. They are a primary source of the most deep-seated norms and values. At the same time, religions are typically practiced through an enormous variety of social forms.³ In Yumaism, Oral Mundhums are the Mythic or Symbolic Structure and thus is the most important institution of the Limboo society, where religious practices occur in the homes, some other natural settings or other social settings. **Religion is the way of life of its adherents, and is a primary source of the most deep-seated rituals, moral and social order (ideological pole) and norms and values (sensory pole) of their society.** The religious beliefs and practices are mostly incorporated into their daily life; and thus form the dynamic core of their culture.¹¹
- (iii) **Sociologists often view religions as a major source of social solidarity.** To the extent that religions provide believers with a common set of norms and values (sensory poles). They are an important source of social solidarity. Religious beliefs, rituals and bonds help to create a ‘**moral community**’ in which all members know how to behave towards one another. If a single religion

dominates a society, it may be an important source of social stability. If a society's members adhere to **numerous compelling religions**, however, religious differences may lead to destabilizing social conflicts. Recent examples of religious conflict within a society include struggles between Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in India; clashes between Muslims and Christians in Bosnia and other such examples.³

For example, Yumaism has provided a common set of norms and values to the Limboo Society from time immemorial, has been a major source of social solidarity so far in Nepal and Sikkim. The Limboo Society was sandwiched from both organized proselytizing religions of Buddhism and Hinduism since 1642 A.D. The Sikkim Chogyal's policy of *Lugs gnyis (Dharmaraja)* after 1640s (making all citizens Buddhists) could not affect Yumaism adherents much due to Teyongshi Sirijunga's (during 1730s - 1740s) effort of creating awareness among Limboo Society. But the Gorkha Administration's Nepal Unification Policy (making all citizens Hindu) started after 1774 onwards considerably affected Yumaism adherents and thus affected the social solidarity of the Limboo Society (of both Nepal and Sikkim). The Hindu agent Phalam Singh after adopting Sahayana (also Josmani after the preacher's name in Nepal) sect of *Shiv Panthi* Hinduism evolved in Garhwal region of India during 6th century, when he was at Myanmar in army, renamed by his Gurus as Phalgu Nanda. He came to Nepal in around 1918 A.D. and started proselytizing adherents of Yumaism to Sahayana Dharma in Limbuwan. His initial proselytization effort remained unsuccessful due to the presence of its Deity Shiva. Then he modified the Sahayana dharma replacing Shiva Deity with Tagera Ningwaphuma (*Yuma Mang*) but keeping all the rituals of Sahayana religion as it was/is. With some initial hitch; some Yumaism adherents started adopting Sahayana Dharma (popularly known as *Sattheyhangma*) by the Limbus of Nepal. This action of Phalgu Nanda created a division amidst Limboo Society of Nepal into *Samriti* (*Sam* means

equivalent, *riti* means tradition = equivalent to Hindu) and *Riti* (followers of traditional Yumaism), which considerably affected the Limboo Social Solidarity in Nepal in the beginning but it has affected in Sikkim too. Presently, both in Nepal and Sikkim, this past action of proselytizing of Hinduism is affecting the solidarity and stability of Limboo Society through their agents from Nepal and implanted agents like Darap Yuma.¹²

(iv) Sociologists tend to explain the appeal of religion in terms of social forces rather than in terms of purely personal, spiritual or psychological factors.

For many people, religious beliefs are a deeply personal experience, involving a strong sense of connection with forces that transcend everyday reality. Sociologists do not question the depth of such feelings and experiences, but they are unlikely to limit themselves to only a purely spiritual explanation of religious commitment. A person may claim that he or she become religious when God suddenly appears in vision, or falsely claim to be the incarnation of *Great Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma* like **Darap Yuma**; but sociologists are likely to look for more earthly explanations. Some researchers argue that the people often “get religion” when their fundamental sense of a social order is threatened by economic hardship, loneliness, loss or grief, physical suffering, or poor health.^{2-13, 14, 15} **In explaining the appeal of religious movements, sociologists are more likely to focus on the problems of the social order than on the psychological response of an individual.** For example, Darap Yuma claims to be *Yuma Mang* (*Tagera Ningwaphuma Mang*) herself; Singtamey Sirijunga claims to be the incarnation of Sirijung Hang of 9th century. However, in Yumaism there is no such tradition of *Mangs*’ reincarnation system known so far. Reincarnation of God is known only in Hinduism but not in Yumaism. Sirijunga Hang’s reincarnation was known as Teyongshi Sirijunga (patrilineal affiliation), and he propagated the Hang’s codified scripts reading and writing and Yuma Mundhum. However, Singtam Sirijunga

negates the Hang's script, Limboo Language and Yumaism justifying his own script, language and spirituality for the Limboo Society unknown to the Limboo Society so far. Thus, such personal, spiritual or psychological observations are unacceptable as a religion to the intellectuals of Limboo Society as Yumaism is a shared beliefs and rituals system.¹²

Q5 What are the three sociological approaches of religion?

Sociological approaches to religion are still strongly influenced by the ideas of the three classical sociologists: Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. None of the three were religious, and all thought that the significance of traditional religions would decrease in modern and post modern times. Their significant remarks on religion are as follows:

(a) Karl Marx's religion and inequality:

In Karl Marx (1818-1883) view, religion in its traditional form will, and shall, disappear; yet this is because the positive values embodied in religion can become guiding ideals for improving the lot of humanity on the earth. Religion defers happiness and rewards to the afterlife, teaching the resigned acceptance of existing conditions in this life. Attention is thus diverted away from inequalities and injustices in this world by the promise of what is to come in the next. According to him, religion has strong ideological elements: **religious beliefs and values often provide justification of the inequalities of wealth and power.**¹⁶

(b) Emile Durkheim's functionalism and religious ritual:

Unlike Marx, Durkheim (1858-1917) does not connect religion primarily with social inequalities or power; but instead relates it to the overall nature of the institutions of a society. **In his view totemism represents religion in its elementary form.** In this uncluttered form, he argued, it becomes easier to discern the

crucial defining features of religion. A totem was originally an animal or plant taken as having particular symbolic significance for a group. It is a sacred object, regarded with veneration and surrounded by various ritual activities. Durkheim defines **religion in terms of a distinction between the sacred and the profane**. Sacred objects and symbols, he holds are treated as apart from the routine aspects of existence, which are the realm of the profane. Eating the totemic animal or plant, except on special ceremonial occasions, is usually forbidden, and as a sacred object the totem is believed to have divine properties which separate it completely from other plants or animals that might be hunted, or crops gathered and consumed. Totem is sacred because it is the symbol of the group itself; it stands for the values central to the group or community. The reverence which people feel for the totem derives from the respect they hold for central social values. In religion, the object of worship is actually society itself. Religions are never just a matter of belief. All religions involve regular ceremonial and ritual activities in which a group of believers meet together. In collective ceremonials, a sense of group solidarity is affirmed and heightened in what Durkheim called collective effervescence – the heightened feeling of energy generated in collective gatherings and events. Ceremonials take individuals away from the concerns of profane social life into an elevated sphere, in which they sense contact with higher forces. These higher forces, attributed to totems, divine influences or gods, are really the expression of the influences of the collectivity over the individual. Ceremony and ritual are essential to bring the members of groups together. This is why they are found not only in regular situations of worship, but also in the various life crises when major social transitions are experienced – for example, birth, marriage and death. The collective ceremonials reaffirm group solidarity at a time when people are forced to adjust to major changes in their lives. Funeral rituals demonstrate the values of the group outline the passing of particular individuals, and so provide a means for bereaved people

to adjust to their altered circumstances. Religious ceremonies both originate new ideas and categories of thought, and reaffirm existing values. It actually conditions the modes of thinking of individuals in traditional cultures.

With the development of modern societies, Durkheim saw, the influence of traditional religion getting waned. Scientific thinking increasingly replaces religious explanation, ceremonial and ritual activities come to occupy only a small part of individuals' lives. Durkheim agrees with Marx that older forms of religion involving divine forces or gods are on the verge of disappearing. Yet he also says that religion, in altered forms, is likely to continue.¹⁶

Yumaism is the best example of a traditional religion described above by Durkheim. Yumaism religious beliefs are based on two contrasting dualism - **Sacred and profane dichotomy**, sacred or hierophanic plant and animal species and profane or non-hierophanic ordinary plant and animal species, mythical time or time of establishment of the sacred spaces and ordinary time, "eternal return" both while living for life renewal or life purification for vigor or strength and at death - "philosophical eternal return" to its origin. It believes in mythical ancestors as totem, a life representing celery flower plant totem, number of totem plants such as *Artemisia sp.* (*Namyoba*) of *Phejiri Phedangmas*, *Sapsing* and *Muktu* of *Sawara Yetchhammuk Samba*, *They Omlari Phung* (*Cymbidium*) of *Sibhak Yeba-Yema*, etc.; a number of totem animals such as *Sijuwa* (Swallow), *Makchere pu* (*Bhanger*), *Sellokwa* (*Niyawli*), *Uklinge* (partridge), etc.; domestic animals like buffalo, cattle, pig, fowl etc. for certain groups (clans or sub-clans) of Yumaism adherents. For example, buffalo is a totem animal of *Mangyung* clan; fowls or birds are totem animals of *Khewa* clan, goat is a totem animal of *Nembang* clan. The members of these clans abstain eating meat of these animals as they consider sacred.^{5, 7, 8}

(c) Max Weber's World religions and social change:

Unlike Durkheim and Karl Marx, Max Weber (1864-1920) concentrated his work on what he called the world religions, those that have attracted large numbers of believers and decisively affected the course of global history. He made detailed studies of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and ancient Judaism (1951, 1952, 1958, 1963), and in the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1976/1904-5), and elsewhere, he wrote extensively about the impact of Christianity on the history of the West. Weber's writings on religion differ from those of Durkheim in that religions **concentrate on the connection between religion and social change**, something to which Durkheim gave little attention. They contrast with the work of Marx because Weber argues that **religion is not necessarily a conservative force**; on the contrary, religiously inspired movements have often produced dramatic social transformations. Thus, Protestantism - particularly Puritanism - was the source of the capitalistic outlook found in the modern West. The early entrepreneurs were mostly Calvinists. Their drive to succeed, which helped initiate Western economic development, was originally prompted by a desire to serve God. Material success for them was a sign of divine favour.

Weber saw his research on the world religions as a single project. His discussion of the impact of Protestantism on the development of the West is part of a comprehensive attempt to **understand the influence of religion on social and economic life in varying cultures**. Analyzing the Eastern religions, Weber concluded that **they provided insuperable barriers to the development of industrial capitalism**, which took place in the West. This is not because the non-Western civilizations are backward; they (Orientals) have simply accepted values different from those which pre-dominated Europe.

In traditional China and India, Weber pointed out, there was at certain periods a significant development of commerce, manufacture

and urbanism, but these did not generate the radical patterns of social change involved in the rise of industrial capitalism in the West. **Religion was a major influence in inhibiting such change.** For example, Hinduism is what Weber called *its highest values stress escape from the toils of the material world to a higher plane of spiritual existence*. The religious feelings and motivations produced by Hinduism do not focus on controlling or shaping the material world. On the contrary, Hinduism sees material reality as a veil hiding the true concerns to which humankind should be oriented. Although China was for a longtime, the most powerful and culturally most developed civilization in the world, its dominant religious values of *emphasizing harmony with the world rather than promoting active mastery of it* acted as a brake on a strong commitment to economic development for its own sake.

Weber regarded Christianity as a **salvation religion**, involving the belief that human beings can be saved if they adopt the beliefs of the religion and follow its moral tenets. The notions of sin and of being rescued from the sinfulness by God's grace are important here. They generate a tension and an emotional dynamism essentially absent from the Eastern religions. **Salvation religions have a 'revolutionary' aspect.** While the religions of the East cultivate an attitude of passivity in the believer towards the existing order, Christianity involves a constant struggle against sin, and hence can stimulate revolt against the existing order of things.¹⁶

Q6 What are the three most important questions to the adherents of Yumaism?

In these three sociological approaches of religion illustrated above, the adherents of Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society should ask themselves the following three most important questions:

- (iii) *Sijoingmisa Mangs* or messenger gods and goddess of the great Goddess, such as *Sigera Yabhundin Porokmi Yambhami, Paoti Mang, Chokchokey Yangyangey Mang*, etc.
- (iv) '*Sammangs*' - the earth bound external forces or earthly energies such as *Him Sammangs* - household divinities of ancestral origin such as *Kappo Thungdang, Thoba Sammang, Charungma, Chanema, Mephrama, Lummayeppa*, and *Mangenna*;
- (v) *Tap Sammang* - nature divinities of the earth realm such as *Toktele Thungthangwa, Misesk, Taksongba, Tensengha, Kappelli Yobedangma, Piporima Yangkhonjoma, Singla mangwa, Keba Sammang, Sigilungma, Warakma, Wajangma, Tambhungma, Namgeppma, Tenchhama, Phakmurama, Payohangma, Yangphuma, Khewaphukma, Thimenamma*, and *Apchara*;
- (vi) *Mingsra Sammangs* - clan divinities or Totemic forces or energies of the clans such as *Yetchhama, Chokhoba, Dungdungey* and *Mudemba*;
- (vii) '*Sammang Chyangs*' - progenies and retinue of *Sammangs* such as *Samyang Nondangwa, Aphanacho, Chomana* of *Tamphungma Sammang* etc.;
- (viii) *Yeming* – reincarnate ancestor divinities of ancestor origin (patrilineal or matrilineal); and
- (ix) *Sam Sires* – group souls of animals used by shamanic Phedangmas as their **Non-physical guides** or helpers for conduct of hierophany rituals, etc.

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In such a situation, a number of earth bound external forces which are neither part of ‘the eternal return’ while living on the profane world, nor ‘philosophical eternal return’ at death, for purification of infinite life, are treated as part of these eternal returns and given blood sacrifices of animal offerings for their appeasement unnecessarily. Thus, the adherents incur uneconomical expenses due to the ignorance of the Phedangmas and the adherent society as a whole. It has acted as a brake on economical development of the Limboo Society.

Fourthly, most of these earth-bound external forces or energies were worshipped when the primitive society was unknown of such external forces affecting them in their daily health care, etc. Now, in this age of scientific awareness where more competitive and economical cause and cure of health care is known, the adherents still worship these earth-bound forces or energies as divinities for their health care. It has also acted as a brake on economical development to the Limboo Society.

(c) What are the changes being envisaged in Yumaism for a cost-effective dynamic society at present?

In view of the above problems in Yumaism, the Limboo society has determined to take up some corrective measures as follows:

(i) Mang-him construction:

Since 1983 onwards, a number of *Mang-hims* are being constructed in the Limboo habitation villages in Sikkim and West Bengal. As Durkheim has pointed out the archaic Limboo Society’s religious thought is mainly based on ‘two contrasting dualism’ – Sacred space established during the Mythical Age (*Chotling, Mangnna Yock, etc.*) and Profane (*Pangwana Den*). The adherents of Yumaism acquire reality or value only to

the extent of their participation in re-actualization or imitation of these sacred rituals conducted by the religious priest (Phedangmas) in a transcendent reality of the rituals. There were no such established tangible heritages or sacred spaces easily accessible in the profane world, for collective prayer or worship without Phedangmas earlier, although private individual's prayer place exists in every household as *Mangdhan*; and a temporary *lasso* (altar) is constructed for offering newly harvested crops, crop-products and *phaksotey* (piglets) to *Yuma-Sammang* and for rituals of *Sammangs* by Phedangmas. In other words, collective pray and worship of gods and goddesses on the profane world was lacking. Further, due to lack of Phedangmas' Institution and also with the influence of modern environment, there are limited knowledgeable Phedangmas for the proper conduct of Hierophany rituals. To overcome these difficulties, establishment of '*Mang-hims*' in the Limboo villages as a 'Sacred spaces' for the adherents' collective prayer or worship to Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma (*Yuma Mang*) through *Yuma Sam* have been a successful alternative for the society now.

Mang-him establishment provides a meeting place of this world (profane) and the other world (Sacred) and avoids the role of intermediaries (Phedangmas). It is also desired to abolish the intermediary role of Phedangmas to some extent between the profane world (human beings) and the sacred world (gods and goddesses' world), which has become extremely cost-in-effective even for a simple pray and worship ritual. On the other hand, at least one Phedangma who will be looking after a *Mang-him*, will also be able to provide services to the Limboo households in the villages around the *Mang-him*. This is definitely a positive step for cost-effectiveness and better service to the Limboo Society. Further, it becomes a tangible heritage and a symbol of social solidarity of Yumaism adherents.

(ii) **Establishment of Cultural Study Center at Yumang Thegu, West Sikkim:**

A proposal to establish an institution at Yumang Thegu, West Sikkim was started during 2006 but the progress is at the snail pace. The purpose is to train the religious priests Phedangmas in Yumaism on the line of *Sheda* Institution of Buddhism or *Sanskrit Pathsalas* of Hinduism being run in Sikkim. This project if completed in time will not only create awareness to the Yumaism adherents but also train our young Phedangmas for better service to the Limboo Society. This will bring uniformity in the Yumaism religious Mundhums (sacred narratives) and ritual practices; and thus provide cost-effective conduct of rituals pertaining to both the 'eternal returns'. This institution may also bring a better understanding of beliefs and rituals of Yumaism and act as a source of inspiration to the Limboo Society.

(iii) **Devotional Songs:**

Religious pray through devotional songs is one of the important aspects of Yumaism, which has recently been started in Sikkim. Although, *Nisammang Sawa Samloo*, *Phungwana Samloo*, *Hakpare Samloo*, *Sammudhung Samloo*, etc. were there in the society since time immemorial, the latest devotional songs brought about by Sri B. B. Muringla and his associates from Lingchom and Hee, West Sikkim are new innovations and praiseworthy.

Q7 What do you know about the history of Religion?

The **history of religion** refers to the written record of human religious experiences and ideas. This period of religious history begins with the invention of writing about 5,200 years ago (3200 BCE) in the Near East. The prehistory of religion relates to a study of religious beliefs that existed prior to the advent of written records. The timeline of religion is a comparative chronology of religion. A

number of beliefs and rituals of tribal people still survive in isolation as oral tradition in the world. Such unknown religious traditions are becoming extinct unrecorded every day.

The school of religious history was the first to systematically study religion as a socio-cultural phenomenon. It depicted religion as evolving with human culture, from primitive polytheism to ethical monotheism. The *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* appeared at a time when scholarly study of the Bible and church history was flourishing in Germany and elsewhere. The study of religion is important because religion has been a major force in many human cultures. Religion has often shaped civilizations' law and moral codes, social structure, art and music.

The 19th century saw a dramatic increase in knowledge about other cultures and religions, and also the establishment of economic and social histories of progress. The "history of religions" school sought to account for this religious diversity by connecting it with the social and economic situation of a particular group.

Typically, religions were divided into stages of progression from simple to complex societies, especially from polytheistic to monotheistic and from extempore to organized. But there are now claims that religion evolved from polytheism to monotheism has now been discredited. Religions can be classified as circumcising and non-circumcising, proselytizing (attempting to convert people of other religion) and non-proselytizing. Many religions share common beliefs.

Q8 What you know about Prehistoric Evidences of Religion?

When humans first became religious remains unknown, but there is credible evidence of religious behavior from the Upper Paleolithic era (50,000 – 13,000 years ago) and possibly earlier.⁴

(i) Paleolithic Burials:

The earliest evidence of religious thought is based on the ritual treatment of the dead. Most animals display only a casual interest in the dead of their own species. Ritual burial thus represents a significant change in human behavior. Ritual burials represent an awareness of life and death and a possible belief in the afterlife. Burials with grave-goods clearly signify religious practices and concern for the dead that transcends daily life.¹⁷

The earliest evidence for treatment of the dead comes from Atapuerca in Spain. At this location the bones of 30 individuals believed to be *Homo heidelbergensis* have been found in a pit.¹⁸ *Homo heidelbergensis* or sometimes *Homo rhodesiensis* is an extinct species of the genus *Homo* which lived in Africa, Europe and western Asia from at least 600,000 years ago, and may date back 1,300,000 years. It survived until 200,000 to 250,000 years ago. It is probably the ancestor of *Homo sapiens* in Africa and the Neanderthals in Europe, and perhaps also the *Denissovans* in Asia. Neanderthals are also contenders for the first hominids to intentionally bury the dead. They may have placed corpses into shallow graves along with stone tools and animal bones. The presence of these grave-goods may indicate an emotional connection with the deceased and possibly a belief in the afterlife. Neanderthal burial sites include Shanidar in Iraq and Krapina in Croatia and Kebara Cave in Israel.¹⁹

The earliest known burial of modern humans is from a cave in Israel located at *Qafzeh*. Human remains have been dated to 100,000 years ago. Human skeletons were found stained with red ochre (hydrated iron oxide or limonite). A variety of grave-goods were found at the burial site. The mandible of a wild boar was found placed in the arms of one of the skeletons. Burial rituals incorporating grave goods may have been invented by the anatomically modern

hominids who emigrated from Africa to the Middle East roughly 100,000 year ago.²⁰ Matt Rossano suggests that the period in between 80,000–60,000 years after humans retreated from the Levant to Africa was a crucial period in the evolution of religion.²¹

(ii) The use of symbolism:

The use of symbolism in religion is a universal established phenomenon. Archeologist Steven Mithen contends that it is common for religious practices to involve the creation of images and symbols to represent supernatural beings and ideas. Because supernatural beings violate the principles of the natural world, there will always be difficulty in communicating and sharing supernatural concepts with others. This problem can be overcome by anchoring these supernatural beings in material form through representational art. When translated into material form, supernatural concepts become easier to communicate and understand.²¹ Due to the association of art and religion, evidence of symbolism in the fossil record is indicative of a mind capable of religious thoughts. Art and symbolism demonstrates a capacity for abstract thought and imagination necessary to construct religious ideas. Wentzel van Huyssteen states that the translation of the non-visible through symbolism enabled early human ancestors to hold beliefs in abstract terms.²²

Some of the earliest evidence of symbolic behavior is associated with Middle Stone Age sites in Africa. From at least 100,000 years ago, there is evidence of the use of pigments such as red ochre (iron oxide mixed with different quantities and qualities of clay and other minerals is called red bole, *cinabrese*, limonite. Artificial variety: mars red). Pigments are of little practical use to hunter gatherers, thus evidence of their use is interpreted as symbolic or for ritual purposes. Among extant hunter gatherer populations around the world, red ochre is still used extensively for ritual purposes. It has been argued that it is universal among human cultures for the color red to represent blood, sex, life and death.²³

The use of red ochre as a proxy for symbolism is often criticized as being too indirect. Some scientists, such as Richard Klein and Steven Mithen, only recognize unambiguous forms of art as representative of abstract ideas. Upper Paleolithic (50,000 – 13,000 years ago) cave art provides some of the most unambiguous evidence of religious thought from the Paleolithic Age. Cave paintings at Chauvet depict creatures that are half human and half animal.

