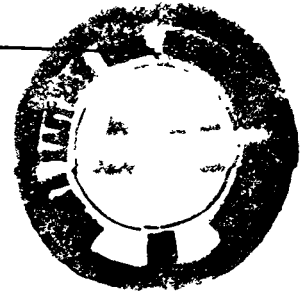


**“RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE : A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA  
AND MAHATMA GANDHI”**

**A THESIS  
SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS,  
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**

1996



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The thesis is the result of his own investigation and no part of this thesis was submitted to any other University for any research degree.

  
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## CUN TENTS

			Page
PREFACE	...	...	i
A CKNOUWL ED GEMENT	...	...	ix
1. CHAPTER I			
1.1 INTRODUCTION	...	...	1
REFERENCES	...	...	15
2. CHAPTER II			
2.1 CONCEPT OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE			16
2.2 HINDU VIEW OF RELIGION		...	32
2.3 BACKGROUND OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAHATMA GANDHI	...	...	52
REFERENCES	...	...	59
3. CHAPTER III			
3.1 EMERGENCE OF VIVEKANANDA		...	65
3.2 VIVEKANANDA'S IDEA OF RELIGION		...	72

	Page
3.3 CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN ...	... 83
3.4 CONCEPT OF MAYA AND ISVARA	... 87
3.5 CONCEPT OF UNIVERSE	... 96
3.6 CONCEPT OF MAN ...	... 99
3.7 CONCEPT OF SELF REALISATION (MOKSA)	... 103
3.8 HUMANISTIC FEATURES	... 111
REFERENCES ...	... 120
 4. CHAPTER IV	
4.1 EMERGENCE OF GANDHI...	... 128
4.2 GANDHI'S IDEA OF RELIGION	... 139
4.3 CONCEPT OF GOD ...	... 150
4.4 PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD	... 164
4.5 GOD AND THE WORLD ...	... 169
4.6 CONCEPT OF MAN ...	... 174
4.7 MAN, GOD AND THE WORLD	... 177
4.8 HUMANISTIC FEATURES	... 181
REFERENCES ...	... 189

	Page
5. CHAPTER V	
5.1 RELIGION AND SELF REALISATION	... 198
5.2 FOUR WAYS OF SELF REALISATION	... 210
KARMA YOGA	... 211
BHAKTI YOGA	... 223
RAJA YOGA	... 230
JNANA YOGA	... 238
5.3 TRUTHFULNESS, SATYAGRAHA, NON-VIOLENCE	... 247
REFERENCES	... 271
6. CHAPTER VI	
6.1 DIVERSITY OF RELIGIONS	... 276
6.2 ROCK BOTTOM UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS	... 298
REFERENCES	... 309
7. CHAPTER VII ; RELIGIONS TOLERANCE ; VIVEKANANDA AND GANDHI	
7.1 THE NEED FOR RELIGIONS TOLERANCE	... 312
7.2 ATTITUDE TO OTHER RELIGIONS	... 329
REFERENCES	... 343

		Page
8. CHAPTER VIII		
8.1 CONCLUSION	...	... 347
REFERENCES	...	... 400
BIBLIOGRAPHY	...	... 404

(Chapter references have been shown at the end of each Chapter)

## PREFACE

The area of research project contained in the present dissertation is by no means an untrodden field of investigations particularly to those who are familiar with the philosophical and religious tradition of India. Hence, I had to proceed cautiously to touch upon the subject which has been touched by many scholars of India. Yet I must admit that I had some weakness and fascination for the subject and consequently stick to it knowing fully well the intricacy of the subject which involves risk and responsibility. As a student of Philosophy I prepared a scheme of work which would entail the philosophical and religious approach to understand the idea of religions tolerance of two great souls of India - Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi keeping in view the necessity for it under present day context.

The main emphasis on this thesis on their religious tolerance requires further interpretation and assessment. They interpreted their ideals in terms of spiritualism. They interpreted history in terms of spiritualism. Their ideal of quality stands for gradual growth and wellbeing of the individual. Their philosophical and religious views on politics, economics, culture etc. are all based on spiritualism. This is

because of the fact that both Vivekananda and Gandhi were the ardent devotees of tradition of the spirit of tolerance which is inherent in the very root of the religico-philosophical tradition of India. Being imbibed with this tradition they appealed to the people of the world and particularly India to realise the true spirit of religion to rise above all kinds of religious dogmas which disturb the communal harmony. They realised well that to ensure peaceful co-existence of all living beings on earth it is necessary to cultivate the spirit of religious tolerance. They wanted to remind the people of the world that religion must be the guiding principles of lives. They believed religion is the foundation of human life and principle of growth and wellbeing. So the people of the world should insist on following the track of religion. Having been influenced by the Vedas, the Bhagavad-Gita, the vedanta together with the other philosophical and religious systems of all over the world tried to realise the dream of human race - harmony of nations and ideal world. They emphasised on the point that only by establishing a spiritual bond we can dream of an ideal world where human aspirations get all round fulfilment. Referring to India they appealed to the Indian people that India being a land of religion so it is the task of Indian civilisation to overflow and flood the world with

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spirituality to bring in a new life to the world with this end in view both Vivekananda and Gandhi advised the Indian people to shed fear, destroy castism and raise the down trodden so that Indian people can become the torch bearer. Hence, they delivered the message of unity and equality and spoke of dignity and supremacy of human spirit which were not confined to time and place.

Both Vivekananda and Gandhi were religious by nature and they proved this by virtue of their messages and activities. They were activists and as a result they succeeded in turning the eyes of the whole world towards the land of India for spiritual food. Among the characteristics of the Indian religious-philosophical tradition the tradition tolerance and spirit of acceptance appealed most to both of them. So according to them if religion is a binding force among mankind, each and everyone irrespective of any caste, creed or religion should pay equal respect for all other religions and should be tolerant to each other. It is religion alone which can bind together the hearts of all people and thereby prepare the ground for universal love and brotherhood.

The present day world is passing through a difficult situation arising out of materialistic civilisation leaving little scope for spirituality. The world has been leading to

soul-less society threatening the existence of human races. The ugly heads of egotism, fanaticism, racialism, provincialism, cessationism etc. are raising up their ugly heads in order to serve vested political interest and hence, tending towards the destruction of human civilisation. And hence, if human race decides itself to go on living peacefully the people of the world must have to change it's way of living, thinking, feeling and behaving. And this will be possible only when mankind will learn to submit itself to the spirit and practises the true spirit of religion. People must realise the 'oneness' of humanity as Vivekananda and Gandhi realised. They must learn to respect man recognising the divinity in man.

Vivekananda and Gandhi realised that intolerance is the root of all social and political discontents. And a day is not far when the entire human race will have to face dangerous catastrophe provided their minds and hearts are not replenished with the spirit of tolerance. And here comes the relevance of the teachings of Vivekananda and Gandhi to save the present day world from all kinds of social and political discontents. Hence, the very aim of this work is to instill that spirit of tolerance cherished by Vivekanda and Gandhi in the minds of the people so that they may be able to cultivate that spirit

of tolerance for promoting better understanding and mutual respect for one another belonging to various religious faiths existing in the world. The teachings of Vivekananda and Gandhi is all the more important for India which is a world in moniative inhabited by various religious groups for peaceful co-existence which I deem to be the crying need of the day to come.

The chapter scheme of the study may now be indicated.

In introductory Chapter I describes the over all situation prevailing in India as well as the world at the time of Vivekananda and Gandhi to show how they tried to solve the crisis following the ideal of tolerance inconsistency with the religio-philosophical tradition of tolerance and succeeded in their attempt.

Chapter II provides with the definition of religion in general and Hinduism in partials with it's various doctrines, the meaning of the word tolerance in Eastern and Western sense together with the role of the study of comparative religion in promoting the spirit of religious tolerance all over the world, over and above all these, the philosophical and religious background of Vivekananda and Gandhi that made them religious tolerant has been inserted.

Chapter III provides the discussion on the reformativ  
 practical and dynamic interpretation of Vivekananda's ideas  
 of religion together with the vedantic ideas of Brahman,  
 Isvara, Maya, Man, universe and Moksa etc. that turned him  
 religiously tolerant. His idea of Humanism is also touched upon  
 for his religion was man-making religion in relation to society.

Chapter IV describes the Gandhi's idea of religion, his  
 concept of God, world, Man Moksa Humanism etc. to show his  
 creative genius for reinterpretation of certain religious  
 ideas that turned him into a practical idealist to practise  
 religion for the wellbeing of humanity cultivating the spirit  
 of tolerance.

Chapter V provides the topics that deal with the relation  
 between religion and self realisation for the goal of all  
relations is self realisation together with the four paths  
 recognised by Vivekananda like Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, Jaga to  
 self realisation and the interrelation of these paths and  
 Gandhiji's concept of truthfulness, Satyagraha and non-violence  
 as the mean for self realisation and their social significance.

Chapter VI describes a brief account of the origin and  
 development of diversity of religions for the question of  
 religious tolerance comes owing to the existence of the diversity

of religions. Over and above this it also provides the attitude of Vivekananda and Gandhi towards other religions. The essential unity of all religions has also been dealt with in order to show that the fundamental teachings of all religions are the same though they differ in regard to certain superficial elements owing to the variation of geographical, cultural and linguistic aspects. Hence, the need for religious tolerance, for which Vivekananda and Gandhi stressed and became religious tolerant. And the importance of spirit of tolerance is all the more for the present as the world is passing under the crisis of civilisation. Therefore, a brief discussion on the need for religious tolerance has been made in order to show it's practical necessity.

In Chapter VII a comparative study of both Vivekananda and Gandhi has been made in relation to their ideas of religious tolerance and it's implication on social and political problems.

In concluding Chapter the various ideas of the thesis has been placed together and presented in a brief form. And the relevance of the teachings of Vivekananda and Gandhi have also been emphasised which I deem to be very important under present day world context.

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In the pursuit of the present study no particular model has been adhered to. Materials have been collected mainly from the books and periodicals (news papers) etc. The approach to the study is philosophical, (religious), analytical and critical in relation to man and society.

Krishna Kinkar Mahanta.

Date: 29.3.76.

( Krishna Kinkar Mahanta )

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take the opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to Sri Girish Sarma, M.A. Ph.D., Reader of Philosophy, Gauhati University for his learned guidance and supervision of my work. The present thesis would not have seen the light of the day but for the opportunity given to me to work with Reader Sarma.

I also express my sincere gratefulness to my revered teacher Sri Dilip Kumar Chakravarty, Professor of Philosophy, Gauhati University and all other Professors, Readers and Lecturers of the Philosophy Department, Gauhati University for their help and inspiration to undertake this work.

I am grateful to Principal S.N. Das, of our College, who was kind enough to provide me with necessary help and encouragement throughout the period of my work.

My thanks are also due to my friends, Prof. Mrs. Prantia Sarma, Head, Department of Philosophy, Bajali College, Prof. P.K. Khataniar, Prof. R.K. Das my colleagues, my friends Dr. Daityari Das and Sauravpran Goswami, my students Miss Manisha Kalita (Naina) and Arun Sutradhar for their kind help and interest in my work, My wife Manju Mahanta was a constant source of inspiration to me in all my labour.

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Lastly, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my sincere thanks to Sri B. Roychoudhury who helped me with the typing of this thesis straight from the manuscript within a record time.

Date: 29-3-96.

JKrishna Kinkar Mahanta.  
( Krishna Kinkar Mahanta )

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

1.1. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi are the legendry figures in the great lines of sages and heroes and wise-men in the annals of India. These two spiritual giants were born when India was passing through a critical period. The first Indian struggle for political independence (namely, Sepoy Mutiny) from British subjugation took place just before some years before these two great souls were born. In that struggle India had to suffer defeat and consequently Indian people were suffering from mental agony finding no other way out to make India free from the colonisation of the Britishers. In the meantime some good souls tried to analyse the cause for the deplorable condition of the people of India that India had to suffer set back not only politically but also in other disciplines like religions, philosophical, economic social etc; Some people agreed that one of the important causes was the moral degradation of the Indian people and, as a result, India could never be made free from the political subjugation until and unless spiritual regeneration is brought about in the minds of the people. They must be made alive to the rich religio-philosophical and cultural heritage of India. Indians could

be united to fight against colonisation only when they could be made strong both morally and spiritually. So due to some untiring effort of some spiritual thinkers some religious institutions sprang up. But these organisations helped a little in order to reach the desired goal. Due to influence of western education and culture many Indians started neglecting their rich ethnic religion and culture and many converted into christianity. So it was a crying need of Indian people to save the honour of their motherland and re-assert their lost rich religio-philosophical foundation. With this end in view some thinkers felt the necessity for re-interpreting the religious thoughts which would help in solving the practical problems of life in accordance with the needs of the day. While this humble attempt was going on by this time two spiritual giants, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi emerged in the Indian soil, one succeeding the other. These two souls were pregnant with vast amount of knowledge from the religious scriptures of the major religions of the world. With the knowledge of Indian philosophy like Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Advaita Vedanta and other philosophical systems of India they could realise the true spirit and richness of Indian religion and culture. These two spiritual giants succeeded in making Indian people to believe that India is a land of religion. Religion is the

part and parcel of Indian life and also made impressions on them that all their problems could be solved if they cling to their own religion with honour and sincerity. They succeeded in raising the position of Indian philosophy and religion in such an altitude Indians could not but believe the superiority of the Indian religion and culture. In accomplishing all these, these two great souls had to renew the ancient Indian religio-philosophical concepts into concrete form in their own way so that religion could be made suitable for solving the problems of every walk of life. Both of them established religion on the sound footing of reason and scientific outlook.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi realised that the task of religion is to renew contact with indispensable essence of religion. The essential truth and means of salvation which religion offers need to be expressed in terms that convey effectively to each successive generations. They also understood that if religion was to help in life, people can never afford to neglect the task of distinguishing the contingent and outward expression of it's unchanging essence and they must be ready to bring revolutionary changes in the traditional expression. This was a difficult task no doubt, but these two thinkers succeeded

in accomplishing the job.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi defined the lines of India's growth, the path for her great rejuvenation. It is the way of rejuvenating the people of the world and India in particular by the Vedantic idea of divinity in all men and women. Being imbued with the Vedantic idea of one'ness these two thinkers found the way of harmony of faiths and creeds. They had vision of an India may the world, unified by a flood of spirituality.

Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi affirmed that the eternal was to be realised in this earth itself. According to them love is fundamental to religion. Hence, they tried to bring about a revolution in religion through the medium of this life by transforming it, by changing it over. In order to ensure strong and stable unity, the ideals require to be strengthened. In the work of rebuilding human house religion plays a significant role. And for this reason both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi strongly advocated for preaching the gospel of universal religion - a religion which by no means sectorial religion but religion which is acceptable by all people of the world for all time to come. This religion knows no sectarian religion, no creed, race or geographical

boundary. Swami Vivekananda asserted that religion is not merely a concept but a reality. Universal religion is here and now. All other religions are small 'r', universal Religion is reality, the Religion beyond all religions. All religions are different expressions of this Religion - and these expressions are essentially neither contradictory nor antagonistic to one another. Universal Religion is, therefore, the summation, the sum total of all religions of the world. It is not a new religion but the co-existence of all religions with a spirit of give and take about it. A proper understanding of the relation between the eternal religion and its expressions is the crying need. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi successfully succeeded in holding before the world that various religions were nothing but so many attempts of human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite. But each religion is determined by the condition of its birth and geographical position and each of these marks a stage of progress.

According to both these thinkers religion itself, a complex phenomenon essentially combined with cultural, social, linguistic and political factors. Hence, it was the aim of them to teach the world that all human problems must be solved through the understanding of the true spirit of religion. That

was the reason why they launched their political, social and economic activities on religions background. Apart from this they re-asserted the idea imbibed with the spiritual tradition that mere recognition of the good paths of other religions is not enough. Recognition must be followed by acceptance. They also warned that in assimilating the ideals of other religions each man should try to preserve one's own individuality. He needs a proper understanding of the spirit of one's own religion as well as that of others. He must make conscious effort to see the thread connecting all religious forming as if, a beautiful garland adoring the Supreme Being who is neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim, nor a Buddhist. All belong to Him but He transcends all. The Religion beyond all religious provides man with open air of freedom through which a religious man loves all and hates none. The view of 'Advaita' or 'Oneness' of humanity was the real teachings of both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi.

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But it is to be noted that these two sacred souls of India were not satisfied with teaching theoretical religion in words but they also practised the true spirit of religion in their every walk of life and dedicated their lives for the sake of betterment of the entire human race.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi emphasised that it was the task of Indian civilisation to overflow and flood the world with spirituality to bring a new life to the world. With this end in view they advised the people of India to shed fear, destroy castism and raise the down-trodden so that Indian people can become the torch bearer for showing new light of spirituality to the people of the world. They delivered the message of unity and equality and spoke of dignity of labour and consequently they succeeded in turning the eyes of the people of the whole world towards India for spiritual needs. The inspiring lectures delivered by Swami Vivekananda both in India and abroad, could exert influences over the people of the world and thereby he succeeded in asserting the supremacy of Indian religion and thereby he helped India to get rid of Western influences. Mahatma Gandhi also imbibed with the age-old teachings of Ahimsa as found in sacred books of India, successfully launched movement uniting the people of the land with a view gain political independence. Gandhi proved to the world that Ahimsā is such a spiritual force following which man can do even the impossible. He directed his political activities in the background of religion. Among contemporary leaders of the people Mahatma Gandhi stood alone in the eminence and uniqueness. He is a unique leader who practised what he

preached and gave out to the people what he tested in his own life. It is a fact that political freedom of India was one of his chief interests but he also worked for instilling the spirit of spirituality in the minds of the Indian people and worked for the upliftment of their material prosperity for he realised that a hungry belly could think of no-God, religious ideals were meaningless to him. His ideal of 'Swaraj' was outwardly a political slogan but inwardly a spiritual ideal. He endeavoured to the nation the religion of divine love and human services.

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Swami Vivekananda was a patriot saint. He did not involve himself directly in Indian struggle for political independence; but he was a tremendous source of inspiration for the freedom fighters. His inspiring speeches brought about firy national spirit to the youths and consequently revolting groups swelled in numbers. Swami Vivekananda realised very well that if India was awakened to the realisation of unity, call of integrity, strength and selfishness political independence was sure to come; and all these works Swami Vivekananda tried to accomplish in his life time. His object was to produce 'man' in the real sense of the term so that they would be able to attain political freedom and also preserve it. He was the first man in the world

who gave to the west the Vedanta philosophy of essential divinity of life in their own language of reason and science and thereby he gained the ground for asserting the supremacy of philosophy and religion of India. His opening address to the World-parliament of Religions held at Chicago was an ovation to the eternal Indian spirit of fraternity and tolerance. According to Vivekananda harmony, not dissention was the spirit of religion. Swami Vivekananda found out the essentials of Hinduism from it's non-essentials and preached the Universal Religion. He was a practical idealist through and through. His spirit of humanism knows no bounds. He was not interested in framing any theoretical religion but a human religion which can be put to maintain unity and solidarity of the human race for it's onward march to eternal freedom.

Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi proved to the world that the spirit of tolerance is the very root of religio-philosophical tradition of India. Being the ardent devotee of this age-old tradition of India they appealed to the people of India and the people world over to rise above all sorts of narrowness of religions dogmas that jeopardise the communal harmony and hence asked the people to cultivate the spirit of tolerance in order to ensure peaceful co-existence of all

living beings on this earth. These two great souls of India reminded the people that religion should be one and sole interest in them. According to both of them religion is the foundation of their life, principle of growth and well-being.

The attitude of tolerance to other religions appealed to both of them. If religion is a binding force among mankind each and everyone irrespective of any caste, creed or religion, should pay equal respect for all other religions and should be tolerant to one another. It is religious tolerance which can bind together the hearts of all people and thereby prepare the ground for the universal love and brotherhood.

Self-perfection is the aim of religion, but until this aim gains ground of society as a whole, the world is not safe for civilization and humanity. The religious soul must seek for divine fulfilment. In order to become a fit member of this kingdom of humanity one must cultivate the spirit of tolerance. Brotherhood of all men irrespective of any race, caste, religion or nationality should be the ideal of each individual being. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi imbibed with the Indian tradition of tolerance was even ready to sacrifice India herself at the alter not of freedom, but of truth. Both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi actively followed the cordial

virtues of life and as a result their patriotism was a prelude to internationalism.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi pre-concieved the impending danger human race is facing and hence they suggested the ways and means for overcoming the worst fate of human race. Apart from this, in modern times the connection of war with science has grown gradually more and more intimate. The neuclear weapons possessed by certain countries have caused new fear regarding the destiny of mankind. Even the eminent scientist Einstein feared that there was a danger of extinction of all lives in the planet. Over and above presently the world is chased by some disrupting elements like racialism, fetishism, begotism, communalism, fanaticism etc; To express in the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishan - "We are at a critical period not only in the history of our country but in the history of the world. There are many people who think we are at the abyso. There is distortion of values, there is lowering of standards, there is wide spread escapism, a good deal of hysteria and people think of it and collapse in despair, frustration, helplessness. Such a kind of lack of faith in the spirit of man is a treason to the dignity of man. It is a insult to the human nature. It is the human nature to be brought about all the great changes that have taken place in the world".<sup>1</sup>

India is a world in miniature where people belonging to all religions live. This is one of the reasons why our country has been following the ideal of secularism. The constitution of India has provided equal rights to all persons in order to practise their own religion without any interruption from outside. Yet some narrow minded men are trying to disrupt the communal or religious harmony of the country. As a result some strary communal riots sometime raise their ugly heads and thereby disturb the peaceful co-existence of the people. Hence, if human race decides itself to go on living peacefully they must have to make change in it's way of thinking, feeling and behaving. Mankind will have to learn to control their passions realising the true spirit of religion or in other words they must be tolerant. Mankind must submit itself to spirit. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi realised the worst catastrophe that may follow owing to religious intolerance. Their mission was to ensure to make one end of all sorts of evil practices done in the name of religion.

