

## Fourth Chapter: Religion or Religions?

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The conflict of religions is a burning problem of human society. As a member of a particular religious community, we are guided by our religious values in almost every aspect of our life and social arrangements. Our religion becomes visible at the time of our birth, marriage, funeral, and so on. But sometimes our preferences create most undesirable situation for others. These individual preferences give birth to so many questions related to our social life. Such as – how should one look and behave towards others? How do our religious preferences enjoy the authenticity without being dominating the authenticity of others' religious values? How can we enjoy and maintain our religious identity amidst the diverse forces of religions? In the present chapter, we will try to find out a possible solution to the religious conflicts. But before going into the main discussion, at first, we shall try to explore the causes of religious conflicts.

In the previous chapter, we have seen that some of the world's great religious traditions maintain exclusive claims regarding an ideal way of life and true nature of the world. It is not only the case with the religions we have discussed; it is the case with all the religious sects throughout the world. Every religion has some claims that may not be accepted by the others. For example, Semitic religions proclaim the existence of divine personal God, who is considered to be the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world and

life. On the other hand, early Buddhism and Jainism do not believe in the existence of such kind of personal god or principle, or rather any kind of god as ultimate reality. However, such exclusive metaphysical proclamations of religions create a boundary and set of taboos for their respective followers. Famous American theologian Paul J. Griffiths maintains that all the religious doctrines function as a rule, governing the life of the communities that profess them and also sets a boundary for them – which have been discussed in the very beginning of the third chapter of this thesis. Griffith's account of exclusive claims of religious scriptures is worth considering. He tries to bring out the exclusive nature of the scriptures. We can realize the influence of our religious scripture over our life and society. It shapes and forms ours in a certain way. However, among these different claims of religions, a common claim can also be found present in all the so-called diverse religious traditions. For example, it is the only true path or best path proffered by God for entire mankind. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Each religion brings out its own doctrines and insists upon them as being the only true ones."<sup>xxxx</sup> Often they tend to prove it so by various means. And in doing so, almost all the religious communities find themselves in collision with each other, sometimes in an extremely violent way. Often the degree of this madness is too decisive that one religious community tries to destroy the existence of other religious community. Such violence and conflicts are harmful to the peaceful existence of human life and society. Such conflicts and violence cannot be the criteria of an ideal human society. In fact, such violence and

conflicts are main hindrances in the way of an ideal human society. Therefore, in order to establish a harmonious human society, we need to look for a possible solution of religious conflicts. And it is the primary subject matter of this final chapter of the thesis.

A search for a possible solution to religious conflicts may have the following three possible solutions: first, that there should be no religion in the future-world; second, there should be only one religion that will replace all other religious systems; and third, all religions should coexist.

It is hard to draw a picture of human society without using the color of religion. It's like a daydream that in future a human society will be established without any religious institution. This possibility seems to be meaningless if we consider the fact that religious history of human beings is as old as that of humans themselves. If we look into the history of human society throughout the world, then we may see that the notion of religion is embedded even in the earliest form of society. Indeed, it is difficult to conceptualize the social life of human beings without having an idea of their religious life. In the earliest societies, there were no sharp distinction between social life and religious life. The present form of society is nothing but a continuous flow of earlier social life. Therefore, the reflection of previous traits and habits of human society naturally transformed to the present form of society. There may be questions raised regarding the authenticity of previous patterns and characteristics of earlier social life from the current point of view and, this to some extent, seems necessary. But it is not possible to make a

completely new version of society by eliminating all the previous patterns and characteristics of earlier social life. So, under such conditions, we may leave aside the first possibility that, in future, a human society will be established without having any religious institution. Although there have been many intellectual people appeared in different times who tend to prove the unworthiness of religious institutions. Say for example, Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx etc. To some extent, they are successful to demonstrate the hegemonic role of religious institution over the mass. And they were also successful to apprehend the abnormal psychological basis behind many superstitious religious endeavours. But they were not successful to give a substitute of religion. They have successfully explored the negative aspect of religious endeavour through the scientific glass. Their Glass of Science makes the religious endeavour of people meaningless. But with their utmost effort, they did not become successful to cut out the religious endeavour of people from its root. The reason is simple that human race has found something positive elements in their religious endeavour. For people, religion does not only consist of superstitious endeavour and religious institution. Religion becomes a phenomenon of the human mind through which they try to know the beyond. For some enlightened persons, human society can never be a human society without religion. As Swami Vivekananda said “Now comes the question: Can religion really accomplish anything? It can. It has made man what he is, and will make of this human animal a god. That is what

religion can do. Take religion from human society and what will remain? Nothing but a forest of brutes.”<sup>cxxxix</sup>