Q9 What do you know about Organized Religion?

Organized religion traces its roots to the Neolithic revolution that began 11,000 years ago in the Near East but may have occurred independently in several other locations around the world. The invention of agriculture transformed many human societies from a hunter gatherer lifestyle to a sedentary lifestyle. The consequences of the Neolithic revolution included a population explosion and acceleration in the pace of technological development. The transition from foraging bands to states and empires precipitated more specialized and developed forms of religion that reflected the new social and political environment. While bands and small tribes possess supernatural beliefs, these beliefs do not serve to justify a central authority, justify transfer of wealth or maintain peace between unrelated individuals.

SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF HUMANS

Period years ago	Society type	Number of individuals
100,000–10,000	Bands	10s–100s
10,000–5,000	Tribes	100s–1,000s
5,000–3,000	Chiefdoms	1,000s–10,000s
3,000–1,000	States	10,000s–100,000s
1,000–present	Empires	100,000–1,000,000s

Organized religion emerged as a means of providing social and economic stability through the following ways:

- Justifying the central authority, this in turn possessed the right to collect taxes in return for providing social and security services to the state.
- Bands and tribes consist of small number of related individuals. However states and nations are composed of thousands of unrelated individuals. Jared Diamond argues that organized religion served to provide a bond between unrelated individuals who would otherwise be more prone to enmity. He argues that the leading cause of death among hunter gatherer societies is murder.^{24, 25}
- Religions that revolved around moralizing gods may have facilitated the rise of large, cooperative groups of unrelated individuals.²⁵
- The states born out of the Neolithic revolution, such as those of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia (2400-2300 BCE.), and later revolutions of Kathmandu Valley's 32 Kirat King starting from Yalamber 1,779 B.C. or started as late as Lumbuan's Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang by 200 A.D., were theocracies with chiefs, kings and emperors playing dual roles of political and spiritual leaders.^{8, 25} Anthropologists have found that virtually all state societies and chiefdoms from around the world have been found to justify political power through divine authority. This suggests that political authority co-opts collective religious belief to bolster itself.

Q10 How Invention of writing enabled development of Religion?

Following the Neolithic revolution, the pace of technological development (cultural evolution) intensified due to the invention of writing 5000 years ago. Symbols that became words later on made

effective communication of ideas possible. Printing invented only over a thousand years ago increased the speed of communication exponentially and became the main spring of cultural evolution. Writing is thought to have been first invented in either Sumeria or Ancient Egypt and was initially used for accounting. Soon after, writing was used to record oral myths. The first religious texts mark the beginning of religious history. The Pyramid Texts from ancient Egypt are one of the oldest known religious texts in the world, dating to between 2400–2300 BCE.^{26,27} Writing played a major role in sustaining and spreading organized religion. In pre-literate societies, religious ideas were based on oral traditions, the contents of which were articulated by shamans and remained limited to the collective memories of the society's inhabitants. With the advent of writing, information that was not easy to remember could easily be stored in sacred texts that were maintained by a select group (clergy). Humans could store and process large amounts of information with writing that otherwise would have been forgotten. Writing therefore enabled religions to develop coherent and comprehensive doctrinal systems that remained independent of time and place.²⁸ Writing also brought a measure of objectivity to human knowledge. Formulation of thoughts in words and the requirement for validation made mutual exchange of ideas and the sifting of generally acceptable from not acceptable ideas possible. The generally acceptable ideas became objective knowledge reflecting the continuously evolving framework of human awareness of reality that Karl Popper calls 'verisimilitude' – a stage on the human journey to truth.²⁹

Q11 What do you know about the Religion of the Neolithic Revolution?

The religions of the Neolithic peoples provide evidence of some of the earliest known forms of organized religions. The Neolithic settlement of Catalhoyuk (7,500 BCE - 5,700 BCE), in what is now Turkey, was home to about 8,000 people and remains the largest known settlement from the Neolithic period. James Mellaart, who

excavated the site, believed that Çatalhöyük was the spiritual center of central Anatolia.^{4,30} A striking feature of Çatalhöyük are its female figurines. Mellaart, the original excavator, argued that these well-formed, carefully made figurines, carved and molded from marble, blue and brown limestone, schist, calcite, basalt, alabaster, and clay, represented a female deity of the Great Goddess type. Although a male deity existed as well, "...statues of a female deity far outnumber those of the male deity, who moreover, does not appear to be represented at all after Level VI".³¹ To date, eighteen levels have been identified. These careful figurines were found primarily in areas Mellaart believed to be shrines. One, however – a stately goddess seated on a throne flanked by two female lions – was found in a grain bin, which Mellaart suggests might have been a means of ensuring the harvest or protecting the food supply.³²

The Pyramid Texts from ancient Egypt are one of the oldest known religious texts in the world dating to between 2400 and 2300 BCE.²⁷ ²⁸ Sirijunga Teyongshi's writings (1704-1741) of Yumaism Mundhums (in Sirijunga script) are the oldest religious writings of the Limboo Society available to us today. This was followed by Lalshore Sendang (1840-1926) and Iman Singh Chemjong (1904-1967) in Sirijunga and Devnagari script, followed by J. R. Subba in Sirijunga Script and its analysis in English. Writing played a major role in sustaining organized religion by standardizing and understanding religious ideas regardless of time or location.

Q12 What is the Value of religion?

Organized religion emerged as a means of providing social and economic stability to large populations through the following ways:

- Organized religion served to justify the central authority, which in turn possessed the right to collect taxes in return for providing social and security services to the state. The empires of Ancient Egypt and

Mesopotamia were theocracies, with chiefs, kings and emperors playing dual roles of political and spiritual leaders.²⁵ Virtually all state societies and chiefdoms around the world have similar political structures where political authority is justified by divine sanction.

- Organized religion emerged as means of maintaining peace between unrelated individuals. Bands and tribes consist of small number of related individuals. However states and nations are composed of thousands or millions of unrelated individuals. Jared Diamond (1997) argues that organized religion served to provide a bond between unrelated individuals who would otherwise be more prone to enmity. He argues that the leading cause of death among hunter gatherer societies is murder.²⁵

Q13 What do you know about the Religion in Axial Age, Middle Ages, and Modern Period?

(i) Religion in Axial Age: The period from 900 to 200 BCE has been described by historians as the axial age, a term coined by German philosopher Karl Jaspers. According to Jaspers, this is the era of history when “the spiritual foundations of humanity were laid simultaneously and independently. . . .and these are the foundations upon which humanity still subsists today”.³³ Intellectual historian Peter Watson (2002) has summarized this period as the foundation of many of humanity’s most influential philosophical traditions, including monotheism in Persia (6th century B.C.) and Canaan (6th century B.C.), Platonism in Greece (4th century B.C.), Buddhism (between 6th and 4th century B.C.), Jainism (between 6th and 5th century B.C.) and Hinduism (5th century B.C.) in India, and Confucianism (between 6th and 5th century B.C.) and Taoism (between 4th and 3rd centuries B.C.) in China. These ideas would become institutionalized in time, for example Ashoka’s role in the spread of Buddhism (3rd century B.C.), or the role of platonic philosophy in Christianity (between 2nd and 3rd century B.C.) at its foundation.³⁴

(ii) **Religion in Middle Ages:** Newer present-day world religions established themselves throughout Eurasia during the Middle Ages by: Christianization of the Western world (16th century); Buddhist missions to East Asia (between 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D.); the decline of Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent (between 6th and 12th century); and the spread of Islam throughout the Middle East (between 6th and 7th century), Central Asia (1st century), North Africa (between 6th and 7th century) and parts of Europe (8th century) and India (7th century).

During the Middle Ages, Muslims were in conflict with Zoroastrians during the Islamic conquest of Persia (7th century); Christians were in conflict with Muslims during the Byzantine-Arab Wars (between 7th and 11th century), Crusades (11th century), Reconquista (between 11th and 12th century), Ottoman Wars of Europe and Inquisition (between 15th and 16th century); Shamans were in conflict with Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims and Christians during the Mongol invasions (between 12th and 14th century); and Muslims were in conflict with Hindus and Sikhs during Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent (between 13th and 16th century).

Many medieval religious movements emphasized mysticism, such as the Cathars and related movements in the West (14th century), the Jews in Spain (14th century), the *Bhakti* movement in India (between 5th and 9th century) and Sufism in Islam (between 7th and 8th century). Monotheism reached definite forms in Christian Christology (3rd century) and in Islamic *Tawhid* (7th century). Hindu monotheist notions of Brahman likewise reached their classical form with the teaching of Adi Shankara (8th century).

(iii) **Religion in Modern period:** European colonization during the 15th to 19th centuries resulted in the spread of Christianity to Sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, Australia and the Philippines. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century played a major

role in the rapid spread of the Protestant Reformation under leaders such as Martin Luther (16th century) and John Calvin (16th century). Wars of religion followed, culminating in the Thirty Years War which ravaged central Europe (1618-1648). Both Protestant and Catholic churches competed in a global endeavor to Christianize the world (17th century).

The 18th century saw the beginning of secularization in Europe, gaining momentum after the French Revolution (between 18th and 19th century). By the late 20th century religion had declined to only a weak force in most of Europe. In the 20th century, the regimes of Communist Eastern Europe and Communist China were explicitly anti-religious. A great variety of new religious movements originated in the 20th century, many proposing syncretism of elements of established religions. Adherence to such new movements is limited, however, remaining below 2% worldwide in the 2000s (decade). Adherents of the classical world religions account for more than 75% of the world's population, while adherence to indigenous tribal religions has fallen to 4%. By 2005, adherents of organized religions in per cent were: Christianity 33.56, Islam 18.26, Hindu 13.50, Buddhist 5.99, Chinese folk 2.65, New Religion 2.28, etc. and 16.32 of the world's population identify as Non-religious. New Religious Movement (NRM) is a term used to refer to a religious faith or an ethical, spiritual, or philosophical movement of recent origin that is not part of an established denomination, church, or religious body.

Q14 What are the Archaeological evidences on Origin of Religion?

The earliest evidence of religious ideas dates back several hundred thousand years to the Middle and Lower Paleolithic periods. Archeologists refer to apparent intentional burials of early *Homo sapiens* from as early as 300,000 years ago as evidence of religious

ideas. Other evidence of religious ideas includes symbolic artifacts from Middle Stone Age sites in Africa. However, the interpretation of early Paleolithic artifacts, with regard to how they relate to religious ideas, remains controversial. Archeological evidence from more recent periods is less controversial. A number of artifacts from the Upper Paleolithic (50,000-13,000 years ago) are generally interpreted by scientists as representing religious ideas. Examples of Upper Paleolithic remains associated with religious beliefs include the lion man, the Venus figurines, cave-paintings (petroglyphs, pictograms and logograms) from Chauvet Cave and Azikh Cave, and the elaborate ritual burial from Sungir. Stone tools were also found in Chauvet Cave and Azikh Cave dating back to the Upper Palaeolithic period.³⁵

Ethnological and archaeological researches in the northern part of Iran and Azerbaijan have revealed remarkable information about shamanism evolution and development in the prehistory at the intersection of Anatolia, Causasus, Zagros and the Central plateau of Iran. The fourth oldest *Neanderthal* human jaw-bone relic was found in Azikh Cave. The first hominid relic was discovered by Louis Leakey and his wife, Mary and son Richard in Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania; and second, in Kenya; and third, in France.³⁶

Petroglyphs (rock engravings) are pictogram and logogram images created by removing parts of a rock surface by incising, picking, carving and abrading. They are found worldwide, and are often associated with prehistoric peoples. Pictogram is an image drawn or painted on a rock face. Some petroglyphs are dated to approximately the Neolithic and later Upper Paleolithic boundary, about 10,000 to 12,000 years ago, if not earlier. Sites in Australia have petroglyphs that are estimated to be as much as 27,000 years old, and in other places could be as old as 40,000 years. Around 7,000 to 9,000 years ago, other precursors of writing systems, such as pictograms (image drawn or painted on a rock face) and ideograms (graphic symbol that represents an idea or concept), began to appear. Petroglyphs are found common on the

epitaph stones (*Lakaklung-Namkaklung Tembhe*) of *Falaincha* and Cemetery of the Limboo death memorials even today. Petroglyphs were still common though, and some cultures continued using them much longer, even until contact with Western culture was made in the 20th century. Petroglyphs have been found in all parts of the globe except Antarctica with highest concentrations in parts of Africa, Scandinavia, Siberia, South Western Asia, North America and Australia.

Gobustan Cave of Azerbaijan, is one of the important site of Petroglyphs. Primitive humans had settlements in Gobustan, 60 km south of west Baku where their petroglyphs show their spiritual culture. The Gobustan Petroglyphs, now a UNESCO World Heritage site (I visited and took photographs in April 2013, presented on this book cover), are unique. The first petroglyphs were created over 12,000 years ago in the Stone Age and drawings were added on this rock surface until medieval times. The tribes inhabiting those areas were Caucasoid nomads, isolated from the main areas of development. Early man held religious ceremonies here. The petroglyphs on limestone rocks show man and woman, shamans, shaman dances, wild bulls, deer, wild horses, boar, hunting scenes, tambourine (stone musical instrument); and dug-out holes on rocks for collection of sacred rain-water and sacrificial animal-blood for offerings to the gods and goddesses as well as for drinking. In Yumaism rain-water collected on rocks and tree-trunks in nature are the most sacred for offering to gods and goddesses. In Gobustan, the dug-out holes on rocks for rainwater or sacrificial animal-blood collection for offering to their gods and goddess may be for the same purpose or otherwise due to water scarcity. The majority of the pictures show ceremonial scenes, prayers and daily life. Rowing boats are prominent among petroglyphs from the Neolithic period, showing that the ancient inhabitants of Gobustan had access to the sea too. There is a sign of the Sun on the front of each boat and in some boats the Moon at the hind-end. Fish and fishing nets can be seen among the petroglyphs, too. There are also

schematic drawings. People are shown raising their hands in prayer with the Bronze Age signs of the Sun and the Moon above them. There are drawings of horsemen holding weapons in their hands that date back to the Iron Age. About 6,000 petroglyphs, pictograms and logograms have been found inside and near the caves in Gobustan. One stone bears a Latin inscription from the first century A.D., referring to the Emperor Domitian's XII legion. Drawings from the early Middle Ages depict symbols, while pictograms of caravans and Arabic inscriptions began to emerge later. An inscription from the 13th century reads "Imad Shaki was here, he prayed and went away."

Stones with holes on each side, designed for tethering animals near the caves, are thought to have been left by pilgrims in medieval times. Many holes can be seen on the rocks designed to hold sacred rain-water or the sacrificial animal-blood collection for offering. The petroglyphs, pictograms and logograms show that the area was of religious site and had ceremonial importance from the Stone Age until the late Middle Age. The caves like that of Gobustan, were undoubtedly "temples" in which sacred ceremonies and rituals were held. Therefore, several ceremonies have always being administered in these cave-sites just like in churches and temples. Shamans in Azerbaijan are available even today. They are females known as *Amchi*. They perform to cure phobic illnesses through magic methods.

The primitive residential premises and other architectural landmarks of Qala, Absheron Peninsula of Azerbaijan are 3-2nd millennia B.C. The Qala Ethnology Museum Complex provides conservation of primitive mounds, rock carvings, Stones worshipped as God, ancient jewellery, utensils and remains of residences. From these stone worship of Caucasoid primitives, idol worship system or theophany has originated in Caucasoid Human Race (I visited this site in April 2013, and photograph of a stone worshipped by 3-2nd Millennium B.C. Caucasoids is on the [book cover](#)).

Interpretations of these petroglyphs, pictograms, logograms of the caves are numerous. There are many theories to explain their purpose, depending on their location, age, and the type of images. They may be astronomical markers, maps, and other forms of symbolic communications, including a form of “pre-writing”; symbols of communicating, by-product of other rituals, musical instruments (stone tambourine), and deep cultural and religious significance for the societies. These petroglyphs, pictograms, logograms of the caves have been interpreted as symbolic or ritual languages; religious meaning genetically inherited symbolic structure or atavistic or archetypal symbols of the human brain made by shamans in an altered state of consciousness, perhaps induced by the use of natural hallucinogens. These petroglyphs are “hard-wired” into the human brain; they frequently occur in visual disturbances and hallucinations brought on by drugs, migraine and other stimuli.³⁷

Archaeologists opine that the Petroglyphs, Pictograms, Logograms on ancient caves of Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages are the evidences of origin and development of Religion. The rock carvings of shamans, shaman dances, rock holes for collection of sacred rain-water and sacrificial animal-blood for offering to their gods and goddesses show that these caves were the temples of the primitive nomads; and religious ceremonies held regularly for the entire Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods. The individuals become shaman through life possession of patrilineal or matrilineal reincarnation of their deceased ancestors. This further evidence that ‘**Ancestor Worship**’ followed by ‘**Shamanism**’ was the beginning of religion of the nomadic humanity. From these archaeological evidences it is concluded that Religion originated from “Ancestor Worship”, which was followed by evolution of **Shamans**, (as the deceased ancestors constitute the Incarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shaman Phedangmas in Yumaism) and “**Shamanism**” from the Upper Paleolithic Age (50,000 – 13,000 years ago).

Q15 Is Religion originated from Ancestor Worship?

Yes, it is. All the above archaeological evidences indicate that “**Ancestor Worship**” is the origin of Religion. Ancestor worship led to evolution of shamans as the deceased ancestors constitute the Incarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shamans; and thus the ancestor worship followed shamanism and not *vice versa*. If the heredity and invocation of new shaman religious priests - Phedangmas of the Limboo Society is examined, a layman or laywoman becomes a shaman Phedangma only at the instance of life possession of a patrilineal or matrilineal reincarnation of their deceased ancestor soul to a teenage boy or girl. The reincarnate soul possessed to the teenage, forms the divinity of the shaman known as *Sam Sire* or *Yeming*. The life possessed shaman, prays, worships and meditates his reincarnated divinity; and through this non-physical guide or *Sam Sire* or *Yeming*, the shaman functions all the shamanic or hierophany rituals in shamanism.^{4, 7, 38, 38, 40}

The Mundhum *Yehang Se:ma* (sacred narratives) reveals that the Limboo ancestors in their formative period prayed and worshipped their apical ancestor grand-mother Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma “for seeking Her help to regain the stability of mind and readjust to situations of emotional stress that habitually arose when they were somewhere in the North Eastern Eurasia”(immediately after their evolution). It is quite logical that when a child is in emotional stress, he or she seeks his or her parents for help. Similarly, when a man or woman is in emotional stress he or she looks for his or her parents or deceased ancestors for help. Slowly, the routine work of looking for help to the deceased ancestors becomes a worship of ancestors. Thus, “**Ancestor Worship**”, was the first religion originated in the primitive nomadic ancestors of the Limboo ancestors to regain the stability of mind and readjust to situations of emotional stress. Thus, it is concluded from the Mundhum that religion was originated from “**Ancestor Worship**” caused by psycho-biological processes of emotional stress to the human primitive

ancestors in Upper Paleolithic Age (50,000 – 13,000 years ago). The continuous worship of his or her deceased ancestors followed their dreams and then reincarnation of their ancestors. In due course of time, evolution of **Shaman** took place as **the deceased ancestors constitute the Incarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shamans** and from there evolution of **Shamanism**. Thereafter, Shamanism was encompassed and interwoven within “**Ancestor Worship**” and became a dominant religion of the nomadic humanity spread throughout the world as evidenced by worldwide spread of Petroglyphs, Pictograms and Logograms as in the case of the first phase of Yumaism development in the nomadic life of the Limboo ancestors.^{4, 7, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40}

Even in the organized religions, the origin of religion is the Ancestor Worship. In Christianity, ancestor of antiquity (Father or God) is worshipped through Jesus. Jesus is the ancestor of Jews, and so Christianity originated from the ancestor worship. In Islam, Prophet Muhammad is the ancestor of Arabians. They pray and worship the ancestor of antiquity (ancestor god of antiquity Allah) through him. In Hinduism, Brahma, Bishnu and Maheswar are all trinity ancestor Gods. Thus, ancestor worship is found in every primitive as well as organized religions. The adherents of every religion desire to either transcend to their realm of origin or ancestors or release; and thus, every religion is originated directly or indirectly from Ancestor Worship.

