

Issues in Bioethics
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Module No #04
Lecture No #19


Religious Traditions and Contemporary bioethics: Possibilities and Challenges

(Refer Slide Time: 00:00)Hi, Welcome back to the course, Issues in Bioethics. This is the Unit Four of Module Four. And this lecture, is going to deal with the topic, Religious Traditions and Contemporary bioethics. We will particularly, see the possibilities and challenges raised by religious traditions, to the contemporary deliberations of Bioethics.

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The Principlist Approach

- **Tom Beauchamp and James Childress:** the normative method.
- **Four midlevel principles** covering the full range of applied ethical considerations relevant in bioethics.
- Both **deontological** and **utilitarian** considerations.
- **Autonomy:** deontological
- **Beneficence:** Utilitarian
- **Non-Maleficence:** Utilitarian

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So, the principlist approach is one of the dominant approaches in contemporary bioethics. This is something, which we have already discussed, in one of our previous lectures. So, I think, start with this, a brief mention of the principlist approach. What it does, and how it has arrived at some of these widely accepted principles, which globally is treated as very important for contemporary bioethics or practice of ethical principles or practice of medicine.

This is devised by Tom Beauchamp and James Childress, which is widely known as a Normative method, which discusses, the four-middle level principle. Which cover the full range of applied ethical considerations, relevant in bioethics. These principles are derived from the dominant ethical traditions in the western world, particularly the post-enlightenment

western world. There are, these two traditions of Deontologyism and Utilitarianism, from where, they have derived it. So, we can see the four principles. (Refer Slide Time: 01:41)

The principle of autonomy, of course is derived from the Kantian perspective, the Deontologyism perspective, which gives a lot of importance to the individual. See one of the primary principles of Kantian Deontologyism is that, you have to treat every individual, as an end in himself, not as a means for an end. So, the fundamental ideas of respect for person, personal autonomy, all these things are derived from this Kantian Deontological principle.

And, when it comes to Beneficence, which is another very important principle in the principlist approach. It is obviously, Utilitarian, along with Non-Maleficence, which is also obviously, Utilitarian. Because, Utilitarianism in general speaks about the consequences, the utility, maximum utility to the maximum number of people. So, though that is a motto of Utilitarianism, there is a reference to the consequences. So, utility should be the consequences. And in that approach, physicians or health care should aim, at the Beneficence of patients, and Non- Maleficence is of course, has to be thoroughly observed. And the final one, Justice, which is again derived from the Deontological perspective.

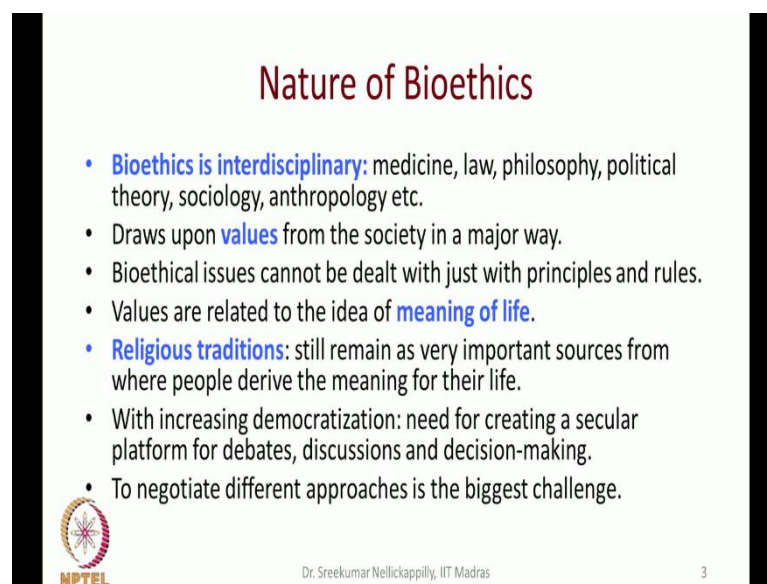
I am not saying that, contemporary bioethics is all about principlist approach. Because, there is, there are certain difficulties in making these approach, practical in different cultures and different traditions. Of course, to some extent, we can say that, modern western bioethics deals with these principles, with great importance. Particularly, after the historical development, Helsinki report, and all that. These four principles, occupy a very important position in the contemporary deliberations of bioethics. But at the same time, we should also recognize that, there are other cultures and other civilizations in which, modern medicine plays a very important role today.