Secondly, one may think of the possibility of one religion in the future world, so that no question of religious conflict may arise. The dream is that a single religious sect will replace all the other religions and will be able to satisfy the heart and mind of all the people of the world. Galloway thinks that Christianity in future will replace all other religions because only Christianity has the characteristics of universal religion. He says, “By its full and fair outlook on human nature and human life, Christianity has the best claim to be the Universal Religion.”<sup>cxxxix</sup> Therefore according to George Galloway, in the future world, there will be one religious identity, i.e. Christianity. Not only Galloway, but many others from other religions preferred their religions as the ideal and universal one. It may be the result of their strong attachment to their own tradition. This makes hard to imagine that people will live in the future world with a single religious identity. Let us examine the factors that make it difficult to imagine a single religious identity for all human beings.

As members of certain natural and cultural environment, we possess so many identities like biological identity, geographical identity, social identity, linguistic identity and sexual identity etc. Religious identity is one of our identities among such identities. It is true in that a specific identity of mine in some sense make me different from the other members of society. And sometimes it may become a matter of disagreement among the fellow members of society. But in spite of that, on most occasions, we are not

willing to abandon any of our identities – whether it is biological or certain social identities. Because some of the identities do not depend upon the individual's choice, but acquired by birth. For example, if a person is born in India, she/he is considered to be an Indian, and it becomes his/her national identity. Similarly, if one is born to a Bengali spoken family, Bengali becomes his/her mothertongue among the languages of the world. On the other hand, there are also certain identities which we choose ourselves willingly. For example, in these days, one may change his/her sexual identity. Religious identity is one of the essential kinds of social identity. Like the other kind of identities, religious identity is one of the primary identities of human beings. It is also true that like some of the aforementioned identities religious identity of a man/ woman also does not depend on his/ her choice. The religious identity of man/women is also acquired by birth like his/her linguistic identity. But there is a difference between the religious identity and other sorts of identity of human beings. Unlike the other identities, religious identity imposes a moral authority and sense of guilt upon the minds of people, which claims a particular behaviour from them. Disobedience to such moral claims creates a sense of guilt within the minds of the people. Unlike the religious identity, other identities like the identity of language do not impose such kind of moral authority or a sense of guilt upon the concerned person. People can talk in different languages apart from theirs, but this does not give birth to a sense of guilt upon their mind. But the disobedience of certain religious codes and cultures sometimes may cause a sense of guilt

in the mind of the people of that particular religion. And sometimes the notion of guilt causes a sense of fear in their mind, i.e. the fear of being abundant from the right paths of life. The fear of such things may cause a mental reservation with regard to the religious identity. All the great religions of the world maintain that their prescribed path is the only valid path preferred by God. Therefore, all of them believe that one has to follow their path in order to be saved from the sufferings of the world. In doing so, a particular religious community tends to profess that one should need to come under their religious identity in order to lead their life in the right way. It may be due to their strong attachment to their respective religious culture that they become a blind subject to their tradition, and unable to see the existence and importance of other religious tradition. But their subjective thinking about the supremacy of their religious faith does not make other existing religious faith unworthy. Sometimes people are so much dogmatic to their position that they may fail to realize the impartial aspect of reality. This is an obstacle in understanding the faiths of others.

Like other social and biological identities, people are more or less happy with their religious identity. They like to enjoy it. They generally find the true way of life in their respective religions. In the history of human civilization, many saints and religious leaders have come within the all the great religious sects of the world to preach about the goal of religious endeavours. We have mentioned in the previous chapter, Swami Vivekananda's view in this regard. People have the freedom to choose and enjoy their religious identity. For

Swami Vivekananda, a particular religion may not take the place of all the religions. A single doctrine may not be able to fulfill the hearts all the devotees throughout the world. He says "...by the idea of universal religion if it is meant that one set of doctrine should be believed in by all mankind, it is wholly impossible."<sup>xxxiii</sup> For him, diversity is the basic principle of life.

