

Lecture-29



Codification of laws

Codified law refers to the rules of a society that have been collected and recorded for the purpose of establishing civil order. In this lesson, you will be introduced to the process of codification, as well as its history and modern application.

What Is Codified Law?

You are probably familiar with the concept of laws. For example, you know that if you drive your car down the wrong side of the highway, you are breaking the law. This makes sense, because it is very dangerous to drive the wrong way down the highway. But, how does a common sense idea or rule become a formal law that everyone is expected to follow? And, who decides what rules should become laws?

Codified laws refer to the rules and regulations that have been collected, restated, and written down for the purpose of providing civil order to a society. This process of collecting, restating, and writing down laws is known as **codification**. Codified laws are sometimes referred to as statutes, codes, acts, bills, or simply laws.

The History of Codified Laws

The process of codification has been around for a very, very long time. In fact, the earliest codified laws date back to 2000 B.C.E. Perhaps the most famous example of ancient codified law is **The Code of Hammurabi**, a set of laws written by the Babylonian king Hammurabi in late 1700 B.C.E. The Code of Hammurabi was extremely detailed for the time, with a punishment assigned to each particular offense. The phrase 'an eye for an eye' originated with The Code of Hammurabi, punishing brutal crimes with equally brutal consequences.

Many ancient forms of codified laws were actually examples of the codification of religious laws. The Torah, for example, was considered a codification of Jewish law. The Islamic Sharia law is another example of codified religious law.