See for example, in India, more than 100 crore of people, 130 crore of people, depend the services of this modern medicine. And the concern is probably, if you examine the kind of a society, which India is even today. We can see the role played by age-old traditions and conventions and customs. They are still quite active here. And, our society more or less gives importance to communities, and religion and caste is, still very relevant in our society here. This is not really very different, in many other ancient and other civilizations, but in Africa also.

So, we cannot say that, the principlist approach is universally applicable everywhere. See for instance, the context of autonomy has very limited applications in non-western context. Because, lot of importance is given to the family, the society, the community, in such non-western cultures. Though, Beneficence and Non- Maleficence are highlighted in almost all the civilizations. These concepts are understood in very different ways, in different cultural context. And again, Justice. Justice is also understood in a very different way. And in some cultures, like, for example in India, and also in general, in the third world countries, justice occupies a more important role than autonomy.


So, the core ethical principle is not autonomy in many developing countries and non-western cultures. There justice occupies a very important role, because accessibility, affordability, these are some of the very important concerns, these cultures today face. Before, we really try to understand, the role of religion. In what way, religion plays a very important role, even today, shaping the practice of bioethics in the current world. We have to see also the nature of bioethics, just to sum up.

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Nature of Bioethics

- **Bioethics is interdisciplinary:** medicine, law, philosophy, political theory, sociology, anthropology etc.
- Draws upon **values** from the society in a major way.
- Bioethical issues cannot be dealt with just with principles and rules.
- Values are related to the idea of **meaning of life**.
- **Religious traditions:** still remain as very important sources from where people derive the meaning for their life.
- With increasing democratization: need for creating a secular platform for debates, discussions and decision-making.
- To negotiate different approaches is the biggest challenge.

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Some of these things, we have already seen, but let us try to understand it from the current perspective. Bioethics is thoroughly interdisciplinary, no doubt in that. It takes insights from medicine, law, philosophy, political theory, sociology, anthropology, etcetera. These are all academic disciplines, which are available today. But, on top of everything, religion plays a

very key role in many societies. Because, many of the values are derived from religious traditions. Of course, secularization movement is active, particularly after the enlightenment, and also in the 20th century, when modern bioethics was developed. The emphasis was more on very secular, extremely secular concepts. But, many of the values, which are still relevant, have their roots in the religious traditions.

For example, Beneficence. The idea of care itself, is a very religious value. But of course, when we understand it in the modern context, in a secular context, it has got different connotations. There it precisely is our challenge, to see how they are derived from the age-old religious traditions, and how do we understand it, and appropriate it in today's modern requirements and contemporary secular perspectives. And so, we can see that, modern Bioethics draws upon values from the society in a major way. Where the sources of value, we can find that, there are multiple sources of values. And religion plays a very key role here.

Bioethical issues cannot be dealt with, just with principles and rules. So, though principles and rules and norms play a very key role, in our bioethical deliberations today. These issues cannot be dealt with, just with these principles. We need to draw upon, we need go back to the values, customs, and also negotiate with some of these traditional ideas, about value of life, meaning of life, and other things, which people still hold, which have their roots in religious traditions. And, values are related to the idea of meaning of life. This is the very important concept, though it looks a bit ambiguous today, because the whole idea of meaning of life

Of course, we have to recognize that, the notion of meaning of life is very ambiguous today. Very vague, in a post-metaphysical age. In a world, where we have, we are living with plurality. We have accepted, plurality of traditions. And, we have accepted the importance of more and more democratization and secularization of society. So, in that context, it is very difficult to talk about meaning of life. Because, in one sense, we can say that, this whole notion is one of the core religious ideas. Many religious traditions have dealt with this notion in very important ways.

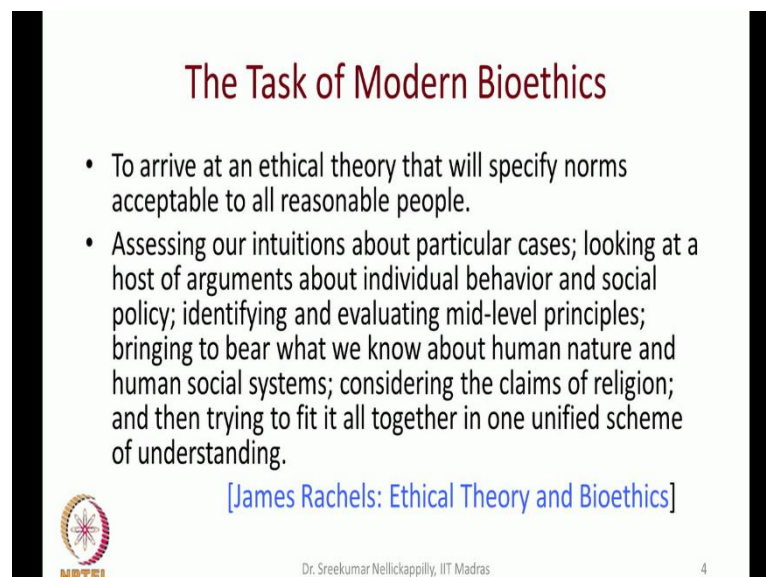
And, some of them have even design their entire ideas, religious terms and notions, around this principle of meaning of life. So, there is a teleology, which every religion considers as important. And, the whole idea of meaning of life is derived from that teleology. In one