Q&A 16-33

Analysis on Evolutionary Approaches

16. What do you know about Non-human Religious behaviour?
17. What do you understand by setting the stages for Human Religion?
18. What is Evolutionism?
19. What is Positivism?
20. What are Intellectualism and the Intellectualist Theories of Religion?
21. What do you understand by the theory of Nature-Myth School or Naturism?
22. Do you find traces of Naturism in Yumaism?
23. What is Ghost Theory or Animatism?
24. "Ancestor worship is the root of every religion". Do You Agree?
25. What is Soul Theory or Animism?
26. Are the Hierophany or Shamanic beliefs and rituals of Yumaism rooted on Animism?
27. What do you know about the theory of Dependence on Magic?
28. Do you find traces of the theory of Dependence on Magic (occult practices) in Yumaism?
29. Is Religion originated in Psycho-biological Processes?
30. Is Religion a product of fear?
31. Is Religion a product of Religious Feelings and Thrill?
32. Is Religion a product of Emotional Stress?
33. Is Religion a product of Feeling of Guilt?

Q16 What do you know about Non-human Religious behaviour?

Zoologists view that the humanity's closest living relatives are common chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) and pigmy chimpanzees or bonobos (*Pan paniscus*). The former is a male-dominated and strict hierarchal species of savannahs of West and Central Africa while the latter is with a high level of sexual behaviour and matriarchal species of Congo Basin. These primates share a common ancestor with humans who lived between four and six million years ago. It is for this reason that chimpanzees and bonobos are viewed as the best available surrogate for this common ancestor.¹ Barbara King argues that while non-human primates are not religious, they do exhibit some traits that would have been necessary for the evolution of religion. These traits include high intelligence, a capacity for symbolic communication, a sense of social norms, realization of "self" and a concept of continuity.² This concludes that religion is not a spontaneous origin and development on human beings, but evolved and developed with evolution of life in this universe.

Q17 What do you understand by Setting the stage for human religion?

The primitive religion had a biologic origin, a natural evolutionary development. In the evolution of the human species, worship in its primitive manifestations appears long before the mind of man is capable of formulating the more complex concepts of life now and in the hereafter which deserve to be called religion. Early religion was wholly intellectual (cognitive) in nature and was entirely predicated on associational circumstances. The objects of worships were altogether suggestive, they consisted of the things of nature which were close at hand, or which loomed large in the common place experience of the simple minded primitives.

There is inconclusive evidence that *Homo neanderthalensis* may have buried their dead which is evidence of the use of ritual. The use of burial rituals is evidence of religious activity, but there is no other evidence that religion existed in human culture before humans reached behavioural modernity.³ However, many animal species grieve death and loss; house crows for instance.

The scientific or biological evolutionary origin of religions, theorizes about the emergence of religious behaviour during the course of human evolution. The following human evolutionary development caused setting the stages for human religion.

(i) Increased brain size:

In this set of theories, the religious mind is one consequence of a brain that is large enough to formulate religious and philosophical ideas.⁴ During human evolution, the hominid brain tripled in size, peaking 500,000 years ago. Much of the brain's expansion took place in the neocortex. This part of the brain is involved in processing higher order cognitive functions that are connected with human religiosity. The neocortex is associated with self consciousness, language and emotion. According to Dunbar's theory, the relative neocortex size of any species correlates with the level of social complexity of the particular species. The neocortex size correlates with a number of social variables that include social group size and complexity of mating behaviors. In chimpanzees the neocortex occupies 50% of the brain, whereas in modern humans it occupies 80% of the brain. Robin Dunbar argues that the critical event in the evolution of the neocortex took place at the speciation of archaic *Homo sapiens* about 500,000 years ago. His study indicates that only after the speciation event is the neocortex large enough to process complex social phenomena such as language and religion. The study is based on a regression analysis of neocortex size plotted against a number of social behaviors of living and extinct hominids.⁵

Stephen Jay Gould suggests that religion may have grown out of evolutionary changes which favoured larger brains as a means of cementing group coherence among savannah hunters, after that larger brain enabled reflection on the inevitability of personal mortality.⁶

(ii) **Tool use:**

Lewis Wolpert argues that causal beliefs that emerged from tool use played a major role in the evolution of belief. The manufacture of complex tools requires creating a mental image of an object that does not exist naturally before actually making the artifact. Furthermore, one must understand how the tool would be used, which requires an understanding of causality.⁷ Accordingly, the level of sophistication of stone tools is a useful indicator of causal beliefs. Wolpert contends use of tools composed of more than one component, such as hand axes, represents an ability to understand cause and effect. However, recent studies of other primates indicate that causality may not be a uniquely human trait. For example, chimpanzees have escaped from pens that were closed with multiple latches, that were previously thought could only have been figured out by humans who understood causality. (Chimpanzees are also known to mourn the dead, and notice things that have only aesthetic value, like sunsets, both of which may be considered to be components of religion or spirituality). The difference between the comprehension of causality by humans and chimpanzees is one of degree. The degree of comprehension in an animal depends upon the size of the prefrontal cortex: the greater the size of the prefrontal cortex the deeper the comprehension.

(iii) **Development of language:**

Religion requires a system of symbolic communication, such as language, to be transmitted from one individual to another. Philip Lieberman states “human religious thought and moral sense clearly rest on a cognitive-linguistic base”.⁸ From this premise science writer

Nicholas Wade states that like most behaviors that are found in societies throughout the world, religion must have been present in the ancestral human population before the dispersal from Africa 50,000 years ago. Although religious rituals usually involve dance and music (e. g. shaman dance and stone tambourine of Gobustan Cave), they are also very verbal, since the sacred truths have to be stated. If so, religion, at least in its modern form, cannot pre-date the emergence of language. It has been argued earlier that language attained its modern state shortly before the exodus from Africa. If religion had to await the evolution of modern, articulate language, then it too would have emerged shortly before 50,000 years ago.⁹

Another view distinguishes individual religious belief from collective religious belief. While the former does not require prior development of language, the latter does. The individual human brain has to explain a phenomenon in order to comprehend and relate to it. This activity predates by far the emergence of language and may have caused it. The theory is, belief in the supernatural emerges from hypotheses arbitrarily assumed by individuals to explain natural phenomena that cannot be explained otherwise. The resulting need to share individual hypotheses with others leads eventually to collective religious belief. A socially accepted hypothesis becomes dogmatic backed by social sanction.

(iv) **Morality and group living:**

Dr. Frans de Waal and Barbara King both view human morality as having grown out of primate sociality. Though morality awareness may be a unique human trait, many social animals, such as primates, dolphins and whales, have been known to exhibit pre-moral sentiments.¹⁰ According to Michael Shermer, a number of characteristics are shared by humans and other social animals, particularly the great apes. These are: attachment and bonding, cooperation and mutual aid, sympathy and empathy, direct and indirect reciprocity, altruism and reciprocal altruism, conflict

resolution and peacemaking, deception and deception detection, community concern and caring about what others think about you, and awareness of and response to the social rules of the group.¹¹

Dr. de Waal contends that all social animals have had to restrain or alter their behavior for group living to be worthwhile. Pre-moral sentiments evolved in primate societies as a method of restraining individual selfishness and building more cooperative groups. For any social species, the benefits of being part of an altruistic group should outweigh the benefits of individualism. For example, lack of group cohesion could make individuals more vulnerable to attack from outsiders. Being part of a group may also improve the chances of finding food. This is evident among animals that hunt in packs to take down large or dangerous prey.¹⁰

All social animals have hierarchical societies in which each member knows its own place. Social order is maintained by certain rules of expected behavior and dominant group members enforce order through punishment. However, higher order primates also have a sense of reciprocity and fairness. Chimpanzees remember who did them favors and who did them wrong. For example, chimpanzees are more likely to share food with individuals who have previously groomed them.

Chimpanzees live in fission-fusion groups that average 50 individuals. It is likely that early ancestors of humans lived in groups of similar size. Based on the size of extant hunter-gatherer societies, recent Paleolithic hominids lived in bands of a few hundred individuals. As community size increased over the course of human evolution, greater enforcement to achieve group cohesion would have been required. Morality may have evolved in these bands of 100 to 200 people as a means of social control, conflict resolution and group solidarity. According to Dr. de Waal, human morality has two extra levels of sophistication that are not found in primate societies. Humans

enforce their society's moral codes much more rigorously with rewards, punishments and reputation building. Humans also apply a degree of judgment and reason not otherwise seen in the animal kingdom.¹⁰

Psychologist Matt J. Rossano argues that religion emerged after morality and built upon morality by expanding the social scrutiny of individual behavior to include supernatural agents. By including ever-watchful ancestors, spirits and gods in the social realm, humans discovered an effective strategy for restraining selfishness and building more cooperative groups.¹² The adaptive value of religion would have enhanced group survival. Rossano is referring here to collective religious belief and the social sanction that institutionalized morality. Individual religious belief is initially epistemological, not ethical, in nature.

(v) Evolutionary psychology:

There is general agreement among cognitive scientists that religion is an outgrowth of brain architecture that evolved early in human history. However, there is disagreement on the exact mechanisms that drove the evolution of the religious mind. The two main schools of thought hold that either religion evolved due to natural selection and has selective advantage, or that religion is an evolutionary byproduct of other mental adaptations. Stephen Pinker, for example, believed that religion was an exaptation or a spandrel, in other words that religion evolved as byproduct of psychological mechanisms that evolved for other reasons.¹³ Such mechanisms may include the ability to infer the presence of organisms that might do harm (agent detection), the ability to come up with causal narratives for natural events (etiology), and the ability to recognize that other people have minds of their own with their own beliefs, desires and intentions (theory of mind). These three adaptations (among others) allow human beings to imagine purposeful agents behind many observations that could not readily be explained otherwise, e.g.

thunder, lightning, movement of planets, complexity of life, etc.¹⁴ The emergence of collective religious belief identified the agents as deities that standardized the explanation.

Some scholars have suggested that religion is genetically “hardwired” into the human condition. One controversial hypothesis, the God gene hypothesis, states that some variants of a specific gene, the VMAT2 gene, predispose to spirituality.¹⁵

Another view is based on the concept of the triune brain: the reptilian brain, the limbic system, and the neocortex, proposed by Paul D. Mac Lean.¹⁶ Collective religious belief draws upon the emotions of love, fear, and gregariousness and is deeply embedded in the limbic system through sociobiological conditioning and social sanction. Individual religious belief utilizes reason based in the neocortex and often varies from collective religion. The limbic system is much older in evolutionary terms than the neocortex and is, therefore, stronger than it much in the same way as the reptilian is stronger than both the limbic system and the neocortex. Reason is pre-empted by emotional drives. The religious feeling in a congregation is emotionally different from individual spirituality even though the congregation is composed of individuals. Belonging to a collective religion is culturally more important than individual spirituality though the two often go hand in hand. This is one of the reasons why religious debates are likely to be inconclusive.

Yet another view is that the behaviour of people who participate in a religion makes them feel better and this improves their fitness, so that there is a genetic selection in favor of people who are willing to believe in religion. Specifically, beliefs, rituals, and the social contact typical of religious groups may serve to calm the mind (for example by reducing ambiguity and the uncertainty due to complexity) and allow it to function better when under stress.¹⁷ This would allow religion to be used as a powerful survival mechanism, particularly

in facilitating the evolution of hierarchies of warriors, which if true, may be why many modern religions tend to promote fertility and kinship.

Still another view is that human religion was a product of an increase in dopaminergic functions in the human brain and a general intellectual expansion beginning around 80,000 years ago.^{18, 19} Dopamine promotes an emphasis on distant space and time, which is critical for the establishment of religious experience.²⁰ While the earliest shamanic cave paintings date back around 40,000 years ago, the use of red ochre for rock art predates this and there is clear evidence for abstract thinking along the coast of South Africa by 80,000 years ago.

In the 19th century, various theories were proposed regarding the origin of religion, supplanting the earlier claims of Christianity. Early theorists Edward Burnett Tylor and Herbert Spencer proposed the concept of animism, while archaeologist John Lubbock used the term “fetishism”. Meanwhile, religious scholar Max Muller theorized that religion began in hedonism and folklorist Wilhelm Mannhardt suggested that religion began in “naturalism”, by which he meant mythological explanation of natural events.¹ All of these theories have since been widely criticized; there is no broad consensus regarding the origin of religion that has been discussed elaborately in this category of questions.

Q18 What is Evolutionism?

Evolutionism was a widely held 19th century belief that organisms are intrinsically bound to increase in complexity through evolution.^{21, 22} The belief was extended to include cultural evolution and social evolution.²³ In the 1970s the term Neo-Evolutionism was used to describe the idea “that human beings sought to preserve a familiar style of life unless change was forced on them by factors that were beyond their control”.²⁴

In the sociology of knowledge all social phenomena inclusive of religion were first explained by early sociologists in terms of evolutionary theories. These theories were gradually replaced by functionalist theories. The debate about origin and development of religion were considered to be necessary for sociologists to understand and explain social phenomena. The study of the various approaches for understanding and explaining religion is based on the larger framework of the myriad knowledge under Sociology.

Generally speaking, evolutionism refers to a belief that societies everywhere have a common development pattern. It is also understood that mind as well as society progress in a straight line towards ever-increasing complexity and rationality. In this rectilinear progress there are definite stages, beginning from the 'origin' to the present state of human civilization. Most evolutionists studied the primitive people of the world for finding out the beginning and progress of social institutions and society. They did not, however, agree on any one theory of social development but discerned widely varying schemes of development through which human societies were supposed to have passed.

The term evolutionism came to be defined in the early nineteenth century, with the anthropological theories dealing with the origin and development of religion. These evolutionists were trying to identify, using whatever material was available about the primitive societies, the stages through which society and the institutions developed over the years. The stages described by them can be listed as those of **Naturism**, **Animatism**, **Animism**, etc. Evolutionists understanding of religion to rest are presented on two assumptions, namely positivism and intellectualism.

Q19 What is Positivism?

Positivism is a philosophy of science based on the view that information derived from logical and mathematical treatments and reports of sensory experience is the exclusive source of all authoritative

knowledge,²⁵ and that there is valid knowledge (truth) only in scientific knowledge.²⁶ Verified data received from the senses are known empirical evidence. This view holds that society, like the physical world, operates according to general laws. Introspective and intuitive knowledge is rejected. Although the positivist approach has been a recurrent theme in the history of Western thought,²⁷ the modern sense of the approach was developed by the philosopher and founding sociologist Auguste Comte in the early 19th century.²⁸ Comte argued that, much as the physical world operates according to gravity and other absolute laws, so also does society.²⁹

Positivism means commitment to the principles of natural science. It refers to a conviction that like other natural science, religion can also offer scientific explanations. Very less scholars with positive assumption, tried to contrast religion with science. For them, religion, when subjected to scientific analysis, ended up merely as something irrational. Positivists tended to assume that when belief in science, based on experiment and sensory perceptions, it widely held religion will lose its value. They believed that the theological stage was the beginning, metaphysical stage to be the next and the scientific stage the last in the evolution of human societies. Religion arose from the practice of worshipping the ghost of ancestors. After this stage came polytheism (worshipping many gods of ancestor origin) and finally monotheism (worshipping a single apical ancestor God or Goddess). Religion centered on god head will fade away. Consequently agnosticism (belief that nothing can be known about God) will be the religion of the scientific age.^{30, 31, 32}

For example, in Trinitarian Yumaism, worship of *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam*, - the departed soul of the clan, sub-clan or family (*mingsra*) three generation ahead is considered to be the patriarchal component of the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma; or a 'Third Person' of the Trinitarian great feminine Goddess. When an adherent dies, his/her soul is accompanied to soul journey to the phenomenal world by the Phedangma during the death ritual of *Samsa:ma* and

hand over it to the soul receiving ancestor *Hang-sam*. However, the adherents do not worship *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-Sam* (Third Person) as the departed souls are not allowed to visit the nominal world, and they are guarded by god (*Makchiso Kulang Kemba*) over the liminal river-bridge. The god disallows the deceased's soul to reenter the nominal world or profane world. Similarly, Yumaism adherents also pray *Sodhung Lepmuhang* (mythical ancestor soul), and worship *Sewaklung Aakwanama* (grand-son of the mythical ancestor *Sodhung Lepmuhang*), *Kappo Thungdhang* or *Thoba Sammang* (other ancestor divinities), etc. Yumaism arose from the practice of worshipping the *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-Sam* and other ancestors. Yumaism adherents also practice praying the messenger gods and goddesses of Tagera Ningwaphuma known as *Sijoingmisa* such as *Sigera Yabhundin Porokmi Yambhami Mang*, *Achuni Allekha Mang*, *Khambudang Yeppudang Mang*, *Paoti Mang*, *Sodhung Lepmuhang* and a host of such other messenger gods and goddesses. But they never worship as different gods and goddesses. Further, Tagera Ningwaphuma's matriarchal component – '*Yuma Sam*' and its humanity Will – '*Yuma Sammang*' is also prayed and worshipped at *Mangdhan* and at temporary *Lasso*. Thus, Yumaism practice seems to be polytheism (worshipping many gods) in the beginning. However, when Yumaism was analyzed in detail, it was found that the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma is (*deus otiosus* or idle goddess) and worshipped Her only through Her matriarchal component '*Yuma-Sam*' (Divinity Will) at *Mang-him* and *Mangdhan* while at *Lasso* through *Yuma Sam*'s 'Humanity Will' – '*Yuma Sammang*'. The High Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma is far away in the phenomenal world and thus is not worshipped by its adherents directly but through its matriarchal component *Yuma-Sam*'s Divinity Will '*Yuma Sam*' and her Humanity Will '*Yuma Sammang*'. It is, therefore to be understood that Yumaism is not polytheism but it is a Trinitarian Monotheistic religion (worshipping a single Goddess). As observed by positivists, the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma has already faded away as *deus otiosus* (idle god) and has replaced by small goddess (*Yuma Sam*

with its humanity will *Yuma Sammang*). However, fading away of the small goddess head – ‘*Yuma Sam*’ with its humanity Will – ‘*Yuma Sammang*’ and appearance of agnosticism (belief that nothing can be known about God) religion of the scientific age is yet to be seen in the Limboo Society. As viewed by Durkheim, Yumaism may continue in some altered form.^{33,34}

Q20 What are Intellectualism and the Intellectualist Theories of Religion?

Intellectualism denotes the use, development, and exercise of the intellect; the practice of being an intellectual; and the Life of the Mind. In the field of philosophy, “intellectualism” occasionally is synonymous with “rationalism”, that is, knowledge mostly derived from reason and ratiocination. Socially, “intellectualism” negatively connotes: single-mindedness of purpose (“too much attention to thinking”) and emotional coldness (“the absence of affection and feeling”). Intellectualism refers to the exercise of reasoning for explaining something. Scholars with an intellectualist assumption argue that religion is a rational response of an individual to the natural phenomena. In other words, religion is a system of explanation offered by the primitive, with reference to supernatural beings. Evolutionism based on the intellectualist assumption claims that religion is a matter of knowledge.

The Nature-Myth School was the first idea of the origin and development of religion. The next in the chronology of ideas on religion were the ghost and the soul theories. The latter two theories were initially based on the reports of missionaries and adventures about the nature of religion among the primitives. For example, De Brosses (1760) advanced a theory that religion had its origin in fetishism (belief in magical fetishes or objects).³⁵ The Portuguese sailors had reported that the Coastal Negro tribes of West Africa worshipped inanimate things and animals. **Fetishism** was replaced by **Polytheism** in due

course of time. This theory was superseded by the ghost theory and the soul theory in due course of time. These theories are known as intellectualist theories of religion, because they assume that the primitives are rational being, although their efforts to explain natural phenomena are somewhat crude.

Q21 What do you understand by the theory of Nature-Myth School or Naturism?

Max Muller (1878) a German linguist established that ancient Gods were universally personifications of natural phenomena.³⁶ He held that grand natural objects gave people a feeling of the infinite. At the same time, these objects acted as symbols of the infinite. The celestial bodies, such as, the Sun, the Moon, stars, dawn and their attributes were looked upon by the people in terms of metaphor and symbol. He argued that with the passage of time the symbolic representations came to gain an independent identity of their own and became separated from that of which they represented. Thus, the human beings and nature stand in a relationship of awe, wonderment, terror, etc. Early human beings could not understand or explain the world of nature. They ended up worshipping it out of fear and awe. They worshipped objects of nature (the Sun, the Moon, stars, etc.) circumnavigating around them from the right-side or eastern side of these natural objects, which appeared unusual and seemed to influence life in some way beyond human control. This is a reference to a particular understanding of the relationship between primitive man and the supernatural world as the **world of natural forces. It mainly traces the earliest form of religion in worshipping nature and is thus called Naturism by Muller.**

Q22 Do you find traces of Naturism in Yumaism?

Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society has many traces of Naturism or Nature-Myth School even today. This may be described as follows.^{33,34}

- (i) **Firstly**, the adherents of Yumaism circumambulate all the sacred places like *Mang-him*, *Tongsing*, *Yagrangsing*, *Lasso* (altar), fireplace, *Murumsitlang* (main pillar of a dwelling house) or any such sacred space or altar from the anti-clock-wise direction or right-hand-side or eastern side as all the natural objects like the Sun, the Moon, stars rise from the east; all the climbers of crops or plants entwine around the tree or stake from the right-hand-side in search of the sunlight, following the nature, and thus they are known as naturist or *Prakritivadi*.
- (ii) **Secondly**, these natural objects the Sun, the Moon, stars found in petroglyphs, pictograms and logograms in ancient caves of worldwide (e.g., boat petroglyphs of Gobustan) are still seen engraved on the epitaph of Limboo *Fallaicha* (resting place established for *Pung-Sam* sub-soul during conduct of final death ritual) and *Yi:bungden* (graveyard construction). The attributes of natural objects were conceived by the Limboo Society in terms of metaphor and symbol. The concept of these natural objects (the Sun, the Moon, stars, etc.) engraved on the epitaph are the symbols of “mortality as well as infinity” of all animate and inanimate objects in nature (the universe). There are elaborate myths (Mundhums) in Yumaism to explain the mortality as well as infinity of all animate and inanimate objects of nature in the universe inclusive of human beings.
- (iii) **Thirdly**, these natural objects acted to the people in terms of metaphor and symbol of infinity of life. The Sun set in the day ascends next day, the Moon set at night ascends in the next night. A dead man may be born some day some where. Likewise, it gives an idea about infinity of life to all animate and inanimate objects in nature. In Mundhum, when a man dies, the Phedangma consoles the deceased’s soul saying “*you have done nothing new. Nothing is permanent in this universe. Everything in this universe dies to be born again. It is your turn today. There will be someone’s*

tomorrow.” This shows that Yumaism express the feeling of “impermanence as well as infinity of life,” influenced by Naturism of Muller.³⁶

- (iv) **Fourthly**, the natural objects such as the Sun, the Moon, and stars are still seen as gods and goddesses in Yumaism. They affect our everyday life. The Moon affects menstruation cycle of women. The Sun affects growth and development of plant-life, crop-life, gives light and warmth to us. Without the Sun nothing survives on the Earth. While wedding the bride and groom are protected from *Tanchokpa* and *Yunchokpa* stars providing umbrella as they believe that the stars envy and jealousy to bride-groom during the wedding procession. We still believe that the object of nature somehow affect our life; and it is therefore, worship them.
- (v) **Fifthly**, Yumaism believes that the nature stands in a relationship of awe, wonderment, terror, etc. and thus the Sun, the Moon, stars are prayed and worshipped.
- (v) **Sixthly**, Yumaism compares the Sun with the physical body and the Moon with the Soul (real life of the adherents), and thus, the body is active in day while the soul is active at night. As a result, religious rituals (hierophany) which involves soul journey from profane to sacred spaces are performed only at night.

There is definitely some influence of Naturism on Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society. That may be the reason why the Limboo Society is often known as Naturists or *Prakritibadi*.

Q23 What is Ghost Theory or Animatism?

Spencer, Herbert (1925)³⁰ observed the primitive mind to be rational though with a limited quantum of knowledge. They make reasonable, though weak, interferences with regard to natural phenomena. By

observing natural objects such as the Sun, the Moon, the clouds and stars come and go; the primitives get the notion of visible and invisible conditions. Similarly they get the idea of a person's duality from dreams, which are considered as real life-experiences by the primitives. For them, the dream-self moves about at night while the shadow-self acts by the day. This notion of duality is reinforced by persons' experiences of temporary loss of sensibilities. The event of death is also considered by the primitives as a longer period of insensibility. This idea of duality is extended by them to animals, plants and material objects. This refers to pre-animistic stage in religious development which is known as **Animatism**. It attributes life to all animate and inanimate objects of nature. Further, the appearance of dead persons in dreams is taken by the primitives to be the evidence of temporary afterlife. This leads to the conception of a supernatural being in the form of a ghost. The idea of ghosts grows into the idea of Gods and the ghosts of ancestors become divine beings. He concluded that "**ancestor worship is the root of every religion.**"

Q24 "Ancestor worship is the root of every religion". Do You Agree?

Yes, I agree. Ancestor Worship is the root of every religion inclusive of Yumaism. In other words, all religions originated from Ancestor Worship. As described in earlier questions in the introductory of religion, adherents of Trinitarian Yumaism believe on the apical non-human ancestor Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma as the *first person*, Her matriarchal component *Yuma Sam* mythical ancestor as *second person*; and Her patriarchal component *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam*, the departed human ancestor soul of the clan or sub-clan (*mingra*) as the *third person*. When an adherent dies, his/her soul is accompanied soul journey to the phenomenal world by the Phedangma during the death ritual of *Samsa:ma* and hands over it to the *Hang-sam*, *third person* or patriarchal component of the great Goddess. Thus, Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society is

definitely based on the **Ancestor Worship**. The ancestors are worshipped as their gods and goddesses.^{33, 34} The followings are some of the traces of ghost theory or Animatism in Yumaism:

(i) **Firstly**, Yumaism comprises of three important components namely, Ancestor Worship, Shamanism and Totemism. As mentioned in the previous question (Q15), ancestor worship leads to evolution of shamans; and then the ancestor worship is followed by shamanism and not *vice versa*. A layman or laywoman becomes a shaman Phedangma only at the instance of life possession of a patrilineal or matrilineal reincarnation of an ancestor soul to a teenage boy or girl in Yumaism. The reincarnate soul possessed to the teenage, forms the divinity of the shaman known as *Sam Sire* or *Yeming*. The life possessed shaman prays, worships and meditates his reincarnated divinity; and through this non-physical guide or divinity (*Sam Sire* or *Yeming*), the shaman functions all the shamanic or hierophany rituals in shamanism. Thus, religion is originated from Ancestor Worship caused by psycho-biological processes of emotional stress to the human primitive ancestors in Upper Paleolithic Age (50,000 – 13,000 years ago).

(ii) **Secondly**, Yumaism believes in Animatism or mortality of life in all animates. They also believe in dualism of life on human individuals. They believe that the human soul is the blessing of the apical Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma and it is the life infinity; while the human body is the means of purification of the impurity of life. They believe that human physical body is active in day time as the Sun and the human soul remains inactive. Alike the moon the human physical body remains inactive and the soul becomes active during the night. In Yumaism, almost all the ritual is shamanic or hierophany, which involves the soul journey or transcendence from profane to sacred place.^{33, 34} This is the reason why the shamanic or hierophany rituals of Yumaism of the Limboo Society are conducted only at

night. Since the soul remains inactive in the day time like the Moon, the shamanic or hierophany rituals conducted in the day time believed to be ineffective.

(iii) **Thirdly**, the idea of ghosts grows into the idea of Gods and the ghosts of ancestors become divine beings. For instance, in Yumaism, the appearance of dead persons (departed soul in the form of ghost) forms the gods and goddesses as described above.

(iv) **Fourthly**, the divine beings inclusive of the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma (means *Yuma Mang* = Grand-mother Goddess), *Yuma Sam* (means Grand-mother soul), ancestor soul *Hang-Sam* or *Thoba Pa-Sam* (means departed deceased's main soul or grand-father soul of the family, clan or sub-clan), *Thoba Sammang* (means humanity will of grand-father soul), *Sewaklung Aakwanama* (grand-son of mythical ancestor Sodhung Lepmuhang), *Sam Sire* or *Yeming* (patrilineal or matrilineal reincarnated soul of the ancestor) of the reincarnate Phedangmas, etc. are the evidences of ghost ancestor Gods and Goddesses of the Yumaism, religion of the Limboo Society.

(v) **Lastly**, Yumaism believes in three worlds, Viz: Animate world (plants, animals inclusive of human beings), Inanimate world (stones, rocks, mountains, rivers, lakes, etc.), and Spiritual world (individual soul or spirit of human beings, diverted souls and evil spirits of human being, group souls of animals, earthly energies or external forces etc.) which exist in close coordination for perfect balance of the universe.

From all the above facts, it is concluded that the Ghost Theory have definitely influenced Yumaism; and thus, "ancestor worship" is the root or origin of every religion.

Q25 What is Soul Theory or Animism?

Sir Edward Tylor's theory of Animism emphasizes the notion of soul (meaning *anima* in Latin). This theory considers both the origin and development of religion. We can say that the ghost theory explains the origin of religion in the idea of ghosts while the soul theory says the same thing in terms of the idea of soul or spirit. Experiences of death, disease, visions and dreams, according to Tylor, lead the primitives to think about the existence of immaterial power, i.e., the soul (*anima*).³⁷ This idea of soul is then projected on to creatures other than human and even to inanimate objects. The soul exists independent of its physicality, and therefore arises the idea of belief in spiritual beings. This theory attributes the origin of religion to the belief that all inanimate objects and natural phenomena have a spiritual quality or soul (*anima*) which is the cause or source of the peculiar experience that primitives undergo and that create in them feelings of awe and wonderment. The soul theory of Tylor has elements of the sacred and the supernatural. These spiritual beings later developed into Gods. They possessed superior powers and controlled destiny of human beings. The experiences of death, disease and dreams make primitives believe in the existence of an immaterial entity. Tylor held that the idea of spirit grew out of the idea of soul of which the idea of spirit later became the conception of God.

Andrew Lang (1898)³⁸ criticized this theory on the ground that the idea of Gods could have arisen as a late development from a belief in ghosts or spirits. Lang stressed that many primitive peoples believed in what he called "High Gods". Lang argued that the idea of High God cannot have evolved out of reflections on dreams and ghosts, because the two have entirely different origins. For him, belief in God was first which later became degraded as Animism.

R.R. Marett (1909/1914)³⁹ also criticized the animistic theory. He claimed that the primitive belief in an impersonal force preceded belief in spiritual beings. He called this impersonal force *Mana* which may be considered as similar to the notion of *Bonga* (mind) of tribal groups

in India and argued that belief in *Mana* had both historical and theoretical priority.

Q26 Are the Hierophany or Shamanic beliefs and rituals of Yumaism rooted on Animism?

In Yumaism, presence of High Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma (*deus otiosus* or idle god) is the vivid evidence of the criticism pointed out by Lang.³⁸ The adherents of Yumaism also believe that the patriarchal component (Third Person of Trinitarian Monotheism) of the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma is our own forefathers' soul – *Thoba Pa-Sam*, or *Hang-Sam* (deceased's soul receiving ancestor divinity); and the deceased's soul of a person is handed over to the respective clan (*mingsra*) ancestor's divinity at death by the shaman Phedangmas conducting the death ritual of *Sam-sa:ma*. Yumaism also believes on numerous mythical ancestor divinities (*Sodhung Lepmuhang* and *Thillilung Thamdenlungma*), *Sewaklung Aakwanama* (main pillar ancestor divinity of Limboo dwelling house), *Thoba Sammang* or *Kappo Thungdang* (ancestor divinity), etc.^{33, 34}

The soul theory or Animism is the basis for conduct of hierophany (death and resurrection) rituals in Yumaism. Each and every ritual of Yumaism involves the retrieving of soul of living as well as dead, and soul journey or transcendence to Sacred space from the profane world. Its tremendous influence on Yumaism could be described as follows:

- (i) **Firstly**, Yumaism believes in existence of an impersonal force known as *Sam* (soul means *anima*) in each individual human being as a blessing of the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma. It is immortal and has to return to its origin – the Goddess at one's death. Yumaism believes in mortality as well as infinity of life in all animates of nature in the Universe; but unlike, Tylor's theory of animism it does not believe in existence of individual *Sam* (soul or *anima*) in all animate and inanimate objects of nature of the universe.

- (ii) **Secondly**, unlike Tylor's theory of animism, Yumaism believes that individual soul is present only in human beings. Our individual soul is an independent micro energy system, and has all the power of the macro calibrated to an individual form of certain energies.⁴⁰ This is evident in Yumaism while conducting religious rituals (e.g., *Simering Mangenna*, *Sam Sa:ma* etc.) by Phedangmas.
- (iii) **Thirdly**, Yumaism believes that the animals don't have individual souls. They have only group souls. They are not micros of a macro. Cats, for example, do not have individual souls or ego energy. They are merely physical manifestations of a huge macro system. Millions of frequencies that interact into a group animal soul.⁴⁰ The rituals in Yumaism are all Eliade's "eternal return" while living and dead. The group souls of animals don't exist on profane world but with the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma only at *Sangram Pedang Den*. Only their physical manifestation of body is present in the profane world. This is evident from the *Yagransing* ritual of Yumaism when the *Sibhak Yemi Yeba* or *Yema* requests the Goddess and brings *Keba Sam Sire* (group soul of the Tigers) to cure the sick persons during the healing ritual. There is no particular tiger name involving in the ritual. That indicates no individual soul of tiger exists. They resubmit it to the Goddess immediately after the ritual is over. Each animal is a part of a group soul. Each elephant is a part of the group soul of elephant; each cat is a part of the group soul of cat, and so on. A group soul is not the same as an individual soul. Group soul exists at a level of simply energy dynamics, not individual selfhood. Instinctual behavior is the way of the group soul. That is the reason why our religious priests Phedangmas utilize group souls of *Muya Sire*, *Tokmi Sire*, *Miyong Sire*, *Keba Sire* but never individual white, black or brown cat *Sire* as helpers to conduct shamanic rituals.

- (iv) **Fourthly**, contrary to Tylor's theory of Animism, the religion of the Limboo Society disbelieves the presence of soul in the Plant Kingdom and inanimate objects of nature. It believes that the plants, animal, and everything in nature were created for the survival of human beings. There is no sin in killing and eating of plants and animals by the human beings as they were merely created for human survival. The mystery of killing and eating of life, not understood by human beings is explained in Yumaism. Unlike Tylor's theory of animism, Yumaism believes that the plant kingdom and inanimate objects of nature do not have any soul (neither group nor individual souls). For example, the Phedangmas never use any plant or inanimate individual or group soul as *Sam Sire* (helpers) during their shamanic ritual as it does not exist. They worship plants or inanimate objects as symbols (Totem) where some divinities are known dwelling or attribute some religious characters on it but not the plants and inanimate objects of nature having souls of their own.
- (v) **Fifthly**, however, Yumaism considers human soul to be the real life of an individual. It is the most important and it involves soul journey or transcendence in every ritual. Every ritual of the Limboo Society is Eliade's "Eternal Return" (hierophany) involves retrieval of the soul (both living and dead), and soul's journey from profane to the sacred space is essential while conducting rituals by the shaman priests. The shaman priests are all incarnate religious priests having a reincarnate soul in addition to his/her *Yetchham* (eight-soul tradition). During hierophany ritual the souls of his/her clients are retrieved, accompany soul journey, reach to the sacred space, ask the divinities to bless them and bring back to their own dwelling house by the incarnate soul of the Phedangma. Thus, every ritual is a ritual of "Death and Resurrection".^{33, 34}
- (vi) **Sixthly**, patrilineal or matrilineal human soul reincarnation is essential to become an incarnate shaman Phedangma is yet another important phenomenon in Yumaism.

Thus, the Animism theory of Tylor has tremendously influenced Yumaism but also contrasts to Tylor's Animism theory in soul understanding especially on Incarnate Phedangmas, human beings, animals, plants, and inanimate objects of nature.

Q27 What do you know about the theory of Dependence on Magic?

Magic is practiced in many cultures, and utilizes ways of understanding, experiencing and influencing the world somewhat akin to those offered by religion.^{41,42} Hanegraaff further argues that magic is in fact "...a largely polemical concept that has been used by various religious interest groups either to describe their own religious beliefs and practices or - more frequently - to discredit those of others"⁴³ Magic is often viewed with suspicion by the wider community, and is sometimes practiced in isolation and secrecy.⁴⁴ The belief in and the practice of magic has been present since the earliest human cultures and continues to have an important religious and medicinal role in many cultures today.⁴⁵ "Magic is central not only in 'primitive' societies but in 'high cultural' societies as well..."⁴⁶ Modern Western magicians generally state magic's primary purpose to be personal spiritual growth.⁴⁷ Modern perspectives on the theory of magic broadly follow two major views. The first sees magic as a result of a universal sympathy within the universe, where if something is done here a result happens somewhere else. The other view sees magic as collaboration with spirits who cause the effect.⁴⁸

It is argued by some scholars that Magic (occult practices) rather than religion is the more primitive way of dealing with crisis. The basic difference between religion and magic is that in the former, "one deals with supernatural forces by submitting to it through prayer, worship and rituals, while in the later one tries to overpower or coerce the supernatural force through certain 'magical' activities."⁴⁹ James Frazer (1992) argued that with dependence on

magic, one would turn to religion and then eventually to scientific thinking. He also stressed the role of religious specialists such as magicians and priests in dealing with the world of the supernatural. He distinguished between two types of magic practiced by primitive people as follows:

(a) Homeopathic or imitative magic:

This was a situation where magic (occult practice) was based on a principle of '*like produces like*' or a law of similarity. For instance, in some tribal groups in India, it is believed that thunder and its rumbling noise are direct cause of rain. Therefore, when the tribals want rain they go to the hill top and sacrifice a small animal. Then, they start to throw rocks and stones downwards from the mountainside. As these will make a loud rumbling sound, since it is like the sound of thunder the tribal believe subsequent to such practices rain will follow.

(b) Contagious magic:

The second kind of magic (occult practice) was based on the notion that things that came in contact would remain in contact always or the law of contagion operated here. The basic notion operative here is the belief among tribal people that "any belonging of an individual, be it an article or clothing, somehow represents a part of the person. Even hair and nail clippings are believed to represent the person they once belonged to." Often these objects are used by the magician to influence the life of a particular person, by performing a ritual act on a piece of clothing or hair or nail. Usually this is used for negative purposes.

Thus, magic like religion, was basically a means of coming to terms with the supernatural and gaining control over the environment that might spell danger or disaster for the primitive people. Primitive people thus progressed from reliance upon nature and magic to religious worship and activity.

Q28 Do you find traces of the theory of Dependence on Magic in Yumaism?

Yumaism is heavily influenced by this theory. They are as follows:
33, 34, 50

- (i) **Firstly**, in Yumaism, all the rituals “eternal return” while living and “philosophical eternal return” at death conducted by Phedangmas are imitations or re-actualization of rituals performed by the mythical ancestors *Khambongba Lungbongba Mangs* (soil gods and goddesses) during the establishment of “Sacred space” of mythical age. These rituals are equivalent to Homeopathic or imitative magic in a sense that both are imitations or re-actualization of the mythical events for obtaining transcendent reality or value of the rituals.³⁴
- (ii) **Secondly**, Yumaism uses individual clothes of both dead and living as ‘*muyinam*’ (old clothes of individuals representing the clients) for various rituals conducted by shaman Phedangmas both during rituals of “eternal return while living individuals” and “philosophical eternal return” during death rituals. These clothes of the individuals represent the persons for whom religious rituals are being performed. Even if the individuals are present during the rituals, the Phedangmas use “*muyinam*”. Sometimes, it becomes essential to use *muyinam* when pregnant women and children of less than 8 years of age are not allowed to cross *Chellung Khoklung* altar during *Tongsing* ritual.^{33, 34, 50}
- (iii) **Thirdly**, Darap Yumsam uses belongings of the small children for creating magic (occult practice) trance to the children to convince her *Shiva Margi* Hinduism teachings (*Samriti*). She tries to overpower or coerce the supernatural forces (*Shiva*) through certain ‘magical’ or “meditation” activities to convince others.
- (iv) **Fourthly**, hair, nail clippings, spit etc. are also used in many shamanic rituals such as *Chellung Khaklung*, *Kriya Kantha*, *Manghuk*

Mangde rituals etc. to cast away the evils, curse, incest, sin, envy and jealousy, etc. in Yumaism.

Thus, from the above description it is clear that Yumaism is heavily influenced by the theory of dependence of magic.

Q29 Is Religion originated in Psycho-biological Processes?

Yes it is. It is already pointed out that religion definitely originated in Psycho-biological processes of emotional stress. Yumaism is originated and functions under conditions of emotional stress even today. The primitive ancestors of the Limboo Society used Ancestor Worship and Shamanism as we use scientific knowledge today for overcoming most of our practical difficulties in our day to day life. Ancestor Worship and Shamanism are still in use in the Limboo Society for overcoming many more practical problems which has no solution so far with scientific knowledge even today. Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society confirms that religions have originated from a number of components of psycho-biological processes of emotional stress. The various Psycho-biological processes on origin of religion may be whether it is a product of fear, feeling and thrill, emotional stress or feeling of guilt.

