

## CHAPTER - V

### SCIENCE AND RELIGION - SAME GOAL

#### (i) Introduction

The discussion made in the previous chapters prove that we cannot do away with religion. Let us now find out what religion has done for mankind. Following the lead of Herbert Spencer<sup>1</sup> who applied the principle of evolution to every sphere of human life. We may say that religion has the fitness to survive the onslaughts of reason. And doubt is a friend and guide of religion to clear the mist and confusion about it. So the natural question comes whether religion conveys any truth in the present age which is the age of science. The findings of science are obtained through a process of experiment and observation for which science commands our faith. But the problem is that science can not solve the deep mysteries of nature. The higher scientific ideas can hardly be brought within the scope of rational concepts as these ideas exceed our comprehension. In all directions the scientific investigations bring an insoluble enigma as human intellect is endowed with limitations.

#### (ii) Religion and ultimate Reality

Now the question is - can religion concern itself with the ultimate Reality which is transcendental in its nature? In this context Immanuel Kant provided out that our reason leaves us free to believe that behind the thing-in-itself there is a just god because our moral sense claims us to believe it. For Pascal, the heart has reasons of its own, which our head can never understand. Rousseau claims that above logic of the head there is the feeling of the heart. Bergson pointed out the possibilities of intuition as the medium of direct knowledge. In our own age, Sri Ramkrishna, Swami Vivekananda viewed that it is through the heart that all realisations come. Sri Ramakrishna assured us that it is open to every-one to see the godhead for which we have to purify our minds and hearts when this purification of the mind and heart will be crystallised then Reality will be revealed to this purified mind. This intuition of pure heart leads one towards the immediate experience of Reality. The

Vedanta teaches us that the real self is beyond both mind and matter.

The physicists have discovered the electric forces and vast empty spaces in the universe. But it cannot be admitted that these formless entities are somehow transformed by us into this uniquely beautiful nature with moral and aesthetic values. We are in a safe position when we say that through evolution we have achieved the widest and richest view of nature. This process has not yet stopped. So, it would not be illogical to think that we the men of the present stage may be evolved to a stage of Divinity in the far distant future. It may quite reasonably be supposed that the ever-widening and ever-changing affair along with evolution which has brought us so far, would take us further to the plane of Divinity in the not too remote future. It is reasonable to say that the seers are individual specimens of higher altitude towards which humanity is advancing through the process of evolution. These seers had the vision of the unity and harmony which are reigning supreme eternally within the core of the universe and their religiously disciplined nature alone prepares the mind to unveil the fundamental unity of the universe. Universal love will then reign supremely. Religion eliminates the baser instincts of men and manifests the Divinity within us. It might be said that religion of humanity would lead to the realisation of God and consequent manifestation of Divinity in man as religion gives us the genuine incentive for transcending the brute plane manifesting the Divinity in us. More than this religion with its association to 'hereafter' serves the purpose of moral discipline. It might be pointed out that it is possible for us to have mistaken idea of religion judging it by the consequences of its perverted form. It might be emphasised that this perverted form of religion is the basic of all the crusades, and jehads and all the wars that this world has faced. All the creeds, all the prophets, all religions, all the seers have been reinstated in their glory by a fresh decree of truth by which the inner self of humanity as the cry for the brotherhood which is universal in its nature and it is crying for the response. Mankind now should have the feeling of reverence towards religion.

### **(iii) Can Religion bring forth world-society**

The world history depicts the picture of the manifold expressions of art, science, ethics and philosophy though there may be differences among the religion of an artist, the religion of a scientist or a religion of a moralist. But if we have a glimpse to the deep undercurrent following amongst the philosophers, scientists, moralists or artists, we find that the leading persons like Rabindra Nath Tagore<sup>2</sup>, Sir Arthur Eddington<sup>3</sup>, of the world of philosophy, art and science are men of strong religious characters. This is because the constituents of true religion are reason which can stand at the alter of experiments and tolerance for other religious faiths. True religion is a grand combination of reason, faith, tolerance and morality. Religion inspires the spirit of man by which he will be awakened to bring about the higher starata for the brings of the society.

