

CHAPTER - IV

RELIGION, MARX AND SCIENCE - INTERRELATIONSHIP

(i) Introduction

This age is precisely an age of critical judgement. Religion, however old it may be, has to pass through the ordeal of critical judgement. In the discussion made so far we have attempted to make religion victorious and now we have to stand at the alter of some doubts which have been raised against religion to encrown religion.

(ii) Religion - The Saviour of Civilisation

In this complicated age of science some doubts have crept into the domain of religion. The positivist raised the objection that religion can not be understood in terms of sense experience. Scientist's Kaleidoscope is tilted as because of the birth of the new century. The picture before him has undergone a miraculous change. Indivisible and indestructible atoms of the physical universe refuse to remain in the category of matter. These atoms, exceeding the category of matter, can very well be looked upon as the field of force. These atoms are, in no sense, particles of matter. According to some important Scientists, there is a principle of indeterminateness which is involved in the very constitution of nature. Some noted Scientists hold the view that the reality behind electrons and protons belongs to higher dimensions and all our knowledge of the world of physics becomes a world of shadows. The quantum theory has shaken the foundation of determinism. For the twentieth century science, the shadows are declared to have an ultra shadowy character. And in his search for Reality the physicist has found that his quest for Reality has led right through the physical realm into the metaphysical realm. It is interesting to note that some of the disclosures made by the Vedantic process of self analysis are being corroborated by the findings of modern science. The Vedantic message of the spiritual coherence and psychological unity is the prime goal of science. Herbert Spencer appears to be perfectly right when he views the ultimate scientific ideas as the representation of realities which exceeds our comprehension. In

all directions, the scientific investigations face with an insoluble enigma. The theories and hypotheses of science do not bear the label of finality as these are liable to correction by further discovery. Spencer views "Science is partially-unified knowledge; Philosophy is completely-unified knowledge" ¹. There are many who are apt to discard religion simply because it is old. For them, the source of religion is ignorance and fear. They think that religion converts men into dreamers who are concerned with the superworld than with the present world. The ideas of evolution, however, suggest that survival presupposes fitness. Religion has the fitness to survive. From the prehistorical age down to the modern era it has survived. Religion has the fitness to survive the onslaught of reason. It meets the challenge of reason. It had to meet the challenges of reason that Socrates, Plato had given. Spinoza, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer and many others enunciated their theistic views. In the present, we have our Realists, Behaviourists, Marxists and yet to meet this very situation we have in some sense the Vedantists. We feel the inner disorder which is deep down. We share the religious instinct which we deny on the superficial level of reason. Our scientific achievements are of a staggering character for which we are able to touch the stars and moon, yet we are clinging to find out the meaning of our life to satisfy our feeling of meaninglessness. In this situation we realise that religion is stepping towards shouldering the responsibility of the task to find out the meaning of our life. The history of religion and the critical study of other religions lead to a re-examination of the sources and the validity of views accepted so far. Now the complex ideas of modern science and history seemed to have caused a complete inner crisis. The person with the intellectual integrity and courage finds it difficult to accept the traditional religion since traditional views have lost their authority and psychological justification. We are now in a mood to question the conventional religion. The positivist movement represents a reaction which is scientific in its nature. The idea of positivism was inaugurated by Comte ² with his law of three stages of cultural development of which the first is that every culture is theological which is another name of superstition and the second stage is the metaphysical stage which substitutes Principle and the third stage is positivism which deals with scientific knowledge. Logical positivism conceives that nothing can be true or

even meaningful if it can not be understood in terms of sense experience. It might be noted that Protagoras, the ancient Greek thinker shared the same view. Ayer³ maintains the view that there can be no true or meaningful assertions about god, soul or immortality or objective standards. For him, the statements which are capable of being verified or falsified by empirical observation are the statements of logic and mathematics. Thus Logical positivism has the credit for being corrective against the revelations and mysticism. Individual experience of truth of a man can not, according to this view, give an account of reality since his state of experience does not amount to knowledge. If it be the case then on this positivist view, life ceases to have any meaning, and becomes unsupportable. For as it has been stated in the last chapter we have to live by faith otherwise we will be perished. The authority overlooks the moral obligation and go back to dogmas. The greatest inhibition to religion as spiritual adventure is the claim of a faith which offers a final solution. It is impossible to deny the great services which religions have rendered to humanity by sustaining the sense of the spiritual. But religions in its traditional and institutional sense tend to crush the individuality and moral responsibility of man which can corrupt the conscience of the community. The dogmatic religions foster the closed mechanistic society by which the individual man ceases to be an individual.