Hence, it has become the crying need of the day to instill the spirit of tolerance in the minds of the people following the ideals shown by Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi to save India, nay the world, from the evil consequences of intolerance and pave the way for harmonious peaceful co-existence. And in

this regard the relevance of the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi are of immense importance because Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi not only paid equal respect for all religions but also dedicated their lives with an end in view to ensure essential unity of mankind. Their lives were the embodiments of religious tolerance, universal love and brotherhood.

As both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi had significant and towering personality, so it is not possible to throw light on all the teachings of these two sacred souls of India. If it is asked what they gave to the people of India and the world, an equally counter question may be put what they did not give to the world. So in this dissertation an attempt has been made to look into only a single aspect, namely, religions tolerance. For better understanding of this aspect it is necessary to understand religion in general and Hinduism in particular. A discussion on religion and Hinduism in particular with it's various doctrines have been worked out to highlight their views on religions tolerance. Over and above, discussion has been made on their religious background, their altitude to other religions also. For a better understanding of the concept of tolerance, the conceptual framework of their religions philosophy is also worked out. In addition to all these an

attempt has been made to discuss the diversity of religions, essential unity of all religions. A simple examination has also been made if there is any prospect for the establishment of Universal Religion as cherished by both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Together with all these a humble attempt has been made if they succeeded in removing the misconception on religious issues from the mind of the people as a whole. Further the relevance of their teaching is also examined in the context of the problems faced by the present day world.

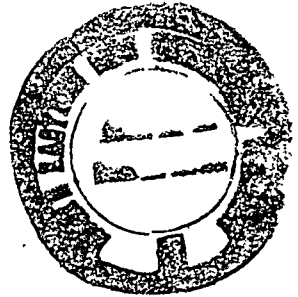
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## CHAPTER II

### 2.1 CONCEPT OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE :

Every attempt to define religion will be as futile as an act of throwing a handful of sugar into the ocean with a view to making it sweet because the word 'religion' can be used in several senses. Religion is growing, dynamic and personal affair. Religion is something which is to be realised and experienced. From (in) time immemorial religious thinkers have been trying to define religion. But there are few definitions of religion which throw light on all the important aspects of religion. To be precise "Religion is a growth which is perennial and its evolution has gone on obeying the primary laws of human progress. As religion is still in the process of growing and until the growth is complete, an adequate definition can not be found".<sup>1</sup>

Etymologically the word 'religion' has come from the latin word 'Religionis', 'Re' means 'back' and 'ligere' means 'to bind'. So religion is a principle of unification and harmonisation.

*Religious meaning.*

Western minds are largely theistic in it's approach to religion. They usually regard religion as ~~some~~ some form of theism. In defining religion theologicians accepted the view of Flint according to whom anything more than theism is not possible and anything less than theism is no religion at all. Following the footprints of Flint William James also remarked - "Anything short of God is not rational, anything more than God is not possible"<sup>2</sup> Galloway defined religion thus "Man's faith in a power beyond itself wherein he seeks to satisfy the emotional needs and gains stability in life and which he expresses in acts of worship and service".<sup>3</sup> Galloway's definition of religion is applicable to theism as it gives stress on faith in a power beyond man as the essential feature of religion. With the same spirit Schleiermacher also defined religion as feeling of absolute dependence.

Some theologicians do not accept the view that religion involves an element of feeling. But by 'feeling' Galloway meant 'emotional satisfaction' and feeling of stability or security which was greatly emphasised by Freud. In Freud's own words - "..... a belief in God subserves the purpose of giving us a feeling of security in the face of helplessness caused by the pitiless and dark workings of fellow men .....".<sup>4</sup> Jung

also maintained that "Religion gives us peace and pistis".<sup>5</sup> The concept of 'Sthitaprajna' or 'Nirvāna' that we find in Indian philosophy is also a state of stability where a man remains unmoved by the vicissitudes of life. In this respect Y. Masiah remarks - "..... This is what Stoics, Epicureans and Spinoza emphasised as the ripened fruits<sup>of</sup> wisdom. In theism this state may assume the form of creatureliness or a state of being abased ..... before one's creator or simply that feeling of being an unclean before the sacredness of God. In current literature this state is being talked as pure subjectivity, inwardness or state of commitment".<sup>6</sup>

Galloway also regards religion as the response of the wholeman involving his intellect, feeling and will. Religion can not be a matter of 'faith' or 'belief' for the concept of faith is difficult to clarify. Most theologians will concede this definition for it does not imply some sort of cognition by adding the view that a fully understood God is not God at all. Man must be capable of realising this much that such a 'Being' is worthy of worship. This kind of knowledge might be insignificant and might be intermixed with other elements like feeling and will. A religious man requires only this much assurance that the power beyond man is an actual entity.

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That religion involves conative element is testified by the observance of taboos, taking part in magico-religious dances etc. in the primitive forms of religion and in the form of hymn singing, fast, rituals etc. in more organised religion. With the deepening of ethical consciousness, social acts of charity, of alleviating human suffering, sympathy etc. are also religious provided they are taken as the divine commands. For this reason James Martineau, Mathew Arnold, Braithwaite etc; were of opinion that religion is a matter of morality. Religious acts are ethical in so far as these observations pertain to theistic religion exclusively. But it is a fact that there are certain religious acts which are mostly ritual without any moral principle involved in them. Here also we must agree with Galloway that religion does not consist in acts of worship and social services. Though it has been conceded by majority of thinkers of the West that religion is a matter of wholeman and this has been asserted by Galloway in his definition yet his definition would not suffice us.

In India there are certain systems like Hinayāna form of Buddhism, Orthodox kind of Jainism, Sankara's non-dualistic Vedānta where there is no room for a power beyond man or ever-living God. If Galloway's definition is accepted then these

systems can not be entered into the fold of religion. The western religions thinkers in defining religion exclude Buddhism or Jainism as the form of religion rather they are treated as form of ethical systems and Sankara's Vedanta either as super-religion or a philosophical speculation. This misconception arises owing to the fact that both Jainism and Buddhism do include much that is ethical. But it is to be noted that their ethics remain subordinate to their spiritual aim. As both of them emphasise the spiritual goal as the real end of life and it's activities, they must be regarded as religion because of their spiritual culture.

According to James Martineau - "Religion is the belief in an everlasting living God that is, in a divine mind and will ruling the universe and holding moral relation with mankind".<sup>7</sup>

Herbert Spencer defines religion thus - "Religion is the recognition that all things are manifestation of a power which transcends our knowledge".<sup>8</sup>

J. B. Frazer understands religion as - "A propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life".<sup>9</sup>

For Bradley - "Religion is rather an attempt to express the complete Reality of goodness through aspect of our being".<sup>10</sup>

According to Mathew Arnold - "Religion is ethics and heightened, enkindled lit up by feeling".<sup>11</sup>

Reading between the lines of the above quoted definitions we find that not a single definition is sufficient enough to explain all the necessary elements of religion. They stress only on one aspect or another excluding the other aspect of religion. For example, Martineau has failed to recognise certain poly-theistic religions. Similarly Bradley and Arnold have identified religion with morality. They believe that moral consciousness has an autonomy of its own and religion springs out morality and in the nature of our moral consciousness there is direct evidence for the existence of super human personality. But this theory does not appear to be quite reasonable as it is not applicable in the case of primary societies where there was no real connection between the ritual system with its associated beliefs in super-natural beings and moral code.

As no satisfactory definition of religion is possible we must remain satisfied with certain elementary definitions. "A survey of the numerous definitions would be more informing

than any new one that might be proposed".<sup>12</sup> Because these definitions themselves are valuable contribution to man's conceptions of what religion was, is or should be.

That there are many religions in the world is a fact. "In every religion there are certain precious grains and we must draw in every religion the broad distinctions between what is essential and what is not, between the eternal and the ephemeral, between human and divine and the non-essential fill the volumes, the essential can be comprehended in a very few words. Every religion has some mission to fulfill and nothing can thwart it's aim and annihilate it's purpose. In order that religion may be perennial living force, one should esteem all the different creeds, doctrines and theories and realise that they are like so many radii proceeding towards the same centre".<sup>13</sup>

If the above view is accepted then surely we are in a position to describe (not define) religion by assimilating all the essential ideas of religion. Religion is "individual's aspirations for the realisation of an ideal intuitively felt. An analysis of the intuitive feeling would reveal that this is just another name for numinous elements in our religious consciousness ..... It can be further shown that this is non-

Single note

rational counterpart of our idea of the Infinite. This idea of the Infinite comprehends everything, thus creating in the individual a sense of his unity of oneness with all. It is this, that acts as a binding force among all and probably is as the basis of many of our higher social and political institutions".<sup>14</sup>

(What does it mean?)

Man is a finite-infinite being. He is never satisfied with what he gets through ordinary experience in this mundane world. There is an 'innerary' which impels him to move onwards and to find out the means to achieve his goal i.e. realisation of God in himself. "Thus religious ideas and practices are consequences of this religious consciousness ..... religious consciousness is prior to religious ideas and practices".<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact all the religious ideas, moral ideas can be traced back to religious consciousness indicating the primacy of religious consciousness. The consciousness of the numinous which Otto has happily described as - 'Mysterious tremendum fascinans'. To be precise - "the subject of religion involves the problems of personality and existence and deeper vicissitudes of life and thought".<sup>16</sup>

In defining religion it has been found that religion is perennial and dynamic in character. Religion is native to human

mind, integral to human nature. Every other things may disappear but belief in God is ultimate faith of world religions. If religion is taken to be dynamic then it is bound to change with the change of world order and altitude of human beings towards their lives. It also can not be denied that religion plays an important part in different aspects of life like individual, social and cultural etc. As religion is a movement, a growth and in all true growth the new rests on the old. If we are not satisfied with the present form of religion we must expect a better one which might satisfy the parrenial inner urge of man. The most impressive phenomenon of our time is the growing unification of the world. With the development of science and technology a natural tendency has grown up in the minds of the people that scientific application, economic alliances, political institutions are the means by which this unification can be accomplished. It can not be denied that these may bring the world outwardly. But for a subtle unity, the invisible but deeper bond of ideas, the ideals require to be strengthened. In the work of rebuilding the human house-hold the importance of religion is by no means less important than that of science. True religion, however, consists in affirming that life eternal

is to be realised on this earth itself. Love of man is fundamental to religion as worship of God. The human beings must search for revolution through the medium of life transforming it, changing it over. But how this is to be brought about in the face of the existence of divergent religions of the world, in a state of affairs where each religion claims it's superiority over any other religion leading to fanaticism, bigotry, communal violence etc. as are seen in the world. And here the importance of tolerance steps in. The best way to overcome disharmony and ensure peaceful co-existence is to be tolerant in religious matters. But mere recognition of the good points of other religions is not enough. Recognition must be followed by acceptance. A religious man must learn to integrate the good points of other religions into his own religious life. In other words he must be tolerant to other religions.

Ordinarily the meaning of tolerance "is willingness to bear with others especially with those whose views differ from one's own; or the act of non-interference with the religions doctrine or practices not wholly approved. From the legal and doctrinal application it has limited signification." It connotes a refraining from prohibition and persecution.

Toleration suggests a latent disapproval and refers to a condition in which the freedom which it permits is both limited and conditional<sup>17</sup>. Toleration, however, must not be equated with religious liberty and it falls far short of religious equality. It assumes the existence of an authority which must have been coercive; but which for reasons of its own is not pushed to extremes. Again, the word 'toleration' implies voluntary in action and polite leniency. There are various motives that impel a man to adopt the policy of toleration. A man may become tolerant owing to his weakness or when he fails to enforce prohibitory measure on others. Mere desire to secure pacification by concession also impels a man to be tolerant or when a man attains the wisdom to perceive the futility of force for remedy then also he may adopt the policy of toleration. The intellectual breadth, humility etc. also make a man tolerant. So these are the various meanings that the word tolerance connotes.

Henry Kamen defined toleration - "as the concession of liberty to those who dissent in religion. It can be seen as part in history which has led to a gradual development of the principle of human freedom<sup>18</sup>". But he is of opinion that this development has by no means regular. Lord Acton, the great

English historian, also opined that toleration has pursued not a linear but a cyclic development suffering periodic and prolonged reverses.

*It should be in his book*

According to Katherine Moore - "Tolerance is the spirit of respect for personality, the social value of values".<sup>19</sup> He, however, used the word 'respect' in a different sense. To him respect does not mean to be an act of admiring or fearing dutifully obeying or regarding as good or recognising as superior character or intellect or station. Respect also does not consist in assimilating sum of all these attitudes combined in various proportions. And personality also does not mean certain selected personalities. He also says that - "when we say that we respect personality we mean that we recognise in every human being, and to a certain extent in everything something special, particular concrete individual uniqueness. Respect for personality recognises the essential spiritual quality of all human beings including ourselves and perhaps every living being".<sup>20</sup> According to him the real test of respect is our attitude towards people whom we do not like or respect and to all of whom we think of as enemies or criminals or sinners. In replying to the question why we should respect personality as such he answers that - one of the obvious reasons is 'panteism' and the other owing to various systems of the Eastern wisdom and Western philosophy.

These two answers though appear to be mutually exclusive to the people trained in European tradition but really they are not. These two may ordinarily be called the religions and the non-religions.

That God created all men in His own image, that God is the Father of all men and that all men are therefore brothers, these three interrelated religious thought demand respect for a personality. A non-religious man answers differently when asked why he respects personality. He recognises it with a sense of necessity or inevitability independent of logical process, his own uniqueness, his own being in his own right. He recognises in his an inner citadal that must be forever inviolated. And because he recognises that he understands by imaginative sympathy that what is true of him is true to others, that every human being is unique and has a citadal which is sacred and that he must imperatively respect in others. What he knows from the nature of his own being must be respected by him.

In this connection it is to be noted that according to Kamen liberation in religion is not the same thing as tolerance. But from historical perspective it was a ~~pre~~-requisite and has a immense importance in helping us to arrive at a idea of the

often vague concept of tolerance.

Pester King regards toleration as a problem of human relation. According to him - "to tolerate generally means to endure, to suffer or put up with a person activity, idea or organisation of which or whom one does not really approve"<sup>21</sup> Generally tolerance involves some kind of 'acceptance' of an item to which we aim at because of the reason that it pre-concieves a power to act out of objectives. In this respect toleration is a particular kind of liberty.

Liberty is a general concept socially protected to perform or not to perform in certain ways. A right is primarily a moral claim (it may be legally certified) and the aim of it is positive good which should not or must not be secured. To him - "Tolerance is a liberty wherein one is empowered to act or forbear and the object of liberty is viewed negatively, although not acted against. Tolerance by the same token, is not itself a right taken as such prove an object of tolerance. Not all liberties whether we label them rights are tolerances, any moral claim to continue in being"<sup>22</sup> Liberty is a general capacity to act or forbear. Tolerance pre-supposes such a capacity and is thus a liberty, but it only specifically obtains where a negative act genuinely indicated by a negative motive

(the object) is for some reasons voluntarily suspended.

Having discussed a few definition on tolerance given by certain western thinkers it is clear that while certain thinkers attach morality or spiritual element in it, others regard tolerance to be entirely social and political phenomenon. But tolerance in whatever forms it may be, plays an important role for the happiness and wel-being of the human race. And in this connection the view of Richard Living stone is worth quoting - "Tolerance has always been need for the happiness and welbeing of the human race. To -day it is needed for survival ..... the forces of intolerance varies from age to age. Today racial bitterness has largely replaced religious tolerance, but the spirit of tolerance remains the same and in that sense nothing here is out of date".<sup>23</sup>

If we take into account a few phases of historical development it is found that a few centuries ago there was no such thing as religions tolerance in the West. Religious tolerance was unthinkable to them and as a result various Crusades took place. For example, the Muslims believed the Christians to be heretic, similarly Christians did the same in return. And consequently both the Christians and the Muslims

decided to put to others to the sword resulting in the death of thousands of people. Hence, although there was no religious tolerance two or three centuries ago, there is to-day religious tolerance. Apart from liberation various means have been adopted to make progress in this respect. Modernisation of Roman Catholic countries, spreading of Christian charity and culture, knowledge of history, scientific method of criticism, study of comparative religion, softening of manners by scepticism and by religious indifferences - all these are practised now to cool down the odour of the persecuting spirit and so to establish toleration.

Coming to Indian perspective it may be said that toleration is a religious concept, not political or social phenomenon. Y. Masiah holds - "Toleration means restraining from persecuting the followers of religion, other than it's own".<sup>24</sup> The spirit of toleration is integral to Indian life. This is because of the fact that the tradition of India is intensely spiritual in character. Toleration in India, is not an ideal, but a reality. The spirit of tolerance has been practised right from the time of Vedas to the present. The detail discussion on it, is however, kept reserved for subsequent discussion.

## 2.2 "HINDU VIEW OF RELIGION" ;

In the previous paragraphs we have given a rough idea of the general nature of religion and the meaning of tolerance. We are now in a position to examine the Hindu view of religion.

The word Hindu is most likely of Persian origin and is not found in any of the religions books. The trace of the origin of the word 'Hindu' carries us back both to the invasion of the peninsula by the Aryan tribes from the North to the North-East. The Aryans used the word 'Smohu' in order to name the great river 'Indus' of the west. Of course, the Vedic literature used the term 'Sindhu' as appalative noun for river in general through out Indian history. So it is quite possible that the word 'Indus' or 'Sindhu'. A common term for the Aryans settlements in the Punjab was "the seven rivers (Sapta-Sandhava) the name Hindu appears in the form of 'Hindus' in the inscriptions of the monuments of Darins Hystopas near Persepolis (486 B.C.)".<sup>25</sup>

Again, under the title Hinduism is included diverse classes, views, beliefs, rituals, modes of life". There was no religion called Hinduism just as there were no Indians belonging to the same race or nationality regardless of their being inhabitants of America, the East-Indies, West-Indies

or India ....<sup>26</sup>

Hence, it is difficult to define Hinduism. Some recent writers have defined 'Hindu' as - "All natives of India who do not belong to unsalman, Jaina, Buddhist, Christian, Persi, Jew and other known religions of the world and whose form of worship extends from monothemism to fetishism and whose theology is written in Samskrit language".<sup>27</sup> But this definition is not satisfactory for, it ignores the fact that Hinduism is not a religion in the sense of the word as understood by western thinkers. An Indian thinkers observes Hinduism thus - "Hinduism is that a Hindu does, in other words, it is a question of ritualistic and social observance".<sup>27</sup> Hinduism is a everchanging society which may expand and take in races and peoples irrespective of their religions beliefs. What societies it will absorb depends entirely on the circumstances".<sup>28</sup>

From the above it becomes clear that the word 'Hindu' had only a territorial significance. It only implied residence in a particular geographical area. Naturally all the people like aboriginal tribes, savages, half-civilised people, the cultured Dravidians and the vedic Aryans were all Hindus as

they were the sons of the same mother. Hinduism came into existence due to subtle unification of the different masses by a bond of spiritual thought and realisation. It is a collocation of name for a variety of beliefs born in India inclusive of Buddhism and Jainism.

Some Western thinkers, however, used the word 'religion' and 'Dharma' synonymously, but it is not true. In India the word 'Dharma' is pregnant with deep rooted significance connecting several senses. This concept is unique to Indian culture and philosophy.

Etymologically the word 'Dharma' is derived from the sanskrit root 'Dhr' (means to support). It is the all supporting principle making for integrity and harmony in every context. It is also described as established order, usage, institution, custom, rules, dignity, virtue, moral spirit, right, justice, law etc. According to Manu - "The whole Veda is (first) source of sacred laws, next the traditions and the virtues, conduct of those who know (veda-further) as the customs of holy men and finally self-satisfaction".<sup>29</sup> Dharma as duty as duty is the obligation on the part of every individual towards other members of the society in which he is placed without any attachment to it's fruits. Dharma as virtue is universal and

eternal. It means individual's will to cultivate a number of virtues such as Ahimsā, Kṣhamā etc; as prescribed by the Indian thinkers.