sense, we can say, when we are talking about values, they are related to the idea of meaning of life, which people have derived from these old age-old traditions, which are religious in nature. Religious traditions are still remain as very important source for these values. And also, for our ideas of meaning of life, where people derive the meaning of their life from them.

There is a need for creating a secular platform for debates, discussions, and decision-making. We cannot completely rely upon the age-old religious ideas. And, this is particularly the case in countries like India, where we essentially have a multi religious, a multicultural environment. We cannot or we do not have an official religion from where, we derive all our religious ideals and all that. So, to negotiate different approaches, is the biggest challenge of modern Bioethics.

We cannot on the one hand, many of the ideas related to values are derived from these religious traditions. On the other hand, we cannot take them in their face value. We cannot just accept them blindly. We have to be very careful and cautious, when we take insights from religious traditions. Because, we are dealing with platform, which needs to be essentially secular and democratic.


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The Task of Modern Bioethics

- To arrive at an ethical theory that will specify norms acceptable to all reasonable people.
- Assessing our intuitions about particular cases; looking at a host of arguments about individual behavior and social policy; identifying and evaluating mid-level principles; bringing to bear what we know about human nature and human social systems; considering the claims of religion; and then trying to fit it all together in one unified scheme of understanding.

[James Rachels: Ethical Theory and Bioethics]

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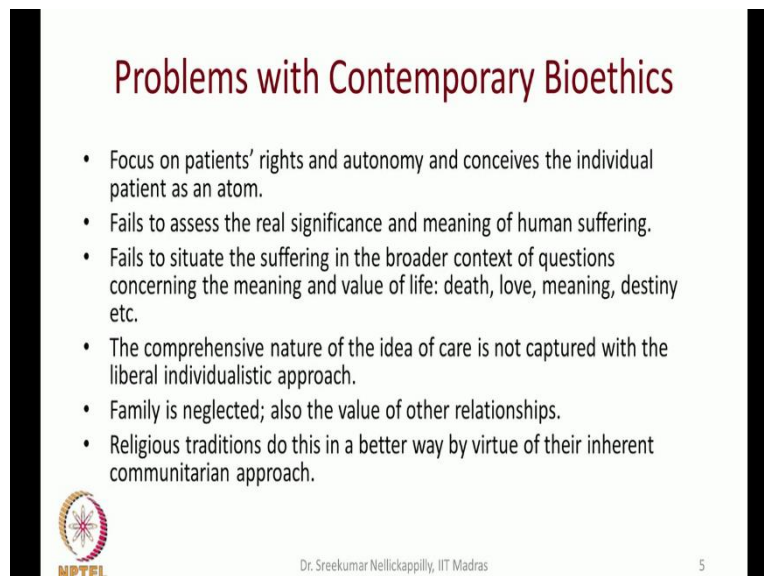
Now, the task of modern bioethics is to arrive at an ethical theory. So, we can put it in this way, which may not be very accurate. Because, it is not to arrive at an ethical theory, one theory, but some sort of a theoretical framework, we can put it in that way, to arrive at an

ethical theory. Will, that will specify norms, acceptable to all reasonable people. So, whatever framework we rely upon, we depend upon, in order to justify our decisions, or in order to make sense of, what we are doing. We need to be reasonable.

We need to rely upon, some sort of rational justifications for that. And this is what, James Rachels writes in his article, Ethical Theory and Bioethics. He says that, assessing our intuitions about particular cases; looking at a host of arguments about individual behavior and social policy; identifying and evaluating mid-level principles; bringing to bear what we know about human nature and human social systems; considering the claims of religion; and then trying to fit all together at one unified scheme of understanding. This is the biggest task of modern Bioethics. So, you have to bring everything, it has to be absolutely inclusive.