Though Karl Marx⁴, revolted against religion on behalf of the humanity of man by asserting that the existence of God threatens the freedom and dignity of man yet we must admit that. If any religion crushes the freedom of the spirit then it would hit the vital core of civilization as free and disinterested spirit is a necessary condition for religion. True religion asks us to meet hatred and violence with calmness and dignity of a free and disinterested spirit. The world is now in search of a new morality. In religion, can be only one objective for human endeavours that is perfect service and love for fellow men. Philosophy is love of wisdom and religion should be the wisdom of love. This is possible only when religion becomes a burning conviction. True religious beliefs should be reconciled with the spirit of science and the ethics of humanism and in this domain of religious beliefs moral conscience and the universalist spirit will

reign supreme but to achieve such a state of mind we have to purify our minds for the integration of our internal chaos. What we need now is a recovery of the spirit of religion to save us from utter ruin. The faith of yesterday is riddled with scepticism and we have to gain the faith for tomorrow. In spite of the total secularization of the world, man will surely be capable to recapture an understanding of something sacred. We are now in a search for the living spirit and this search will not be in vain. The prophetic revolts reformed the traditional faiths and made new beginning. We urgently need a way-back to the living spirit which is capable of combining the two opposites of faith and rational thought. The recovery of the spirit of religion has the potentiality to save the world from utter ruin. This spirit of religion reformed the traditional faith and paves the path for the beginning of a new era for which we are on the threshold of a new age of spirit.

(iii) Relation between Science and Religion

In this juncture we urgently need to have a glimpse about the relation between science and religion to justify the case of religion. The vision of the modern scientists have undergone a revolutionary change as the atoms can very well be looked upon as fields of force rather than as a particle of matter and so the vision before him has then undergone miraculous change. Indivisible and indestructible atoms of the physical world refuse to remain in the category of matter. There is nothing substantial about it. For this reason, some scientists prefer to call them "wavicles". As it has been just stated the most outstanding feature of the structure of the material universe is that there is a principle of indeterminateness which is involved in very constitution of nature. This principle of indeterminateness finds out that position and velocity of a particle at a particular moment can never be determined accurately. Any particular may have position or it may have velocity but it can not in any exact sense have both. If its position be accurately determined, its velocity will simply go beyond the range of precise measurement. So a proton or an electron, be it a particle, or wave, or wavicle, is something of super-physical nature. Its position and velocity appear to lie on two different planes. It is evident then that protons and electrons appear to be outside the domain of even scientific comprehension.

For some scientists the reality behind electrons and protons belong to a higher dimensions and knowledge of them is nothing but the behaviour of shadows. According to Arthur Eddington, the world of physics now becomes a world of shadows. The quantum theory has shaken the foundation of determination as it says that energy is absorbed in lumps or quantas. Nowadays the scientists have to grasp absolutely new conception undreamt of in the classical scheme of physics. Time and space have also somehow melted into an obscure mathematical figure of 'time and space'. According to this theory, energy is absorbed in distinct lumps or quanta. So continuous motion is not a feature of the process of Nature. Nature moves rather discontinuously by sudden jerks. Then, again, when a quantum of energy reaches a body, only one of them absorbs the whole quantum. Now the question is who determines which atom should go in for the quantum. The exact answer is not found. So we may admit that the element of fate or will is involved in the choice of the atoms. The next blow to the deterministic theory comes from radioactivity. The disintegration of the atoms is said to be discontinuous as long as no cause of this disintegration be forthcoming. The fate of the deterministic theory must remain hanging in the balance as long as the cause of the disintegration be forthcoming.