Q30 Is Religion a product of fear?

A. E. Crawley (1902)⁵¹ looked at the psychological aspects of human behavior for the origin of religion. He attempts to seek answers for associated prohibition and prescriptions in terms of emotions. The main force behind primitive thought is fear of the danger in social relations. He argued that the emotion of fear of danger in relations among the people led them to observe taboos around particular actions (e. g. believe on *Mangenna* an incest taboo between consanguinous brothers and sisters in the Limboo Society against incest). This resulted in a set of religious beliefs. For him, wherever people face greater danger, they are presumed

to be more religious; and God is an outcome of processes of psychology and biology. Wundt (1916)⁵² also held that all the ideas which are not part of one's perception or which are mythological, have their genesis in emotions. These emotions are projected outwardly and then become the first stage of religion i.e., the belief in magic (occult practices) and demons. In the next phase of evolution, people began to worship animals. This he calls the Totemic Age. It is in due course succeeded by the worship of ancestors. This again is replaced by the worship of demi-gods and then by the cult of the Gods. This is the stage of the Age of Demi-gods and Gods. The final stage of this evolutionary cycle is the Humanistic Age which refers to religious universalism.

When we analyze **Yumaism**, the religion of the Limboo Society from the mythic structure or ethnographical approach of the primitive ancestors (which will be discussed in the subsequent questions) we find a similar sequence of origin and development of religion. It appears that the primitive ancestors of the Limboo society were in danger of **"hunger and starvation death"** as food resources were the primary concern for their survival at their place of origin, somewhere in the North Eastern Eurasia (their place of origin). They were continuously in fear of unexpected encounters with animals on the one hand, and encounters with other nomads as they all competed each other for the same food and other livelihood resources. Thus, the main force behind primitive thought of the Limboo ancestors was **"emotion of fear of the danger of survival."** The primitive people **"balanced their emotions of fear by seeking guidance from their forefathers and ancestors."** The outcome of these processes of psychology and biology made them religious; their ancestors became their spiritual guides; their ethnography of their primitive ancestors became mythological Mundhums (myths) or sacred narratives, and their religion became their first stage religion known as **"Ancestor Worship"**. These emotions were projected outwardly

and then evolution of Shamans took place after thousands of years of Ancestor Worship, as **the deceased ancestors constitute the Reincarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shaman Phedangmas in Yumaism**. Consequently, with the evolution of shamans their **Ancestor Worship** religion encompassed and interwoven **Shamanism** during the Upper Paleolithic Age (between 50,000 and 13,000 years ago). Thus, Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism became the second stage of religion of the nomadic ancestors of the humanity. In the third phase “**Ancestor Worship -cum-Shamanism**” encompassed and interwoven “**Totemism**” when the primitive Limboo ancestors started foraging in the Eastern Himalayan Region after 200 A.D. with the establishment of Limbuwan Kingdom by King Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang; and their ancestors became the **Totemic Gods and Goddesses**, Totemic mythical ancestors, Totemic household divinities, Totemic *Mangenna Yocks* for various group of people (*Thar/clan*) to regulate and keep in order their society. Thus, Yumaism comprises of “Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism-cum-Totemism” or Ancestor Worship, Shamanism and Totemism. All the ancestors of the Limboo Society became Ancestor gods and goddess first; then symbolic or mythical gods and goddesses of sacred spaces in the second; and Totemic gods and goddesses in the third stage of Yumaism development of the Limboo Society.

Q31 Is Religion a product of Religious Feelings and Thrill?

The American anthropologists R.H. Lowie (1924), Paul Radin (1938) and Goldenweiser (1917) held that religion among the primitive people is characterized by emotional responses of awe and amazement towards mysterious forces of the supernatural. In fact, this visible and outward behavior was made by them a basis of defining religion. Thus, for Lowie, religion is a matter of feeling; if magic is associated with emotion, it is to be called religion. Paul Radin considered occult practices as religion only if it aroused religious feelings. In the absence

of religious emotion, occult practices are only folklore. Goldenweiser describes two spheres of religion, namely, magic or occult practices and religion. He holds that in both magic and religion the thrill is experienced.^{53, 54, 55}

All these anthropologists' emphasized religious feeling and thrill as the origin and development of religion. No doubt, Yumaim, the religion of the Limboo Society is originated from emotional responses of awe and amazement towards mysterious forces of the supernatural. However, it is not only an origin factor of Yumaim.

Q32 Is Religion a product of Emotional Stress?

Malinowski (1948)⁵⁶ held that both religion and magic originate and function under conditions of emotional stress. Magic is used by the primitive as we use scientific knowledge today for overcoming practical difficulties in day to day life. This relieves the tension which is built up because of a sense of weakness or inability of human beings to achieve success in their pursuits. Emotional stress in contemporary times is closely linked to the stress factor in modern times. Though different from each other, religion and magic both function for purification that brings about release from tension. When the people face crisis of life, the fear and anxiety cause tension. The performance of religious and magical rites helps them to dispel their fears and emotional stress.

Q33 Is Religion a product of Feeling of Guilt?

Freud (1913/1960)⁵⁷ elaborates his ideas on the origin of religion in his theories of Oedipus complex and Electra complex. He has a very interesting story to account for it. In his story, the son, in his unconscious, wants to have mother for him and wants to kill his father while in the latter the daughter, wanting to have the father to her, wants to kill her mother. In the last analysis, father is idealized and taken to be God. For Freud both religion and magic are reducible to

feelings of tensions, frustrations, emotions, complexes and illusion. This is all illusion, so, for Freud religion is also an illusion.

Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society confirms that it has originated from a number of components of psycho-biological processes of emotional stress. However, Freud's view that religion was originated from the feelings of tensions, frustrations, emotions and complexes of illusion seems to be controversial in Yumaism.

Q&A 34-47

Analysis on Functional Approaches

34. What is functionalism?
35. What are the traces of Functionalist thinking?
36. What is Durkheim's "Totemism as an Elementary form of Religion"?
37. What is Durkheimian "Sacred-Profane Dichotomy"?
38. What are Cognitive and Social Functions of Religion?
39. Is Yumaism in conformity to Durkheim's understanding of 'Totemism is eminently social'?
40. Are the *Mundhums* of Yumaism "Sacred Totems" and explain the cognitive and social functions of the Limboo Society?
41. Is the Great Feminine Trinitarian Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma of Yumaism a Totemic Goddess?
42. Are *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlungs* in Yumaism "Sacred Totems" of the Sacred Space?
43. Are *Simering Mangenna Yocks* of numerous Limboo Clans, "Clan Totems" of the profane?
44. Are the Flowers and Flower Gardens of *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlungs* with *Sodhung Warok* Sacred Totems of the Sacred Space?
45. Are Mythical Ancestors of *Mundhums* "Totemic Mythical Non-human Ancestors" of Yumaism Adherents?
46. "Is the power of a thing lies in its origin" in Yumaism?
47. Are Yumaism beliefs and rituals in conformity to Durkheimian views of "Society, Like God, comes to be worshipped"?

Q34 What is functionalism?

Structural Functionalism or **Functionalism** is a broad perspective in sociology and anthropology which sets out to interpret society as a structure with interrelated parts. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as “organs” that work toward the proper functioning of the “body” as a whole.¹ In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes “the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible,” For Talcott Parsons, “functionalism” came to describe a particular stage in the methodological development of social science, rather than a specific school of thought.²

Society is a complex reality. It is almost impossible to understand this reality wholly. Religion is a social institution. There are several ways of understanding religion. Evolutionism is one way of understanding it. The next is the functionalist way of analyzing religion.

The evolutionist theories of religion explained religion in terms of individual thought process or psychological assumptions (e.g., ‘awe’, ‘wonderstruck’, ‘dream’ etc.). This is unacceptable, said the critics of evolutionist theories. They considered religion as social phenomena. They argued that social phenomena can be explained only through social causes without using natural or individual psychological causes. The evolutionists could not understand religion because they looked religion as a mark of ‘ignorance’ and ‘vehicle of irrationality’ amongst the primitive people. They sought to explain the origin of religion and society by relying on the reports about or by observing the pre-modern or ‘primitive’ societies known in their times.

Unlike evolutionists, the early sociologists observed about the functional relations between political, religious, economic and moral action. They argued that change in any one of these areas brings corresponding

changes in the other. Later, with concerted efforts of Malinowski (1948),³ Radcliffe-Brown (1952),⁴ Parson (1954)⁵ and Merton (1957),⁶ functionalist approach gained popularity and made significant contributions to the study of religion. They borrowed the concepts, which most functionalists used for their explanations of religious behavior, from Durkheim.

The earlier evolutionist scholars were trying to construct conjecturally the historical development of human societies. Functionalists, on the other hand, **tried to understand the functioning of contemporary societies**. The foremost questions in their minds spoke about: “How does a society exist in an orderly manner”? For a functionalist, society is a system with interconnected parts like a steam engine. Within this system, the different parts perform certain functions, so that the systemic whole can be maintained or run as in the case of a steam engine’s function. This is a very simplified notion of functionalism. However, there are many different variations within the functionalist thinking.

Q35 What are the traces of Functionalist thinking?

Earlier, Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)⁷ realized that religion can perform certain important functions for society. During his time, it was widely accepted amongst scholars that religion does not foster or support democracy, but it helps the growth of democratic spirit. Auguste Comte (1865),⁸ proposed a new “Religion of humanity” to develop greater commitment to society among French people.

Herbert Spencer (1925)¹ established functionalist thinking more systematically. He compared society to a human body. In the human body, as we know, there is natural co-ordination among the various organs. Alike, various institutions in society must naturally cooperate among themselves, to compatible with the rest of the institutions of the advanced, industrial society.

Malinowski,³ the famous functionalist, wrote about religion, science and occult practices and discussed their functions. He provided a wealth of material on primitive religious practices and beliefs but he did not add any new concepts to the study of religion. Radcliffe-Brown,⁴ another functionalist, talked about functions of religion. He relied heavily on the ideas of Durkheim. For Durkheim,⁹ the society was prior to an individual and the social could not be reduced to the psychological. Durkheim's theory of religion is important for it gave impetus to further sociological research on religious phenomena.

According to Robertson (1927),¹⁰ all members of a clan/ of a tribe were thought to be one blood. **The God of the clan was also thought to be of the same blood because he was conceived as the physical father of a clan founder. In other words, God was the clan itself** (e.g., *Hangsam* or *Thoba Pa-Sam* in Yumaism). The concrete representation of this god was made in the form of totemic creatures. Sacrificing the totemic creation and sharing its flesh and blood was a sacred communion. This is the case of Christianity. Much influenced by this approach, Durkheim tried to show how religion arose out of the very existence of society. He described religion as a social fact.

According to Durkheim (1912),⁹ social phenomena are those factors which are external to an individual and yet have a controlling effect on one's actions. He characterized social factor as (i) being external to individual; (ii) exercising pressure on individuals; and (iii) being objective, in the sense that individuals to suit themselves cannot define them. For example, the customary law of a society is a social fact. It is not dependent on any one individual. It has to be followed and punishable to the lawbreakers.

He criticized those who explained religion in terms of individual psychology. He asked if religion had its origin in an illusion (as Freud's feelings of guilt), how could it last for so long and how could it be found to exist universally? He argued that many primitive groups

took for granted the so-called remarkable natural forces, the Sun, the Moon, the Sky, the sea, etc. and looked on them as regular phenomena. He claimed that in contrast with Totemism, an early form of religion, rather ordinary creatures were worshipped. These were, for example, such small things as rabbits, worms, frogs, etc. They do not strike us as being awe-inspiring, mystical or impressive. In accounting for their significance he discovered the importance of religion in its social context.

Q36 What is Durkheim's "Totemism as an Elementary form of Religion"?

Durkheim (1912, reprint 1976)⁹ was not satisfied by the evolutionist explanations, which failed to give religion its meaning as a social institution. Durkheim wanted to demonstrate social functions of religion by taking "**Totemism**" as a test case through his book '*The Elementary forms of the Religious Life*'. Totemism among the central Australian tribes, as represented in the ethnography of Spencer and Gillen, came handy for Durkheim. He chose totemism for analysis due to two reasons:

- (i) **First, he considered** "totemism to be an elementary form of religion"; **and**
- (ii) **Secondly, he considered that the** "sacred-profane distinction arose from the totemic practices."

Totemism: An Elementary Form of Religion:

Totemism is a complex system of idea and belief in which each human is thought to have a spiritual connection or a kinship with another physical being, such as an animal or plant, or it may be a natural phenomenon or feature of the landscape with which a group believes itself linked in some way, often called a "**spirit-being**" or "**totem**." The totem is thought to interact with a given kin group or an individual and to serve as their **emblem** or **symbol**. It is a complex system of

ideas, symbols, and practices based on an assumed relationship between an individual or a social group and a natural object known as totem.

Firstly, 'Totemism' was an elementary form for Durkheim, not because it came **first** historically. Totemism was simple in terms of its organization and hence it came to be the elementary form. Also totemism could be explained without borrowed features from any previous religion. In other words, features of totemism were unique to itself. Totem is pre-eminently social and not an individual emblem. All religions are true in their own fashion for the believers. He rejected animism and naturism as they arose out of primitive people's ignorance about nature. He also questioned the assumption that religion had its genesis in a mistake, an illusion. He asked if it was so, how religion could be so widespread and enduring.

Secondly, he questioned also the assumption that animism was found only in primitive societies. On the contrary, the primitive groups took for granted ever recurring natural events and showed little interest in natural phenomena. Durkheim called naturism as a false explanation of religious behavior.

Criticizing the arguments of evolution in general, naturism and animism in particular, Durkheim began to explain how totemism gives rise to the distinction between 'sacred' and 'profane'; and thus, he concluded that Totemism is the elementary form of religion of every society.

As defined above, Totemism is a system of beliefs and rites centered around the totem. The totem is very often an animal, a plant species, mythical ancestor or mythical Sacred Narratives. The totem is sacred; it is held in respect. The totem cannot be approached without proper rites and ceremonies. To approach the totem which is sacred, one has to purify oneself both internally and externally. But the object at the centre of totemic religion is not an animal or plant as such. Rather it is

a pictorial representation of the animal or plant, which is worshipped. Totem also serves as a symbol of the clan identity. Totem of the clan is also totem of its members.

Q37 What is Durkheimian “Sacred-Profane Dichotomy”?

Against the sacred world of totem lies the profane world. The profane world includes human beings and all that is not related with the sacred totem. Myths (Sacred Narratives or Mundhums), legends, dogmas and beliefs represent the sacred totem, its power, virtues and relationship with the profane world. The sacred and profane are entirely different and the lines of separation are clearly demarcated. According to Durkheim distinction between the profane and sacred is ‘absolute’. These two worlds are even hostile to each other.

Durkheim argues that, this type of **sacred-profane dichotomy** is common to all religions. All known religious beliefs presuppose a classification of all things into two classes or opposed group, generally designated by two distinct terms – profane and sacred. Sacred things (or hierophany termed by Mircea Eliade, 1971)¹¹ are not only gods and spirits, but include a rock, tree, spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, a word, the four noble truths and the practices derived from them in Buddhism or anything that is considered sacred by religious beliefs. Its extent varies infinitely, according to different religion. Sacred things are distinguished from profane things and are considered superior in dignity and power as compared to profane things. The opposition of these two classes manifests itself outwardly with a visible sign by which we can easily recognize the very classification, wherever it exists.

Only under certain special circumstances, the profane can approach the sacred by performing certain rites. These rites are derived from beliefs. In other words, beliefs and rites are the two fundamental categories in which a religion is organized. This kind of dual organization in terms of beliefs and rites has a special significance because it explains functions

of religion. This system of classification of all things into two classes or opposed groups – sacred and profane is known as Durkheimian sacred-profane dichotomy.

Q38 What are Cognitive and Social Functions of Religion?

Durkheim found the sacred-profane dichotomy to be at the centre of any religion. The profane can contact the sacred only by performing certain rites. It must be made explicit that this division or opposition of the sacred and profane is such that it is found in different forms and degrees in various religions. These rites are derived from beliefs. The division of religious phenomena into two fundamental categories, namely, beliefs (thoughts) and rites (actions), corresponds to the difference between thought and action, and this is known as cognitive and social functions of religion.

- (i) **Cognitive Functions:** Religion can mould people's thinking and so help them to live and adapt to their conditions of existence. One, who participates in religious practices, emerges as a superior person with strength and vitality to face the world. This perception has to be understood in the context of Durkheim's argument that religions have continued to survive all along, because it has fulfilled certain needs. Religion generates a particular mental state within an individual, which raises one above oneself and helps to lead a superior life.

Durkheim argued that the fundamental categories of science like time, space, number and cause, came out of one's religious quest. Philosophy and sciences were born from religion; it is because religion began by taking the place of the sciences and philosophy. Time, space and numbers in fact reveal the 'rhythm of collective activity' towards the sacred. Categories like time, space, number, class, through which we understand the world, came out of the **collective activities of the primitives toward the sacred**. If that is so,

these categories are collective representations. At the level of cognition, these emerge from collective response towards the sacred.

(ii) **Social Functions:** According to Durkheim the collective representation are the result of '**an immense cooperation**'. They emerge, when the whole community comes together, **to enact certain rites in response to the sacred**. The rituals (actions of thought) are of two types: *positive* and *negative*. Negative rituals include a whole set of prohibitions to be observed to recreate the collective sentiment and worship the sacred. The positive rituals, on the other hand, include the meticulous 'preparations' to be undergone by an individual before approaching the sacred and participating in the community. For example, the initiation rites undergone by an individual, at the attainment of adulthood, denote a 'total transformation' of the young person. Some of the initiation rites are painful but it is through pain, one 'transforms' oneself and profane passes over to the sacred.

Sacred is something, which is noble, respected, venerated and worshipped. It is society which creates the 'sacredness' and sets the 'sacred' apart from the 'profane'. In other words, Gods are derived from certain rites performed by human beings. What is considered to be 'sacred' today may not be so tomorrow. Also, it is a fact that when 'profane' approaches the sacred without due precautions, 'sacred' itself loses its value.

From the above, we understand that, the 'sacred' is the creation of society. If that be so, when society worships the 'sacred', it actually means the society is worshipping itself. When a community comes together and performs certain rituals collectively, the collective sentiments are around. These collective sentiments are symbolized by the sacred object, set apart and venerated by the society. The set of rules and regulations, characteristics of the ritual, direct and transform the society into a 'moral' community.

Q39 Is Yumaism in conformity to Durkheim's understanding of "Totemism is eminently Social"?

Both **No**, it is not; and **Yes**, it is. **No**, because "**Ancestor Worship**" was the beginning or origin of the religion of nomadic ancestors of the entire humanity as discussed on Question **No.15** earlier. "**Shamans**" evolved from ancestor worship after thousands of years later as the deceased ancestors constitute the Reincarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shaman Phedangmas in Yumaism, and thus "**Shamanism**" was encompassed and interwoven within "Ancestor Worship" in the nomadic ancestors later in the first phase of religious development as in the case of Yumaism. Thus, **the origin of religion is "Ancestor Worship"** of the entire humanity; and not Totemism contrary to the views of Durkheimian understanding of religion.

Yes, it is; because "**Totemism**" was also encompassed within **Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism** in the second phase of development of Yumaism required for more complex social order for a more complex society (Chiefdomship) when they started foraging or settled in Limbuwan, once Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang established his kingdom after 200 A.D. Thus, **Yumaism** now comprises of "**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism-cum-Totemism**" since 200 A.D.

Ancient archaeological evidences of the worldwide spread of petroglyphs with "Shamans" and "Shaman dances" of the ancient caves, which are considered temples of nomadic humanity of Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages as described under **Q14** and **Q15** explain that these two phases of religious developments of Yumaism required for more complex social order mentioned above seems to be universal for transformation of simple nomadic humanity to more complex society (Chiefdomship/Tribal) through out the world.

Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society (one of the Native Himalayans) now, is in conformity to Durkheim's "**Totemism is**

eminently Social” after 200 A.D. According to Durkheim (1912),⁹ “*Totemism is an elementary form of religion*”. When Yumaism Mundhums were analyzed in detail, it was found that “Ancestor Worship” encompassed and interwoven “Shamanism” within it was the religion of the Limboo nomadic ancestors before establishment of a Kingdom by Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang in Limbuwan Country in 200 A.D. in the Eastern Himalayas inclusive of the period of 32 Kirata Kings’ who ruled Nepal Valley for about 1964 years established first by King Yalamber Hang about 1,779 B.C. (1,779 B.C. to 185 A.D.). As already explained in the questions of Archaeological study of primitive human nomads under **Q14** and **Q15**, the elementary religion of the entire primitive nomads was “**Ancestor worship**” followed by “**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism**”; and not **Totemism**. In other words the origin of religion of all the nomadic humanity through out the world was Ancestor Worship, which encompassed and interwoven Shamanism at its first phase of religious development. Totemism was also encompassed and interwoven within it only during the Neolithic Revolution when the humanity started settling in a particular location or region or country after domestication of wild-plants and wild-animals for agriculture to establish a more complex social order for Chieftdomship/Tribal Society in its second phase of religious development.