In this modern age, we are too much engaged with our existential for which we have not scope to nourish our religious spirit. But we have to cultivate the feeling of respect for truth and for the upliftment of humanity as a whole because true religious feeling feels fellowship not only with god but also with his fellowmen of whole world. We have to win the heart of the whole world as discords and disharmonies are not the last words. Concord and harmony will surely be achieved where the melody of harmony will be heard and men will be shackled by the chain of love. Then and then only we will be the members of a world-society which has the demand for the fellowship of man. We have to suffer much with our fellowmen as we are bound up with the chain of love. This bond of love makes life complete as here there is no chance for the feeling of otherliness. If so then even a radically different scientific view of the world can be religious if its nature is optimistic and imaginative as a whole in relation to good and evil. Man's religious instinct is so deep rooted that even a man who does not believe in god, has also his religion. Religion being a growing experience its expanding its horizon more and more by intellect so the nature and character of religion is determined by more and more knowledge. Our spiritual life needs nourishment in our intellectual and physical life by which we will be able to come up to encompass the recognition of love and be the king to reign supreme. In the present time we have our intellectual problems which are

exceedingly difficult to be solved. Yet the feeling of harmony within ourselves can be felt in our heart. Man is an individual and at the same time he is a member of the society. The most necessary conditions of this society are, cooperation and feeling of friendliness which is expansive in its nature. In the map of this society the whole world is to be encompassed. This world society has its concern for the unification of mankind through modern techniques of modern science. The present age has the urgent need for a world government. The inner change of the heart of man will make them realise the need for world-wide co-operation. This is the most vital factor for the survival of human beings.

**(iv) Is Religion an experience of the ultimate Reality?**

We are now going to unearth the question:- Is religion so rich enough to be an experience of the ultimate Reality? Indian philosophy relies on the truth that there can be the spiritual experience of the reality and this experience attains its clarity through contemplation which means the experience of the eternal. This conception comes nearer to the Jewish, Christian, Muslims seers who have tested and retested their own experience. It might be remarked in this context that for the Existentialists also truth is subjective. We have to feel it within ourselves and for them freedom can be achieved here now.

Experience being as direct and immediate knowledge, is to be characterized by the feeling of absolute certainty and the true form of Reality should be known through one's own understanding. To gain an experience of reality there should be a well fabricated harmony of reason and impulse. The modern culture also has been firmly convinced of the moral character of the universe. In the modern age, there is the widening of intellect and the rapid dissolution of accepted values. The anxiety, the despair pervades the sky of the mind. Yet under these inner disorders the religious instinct is flowing incessantly to dispel all the darkness of the mind. Religion is not to be regarded as a stumbling block to the rational thinking as religion is undertaking the process of revolutionary adjustments to the modern life as it is now operating with reason and faith.

Religion is a transforming experience of spiritual consciousness when the individual withdraws his soul from all outward events and looks towards his inner self then he has the realisation of his being which constitutes the most probable proof of the reality of god. Our religious experience is something immediate while the theory of reality is a deduction. There is big gap between the immediate contact with reality, given by the religious reflection and religious contact and theorisation about it.

The fulfilment of man's life lies in the spiritual experience where the whole mind has its leaps and goes beyond phenomenal fact without any logic, argument or hypothesis. Without this spiritual recovery, we cannot have the touch of the feet of reality. We are in the incessant search for the achievement of the ultimate goal and the ultimate goal of life is really the "Inness" or "oneness" of all beings. This realisation needs the practice of discipline of our nature. This disciplining of nature can reach the altitude of perfection where it can dispel all darkness with his intuitive self-knowledge.

It might be pointed out here that William James<sup>4</sup> refers specifically to the discipline of yoga. According to him, the mystic comes in touch with a world which is really one. In this practice of discipline, the thinking principle is to be suppressed to attain the concentration of mind on one object. The truth of life can never be solved by empirical knowledge and thinking. The truth of life lies in self-knowledge. Through this self-knowledge a man can only understand this universe.