Thus there is a difference between Hindu-conception of Dharma and European conception of religion. Hindu is a definite body and Hindu-dharma is an indefinite thing which the Hindus consider as their Dharma. Indian commentators have explained it as - "denoting an act which produces the quality of the soul called 'Apuṛva', the cause of heavenly bliss and final liberation".<sup>30</sup>

Monier Williams, on the other hand, defines 'Dharma' as - "a particular body of traditional doctrines handed down through succession of teachers and also designated 'Darshana' or 'Mata' - that is particular views or opinions on religion or philosophy".<sup>31</sup> But careful study of the Hindu religion reveals that the word 'Mata' for religion can not be used. Mata means opinions, doctrines, theories, views etc; Monier William committed mistake in identifying 'Mata' for religion. The Indians regard 'Dharma' as a theory of Reality guiding our life according to that theory. They make a clear cut distinction between the two. If this distinction is not made people may think that Indian philosophy grew out of dogmas

formulated by some ancient religious teachers. Keeping in view this distinction it will help us to understand why Indian philosophy still keeps religious bias, a bias towards spirituality. Indian philosophy is a reflective way of life.

Dharma is, therefore, the law of life, the way of life that keeps running union with the foundation of our being. In Indian tradition religion and philosophy are not divided into two water tight compartments. They are regarded as the two states of the same human activity. The aim of both religion and philosophy is to uplift man and society to higher and nobler level and to seek unity through diversity.

On development of Indian religion P.T. Raju observes that - "the elements of Indian religion can be traced back to the pre-Aryan Mohenjodaro civilisation in the Indian valley to about 300 B.C. or even earlier times which had a script but that has not been deciphered. Excavation reveals that people of the time had a meditative religion and worshipped some mother Goddess"<sup>32</sup> This view has been confirmed by Ernest Mackay - "The worship of another Goddess is a very nearly Indian cult and probably existed in the country long before the arrival of the Indus valley people. It is probably true also of the tree worship..... Animal worship is also inherent in most primitive

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communities and has existed in India or elsewhere for so long that its origin is untraceable".<sup>33</sup> Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also writes - "There is hardly any height of spiritual insight or rational philosophy attained in this world that has its parallel to the vast stretch that lies between the early Vedic seers and modern Naiyayikas".<sup>34</sup> From all these we may come to the conclusion that Indian religion is the oldest religion of the world.

Now we may sum up our discussion on Hindu view of religion thus - Indian religion is neither based on certain dogmas or principles nor an intellectual gymnastic. It is inward realisation of Reality or experience of Reality. By experience it does not mean emotional thrills or mere subjectivity, it is the response of the whole personality, an integrated self to the central Reality. Dr. Radhakrishnan also observes - "While fixed intellectual beliefs marks off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself not limits. Intellect is subordinate to institution, dogmas to experience, outer expression to inward realisation. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstraction or celebration of ceremonies but a kind of life and experience. It is insight into the nature of Reality (Darsana) or experience of Reality (Anubhava). This experience is not our emotional thrills or a subjective fancy; but is the

response of the whole personality, the integrated self to the central Reality. Religion is a specific attitude of the self itself and no other, though it is mixed up generally with intellectual views, aesthetic norms and moral valuation<sup>35</sup>.

From the different views on religion both Western and Indian, it may be noted that religion is a binding force which deepens the solidarity of human society. It's very aim is to convert the people belonging to divergent religions into a world community. And in order to accomplish this objective of religion we require to cultivate good will and understanding of the basic principles underlying in various religions of the world. The followers of different religions must work together with a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect. And in order to promote this spirit of co-operation and mutual respect for one another the study of comparative religion plays an important role. Hence, a brief study has been undertaken to explain the meaning of comparative religion and how it helps in promoting the spirit of tolerance among the people of divergent religions.

The development of the science of comparative religion came into existence primarily owing to two reasons -

(1) publication and the study of the sacred books of the East and (ii) the growth of Anthropology. Federick Max Muller gave

an inspiration to the study of comparative religion by his devotion to the subject of comparative religion as well as by the publication of 50 volumes of the sacred books of the East.

Comparative religion is not a special kind of religion, it is only a particular method of treating religion. "By comparative religion is meant the comparative study of the beliefs, values, symbols, cults and institutions of the religions of the world".<sup>36</sup>

The aim of comparative religion is not to prove that this or that religion is of supreme manifestation of the religions spirit. It is really difficult to maintain the absoluteness of any religion while analogous phenomena are directly discovered among people of other faiths. One has to realise that every form of religion is relative and as such it can not claim the sole monopoly of religious insight. The study of comparative religion is to be undertaken with the spirit of treating all religions to be relative in achieving the supreme ideal. Max Muller opines - "I hold that there is divine element in every one of the great religions of the world". Similarly Dr. Erslie Carpenter maintains that - "The different religions are like partners in the quest for the same object".<sup>37</sup> Hence, only if the relativity of all religions

of the world is accepted then it becomes easy to discuss the aims and objectives of the study of comparative religion.

Religion is such that it includes all the areas of human life - cultural, social and individual. Without entering into the debate whether religion is the product of culture or culture has its origination in religion, it has been accepted by most of the religions thinkers that more than half of our experiences, values and symbols of culture are religions by nature. Culture is the sum total of experiences, values and symbols of a society transmitted from generation to generation. It elevates man above animals no doubt, but it also conditions human mind and create divisions among them. The same fact is applicable in religion also. Every religion is pregnant with some merits and demerits. The study of comparative religion helps people to study multifarious religions and understand the weakness of their own religion. As a result this sort of self-correction and integration of foreign elements have already taken place whenever religions have interacted. Study of comparative religion also helps in discovering the hidden treasure of one's own religion. For example - \*Contact with Hinduism Buddhism led to the discovery of the rich mystical tradition of Christianity which the people of the West had neglected during the 18th. and 19th. century. \*Comparative religion helps the

scholars to study the relation of religion with other aspects of culture. It clears the path for universal religions atmosphere to the people world over. Comparative religion also increases "our confidence in universality of God and respect for human race. It includes not a mere attitude of tolerance which implies conscious sympathy, not patronising pity, but genuine respect and appreciation".<sup>38</sup>

Coming to social aspect it can be stated that the development of science and technology has led to both positive and negative consequences upon the people. While in it's positive aspect science and technology encourage co-operation and mutual help at national and international level, in it's negative aspect it also fosters communal disharmony, unrest, violence etc; Comparative religion can help a lot in developing the spirit of harmony and universal brotherhood among various religious communities. If properly studied comparative religion helps to prepare a common ground to fight against immorality, exploitation and other social evils.

As religion plays an important role in personal life of individual in whatever religion he may be. Comparative religion provides several ~~alterative spiritual paths~~ and techniques other than it's own. Swami Bhajanananda remarks - "Comparative religion enables us to have better understanding of the phenomena of

religion in all its dimensions and place one's own religious life in a cosmic perspective, understanding other religions enlarges one's own religious consciousness". In this connection it is to be noted that in the task of studying comparative religion must be accomplished as Dr. Bonquet observes - "The only tolerable way of engaging in the work is to let oneself be enthralled by man's ceaseless quest for something supernatural and eternal which the ordinary life of this world will never give him, and to try to put one's self into the place of those who are obviously enthusiasts for a religion which is not one's own".<sup>39</sup>

This is an age of science and hence there is likelihood that a modern man is not ready to accept the incredible dogmas or exclusive revelations. He wants to scrutinise any religious view through the spectacle of reason and anything unreasonable is not acceptable to him. In addition to this, this is an age of humanism as such the religion which does not pay heed to the human ills, social and political problems can not penetrate into human minds. Religion which gives rise to discord, division, disintegration, fanaticism etc; fails to bring unity among the people and these are so dangerous that it threatens the very existence of human race. Hence, the present day world needs a

religion which is capable of bringing together the divine revelations of life and this kind of religion only can serve as the basis of world orders. To put in the words of Bernerd Shaw - "Civilization needs a religion which will appeal the educated men and women, should be living and dynamic religion and not a static and frozen religion full of beliefs and superstitions, orthodox dogmas and soulless tradition".<sup>40</sup>

Hence, religion must create the spirit of unity and synthesis at the highest level - the tripple unity of faith and reason, faith and faith and faith with life. The forceful influence of this kind of spirit of the various creeds and sects will lead to an ever-increasing importance of their spiritual elements resulting in the liberation of values, universal and human embedded in them. This kind of religion will be able to work as a force of human unity, fellowship and service.

It is, however, heartening that this spirit of unity and tolerance has been there in India since the time of Vedas down to the present age. Commenting on religious tradition Toyenbee remarks - "This catholic minded Indian religious

spirit is the way of salvation for human beings of all religions in an age in which we have to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves".<sup>41</sup> The mission of India's religious tradition is that - "it does not want any religion to compromise or capitulate, it wishes to treat all religions as friendly partners in the supreme task of formulating the spiritual life of man".<sup>41</sup>

The Upanishads which are the earliest philosophical foundation of India also taught to practice toleration among the people searching their way the same God. The most ancient utterance which influenced Indian culture and religion down to the present age occurs in the Rg Veda - "Ekam Sat Vipra bahudha vadante".<sup>42</sup> - the Truth is one, sages call it various names. The Bhagavad Gita, the Magna Carta of world religion declares - "Through whatever paths men may come to Me, I receive them".<sup>43</sup> This is a proclamation of absolute freedom of each religion to strive and develop in its own way and to lead its votary to the highest realisation. The Bhagavad Gita also says - "It is the one and the same mental consciousness that is spoken of as Brahman by the philosophers, as Paramatman by the mystics and as Bhagavana by the devotees".<sup>44</sup>

Thus tolerance and acceptance are the principles which have been practised in India. Commenting on tolerance in Indian religious thought Swami Ranganathananda remarks - "India has a long tradition which was created early history by our philosophy and fostered by our religion and our political states in subsequent periods. Great world moving spiritual leaders like Kṛṣṇa, Sankara and Ashoka in the past powerfully influenced millions of people resorting entirely to the democratic method of peaceful persuasion backed by rational appeal and sterling character. In our time, we see the reinforcing to this tradition and method of Swami Vivekananda. We had benefit of it's successful application in the socio-political field by Gandhiji"<sup>45</sup> K.V. Reddy also remarks - "Hinduism is perhaps the most tolerant of all religions of the world - I mean no offence to other religions. Hence, in this country you will find philosophers of greatest differences including philosophers who deny or at least do not think about God in Hinduism taking all these there in, I see the tolerance of which this faith is capable. Freedom of thought has been allowed resulting in what you find today in our country"<sup>46</sup> And this is a fact that various opposing religious co-existed in India without any conflict. In this case we can refer to the Ashoka's inscriptions such an early hour in the history of the human

civilisation where Ashoke declared - "The King Piyadsi honours all sects, monks and house-holds, he honours them by gifts and various kinds of favours ..... for he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment of his own with intent to enhance the splendor of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect".<sup>47</sup>

Much earlier to this example of toleration is, in the days of Buddha when various sects like Padaka, Ladaka, Nigartha etc; existed without any mutual persecution. In the mediaval age the emperor Akbar set an example of cultural fellowship in the sphere of religion. He built Fatehpur sikri, the house of worship (Ibādad Khāna) where all adherents belonging to various religious like Hindu, Muslim, Jaina, Zoroastrian met together and discussed the problems of metaphysics and religion. He even promulgated a new creed 'D in-Elahi' which was synthesis of the truths of the various religions known to him. Dara-sukhoh, son of king Sahjahan being attracted to sufism hold the opinion that there are as many roads to God as there are seekers of Him. He wrote a book on the mingling of the two oceans, 'Majin-aul-Baharam' - the two oceans being Hinduism and Islam. In the mediaval times fellowship in the field of religion gave birth to a galaxy of sacred souls like Nanak, Ramananda, Kabir

Tulsidas, Jaydeva Mirabai, etc. in both Hindu and Musalman. Hence Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes - "The richness, tolerance and profundity of the Indian religion and its enduring roots among Indian people made it difficult for Christians to spread in India".<sup>48</sup>

During British era the influence of Christianity and western English education brought about a religious awakening and gave birth to a number of renaissant Hindu thinkers like Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and many others. Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian who brought about fundamental unity of spirit in Hindu, Muslim and Christian religion. In 1928 he founded Brahma-Samāj, a society believing God, open to all men irrespective of a caste, creed and religion. Ramakrishna was in the direct line of rishis of the Upanishads. He declared - "in all religions the human mind is revealed in it's search for truth".<sup>49</sup> Following RamaKrishna Swami Vivekananda in conformity with the age old tradition of India presented the sweeping ideas of 'Sanatani Dharma' and carried the message of unity and universal brotherhood even to the west. In Swami Vivekananda's words - "I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them all in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Muhammedan ..... Kneel before

Christ ..... I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindus who is trying to see the light which lightens the heart of every one".<sup>50</sup> Through his message and service in both the hemispheres he united humanity through the divinity running through all existence. The spirit of India being the assimilation of various elements that came to this country so Mahatma Gandhi also appealed to all of us "to open our doors to all the winds that blow but not to get swept off our feet".<sup>51</sup> He dedicated his life for Hindu-Muslim unity and said - "the true beauty of Hindu-Muslim lies in it's remaining true to his own religion and yet being true to each other".<sup>52</sup> In modern times there are records of Hindu-Muslim unity and fellowship. Dr. Taylor remarks - "Religions quarrels between the Hindu and the Muhammedan are of rare occurrence. These two classes live in perfect peace and concord and majority of the individuals belonging to them have been overcome their prejudices so far as to smoke from the same hookah".<sup>53</sup>

From the above discussion it is evident that India sought for throughout her history for the freedom of the spirit and union of hearts. "It does not destroy differences but discovers their underlying affinities..... when new ideas old traditions are not discarded but are treated with respect introduced by way of interpretation".<sup>54</sup>

Even after independence India to keep its age-old tradition of tolerance, it has followed the principle of secularism. Originally though the constitution makers of India did not incorporate the word 'Secularism' in Indian constitution it has been inserted in 42nd. amendment of the constitution in 1976. But the principle of secularism as practised in India in accordance with constitutional provision is different in respect of its meaning of secularism as understood in the West.

Generally secularism is a term which can be viewed from two aspects - Positive and negative. Secularism has been described as a movement intensely ethical and negatively religious with political and philosophical antecedents. Founded with the express intention of providing a certain theory of life and conduct, it follows that "in its positive aspect it is ethical, since it undertook to this without reference to deity or a future life and this proposed to fulfil a religious aspect apart from religious institutions, it may be regarded as negatively religious. Its origin, however, was primarily due to the certain political and philosophical influences".<sup>55</sup> Though the philosophical roots of secularism can be traced back to James, Mill and Bentham etc. with an anti-theistic forceful attention inherited from Thomas Paine and Richard

Carlyle, yet socialism owes its name and in large measure its existence to the life and writings of Holyoake and Bradlaugh. Actually secularism developed at a period when the relation between science and religion were beginning to be treated as those of sharp opposition and proclaimed independence of secular truth. Secular knowledge is founded upon the experience of this life and can be maintained and tested by reason at work in experience. It conceived that just as mathematics, Physics, Chemistry were secular sciences, so it would be possible on the same line to establish a secular theory of the conduct and welfare of life. The basic principle of secularism is to look for human improvements by material means alone because these means are more proximate and that independently and in themselves they are adequate to secure the directed end. To be precise secularism in West as Y. Masiah says - ". . . . the cultivation of the secular attitude of life and especially towards religions claims in the light of a scientific world view. Hence it means the full exploitation of the resources of one's country with the help of science and technology in utter disregard to super-materialism. Therefore, secularism is this worldly. In this sense secularism is not anti-religions but quite indifferent to religion. Religion is kept apart from all public activities - social, economic and

political ..... Religion is regulated to man's personal life only".<sup>56</sup>

But this meaning has not been adopted in India. From the common supposition and the convention developed in our country. Secularism means that India is not a theocratic state and there is no preference for any one religion existing in India. All religions have equal rights and all religions are equal before the law of the secular state. It means the co-existence of all religions or equal respect for all religions - 'Sarva Dharma Samabhāva'. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also observes - "It may be strange that our government should be secular one while our culture is rooted in spiritual values. Secularism here does not mean irreligion or atheism or even stress on material comforts. It proclaims that it lays stress on the universality of spiritual values".<sup>57</sup> Thus in India secularism is a religious concept and not a social or political concept. Secularism, in the preamble of Indian constitution means - co-existence of all religions. This is what Gandhiji maintained - "I believe in the Bible as I believe in the Gita. I regard all the great faiths of the world as equally true with my own. It haunts me to see anyone of them caricatured as they are to-day by their own followers".<sup>58</sup> As India has regard for spiritual values so the principle of secularism

in India must be based on two supreme principles of morality as Kant maintained. They are - (i) Man is sacred to man, (ii) Man must be on that maxim thus while he can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. The law, order, principles, rules etc. of the state or of any religion must be in accordance with these supreme principles. Insisted on the recognition of potential divinity in man as taught by Advaita Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda also directed his religious preachings and activities for the welfare of the human race for in India religion is the prime motive force of all activities. And in this connection it is to be remembered that Mahatma Gandhi also regarded his political activities to be religious in character

### 2.3 'BACKGROUND OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAHATMA GANDHI'S IDEA OF RELIGION' ;

Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were the apostles of tolerance. Both of them dedicated their lives through their activities and teachings in continuing the age-old religious tradition of tolerance through out the world. Hence, it is necessary to discuss their religious, social and political background that made these two thinkers religiously tolerant.

It is well known that technological revolution brought about by modern science and technology in the 17th. century helped to make prominent the mundane values and to increase man's worldly appetite for the two and a half century. The heavy impact of science and technology was felt more or less dimension in the rest of the world including India. The whole world was in the grip of forces physical, mental and social reinforced by the scientific revolution. This scientific revolution of the West carried with it both benevolent as well as malevolent elements. The benevolent elements constituted an attractive feature of modern civilization, destruction of distance, physical unification of the world, theory and practice of democracy based on the dignity of individual and various plans and measures all-round social welfare throughout the world, the increase of religious tolerance and feudal emergence of International outlook.

But unfortunately with the advent of 20th. century the malevolent elements of the scientific revolution started importunately forwarding in the form of selfishness, violence, war etc. Describing the situation Swami Ranganathanda remarks - "17th. century Europe had banished religion as a centre of human royalty as a reaction against 30 years religious wars

of that century and substituted sense values in it's place. But in this banishing religion Western man had a keen feeling he was banishing a thing of deep value of life but he could not help it, as that value had been presented to him enclosed in elements irrational and anti-social and alien to his new-formulated scientific and rational temper, aims and methods".<sup>59</sup> And in this critical juncture when there arose a sharp opposition between science and religion and reached it's highest altitude, some eminent religious thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, RamaKrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi born in India.

India was under the British regime by the time Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were born. In 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny, the first Indian struggle for independence against British colonisation took place only to suffer defeat. Being defeated Indian people felt humiliated and a suppressed feeling of dissatisfaction was prevailing, on the other hand under the British regime modern civilisation with all it's accessories, manners, costumes, railways, telegraph etc. were advancing all over India while it's thoughts and news were encrossing the mind of the people owing to introduction of English education. Christian missionaries started looking down upon

Hindu social customs, religions beliefs and practices. They started asserting supremacy over Hindu religion and culture. Influenced by the English education some Indians were attracted to Western civilisation doubting on the Indian traditional ideals and ways of life. Even some educated Indians lost faith in their social culture and religion and wanted to adopt western ideals for salvation of their country. A few brilliant intellectuals threw off their time honoured faith and turned atheist or accepted Christianity, commenting on the Indian scholars of that time Lord Macaulay, the architect of Indian education wrote in 1831 - "I have never found one among them who would deny that a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia".<sup>60</sup> Inspired by the increasing Europeanisation of the Hindus again wrote in 1836 - "Our English schools are flourishing wonderfully. If our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator (Hindu) among the respected class in 50 years hence".<sup>61</sup> Commenting on Indian social, political and religious situation of that time Swami Jitmananda also writes - "Never before such a sweeping influence of western culture could be seen among the educated intellectuals of India. Calcutta had witnessed unprecedented scenes when nearly half of the 400 bright and

cultured students of Calcutta Presidency College left Hinduism under the modernizing influence of Derezio. These young Bengalees paraded through the streets of Calcutta with brandy bottles and beaf baskets shouting slogans against Hinduism which was considered only a religion of superstion and idolatory".<sup>62</sup> The ship of Hinduism was passing through one of it's most critical periods. But fortunately by this time some sacred souls of India started reacting against the western culture and civilization. Some religious and social movements like Bramho-Samaj by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal, Arya-Samaj in punjab by Dayananda Saraswati etc. came into existence to cope with the Western religious and cultural aggression. "But none of these organisations were capable of calling forth of national genius of India or to pointing the India's children the true import of their voluminous scriptures, the universal character of their religion, the inner harmony of their multiferious beliefs, the fundamental unity of their national life despite divergence of sect, creed, caste, colour customs and language none could restore their faith in their ancient heritage and how to accept the new on the basis of the old and apply the eternal religious principle to modern condition".<sup>63</sup> To quote Swami Jitatmananda - "one one side there was charidies of new reformers and intellectuals full of hatred

and criticism against superstition, caste-bound and priest-ridden Hinduism as practiced by the caste Hindus on those days. On the other hand, there was the scylla of orthodoxy were as Swami Vivekananda says - 'a grown up men by hundreds have been discussing for years whether we should drink a glass of water with the right or the left'.<sup>64</sup>

Though it was period of Indian Renaissance but like European Renaissance it was not artistic and literary movement. Indian Renaissance was primarily cultural and spiritual, not simply a religious movement'. Though Indian Renaissance started long before the birth of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi yet, it bore a little faith for the spiritual regeneration of the Indian people. They could see very clearly that the ship of Hinduism was passing through most difficult periods. Swami Vivekananda feared - 'if it goes for an another century, all of us will be in a launatic asylum. The religious practices of Hinduism were like as Swamiji himself described - 'A petty village custom now the real authority and not the teachings of the Upanishads'.<sup>65</sup> Hence Swami Vivekananda was in search of a dynamic and modern Hinduism which would save India from the all-round degradations - like religious, political and cultural. Practically it was Swami Vivekananda who gave

message of Renaissance into a concrete shape and Mahatma Gandhi put it into practice.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi travelled throughout India and found most of the Indian people were illiterate and poverty stricken. The economic policy adopted by the Britishers was only to fulfill their vested interests. Hence, the socio-economic conditions of the Indian people were deplorable. Both these sacred souls were, therefore, searching the way out to save the nation as a whole and found that religion had to be the principal and leading force in implementing the political and social change in India. According to both of them only the dynamic and modern Hinduism was capable of raising the Indian people to a honourable position. Swami Vivekananda believed - "The Hindu man drinks religiously, sleep religiously, walks religiously, marries religiously robs religiously".<sup>66</sup> He also believed - "If you want to speak of politics in India you must speak through the language of religion".<sup>67</sup> Both the thinkers believed that spiritual regeneration is to be brought about in India as a whole. Religion is the key to the solution of all problems.