You cannot say that; religious traditions are originated in the past. So, we do not have to bother about them, right now. You cannot be, so insensitive about such concerns, that religious values. You have to take them into account, and fit all of them apparently contradicting views, in to one framework. That is the biggest task of modern bioethics. And there are certain in this context, it will be interesting to see also, some of the problems contemporary bioethics encounter.

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Problems with Contemporary Bioethics

- Focus on patients' rights and autonomy and conceives the individual patient as an atom.
- Fails to assess the real significance and meaning of human suffering.
- Fails to situate the suffering in the broader context of questions concerning the meaning and value of life: death, love, meaning, destiny etc.
- The comprehensive nature of the idea of care is not captured with the liberal individualistic approach.
- Family is neglected; also the value of other relationships.
- Religious traditions do this in a better way by virtue of their inherent communitarian approach.

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Some of the lacks, we can put it in that way, some of the limitations of contemporary bioethics. See, we all know that, contemporary bioethics is largely a western. And, that is one of the major complaints, with non-western cultures have about contemporary bioethics. It is

largely a western business. The reason is that; the focus is on patient's rights and autonomy and conceives the individual patient as an atom.

So, this is one of the realities, whether we like it or not of contemporary bioethical contemplations. No doubt, the rights of the patient is at the center. Again, the rights of the patient, the very concept of this rights, is derived from the fact that, every individual is autonomous. And this idea of autonomous individual, in turn presupposes, a kind of an atomistic conception of an individual, who is independent of the society or the community, in which he lives or to which he belongs.

So, the identity of the individual is primarily, an individual identity, not a community identity. So, this is something, which is trust by the modern bioethical contemplations, which can be understood, can be treated as, one of the major problems of contemporary bioethics. It fails to assess, the real significance of the meaning of human suffering. Because on many occasions, the context in which, human beings undergo suffering. We will find that, suffering has a multiple dimensions, multiple faces. It is not just an individual. But, the individual suffering, the individual's membership to a community, to a particular family, or all these factors, add to the way, the dimensions of their suffering.

So, we have to take into account all these things. The individual needs to be contextualized, to placed in a, in the context, in the larger context, of a family in this community, to understand the depth of his suffering, the very meaning of his suffering. So, the modern bioethics with its emphasis on individuality, emphasis on autonomy, and atomic individualism, fails to understand, the real significance of the meaning of human suffering. And, it also fails to situate the suffering, in the broader context of questions, like concerning the meaning and value of life.

What is death? Death is again, not just a physical phenomenon, a biological phenomenon for the individual. It has social and other dimensions. Cultural, religious, spiritual dimensions for an individual. The concept of love, meaning of life, destiny of human life, etcetera. These are all broader questions, which we need to understand, or which we need to address, in order to appropriately, appreciate the concept of suffering, and the concept of human well-being. So, this is something, which is lacking in the modern bioethics, because of its overemphasis on

individuality. Again, the comprehensive nature of the idea of care is not captured with the liberal individualistic approach, that is dominant in the western frameworks.

Care is again a problem in the individualistic environment. Because, care is of course, an individual cares for another person, or there is a craving for care. So, these things are sometimes not very rational. You cannot rationalize these phenomenon of care. Because, very closely related to the notion of care, is the idea of love, the idea of responsibility. And again, these are not always rational concepts. So, we need to come up with a broad framework to situate, these concepts properly to understand them. And, families neglected also, the value of other relationships. This is another major criticism, against modern contemporary bioethics.

Because often, with its emphasis on individual, and its enthusiasm to protect the rights of the individual, family of the individual, and the entire community of individual, are posited as something, which is against all the interest of the individual. So, it creates a divide between the individual versus family, or individual versus community, and tries to protect the individual. Isolating the individual from the community, and the larger context in which, the individual finds himself or herself. It is here, we can find the relevance of religious traditions. Because, religious traditions essentially consider the individual, as part of a broader and larger whole.

It never treats the individual, as an atomistic entity. But, always part of a community, a part of a larger humanity, a part of a larger, you know, what you called, with the concept of god, even a broader community, to which individual belongs. So, most of the religious traditions have adopted an essential communitarian approach, when it comes to questions of ethics and other things. So, they have a better way by virtue of their inherent community approach, to tackle problems like, care, well-being, etcetera. Now, let us see, how can we conceive a religious insight, as a possible solutions to help problems.

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Religious Insights as Solution

- Religions directly deal with questions about value: meaning and destiny.
- Many of them deal with the question of suffering and devised ways to overcoming sufferings.
- Emphasis on community; care for others: duty, dharma, love etc.
- Traditional medical ethics: emphasis on spiritual values.