Under the above mentioned psychological basis of the human mind, we may leave out the possibility that there will be one religious identity in the future-world. The possibility of no religious identity has already been rejected by us. Identity is always meaningful with respect to diversity. The idea of one implies the idea of many, and accordingly the question of one religious identity would be meaningless without the existence of multiple religious identities. The idea of one religious identity exists so far as the different religious identities exist. So, logically it seems impossible to identify all the people of the world through a single religious identity by ignoring the existence of all the other religions. The reason that, if we would to assemble all the people of the world under a single identity the idea of many religious identities would automatically come into being beside the idea of one. Hence, the idea of one religion seems not a reasonable solution towards the problem of religious conflict. It is, therefore, better to find out a solution of religious co-existence not into any universal system of faith but the unity among the diverse religious system of faith. For that, we need to look for common platform or a meeting place where all the religious identities can enjoy their

uniqueness. Let us now try to find out the mechanism of unity among the diverse religious activity.

Scholars from the different corners of the world have given various suggestions concerning the possibility of religious co-existence. As for example, John Hick uses the Kantian distinction of two worlds, namely, the phenomenal world and transcendental world to propose a possible solution of religious co-existence. He thinks that Kantian division of these two worlds can be used as an analogy for a viable solution to religious conflicts. By following the Kantian analogy of schematization, he maintains that all the general concepts become concrete by the mental categories of understanding like, cause and effect, substance and quality etc. He applied this Kantian process of schematization over the most important concept of religions, namely, the concept of God and tried to explain the diverse claims of different religions. As in his book *Philosophy of Religion*, he says “Each of these basic concepts is, however, made more concrete (in Kantian terminology, schematized) as a range of a particular image of God or particular concepts of the Absolute. These images of God are formed within the different religious histories. Thus the Yahweh of the Hebrew scriptures exists in interaction with the Jewish people.”<sup>xxxiv</sup> By following Immanuel Kant, Hick maintains that the knowledge of religious concepts is also relative to other empirical knowledge of the world. Furthermore, he maintains that the ignorance about the relative nature of the religious theology sometimes causes religious violence. Due to our ignorance we think that the gospels of

our tradition are the only true gospels of God and try to deny the authenticity of other's religion. Moreover, we tend to prove the uniqueness and authenticity of our concerned religious doctrine through various means. In doing so, we are engaged in a collision with other religious traditions.

But there is a problem lies within the Kantian theory of Schematization and the division of two worlds. In his theory, Kant has tried to show the limits of the human mind. He says that man can never know the true nature of the world. In Kantian sense, Humans can never "see" or know the 'world of noumenon', although they can think of it. The human mind can never go (to have scientific knowledge) beyond the boundary of the phenomenal world. Human mind is always confined within the boundary of the world of appearance because of its faculties. Thus, Kant draws a tragic picture of human thought, i.e. it can never know the true nature of the world. Human has to remain satisfied only with the shadows of the world.

However, there is no question of doubt that Kant's theory of knowledge makes a revolution in the field of epistemology, science and many other disciplines. The post-Kantian philosophers have applied his unique doctrine of epistemology to develop their own theory. But using this Kantian conception of schematization and his two world theory to the field of religion may be problematic. Firstly, the Kantian theory may not satisfy the heart of a devotee. Religion is said to be an endeavour of the human mind to know the reality. Kantian philosophy implicitly makes the religious endeavour of human mind impossible. According to Kantian theory, humans can never

know the world as such. By following Kant, we may say that our respective environment (both social and natural) and faculties of mind plays an essential role in the formation of our knowledge. But it is hard to believe for a devotee that human mind can never know the object in its own essence; although by denouncing scientific knowledge of the Reality, Kant has opened up the cope of faith. Therefore the complete structure religion cannot be seen in the light of Kantian theory.

Hick was aware of the agonistic nature of Kantian epistemology. By following Kantian epistemology, he maintains that our social, cultural and natural environment formed our knowledge of the world in a certain way. Like the knowledge of the world, it also forms our conception of divinity in a certain way. Our respective environment and tradition, consciously or unconsciously, guide our mind to look upon the idea of divinity in a very particular way. Simultaneously, we take the help of our tradition frequently to understand the true nature of absolute divinity. So for Hick, the diverse images and names of god are the joint product of culture and mind. Therefore, our idea of divinity is not the idea of divinity in itself in the true sense of the term. In a sense, it can be said that our idea of divinity represents an aspect of absolute divinity among the various aspects. People use their respective images of god to know the same absolute. In his book, *Philosophy of Religion*, Hick says, "Given the basic hypothesis of the reality of Divine, we may say that Yahweh, and Krishna (and likewise, Shiva, Allah and Father of Jesus

Christ) are different personae in terms of divine Reality is experienced and thought within different streams of religious life.”<sup>CXXXV</sup>