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## CHAPTER III

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON RELIGION

#### 3.1 EMERGENCE OF VIVEKANANDA :

Swami Vivekananda (Narendra Nath Datta, 12th January, 1863) was born in a religious atmosphere of his house and surroundings where God was injected to his mind in the guise of God's commandments. Since his very childhood he observed various religious rites and ceremonies performed in his house and his neighbourhood. He also visited many temples, churches and mosques. The effect of all these imprinted in his mind in such a manner that he began to take God for granted. He had natural urge for classical music and poetry. He attentively studied Shelly and Wordsworth during his college life. As G.S. Banahati writes - "He studied Wordsworth and Shelley's 'Hymns to intellectual beauty' touched him the presence of supreme Reality ..... which had a curved corner in his mind due to the study of certain western philosophers".<sup>1</sup> He also had a meditative strain that often made him appear aloof and indifferent. He used to live the austere of a spiritual aspirant and hence he daily practised meditation on God. He had also many more qualities of head and heart that betokened his future

glories. Mr. Hastie, the principal, Current Assembly Institute marked him as one of the genius among his students. It was Hastie who for the first time told him about the mystical experience in the course of his lecture on poetic tresses of Wordsworth.

It has been already shown in some previous paragraphs that during the time of Swami Vivekananda religion was carrying on a last ditch fight, as if, with materialistic and rationalistic philosophy. Theism, materialism, scepticism etc., were competing with one another for a hold on human thought and life. By this time Westernised education had already been infiltrating Hindu minds. His search for the knowledge of the truth impelled him to study western science, history and philosophy. For sometime he was more or less influenced by Hume and Bentham's atheism, Spinoza's pantheism, Darwin's theory of evolution, Comte and Spence's positivism and agnosticism and other western, philosophical theories. To quote Banahati - "Philosophy was his natural liking and fervishly digested Herbert Spencer whose influence can be felt in his discharging arguments Vivekananda later developed".<sup>2</sup> He also studied the philosophy of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhaur as well. Being well-conversant with modern stalwarts of science and philosophy, he possessed a stern scientific attitude and uncompromising respect for human intellect.

Like some remarkable youth of his day; Swami Vivekananda came under the influence of Bramho-Samaj led by Keshab Chandra Sen and Debendra Nath Tagore. Vivekananda regularly attended the meetings of Bramho-Samaj and took active participation in devotional chorus as he had also a sweet voice. And through the meetings of Bramho-Samaj he was drawn towards Indian religion and philosophical heritage and within a short time he familiarised himself with the basic ideas of Indian thought. He used to study intensively the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Sankara's Advaita Vedanta and all philosophical systems of India. In spite of all these Vivekananda's quest for God was not satisfied. The principles adopted by Bramho-Samaj though attracted him for certain reasons failed to cast spell on him. To quote Satprakashanda - "The Bramho-Samaj was a socio-religious movement considerably influenced by western thought and culture. It was primarily based on reason and ethics and not on the supersensuous experiences. It served as a check against English educated youths becoming converts under the influence of the christian missionaries. But it could not satisfy Narendra Nath's yearning for direct knowledge of God. The Samaj was opposed to Hindu idol worship, caste-distinction and child marriage, and unlike Hinduism supported widow-marriage. Young Narendra Nath was in favour of these ideas of reform but its conventionality lacking

in true devotion to God had little charmon him".<sup>3</sup> He was slowly moving through his enormous stock of knowledge towards the question which marked the real begining of his intellectual quest for God. In 1881, he asked D.N. Tagore his famous question - 'Have you seen God' and got no reply.

Then came his turning point of his life in his meeting with Ramakrishna Paramhansa in November 1881. When Vivekananda asked RamKrishna if he had seen God and got the historic answer. RamKrishna replied - "Yes I have seen Him even as I see you only more clearly, more intensely".<sup>4</sup> He also told him that he felt the reality of God in his own life, in the pulse of his being and was face to face with Him almost all his life and this made a profound change in Vivekananda. To quote Dr. S. RadhaKrishnan - "The impact of his personality, his passionate love for God made a remarkable change in his life and works of Vivekananda. RamKrishna's answer acted as soothing balm to his agitated nerves".<sup>5</sup>

For a long time, however, Vivekananda was a staunch intellectual. He did not accept any assertion of his master without putting into cross-examination. As a Bramho he had no belief in image-worship Vivekananda and even criticised Ramakrishna's Kali-worship. Vivekananda asked him if he had to worship Her because he was there with him. Ramakrishna replied

"All right before long you will not only accept Her but weep in Her name".<sup>6</sup> Vivekananda could not understand many of his sayings of his master and rebelled. At last it is the burning renunciation of his teacher which removed his obstinate rationality. Vivekananda throughout his life looked upon his master Ramkrishna as a realised soul. To put in his own words - "Sri Ramkrishna incarnated in India to demonstrate what the true religion of the Aryan is".<sup>7</sup> He also said - "He showed by his life what the risis and avataras really wanted to teach. The books are theories, he was realisation".<sup>8</sup>

After the sad demise of Ramkrishna in 1886 he had to keep his disciples together. They performed 'Vraja-Homa' in 1887 and became ascetic and took sanyasin's name. In 1888 he embarked upon extensive travels. He visited all the important centres of Indian culture and wandered the vast land from Himalayas to Capecomorine. During his second trip he met Pavahari Baba at Gajipur and was tempted to take yoga-practice, but the vision of Ramkrishna made him to go back to his monastary. In Ahmmedabad he was attracted to Jaina and Islamic tradition. Historical monuments stirred him deeply. In the midst of ruined steps of Nalanda and Saranath he brooded over the meaning of Buddha's life. As a born lover of humanity Vivekananda was

naturally drawn to the compassionate Buddha. "Buddha" he said, "was not a man but a realisation. Enter all ye, into it; have receive the key".<sup>9</sup> He set out again to the Himalayas in 1898 with determination not to return. He wished to become 'Paribrajaka', a solitary roaming monk and wandered to and fro for two years. In Kanya-kumari Vivekananda set on a rock and started meditating. On his meditation Dr. Lakshmi Kumari writes - "Marvellous was that meditation. India's glorious past, degeneration of the present and glorious future passed through Swamiji's mind. During this meditation and thereafter he received the answers of his queries. His search was over. Mother's work presented itself before him as well loud out plan, the central theme which is "Expansion of cours in spiritual terms".<sup>10</sup>

Then came out the turning point of his career. He attended the first session of Parliament of Religions at Chicago on September 11, 1893 and there he gave an exposition of Vedanta Philosophy. That eventful day, 11th September 1893 is now one of pages lettered in gold in the history of religions of the world. Almost all religions were represented there and the respective leaders had arrived there and they tried heart and soul to establish supremacy of their own faiths and beliefs.

"It was into such a crowd that Swami Vivekananda found the way and contrary to what other leaders did, from the very first note- "Sisters and Brothers of America' his was a tune which created resonance of the true and fundamental harmony and made people think and feel as one".<sup>11</sup> To quote a few lines from 'Indian Mirror' 1893 - "Truely it may be said of Swami Vivekananda's work in America, that he went, spoke and conquered. The influence that this gifted Hindu youth is exercising, is something wonderful. His teaching has so tolerant, unsectorian, lucid and logical and free from resentful invective and so truely representative of higher ideas of Hinduism that his audiences have bowed down before him in astonished gratitude".<sup>12</sup> An 'American review' 14/1897 observes - "Toleration to all was a high ideal, love all the faiths, seeming right and goodness in all religions was the highest ideal".<sup>13</sup> By his eloquence, depth of knowledge, expansiveness of his vision, intensity of his realisation he was capable of proving himself to be the top of all religious thinkers - 'Man of the Congress'. Within a short period of his staying there he carved for himself a niche in the audience at the world of Parliament and also the heart of the well-meaning people of America and later in England and Europe. The Swami Vivekananda came to Newyork and sailed for England in September 1895. In the same year he delivered a series of lectures on

Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga in Harvard University. In the month of February 1896, he organised the Vedanta Society of New York. Then Vivekananda went to London where he met some world famous Philosophers like Prof. Max Muller and Paul Dawson.

After the successful tour of America and England he came back to India. On his return to India he received a heroic welcome. But he had little time to rest on the laurels. He undertook whirl-wind tour carrying with him the message of spirituality of India to remote parts of India. In October 1890 he returned to Belur, the headquarter of Ramkrishna Mission. He also founded the Advaita Ashram in Almora in the month of March 1899. In the same year he had his second tour to America with his devoted disciple Sister Nivedita to observe the work of Vedanta society there. In 1900, he went to Paris to attend the Congress of History of Religions. He returned to Belur on 9th December 1900. In 1901 he had his last pilgrimage on the request of his old mother Bhuvaneshwari Devi.

### 3.2 'VIVEKANANDA'S IDEA OF RELIGION' ;

Religion is the central theme of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy. He conceived religion as the dominating and guiding force of life. By religion he did not mean the Orthodox

conventional religion. He found out the weakness of it and criticised it as an silk worm. To stick to conventional orthodox religion is like an act that "we make the thread of our own substance and spin the cocoon and in the course of time one imprisoned inside".<sup>14</sup> But he, however, did not oppose to rites and ceremonies, myths, traditions and institutions, on the other hand, he regarded all these to be essential elements of every religion. With the same spirit of his master Sri Ramakrishna he conceived that these are the husks of religion but as the seed cannot germinate and grow without the husk likewise for any religion for its existence requires the help of rites, rituals etc. but by themselves they are not religions. They are only the instruments to practise religion. With the help of rites, rituals etc; religious truths are preserved and religion is taught to the people. They are the concrete forms of abstract religion. They should be understood as the means and not the ends of religion. But they lose the touch with religion assumes independent existence of their own. They stand in the way of true religion. Swamiji writes - "Rituals are Kindergarten of religion. They are absolutely necessary for the world as it is now, only we shall have to give people newer and fresher rituals. A party of thinkers must do this. My watchword is construction, not destruction, out of the existing rituals new one's will have to be evolved".<sup>15</sup> He wanted to make religion

most dynamic. An age attains dynamic process when people learns to live for truth, for beauty and love for fulfilling our aspirations to rise above the sordid self. He tried to provide us with opportunity to mobilise our own spiritual aspirations.

According to Swami Vivekananda religion is co-extensive with life and it influences the social and economic ideals of the people and their daily conduct and activity. He writes - "They may be very good if it is absolutely impracticable no theory is of any value whatever except an intellectual gymnastic- we must be able to carry out in every part of our lives. The ideals of religion must cover the whole life, they must enter into all our thoughts and more and more into practice".<sup>16</sup>

Religion does not consist in any doctrine or dogmas or intellectual discourse. It is the Being and Becoming. He declared - 'Religion is realisation'. One must try to realise God not only in his traditional way, he or she must be ready to join other religious groups in their own traditional methods.

In explaining the origin of the ideas of religion he reconciled the 'spiritual' and 'Evolution theory' and brought about a new theory which relates to struggle to transcend the limitation of the senses. According to Swami Vivekananda human

mind has the power to rise to higher conception and when a man reaches such a state, he experiences a new series of facts in the spiritual kingdom. Human mind can cross over the barrier of senses and the power of thinking and realises the facts which are the basis of the religions of the world. The facts are discrete and isolated which the highly organised religion take pure form of abstract unity, an Omniscient Being, called God, a Moral Law which is the Absolute Essence that underlies in every existence. Man has the latent tendency to reach this ideal power and Infinite pleasure. Our senses and bodies which fail to express the Infinite for they are too limited and Infinite can also never manifest through the finites.

Out of the principle of evolution which states that every effect is the reproduction of a preceding cause changed only by circumstances, Swami Vivekananda arrived at the third universal generalisation from which everything else has come. This primal cause Brahman must be identical with the most significant effects. This Brahman is Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Existence is the last generalisation the human mind can attain at. Knowledge is the essence of the ultimate fact, the essential unity of everything else. The matter out of which our bodies are made of may have been present

in the Sun many years ago. Hence, all bodies are one and the same, the thought is one ocean in which minds are whirlpools. Swami Vivekananda is of opinion that matter, mind and the spirit are essentially one. Hence the saying - 'Thou art That' the self

Swami Vivekananda gave a new meaning to religion. His approach to religion was out and out a novel one. Commenting on Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of religion A.R. Wadia remarks - "Shri Ramakrishna was a thought, Swami Vivekananda was the expression of thought". Swami Sarvagatananda has expressed the above idea thus - "It was Vivekananda who made butter out of milk, that is, he observed and closely followed the life of Ramkrishna and then gave a cohesive form to his divine experiences"<sup>17</sup> Swami Vivekananda understood well Ramkrishna's words when the later said - the Mugal's coins have no currency under East India's rule and Swamiji believed that religion would have to be scientific to fit into the wave of the future. Religion does not consist in mere belief. Hence, he expounded the scientific approach to religion. He also understood that man wants to understand the meaning of their lives and the universe. To Swami Vivekananda - "Religion is the science of the spirit, the soul, the science of life and science of Being"<sup>18</sup> Religion is more scientific than science itself because religion is mandate from

within. Religion is universal, impersonal and eternal. He wanted that - "Not only be it made scientific - a science at least, as any of the conclusions of Physics and Chemistry - will have greater strength because physics and chemistry have no internal mandate to vouch for it's truth which religion has. Religion is the motivation towards individual perfection and social progress. Religion must be good for all".<sup>19</sup> According to him the test of religion depends on the truth of the constitution of man and not on some books alone for it is He and nothing else, the eternal subject in the heart who says - "I am in every heart the Deathless one".<sup>20</sup> In all religions of the world the prophets experienced this. Swamiji said - "As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similar, similarly contained and similarly situated. Their experience are the same and becomes the law".<sup>21</sup> And because of this Swamiji said - "I bow down to the prophets of the past and the prophets yet to come".<sup>22</sup> Our ordinary experience is only the source of knowledge but it does not fully apply to religion. Only a small group of mystics teach religion. It is to be noted Swami Vivekanda did not equate religion with mysticism. He warned us to be aware of mysticism thus - "Occultism and mysticism have nearly destroyed us, they may have great truths in them. We have wept for long enough. We want now a man making religion. Anything

that makes man weak reject as poison. Truth is strengthening. Give up these weakening mysticism".<sup>23</sup>

According to Swami Vivekananda while chemistry and other material sciences deal with the truth of the physical world, religion deals with the metaphysical world. He says - "The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book which to learn religion is one's own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science and the scientist too ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book without".<sup>24</sup> He wanted to preach religion which must be compatible with the modern science. According to him any scientific theory adopts three principles - (i) particular is explained by the, the general by the more general untill it comes to the universal (ii) The explanation of things are to be found in terms of their own nature and outside agent is required to explain what is going on in the universe - the principle of self-consistency, (iii) The principle of evolution is nothing but the manifestation of the principle of self-consistency. Hence Swamiji says - "The whole meaning of evolution is simply that nature of a thing is reproduced that effect is nothing but the cause of another form ..... change only by circumstances ..... we need not go to see the course of these changes, they are within".<sup>25</sup>

According to Swami Vivekananda - religion needs constant help from reason, when religion refuses to take help of reason that religion weakens itself. Religion must justify itself by reason and must apply the same method which we apply to other natural sciences. He once said - "If a religion is destroyed by such investigations it was then all the time useless, unworthy and superstition and sooner it goes better".<sup>26</sup> He believed religion which is not based on reason, it's destruction would be best thing that could happen. He was, however, critical in regard to the limitations of reason. The knowledge provided by reason is often too theoretical to satisfy us in actual practice. Reason lacks vividness and reality. Knowledge that we acquire through personal realisation gives an altogether different order than offered by reason. Vivekanand's scientific interests were secondary and primarily he was a man of religion. He was concerned with spiritual truths, not with physical discoveries.

Adding new meaning to religion Swamiji was not satisfied with humanising it. He tried to socialise it's purpose. He said - "Man is the greatest of all things".<sup>27</sup> The best way to realise God consists in serving his fellow-men. In his own words - "I do not believe in God or religion which cannot wipe out widow's tears or a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth....

I do not call it a religion so long it is confined to books or dogmas".<sup>28</sup> Religion must be in conformity with contemporary thoughts. He put emphasis on the service of man. He said - "There is no difference between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality".<sup>29</sup>

According to Swami Vivekananda religion is strength and strength is religion. Strength is life, weakness is death. Religion is the manifestation of natural strength of man. Religion ought to teach fearlessness or 'Abhaya'. He equated strength with religion. This view of Swami Vivekananda is opposed to the traditional view of religion maintained by the theologians who maintained the view that man is insignificant before God. He maintained that real nature of human beings is not weak and fallible. It is ever-abiding self. Thinking oneself to be weak makes oneself weak. Strength brings out from within all the courage we need. Man by identifying with the self, the Atman, can bring out hope, courage and strength. Whatever we need. In this connection Swamiji speaks about faith or Sradha. Though ordinarily the word Sradha is translated into faith but it is not so. According to him it is effective attitude in a particular situation. He equally stressed on the cultivation of physical and mental strength. He wanted to see strength

manifested in every situation. He said - "You will be nearer to God through football than through the study of the Gita.... you will understand Upanishads and glory of the Atman better when your body stands firm upon your feet and you will feel yourself to be man".<sup>30</sup>

As mind controls the body so he gave strength of mind also. Mental strength comes through concentration. A man must develop his will-power and the power of concentration in order to achieve his goal. As regards intellectual strength he said - "If you are born a man, have a mark behind ....."<sup>31</sup> He believed that from the idea of largeness a person becomes gradually aware of his spiritual nature. Apart from all these he equally gave importance on economic, political and military strength. He said - "As long as even a dog remains hungry. I consider it my religion. By military strength Swamiji said - "I have never spoken of revenge, I have always spoken of strength".<sup>32</sup> According to him spiritual strength is the controller of mind and body. If we are aware of spiritual strength we will be able to bring out that strength in the other levels of life. Swami Vivekananda's prescription was to hear the strength giving ideas about our divine nature, to meditate upon them and to assert them in every situation of life.

According to Swami Vivekananda religion is to be attained by Yoga or Union. He prescribed four Yogas - Jñana, Karma Bhakti and Dhyana in such a way that everyone belonging to any religions practices gains enlightenment. The goal of man is to attain perfection. If these yogas are followed in unison work like four wheel drive and lead us to the ultimate Realisation. He said - "This is the whole of religion. Doctrine or dogma, rituals or books, temples or forms are but secondary details ..... each soul is potentially divine".<sup>33</sup>

Swami Vivekananda hold the view that religion must be free from superstition. He regarded it to be the great enemy of man. He said - "Superstition is a great enemy of man, bigotry is worse". He always advised us to be aware of superstition. "I would rather see everyone of you rank atheist ..... for the atheist is alive and you can make something of him. But if superstition enters the brain is gone, the brain is softening, degradation siezed upon this life mystery mongering and superstitions are always signs of weakness".<sup>34</sup>

Swami Vivekananda, however, did not condemn idolatory or image worship. To him image is an aid to worship. He said - "Nowhere I found a single Hindu worshipping an image saying - 'O stone, I worship thee, O metal be merciful to me'. Everyone is worshipping spirit, the soul of the pure knowledge".<sup>35</sup> In

image worship first the divinity in the heart of the worshipper is invoked and then identified with the image before him. Swami Vivekananda said - "External worship, image worship, says the scriptures, is the lowest stage struggling to rise high, mental prayer is the next stage, but the highest stage is when the Lord has been realised".<sup>36</sup> He also said that - "The Hindus have discovered the Absolute can only be realised or thought of or stated through the relative and the images. Crosses and Crescents are simply so many symbols - so many pegs to hang spiritual ideas on. It is not that this help is necessary for everyone but those that do not need it have no right to say that it is wrong".<sup>37</sup> To him image worship is an attempt of undeveloped minds to grasp the spiritual truths.