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Religions directly deal with questions, about value, meaning, and destiny. I have already mentioned this. See, what we have to understand is that, I am just trying to see religion from a very positive perspective. We are not dealing with illness, as a biological, physical phenomenon, where a particular individual is suffering. I am trying to see illness, as part of larger human suffering. Where not, just the individual is involved. But, the entire community, family of the individual, is involved in the picture.

So here, the questions of human destiny, meaning, value, death, all these things come into the picture, when you place the individual in a broader context. And in this sense, religion probably can help you to understand, the situation in a better way. Again, many of the religious traditions deal with the question of suffering, and devised ways to overcome suffering. See, if you examine, some of the religious traditions like Buddhism, for example. One of the primary concern is the overcoming of suffering, the great Arya Sathya's of Buddhism.

It begins with the fact that, the recognition that, there is suffering. Then it says that, there is a cause of suffering. The third Arya Sathya is, suffering can be eliminated. And the fourth Arya Sathya is, there, as a means to overcome suffering. So, the primary concern is the overcoming of suffering. Of course, there are many various dimensions to this process of overcoming. There is a physical dimension, as well as a spiritual dimension. And, religious traditions might give a little more important to the spiritual dimensions. But, it is also very interesting

to note that, Buddhism is one religion, which is overemphasized the notion of suffering and its overcoming.

And, it was during the reign of Buddhism, it was during the flourishing period of Buddhism, that Ayurveda, the science of medicine, also heads flourished in India. So, they give a lot of importance to physical suffering, as well. Physical suffering, and also its overcoming, along with spiritual emancipation. So, it is wrong to say that, almost all religions are, concerned with spiritual emancipation, and not with worldly suffering. Most of the religions equally deal with the problem of human suffering in this world, as well. Emphasis on community, care for others, duty, dharma, love, all these are explicitly religious values.

See the concept of dharma, when the science of medicine, later on developed. The concept of dharma was directly taken, from the religious traditions. There is a concept of Vaidya dharma. The duties of the Vaidya, the physician to the patients, or the medical institutions to the patients, who suffer. So, and the concept of care. The care of the attendant. All these issues are highlighted by religious traditions. Most of the religious traditions, do not really introduced the ethical issues, as a matter of rights. They do not mention, the word right and they, do not consider, it is a matter of right of the patient. They rather, gives an emphasis to duty, the other side of ethics. Instead of right, duty is emphasized. Traditional medical ethics emphasize on spiritual values.

Though, I have mentioned, some of the well accepted contributions, which medical, which religious traditions can give to the medical care, the very idea of medical care and health care. There are certain limitations and problems with religious traditions, particularly in the contemporary world. Because, we are now concerned about the contemporary world. We are trying to understand, how these religious traditions can play a key role or rather, what role can they play in the contemporary debates on medical ethics, and understanding of ethical issues in the contemporary world. So, there are definitely certain problems and limitations.

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Problems and Limitations

- Religious views may occasionally be dogmatic.
- Incompatible with the modern conception of justice: more individual centered.
- Many religious traditions support coercive social segregations and oppressions.
- Differences and clashes in a modern society.
- Many traditional religious values are incapable of dealing with contemporary issues raised by the possibilities of new technology.



Because, we all know that, religious views can be occasionally be extremely dogmatic. There are many dogmas. There are many misconceptions, which religious views and religious traditions have given rise to. And also, many of the practices, which religious traditions consider as sacred and right, are politically wrong in today's world. See for example, many religious traditions, even today, accept slavery. Which, we all know that is wrong. Which is against the contemporary ethical and moral sentiments of humanity.