Sir Arthur Eddington⁵ declares that the material stuff of the world is mind stuff. The mind stuff of the world is, of course, more general than our individual conscious mind; but we can think of its nature as not altogether foreign to our consciousness. The physical world is now dissolved into a subtle composition of some thing like mind stuff and science is expected to admit that this universe exists and it moves about individuals composed simply of life and mind. It is our mind that transforms the physical world of symbols into the world of our experience. Physicist's search for Reality has led him right through the physical realm into the realm of metaphysics.

In India, Vedanta declares that through self-analysis alone one can have the glimpse of ultimate truth. It is interesting to note that some of the disclosures made by Vedantic process of self-analysis are being corroborated by the findings of modern science. By the process of self-analysis Vedic seers in course of their quest for Reality revealed the truth that cosmic mind is the ruler of the

universe. It was precisely by this method of self-analysis that the Vedic verses had gone to the very core of the universe, the Eternal background of pure consciousness. Then science is no longer in a position to say anything against religion in regards to the latter's process of search for Reality. Just as the scientist tries to be closer to the Reality in and through the illusions of the everyday life, so does the mystic who tries to get nearer to the Reality in and through the illusions of the mystic world. Though the mystic world is illusory from the standpoint of the Absolute Truth, it might be said to be in a close togetherness with reality. So science and religion need no longer to inhabitate in different camps. Science is not opposed to religion. The religious thesis give us the objective consideration of the cosmos. The methods which attempt to construct by reasoned argument to find out the ultimate being from the observations of the facts of nature are the scientific methods. The Brahma Sutra starts with a query to know Brahman, from which the origin of the world along with subsistence and dissolution proceeds. In the Taittiriya Upanishad we find that there has been a steady ascent from the inorganic to the rationalised spiritual self which picturised the steady growth of the spiritual fellowship ushering the intermingling of this spiritual being with that which exceeds the physical world.

The achievement of science stands as witness to the spirit in man. The nature of the cosmic evolution suggests the reality of underlying spirit. Albert Einstein⁶ is of the opinion that the scientist's religious experience raptures the harmony of natural law revealing a superior intelligence to which all the systematic thinking and acting on the part of man is an utterly insignificant reflection. Thus science in the pursuit of truth is serving God who is Truth. Further the spirit of religion is rooted in experience. The spirit of science adopting an empirical attitude engulfs paranormal phenomena and spiritual states. All religions are opportunities for self-realisation. They call the human beings to strive incessantly to attain immortality. We will then be awakened spirit who do not differentiate between him and the others and this would be possible because of Religion as it is the binding force which will deepen the solidarity of human society, and love for the others.

(iv) **Karl Marx and Religion**

The above said discussion would not be complete if we do not discuss the revolutionary view of Karl Marx. Dialectical materialism, propagated by Marx, can give only a temporary truth as his theory is pragmatic in its character which contains the characteristic of progressive truth. The material of things determines the social changes but the raw materials of nature are to be attained with the power of the human minds to subserve the human ends. Human intelligence can not be excluded as it has the productive power to discover newer and newer height of undiscovered power of nature as the ultimate principle of reality is not stubborn matter and it is not solid. The very essence of the spirit of man is self-active in its nature. Marx⁷ conceived the historical evolution as dialectical. Marx believed in the inevitability of social progress but it might be pointed out that history reveals the picture of the peril of social progress as it is not a continuous development through conflict. Love and friendship, courage and adventure will be the potent forces than struggle for power and self-interest. All novelties occur first as the ideas in the human mind and we can not identify the economic structure of society with society itself. According to Radhakrishnan⁸, what is urgently needed at present, is a spiritual upgrading which will bring forth deep spiritual impulse. Religion is rooted in the discovery of the essential worth and dignity of the individual and his relation to a higher world of reality. Religion is the binding force deepening the solidarity of human society as religion is the practice of discipline of the spirit. The world congress of Faiths, World Alliances for Friendship through Religion and Church Peace Union, World brotherhood, World spiritual council, Society for study of Religions are working for a religion of spirit. We inherit the heritage of the whole of humanity by which the Western religious circles have been fascinated. Vedanta is ready with representations to meet the requirement of each and everyone. As for it Brahman is immanent in this universe, in and through Him every name and every form has its existence. The world phenomenal world is to be considered pervaded by God – is the saying of Isha Upanishad.