Durkheim’s study was based on the study of Neolithic or later primitive settled societies. In Yumaism “Totemism” was encompassed at the later stage when the primitive ancestors of the Limboo society started foraging in a particular area of the Himalayan region in 200 A.D. onwards after the King Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang established his Kingdom at **Tawalung Susuwaden, Limbuwan, Eastern Himalayas**. It is because the Limboo society acquired more complex social stage only after 200 A.D. The totemic plants and animals inclusive of their sacred landscape Jannu Mountain (*Phoktanglungma Penbenlungma*) of Limbuwan of the Limboo Society found exclusively in the Eastern Himalayan region only. When totemism encompassed

and interwoven within Ancestor worship-cum-shamanism, forming a religion known as Yumaism, the Limboo ancestors were no more nomads but at least in a tribal or Chiefdomship social stages. Thus, Yumaism is very much in conformity to Durkheimian “Totemism is eminently social” but only after 200 A.D. when their ancestors attained Chiefdomship or Tribal Social stage.

The various religious rituals (action of beliefs) in Yumaism were/are being performed in every six months, annually, or in three years cycle for obtaining reality or value in participating in transcendent reality of the rituals - for giving new life, curing, healing, vigor, strength, prosperity, a ritual of defending oneself from the evil spirits, recollecting the gods with reverence and invoking them for their support in time of crucial events of life and death through hierophany “*death and resurrection of the individuals while living to the adherent individuals, family, clan or society*”.¹² This shows that the Yumaism still rest on **psychological explanation for a social cause; and hence, the belief system and rituals of Yumaism are eminently social.**

The religious rituals of Yumaism are hierophany (manifestation of Sacred space and sacred time) not theophany (manifestation of gods and goddesses), and not Animism too. Their believes are in two types of ‘eternal return’ (a) ‘the philosophical eternal return’ which takes place at death of the adherents, and (b) ‘eternal return’ to the sacred place established during the mythical age while living to acquire their reality, their identity, only to the extent of their participation in a transcendent reality. Yumaism also believes in two broad levels of existence (a) the sacred space such as *Chotlung, Mangenna Yock, Sam Yukna Den, Sangram Pedang Den, Khema Yongsong Den, etc.*, and (b) the profane such as *Pongwana den* (dwelling place or nominal world) and other than sacred things. Yumaism religious thoughts in general, rest on a sharp distinction between the sacred space and the profane. The sacred contains the reality, or value and thus obtain reality or good health, healing, curing, strength, progress and prosperity; while

the profane world has no reality or value to the individual or family or clan or the society. Therefore, **Yumaism is eminently social**, based on psychological explanations of the emotional stress of the Limboo Society but only after 200 A.D. or Neolithic revolution.

Q40 Are the *Mundhums* of Yumaism “Sacred Totems” and explain the cognitive and social functions of the Limboo Society?

Yes, it is. As already defined in the previous questions, *‘Totemism is a complex set of ideas and beliefs in which each human is thought to have a spiritual connection or a kinship with another physical being’*.⁹ “Mundhum” of Yumaism is a “Mythic structure”, “Collective Spiritual Wisdom” or “Ethnography of the primitive Limboo ancestors”, constituting the most important Sacred Narratives or “Sacred Totems” of the Limboo Society. It is an approach in which most stories of the Limboo Society (ethnography) were boiled down to a series of narrative structures and character archetypes, described through mythological allegory. Thus, the Mundhums of Yumaism are defined as ‘Religious Sacred Narratives’ explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form. These are all elementary idea, ethnic idea or folk idea of the ethnic Limboo Society. The main characters in Yumaism Mundhums are usually the great feminine apical ancestor Goddess – Tagera Ningwaphuma (*Yuma Mang*), Her matriarchal component *Yuma Sam* and its humanity will *Yuma Sammangs*; patriarchal component *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam*; Her *Sijoingmisa Mangs* (messenger gods and goddesses), mythical demigods and demigoddesses (*Khambongba Lungbongba Sas* on which the entire Limboo Mundhums are based) and Super humans (all five types of incarnate religious priests - Phedangmas). **Mundhums are ‘Sacred Totems’ of the Limboo society and its power, virtues and relationship bridges between the sacred places of phenomenal world and the profane or nominal world.**^{11,12,13}

Many learned scholars inclusive of I.S. Chemjong believed that the oral Mundhums of Yumaism were composed by Mahatma Yehang¹⁴ (which is non-existent). It is unlikely to believe that an individual could compose such a vast oral literature of Yumaism Mundhums. In fact, the oral Mundhums of Yumaism are 'the collective spiritual wisdom' of the Limboo Society, and the characters in these oral sacred narratives are all gods and goddess of ancestral origin, and constitute the mythical ancestors of the Limboo society. For example, *Sodhung Lepmuhang* and *Thillilung Thamdenlungma* were renamed by *Sutchchura Suhangpheba* and *Tetlara Lahadongna* themselves to discharge other functions in the oral sacred narratives after they were separated by the cosmic gods and goddesses. *Sawa Yethangs* and *Pegi Phanghang* were their progenies. They were all *Khambongba Lungbongba Mangs* (soil gods and goddesses). They are not human ancestors but they are considered as mythical non-human ancestors of the Limboo society. In Mundhum, they are projected as 'the mythical ancestors' of 'the mythical age'. 'Yehang' is a term used for 'a religious council' who supervises the religious rituals being conducted in any Limboo Society. Thus, Mundhum of Yumaism cannot be an individual's imagination or composition, but 'a collective spiritual wisdom' of the Limboo society. Mundhums explain the **cognitive** (beliefs/thoughts) and **social functions** (rituals and actions) of the Limboo Society. All the cognitive and social functions of all the important Yumaism Mundhums have been analyzed in my previous work.¹³

Q41 Is the Great Feminine Trinitarian Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma of Yumaism a Totemic Goddess?

Yes, it is. As pointed out above, the main characters in Limboo Mundhums (Sacred Totems) are usually the great feminine Goddesses – Tagera Ningwaphuma (*Yuma Mang*), matriarchal component *Yuma Sam* with its humanity will *Yama Sammang*, Her patriarchal component – *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam*, Her *Sijoingmisas* of other *Mangs* (messenger gods and goddesses), supernatural

demigods and demigoddesses (*Khambongba Lungbongba Sas* on which the entire Limboo Mundhums are based) and super humans (all five types of religious incarnate priests - Phedangmas). All these Mundhums are 'sacred totems' of the Limboo Society and its power, virtues and relationship bridges between the Trinitarian Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma of the sacred space of phenomenal world and Limboo Society of the profane or nominal world. Thus, Mundhums are '**Sacred Totems**' of the Limboo society which describes the Limboo Society's relationship with a symbolized '**great feminine Trinitarian Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma** of *Sangram Pedang Den*; Her Matriarchal component – *Yuma Sam* (prayed and worshipped the Goddess through her at *Mang-him* and *Mangdhan*); and its Humanity Will – *Yuma Sammang* (prayed and worshipped the Goddess through it at *Lasso* - temporary altar); and Patriarchal component *Hangsam* or *Thoba Pa-sam* (the Phedangmas retrieve, accompany deceased soul and submit the soul to *Hangsam* at *Samyukna Den*). *Hangsam* is never prayed or worshipped in the profane world, as they are not allowed to visit the profane world. Because of this reason, the deceased's souls have to accompany soul journey to *Sam Yukna Den* (ancestor's land) through *Sam Sa:ma*, *Sam Chaomma*, *Sitongsing Khema* ritual etc. They all represent as '**Sacred Totemic Trinitarian Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma**' in Her various forms at various 'Sacred places' (*Mang-him*, *Mangdhan* and *Lasso*; *Sangram Pedang Den*, and *Sam Yukna Den*). Similarly, *Tamumang*, the divinity of death; and *Paotimang* of *Khema Yongsong Den* or Purgatory world are also "Totemic gods". According to Durkheim, "*religion itself is a product of the collective sentiments aroused by the collective performance of rituals.*"⁹ Similarly, Yumaism is a product of the collective sentiments aroused by the collective performance of pray and worship of individuals, families, clans of Limboo Society of Yumaism adherent rituals.

Q42 Are *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlungs* in Yumaism “Sacred Totems” of the Sacred Space?

Yes, they are. In Yumaism Mundhum, all the incarnate five types of religious priests and head of the family have their own sacred fortification places, known as ‘*Sacred Kambolling Nahangma Chotlungs*’. These sacred fortification places were established during the mythical age, and they have been classified as ‘*Kambolling Nahangma Ongshi Chotlung*’, ‘*Kambolling Nahangma Phedangma Chotlung*’, ‘*Kambolling Nahangma Sawara Yetchhammuk Samba Chotlung*’, ‘*Kambolling Nahangma Sibhak Yemi Ya Chotlung*’ for *Muhikkum Ongshi*, *Phejiri Phedangma*, *Sawara Yetchhammuk Samba* and *Sibhak Yemi Ya* (*Yeba* and *Yema*) religious priests respectively; and ‘*Sawa Yethang Nahangma Chotlung*’. The last one is for the head of the family and it is further divided into four domains of children (*Henjiri Hemponge Chotlung*), youths (*Menchhya-Thangben Chotlung*), women (*Yaklasuhangma Chotlung*) and gentlemen (*Tuttu Tumyanghang Chotlung*). All these fortification sacred places are **totems of these classes of people in Yumaism**. Each of these type of religious shaman priests and head of the family have to conduct the ritual of Eliade’s “eternal return” while living once in every three years for fortification, providing a new life full of strength, vigor and vitality.^{11, 12} Through the performance of this ritual (death and resurrection) the shaman priests and the household members are blessed with new lives, power, prestige and progress and the energy of the Sun and the Moon to avoid or cure illness, envy and jealousy, anger and incest, etc.¹²

All these sacred *Chotlungs* are “**Sacred Totems**” of different types of shaman religious priests and family head. Imitating and re-actualizing the exemplary acts of god and goddesses or mythic demi-gods and demi-goddesses or simply by recounting their adventures of these sacred *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlungs*, they detach themselves from profane world and magically re-enter the great mythical time of

their respective *Chotlung* creation; and thus acquire reality or value only to the extent of their participation in a transcendence reality of the ritual in their profane life.

Q43 Are *Simering Mangenna Yocks* of numerous Limboo clans, “Clan Totems” of the profane?

Yes, they are. The Limboo tribe is divided into several clans or *mingsras*. The clan is a group of people originated in a particular place which is known as *Mangenna Yock* (sacred place) of that particular clan united by a name (*mingsra ming* or clan name), into a common bond. There are more than a thousand of clans in the Limboo tribe. The *mingsra* is a group based on blood relations (family tree – genealogy or *vangsavali*). The name of the clan is identified by its common name of their ‘*Mangenna Yock*’ (sacred place) which differs from one clan to the other, indicates its “*totem*”. Not only is the clan but also individuals of the clan identified with the name of the clan *totem* – “*Mangenna Yock*”. For every individual, one has to perform rituals of *Simering Mangenna* which means “death and resurrection” conducted by religious priest^{11, 12} for obtaining a new life for healing, curing, vigor, strength, prosperity, or defending oneself from the evils every six month or every year. Further, even in wedding ritual (*Mekkam Mangenna*), the soul of the bride (*Sisamey*) and the groom (*Nalisang*) are accompanied on a soul journey by the incarnate soul of the shaman Phedangma to the *Mangenna Yock* of the bride first, and then, he carries along with them the ‘*Mangenna Yock*’ of the bride to the *Mangenna Yock* of the groom. Then he conducts a symbolic mixing of the *Mangenna Yock* of the bride with the *Mangenna Yock* of the groom, sacrificing a cock and a hen (hierophany or totem materials for the bride and groom respectively) and symbolically mixing the blood of these sacrificed birds. Then, the shaman Phedangma asks the divinity of ‘*Mangenna Yock*’ (sacred space) to bless the bride-groom a happy marriage life, balancing their characters for better cooperation, introducing the bride with the groom’s household divinities, blessing

them with progenies, healing, curing, vigor, strength, prosperity, or defending them from the evils. Thereafter, there will be no separate *Mangenna Yock* of the *Sisamey* or wife now. Her *Mangenna Yock* will be the same as that of *Nalisang* or her husband now. Then, the incarnate soul of the shaman *Phedangma* returns with the souls of bride and groom to the main pillar of the dwelling house of the groom using the staircase of *Murumsitlang* or *Axis mundi* (symbolic center of the world). Thus, every Limboo individual during *Simering Mangenna* and bride-groom during *Mekkam Mangenna* acquire their reality or value only to the extent of their participation in a transcendence reality of the *Simering Mangenna* and *Mekkam Mangenna* rituals respectively.¹²

Thus, *Mangenna Yock* of a clan is a clan's '**Sacred totem**' of the profane or nominal world. It is a Symbol or Totem of identity of a clan or *Thar* for avoiding consanguinous matrimony and inbreeding and thus established a social order in the Limboo Society. It helps in establishing the identity of an individual person or clan group. Totem is employed in rituals and other religious ceremonies. Most important of all, the totem has a religious character. It is a sacred thing. The *Mangenna Yock* of a clan is the personification of the clan (*mingsra*) itself. The cock and hen sacrificed are "Totem animals" or "hierophanic animals".

Q44 Are the Flowers and Flower Gardens of *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlungs* with *Sodhung Worok* Sacred Totems of the Sacred Space?

Yes, they are. The Limboo Society compares the human life with a flower garden ever blooming, fresh, and vibrant with a lake. *Sekmari Wandayo Phung* is the first flower-plant grew in the garden and it is compared with the life of Yumaism adherents. Thereafter several fragrant flowers of ladies and gentlemen also grew there, such as *Mennoye Menjai Phung*, *Khirabe Yamsephung*, *Mahangma Yamsephung*,

Singjango Wetjangophung, Thopara Mangennaphung, Hukjiri Hukkaklempfung, Mukkumpfung Kewaphung, Maroti Nunammaphung, Lungdhakke Lunglengwaphung, Thokphetla Nahenpfung, Kokphetla Nunammaphung, Sinikka Pejammaphung, Ingnama Chomenaphung, etc. Similarly, flower of *Phedangmas – Namyoba (Artemisia vulgaris)*; flowers of *Samba – Sapsing (Phoebe lanceolata)* and *Muktubung (Neyraudia medagascariensis)*; and the flower of *Yaba and Yema – Tiamla Theamla (Cymbidium spp. orchids)* also grew on the hills. Thus, “the flower garden” so created represents the human life of different groups of the Limboo Society, and is a “**Sacred Totems**” of the “**Sacred Chotlungs**”. Similarly, all these Totemic flowers are Totems of the specific group of Limboo Society as follows:

- (i) ***Sekmari Wandayo Phung (celery, *Apium graveolens*)*** is a “**Life Totem**” of the Limboo Society. The first flower grew in the garden known as *Sekmari Wandayo Phung*, and also the flower first used to represent *Namsami* (human being) by their mother *Ipnana Sarengdhangma* during *Kesapmi-Namsami’s* (*Kesami* = tiger animal) life and death fighting, is also a ‘**Totem flower**’ representing the human life of the Yumaism adherent Limboo Society. It is a human flower of the adherents of Yumaism that tetomically separates the humans from other animals. It is the most sacred flower and revered with respect and reverence, and always encouraged to grow in the garden during rituals of *Tongsing, Nahangma, Phungwachangma, etc.*

- (ii) ***Namyoba Flower (Artemisia vulgaris)*** is a “**Totem flower**” of Phedangma shaman religious priests. This type of incarnate Phedangmas always uses *Namyoba* flower plant while conducting various religious rituals that tetomically identify and separate them from other shaman priests in the Limboo Society.

- (iii) **Sapsing** (*Phoebe lanceolata*) and **Muktubung** (*Neyraudia medagascariensis*) are “**Totem flowers**” of *Sawara Yetchhammuk Samba*. *Sawara Yetchhammuk Sambas* always use these plants while conducting various religious rituals that identify and separate from other shaman peirsts in the Limboo Society.
- (iv) **Tiamla Theamla** flower (*Cymbidium spp.* orchids) is a “**Totem flower**” of *Sibhak Yemi Sa Yeba* and *Yema*. *Sibhak Yemi Ya (Yeba and Yema)* always used this plant while conducting various religious rituals that identify and separate them from other shaman priests in the Limboo Society.
- (v) **Namyoba Flower** (*Artemisia vulgaris*) is also “**Totem flowers of flower-vase**” of the Limboo Society. Without it the Limboo Flower-vase is incomplete and it identify and separate from other flower-vase. It is always encouraged to grow in the garden as it is needed for various religious rituals.
- (vi) A number of flowers became dwelling flowers of evil spirits as “**Totem Evil Spirit flowers**”, such as *Chuwat phung* (Hyacinth, *Hyacinthus orientalis*), *Lekwasen Kopiphung* (white water lilly *Nymphaea alba*), *Yamsampha phung*, *Tabephung* (Angeri, *Melastoma normale*), etc. All these flowers have to be weeded out from the *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlung* gardens and thrown away in the rituals of *Chotlung*.
- (vii) **Mikchiri Chey Phung** is a “**Totem flower of Chey (corpse)**”. The flower needs to be weeded out and thrown away from the *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlung* gardens.
- (viii) **Ondong Phung** (*Ocimum basilicum*) is the flowers of “**Totem Phayet Nuge**” (flowers of tiger) as it was first used by *Ipnana Sarengdhangma* to represent her tiger Son – *Kesami* while her

sons were fighting life and death. The flower needs to be weeded out from the *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlung* garden and thrown away.

(ix) **Sodhung Warak (Lake-Life) of the Chotlungs is “Totemic lake”**. The lakes of *Kambolling Nahangma Chotlung* gardens represents the life of different groups of human beings of the Limboo Society described above. In every ritual of *Chotlung*, the shaman priest perform the ritual of making barrage strong enough by putting more soils of various places for barricading. The lake must be full of water. So he brings water of great oceans situated in all the four different directions, water from different directions of fountains and wells and pour into the lake with the help of his *Sam sires* (group souls of animals). He also puts fishes, aquatics animals, stones and rocks and makes it perfect and full of every thing.¹²

(x) A number of Limboo Clans also have “**Animal Totems**” as the clan identity. For example, fowl or a bird is a totem of *Khewa* clan, buffalo is a totem animal of *Mangyung* clan, goat is a totem animal of *Nembang* clan, Pig is a totem animal of *Angbohng* clan, etc. These totem birds and animals are sacred for the clans and abstain from eating.

Q45 **Are Mythical Ancestors of Mundhums “Totemic Mythical Non-human Ancestors” of Yumaism Adherents?**

Yes, they are. In Yumaism, the mythical ancestors (ancestors described in Mundhum) are also known as “**Ancestor Totems**”. These mythical ancestors are “*Sodhung Lepmuhang*”, “*Thillilung Thamdenlungma*” (demi-god and goddesses respectively), “*Sawa Yethangs*” (mythical ancestors), “*Pegi Phanghangs*”, “*Khambongba Lungbongbas*” (soil gods and goddesses or owners of the earth realm), “*Sewaklung Aakwanama*” (divinity of main pillar - *Murumsitlang*) of the Limboo dwelling house, *Thoba Sammang*, etc.

Q46 Is “the power of a thing lies in its origin” in Yumaism?

Yes, it is. If origin is equivalent to power; then ‘it is the first manifestation of a thing that is significant and valid. A thing’s reality and value therefore lies only in its first appearance. Mundhums describe the Sacred’s first appearance; therefore, Mundhum as well as the mythical age is sacred and a sacred time. Every hierophany materials or non-materials appeared first are ‘hierophany’ or “Totem” in Yumaism. For example, such Totemic or hierophany materials are **the Sky, the Earth, Wadumbokwa** (the rain water collected on tree trunks and rocks), **the Moon, Sadhunge Thungwama Ahang** (mythical liminal river separating nominal world with phenomenal world), **Ponglung** (shotput stone), **Sangsing Dhup** (incense from pine tree), number of totemic flowering plants described above, **Mukkum Semi** (fire), **Murumsitlang** (main pillar of a Limboo dwelling house), **Tambhungkhe** or **bontarul** (wild yam which was the first food of our ancestors used for their survival), all types of newly harvested food crops (**Tooksok, Thisok** or **nuwangi**), **Phaksotey** (one female piglet in every weaning), sacrificial animals (**Samdangwa, Karangwa**, fowl, pig, goat, sheep, buffalo, duck, or other domesticated and wild animals, etc.) are also considered as “Totemic” or “symbolic” in Yumaism of the Limboo Society.¹²

Q47 Are Yumaism beliefs and rituals in conformity to Durkheimian views of “Society, Like God, comes to be worshipped”?

Yes, they are. Yumaism believes and ritual practices are same as Durkheim’s view of ‘*Society, like God, comes to be worshipped*’. According to Durkheim, ‘*God is to worshippers, what society is to individuals. Both God and Society have overarching power over the worshippers or the individuals. Hence society, like God, comes to be worshipped.*’ Yumaism beliefs and practices are in conformity to Durkheimian understanding of “*Society, like God, comes to be worshipped*”.⁹

All the Gods and Goddess of Yumaism are the creations of the Limboo Society. When the Limboo Society worships them, it actually means the Limboo Society is worshipping itself. When the Limboo Community comes together and performs certain rituals collectively, the collective sentiments are around. These collective sentiments are symbolized by the sacred objects of *Mang-him*, *Mangdhan* or *Lasso* (Altar), set apart and venerated by the Limboo Society. The set of rules and regulations, characteristics of Yumaism rituals, direct and transform the Limboo Society into a moral community.

