

## ANALYSIS OF ASCETICISM AS A RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON

Gulnora Khudayberganova

International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, Teacher of the Department, UNESCO Chair in the Comparative Study of World Religions, 11, A.Kadiri, Tashkent, 100011, Uzbekistan.  
gulnoraxudoyberganova@iiu.uz,

### ABSTRACT:

**The ascetic phenomenon, which has existed in the life of society since ancient times, has become an important and sometimes dominant factor in social development. In the twenty-first century it is impossible not to notice the rapid growth of countless associations, organizations, groups and individuals, which directly or indirectly reflect the attachment to the spread of "traditional "and" modern " mystical or mystical-ascetic systems.**

**This article examines the phenomenon of asceticism in the traditions of World Religions in the field of religious phenomenology, which is one of the branches of religious studies.**

**Keywords: religion, analysis, mysticism, asceticism, phenomenon, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, zuhd.**

### INTRODUCTION:

The ascetic phenomenon, which has existed in the life of society since ancient times, has become an important and sometimes dominant factor in social development. In the twenty-first century it is impossible not to notice the rapid growth of countless associations, organizations, groups and individuals, which directly or indirectly reflect the attachment to the spread of "traditional "and" modern " mystical or ascetic systems (18). This factor has a significant impact on the increase of the religious-mystical component in the public consciousness, on the attempt to turn the entire spiritual and social life of the world community into a mystical-ascetic one.

The present time is characterized not by a random solution of such problems in different layers of social culture, but by the sustained interest of the entire world community.(21)

### THE MAIN PART:

Etymologically, the term asceticism is derived from the Greek askesis, originally meaning "to train" or "to exercise" specifically in the sense of the training and self-denial that an athlete undergoes to attain physical skill and mastery over the body (12). However, in the context of this study, asceticism may be defined as the practice of self-denial, self-abnegation, self-inflicting pains and renunciation etc., for the purpose of achieving a transcendental goal; it is a conscious refinement of the physical, in order to be more accessible to the influence of a higher force. In other words, it is the shaping of life in accordance with a particular textual and interpretive religious tradition.(19) Asceticism is classified into two types, "Natural asceticism" consisting of a lifestyle where material aspects of life are reduced to utmost simplicity and a minimum but without maiming the body or harsher austerities that make the body suffer, while "Unnatural asceticism" is defined as a practice that involves body mortification and self-infliction of pain such as by sleeping on bed of nails. (2).

Ascetic struggle has two aspects: negative and positive. The negative aspect is sometimes called mortification, purification, or self-denial, and by this is meant the effort to destroy sin and its consequences in human life, to control his evil inclinations, and ultimately to renounce all that may be an obstacle to its growth in the love of God and neighbor. The

practice of mortification and self-denial must continue throughout a person's life, because he is always faced with temptations to satisfy his selfish desires and inclinations. (20)

Ascetic practices are used for a variety of purposes. Many religious traditions encourage or require asceticism at periodic or specific times in the religious calendar, usually for purification or preparation for a significant ritual event" (19). Most religions have at least some practices that can be considered ascetic: fasting, celibacy, seclusion, voluntary or complete abstinence from intoxicants, renunciation of worldly goods and possessions, and in some cases religious suicide.

Asceticism is seen as an essential component for spiritual growth: It encompasses a broad range of practices intended to illuminate vices and inculcate virtue. The forms of asceticism found in the history of religions are manifold. The most common, however, are: renunciation or restriction of nourishment (fasting), sexual abstinence (celibacy), seclusion from society, renunciation of possessions (or at least restriction to the bare necessities), renunciation of everything that might be conducive to joy and in extreme forms self-inflicted suffering (such as flagellation and self-mutilation) (17). In today's usage, the term describes the exercise of renunciation in one's everyday life, and subordination of all daily living to the dictates of that renunciation. However, the methods of ascetics are quite naturally based upon the necessities of habitual life driven by natural instincts. Human beings variously need or want air, food, water, sleep, sex, clothing and shelter, companionship and status, communication, sense-pleasure, and a sense of identity. Therefore, in order to control these needs, asceticism involves the practices of breath retention, fasting, vigil, continence, poverty including nakedness and

homelessness, isolation, silence, endurance of pain, and self-transcendence (22).

In the teachings of the world religions, the phenomenon of asceticism is interpreted in different ways. The basis of the teachings of Buddhism is the liberation of man from the suffering of the world. Suffering brings to man literally everything: "childbirth-suffering, old age-suffering, disease-suffering, death-suffering, associated with illness-suffering, pleasure-separation from suffering, not receiving anything-suffering; in short, five-fold attachment to life is suffering." In order to get rid of suffering, a person must surrender to asceticism in his life, which will lead him to a state of Nirvana. The Sanskrit word "Nirvana" means "extinction". Nirvana is the inner state of man, in which all feelings and attachments are extinguished, eroded, and the world is perceived through them.(23)

The inner extinction of the senses and physical objects frees man from the torment of the self and the thirst for life, which leads all living beings to an infinite rebirth. Thus the power of karma is abolished and "so illumined that the Immortal absolutely melts away in absolute rest". The soul, therefore, which has lost its identity, must unite with the absolute "nothing". To achieve Nirvana, it is necessary to observe a number of moral and ascetic rules.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Today, there is a need to study the phenomenon of asceticism not only in relation to the phenomenon of religion, but also to different levels of cultural development and within the framework of logical sections of the teachings of world religions-other socio-cultural phenomena of the spiritual life of society, for example, in connection with politics. The need to study the tendency of mystical-ascetic views in the teachings of world religions within the framework of the existence of religious cultures allows kengaytirishga the

boundaries of philosophical and cultural knowledge. In order to objectively assess the position of religious consciousness at different levels of cultural development of ascetic views in the teachings of world religions, it is necessary to conduct research on the information, social and, of course, cultural character.

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