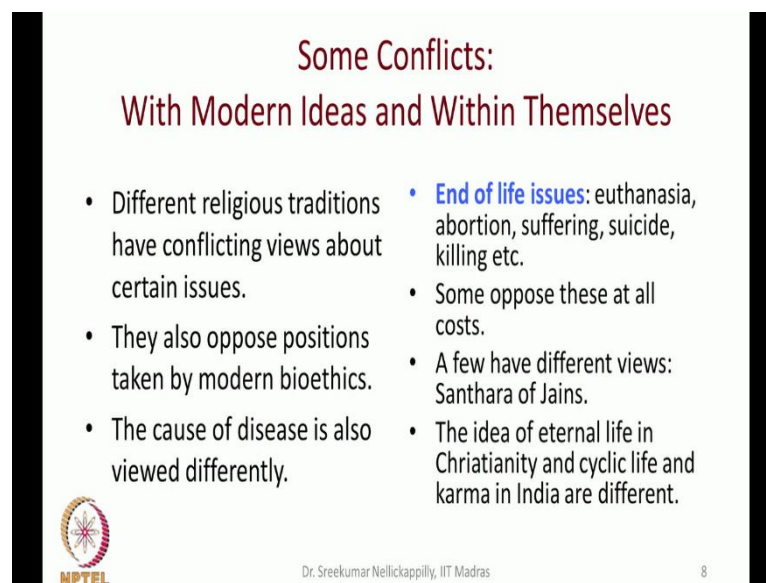
Again, they are incompatible with the modern conception of justice, which is more individual centered today. Because, as I just mentioned, the modern conceptions of justice are centered around the notion of rights, rights of the individual. And, traditional ethical and religious values are mostly duty centered. They give emphasis to the duty of the individuals, rather than rights of individuals. So, in that way, they might be incompatible with the notions of justice, as we understand it in today's world.

And again, many religious traditions support coercive social segregations and oppressions like caste system, for example. And, many other oppressions, oppressive practices, which religious traditions validate. And, differences and clashes in modern society. Because, we know that, many religious traditions are creating a lot of issues, lot of problems, to modern societies, in the name of terrorism and fundamentalism, and all that. So, these are all problems created by religious traditions.

So, how can you say that, such religious traditions, would be helpful for developing a more balanced, secular, democratic, ethical framework, for dealing with bioethical issues. This is a natural question, which we need to ask. And again, many traditional religious values are incapable of dealing with contemporary issues, raised by the possibilities of new technology. We have already discussed, some of these things. Because, today's modern medicine is not just a set of healing practices. But, it is constituted of very complex and sophisticated systems of technological devices.


And, using of these technological devices for saving people, lives of people, in ways which were, unknown to our predecessors. And, there are many possibilities like, stem cell research is one possibility. Genetic engineering is another one. Where, we can actually manipulate, even the gene pool of humanity, human kind. So, all these technological possibilities have introduced, new ethical issues to tackle with, the modern society has to deal with them, and find solutions. And, many of the ancient religious traditions are incapable of dealing with them. Because, their moral sentiments were not shaped in order to solve, such issues. So, this is some of the problems, which we might encounter.

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**Some Conflicts:
With Modern Ideas and Within Themselves**

- Different religious traditions have conflicting views about certain issues.
- They also oppose positions taken by modern bioethics.
- The cause of disease is also viewed differently.
- **End of life issues:** euthanasia, abortion, suffering, suicide, killing etc.
- Some oppose these at all costs.
- A few have different views: Santhara of Jains.
- The idea of eternal life in Christianity and cyclic life and karma in India are different.

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See, let us take some of the conflict. Say for example, you know different religious traditions have conflicting views about certain issues. So, there are problems among themselves. One particular religion, might support a certain practice, and another might not. Such a context, we have a problem with two religious traditions. There is a conflicting, conflict between these two religious traditions. And again, you know in general, they might have certain problems

with the secular democratic views, which are, which we try to propagate in our modern world.

They also oppose position taken by modern bioethics. And, the cause of disease is also viewed differently by different traditions. Because, according to some religious tradition, it is our sins, who, which are responsible for our diseases. And again, a very interesting thing, as I mentioned some time back, when we discussed Indian theoretical approaches to medical ethics. Astanga Samgraha of Vagbhata says that, Ragas or Attachments, are the root cause of Rogas or Diseases, Ragathi Roga Sagaja Samola.

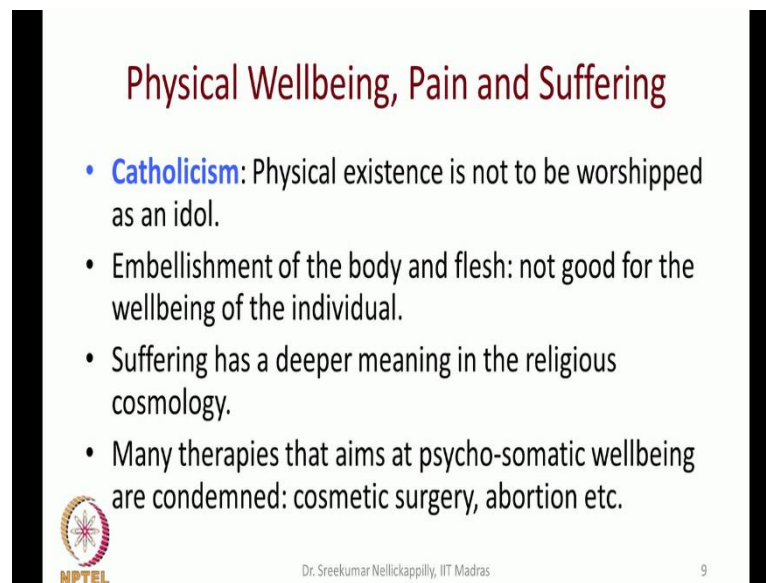
So, ragas are the root cause of rogas, diseases. So, it is a very spiritualistic kind of an explanation, which is trying to see a broader context of disease and welfare. There are certain conflicts, very obvious conflicts, we may come across in today's world. A striking example is end of life issues. Where issues like euthanasia, abortion, suffering patients, suicide, killing, all these are problems. All these are issues, which we need to tackle, we need to grapple with, in the context of end of life issues, facing modern Bioethics.