Vedanta identifies this unification of the self in oneness as the Absolute self. This self-knowledge alone can understand this universe and this self-knowledge is the ultimate goal of life. This disciplining of nature is the only way for the attainment of the ultimate goal of life. The truth of life and existence is necessary transcendent in nature. The riddle of life can never be solved by empirical thinking and experience. So man has to recourse to faith as truth can not be reasoned out. Men can have faith and this attitude of man can lead him towards religion. We have the need now for the proper growth and

nourishment of our psyche. Man's basic physical structure is the same all over the world. To share a common destiny religion should not block the rational thinking and social progress as these are undergoing revolutionary readjustments to modern life.

All religions in the proper sense of the term are now shouldering the responsibilities of understanding the changes in the social orders by the modifications of themselves.

Let us now analyse the relation between man as a social being and religion. Religion, at the same time is intensely personal and social in its attitude. The oncoming of new religion questioned the accepted traditional ideals as the sociology of religion is well fabricated with social phenomena. In the modern age man is now seeking his soul. This search indicates the progress of the society. When the mind of the individual will be full of joy and peace then he will be merged in the rest of mankind. Religious ideas and emotions are interwoven with man's inner world of self-hood which tends to be socially patterned and it reflects man's social experience.

We have the unquenched thirst for the ultimate Reality. For this reason we have to quench this thirst and seek the answer to the question : Is this thirst really genuine or not?

The satisfaction of the physical needs can not quench this thirst for knowing the super physical reality. The ontological disposition of mind drives man to know the 'why' and the 'how' of things and to know the meaning and purpose of life and the underlying unity of this world. Metaphysics being the spiritual necessity of life plays important part in the life of the thinking being.

In modern philosophy we find that the examination of our nature as moral agents enables Kant <sup>5</sup> to give richer and deeper meaning to idea and he conceives that the contemplation of the starry heaven above should be accompanied by the recognition of the moral laws within us. The ultimate goal of life is the quest for truth. We have the firm conviction that He is. This may

possibly be the reason for which we find, in the philosophical circle so many proofs for existence of God whom we think as Reality of truth. These proofs signify the quest for the Reality.

This quest is not peculiar only in the circle of philosophy but it is inevitable in any branch of knowledge. As a result science is also longing to unveil the Reality. Religion and science with no contradiction search for the Reality though their methods are different. In the modern age, science and religion do not belong to two camps. We must realise that the religious truth is deeply scientific in its attitude. We should exercise our intuitive understanding to unveil the metaphysical truth which will impel us towards the never-ending effort to clarify the mystery of this universe. The universe tends to become more complicated for which some scientists and philosophers adopted the theory of emergence. For them new quality emerges in every step of evolution which could not be predicted from knowledge of the constituent elements before their organisation. This quality is really new but at the same time not an additional factor.

For some philosophers, mind is an emergent quality; but this mind is not the highest possible emergent quality as religion aspires the high flights of mind towards the world which is "Deity". This is the next highest quality, in all probability and for the attainment of this height we have to bear much pains and sufferings. The world is nothing but a veil of soul making and man is actually evolving towards the plane of Divinity. Upanishadic maxim 'tat tvam asi' confirms that all men are in the Divine. Religion is the only way for the direct apprehension of the supreme.

The seventeenth century shivered with a sudden revolutionary change in the world picture which experienced the main work of Kepler, Gallileo and Newton, and the world picture of modern man is now captured by science.

The impact of the new physics of relativity and quantum theory make science to cease to be mechanistic. Teleological view of the world is the general characteristic of the religious attitude. But these two kinds of explanations are

not inconsistent with one another. If we want the highest kinds of knowledge we should have the understanding of everything in this universe in terms of religion which is unitive in its attitude which is the ultimate goal of science too.

