

Introduction

The rivalries among the religious traditions to prove their universality is not a matter that has come up in the contemporary times. It rather has a long history. Throughout the entire human history, people, community, temple, mosque etc. were killed, buried, marginalized and destroyed in the name of religion. But how has religion acquired such prominence so as to determine the happening of important incidents and events of progress and destruction? The reason might be that in human history different religious traditions has been trying to prove their universal acceptance by showing the all-encompassing qualities of their religions, which are free of dogmatic practices, and upholds the principles of universal brotherhood and fraternity. Almost all the great religions of the world have their own religious doctrines, which contain certain metaphysical and spiritual assumptions about the ontological reality of Truth and human existence. And it is important to note that such assumptions may contradict with each other. Each religion acclaiming the status of universality, paradoxically, tends to prove that it is the only true religion for entire mankind. And in doing so, almost all the religious communities are engaged in collision with each other, sometimes in an extremely violent way. And sometimes the degree of this violence is so intense that one fundamental religious community tries to destroy the existence of another rival religion or with whom their religious proclamation

does not match. Such collisions are harmful for the peaceful existence of our social life which is naturally not desirable in a civil society. So a solution in this context seems necessary for the peaceful existence of society. This thesis is directed to find out a possible solution of these aforementioned religious conflicts to maintain peace in the society. In other words, we may say that the main objective of this thesis is to find out a possible solution of these religious conflicts to create a space for inter-religious dialogue. In order to accomplish the set objective the thesis is divided into five chapters.

The first chapter of this thesis is concerned with the origin of religion in which we shall try to analyze the notion of religion from the social, cultural and psychical perspectives. The search for a possible solution of inter-religious collisions gives birth to certain fundamental questions, like — why do religious traditions collide with each other? Is there anything embedded in religion which implies violence into the society? In order to find out a possible solution of religious conflict, we need to make a critical journey into the origin of religion. A critical analysis of the origin of religion may make us aware about the psychical, socio-cultural basis behind the religious phenomena which ultimately help us to find a possible solution of religious conflict. Furthermore, a proper knowledge about the governing principle of origin of religion may help us to understand the meaning and purpose of religious behaviour of a person. The perception of such religious behaviour may guide us to reach the intended goal of this thesis. In this chapter, we will also try to search into the writings of many thinkers like George Galloway,

Sigmund Freud, Emile Durkheim, Swami Vivekananda, Dr.KalidasBhattacharya, Max Muller, .B Taylor etc., a better understanding about the foundational basis of religion.However, for some scholar like G.Galloway and Swami Vivekananda,religion is essentially a psychical phenomenon, although they never try to deny the socio-cultural effect upon the religious consciousness of human mind. Religion is an enterprise of human mind through which they want to approach the truth by transcending the narrow limits of their sensory world. And for scholar like Durkheim, religion is not a creation of an individual human mind rather it is a fruit of collective mind where individual wishes and aspirations have a very little role to play. For him, religion is chiefly a social phenomenon which is directed to protect the common good for society. But for Freud, religion does not have any basis at all as it is a sort of ‘neurosis’. However, in order to make our understanding clear about the origin of religion we make a survey into the different stages of religion by following the survey of historical evaluation of religious consciousness.The survey of historical evaluation of religious consciousness provide us with the information of the two transformation of religious consciousness of human beings, i.e. the transformation from tribal stage of religious consciousness to the national stage of religious consciousness, and from national stage to universal stage of religious consciousness. In other words, it can be said that historical evolution of religious consciousness pointed out three intimately connected stages of religious consciousness, namely tribal, national, and universal. Besides the

origin of religion, another important factor is also discussed in this chapter i.e. the difference between magic and religion. This discussion seems necessary for the purpose of the first chapter. A distinction between religion and magic may help us to understand the origin of religion.

In the first chapter of this thesis, we see that both in the tribal and national stage of religion the religious consciousness of human mind are subjected to their laws accordingly. Individual preference does not enjoy the primary place in these two stages of religion. Cultural codes, laws, rituals etc., more or less, hold the central position in these two stages of religion. Thus, people were looking for a wider form of religion where individual preference could enjoy the highest place, which ultimately would give birth to a conception of religion known as universal religion. Hence, we can observe that almost all the religious traditions claim that their religion is the truly universal religion. But what does 'universal religion' mean? This question needs a critical approach. Without having a proper understanding about the nature of universal religion we may not be able to reach the main purpose of this thesis.

In the second chapter of this thesis, we try to formulate a proper understanding of the nature of universal religion. This chapter deals with the notion of universal religion itself, rather than any particular form of religion which claims its universal authority. Here 'universality' does not mean uniformity of thought and belief. It refers to a state of mind which is free from any sort of narrow social and cultural boundaries. However, in this chapter, we analyze the points of view of different thinkers like G. Galloway,

Sri Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekanandaregarding the nature of universal religion. According to the great religious scriptures of almost all the existing religion, the ideal form of religion has been sent down to this world by the almighty god himself. In this chapter, we try to make a comparative study between theological explanationsabout the origin of ideal form of religions by following certain scriptures of some of the world's great religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Islam etc.Besides such theological explanations, we also try to make critical study into the writings of these thinkers to understand the meaning and function of universal religion. However, in their view universal religious consciousness is a kind of religion which is free from all sorts of narrow boundaries of caste, creed etc., and it is also a form of religion where human beings enjoy the primary place.

The third chapter of this thesis deals with some particular claims of existing religion which claim themselves as a universal religious sect. The critical exposition of the claims of a religion may help us to understand the nature and goal of respective religions. Each and every religious tradition maintains a metaphysical view regarding the ideal form of life and world which in a sense set their boundaries. The critical understanding of various claims of different religious traditions help us develop the nature of a particular religion which in turn may help us set a common platform for inter-religious dialogue. In this chapter, we discuss about the particular claims of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

The fourth chapter of this thesis is about finding a possible solution of the religious conflicts in order to maintain peace in society. And the possible solution may lie inherently in the answer of a question i.e. religion or religions, i.e. if there should be predominantly one religion or multiple religions should co-exist tolerantly and with acceptance. Ironically, the exclusive claims of different religions sometimes make the existence of multiple religious sects in the society impossible. Each and every religious sect tends to prove that their way of life is the only ideal way of life, so everyone should take refuge in their tradition to lead the ideal life. That's why the question arises if in future only one religious sect would exist or multiple religious would exist respecting for each other. In order to find out a possible solution of the inter-religious conflict we will try to critically analyze three different possible solutions: first, 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 the religions should co-exist together. In this chapter we try to find out a possible solution of inter-religious conflicts by making comparative study of the scripture and texts of some religious traditions. By making a comparative study among the scriptures and texts of these religious traditions we are trying to foresee some common principles which may act as a founding ground of inter-religious dialogue which may further work as a possible solution to religious conflicts.

The fifth chapter of this thesis is concerned about the main findings of our research work. Here one may find the essence of our preferred possible

solutions and suggestions to the religious conflicts in a summarized way. The discussion of this chapter also may help us to realize the impacts and influence of our findings in the life of human beings as well as in society.