So, some oppose these at all cost. See for example, Roman Catholicism might be taking a very strong views or they might oppose, say for example, active euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide. Most of the religious traditions, attach a very different meaning, to the very notion of suffering and well-being, and all that. For many of them, the concept of well-being is ultimately a spiritual concept, which needs to be attained not in this world, which is not acceptable to modern secular views. A few have different views like Santhara of Jains, which we have discussed in one of our previous lectures.

Santhara is a process, where Jains after a certain age, abstain from eating food and drinking water and slowly accept death. So, this can be understood as a suicide. Another set of people might argue that; this is equivalent to suicide. But, the Jains would oppose. According to their cosmology, it has a different meaning. So, there are different cosmologies propagated by different traditions and opposing views. So, this presents a very confusing environment in today's world, to arrive at policies, by the secular government like India, for instance. So, the idea of eternal life in Christianity, and cyclic life in karma in India, are very different.


Because, in Christianity the life is, god is the ultimate creator of human beings. And, once god creates the human self, it is eternal. But, there is no idea of coming back. There is no idea of rebirth. But in India, there is no creation, there is no creator god as such, as it is understood in the Abrahamic tradition. God is not a creator, but there is only karma, it is human karma. The karma of the individual, which decides, what kind of a life, the human being is going to have in this world. And it is always cyclic. We come back, and there is this, notion of Punar Janma.

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Physical Wellbeing, Pain and Suffering

- **Catholicism:** Physical existence is not to be worshipped as an idol.
- Embellishment of the body and flesh: not good for the wellbeing of the individual.
- Suffering has a deeper meaning in the religious cosmology.
- Many therapies that aims at psycho-somatic wellbeing are condemned: cosmetic surgery, abortion etc.

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These are some of the terms, physical well-being, pain, and suffering, are some issues, which modern bioethics is concerned with, or medicine as such is, concerned with. And here again, we can see that, religious traditions have different views about it. See for example, Catholicism. Catholicism does not consider, physical existence as something, which is great. For them, the physical existence is in one sense, the result of your sin. So, what is more important is the eternal life, which you are supposed to live in the heaven, the paradise, after returning to the paradise. So, that is more valuable than the life in this world.

So, accordingly their value system is also different. So, they consider the embellishment of the body and flesh, as not good for the well-being of the individual. And, suffering has a deeper meaning for them, in the religious cosmology of Christianity or Catholicism. Of course, the notion of suffering has different meanings in different cosmologies, as I already mentioned. The context of karma theory in Indian religions, they have different connotations. And many therapies, that aims at psychosomatic well-being are condemned. Like for

example, cosmetic surgery. There are cosmetic therapies, which will make changes to your body structure.

So, that you look better “in the way, you want you, to look”. So, this is probably condemned by many religious traditions. But, this according to modern, many modern ethicists. If this is going to add, some sort of comfort, and confidence, and sense of well-being, in some individuals, that needs to be treated as a therapy, not just as a kind of modification, or enhancement. Then again, abortion is another contentious, very controversial issue, which many traditions oppose.

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New Technological Possibilities & Bioethics

- Many religions have conservative views about them.
- The distinction between therapy and enhancement is emphasized.
- The sacredness/God-given character of human nature is underlined by many.
- Roman Catholic Church: opposes embryonic stem cell research.