Vedantic philosophy, especially Advaita Vedanta, maintains a similar opinion concerning the apparent existence of diverse images of God. The Advaita Vedanta believes in the existence of one absolute divine being, namely Brahman. For Advaita Vedanta, Brahman means pure eternal consciousness devoid of any kind of quality and category etc. Because of it, Brahman can never be expressed in language. Generally, our consciousness can grasp only those things which have certain qualities, categories and form. So for Samkara, whenever we try to grasp the idea of formless Brahman we ascribe certain qualities and categories to the nature of Brahman like omniscient, omnipresent, merciful etc. By attributing such qualities we try to know about the one absolute divinity, i.e. Brahman. In doing so, we are actually creating a particular conception of divinity, namely Isvara, with our capacity of mind. According to Samkara, all these different images represent the divine nature of the one absolute divinity. Moreover, Isvara or the particular conceptions of divinity have only phenomenal existence. When we acquire the true knowledge of the one absolute Brahman, the apparent existence of different personal gods will be demolished. According to Samkara, due to our ignorance about the true nature of the absolute divinity, we perceive or conceive the existence of various personal gods instead of one absolute divinity

However, the phenomenal existence of different personal gods is not meaningless or worthless for human life, holds Advaita Vedanta. Human beings can take the help of these different personal gods (Isvara) to realize the true nature of Brahman because all the personal gods are nothing but mere representations of the one absolute divinity. In later history of time by following Vedanta Philosophy Swami Vivekananda also maintains the same opinion regarding the role of different personal gods (Isvara) in human life. He says, “My brethren, we can no more think about anything without a mental image than we can live without breathing. By the law of association, the mental image calls up the mental idea and vice versa. This is why the Hindu uses an external symbol when he worships. He will tell you, it helps to keep his mind fixed on the being to whom he prays. He knows as well as you do that the image is not God...it stands merely as word or symbol.”<sup>xxxxvi</sup> John Hick in *Philosophy of Religion* gives a similar account of explanation of the existence of different personal gods into the human society, by following this unique Vedantic conception of divinity. He says, “If we suppose that the real is one, but that our human perceptions of the Real are plural and various, we have a basis for the hypothesis that the different streams of religious experience represent diverse awareness of the same limitless transcendent reality, which is perceived in characteristically different ways by different human mentalities, forming and formed by different cultural histories.”<sup>xxxxvii</sup> Vedantic conception of divinity may be a platform where all the different conceptions of Personal gods may enjoy their superiority without

denying the existence of others. Probably for that reason Swami Vivekananda projects Vedanta as an ideal future religion of the world. For him, the basic principles of Vedanta would be seen as a harmonious platform for all the diverse existing faiths. He also tries to give a possible suggestion of religious conflicts by following the philosophy of Vedanta. By following the paths of Vedanta he attempts to establish a unity among the human beings. He believes in the diversity and variety among the human beings on the one hand, and on the other hand he believes in the absolute existence of eternal pure consciousness. For him, variety and diversity is the burning fact of the universe. But the variety is to be understood under the light of unity. As the diverse elements of the universe is nothing but the manifestations of the one absolute consciousness. For him the same eternal consciousness flows through among us. Human consciousness is the representation of the one absolute consciousness. Therefore, from absolute point of view, we are one, as we have all come from a common origin. As he says, “Such are the different pearls and the Lord is the thread that runs through all of them, only the majority of mankind is entirely unconscious of it.”<sup>cxviii</sup> By following the philosophy of Vedanta, Swami Vivekananda observes this divine unity among the human race as a possible solution towards the religious collision and preferred Vedanta as an ideal future religion.

No doubt Swami Vivekananda has made an influential attempt towards religious conflict by following the path of Vedanta. His proposal concerning the possible solution of religious conflict inspires the mind of many

intelligent people. His words and thoughts left a tremendous effect upon our social psyche, which helps to form our refined religious behaviour. However, it seems that his dream of Vedanta as an ideal future religion of the world is subject to challenge. Firstly, can Vedanta be considered as a religion? Neither in the Western sense of the term nor in the sense of Hinduism can it be called as religion. It is a philosophical school rather a mere religious sect. Furthermore, one can raise arguments against his strong belief in the principles of Vedanta. May be it is due to his strong attachment to the Vedanta tradition he thinks of Vedanta as the future religion of the world. Most importantly by giving utmost attention and preference to the principle of Vedanta as a common platform of interreligious dialogue, are we not trying to accommodate all the other religious faith under the shade of Vedanta? By proposing Vedanta as a universal religion, are we not trying to replace all other religious systems with a single religious faith? Such questions make us doubtful about the success of Vivekananda's proposal of Vedanta as a universal religion.