### 3.3 CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN :

If we go through the philosophy of Vivekananda it becomes evident that his mainbody of thought was derived from Hindu scriptures - Primarily the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita and Vedanta. His idealism is monistic for he very often describes reality in the style of Abstract monism. Sankara's vedanta is popularly known as Advaita or Non-dualism or unqualified monism or Abstract monism as he called the Absolute, the Brahman, the ultimate Reality devoid of all qualifies. Vivekananda's Vedanta

is also Vedantic for he also holds the Brahman, the ultimate Reality is one without a second. (Ekamevadvitiam) But as distinguished from traditional Vedanta his vedanta is Neo-vedanta or Synthetic vedanta in so far as he reconciles Dvaitaism and Advaitic and other theories of reality. It can be branded as Concrete Monism for he regarded Brahman both as qualified and qualityless (Sagūṇa and Nirgūṇa).

According to Vivekananda Brahman is Infinite Existence (Sat), Infinite Knowledge (Cit), and Infinite Bliss (Ānanda). Brahman is without a name form or stain. He is beyond space, time and causation. He is all in all, nothing exists save Him. He says - "There is neither nature nor God nor the universe, only that Infinite Existence out of which through name and form are manufactured. All this universe is the reflection of that Eternal Being on the secret of Māyā - the triad of space, time and causation. These are only ideas and concepts of our mind and have no place in Brahman. The world is the creation of name and form, a Maya ..... we are looking upon one Existence in different forms and creating all these images of objects upon it..... the world is but a dream and this dream also vanishes when we wake up and becomes free from Māyā. There is but one, in Him is Māyā, the dreaming of this dream".<sup>38</sup>

According to Vivekananda there are two ideas of God - Personal and Impersonal. Personal God is the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world of everything, but he is not separate from Atman. Impersonal God is without any of these attributes. Sankara conceived Personal God or Isvara as determinate (Sagūṇa), God is the product of ignorance and Māyā. He is not real from the transcendental point of view. But according to Vivekananda Absolute and God are not two. God is not the creation of Māyā, God is all pervasive, Omnipresent He says - "The Absolute is that ocean, while you and I, the Sun, and stars and everything else are various waves of that ocean and what makes the waves different only the form and that form is time, space and causation, all entirely dependent on the wave".<sup>39</sup>

According to Vivekananda the Absolute has become and becoming. The Absolute has become the universe "by becoming through space, time and causation ..... time, space and causation are like the glass through which Absolute is seen and when seen on the lower side, it appears as the universe".<sup>40</sup> In the Absolute there is neither time, space or causation for the Absolute is beyond them all. They have no real existence yet they are not non-existent because it is through them all things are manifesting as the universe. They sometimes disappear.

As Vivekananda explains - "The wave is the same as the ocean yet we know it as a wave and as such different from the ocean. What makes it different from the ocean are its name and form. If the wave subsides the form vanishes in a moment and yet the form was not a delusion. So long as the wave existed and the form was there and yet you are bound to see the form, this is Māyā."<sup>41</sup> Absolute is manifesting as many when we see through time, space and causation. Hence, it seems that Vivekananda had two different conceptions of Brahman or Absolute as apparently manifested in the universe and is really expressed in it.

Though in conformity with Sankara Vivekananda admits that Brahman is the only Reality and the world is unreal in the generic sense, yet he introduced a policy of give and take. He agrees with Sankara in rejecting the reality of the world but unlike Sankara he deifies the world. Sankara rejected the world as unreal but Vivekananda gives the world a status of Brahman itself. He supplements and transforms the famous assertion of Sankara 'All this is nothing' into 'All this is nothing but Brahman'. In other words he transforms and extends the concept of Brahman.

Swami Vivekananda held the opinion that there can not be answer to the question - in what way does Absolute cease to

be Absolute degenerating into the phenomenal world. He says - "The Absolute is Absolute, in expressing some ideas of the Absolute we thereby restrict it so that it ceases to be Absolute. Absolute or Brahman can not be expressed by reason".<sup>42</sup> Whatever is expressed by reason is limited. In this sense "A God known as no more God. He has become finite like us".<sup>43</sup> But Infinite as such can never become finite.

Commenting on the concept of Absolute or Brahman Brodov observes - "Vivekananda does not depart from the traditional Vedanta. It is impossible to know Brahman by reason, it is only possible to merge with it in one's soul, freeing itself from the frailties of the material world. It's degenerating action as the Absolute are in expressible in the categories of reason.

### 3.4 CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ AND ISVARA :

The theory of Māyā forms one of the pillars upon which Vedanta rests. As this theory of Māyā has been interpreted in various ways from time to time. Hence, it requires proper understanding of the problem. In the vedic literature it is understood in the sense of delusion. In the Upanishads the Māyā reappeared with a new meaning. In Shvetashvatara upanishad, it is stated thus - "Know Nature to be Māyā, the ruler of this

Māyā is the Lord Himself".<sup>44</sup> The theory of Māyā has been discussed by the Buddhists too and took the form of Idealism. In these ways the theory of Māyā has been discussed in various ways until Sankaracharya established his Advaita Vedanta attaching much priority to it. When the Hindu say that the world is Māyā it is generally understood that the world is an illusion. The theory of Māyā understood in this sense has been criticised from several ends. But Māyā should not be understood incorrectly to denote illusion or delusion. Reacting on this sense Vivekananda said - "This transition of the word is neither happy nor correct. The concept that this world is an illusion comes through the Buddhist philosophers who did not believe in the existence of world at all. But the Māyā of Vedanta in its developed form is neither Idealism or Realism, nor it is a theory. It is a simple statement of fact ..... what we are and what we see around us".<sup>45</sup> He also said that - "we see the world through our five senses and if we had to another sense we should see something else. If we have still another sense, it would appear as something else. If we have still another sense, it would appear as something different again. So as we go ..... the universe as we see it therefore is a mixture of existence and non-existence".<sup>46</sup> From

the Vedantic stand-point finite is not a mere dream but a real form of the Absolute. Vivekananda accepts all realities as true though differing in degree of manifestation. In answering the question - if Vedanta accepts everything as real why the world has been described as Māyā, Vivekananda says that - Māyā does not mean illusion if the word illusion ~~if the word illusion~~ is taken in the sense of opposite of reality. Māyā indicates only the relative reality of the world and of the human life. He says - "The world is an indefinable mixture of reality and appearances, of certainty and illusion".<sup>47</sup> The Māyā does not mean that the world is pure illusion, it is full of contradictions and in this sense it can be described as unreal or illusory. Vivekananda says - "The world has neither existence nor non-existence. You can not call it existent because that alone really exists which is beyond space and time, which is self existent, yet this world does not satisfy to a certain degree idea of existence. Therefore we can say that it has an apparent existence".<sup>48</sup> The Absolute is free from contradiction.

Sometimes the word 'Māyā' is described as ignorance, untruth, attachment to material comforts etc. It was maintained that the world is Māyā and hence it must be rejected through

and through and all actions are to be given up. Vivekananda regards this kind of asceticism as gospel of despair. To him the world has both aspects of illusion and reality, nature and freedom, passion and reason. He says - "We have to fight our way through Māyā which is beyond Māyā".<sup>49</sup> He advocated activism rather than passivism. He compares that type of ascetic idea that - "I shall cross all the water has run into the ocean".<sup>50</sup>

As to the question how the Infinite or Absolute becomes the finite he had recourse to two theories. (1) Brahmapariṇām Vāda advocated by Sāṃkhya who differentiated the world of finites as the actual or real transformation of Brahman. (2) Advaita Vedantic 'Vivarta-vāda' that holds the view that there is no real transformation of Brahman into differentiated objects. There is no change of the unchangeable or change of Brahman as such but the appearances of the Brahman to relative consciousness. Brahman does not transform into the world but appears as the world or illusory superimposition of forms and names upon the Absolute. World exists only in relation to the mind. The Absolute has become the universe by coming through time, space and causation. The differentiated world is the manifestation of the Absolute to consciousness bound by space

time and causality. To express in his own words - "The Absolute has become the universe by coming through space, time and causation... Time, space and causation are like the glass through which Absolute is seen and when it is seen in the lower side, it appears as the universe..... in the Absolute there is neither time, space and causation. The idea of time can not be there seeing that there is no mind, no thought, the idea of space cannot be there seeing that there is no external thing, what you call motion and causation can not exist where there is only One ..... we can only think of something in motion in comparison with something to which is moving".<sup>51</sup>

Swami Vivekananda gave a new interpretation of *Māyā* by which not only he tried to prove the world but also deify it. The deification of the world is something novel in Vivekananda's philosophy.

Buddhism and Vaisṇavite theism also tried to give importance on the effective side of human life. With a view to softening the stern logic and abstract metaphysical speculation of the Upanishads and Advaita vedanta Vivekananda in formulating his New Vedanta could not help insisting on effective side of human life. He realised the fact that in establishing spiritual bond of unity of human race can be made

only through love. He says - "The cosmos is a manifestation of love. From the lowest atom to the highest ideal love is the motive power of the universe. Under the impact of love Christ stands ready to give up his own life for humanity, Buddha for an animal, without it universe would fall to pieces in a moment. This love is God".<sup>52</sup>

A simple question naturally arises here - if love is adequate for the unification of mankind then why he brought about the concept of God in his philosophical speculation. Vivekananda never denied that religious feeling is not possible without faith in God but he believed that God has great evocative power. He says - "I have been asked many times - Why do you use that old word God?" In replying to this question he opined that God is the best word for it serves our practical purposes. He said - "All the hopes, aspirations and happiness of humanity have been centred in that word. It is impossible now to change it. All that is great and holy is associated with it".<sup>53</sup>

According to him the idea of God rouses the emotion of love and worm personal attachment. God has undying power. He believed that the heart has it's own counsel which may be superior to that often by head. Hence, he said - "If your heart comes into

conflict with the head, follow the heart".<sup>54</sup>

Swami Vivekananda opines that the world of causation is relative to our senses. Māyā is not the cause of the universe with its multiplicity of objects, it is also responsible for our maintenance of the existence of a personal God or Isvara. When we try to give reality to this world then it necessarily leads us to the idea that there must be a creator or a responsible ruler, i.e. God or Isvara. If the world is taken to be an effect then the effect must be owing to a certain cause. Hence, God is the creator of the world. This God is transcendent and immanent in the world. To Vivekananda this God is both efficient and material cause of the universe both the creator and the created. There is only one Existence, One Infinite in which we dream all dreams. Atman is the only Reality. This Atman or self is the eternal God. Isvara is not bereft of qualities and possessing these qualities God has individuality. He is not Impersonal like the Absolute or Brahman. Vivekananda describes God thus - "He from whom this universe proceeds, in whom it rests and to whom it returns. It is the Isvara the eternal, the pure, the all knowing, the Almighty, the Everfree, the Teacher of all teachers, the Lord who in his own nature is inexpressible love".<sup>55</sup>

According to Vivekananda there is only one God, the Absolute or Brahman, the only one without a second. From the superficial point of view we conceive two Gods - (1) Impersonal and (ii) Personal. The Impersonal is also known as 'Saccidananda' which is indefinable by any positive quality. Often attempts are made to define it only negatively - 'Not this, not this' i.e. 'Neti-Neti' personal God can be conceived only from the empirical point of view. This personal God is no one else but the Absolute or Absolute or Brahman which is seen through Māyā. The same Brahman which is also Isvara, the Impersonal and personal in one. According to Vivekananda Isvara is the highest manifestation of Absolute or to speak in other words the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind. The Isvara has only relative existence. As regards to the relation between the Absolute and Isvara - we can talk of relation when there are two things. But the Absolute and the personal God are not the two but one and the same. He says - "The Impersonal is conceived by the mind as the creator, the ruler and dissolver of the universe, it is the material and efficient cause, the Supreme ruler - the living or loving, the beautiful in the highest sense".<sup>56</sup> He has demonstrated the sameness of the Absolute with the help of the following example. "If a man starts from here and see the sun he will see at first a little sun, but as he

proceeds, he will see it bigger and bigger and untill he reaches the real one. At each stage of his progress he was seeing apparently a different sun yet we are sure it was the same Sun he was seeing<sup>57</sup> When seen through the glass of Māyā i.e. time, space and causation appears as the world and it's creator and ruler called Isvara or God. Vivekananda is of opinion that Brahman is the only reality and what is conceived as personal God or Isvara is the personified Impersonal Absolute. He holds that - "The whole universe is in the self - called Brahman. The self when it appears behind this that little universe the body, is the soul ..... the Universal self which is beyond the universal modification of prakṛti is what is called Isvara, the Supreme God<sup>58</sup>

According to Vivekananda man has the capacity to see God in the light of his own capacity. Man attunes the best attributes to God to the best of his knowledge, each attribute is the whole of God and this signification of the whole by one quality is the metaphysical explanation of the personal God. The concept of personal God is true as much as the world is true, but only relatively. The conception is true and not true at the same time. The statement of Vedanta 'You are, I am God' does not refer to personal God which refers to the Absolute. The

concept of personal God is the play of Māyā. For example, - in our ordinary life we succumb to snake-ropes illusion. We mistake rope for a snake when snake is not existing then and there in the outer world but exists only in the mind.

### 3.5 CONCEPT OF UNIVERSE ;

According to Swami Vivekananda the world is the exact miniature of the universe and whatever is found in the universe is also present in each and individual being. The rules and regulations operating in the universe are also operating in human constitution. Man can reach his highest goal of life provided he follows the correct means to reach it. Man is potentially divine and when he earns this distinction to realise his divinity completely he becomes one with the Absolute or Brahman. The whole Indian philosophical systems leaving a few is based on this conception. That is why Vivekananda opines that the true nature of Brahman or the universe is to be brought in the nature of man. He also says that as man is divine in nature so also the society for the society is composed of man.

According to Vivekananda in the scheme of the universe we find perfect harmony, order and regularity. The universe maintains perfect order in it. Both man and nature also fulfil

a definite purpose, contradictions and confusions that are seen in both man and nature are only apparent and not real.

Swami Vivekananda in explaining the theory of the universe maintains that - "It is He Himself who has become this universe. He is not only is the instrumental cause but also the material cause. The cause is never different from effect, the effect is but the cause reproduced in another form. Nature before it's creation was in a perfect balance without any kind of distinction of form and name. This state is called 'Avyкта'. But this state of equilibrium is disturbed when the three forces begin to mix in various ways and the universe comes into being. He also maintains that these three forces are in operation in the case of man also. He says - "These three forces also exist in man when the Sattva materials prevail knowledge comes, when Rajas activity and when Tamas darkness, lassitude, idleness and ignorance".<sup>59</sup>

Accepting the Saṁkhya theory of evolution Vivekananda maintains that the highest manifestation of the Absolute is the Mahat, the great which is the germ of the manifold world of objects including intellect, ego and mind. It is cosmic in it's nature but also having the psychological aspect called Buddhi or Intellect. To him human intellect is a part of the universal Intelligence or Mahat. Hence, the Mahat is distinguishable from

man or mind and the function of the intellect. The function of mind as Vivekananda says, is "simply to collect impressions and present them to the Buddhi. The individual Mahat which determines upon it. Out of Mahat comes egoism and out which comes again the five materials. The five materials combine and become the gross materials outside in the external universe".<sup>60</sup>

Intelligence is the reflection of the self upon nature. Vivekananda also holds that nature is inclusive of mind and thought. Beginning with thought to the grossest form of matter everything that we come across is the manifestation of nature. Nature is such that it covers the self if man and nature unveils it's cover the self shines own light. Now attachment is the means by which the cover of nature can be taken away. Egoism, will and mind, all have a common basis, the citta or mind, state out of which they all evolve. The mind stuff taken in the form of nature and project them as thought. Vivekananda also points out that - "There must be something again when both force and matter are one, this is called 'Avyakta', the unmanifested state of nature before it's creation and which after the end of a cycle, the whole of nature returns to come out again after another period. Beyond that is purusa, the essence of Intelligence".<sup>61</sup>

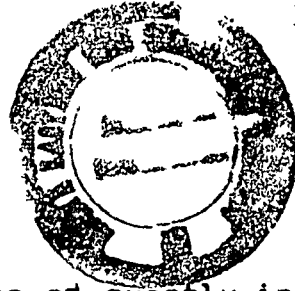
### 3.6 CONCEPT OF MAN ;

Ever since the development of human thought the concept of 'man' has occupied the most important subject for discussion in philosophical domain. Various sciences also have developed to interpret 'man' in different ways. The complexity of human life and the growing understanding of the ways in which human action and thought find expression have drawn interest in philosophical speculation. It is ever recurring fact that man is never satisfied with what he attains in the mundane world; but he wants something more and more, he wants to exceed himself. This ever exceeding nature of man draws him to infinitude. He is finite-infinite being. He is finite in regard to his physical existence no-doubt, but potentially he is infinite. This infinite potentiality in man finds beautiful expression in the philosophy of Vivekananda.

In accordance with the tradition of Vedanta he regards man as something unique, son of Immortality (Amṛitasya pūtraḥ). He conceived man as organic mixture of the materials of the universe, it is a synthetic universe or universe in a small scale. Man is constituted of physical matter of the animal kingdom, the animal ability to feel and desire, the simple intellect corresponding to higher animals now dead and it is

the soul which only makes the true man. It is the soul which constitutes man's essence which is immortal. Birth and death ought to be treated from the point of changes in matter rather than in our self is. Vivekananda writes - "The earliest idea is that when man is annihilated something lives and goes on living even after the man is dead".<sup>62</sup> Our body is not soul for while the body is perishable but the soul is immortal. The soul is the Atman which is neither mind nor the body. The Atman has neither form nor shape and time. It is Omnipresent and Infinite. This infinite nature of the soul leads to the idea of oneness. The individual souls are not real. The Real man is, therefore, is one Infinite, Omnipresent and Spirit. And the Apparent man is only a limitation of the Realman. The Real man is the spirit, beyond space and time. The Apparent man, the reflection is limited by time and space and causation and it is bound. Every soul is infinite, it has no birth and death. The Atman is the Real man which is unchangeable, immoveable and absolute. It being universal it is present everywhere, there is but one life, one existence. The teaching of Vedanta is that everything is one. The difference is in degree and not in kind. He says - "All is one which manifests itself either as thought or life or soul or body and the difference is only in degree. As such we have no right to look down with

103675



101

contempt upon those who are not developed exactly in the same degree as we are".<sup>63</sup>

Vivekananda looks upon man as a unity, not divided into sects, creeds, castes and class. This unity of man gives stress on synthesis of his interest. Science and technology has provided man with things of utility in abundance. But neither science nor politics can give man peace and happiness or sense of fulfilment. The utilitarian values proceed only from religion and morality. Science and politics can nourish the lower self of man. Vivekananda maintained that man in the course of development and self expression gives rise to various forces, physical, mental, social or political and the development of his forces requires to be matched by a parallel development of his inner spiritual forms which can only provide him the factors of stability to an evolving personality or social system. If science and politics want to make progress in the development of natural and social environment along with it there must be spiritual progress of man which alone can be adequate for his real development in terms of which Vivekananda tried to explain man.

Vivekananda is of opinion that man is potentially divine. This potential divinity of man is the universal ground of human

relationship. To quote in his own words - "Never forget the glory of human nature, we are the greatest God ..... Christ and Buddha are but waves on the boundless ocean, which I am".<sup>64</sup> He is the highest man who can say - 'I know all about myself'. Vivekananda maintained that man is already free and perfect and hence the question of perfection does not arise. It is we who mistaking our divine nature and our own self compel us to seek for realisation of God. He says - "After long search here and there, in temples and in churches, in earths and heaven atlast we come back completing the circle from where you started to your own soul and find that 'He' for whom you have been seeking ..... is in your own self".<sup>65</sup>

Vivekananda holds the view that the basis of our ignorance is the finite. We mistake universal self for our little bodies. He says - "As soon as I think I am a little body, I want to preserve it, to protect it ..... then I and you become separate. As soon as this idea of separation, it opens the door of mischief and leads to misery ..... all material knowledge adding fuel to fire, only going into hands of selfishman more instrument to what belong to others, to live upon life of others instead of giving up his life for them".<sup>66</sup>

Vivekananda formulates the content and meaning of man's life when he is a slave of nature. This is clear when he says - "The awakening of the soul to its bondage and its effort to stand up and assert itself - this is called life".<sup>67</sup> Success in the struggle is called evolution. The eventful victory rests on when slavery is thrown away - and this is salvation, Nirvāṇa or Freedom. According to him the ultimate goal of all individuals soul as well as man taken together is re-uniting with Brahman, with God, the so-called 'release'. It is realisation as he says - "I am He and He is I. I stand if I shut my eyes and try to conceive my existence - 'I' 'I' 'I' "<sup>68</sup>

Hence, Vivekananda in his attempt to interpret man tried to interpret the fundamental spiritual truth about man in modern terms so as to regenerate man-kind by bridging the old with the new, the East and the West. The principal teaching is - realisation of the essential identity of man's own self with the supreme self, Brahman that dwells in every individual as the innermost self.