Unlike Hinduism, Yumaism believes that the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma, Her matriarchal component '*Yuma Sam*' with her humanity will '*Yuma Sammang*', Her patriarchal component *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam*; Her messenger gods and goddesses; the external supernatural earthly forces or energies - *Sammangs* (divinities), *Sammang-Chyangs* (retinue of divinities) and *Sam Sire* (incarnate divinity and group souls of animals) described in Yumaism are all considered reality and not illusions. The great feminine Goddess is at the sacred place '*Sangram Pedang Den*' and the realm is beyond time and space. All the '*Eighteen Dens*' (*sangbhe*, *tal-atal* – nine above in the *Akasic* fields and nine underworlds) ruled by different gods and goddesses are considered reality in Yumaism. The entire shamanic belief system and shamanic rituals are based on the gods and goddesses of these eighteen realms of existence. Yumaism believes that even *Sam Sires* (group souls of animals) exists only with great feminine Goddess at "*Sangram Pedang Den*". The shaman priest Phedangmas are capable of obtaining these group souls of animals from the Goddess on request and use as agents for curing and healing of the individual adherents in the society while practicing shamanism. They believe that the group souls of animals do not exist on the earth realm or profane. The animals have no individual soul. They have only group souls but at "*Sangram Pedang Den*"; on the basis of which the Phedangmas obtain "*Wasang*" (feather symbol of shamans) as their

symbolic gear of *Yebe* and *Yema*. These gods and goddess and eighteen realms of existence are considered not illusions but reality.

The Limboo Society believes that they are the blessings of *Yuma Mang* and they came in existence as intangible spirit or soul with the dawn of consciousness *Tagera Ningwaphuma*. They believe that the Trinitarian Goddess *Tagera Ningwaphuma* (*Yum Mang* = grand-mother Goddess) is their **apical ancestor** of the dawn of consciousness, and they worship as Spiritual or Universal Consciousness. *Yuma Sam* (= grand-mother soul, matriarchal component or Second Person) with *Yuma Sammang* (humanity will of grand-mother soul) is their **matriarchal ancestor soul** of the earth realm (*Iksading Khambek Den*) and they worship as Spiritual Consciousness of the earth realm; and the *Hang Sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam* (= main soul or grand-father soul or Third Person) is the deceased's **soul receiving ancestor divinity** of their own clan or sub-clan deceased soul of three generation ahead. Thus, they believe that the Trinitarian Goddess *Tagera Ningwaphuma* with both Her Second Person and Third Person is a *Totemic or Symbolic Ancestor Goddess*. The Limboo Society worships his/her own ancestors or Society in the form of the Great Feminine Trinitarian Goddess.

Further, the Limboo Society also believes that their real life is nothing but a spirit or soul, energy and blessing of the dawn of consciousness – *Tagera Ningwaphuma* (*Yuma Mang*), and they come to the physical form to the earth realm (*Iksading khambek Den*) only to purify themselves through *Suyo* (good *Karma*) when they get impurity. In the field of purity the Trinitarian Goddess is the first, followed by other gods and goddess (*Sijoingmi Mangs* and *Khambongba Lungbongba Mangs*). The human beings are in the bottom line of impurity; and thus they have to come to the earth realm in physical form to purify themselves through *Suyo* (good *Karma*). *Suyo-Kheyo* (*Karma*) can be practiced only in this realm when they acquire Outer Perception System (*Ni-sam* and *Khem-sam*) and Multi or Inner Perception System

(*Sikkum-sam*, *Ningwa-sam* and *Thona-sam*) and that comes with flesh. Once they purify, the individuals follow their own continuous intangible life in the three realms of existence (i.e. *Sangram Pedang Den* and *Khemading Yongsong Den*). While in the earth realm, if they commit a heinous crime (*kheyo* or negative karma) they have to go to *Khemading Yongsong Den* (purgatory world) for burning away their excess *Kheyo* (negative *Karma*) to get reborn on the earth realm again for purification. Thus, the cycle repeats infinitely. Yumaism does not believe on *Mokchya* or Liberation as in Hinduism or Buddhism.

All the gods and goddesses of Yumaism inclusive of the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma are the creations of the Limboo Society. When the Limboo Society comes together and performs certain ritual, pray or worship of Goddess at any *Mang-him* or *Mangdhan* or *Lasso* (altar), it actually means that the adherent individual or the society is worshipping the great feminine Trinitarian Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma (*Yuma Mang*) or their apical non-human ancestors in Her different forms, Her messenger gods and goddesses of these realms at these sacred places both individually and collectively. The collective sentiments of the worshippers on the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma, Her different forms described above, and Her messenger gods and goddesses of the eighteen realms of existence are aroused. These collective sentiments on Goddess and other gods and goddesses are symbolized by the sacred object at *Mang-him*, *Mangdhan* or *Lasso*, set apart and venerated by the worshippers. The set of rituals' pray and worship, rules and regulations, characteristics of the *Mang-him* or *Mangdhan* or *Lasso* (altar) rituals, direct and transform the worshipping the Limboo Society into a 'moral' Limboo community.¹⁵

Q&A 48-51

Analyzing the Role and Functions of Religion

48. Is the role of Religion in the Society functional?
49. Does the functional role of religion provides Identity, Social Continuity and Stability to a Society?
50. Is "Ancestor Worship" encompassed and interwoven "Shamanism" and played a dominating role in the nomadic humanity?
51. What are the functional roles of Yumaism in the Limboo Society?

Q48 Is the role of Religion in the Society functional?

Yes, it is. Malinowski (1948) had studied the Trobriand Islanders in the Western Pacific. The people there were mostly from fishing communities and had to constantly deal with hazardous expeditions for fishing and underwent experiences that could not be explained by them. Malinowski argued that *“the feeling of fear, anger, sadness, etc. that rose in the mind of primitive people on such occasions were overcome by resorting to religious activities or the performance of certain rituals that would help get over of such unsure feelings. Religion functioned here to essentially help one to regain one’s stability of mind and ‘readjust to situations of emotional stress that had arisen. In other words, religion ‘functioned as a tool for adoption’ to any given situation. For example, when the islanders would set out for a long journey, they would perform rituals and magic on the boat so that it would avoid trouble on the way. Such an exercise was carried out in all kinds of situations of mental and physical instability. Ritual and magic have a very great influence on the activities of the society as a whole, the rituals flourished greatly in times of acute stress and especially in all events that men can hardly explain.”*¹

In this sense Malinowski and his followers understood religion in term of its **functions**. Their findings progressed beyond traditional answers to questions of origin and development of religion. They provided the functionalist alternatives to evolutionist theories. Not content by simply observing and recording data about primitive societies, Malinowski’s successor, Radcliffe-Brown,^{2,3,4,5} tried to analyze ethnographic data by using sociological concepts. He was attracted to the Durkheimian sociology and attempted to organize his theoretical ideas around Durkheim’s views on religion.

From the study of Malinowski and his successor Radcliffe-Brown on the role of religion, it was concluded that the role of religion was functional in a society (alternatives to evolutionist theories) beyond

traditional answers to the questions of origin and development of religion. Both the functionalists Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown concluded that **'the role of religion was functional in a society.'** They argued that religion was not originated and developed as an evolutionary process in a society. They rejected evolutionary theories of origin and development of religion described in the previous questions as they found that religion was not originated and developed through evolution in a society. They concluded that the role of religion was functional, and thus religion was originated and developed to function something in a society as observed in the Trobriand Islanders of the Western Pacific. The role of religion in the Trobriand Islanders was **"to regain their stability of mind and 'readjust to situations of emotional stress that had arisen"**. The role of religion in the society was to **'function as a tool for adoption to any given situation'**.

Alike the Trobriand Islanders in the Western Pacific, the Limboo Society also conducts religious rituals as protective measures as well as success before starting any important work even today. They conduct *Yuma Mang* prayer, *Simering Mangenna* or *Kambolling Nahangma* religious rituals of the family members before starting any important work for providing a new life full of vigour and strength to accomplish the work successfully, defending the individual from the evil spirits, invoking the gods and goddesses for their support in time of crucial events of life. Thus, the role of Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo society is also to function as a tool for adoption to any situation of emotional stress; and thus it is in conformity to religious understanding of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown.

Q49 Does the functional role of religion provides Identity, Social Continuity and Stability to a Society?

Radcliffe-Brown (1929)³ took a more comprehensive view of Durkheim's sociological view of Totemism and showed *"Totemism to be a particular form of universalistic law operating in human society. The universal law is that anything related to material or non-*

material well being of a society is an object of religious attitude. For example, those who depend on dairy products have ritual attitude to dairy animals." Radcliffe-Brown did not accept explanations of the origin of religion in terms of psychology. Evans-Prichard (1965:74)⁶ is, however, critical of this position.

Since people's "behaviour is largely determined by what they think to be important, the performance of ritual may have important social consequences." This was the central theme of Radcliffe-Brown's theory of ritual, which he derived from Durkheim. In the Andaman Islanders and elsewhere he argued that "the main social function of the rituals is to express certain important social sentiments, such as the need for mutual support and solidarity between the members of a community. Unless enough people held and acted on these values, the society could not survive, and through the performance of ritual they are constantly in the minds of the performers, and so the maintenance of the social system is secured".⁷

Firstly, he argued that in practice, while describing the occasions of dancing among the Andaman Islanders, Radcliffe-Brown² explains "religious behaviour mainly in terms of the personality of the dancer and mixture of feelings and actions in his dance which produce solidarity in the community."

Secondly, on the basis of this case, Radcliffe-Brown generalizes that a "ritual attitude generates social cohesion and harmony."⁵ Evans-Prichard (1965:74)⁶ objected to this tendency of generalizing on the basis of one case. For example, the dances in Central Africa, he argued, often cause conflict and disharmony.

Thirdly, Radcliffe-Brown⁴ argues that "religious functions are essential to keep society together and it forms contrast in accordance with types of society." For example, "ancestor worship is commonly found in societies with lineage systems." But, then,

Evans-Prichard (1956:75)⁸ again argued Radcliffe-Brown's findings that among some African groups, ancestor cult is found where no lineage system exists.

Evans-Prichard criticizes Radcliffe-Brown's functionalist approach to religion on the following bases. (i) *Sociological explanations offered by Radcliffe-Brown did not take into account any negative evidences*; and (ii) *Radcliffe-Brown's generalized statements are quite vague in nature*. They have very little scientific value because it is not possible to either prove or disprove them.

Evans-Prichard (1965)⁶ criticized Radcliffe-Brown's functionalist approach to the study of religion. In addition he considered the possibilities for showing that "*certain religious systems are found in societies of a particular type*." This was initially understood by Levy-Brhul^{9, 10} and later Evans-Prichard also added new ideas to the sociological study of religion.

From the study of functionalists, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Prichard on social continuity and solidarity, the following inferences have been drawn:

- (i) The main function of a religion is to strengthen social continuity and solidarity in a society.
- (ii) Totemism is a particular form of law operating in human society. The universal law that of anything related to material or non-material well being of a society is an object of religious attitude. The people's behaviour is largely determined by what they think to be important, and the performance of ritual may have important social consequences. **The totem and the behaviour of a society towards it depend on the foraging regions of nomad settlement area or regions where people generally come across to these totems mainly during their early settlement period or Neolithic revolution.**

- (iii) The ritual's main social function is to express certain important social sentiments, such as the need for mutual support and solidarity between the members of a community. Unless enough people held and acted on these values the society could not survive, and through the performance of ritual they are constantly in the minds of the performers, and so the maintenance of the social system is secured. Religious behaviour mainly in terms of the personality of dancer and the mixture of feelings and actions in his dance which produce solidarity in the community. In other words, conduct of rituals for regular expression of identity, continuity and solidarity is essential to keep a society together.
- (iv) Ritual attitude usually generates social cohesion and harmony. Religious as well as secular functions are essential to keep society together and its form varies in accordance with types of society.
- (v) Ancestor worship is the root or origin of every religion but commonly found in the society with lineage systems; and
- (vi) Certain religious systems are found in societies of a particular type.

Q50 Is "Ancestor Worship" encompassed and interwoven "Shamanism" and played a dominating role in the nomadic humanity?

Yes, it is. "Ancestor Worship" is the inevitable religious beliefs of the entire nomadic humanity. Other form of religion originated encompassing and interweaving "**Shamanism**" within "**Ancestor Worship**" with the evolution of "**Shamans**" as **the deceased ancestors constitute the Rencarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shamans** and played a dominating role in the nomadic humanity as evident from **Q14** and **Q15**. "**Totemism**" or other traits of religious beliefs and rituals of the settled societies followed later encompassing and interweaving them within "**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism**" in the Neolithic

revolution. Totemism cannot be the starting point or origin of religion of the nomadic or tribal humanity as understood by Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown. For the development of totemism, the humanity needs a particular area of foraging or settled agriculture. In Yumaism, Totemism encompassed within "**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism**" at the later stage of development when the Limboo Society started foraging or settled agriculture in the Eastern Himalayas after 200 A.D. only. This is evident from *Phungwa Changma Mundhum* of Yumaism, where the mythic ancestors start planting and growing various types of flowering plants right from *Tusroti-Umroti Pumma* (Bhahamputra River) in the Eastern Himalayas to *Aruna Varuna* (Arun River) in the Central Himalayas. This indicates the boundary of the landscape inhabited by the ancient ancestors of the Limboo Society. Totem plants, animals and landscape (*Phoktanglungma Penbenlungma*) of Yumaism are available only in the Limbuwan area of Eastern Himalayas. Thus, Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society now, comprises of "**Ancestor Worship**", "**Shamanism**" and "**Totemism**".

The petroglyphs, pictograms, logograms of Gobustan Cave, near Baku; Tassili in jjer, Algeria; Bidzer of Cameron; Lengo, Toulou, Djebel Mela and Koumbala of Central Africa; Niola of Chad; Tiya of Ethiopia; Ughtasar of Armenia; Macao; Zhuhai; Ancient Caves of Australia and France; and Ladakh of India, and epitaphs of graveyards and memorial platforms (*Falaincha*) of the Limboo Society of India and Nepal even today have been interpreted as symbolic or ritual languages, religious meaning genetically inherited symbolic structure or atavistic or archetypal symbols of the human brain made by shamans in an altered state of consciousness, perhaps induced by the use of natural hallucinogens or alcohollic intoxicants. These petroglyphs, pictograms and logograms are "hard-wired" into the human brain; they frequently occur in visual disturbances and hallucinations brought on by drugs, migraine, alcohollic intoxicants and other stimuli (Q14 and Q15). Existence of these petroglyphs, pictograms and logograms worldwide

evidence that “**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism**” played a dominating role on the entire religious beliefs of the nomadic humanity and functioned “**to regain their stability of mind and readjust to situations of emotional stress that had arisen to the nomadic people throughout the world**”.

Q51 What are the functional roles of Yumaism in the Limboo Society?

From the finding of the functionalist’s study of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Prichard on the origin, role, continuity and solidarity of religion provides the following important conclusions; Viz: (i) the origin and development of Yumaism, and (ii) the role of Yumaism on the identity, social continuity and solidarity of the Limboo Society.

(a) Origin of Yumaism:

The study of the functionalists Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Prichard discussed above focused on the role, continuity and solidarity of religion; but they do not discuss much about the origin of religion, growth and development of any particular religion. However, Evans-Prichard has provided us an important hint that “*certain religious systems are found in societies of a particular type*”.⁶ This statement concludes that all the religions cannot be generalized from the study of one religion. Thus, Yumaism has its own circumstances of origin and development, depending on the environment of their evolution, nomadic foraging regions in the pre-modern society, and ultimate settlement as agriculturists in the region.

The living situation of the Mongoloid Human Race somewhere in North-Eastern Eurasia at the time of their evolution between 45,000 and 40,000 years ago must have been similar to the fishing communities of Trobriand Islanders in the Western Pacific.¹ They had to constantly deal with hazardous expeditions for hunting, fishing or gathering. They often might have undergone

experiences that could not have been explained by them. And thus, like Malinowski's argument that their feeling of fear, anger, sadness, etc. that roused in the mind of primitive Mongoloid Human nomadic people on such occasions were trounced by resorting to religious activities or the performance of certain rituals that might have helped to get over of such unsure feelings. Thus, the origin and development of Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society seems to be functional as against the evolutionary process described through the Evolution Theories as concluded by the functionalist Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Prichard above. Thus, **it is concluded that the origin of Yumaism of the nomadic Limboo ancestors was "Ancestor Worship" originated somewhere in North Eastern Eurasia during Upper Paleolithic Age. Shamanism was encompassed and interwoven within Ancestor Worship later with the evolution of Shamans as the deceased ancestors constitute the Rencarnate Divinities of Incarnate Shaman Phedangmas; and thus formed "Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism", which played a dominating role in the nomadic life of the Limboo ancestors.**

(b) The role of Yumaism:

Now Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society comprises of three components (i) Ancestor Worship, (ii) Shamanism, and (iii) Totemism. It was analyzed from the view points of functionalists namely Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Prichard described above and concluded the followings:

- (i) **Firstly**, from the above studies of functionalists, it is concluded that the role of Yumaism or any other religion is **functional**. It was originated and developed to '**function as a tool for adoption**' to the difficult situation in the cold climate of North Eastern Eurasia among the nomadic hunting and gathering ancestors of Limboo Society as observed in the case of Trobriand Islanders in the

Western Pacific studied by Malinowski.¹ The primitive Mongoloid ancestors must have been experiencing feeling of fear, anger, sadness, etc. that might have aroused in their minds. To overcome such situation they might have resorted to religious activities such as the performance of certain rituals like prayer of their apical ancestor Tagera Ningwaphuma as done by descendants of *Sawa Yethangs* that would help get over such unsure feelings. The function of the Religion was essentially to regain one's own stability of mind and readjust to situations of emotional stress that have arisen. Thus, it is concluded that the **role of Yumaism**, the religion of the Limboo Society is **to regain the stability of mind and readjust to situations of emotional stress that had arisen when they were in such a difficult nomadic hunting-gathering situation somewhere in the North Eastern Eurasia.**

- (ii) **Secondly**, the role of Yumaism is functional for strengthening, establishing typical Limboo Identity, Continuity and Solidarity of the Limboo Society.
- (ii) **Thirdly**, contrary to Durkheimian and Radcliffe-Brownian views, the origin of religion of the nomadic Limboo ancestors was "**Ancestor Worship**". It was definitely **Ancestor Worship**, not Shamanism, not Totemism too. However, **Shamanism** and **Totemism** were encompassed and interwoven within **Ancestor Worship** to form Yumaism only after **shamans** and **shamanism** were evolved from **Ancestor Worship** in the nomadic Limboo ancestors in the first phase of Yumaism development; and started foraging in a particular area or region in the Eastern Himalayas when the society evolved as Tribal or Chieftdomship social stages as the second phase of Yumaism development respectively. The Kirat King Yalamber established his kingdom in 1779 B.C. in Nepal Valley was ruled by 32 Kirat kings for 1964 years. After the Kirat king's defeat by Somavangsis, the Kirat King Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang established his kingdom in Limbuwan, the Eastern Himalayas

in about 200 A.D. **Totemism** was encompassed within “Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism” only after 200 A.D. when Yakthum Hang Lillim Hang established Limbuwan Kingdom in the Eastern Himalayas. In other words, the religion of Limboo Ancestors prior to 200 A.D. was “**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism**” - second stage of religious development. The religion of the Limboo Society as Yumaism (**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism-cum-Totemism**) served as an elementary role of religion in the Limboo Society only after encompassing and interweaving Totemism during their Neolithic revolution (after 200 A.D.) of the Limboo Society.

- (iii) **Fourthly**, there is no doubt that “**Totemism**” is very much there in Yumaism now, but it is not the origin of Yumaism of the nomadic Limboo ancestors. Totemism was encompassed and interwoven within “**Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism**” at the second phase of religious development of Yumaism. Thus, Totemism became the elementary religion of the Neolithic Limboo Society. The same view holds good even for other ethnic religions of the other Mongoloid Human Race. Totemism is a latter adoption or encompassed and interwoven within the ethnic “Ancestor Worship-cum-Shamanism” and formed Yumaism when the Limboo Society started habitation in a particular area or landscape of Limbuwan, in the Eastern Himalayan Region and not even when the Limboo ancestors were there in the landscape of Nepal Valley (between 1,779 B.C. and 200 A.D.).
- (iv) **Fifthly**, the religious ritual’s main social function is to express certain important social sentiments, such as the need for mutual support and solidarity between the members of a community. In Yumaism, there are numerous hierophany rituals.^{11, 12} Rituals are actions of beliefs.¹³ These beliefs are expressed in religious rituals, and functions for mutual support and solidarity between the members of adherent Limboo Society.