**(v) The world is a moral order**

It is necessary to have a glimpse over the question whether the world is a moral order or not. The question which bears much importance in the intellectual and the spiritual history of mankind is what do we mean by moral order. According to some philosophical thinkers, the assertion that the moral values are objective, is identical with the assertion that the world is a moral order. According to another type of thinking, moral values are subjective. And this implies obviously that the world is not a moral order. These words subjective and objective are extremely ambiguous. If the existence of value is wholly or partly dependent on any human mental states then it will be called as subjective value. On the contrary the objective value is not in any case dependent upon the human mental states.

Now the ultimate moral character of the universe, whether it is personified in the form of a righteous and transcendent god is viewed as immanent in the world process itself, has been a part of all advanced religious culture. But according to the most fashionable intellectuals of the modern age, the values are subjective and relative in co-relation with the man that is, the world is not a moral order. This view, however, makes man to be perplexed as the older religious view has its sustenance until now. The modern intellectual culture has been firmly convinced in the moral character of the universe. In this modern age there is the sign of inner disorder everywhere yet the deep down currents of religious instinct flows incessantly. Within all our heightened technological might there is a threat of overall meaninglessness which has the grip over our heart and soul. But we should not get loose of hope as because religion now comes to the scene which will discipline the nature of man. It has been already mentioned by us that religion is not a stumbling block for the rational thinking as it is undergoing the process of revolutionary adjustments to the modern life.

Religion is the only way by which man can have the attainment of peace which is a gift of religion engulfing man's whole existence. True religion can stand at the alter of verification which has the quality of tolerance. It gives inspiration to the spiritual minds to be righteous and it is also the source of solace to the distressed minds. It also subserves the purpose of invigorating the minds by which man finds strength of his mind. True religion is a sister branch which shows its face in certain areas and in certain times of the history. Religion has its all enveloping existence in the life of man. Man cannot deny religion as it shows us face in certain times of the history of art, science, literature, ethics and philosophy. The medieval world-picture was a mixture of scientific and philosophical ideas. There we find three main philosophical ideas viz. God, world purpose and the moral order of the world. The first idea is that of God. The main point of this idea is that He has been conceived as a conscious spirit like human mind which has plans and purposes. This conscious being created the world at a particular time in the past out of nothing. This is the original basic idea of creation of the world though sophisticated thinkers are aware of the tremendous difficulties of this anthropomorphic conception of God. The second idea is that of purpose of the creation. The term 'telos' means purpose. To give teleological explanation of an event is to ascribe some purpose to it. Mechanical explanation wants to find out the cause of the creation. It is to be remarked that religion has generally been associated with teleology. Teleological view of the world in general is a characteristic of a religious attitude to the world. It is to be noted that the concept of the world governed by purpose was not the invention of Christaianity. The ancient Hebrew religion is permeated by it. The ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle also developed teleological systems of metaphysics. Socrates' philosophy exhibits favour for the teleological explanation and a prejudice against mechanism. This modern age however, under impact of modern science shows its prejudice towards the mechanical concept. But the fact is that these two kinds of explanations do not contradict each other. But we should not be biased towards any one of the two explanations. As mechanical explanation is not fully equipped to quench the thirst for the 'why' of things we have to go to the line of the teleological explanation which goes on to enquire into the 'why' of things. This

'telos' or purpose is the vital factor of the religious view of the world. It is the most vital part of our intellectual heritage.

**(vi) The Relation between the Eternal and the Temporal**

Now the task left for us is to enquire about the relation between the eternal and the temporal.

The core of religious attitude is - what is the relation between the temporal and the Eternal. All the higher religions have insisted that the ultimate goal of life is the realisation of timeless eternity.