### 3.7 CONCEPT OF SELF-REALISATION - MOKṢA :

All the Indian thoughts save a few centring round the Upanishadic view accept that man is a spiritual entity. He is

divine by nature. Vivekananda holds this view firmly. He interpreted the spiritual truths so as to enlighten mankind on the problem of human existence. To him the purpose of his life is to be one with One - the Absolute or to seek his real nature. Unlike Western thinkers Vivekananda made a distinction between mind and spirit, Atman. The aim of life is the realization of this Atman which is Jiva in bondage. Man can attain perfection only through spirituality which is way to Mokṣa or Liberation.

According to Vivekananda human soul is eternal, immortal, perfect, infinite. Death of a man belongs to physical body, not of the soul. Death is only a change from one body to another. The present life is determined by our past actions. But the soul goes on evolving up or revealing back from one birth to another, from one death to another death. But all these ideas should not lead us to think that man is a helpless creature moving hither and thither at the mercy of good and bad activities - 'a helpless wreck in an ever-rushing currents of cause and effect. Vivekananda stood up before the world and called upon the people • "Here ye children of immortal bliss, even ye that reside the higher spheres. I have found that the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusions. By knowing Him alone will be what saved from death over again".<sup>69</sup> He brought out the message of

hope to the people and asked them to shake off the delusion that they are weak. He writes - "come up O lions and shake off your delusions that you are sheep. You are souls, immortal spirits, free blessed and eternal ..... Man is the sour of immorality, has infinite power, infinite strength and not a helpless creature".<sup>70</sup> He opined that man is sure to attain liberation, if he gets three rare things - (1) Human mind is the highest reflection of God as man is God's own image, (ii) Man must have the intense desire to be free (iii) the preceptor who has already crossed the ocean of delusions.

Vivekananda tends to define self by using the concept of Real man. His concept of self is demonstrative for him, not objective, physical and mental inclination that distinguishes one man from another that his abstract realisation of his unity with Brahman. The real individual is the Absolute. But it is erroneous to think that in this case Vivekananda was a semi-orthodox theologian. But he while changing the accent in the contents of social system he brought forward component of social significance. His views are pregnant with the elements of a new approach to his self. He tried to connect the individuals with society, contrasted nature of Real man with individualist characteristics and was a aspirant of general liberation of the

society of Jivan muktas.

One of the characteristics of Indian philosophy is that it takes a composite view of man and his life and present before him two ideals each is complementary to the other. It concerns with both material and spiritual aspect of life. One is 'Abhudaya' and the other is 'Nishreya' and combining together provide for the physical and spiritual needs of man. Material prosperity is essential for the healthy growth of spiritual life. The philosophical aim of India is always spiritual perfection. Happiness and comforts provided by material prosperity is the means to achieve spiritual perfection. Vivekananda was aware of the workings of human nature. In commonsurating with the Indian religio-philosophical ideal he recognised four ideals of human life - Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa. All of these need satisfaction. But spiritual realisation or Moksa is the ultimate aim that is sought to be achieved with the help either these values.

According to Vivekananda pravirtti and Nirbritti are the two forces which are working in the life of man. Pravirtti resolves towards the world 'I' and 'mine', it includes all those materials which always enriches 'Me' by matter, name, fame etc. Nirbritti resolves away all these mundane things meant

for physical satisfaction. When the pravirtti of man begins to disappear there begins morality and religion. According to Vivekananda the very self-abnegation in man is known as perfection. This self-abnegation is the uniting point of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana yoga. It opines that nobody should have the idea that he can do something for the world. He writes - "The world does not require any help from you. It is sheer nonsense on the part of any man to think that he is born to help the world. .... Each one of our yogas is fitted to make man perfect even without the help of others because all have the same goal in view".<sup>71</sup> He also opines that the learned know that though apparently different from each other, they at least lead to the same goal of human perfection. Commenting on the self-abnegation Swami Bhajanananda writes - "Vivekananda did not just descent upon perfection of morality but he tried to elucidate the concrete stages on the way to attain it. Perfection is attained by gradual abnegation first of egoistic cares and desires for the sake of one's family, then of the narrow interests of the family for the sake of one's friends and by self-abnegation for the sake of the people, of the motherland, by reminding everything and being ready to sacrifice his very life for the good of the country..... such interpretation of the category of self-denial meant overstepping the limits of traditional Vedantism on the way to

practical task of modern life of which got fired with socio-economic content".<sup>72</sup> He holds the view that any man can attain perfection by faithfully discharging his duties in the stage of life he is placed. He writes - "When a man has fulfilled his duties and obligation of the stage of life in which he is born and his aspirations lead him to seek a spiritual life, to abandon altogether his worldly pursuits of possession, fame or power ..... when he seeks the truth, the Eternal Love; the refuge".<sup>73</sup>

Vivekananda is of opinion that Freedom or Mukti, Truth and God are synonymous. True love and affective beneficial works are possible only to those who are free. And this is the reason that his life and teachings were directed towards stressing on freedom and also he appealed to the people all over the world to realise freedom. All other works, disciplines or sadhanas must be oriented to that purpose and justified on that ground. He says - "Freedom was his soul and spirit, the passion and power underlying his life and works and the burden of his message".<sup>74</sup> He also writes - "It may be that I shall find it good to get outside of my body to cast it off like wornout garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire everywhere untill the world shall know that it is one with God".

His concept of Mukti is a mighty and all-inclusive ideal where there is no place for any kind of pettiness, weakness or fear. He once said - "You will go to hell if you seek for your own salvation".<sup>75</sup> He appealed to the people to kill the desire for personal Mukti and regarded the desire for killing personal mukti as the greatest of all spiritual disciplines. He writes - "Liberation is only for him who gives up everything for others whereas the others who tax their brains day and night harping 'my salvation', 'my selvation' wander about with their true-we-bing ruined present and perspective ..... selfishness is the great sin, one who thinks that he will get mukti before others is a selfish man.....".<sup>76</sup> He appealed to the people to bhun all kinds of selfishness. One who does for the benefit of others is a man of content. He derived utmost peace of mind for dedicating his life for the service of others. He said to Sister Nivedita - ".....I look back and scarcely find any action which I have done for meself, so Cristine I am content".<sup>77</sup>

He did not even aspire for his own salvation though he regarded liberation as the highest stage of man's life at the cost of life of others. "Now I have no desire for mukti. I do not care for it so long an individual in the universe remain without attempting it".<sup>78</sup>

Vivekananda opined that man is free, born free. He said - "Remember that I am free - free - born free .... Mukti is my religion .... I leave none bound, take no bounds".<sup>79</sup> He had bondage he himself admitted in that love and service to souls in distress.

According to Vivekananda man has parrenial urge for attaining freedom. All the struggles undertaken by man are really to attain freedom. He says - "Freedom is the motive force of the universe, freedom is it's goal. This universal struggle freedom attains it's highest expression in man in the conscious duties to be free".<sup>80</sup>

Vivekananda is of opinion that when a man attains realisation nothing is visible to his physical appearances. The realised soul only becomes aware of his divine nature. He remains as it is physically, it is only change in his attitude towards life and the universe. He discharges his duties as a normal human being in regard to his physical needs are concerned. To express the idea of Sri RamKrishna - "One does not grow a pair of horns after realisation. What takes place in him is an inner transformation. His attitude towards the world changes, his emotions become chastened and refined and his reactions and responses to outer situation and inner

responses become entirely different from those of ordinary human being and perceives the divine essence. And his self-knowledge makes him realise his own identity with all .....<sup>81</sup>

Vivekananda also said - "Even here (on earth) the relative existence is overcome by those whose mind is established in equality. God is flawless and the same in all. Therefore all these (passions) are established in God".<sup>82</sup>

Thus Vivekananda stressed the importance for the regeneration of man's individuality. His concept of individuality has a spiritual basis in essence more than supreme self. Each individual is a spirit living in a body. The realisation of this consciousness and manifestation of the individual spiritual content is the same with the universal unity that is the only truth - is the end of all Indian religio-philosophical systems. The ideal of man should be to cross the limits of egoism and enter step by step the great and unlimited realm of individual thought and cosmic unity. Vivekananda holds the view that spiritual idealism should be given proper footing to bring the spirit of harmony and universality.

### 3.8 HUMANISTIC FEATURES :

In India, since the ancient times life assuring humanistic ideas have been formed the foundation of Indian world outlook.

The ideas have been expressed in religio-philosophical form and developed in such a way that it paved the way for constant struggle against scholastic, ascetic and passive contemplation of the world. Being imbued with the traditional foundation of humanistic features of India Vivekananda tried to maintain it throughout his life. Truly speaking, it is difficult to understand the distinctions with the humanistic basis of contemporary religio-philosophical culture without taking into account Vivekananda. He assimilated and modified the religio-philosophical teachings of Vedanta turning them into condition of a new life. He pointed out that Vedanta reconciles the actual to the ideal. It stands for truth, harmony and oneness. It springs forth the spirit of selfless service, mutual co-operation among individuals obsessed with freedom and equality. As Vivekananda involves the ideal of social life it perfects social system. As a Vedantist, "Vivekananda, as Swami Ranganathananda maintains, - "..... made Indian philosophy concerns itself with problems of common man ..... he brings down Vedanta to fertilise the field of common life".<sup>83</sup> Vivekananda's assumption of human purity elevates the place of man in society and universe. He maintained that there is nothing above and beyond man. To elevate man he identified man with God. To quote in his own words - "The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body". He also said - "Of course, all animals are temples too but man is the

highest, the Tajmahal of temples".<sup>84</sup> "Man is the highest being that exists and this is the greatest world".<sup>85</sup> He even wants to the extent of personification of the highest divine substance Brahman with the ordinary living people and put forward the idea that to worship man is to worship God. He insisted on the alround development of human personality and asserted the right to happiness in the world. Through his active humanism he instilled in man sense of dignity, sense of responsibility for his own destiny and destiny of all people to make them strive for the ideal of good, truth and justice. He germinated in man abhorance for any kind of suffering. Hence, Chelyser observes - "The humanistic ideal of man is to a certain degree identical with Gorkey's 'Man' - with a capital letter".<sup>86</sup> For the first time in India he brought out qualitatively new humanism which played an important part in the general upsurge of national consciousness and the struggle of Indian people for independence. But his humanistic concept was not confined, however, to the four walls of India. The essence of his teaching was the universality God and his accessibility both in form and without form, the divinity of man, respect and understanding of all religions, the equality and brotherhood of man, renunciation of personal ego and service of man especially who were poor, , illiterate,

disinherited 'Daridranarayana' of the world.

Commenting on the then downfall of India he said - "I consider that the greatest national sin is neglect of masses and that is one the causes of our downfall".<sup>87</sup> To him the primary duties are to pay attention to the masses, their suffering and misfortunes. He upheld the view that humanism which stands for rationalism is incomplete which is devoid of human love and identity. It is the amalgamation of Advaitic 'Love' or 'Oneness' with humanity that helps in fostering humanism in society. That is why he repeatedly told us that man is not only to be loved but also to be worshipped for God is love. This love is not to be identified with ordinary love that is practiced in ordinary life. It is something deeper, something higher which needs cultivation. He defined love with Vedantic spirit - experience of 'oneness' which leads to unity. It is the attraction between soul and soul, something divine, not at all physical in nature. He advocated for the abolition of any kind of privilege that exists in society and barrier, social or national. He made people to realise the meaninglessness of all these and the reality of Vedantic concept of the goal of humanity.

According to Vivekananda individual salvation is incomplete without the total salvation of mind. Sister Nivedita writes -

"The priceless memory he has left with us who know him that -  
'there is no other thing so great as this love of man".<sup>88</sup>

Vivekananda said - "I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments and may I born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, sum total of all souls and above all, my God as the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship".<sup>89</sup> He believed in man equally as he believed in God. He was ready even to go to hell to serve others. Commenting on his humanism Romain Rolland writes - "It is wonderful that he kept in his feverish hands to the end the equal balance of the two poles - burning love for the Absolute (the Advaita) and irresistibile appeal to suffering humanity and what marks him so appealing to us that at those times equilibrium was no longer possible and he had to make a choice and it was the latter that won the day".<sup>90</sup>

Vivekananda did not rest satisfied with mere sympathy and compassion for the oppressed people. He was also busy with chalking out programmes that would enable him to eradicate social inequality. He did not approve the then social reformation made by certain enlightened people of India. Reacting on them he said - "You talk of social reform ? What do you do ? All that

you mean by our social reform either widow marriage or female emancipation and something of the sort of a reform may do good to a few no doubt, of what avail that to the whole nation".<sup>91</sup> He wanted to bring about radical reform, a revolutionary change in the social system. His humanistic Advaita or spiritual humanism aims at not only inner purity of man but all attempts to perfect society by eliminating environmental weakness of society. He realised that economic poverty stands in the way to humanism. He declared war against poverty. His slogan was - 'First bread and then the religion' He made a loud protest against existing social customs and evils and condemned hierarchical caste system and untouchability. He even condemned the concept of sin and said - the difference between a saint and a sinner is in the degree of manifestation of spirituality. His humanism was positive and not negative in character as Dr. S.L. Mukherjee observes - "The message of humanism remained inchoate till Vivekananda came and restored the people confidence in their own faculties".<sup>92</sup>

Vivekananda was well-aware of the strength of the toiling masses. He put much confidence on them for he believed that it is the toiling masses that form the true body of any society. So he imparted the message of faith, strength and courage to

these toiling masses. He wanted to make strong. It is by this positive strength that he wanted to make man a man and raise the country from slumber and inactivity because he understood the active role of the masses in the historical development of the country. He thought that the influence and power of Khatriya and the wealth of the Baisyas are possible only owing to the physical work of the Sudras. But he was at pain to see the deplorable condition of the masses. In order to raise the down trodden whom he believed to be 'Daridranarayan' he wanted to bring about radical reform, a revolutionery change in the social system. In solving the inequality he placed hope in the good will and magnimity of the propertied class. He gave clarion call to the upper class to comedown and to elevate the poor by life long sacrifice. He altogether condemned priviledge enjoyed by a handful of people. He stroke at the very root of priviledge and said - "I am clever in mending shoes, you are clever in reading the Vadas, but there is no reason why you should trample on my head. .... caste is good, that is the only natmal way of solving life. Man must form themselves into groups and you can get rid of that. Wherever you go, there will be caste. But that does not mean that should be priviledge. They should be nocked on the head".<sup>93</sup> He interpreted caste system on the basis of vocation in life and not out the basis of birth. According to

Jati, the category of life, an individual chooses to live in. This total rejection of privilege is the central theme of Vivekananda's Karma-yoga as well as Advaita. 'Each is great in its own place' was his oft quoted dictum. He was also aware of the fact that a voice of protest from the toiling class must come before long. He believed - "The lower gradually awakening to the fact and making a united effort against their oppressors determined to exact their legitimate dues".<sup>94</sup> He again said - "When the masses will wake up they will come to understand your oppression of them and by a puff of their mouth you will be entirely blown away. It is they who introduced civilization amongst you and it is they who will then put it down ..... therefore, I say, try to raise lower classes from slumber by imparting learning and culture to them when they will wake and awaken they must, they will not forget your good services to them and will remain grateful to you".<sup>95</sup> All these appeals of Vivekananda had only one purpose to inspire the people to fight for their rights, to instill confidence and strength to their hearts.

Vivekananda was optimistic in holding the view that his cherished social order might come into existence when Brahminical spirituality, Khatriya's political administrative talents, the Baishya's knowledge of economic development and Sudra's capacity for labour will be harmoniously combined both in individual and

social life of the people. This may be regarded as the index of Vivekananda's socialism the two pillars of which are →  
(i) the equal opportunity for all, (ii) the equal respect for the inherent divinity in all

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## CHAPTER IV

### GANDHI ON RELIGION

#### 4.1 EMERGENCE OF GANDHI :

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, in 1869 in a respectable Vaisya family of Khathaiwad. By the time Gandhi was born that was a period of religious Renaissance. The family Gandhi was born was Vaishnavite. Khathaiwad was the centre of Vaishnava sect founded by Vallavacharyya. His family followed this traditional theistic faith of Vaishnavism. Gandhi's father Kaba Gandhi and mother Putuli Bai were stern believers in God. And consequently his home was surcharged with an atmosphere of love, pity and devotion to God conceived as a personal and benevolent Being. He used to visit temples and saints from his very childhood. All these might have imprinted religious impression on the mind of Gandhi. His grandfather Ota-Bapa in addition to a follower of Vallavacharyya Pusti-marga was very much attracted to a Khaki-Baba, one of the followers of the order of Ramānanda who inspired Tulsidas, the well-known author of 'Ramcharitmanas'. Both Ota-Bapa and Kaba-Gandhi studied deeply this book. Gandhi also studied the Ramayana, the Bhagavad Gita, the Vaishnava poets of Gujrat

and the popular writings of the Jaina. From the beginning his devotion to religious literature and from the imitation of his elders he developed at an early stage a strong moral attitude towards the world. Gandhi himself mentions in his autobiography some simple but touching episodes of childhood which marked his power of truth and love.

Porbandar, the birth place of Gandhi was inhabited by people belonging to various religions of the world. E'clecticism had become their way of life and man enjoyed freedom to follow any religion as they pleased. His father had many friends belonging to various religions and they sometimes had religious discussions in his residence. Gandhi listened to their discussions. Gandhi also learned from his father the Indian maxim - 'There is nothing higher than Truth'. He also learned that Non-violence is the highest virtue. (Ahimsā Parama Dharma'). Though the concept of nonviolence was universally acknowledged among the Hindus all over India, yet it was most rigidly practiced by the Vaishnavas and particularly by the Jainas, and the combined influence of which turned the native place Gujrat into the land of vegetarian. Gandhi could not cast-off the spell of that influence. His mother Putuli-Bai was a pious lady and consequently her spirit of devotion, saintliness and orthodoxy

in respect of religion imparted religious spirit to Gandhi.

Two Hindu mythological drama- 'Sravana-Kumar' and 'Harish Chandra' influenced Gandhi a lot and he considered their moral to be of eternal value. He writes - "..... still both 'Harish Chandra' and 'Sravanakumār' are living qualities for me and I am sure I should be moved as before if I were to read these plays again to-day".<sup>1</sup> He also got by heart two valuable religious books - 'Ramaraksasotra' and 'Vishu-puja'. During his childhood, Rambha, a religious lady used to look after him and she asked Gandhi to repeat the name of 'Rāma' with a view to making him free from the fear of ghosts. This created on Gandhi an ardent faith in Rama so much that he became fearless throughout his life.

Gandhi learnt the art of practising social virtue from his family. For example, on untouchability he writes - "This idea was brought home to me by my bitter experience in South African struggle, it was not the fact that I was once an agnostic. It is equally wrong to think that I have taken my views from the study of the Christian religions literature. These views date as far as back the time when I was neither enamoured for nor as acquainted with the Bible".<sup>2</sup>

During his stay in England and South Africa he followed with sincerity the religions and social movements of the day. He studied Edwin Arnold's translation on the Bhagad Gita 'The song celestial'. This book impressed him so much that he wrote - "It opened to me a new view of life. It touched my spirit as perhaps it can only the child of the East".<sup>3</sup> It is the Gita that taught him that self-realisation is possible only through righteous action and Non-violence. He derived the eternal message of selfless action i.e. Nishkāma Karma' from the Bhagavad Gita. He did not interpret the Kurukhetra war as historical event but "..... under the guise of physical warfare, it described a dual perpetually going on in the hearts of mankind and the physical warfare was brought into to make the description of the internal dual more thrilling. This preliminary intuition became more a confirmed on a close study of the religion of the Gita....".<sup>4</sup> To be precise it was the Bhāgavad Gita that made him Karma-yogi', non-violent and to cultivate the spirit of self surrender to God.

Gandhi studied all major religions of the world. According to Gandhi Buddha and Christ were never theorists, they were activists, they were for direct action in accordance with their ends. They never advocated 'force' as a means of conquest. They

used moral force to fight against evil. These two were the apostles of love and gentleness for him. Gandhi studied Edwin Arnold's 'Light of Asia'. And this book gave a indelible impression on him regarding the life and teachings of Buddha. He liked Buddha because Buddha was opposed to cast-distinction, sacraments, rituals etc. the practice of which brings forth difference in individuals. Buddha was a permanent source of inspiration to him because Buddha tried to evolve new social values and accepted cosmic view of salvation. Gandhi fully accepted the Eight fold path of salvation of mankind enunciated by Buddha-particularly non-violence as most appealing.