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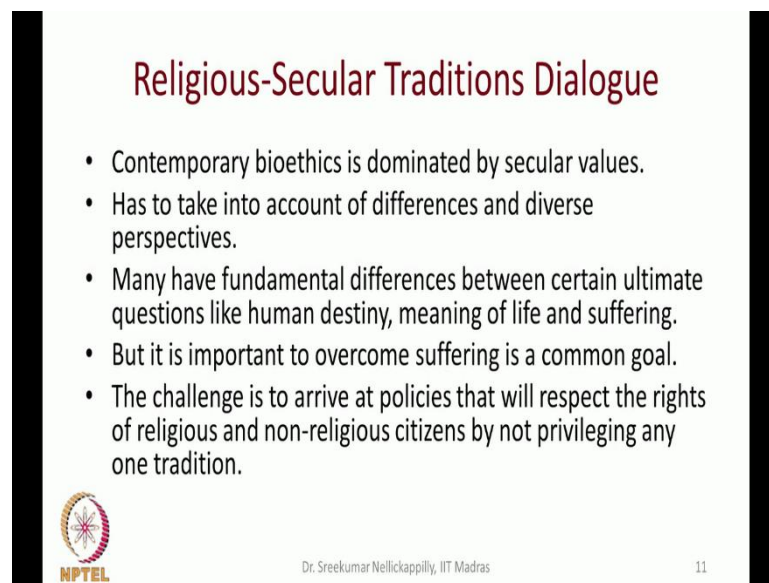
And again, many religions have conservative views, about new technological possibilities, which we have already discussed. The distinction between therapy and enhancement is emphasized. For instance, therapy has to be distinguished from, very strictly distinguished from enhancement, according to catholic view, or some other religious traditions view. They say that, therapy is acceptable, while enhancement is not acceptable.

But, the distinction between therapy and enhancement, itself is extremely problematic. This is something, which we have seen in the previous lectures. We cannot in all cases, distinguish them. Again, if you distinguish therapy from enhancement, which presupposes a concept of human nature, which is again a religious metaphysical idea, which we cannot any longer hold in a post-metaphysical world today.

So, these are issues, which we might face, confusing problems, which we might face, if you hold to the religious principles, and insights in contemporary world. Then again, the sacredness or God given character of human nature is underlined by many religions. Which is not the case, which cannot be the case in today's modern world. And Roman Catholic Church, for example, opposes embryonic stem cell research. Because, they believe that, embryo has life.



Though, this is another controversial issue. According to many modern bioethicist, we cannot fail to see the potential possibilities, and the potential benefits, of such a new technological possibilities. So, this has to be emphasized, the benefit of humanity has to be emphasized, over and above issues like, whether embryo has life or not, such questions. So quite often, we find that, religious traditions are in conflict with modern possibilities and modern approaches and assumptions.

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Religious-Secular Traditions Dialogue

- Contemporary bioethics is dominated by secular values.
- Has to take into account of differences and diverse perspectives.
- Many have fundamental differences between certain ultimate questions like human destiny, meaning of life and suffering.
- But it is important to overcome suffering is a common goal.
- The challenge is to arrive at policies that will respect the rights of religious and non-religious citizens by not privileging any one tradition.

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Now, what we can hope is a religious, secular, traditions dialogue. Because, we have to arrive at some sort of a balancing approach in today's modern world. In multicultural societies, multi religious societies, this is an essential thing. There are certain countries, where you will find majority of the people are non-religious. Majority of the people are secular in that sense. Where you can adopt a complete and absolute secular bioethics, which is not possible in countries like India, or even United States, where you have multicultural, pluralistic culture.

So, what we can hope is to, have a kind of a dialogue, and arrive at a kind of a consensus. A contemporary bioethics is dominated by secular values, is no doubt. No one can deny. And this is also very important. And to very great extent, the individual needs to be protected. That also cannot be denied. But at the same time, we have to arrive at a right balance, something which, we will discuss in the next lecture.

And again, it has to take into account, the differences and diverse perspectives. (Refer Slide Time: 34:26) And, many have fundamental differences between certain ultimate questions like human dignity, human destiny, meaning of life, and suffering. As I have already mentioned, some of these questions and answers, given to this question are, metaphysical and religious, which we cannot accept in today's secular and democratic world. So, but it is also important to overcome suffering. Because, for whether, it is religious or secular, Bioethics ultimately aim at overcoming human suffering. That is one of the common feature of all the traditions.

The challenge is to arrive at policies, that will respect the rights of religious and non-religious citizen, by not privileging, anyone tradition. Which of course, no doubt, is an extremely difficult task. We will wind up this lecture here. And, the next lecture is going to be the concluding lecture in this lecture series, where we will discuss, how can we arrive at a more balanced, in a more a kind of a phronetic bioethical framework in contemporary world. So, right now, we will wind up. Thank you.