It is true that many intellectual and enlightened beings have come forward in different times of the history of human civilization to tell us about the importance of harmony among the religion. They have proposed various suggestions in this regard. Their proposed ways towards the possible solution of religious conflict may vary from one another. But more or less they share a common concern about the role and function of religion in human life and society. According to them, religion belongs to the creative part of human

psyche. Human mind has created a unique phenomenon of religion to relate their consciousness with a higher consciousness and to enjoy a fellowship under the shade of that higher conscious being. Religion becomes a means for human beings for transforming the mode of self-consciousness. This unique endeavour of human consciousness is expressed through their cultural behaviour, practices, rituals and architecture etc. Such external expressions of human consciousness build the body of religion.

Such external aspects and expressions of religion are just the sub-ways to serve the above mentioned purpose of religion. In the view of many spiritual leaders like Sri Ram Krishna Paramhamsadev and scholars like W. C. Smith, John Hick etc., in the case of every religious tradition the purpose of religion is same which is mentioned earlier. But their ways to achieve that purpose changes on the basis of mental choice and aspirations. As the wish and taste vary from person to person, correspondingly the way of fulfillment also changes from one religious tradition to another. Thus, there is no problem or conflict between our religious endeavour and others if we consider the above-mentioned opinion. But for them, conflict among the religious traditions arises because most of the time people make confusion between the way and goal in the premises of religion. They start to give utmost importance to the ways and ignore the higher purpose of religion. In doing so, one religious tradition starts to undermine and ignore the other ways to reach the same goal. Such sort of negligence, ignorance towards others faith may cause a sense of hatred, conservative mentality and ultimately it gives birth to a

collision between the people of two religious traditions. So, a proper understanding of the relative and contextual aspect of different religious traditions may open a path of inter-religious dialogue positively. This helps to sustain the authentic existence of every religious tradition and also helps to maintain social peace and harmony.

From the ancient times of human civilization, many normative principles have emerged to guide our moral behaviours, for example, the principle of Dharma. The word “Dharma” has many senses like duty, morality, virtue, etc. one of its senses is morality or duty. In the previous chapter, we have briefly discussed the nature of dharma. Dharma is often described as a life-sustaining principle by the Indian saints and philosophers. Moreover, the essence of dharma has been uttered in different verses of *Mahābhārata* in several contexts. In the SantiParva of *Mahābhārata*, in explaining the nature of Dharma to Yudhistira, Bhishma says,

A person should never do that to others

Which he does not like to be done to him by others,

Knowing how painful it is to himself.<sup>cxxxix</sup>(259.20)

Furthermore, we may hear the same in the AnusasanaParva from the voice of Brihaspati. In this chapter, he explains the essence of Dharma (virtue) to Yudhistira in the following way:

One should never do that to another

which he considers as injurious to his own self.

This in brief is the rule of virtue.

One by acting in different way by giving way to desire

becomes guilty of sin.<sup>»cx1</sup>(113.8)

As a self-conscious being, if we do not accept the interference of others in the domain of our religious endeavour then we should remain aware of the fact that our interference may also disturb the endeavours of others. The concept of Dharma bears this basic moral principle within its essence. It may help us to determine our duties towards others and also to one's own self. As a social being, we are depended upon our fellow beings. Our happiness to a great extent depends upon the happiness of our neighbours. The essence of Dharma may help to maintain peace and happiness in society at the time of any kind of social discourse, along with inter-religious discourse.

So now it can be said that, all the religious endeavours are directed towards a common goal. But our ways towards this goal are different. If we dislike the taste and customs of others, then it may be possible that others may also dislike the taste and customs of ours. It seems that there is something common among us along with the divers' taste of consciousness. As a self-conscious being, our consciousness does possess a common state of aspiration and acceptance. Here the sole principles of Dharma may help in sustaining the common state of consciousness. It brings out eternal moral principle

before our consciousness, i.e. ‘our way to achieve aspiration should not become the pain for others.’

However, the sole essence of Dharma has been found to be present in almost all the central religious texts of existing religious traditions. It can be heard from the voice of many enlightened beings throughout the world. And of them, Buddha is probably the most important to be mentioned.