Gandhi was equally well-versed in Christianity. He studied both Old Testament and the New. The message of Christianity especially the 'Sermon on the Mount' impressed him immensely. The ideals of detachment to worldly possessions, non-violence universal brotherhood etc. he derived from this. Gandhi expressed his view on the 'Sermon on the Mount' thus - "Today supposing I was deprived of the Gita and forget all its content but had a copy of the Sermons, I should derive the same joy from it as I do from the Gita".<sup>5</sup>

Gandhi also studied Islamic religious books. He was well-acquainted with Quran. He regarded Islamic religion as

the religion of peace. In this religion he found - "the spirit of brotherhood manifested in no other religion as clearly as Islam".<sup>6</sup> Islam means in it's way denial of self, annihilation of self. In brief, the ideals of Islamic religion like universal brotherhood, self-sacrifice etc; created much influence on Gandhi.

During his stay in England he also came into contact with it's Theosophists and their relating to the movement for the unity of all religions. Practically his contact with Theosophical society helped him a lot to study more of the Hinduism like the Gita, Vedanta, Yoga, Jaiminism and the books of Swami Vivekananda who virtually preached Vedanta in the west. From all these and other books Gandhi recieved much more than the actual contents offered. Louis Fischer regarded Gandhi as a creative reader. He said - "He co-authored impression a book made on him. He put things into it and took them back with interest".<sup>7</sup> He brooded over deeply over books he studied and was aware that while they agree on certain points, each had something valuable to offer. He did not consider it necessary unlike other religious thinkers that historical religions must be transcended to give a way to universal religion, the religion of humanity.

It is to be noted that though Gandhi was under the influence of many religions other than Hinduism yet he derived maximum spiritual satisfaction from his own religion, Hinduism. He regarded the traditional values of Hinduism sound and sufficient and found that Buddhism and Jainism are not at variance with the world outlook of Hinduism. His comment on the Bhagavad-Gita confirms this - "When doubts hurt me ..... and when I see not any ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad Gita and find a verse to comfort me".<sup>8</sup>

Gandhi himself confessed that "Three moderns have left a deep impression on my life and captivated me. Raichand Bhai and his living contact, Tolstoy by his book 'The kingdom of God within you' and Ruskin's by his 'Unto the last'".<sup>9</sup>

Raichand Bhai, a saintly merchant made a deep impression on Gandhi by his ideal of Hindu-life. He helped Gandhiji to become acquainted with most of the valuable books of Hinduism like - Panchikarana, Maniratnamala Mumukh Prakarma of Jogi Vasistha. These books helped him to deepen his religious faith.

Gandhi also felt the impact of some modern writers apart from the traditional source of Hinduism and other religions of the world. Henry David Thoreau's book on Civil

disobedience revealed to Gandhi for the first time how the philosophy of non-violence can be applied in the service of political cause. He was much impressed by his revolutionary ethics. What deeply acted on the mind of Gandhi was Thoreau's bold remark - "It is much more honourable to be right than to be law-abiding".<sup>10</sup> Gandhi thought over this remark with the help of his own experience and was assured that under certain circumstances non-conformity or downright disobedience of established law becomes not only a right but also a duty. Gandhi studied some books on atheism too, particularly the writings of Bradlaugh. But the atheism of Bradlaugh created no effect on him because in the meantime he had crossed the Sahara of atheism. His aversion to atheism was confirmed when Gandhi had gone through the books of Annie Besant - 'How I became a theosophist'.

The influence of Tolstoy was much more deeper on Gandhi. He read almost all the works of Tolstoy like - 'The power of darkness'. 'The Kreutzer sonata and the Devil etc; where Gandhiji strengthened his spirit of aversion to physical enjoyment. The seed of thought and action Philosophy and non-violence and particularly the importance of manual labour was implanted by Tolstoy to germinate the heart of Gandhi. Gandhiji says -

"The law that to live man must work first came to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing of Bread-labour".<sup>11</sup> He learnt that to provide service to humanity man must work and share in the production of the country. "Let us get off the shoulders for our neighbour",<sup>12</sup> impressed him a lot. What stirred Gandhi much more was Tolstoy's 'The kingdom of God within you'. In this book Gandhi found eloquent advocacy of truth and non-violence and a moving expression of the beauty of suffering. It was Tolstoy who showed him how a man may through suffering set himself free and neutralise the power of evil. This book cured Gandhiji of his scepticism and made a firm believer in Ahimsā. Gandhi himself writes - "Ahimsa truly understood, is in my humble opinion, a penance of all evils mundane and extramundane. Mahavira and Buddha were soldiers and so was Tolstoy, only they saw deeper and truer into their profession and found the secret of and humours of Godly life. Let us jointly share with these teachers and this land of ours once more be a abode of God".<sup>13</sup>

Gandhi believed that love is the law of nature. To exercise force is to neglect human value, the cause of degeneration of man. This deep rooted conviction of Gandhi gained momentum when he found the same idea in Tolstoy's writing.

"Love is thus the inspiration for communion and solidarity with other souls and that inspiration always liberates the source of noble activities. That love is the supreme and unique law of human life which every one feels with the depth of one's soul".<sup>14</sup> Gandhi was a seeker of Truth. His belief in truth was reinforced by the teaching of Tolstoy. "The Heroine of my writings, she who always was, is and will be beautiful, is truth".<sup>15</sup> Gandhi's belief in the Upanishadic ideals regarding the idea of God and His relation to man gained deep rooted ground when he went through the writings of Tolstoy who said - "I feel God for the first time..... I knew that He existed - that I existed in Him a limited being in the Inlimitable. He is in me, the unlimited within the limited".<sup>16</sup>

Gandhi was also influenced by Ruskin, Referring to Ruskin's book 'Unto the Last', Gandhi says - "..... the book that affected me more than was 'Unto the Last' by Ruskin. I was in South Africa then. I was reading of 'Unto the Last' on a railway train to Durban in 1904 when I was thirty and that made me decide to change my outward life".<sup>17</sup> He was influenced by the philosophy of Ruskin particularly that part of philosophy, the synthesis of thought and action, of aims

and ends, of the harmony attained between words, beliefs and action. Gandhi followed striking similarity with his deep rooted conviction with Ruskin. He said - "I discovered some of my deep rooted convictions reflected in the great book of Ruskin and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life".<sup>18</sup>

Gandhi was tremendously influenced by the teachings of western philosophy and religion no doubt, but we see that Gandhi had already those ideas in his mind. The living contact with these ideas only served him to strengthen his convictions. J. B. Danurelle says - "The influence of western thinkers like Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau has been repeatedly acknowledged by Gandhi himself. But in each case influence was that of corroboration of an ethical precept, a crystallisation of basic disposition".<sup>19</sup>

The inquisitive mind of Gandhi tried to learn and assimilate those ideas of different religions, but all those enriched his basic belief in divinity, the indigenous Indian religion and Philosophy by putting them to the acid test of experience. Though he was exposed to powerful influence of science during his stay in England but his scientific attitude could not alter his deep faith in religion, rather scientific attitude helped his religious faith more scientifically.

#### 4.2 GANDHI'S IDEA OF RELIGION :

A widespread idea developed throughout the globe owing to the advancement of science and technology that religion is opposed to science. Religion transcends experience and hence nothing to do with practical life. This idea gave a dead blow to the religious thinkers of the 19th century and consequently led them to find out the ways and means to have a reconciliation between science and religion. In this connection William James was a religious thinker who became prominent in holding the view that religious ideas must be based on ascertainable and verifiable facts and religious ideas must correspond to scientific truths and thereby he established the foundation of scientific religion. Similar to William James Mahatma Gandhi was also confronted with the same problem and developed his thinking similar to James. In doing so Gandhi did not follow the western ideas blindly rather he interpreted the religious concepts into consonance with the new social and ethical demands.

Being born in a Hindu family Gandhi instinctively related to Hindu tradition. He was attracted to the central theme of Vedas when he emphasised on Truth which is higher than God.

And in accomplishing this his religious ideas became similar to advanced philosophical and religious ideas of Hindu tradition. Gandhi did not develop systematic philosophy of his own for he had little knowledge of Sanskrit and as a result he could not go through the original texts of Hinduism. He had to remain satisfied with studying English translation of those religious scriptures. But in spite of this he, however, was capable of retaining the indigenous traditional thoughts like Binding truth, Detached Action etc; intact and injected new blood by introducing the concept of Satyagraha into Indian tradition.

As Mahatma Gandhi did not develop any philosophical ideas of his own so he did not present his religious ideas systematically. It was the work of the later thinkers to systematise his religious philosophy in subsequent time. But it does not indicate that he had no meaningful philosophy as Unto Tahtinen observes - "In order to have a meaningful philosophy it is not necessary for a pioneer to present his thoughts systematically himself. This may be the task of others as in the case of great philosophers like Socrates and Buddha. No one as Louis Fisher explains knows himself completely nor can express himself. This he says, is especially true of Gandhi".<sup>20</sup>

Gandhi was religious by nature and his doctrines are essentially religious. According to him - "Religion is a mighty tree that absorbs it's sap from that moral height of those who prefers that religion".<sup>21</sup> He became a political leader by necessity of circumstances. Acharyya Kripalani writes - "..... even to politics which for long he dominated and transfused with his light he drifted by accident, was not drawn by his innate inclination".<sup>22</sup> Gandhiji himself admitted that his participation in political life was for him a means to religious life. He practised politics in order to realise religious ideas into practice. He said - "To see the universal and the All Pervading Spirit face to face one must be able to love the meanest creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot keep out of any field of life. It is devotion to Truth that has drawn me into the field of politics and I can say without any slightest hesitation and with all humility that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means".<sup>23</sup> If we wish to understand Gandhi it is important first to understand him as a religious personality. Gandhi was a Karma-yogi, who aimed at perfection through morally justified action. Unto Tehtinenn observes - "Gandhi's ideas were based upon religious tradition not political, judicial, philosophical or economic.

He always tried to base his political and economic doctrines on religion. He demanded economic independence (Swadeshi) on the ground that it originally meant the soul's find emancipation and freedom from earthly bouds".<sup>24</sup>

As Gandhiji was linked with the Hindu philosophical tradition so eclecticism is the most prominent note of his religion. To express in the words of Romam Rolland - "His doctrine is like a huge edifice composed of different floors or grades. Below is the solid groundwork the basic foundation of religion. On this vast and unchangeable foundation is based the political and social campaign. It is not the ideal continuation of invisible foundation but it is the best structure possible under present conditions. It is adopted to conditions".<sup>25</sup>

According to Gandhi religion is such which constitutes the most important aspect of life. Religion is a matter of life and death, religion accompanies beyond one's grave. He described the impact of religion on man thus - "Life without religion is life without principle, a life without principle is like a slip without a rudder".<sup>26</sup> Only religion can help man in reaching the ultimate goal of life and cross over the sufferings of life.

Gandhiji advocated freedom for every individual to believe in his or her faith provided the faith is commensurate with moral principle and a faith that does not contradict ascertainable facts. He wanted religion to be a science and religious ideas must be in consonance with practical affairs. He tried to ensure phenomenal and existential interpretation of religion.

"In India the religions tended to be pluralistic while the philosophies were monistic but this could serve a compensation to maintain equilibrium between the two contraries, but this hardly brings unity and coherent meaning to life".<sup>27</sup> Gandhiji had to break through the paradoxes and with a view to providing with coherent meaning to life he formulated Practical Idealism. This helped him to give active and living to traditional beliefs in Hindu doctrines.

By practical Idealism he meant that morality has an unconditional character in the guise of ethical ideals. The attainment of these ideals are not the exclusive monopoly for the rishis or saints alone, these are equally meant for ordinary people also. He said - "This practical Idealism means the coming together of moral practice and ideals not in such a way that ideals are derived from practice or from factual

behaviour but in such a way that behaviour moves in the direction of that ideal".<sup>28</sup> Gandhiji criticised those moral propogandists who do not by themselves live upto their teachings. Morality must be applied to all fields of human activity. A moral or norm theory which remains purely speculative has no significance. It has no organic relation to synthetic truth.

Gandhiji's concept of practical Idealism may be applied to another sense also. According to him the awareness of a normative world in a way depends upon the subject himself. This awareness does not concern simply the relation of individual and others, it also concerns wider social and political relationship. He said that so long the curse of untouchability goes on poisoning Hindu's own mind, as long as he himself untouchable in the eyes of the world and an untouchable cannot reach real freedom. He said - "If I want to rid the earth of venomous beasts and raptiles I must rid meself of all venomous thoughts".<sup>29</sup> That awareness of a normative world depends upon the subject. This idea should not suggest us that his attitude is arbitrary or it is subjectivism. He was an objective Idealist as he believed that reality is valuable though we are not aware of it. We could

say that only a man who has become good realises that this world is in reality good.

Gandhiji did not conceive religion as one of the tiniest activities of mankind. For him "even the finest activity is governed by what I consider to be religions".<sup>30</sup> That religion was the end and the end of his life becomes clear to us when he said - "I could not live a single moment without religion".<sup>31</sup> To him religion means bound to God and hence he had deep faith in God.

According to Gandhi the existence of God may be regarded as a matter of fact by those people who have a living faith in it. This living faith has many useful consequences. It solves a number of problems in life and reduces our misery. Gandhiji opined - "It sustains us in life, it is our solace in death. The very search for truth becomes interesting and worthwhile because of this belief".<sup>32</sup>

According to Gandhi prayer is the inward communion with the divine and it constitutes the very essence of religion. His prayer is born out of conviction that faith creates its own verification. According to him - "There are subjects where reason can not take us far and we have to accept things on faith".<sup>33</sup> He also maintains that suffering is the best weapon

to attain perfection in life. His belief in God was the source of hope and strength to him.

For Gandhiji religion that takes no account of practical affairs and does not help in solving problems of life is no religion at all. He did not believe that spiritual laws act in a field of it's own. Religion must express itself in and through the ordinary activities of life. He wanted to make religion dynamic and purposive in character; religious ideas must have flexibility. Religion is not simply divine revelations or purely intellectual, but must function of it's practical fulfilment. Religion is the law of life and God must be treated as living power. God is neither in heaven nor down below, He is everywhere. Religion provides us with a moral basis to all our activities of life.

To make religion a science he held the opinion that religious concepts must have universal acceptability and objective meaning. He sought to find a phenomenal and existential equipment to God which would be acceptable and intelligible even to the atheist. That is why he asserted that 'God is Truth'. Even going to a step further he declared - 'Truth is God'. He came to this conclusion after continuous and relentless search after truth for 50 years. This distinction he saw makes a point

of departure from his original theological position to the monistic conception of God.

Gandhiji did not regard moral laws as subjective or timeless essence. Though these moral laws are spiritual revelations yet their truth consists in their practical applicability. According to him Ethics, the science of morality must be explored with the same spirit as we do in other positive sciences even though they differ in regard to it's nature of investigation. When we engage ourselves in our investigation with the same spirit we do in physical sciences it is possible to ascertain and systematise the moral laws. Ethics is like an architect's plan and its value is limited to that extent that moral ideals control the practical ordering of our lives. Moral ideals manifest in the action of man.

According to Gandhi - "True religion and true morality are inseparably bound with each other. Religion is to morality what water is to the seed sown in the soil".<sup>34</sup> He rejected religious doctrine that comes into conflict with morality. He was ready even to tolerate unreasonable thoughts when they are not immoral. His central thesis was that we cease to be religious when we lose moral basis. He opined - "Identification with God for man is impossible without self purification or

morality".<sup>35</sup>

Gandhi also opined that morality consists not in passive obedience to custom or in abiding by the duties and accepting responsibilities imposed by the community. Virtue consists in doing what are believed to be true and good. Gandhiji himself formulated the ultimate test by which all moral acts could be judged. He says - "In finding the actions of man we should always apply the test whether it conduces to the welfare of the world".<sup>36</sup> He also prescribed certain cardinal virtues like - Truthfulness, Non-violence, etc; by which man can act morally in order to attain perfection in life.

Though Gandhi laid to much importance on spiritualism yet, he did not reject reason. He had regard for all religious scriptures of the world no doubt, but the acid test of religion is reason. He would reject all authority if it conflicts with reason or dictates of heart. He was ready to reject all religious doctrines that do not appeal to reason. According to him error claims no exception even if it can be supported by all scriptures of the world. An error does not and can not become truth by reason of multiplied propogation nor does truth become error because nobody sees it. So Gandhiji never became

slave to superstition prompted by certain ancient tradition. The faculty of man is God given and therefore, any tradition, however, ancient it may be, if inconsistent with morality should not be accepted.

Gandhiji did not concern with the absolute good. Moral should have an existential base, they are experimental and not prescriptive. In his treatment of morals Gandhiji does not only provide for the exercise of freedom but bears scope for the formulation of hierarchy of values in order that antagonistic opposition between authority and innovation ceases. To be precise, Gandhi's concept of religion is a way of life to be cultivated consciously. The sole aim of his life was to apply rather than discover religion.

Commenting on Gandhi's conception of religion Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes - "The inspiration of his life has been what is commonly called religious, religion not in the sense of subscription to dogmas or conformity to ritual but religion in the sense of abiding faith in the absolute value of truth, Love and justice and on a persistent endeavour to realise them on earth".<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.3 CONCEPT OF GOD :

The concept of God is the nucleus to Gandhi's philosophy. He had absolute faith in God like all the great saints of the world. He called God his 'inner voice'. He could not proceed even a single step without having the idea of God. Without the presence of God in his mind he felt misery and disappointment. He says - "If I do not feel the presence of God within me I feel so much misery and disappointment everyday that I would be a raving maniac and my destination would be Hoogly".<sup>38 (1)</sup>

Gandhi derived the idea of God from different religions but this was only to enrich his basic belief in divinity, he acquired from the Vaishnava family in which he was born. The Vaishnavite thinkers like Ramanuja, Madhaba, Vallab etc; who succeeded Sankara tried to refute the conception of God as interpreted by Sankara who upheld the doctrine of Indeterminate Absolute. Against this conception they established the conception of God as concrete possessing all the qualities and perfections like Omnipresent, Omniscient, benevolent and all mercifulness. This Vaishnava theism which had similarity with Christianity and Muhammedanism made very easy for Gandhi to accept the basic principles of Theism and other faiths of the world. Hence D.M. Datta observes - "Gandhi was rather a theist than an Advaitan".<sup>38 (1)</sup>

It seems to be correct when we come across with certain statements made by Gandhiji himself. He said - "I am Advaitist and yet I support Dvaitaism (Dualism). The world is changing everymoment and is therefore, unreal it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, it has something in it which persists and it is, therefore, to that extent real. I have therefore no objection to call it real and unreal and this being called as Anekantavada or Syād vāda".<sup>39</sup> From the above statement Datta concludes that - "His own words clearly show that he is not an Advaitist in the sense of Sankarite who would neither support dualism nor the logic of Syād-vāda".<sup>40</sup>

In his prayer meetings in the open he used to sing a rhyme which suggests to hold that Rāma, Isvara, Allah - are all names of God. Even on the eve of his death only the words that came out from his mouth were - Rāma, Rāma. Again, in opposition to fatalism Gandhi was a firm believer of the theory that man is the architect of his own faith. He also believed that man's perfection and liberation come only by self-surrender and grace of God. He says - "For perfection or freedom from error comes only from grace ..... without an unreserved surrender to His grace complete mastery over thought is impossible".<sup>41</sup> The above statements clearly indicate that he

was a Vaishnava for Advaitan Sankara never believed in God's grace.

But sometimes Gandhi made certain statements which almost confirm us that he affirmed his faith in Vedanta. He also said - "My Rāma ..... is not the historical Rāma. He is the Eternal, the Unborn and the One without the second. Him alone I worship".<sup>42</sup> Again - "I believe in Advaita, I believe in the essential unity of man and for the matter of all that lives. I believe in the absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. Though we have many bodies we have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through reflection but they have the same source".<sup>43</sup>

Apart from what have been described above there are certain thinkers who are prone to place Gandhi in the rank of Advaitan. As P.T. Raju observes - "There is no doubt about Mahatma Gandhi being an Absolutist and a Monist. For him God is the only truth. He alone exists. Everything else is Māyā. So we are all sparks of truth. The sum total of the sparks is indescribable as yet unknown truth, which is God".<sup>44</sup> Similarly T.M.P. Mahadevan writes - "The expressions that Gandhi used to indicate the plannery reality is closely similar to those that are employed in Advaita. .... God is that

indefinable something which we feel but I do not know".<sup>45</sup>

The controversy whether Gandhi was a Vaishnavite or Advaitan is based on certain misunderstanding about the religio-philosophical basis of Indian tradition particularly Advaita. If the aim of philosophy is to know the universe as a systematic unity than Advaitan's speculations are designed in bringing about a spiritual conversion of the finite to the Infinite by means of knowledge. Advaita has prescribed the method of training faculties of knowledge gradually through a number of definite stages in order that it may lead towards what yet fall outside the scope Human reasoning necessarily to pass through a series of tentative conclusions each reasoning is valid for a particular stage, but they come into conflict each other when conditions under which they are valid is ignored. The terms like truth, reality etc; that we find in Advaita have always reference to particular contexts but indiscriminative use of them leads to certain difficulties. The right estimate of the place of God in Advaita lies in it's classification of experience in that different levels of perfection - like Vyavahārika and Paramarthika level of experience. If we do not try to understand this distinction the correct assessment of Advaita spirit of teaching is not

possible.