- (v) **Sixthly**, Yumaism's religious ritual attitudes usually generates social cohesion and harmony in the Limboo Society, and thus functions as their identity; social continuity; and creates a forum for their solidarity. A typical attitude of the Limboo Society expressed during the religious rituals and secular festivals of the Limboo Society generate social cohesion and harmony to keep the Limboo Society together.
- (vi) **Lastly**, the Limboo society follows a lineage system and thus Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society is primarily based on ancestor worship. *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam* is their own Clan or Sub-clan ancestor divinity, constituting the patriarchal component or "Third person" of the apical non-human Trinitarian great feminine apical ancestor Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma. Their shaman priests (with their reincarnate ancestor divinity – *Sam Sire* or *Yeming*) accompany soul journey and hand over the souls of the dead to *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam* (soul receiving ancestor divinity) during their death ritual. *Yuma Sam* is considered as Her (Goddess) daughter or matriarchal component of the Goddess. Similarly, they also worship a number of ancestors as *Him Sammang* (household divinity) such as *Kappo Thungdang*, *Sewaklung Aakwanama*, etc.

Q&A 52-55

Analysis on the Functions of Myth

52. What are Myths?
53. What are the basic five Cognitive and Social Functions of a Myth?
54. Can you briefly summarize the cognitive and social functions of some important Mundhums of Yumaism?
55. How old is Oral Mundhums of Yumaism and when was it started writing and analyzing?

Q52 What are Myths?

Myth is a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some being or hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation, especially one that is concerned with deities or demigods and explains some practice, rite, or phenomenon of nature. Every Society has some beliefs and rituals. These beliefs and rituals are expressed in myths. They are known as sacred narratives (religious stories, Mundhums, mythic structures, totem, or symbolic structures), which form a religion of a society. Functions of religion are embedded in myths of a society. Myths explain the cognitive and social functions of their religion.

Durkheim, believed that '*Totemism is a complex system of idea and belief in which each human is thought to have a spiritual connection or a kinship with another physical being,*'¹ Mundhums of Yumaism are mythic structure or symbolic structure and are also equivalent to ethnological accounts of the primitive ancestors. They are the 'collective spiritual wisdom' of the Limboo Society. It is an approach in which most stories of a society can be boiled down to a series of narrative structures and character archetypes, described through mythological allegory. All types of Mundhums (myths) of Yumaism are defined as '**religious sacred narratives**' of the Limboo Society explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form. These are all elementary ideas, ethnic ideas or folk ideas of the ethnic Limboo Society. The main characters in Limboo Mundhums are usually the great feminine Goddess – Tagera Ningwaphuma (*Yuma Mang*), Her (*Yuma Mang*) matriarchal component *Yuma Sam* with its (*Yuma Sam*) humanity will - *Yuma Sammangs*; Her patriarchal component *Hang-sam* or *Thoba Pa-sam*; Her *Sijoingmi Mangs* (intermediaries or messenger gods and goddesses); *Khambongba Lungbongba Sas* (supernatural soil gods and goddesses) on which the entire Limboo Mundhums are based; and super humans (five incarnate shaman religious priests -

Phedangmas).^{2,3} All these Mundhums are also '**Sacred Totems or Symbolic structure** of Yumaism of the Limboo Society; and its power, virtues and relationship bridges between the sacred spaces of phenomenal world and profane or nominal world.

Many learned Limboo scholars inclusive of I.S. Chemjong believed that the oral Mundhums of Yumaism were composed by *Mahatma Yehang*⁴ (who is non-existent). Perhaps; the learned writers were/are not conversant with the social and religious systems being followed in the Limboo Society. '*Yahang*' is a term for a 'religious council' constituted to supervise the religious rituals for correct conduct of every major religious ritual in a Limboo Society. The members of a *Yehang* consists of 10 (ten) or more individuals of different Clans / Sub-clans of a Village who are conversant with Mundhum and are capable to guide the Phedangmas while conducting religious rituals.^{2,3,5} It is not a name of an individual.

In fact, the oral Mundhums of Yumaism (mythic structure or symbolic structure) are equivalent to *ethnography of the primitive ancestors* of the Limboo Society. It is also '**a collective spiritual wisdom**' of the *Yahangs*,^{2,3,5} a religious council of the Limboo Society. The characters of the primitive ancestors in these oral sacred narratives have been transformed to the characters of the soil gods and goddess (*Khambongba Lungbongba Mangs*), not human ancestors for preservation in its original form. Most stories of the ancestors of the Limboo Society were hearkened to a series of narrative structures and character archetypes, described through mythological allegory. Further, each of these Mundhum is composed in the form of poems, to be sung in different tunes and rhythms to preserve it, depending on the mood and situation of rituals to be conducted. The tunes and rhythms of each of these Mundhums suit the tune and rhythm of the Phedangmas' rhythms of costumes or gears (*Yethala, Yehang Ponghe, Ponghe, Sirpong, Ke of Penjiri Penkesing, etc.*).^{3,5}

In the Mundhum, *Sutchchuru Suhangpheba* and *Tetlara Lahadongna* (soil god and goddess) were renamed as *Sodhung Lepmuhang* and *Thillilung Thamdenlungma* by themselves to discharge their new functions of 'apical non-human mythical ancestors' roles after the cosmic gods and goddesses separated them due to their incestuous relationship. Their progenies, *Sawa Yethangs* of the earth realm (mother's share of progenies) were made to function as the 'mythical non-human ancestors' while *Pegi Phanghangs* (father's share of progenies) were 'reincarnations' (*Sam Sires* or *Yemings*) of the incarnate shaman Phedangmas of the Limboo Society. Thus, the myth of separation of father and mother with their share of progenies, constitute the sacred-profane-dichotomy in Yumaism. They were all *Khambongba Lungbongba Mangs* (soil gods and goddesses). They were not human ancestors. In Mundhum, *Sawa Yethangs* are regarded as 'the mythical non-human ancestors' of 'the mythical age'.^{2,3,5}

Q53 What are the basic five Cognitive and Social Functions of a Myth?

The Myths (Mundhums) broadly serve five cognitive (beliefs, thoughts) and social functions (rituals, actions) in a society in general.⁵ They are:

- i) **The first function of Myth** is the **mystical function**, realizing and pondering on what universe and all the things in it are. Mundhum opens the world to the dimension of mystery, to the realization of the mystery that underlines all forms.
- ii) **The second function of Myth** is a **cosmological dimension**, the dimension with which science is concerned, as it shows an individual, the shape of the universe in such a way that the mystery again hearkens back. Today we tend to think that scientists have all the answers. "No, we have not got all the answers."

- iii) **The third function of Myth** is the **sociological** one, supporting and validating a certain social order. And here is where the Mundhums vary enormously from place to place and one society to the other.
- iv) **The fourth function of Myth** is the **pedagogical**, of how to live human life under many circumstances. This is one of the advanced aspects that everyone must try to relate to. The laws of life, ethical laws, as it should be in a good society. Mundhums edifies with law ranging from basic set of good habits to behaviour of oneself in the society.
- v) **The fifth function of Myth**, is the **mystery of afterlife**, the dimension of internal journey (of the soul/spirit), the human psychology of source of origin of life, the physical conscious transforming into spiritual consciousness, concept of soul and journey of soul to heaven and hell, and other such mysteries can be experienced and try to be linked.

We have to learn to get back into accord with the wisdom of nature and realize again our relationship with all animate (the animals, the plants) and inanimate (the water, mountains, rocks, the earth, the sun, the moon, stars, planets, rivers and the sea) objects of nature and spiritual world (the third component) of the universe. The idea is trans-theological. It is of an indefinable, inconceivable mystery, a power that is the source and ends supporting ground of all life and beings. Knowledge comes from dreams and its realization after which we find expression in symbolic form. This seems to be true when we examine the Mundhum with the creation of human beings, which are as follows:

When the creator god failed to create human beings with gold, silver, copper with precious stones in it, etc. a-biogenetic materials, he prayed to the apical ancestor great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma, addressing Her *Yuma* (ancestor Grandmother) for advice. Her advice to the creator god was as follows:

“O my grand-child! Having bigger toes but having no knowledge, having bigger thumbs but conceived with no mind, having longer fingers but having no mathematical knowledge, having a bigger head but having no wisdom. Come and sleep on my leg-side and dream to get knowledge in your dream.”^{6,7} This is an example of **how knowledge comes from dreams and its realizations**. It also explains the origin of **“Ancestor Worship”** in Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society.

Q54 Can you briefly summarize the cognitive and social functions of some important Mundhums of Yumaism?

The five cognitive and social functions of Yumaism, the religion of the Limboo Society are as under:^{2,3,5,6,7}

(a) Creation Mundhum (Yehang Se:ma):

The Mundhum serves all the five cognitive and social functions of the Limboo society. They are:

- (i) **Mystical:** The myth on creation has elucidated the mysterious wonders of the creation of Universe in its own archaic way; how the great feminine Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma with her messenger gods and goddesses manifested in the void and contributed the creation of essential components required for existence of life in the Universe. It has illustrated the mystery of creation of the universe, the earth, other planets, water, air, wind, cloud, thunderstorms, rain, lakes, snakes, fish, birds, mammals, plants, crops, organic matter, biosphere creation and also the environment essential for creation and sustenance of human beings on earth in an enigmatic manner. It also explains the mystery of how **“Ancestor Worship”** the first component of Yumaism originated.
- (ii) **Cosmological:** It expounds how solar system – all the planets, the Earth, the Sun, the Moon, stars (*Tanchokpa* and *Unchokpa*) with centrifugal, centripetal and gravitational forces were created in the void. We are yet to understand many of such cosmological

phenomena even with the rapid scientific advancement of today. We are yet to understand fully the scientific origin and creation of the universe.

- (iii) **Sociological:** It has become the beliefs and essential rituals of “**Ancestor Worship**” the first component of Yumaism of the Limboo Society’s origin, and it is invariably recited/chanted in all the religious rituals involving trance, ecstasy, divination, etc. popularly known as “*Yehang Se:ma Mundhum*”, before performing any major religious rituals in the Society. It is alike a primary level of education, before proceeding to study of any advance studies in education system. In Yumaism thinking, the universe is a unified whole, a giant network in which we humans are linked to the entire animate, inanimate and spiritual world of the universe, just we are to each other and to our ancestors. The gods are foremost our grandfathers and grandmothers, who are our guardian angels. They are real people; and our love for them is strong. This is the love of children for their parents, and parents of their children and grandchildren. This energy never disappears; and thus originated “**Ancestor Worship**”, the religion of the humanity through out the world.
- (iv) **Pedagogical:** It interprets how to live a human course with cooperation, depending on some or all the living and non-living resources created for human survival in its existing environment and in the universe as a whole; as stated above: “the universe is a unified whole, a giant network in which we humans are linked to the entire animate, inanimate and spiritual world of ancestors and spirits of the universe, just we are to each other and to our ancestors.” and finally,
- (v) **Mystery of afterlife:** It also describes the mystery of mortality as well as infinity of the human life. Life in Yumaism is just a blessing of the great feminine Goddess; came to the earth realm

for purification of impurities; once we purify we go to the promised realm of existence to continue our infinite life again; 8 (for female) and 9 (for male) days are required for transformation of spiritual consciousness (spirit) to physical consciousness (body) in creation of human beings (not at birth); performing soul journey and other afterlife mysteries at death; and observation of death pollution - again transforming physical consciousness back to spiritual consciousness after death period (purification) accordingly (8 days for female and 9 days for male); the dimension of the journey inward; transcendence of the journey to the origin, the human psychology of source of origin of life; creation of life through the law of biogenesis, etc. It also explains the purpose of life, that is, human goal of purification of impurities while living, to be achieved in this earth realm of existence; and destination of afterlife, which are extremely important to know by the adherents of Yumaism.

(b) *Tongsing - Sam-sogha Mundhum:*

- (i) **Mystical:** The mystery of how the human beings learned to construct their dwelling houses (shelters); the mystery of origin of first *Sogha* (evil spirit of unnatural death); the mystery of why *Sobensing* (*tooni, Cedrela tooni*) should not be used for construction of dwelling houses by the *Yuma* adherents; the mystery and tradition of protecting the newly constructed house from wood-borer insects and fungi (*Mudhak Thaknam*) through *Hongsing Ke* dance as it was done by *Lodenmang* and *Phungdenmang* who killed the insects, termites, fungi etc. by their *Ke* dance ritual; and propitiating the ancestor household protecting divinity - *Sewaklung Aakwanama* for initiation ritual in every newly constructed dwelling house; the mystery and tradition of driving away of *Sogha* (unnatural death), *Sugut* (evil spirit of parturition), *Sasik* (evil spirit of stillbirths) by *Samba, Yeba* and *Yema*. This *Mundhum* explains the mystery of origin of evil spirits; and suggests their management to avoid their harmful effects to human beings.

- (ii) **Sociological:** It has provided us the beliefs of existence of evil spirits and their management rituals of *Sogha*, *Sugut*, *Sasik Yangdang appma*, *Pakma*, *Napma*, *Paramsing Tangma*, *lam meppma*, (shooting, driving away evil spirits, cutting the evil spirit dwelling tree, guiding the evil spirits to the purgatory world) for protecting the newly constructed dwelling house from wood-borer insects and fungi; protecting the womb of the pregnant woman; and also protecting the mothers during parturition; protecting the individuals/ family/ clan from unnatural deaths; and taming, accompanying and accomplishing the souls of such unnatural deaths to their destination. It is believed that unnatural death occurs only at the influence of such evil spirits. With this belief, all the spirits of unnatural deaths are reached to their destination (*Khema Yongsong Den* = purgatory world for retribution) at the phenomenal world, handover them to the god of purgatory world - *Tamumang* and their paths blocked so that they may not have the chance to revisit the living at the profane or nominal world through the rituals of "*Himlili-Keylang*", "*Paramsing Tangma*", *Khijo aapma*", *Sokha-Sugut Taretooma*", "*Sogha-Sugut Napma-Se:pma-Lammepma*" etc.
- (iii) **Pedagogical:** It has contributed the adherents of *Yumaism* a number of ethical and other customary laws to be observed in a society such as newly constructed dwelling house ritual celebration, unnatural death rituals, womb worship, and parturition worship ritual, conducting *Tongsing* in every three years, etc.
- (iv) **Mystery of afterlife:** It has provided with belief system of afterlife of unnatural deaths, inward journey, concept of soul of the unnatural deaths (*Sogha*), parturition death (*Sugut*), stillbirths (*Sasik*), soul journey of evil spirits to *Sam Sogha*, *Sugut*, *Sasik Yangdang lam*, *Khema Yongsong Den* (place of retribution or purgatory world or hell). It explains that the evil spirits has to be

tamed by the *Sambas*, *Yebas* and *Yemas*. It also explains that unnatural death does not end your life journey. The spirit of unnatural death needs to be reached to the purgatory world for retribution through the rituals mentioned above. Once you burn away your excess *Kheyo* (extremely bad karma) in the purgatory world, you get an opportunity again for rebirth to *Iksakhambek Den* (the earth realm) and try to purify your impurities to continue your infinite life once again. However, there is no other solution if you fail to retrieve such evil spirits, accompany soul journey to the purgatory world and hand over it to the god of purgatory world *Tamuhang* for retribution.

(c) ***Mujina Kheyongnama Mundhum* (Origin of Curse):**

- (i) **Mystical:** The *Mundhum* describes the mystery of origin of curse and its effect on human life. The *Mundhum* explains the mystery of origin of “**Ancestor Worship**”, the first component of Yumaism too.
- (ii) **Sociological:** It interprets the mystery of how to live in a society supporting and validating certain social order set forth by our ancestors from time to time. It explains how “apical ancestor the great feminine Goddess *Tagera Ningwaphuma*” is considered a grandmother Goddess by *Mujina Kheyongnama* and other soil gods and goddess; and thus started “**Ancestor Worship**” in the Limboo Society. How the girl child transforms to motherhood in nature automatically, as in the case of transformation of *Mujina Kheyongnama*. Contrary to it, the young boys have no such means of natural transformation from boyhood to manhood. The boys need assistance for such transformation. In the *Mundhum*, the mother provides assistance to the child as done to *Susuwengba Lalawengba* by *Mujina Kheyongnama* for transformation to attain manhood - *Sawa Yukphung Kemba* (a sociological process). It describes how boys have to be assisted for such transformation to play a bread

earner role by the mother or brother or father or the society, as there is no automatic means of such transformation as in the case of females. It also explains why we do not have *instinctual behaviour* in human beings like animals (energy dynamics) and they need to be guided by the parents about good and evil. It expounds that for the boys, care and assistance of parents is essential for this transformation. The Mundhum also describes elaborately the psychological feelings of a pregnant woman at different stages of conception as *Yumaism* recognizes 18 (eighteen) stages of human life of which **five are in the womb of the mother**. The Mundhum has to be recited/chanted by the religious *Phedangmas* during *Tongsing Mundhum* which is performed once in every three years in the family/clan, reminding the society of the cognitive and social functions time and again **for supporting and revalidating the social order**. It also teaches the art of child care and provides the ritual of *Yangdang Phongma* (child naming ceremony) in 4 (four) days for male child in the community for acceptance of the new born child as a member of a family. Before the conduct of ritual of *Yangdangphongma* (child naming ceremony), the newly born child is known as a guest (*Tareba*, sacred approach only after ritual of sociological processes). It also interprets the disadvantages of **polygamy** and the **effects of curse** to the descendants of human being in the society. It also explains the ways and means of minimizing the effects of curse through “*Manghuk Mande Wademma*” ritual.

- (iii) **Pedagogical:** The Mundhum elucidates how to live a human life, observing the laws of life, ethical laws, and other customary laws as it should be in a good society established by our ancestors. All of what kind of clothes to wear and eat, how to behave to each other, marriage, social life, etc. in the society, nature and universe etc. If it is not observed, the individual have to face the consequences not only in this life but also in the

afterlife (due to negative Karma), or afterlives (multiple of rebirths on the earth realm) as in the case of the progenies of *Sutchhuru Suhangpheba* and *Tetlara Lahadongna*.

- (iv) **Mystery of afterlife:** It explains the dimension of the journey inward (spiritual), the human psychology of life's source of origin and the mystery of afterlife due to the effect of good and bad *karma* citing example of *Mujina Kheyongnama*. Due to negative *karma* of curse of *Mujina Kheyongnama* to her daughter-in-laws and grandchildren, the soul of *Mujina Kheyongnama* became *Sugut* (evil spirit of parturition) after her death.

(d) Incest Mundhum (*Lungdhung kai phekma*):

- (i) **Mystical:** The Mundhum describes the mystery of the origin of incest in the human society. The Mundhum of *Mujina Kheyongnama* represents the accession, the Mundhum of *Ipnana Sarengdhangma* represents the culmination, and the Mundhum of *Sutchhuru Sauhangpheba* and *Tetlara lahadongna* is the climax in the origin of incest. Mystery of sex is beyond the boundary of human understanding. Sex is essential for reproduction, but the intense desire of sex as in the case of *Mujina Kheyongnama*, the extreme libidinous urges of sexual desire and maternal instinct as in the case of *Ipnana Sarengdhangma*, and the obsessed feeling of sex and spending most of the time in lecherous frolic as in the case of *Sutchhuru Suhangpheba* and *Tetlara Lahadongna* (the human progenitors) is the mystery of sexual desire and maternal instinct inexplicable to human beings. It also explains the mystery of overcoming its effects through "*Lungdhung Kai Ye:pma / Wademma*" and *Chellung Khoklung I:ngma* rituals.
- (ii) **Sociological:** The Mundhum provides the rituals of incest such as "*Lungdhung Kai Ye:pma*", "*Chellung-Khoklung I:ngma*", *Tongsing* etc. to the society. It insinuated that incest

was not justifiable, and it was only a source of envy and jealousy, tragedy and tribulations, disharmony and degeneration, devils, and needed a change in the human evolution. Having an intense desire of sex, extreme libidinous urges to satisfy one's sexual desire and maternal instinct, the obsess feeling of sex and spending most of the time in lecherous frolic as described in the myth are nature that leads to social disorder, and thus, needs to be corrected or tamed through culture. It explains that raw food is nature and the cooked food is culture. Nature needs to be tamed in the society for culture.

- (iii) **Pedagogical:** The Mundhum counsels the laws of life and ethical laws, as it should be in the good society. It admonishes how to live a span of human life under myriad circumstances free of incest.

(e) **Fire Mundhum (*Mukkum Semi se:pma*) :**

- (i) **Mystical:** The Mundhum illustrates the mystery of the origin of fire, realizing how important the fire was in the evolution of primitive human ancestors. It elucidates the mystery of the origin of "**Shamans**" and "**Shamanism**" for solving the day to day problems and emotional stresses of the primitive Limboo ancestors. The Mundhum also illustrates the mystery of origin of various types of shaman priests known as *Phedangmas* who performed various types of religious worship rituals of apical ancestor Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma, other gods and goddesses of ancestral origin; worship of tutelary and oracular gods and goddesses of nature (external energies or forces) for healing and curing the illness of the primitive Limboo ancestors. In due course of time these religious rituals became the religious festivals of the Limboo Society. Thus, the mystery of "**Ancestor Worship**", and "**Worship of Natural Energies**" or "**External Forces**" were originated. The Mundhum also describes that the "**Ancestor Worship**" encompassed and interwoven