In the 5th century C.E, such life-sustaining principle has been spoken of by Lord Buddha. Buddha believed in the diversity and variety of human mind. He knew that people could choose different ways to sustain their life. But the diverse ways of life may cause social unrest. In order to maintain peace in society Buddha expressed the essence of Dharma before the mankind. He said:

All men tremble at punishment, all men fears death;

remember that you are like unto them; and do not kill, nor cause

slaughter.<sup>cxli</sup>(10.129)

further,

All men tremble at punishment, all men love life,

remember that thou art like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause

slaughter.<sup>cxlii</sup>(10.130)

Likewise in Jerusalem Lord Jesus has also professed the same kind of life-sustaining principle in the form of the Golden rule at the time of social and moral decay of Jewish community to restore the harmony and wellbeing of society. He said, “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the law of the prophets”<sup>cxliii</sup> (6.15 Matthew). Jesus has tried to guide our moral behaviour in accordance with this rule for the good of all.

Such humanitarians of the human civilization believe in the autonomy of life, and freedom to express ideas, freedom to choose etc. Succinctly, they believe in the individual autonomy. Besides this individual autonomy, they also feel that as conscious beings we all are connected to each other. Our happiness in some respect depends on others. Indeed such diversities and varieties of choice, idea etc. presupposed the autonomy of our life. Without presupposing the individual autonomy, we are not able to consider the diversity of individual choice, ideas etc. These are based on our autonomy of life. The autonomy of life makes various choice and ideas etc. possible. Simultaneously, different thoughts, emotions, choices, ideas etc. of the individuals prove the existence of their autonomy of life. Without one, another becomes meaningless. Without diversities of expression, our autonomy becomes meaningless. On the other hand, without autonomy of self-consciousness, our expressions become meaningless. Our religious diversities are one of the best examples of the autonomy of consciousness. Therefore, if we deny the varieties then indirectly we deny its base, i.e. the

autonomy of conscious life. The practice of such above-mentioned life-sustaining principles of different traditions within our social life is one of the best paths to maintain our own autonomy along with the others. Such principles can be a binding element, a harmonious principle among the different religious traditions. The practice of such above-mentioned life-sustaining principle can make a meeting place where all the great religions of the world enjoy their uniqueness.

However, ignorance about religion is one of the most important causes of the religious conflicts. Our ignorance about the basic traits of consciousness, our ignorance about the essence of other religious endeavours as well as the subjective nature of our knowledge about our tradition may sometimes play a crucial role behind the religious conflicts. In this regard, a very beautiful quote of the great epic *Mahābhārata* is worthy to mention here. In the SantiParva of *Mahābhārata*, the great Bhishma tries to make us aware of the prime enemy of human life i.e. ignorance. In order to bring out the absolute adverse effect of ignorance upon the human mind. He says,

“There is only enemy of man; there is no other  
enemy as such ignorance, clouded by which  
man acts in ways most cruel.”<sup>cxliv</sup> (297.28)

Sometimes our blind faith over our religious tradition creates an illusion in our mind concerning the universal acceptability of our religious tradition into entire human society. We become so convinced by our blind faith that we

become unable to see the faith of others or lose the patience to accept others. Such blind faith about the absolute certainty towards our own tradition makes us dogmatic and conservative about the religious identity of our own. And it also makes inter-religious dialogue impossible and causes violence in the society, because we often like to hide our ignorance, blind faith etc. behind the veil of our brutal instincts. Thus, we need a deconstructive attitude towards our belief system to explore the subjective aspect of our individual belief. It also helps to explore an inter-subjective position among the individual beliefs, which ultimately may open a door of inter-religious dialogue peacefully.

On the basis of the above discussion, we may say that religion is a creation of human mind. These unique phenomena of mind are used to know the factors of outside the natural dominance. It is an approach to freedom to go beyond physical dominance. It can be seen as means to sustain life by avoiding the narrow impulses of senses; by going beyond the narrow boundary of desire and passion. Therefore, religion can be seen as a mental act of having a joyful and peaceful life. The meaning and purpose of all the great religions can be found only in sustaining principles of life and not in destructing principles of life. By following the writings of some thinkers, like Swami Vivekananda, it can be said that all the great religions of the world serve the same purpose for mankind; people take the shelter of any one of the religious sects to fulfil these purposes sustain their religious life. Swami Vivekananda has compared the different religious tradition with an orchestra and said,

“Why take a single instrument from the great religious orchestra of the earth? Let the great symphony go on. Be pure. Give up superstition and see the wonderful harmony of nature.”<sup>cxlv</sup>