The various sayings of the Upanishads have furnished materials to different schools of philosophy for giving different explanations regarding crea-

tion. The Upanishads^o hold the view that Brahman is the final cause of this infinitely differentiated universe and at the same time it accommodates all shades of doctrinal opinions. From the systematic outlook of Vedanta one learns to respect all scriptures, all prophets and all apostles. Leading to a central unity beneath the diversities of religion, and to the realisation of universal Religion there is the inauguration of a new era in the history of religion.

(v) The Present State of Religion

In this changed era humanity is taking a leap into the future. In this era we have the widening of intellect with increasing secularisation of life. The note of despair and anxiety are preparing for a radical change in our life. But this state of mind gives a clearer recognition of the inherent brotherhood of man. Man is now searching for his soul and religion will now shoulder the responsibility to save us from the utter ruins. All the living religions of the world that is Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity are readjusting themselves with the changed world and are now examining their basic tenets to find out whether these are relevant to the present conditions of the world or not.

The theory that this world is a machine excludes from its range any type of purpose or telos. From the mechanical explanation of the world however, it can not be deduced that machine has no 'telos' or purpose. Each and every machine subserve a particular purpose for which we use a particular machine to subserve a particular purpose. Therefore, the view of the world having no purpose is a non-logical transition. From the mechanistic science we can not deduce the denial of a world-purpose. It is true that any explanation which explains the world in terms of causes of laws is a mechanical one. But now the inevitable question comes – who does regulate these laws? Then there is no cleavage between the scientific explanation and the mechanical one. A fact is explained scientifically when its cause is given.^o If one admits the scientific maxim that every event in nature has a natural cause then of course it is possible to bring God at the beginning as a first cause. But this leads to the conception of God who has no practical importance in our life. By little logical

ingenuity we can avoid this result. God is as it were creating and recreating continuously. In the modern age we find that the indeterminate movement of the electron shows that the law of causation does not apply in subatomic world. It is to be noted that the exclusion of God as a philosophical principle of explanation has also started since Berkeley. It will be wrong for us to think that the new science with its mechanical explanation is devoid of the idea of world purpose as this idea is so deep-rooted that it can not be eradicated from the mind. The current literature and art express the futility and meaninglessness of life. But this picture of life is not deep-rooted. In the minds of men. The idea of a world which has its obedience to the harmonious divine plan, is deep rooted. Scientific procedure consists in introducing hypotheses in order to proceed in the search for truth.

The mechanical explanation of the world view is purposeless and more void of meaning as science presents it so. But the idea of a world-purpose has not been eradicated wholly from the Scientist's mind. In this modern age, religion in its Polluted form, is operating to build walls between one another which is the main reason for which so many crusades and jehads are going on in the world scene from time immemorial.

But the question is : Is there really any difference among the existent religions of the world? If we go deep into the texts of the religions then it is realised that if there is any difference between two religions, it is really on their attempt to impose their own special dogmas upon each other. If they think calmly, they find that nothing but man is the real object of religion and the ultimate goal of each and every religion is to attain the Supreme Reality. The only cleavage is in the method, which each of them apply to achieve the Reality. The ultimate goal is common to all, we should be overflowed by the feeling of brotherhood. This feeling of brotherhood knows no barrier as it has the common goal to save religion. All the religions of the world have no special characteristic by which these can be characterized. As all religions have the same goal then each and every one should feel in his inner heart the call of brotherhood and fellowfeeling and this call throws away all the differences of caste, creed or dogmas.

Now it is our task to seek out which type of religion is fit for upgrading our lives. Arts, Science, Philosophy and ethics give evidences of the higher life of man. Religion is most the vital force for the progress of these concerns of higher life as the current of religion works in its fullest harmony with these concerns. The Society can be saved if we nourish and cherish the main theme of religion which is brotherly love and fellowfeeling by which we can have the vision of union call of Vedanta.

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