Summary Course 2.1: Fundamental Theory of Religion

This course explores the deeper archaic and subtle force dynamics within religious phenomena. Where secular approaches often reduce religion to sociological or psychological byproducts, this course approaches religion as an authentic form of thought in which the human spirit pronounces a decisive "no" against mere material nature. The core of religious consciousness rests on the experience of the sacred, understood as a charged state of power in which matter, energy, and information converge at an extraordinary level.

1. The study of the sacred

In the footsteps of the historian of religion Father H. Pinard de la Boullaye, the study of the sacred is divided into three ascending layers:

1. *Hierography*: The empirical and phenomenological description of the sacred as it reveals itself to the observer.
2. *Hierology*: The comparative and explanatory phase in which phenomena are de-, in-, and abductively structured and examined for underlying laws.
3. *Hierosophy*: The philosophical and fundamental interpretation of the foundations of religion. As a fourth, overarching approach, the course adds hiero-analysis: the specific dissection of the causal, factorial, and often paranormal factors operating beneath the social and ritual surface.

2. The Judgment of God (Ordeal) and Biblical Revelation

As a gateway to the sacred, the course analyzes the judgment of God (ordeal), conceived as a dynamic and sifting event taking place through an immanent sanction (inner retribution). Instead of a mechanistic automatism, divine judgment possesses a casuistic-diagnostic and stochastic structure: the power-laden action turns out to be salvific for one person and fatal for another, depending on the inner disposition of their soul.

Biblical revelation provides crucial applicative models for this: The eucharistic judgment: Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 11 that whoever participates unworthily in the Eucharist "eats and drinks judgment upon himself," which manifests physically in sickness, weakness, and even death. The judgment unfolds unconsciously in the soul of the individual concerned.

Judas Iscariot: During the Last Supper, the judgment occurs in an accelerated manner when the food and drink strike the soul of Judas, which is possessed by Satan.Old Testament rituals: In Numbers 5, the woman suspected of adultery undergoes the drinking of the "bitter curse-water" containing dust from the tabernacle; if guilty, her abdomen swells and her womb rots, while the clean woman remains unharmed. Moses' act of

vengeance with the golden calf (Exodus 32), in which the crushed calf is mixed with drinking water and presented to the people, also constitutes such a drinking rite as divine judgment.

3. The Doctrine of the Soul, Soul-Stuff, and Transitivity

Every archaic and fully-fledged religion is built upon three indispensable components: belief in a Supreme Being, soul-belief (animism), and power-belief (dynamism/magism). The course provides a detailed analysis of the concept of soul-stuff.

The soul reveals itself not only in the physical body, but possesses after death (and during extraordinary states) a subtle, ethereal, or fine-material soul-body (such as Paul's *soma psychikon* in 1 Corinthians 15). Soul-stuff is condensed, informed energy. It possesses both an intransitive (intertwined within the body) and a transitive character.

The transitivity of soul-stuff occurs through two main channels:

C*ontractual transitivity*: Soul-stuff transfers through physical or subtle contact. Everything a person touches carries an imprint of their soul-body (saliva, shadow, hair, nails, clothing). Upon this rests the law of repercussion: whatever is done to the left-behind soul-stuff affects the original bearer.

Mimetic transitivity: Transfer based on resemblance (*similia similibus*). Ethically, soul-stuff is double-edged. It is not neutral: the radiation of a good person brings salvation/well-being, whereas that of an evil person brings disaster. Archaic ethical consciousness regulates this through the distinction between *moa* (sanctified, set apart from ordinary use/taboo) and *noa* (released/unrestricted).

4. Religion as a System: The Monograph of the Azande (Niam Niam)

To demonstrate that religion is not an arbitrary collection of loose elements of superstition, but a coherent and integrated system, the course discusses Mgr. Lagae's study on the Azande in Central Africa:

The belief in a Supreme Being (Mboli): Mboli is the exalted, monotheistic Creator and absolute owner of the cosmos. He is not a '*deus otiosus*' (passive deity), but is directly invoked in all daily prosperity and adversity. Alongside private invocations, the Azande know the public *beati*-sacrifice, in which food offerings are presented to Mboli on a rock surface during droughts or plagues.

Belief in spirits and souls: The Azande distinguish between the human soul (*mbisimo*), disembodied ancestor spirits (*atolo*), and malevolent spirits (*agilisa*).

Manism and Witchcraft: Ancestor worship takes place at the *tuka*-basket or house altars, where the *atolo* are fed with sacrifices and agricultural produce. Sickness and misfortune are primarily attributed to black magic and black soul-stuff from malevolent fellow human beings, which is diagnosed through oracles and ritual purifications.

5. Chthonic Religion, Telestics, and Nature Spirits

In the final section, the course addresses the deeper, often darker layers of religious history:

Chthonism versus Ouranism:

Chthonism (telluric religion) centers on the feminine principle, the Earth, lunar power, fertility, and subterranean caverns, in opposition to masculine, heavenly, and sun-oriented ouranism. Chthonism features a strong intertwining with blood and vegetation rites. The course analyzes how archaic blood sacrifices, circumcision rituals (such as among the Dogon), and mutilations stem from a derailed logic of atonement to pay "blood debt" to the Earth.

Telestics (Initiation into Secret Societies): The telestic or initiatory aspect concerns the gradual formation of the human being within an esoteric group structure (lodge or secret society).

1. The Stranniki & Khlysti: Slavic sects that attempted to transform the soul-body and "sanctify through sin" via ecstatic round dances, flagellation, and orgiastic rituals.

2. The Ngil among the Fang: A West African secret society where candidate initiates are transformed through months of isolation, flagellation, severe exhaustion dances, and blood sacrifices into sorcerers and judges endowed with feared soul-power.

Nature spirits and Elementals: Finally, the course considers the folk and esoteric belief in nature spirits or elementals. Paracelsus categorized these subtle beings according to the four elements: salamanders (fire), sylphs (air), undines/nymphs (water), and gnomes/pygmies (earth). Parapsychologically and hierologically, they often represent deeply atavistic layers from prehuman human history that continue to operate within the human unconscious.

Conclusion

This course demonstrates that fundamental religious studies dismantle the superficial distinction between nature, humanity, and the supernatural. Religion is essentially an all-encompassing, diachronic system in which the judgment of God, the dynamics of soul-stuff, and the relationship to the divine Origin define the true, invisible foundational structure of human existence.