In all the higher religions, the doctrines about Eternal Reality bear a close resemblance. It is striking to note that the philosophy of Eckhart and Otto is substantially the same as that of Samkara. For Eckhart, "The knower and the known are one". Samkara thinks, "Talk as much philosophy as you please, worship as many gods as like,..... liberation never comes..... without the realisation of the oneness of the self". Otto conceived that "intuitions brought to the higher vitality by, an individual with an innate divinating gift" <sup>6</sup>. The practical technique of Indian and Christian mystics is identical. In all types of religions there is a search for temporal values which are associated with the idea of god and these are mostly physical than spiritual. But we should keep it in mind that religion has always been concerned with psychic world, and not directly with Reality and Eternity. Psychic forces exist within the temporal universe of creatures. With painful sacrifice of the self we can have an access to the psychic world. Most of the highly developed religions possess a genuinely spiritual as well as a non-spiritual side.

When we cross the realm of the manifested and embodied aspects of reality to that of Reality itself, we find that there is an intensification detachment, a widening and deepening of mortification.

Nietzsche<sup>7</sup> divided religion into Apollonian and the Dionysian - the religion of the repressed and the religion of the expressed feeling. We are likely to see a religion of much fuller expression appear when once religion as a fact of life is brought back into our conduct. However, it is not necessary that the new

form should preserve exactly the old patterns. There is a hope about the rise of religion for mankind. It is possible for human beings to love, to know each other and virtually. To become actually identical with the divine ground. To achieve this unitive knowledge of the Godhead is the final end and purpose of human existence and this is the call of Vedanta.

We are now going to explore the domain of the family traits of the philosophy of S. Radhakrishnan, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and of the Synthetic philosophy of Vivekananda which is Vedantic in its tune.

| Family Traits                          | S. Radhakrishnan | R. N. Tagore | Sri Aurobindo | Vivekananda |
|--|------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Belief in Religious Philosophy.     | P                | P            | P             | P           |
| 2. Belief in traditional caste system. | A                | A            | A             | A           |
| 3. Love for fellow beings.             | P                | P            | P             | P           |
| 4. Preaching of Religious Theodicy.    | A                | A            | P             | P           |
| 5. Formation of Religious Sects.       | A                | A            | P             | P           |

The above shown chart shows that the belief in religious philosophy, love for fellow beings and non-belief in traditional caste system, are the common family traits of the Philosophy of S. Radhakrishnan, R. N. Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and of the Synthetic Philosophy of Vivekananda which is Vedantic in its tune with its practical outlook though there are dissimilarities among them in preaching of religions theodicy and in formation of religions sects which are secondary issues coming out of their common heritage in the belief of religious Philosophy, love for fellow beings and in their non-belief in traditional Caste Systems. So these philosophies are the members of the same family that is recent Indian Philosophy.

## REFERENCES

### CHAPTER- V

- V. (i) 1. A History of Philosophy : Vol. VIII: p.124: F. Copleston: Image Books, DoubleDay Newyork. 1994
- V. (iii) 2. (a) On Art and Aesthetics : Rabindra Nath Tagore: ed by P. Neogi, p.47 : Orient Longman's, New Delhi : 1961
- (b) The Religion of Man: Tagore: Chap-I-XI and XIII p.p. 9-39, 40-45, 56, 74: Unwin Books: 1975
- V. (iii) 3. The Nature of the Physical World: Sir Arthur Eddington: J. N. Dent and Sons Ltd. London, 1964.
- V. (iv) 4. The Varieties of Religious Experience ( Gifford Lecture) a Study of human nature: William James: Chaps. XVI and XVII: pp.370-420 : The Modern Library: Newyork, 1929
- V. (iv) 5. Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone: Immanuel Kant: tr. with an intro. and notes: T.M.Greene and H. H. Hudson: Harper torch Books /The Cloister Library: Harper and Brothers, New york; 1960
- V. (vi) 6. 'The Perennial Philosophy': Aldous Huxley : p. 25, 171, 215; Collins: Fontana Books, 1966
- V. (vii) 7. a) 'Nietzsche as Philosopher': A.C.Danto: Newyork, Columbia University Press, 1980
- b) The Encyclopedia of Philosophy : Vol.5 :pp. 506-507: Edited by Paul Edwards: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, Newyork,1967