Transcendence of duality with all its forms is the fundamental characteristic of paramā̄rthika experience. This experience destroys the very recognised cannons of human knowledge because in this level of experience the subject object duality is not there. It is absolute or ultra-relational experience. Human knowledge always involves subject object relation i.e. relational or discursive experience. As Reality transcends subject object duality, so it can not be known through discursive knowledge. So to bridge the wide difference between finite and Infinite Advaita prescribes the method of gradual training of finite faculties through different stages of approximation to what is yet beyond their scope. Hence, our relational knowledge undergoes transmutation leading ultimately to the absolute experience. The aim of this method is not to remove the defects of discursive knowledge but it suggests rigorous intellectual scrutiny as an indispensable generative condition of Absolute experience when Reality alone stands self revealed. "The rigorous intellectual scrutiny is like temporary scaffolding which has an indispensable function while the construction is not completed, the discursive knowledge prepares the path to intuition and is therefore, an important

preponderance to Absolute experience".<sup>46</sup> Advaita never discussed the world of experience as wholly unreal. It is unreal only from the paramarthika level of experience. It is not real means it is not as real as Brahman, it has its phenomenal reality.

From the above discussion we can ascertain the place of Advaita. "God as an Omniscient and Omnipotent being possessing personality and perfection and as such inspiring and satisfying religious sentiments of humanity has a genuine place in it. Such a God is also real as the individual centre of experience or as the world of common experience, our moral striving. Our aspirations, our happiness and misery. Neither He nor the minds and the material things are mere illusion. The fact that they are absolutely non-existent from the stand point of higher experience does not mitigate against the genuine relativity of our experience as it is now".<sup>47</sup> That Reality is ultra-relational above all determinations is the central point of Advaita. But at the same time it is also conscious of the relational character of all thinkings. It follows from these two propositions that ultra-relational is inconceivable for us, yet logical thought being an indispensable stage in the process of raising the ultra-relational Absolute

the unthinkable has to be brought under the condition of thought by means of attributing to it what is not belong to it - i.e. Super-imposition. " . . . . The Brahman thought absolutely distinctless is to be conceived as Māyā Sakti or Prakriti of the Omniscient Lord. Thus super imposition what is but another name for accomodation to the conditions of discursive thought occupies a prominent place at the method of stipulating thought to go beyond itself".<sup>48</sup>

It is not proper to think that Vaishnava theism is incompatible with Advaita. Among Advaitans even we find vaishnavas, Saivas and others. Advaitans believe that Reality is non-dual but prefers Vishnu for their personal deity. T.N. P. Mahadevan also observes - "To the Advaitan Nārāyana is God, even as Siva is. The heads of the monastic orders established by Sankara even to this day conclude that messages, that they issue, with Nārāyana Smritti . . . many a classical workers on Advaita begins with an invocation to Visnu-Nārāyana or to one of his avatāras".<sup>49</sup>

Gandhi described his Rāma as the Eternal, Unborn, the one without a second. To him Rāma is not sectarian because Rama and Krishna are regarded as avatāras, both belong to the Indian cultural tradition as a whole, even Sankara recognises

is beyond speech, true knowledge of religion breaks down barrier between faith and faith, the soul of religion is one but it is encased in multitude of forms".<sup>53</sup>

It is true that Gandhi started his life as a conventional believer in personal God but later as he grew up he came to be convinced of the highest truth of the non-dual spirit. That Gandhi was an advaitan is proved when he says - "In truth there is no being as Brahma or Siva. The only Reality is Brahman. This is one total and all embracing Absolute, Indescribable. Truth is God, the other things are relatively true".<sup>54</sup>

Having discussed the philosophical background of Gandhi in regard to his concept of God we are now in a position to discuss certain important ideas of Gandhi associated with God. One of the important concepts that caused ecstasy in the mind of Gandhi is truth. He evolved this concept for practical purposes and all his actions are based on this concept of truth in relation of Reality which he described - "My Experiments with truth".

Gandhi described God as the Absolute truth. The fundamental reality is, therefore, truth or God and He is everywhere. He made a clear distinction between "God is truth" and "Truth is

God'. In subsequent period when Gandhi preached 'Truth is God', he made a departure from his theological position to the naturalistic conception of God. He did it because there are too many names of God but "there is no double meaning in connection with truth and even the atheists had not demurred to the necessity for power of truth..... And it was because of this reasoning that I saw rather than say 'God is truth', I should say 'Truth is God'".<sup>55</sup> To Gandhi as truth is universally accepted without any objection from any corner as he preferred best to describe 'God is truth'.

'God is truth' as we find in Gandhi's writings has two different connotations. In certain times he meant by it 'a mighty affluence' which means desires to see face to face and of which he himself has only seen faint glimpse. But Gandhi is of opinion that if one attains the full vision of truth, one will not be mere seekers but become one with God for truth is God. Thus Gandhi sometimes regards truth as an Advaitan, might speak about Brahman and goes to the extent of saying that it 'alone is real and all else is unreal'. Truth stands here for a monistic Absolute and only final Reality with which one can mystically identify. As such truth is a traditional concept and choice of 'Satya' derived from the sanskrit root 'sat' which means 'Being' is also significantly

Hindu going back to the vedas and the upanishads. But truth appears to man in that way only rarely. Generally truth is linked with moral action and that was the reason why he changed the formula - 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God'. According to Gandhi the essence of religion is morality and called his autobiography 'The story of my experiments with truth'. He said - 'Truth is what you believe to be true to this and that is your God',<sup>56</sup> is the strongest expression of his conviction which formed the deepest grounds of Gandhi's personal religion. The central point of his religion lies in facing truth in all actions. When Gandhi regards truth as right action he again inherits the richness of those ancient Hindu term 'Dharma' and Rta. It is to be noted that some ancient Hindu-philosophers interpreted the word 'Satya' or 'Dharma' as Law or Cosmic Law. A western scholar Bonder has proved that Rta means truth - a meaning which carries the most sense when consistently applied to all pages of the Vedas in which Rta is mentioned. This concept of Rta can be translated as 'Binding truth' - to convey the existential obligation which ties man, God and world together in a direct way. Indira Rothmound also observes - "It is this invocation of this bond which seeks to characterise most pages in the Vedas which means Rta".<sup>57</sup> According to Lauder Gandhi attempted to sum of the whole philosophical position of the vedas in one sentence -

"God is the essences of the vow" (vr̥ta). Gandhi recovered this meaning of the Rita in his own Experiments with truth.

According to Gandhi truth is indefinable but faith in it is essential for any enquiry. He said - "We embark upon the search because we believe that there is truth and that it can be found by diligent research and meticulous observance of the wellknown and well-fired rules of search".<sup>58</sup>

Gandhi again holds the opinion that where there is truth, there is knowledge. If truth is Reality and truth and knowledge is co-equal than it implies that truth is an instance in which both knowledge and thought are co-related. Truth is the ground on which knowledge and experience are based. It is reflexive of thought as well as action. To him the real meaning of truth is moral conviction which impels a man to set in accordance with it. But the value of his conviction changes according to moral and spiritual development of the person concerned and the pursuit of his life and conduct. If a man realises that truth completely, nothing is left to be known by him because truth includes all knowledge. No inward peace can be gained without perfect knowledge of truth.

Gandhi did not regard God as a metaphysical concept. He described God as - "that indescribable entity which is

unknown but can be experienced - God is truth and love. God is ethics and morality. God is fearless, God is conscience, a theism of the atheists, transcends speech and thought. For those who needs His presence He is a personal God, He is Omnipresent, He is Omnipotent and a great democrat since he gives freedom to choose between good and evil".<sup>59</sup>

Gandhi lived in God's conscience fighting the battle of life. God sustained him in life. It was his solace in life. His own experiences led to the knowledge that "The fullest life is impossible without a immutable belief in a living Law in obedience to which the whole universe moves".<sup>60</sup>

Though Gandhi described God as mysterious power but being a practical mystic he felt the presence of Him in each and every object of the world. He thinks that God reveals Himself daily to human being but we shut our eyes to the 'still small voice', we shut our eyes to the pillars of fire in front of us.

God is both immanent and transcendent. He is in all human beings though He transcends them Gandhi says - "God is the purest essence. He is simply to those who have faith in Him ..... He is in us and yet above and beyond us. The

only way to God is to see Him in His creation and to be one with it. God is found even in the lowest of His creation than in the higher and mighty".<sup>61</sup>

The most outstanding feature is that Gandhi described God as poverty incarnate - 'Daridra-Nārāyana'. He said - "To people furnishing the ideal that the only acceptable form in which God can appear is work and promises of food as wages".<sup>62</sup> He can think no poetry or hymn in premises of God except the term food for the poor. He said - "I have found it impossible to soothe the suffering patients with a song of Kabir, the hungry millions ask for one poem the invigourating food".<sup>63</sup>

Gandhi's great contribution lies in the fact that he made no dichotomy between religious, spiritual and practical. To him God can be realised only by pure heart. People fail to identify themselves with God without self purification or morality. He said - "To see God one need not go on a pilgrimage or light lamps or burn incense before the anoint the things of deity or paint red vermilion".<sup>64</sup>

Gandhi believed that man of great moral strength is not afraid of wicked rather the wickeds are afraid of him and he protects the virtues. Such a man is looked upon as 'Avatāra'

or incarnation of God. God never incarnates Himself as a human being for God is the creator who never borrows in time. It is the human nature to call the person who has some complacence in him as avatāras. Krishna, Rāma etc. are looked upon avatāra in this sense.

Gandhi also defined God in terms of identity principle of Brahman and Atman. If one can conceive of one Atman when all the embodied jivatmas get liberated, that Atman is God. God is pure consciousness. God does not descend from above but the truth is that each one of us is an avatāra if we affirm it without egoism. He writes - "When the 'I' is melted God can be found to exist in water, land and mountain tops. God, the individual soul and the universe are in essence Reality. Even God vanishes to the realised person".<sup>65</sup>

#### 4.4 PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD :

T.K. Mahadevan, an editor of the Gandhi Marg wrote - "Gandhi minus God is zero".<sup>66</sup> This statement shows that God is central to Gandhi's teaching. All his doctrines are derived from it. He had so deep rooted faith in God that he did not require any proof for the existence of God. He said - "you may pluck my eyes but that can not kill me; but blast my

belief in God and I am dead".<sup>67</sup> But he had to advance certain arguments or proofs for the existence of God in order to make others believe in God. The reason why he did not like to prove was that must have been surprising if he had tried to do so. He was averse to wield the weapons of academic philosophy. God was to him such an intensely felt reality that the question of establishing God's existence did not arise. To him "God is the unseen power which manifests itself yet defies all proof".<sup>68</sup> According to Gandhi reason can not prove the existence of God. Reason can prove only the world of beings. His argument is rational and simple for "God is so unlike that is perceived through senses".<sup>69</sup> and it transcends all senses. Any kind of proof according to Gandhi demands that the object of proof and the object of proof belong to the same domain. But God is unlike and differed from objects of world revealed through senses. Hence, the existence of God can not be proved.

But Gandhi was alive to the fact that if he affirmed that the existence of God is beyond proof then that would make the common people think that either God does not exist or God is simply a fabrication of mind. People will not accept that God is but it's existence can not be proved. He, however, tried to make it clear that God is not the imagination of the human mind. He said - "The question of anyone creating does

not arise, least of all by a significant creature such a man. He can, however, picture God in his mind in many ways. But how can man who is unable to create even a river or wood create God. That God created man is, therefore, the pure truth. The contrary is illusion".<sup>70</sup> But Gandhi subsequently did not deny the possibility of reasoning out the existence of God to a limited extent. God may not be perceived by our limited minds and yet He exists. He made an illustration in this regard. He said "In my tour last year in Mysore, I met many poor villagers and I found upon enquiry that they did not know who ruled Mysore. They simply said some kind ruled it. If the knowledge of the poor people was so limited about their ruler, I who an infinitely lesser than God then they then their ruler, not be surprised if I do not realise the presence of God, the king of kings".<sup>71</sup> This argument suggests that as the human beings are incapable of proving the existence of God, it does not follow that it does not exist. But he could not help formulating arguments in support of his view on pragmatic grounds.

Gandhi did not advance some of the time honoured proofs for the existence of God. If the universe is taken to be an effect in time, it must have a cause for there can not be an effect without a cause. This cause can not be mechanical or blind

as the orderliness or regularity of the universe prove to this. So there must be an intelligent principle or unchangeable divine law behind which governs everything. He said - "I do deemly percieve that everything around me is changing, ever dying, there is underlying all this a change, a living power that is changeless that holds all together that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power or spirit is God".<sup>72</sup> It must be because of God that the universe is not a chaos but cosmos. He said - "That there is orderliness in the universe ..... it is not a blind law for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings ..... that law which governs all life is God".<sup>73</sup> Here Gandhi has blended both cosmological and ontological proof together. For Gandhi told that phenomena of changes and fluctuations cannot be explained unless we accept some permanent ground of these changes, the substructure of changes and transformations. His ontological argument held the idea of perfect Being implies the existence of a perfect Being. But Gandhi's argument penetrated deeper and asserted that deep into the changing world must be some changeless entity that remains unchanged amidst the changes, that is God. This shows that he stressed on immortality rather than immutability. Gandhiji said - "In the midst of death life persists in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst

of darkness life persists. Hence I gather that God is life, truth and love".<sup>74</sup> Truth to be immortal or to use his own term 'deathless'. What Gandhi wanted to assert is that what is changeless is permanent and what is permanent is Real i.e. God. God is the only Reality.

Gandhi was interested in proving the existence of God on moral ground. He regarded consciousness as the 'inner view of God'. The purpose of life is the direct intimation of the good and divine in man. The existence can be proved only through a definite realisation. This is more real than the false and deceptive sense perceptions however real they may appear to us. It is not proved by any external evidence, but in the transmuted conduct and character of those that have felt the real presence of God within. He opines - "He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect he ever does ..... God to be God must rule the heart and transform it ..... it is not proved by extreneous evidence but in the transmuted conduct and character who have felt the real presence within".<sup>75</sup>

Gandhiji also tried to prove the existence of God on authoritarian and historical testimony. "Such a testimony is to be found in the experience of the unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes",<sup>76</sup> He said.

Over and above these arguments Gandhi in an intelligent manner tried to convince people by holding the view that - "If I exist, if our parents exist and their parents had existed, then it is proper to believe in the parent of the whole creation".<sup>77</sup>

Gandhi was, however, of the opinion that God is too subtle to be proved and hence he did not like to waste his time in this regard. According to him it is matter of enlightened faith to believe in God. He said - "I confess to him (i.e. doubter) that I have no argument to convince him through reason. All that I advise him to do not to attempt impossible".<sup>78</sup>

#### 4.5 GOD AND THE WORLD :

It is well-known that Gandhiji not only wanted to spiritualise but also to moralise religion. So it is natural that his concepts of the world might have been influenced by the spiritualistic tradition of India particularly Advaita for the reason that at that time Sankara's Advaita recieved wide-spread attention of the west owing to untiring effort of the great vedantist Vivekananda.

Gandhi's concept of world is closely associated with his concept of God. His concept of the world is reminiscent of theistic vedantic Nimbārka who tried to reconcile Dvaita and Advaita. D.M. Datta observes that Gandhi's attempt "to do justice to the unity and diversity of the world strongly reminds us of the theistic vedantist Nimbārka who tries to reconcile Dvaita and Advaita."<sup>79</sup> Gandhi dedicated his life for the removal of suffering of his fellow beings, he could not dismiss the world as wholly unreal. On the other hand, he sometimes described the world as the sport of God. "Let us dance to the tune of His banshi-flute and all would be well".<sup>80</sup> Gandhi regarded the world as an illusion in the sense of 'Lila' or sport like the Vaishnavas.

Did Gandhi then believe in the reality of the world as real as Brahman? To this question D.M. Datta remarks - "Gandhi sometimes speaks like Sankarite and called the world unreal . . . ." so he believes, "perhaps Gandhi meant unreal was only impermanent and transitory".<sup>81</sup> But to an inquisitive reader on Gandhi, the use of the word "perhaps" would leave sufficient doubt in him and compel him to think that Gandhi did not regard the world as real as Brahman. That Gandhi's mind was drawing towards Advaita becomes clear when he said -

"The wonderful implication of the great truth 'Brahma Satya Jagat mithyā' (Brahman is real, all else is unreal) grew on me from day to day".<sup>82</sup>

Now the question arises - Is the world nothing or unreal for the Advaitan? Here D.M. Datta admits - "Infact epistemologically Sankara can be classed rather with the Realists and pragmatists in so far as he admits the existence of an external world outside and independent of subject mind and Judges the validity of knowledge by practical results".<sup>83</sup> Regarding the status of existence Sankara made three kinds of distinct existence. It is the practical result of contradiction and non-contradiction that constitutes the distinction, what is never contradicted is of the higher order of reality, is Paramarthika, is Sat. Objects perceived in dreams or in illusions are always contradicted in our daily life. Similarly, objects of the world of experience are also contradicted when the stage of intuition is reached. So according to Sankara all kinds of experiences are real, although their realities differ in degree.

If we make a deep scrutiny of Advaita of Sankara then it is found that he never made this world dissolve into nothing. To Sankara the world of experience (Jagat) stands transfigured

as the manifestation of Brahman if the attention is diverted from the multiplicity to the unity of the whole universe or our Judgements are revised owing to the dawn of new experience of intuition. So to Sankara the negation of the world means transformation, re-organisation, revaluation than annihilation. From the metaphysical standpoint regarding the relation between the world of experience and the Absolute (Sat), Sankara maintained that the world is not a groundless phantom rather it is grounded in the Brahman. The falsity of the world consists in considering the world as having independent reality. "All this world of name and form, is real, the real being their essence, but considered independently or by themselves are false".<sup>84</sup> Thus Brahman or Absolute of Sankara is not an abstract principle. It is real of many sided energy which is manifested in universe. The created energy being designated as Māyā. It is a mistake to hold that the world is an illusion. Dr. D.S. Sarma observes - "For true saying that the world is an illusion, Sankara condemns the Buddhist school of Vijñānavāda which says so as a species of heresy. What Sankara means by his Māyā-vāda is that the world belongs to a lower order of reality than God who is perfect reality . . . . what is imperfectly or incompletely real is not illusory . . . . To Sankara life is emphatically not an empty dream, or an illusion, where morality has no place".<sup>85</sup>

Again, the concept of 'Lila' that we find in Hindu religious literature does not suggest that the world is a mere stage play or a meaningless show made in a jest. The concept of Lila was employed to indicate the overflow of the divine into the universe. The world is created by God out of his joy. This does not mean that moral law has no place in it. To express in the words of Dr. D.S. Sarma - "The eternal values implicit in Brahman is realised in human history on the plane of space-time cause. Thus the world is the profoundest expression of the divine nature. It is entirely dependent on God but God does not depend on it. It is His nature to express himself thus. It is the Lila".<sup>86</sup> Gandhi also affirmed the same view. "Therefore, it is that Hinduism call it all His sport and call it illusion or Māyā".

So according to Advaita the world is not real from the standpoint of ultimate truth. Sankara uses the three words to denote three kinds of experience - Pratibhāsika, Vyavaharika and Paramarthika, which respectively mean illusory, empirical and real. To Sankara also life is not an empty dream or an illusion where morality has no place. The world has only empirical existence - Vyāvahārika sattvā. The world like it's cause, Māyā is neither real or unreal, nor both real or unreal and it is the projection of Brahman endowed with Māyā. Even

the dream world has a degree of reality. Gandhi also opined - "dreams are also true while they last".<sup>87</sup>

It is not true to maintain that when Advaita view is accepted there is no scope for social service. Gandhi might have received the inspiration in formulating his social service programme from positive Vedantist Swami Vivekananda. Gandhi's spirit of social service is in accordance with Advaita view because Sankara himself on the commentary of the Gita remarked - "They (Jogis) are intent on promoting good will, they are non-violent".<sup>88</sup> Sankara only stood for plannery experience, the glorious vision of reality to gain to which Gandhi constantly dedicated his life.

#### 4.6 CONCEPT OF MAN :

Humanism which looks upon man as a purely natural phenomenon and whose outlook is confined to space and time do not appeal to Indian thinkers. They do not regard it as the highest system of ethics for it attempts to perfect human life by natural means alone. This kind of ethics encourages cynical subservience to nature. But man is not simply a natural being but also spiritual. Man is not satisfied with material civilization or even by unending progress. To the Indian

thinkers if the ethical thought is to be made profound and perfect, it must give transcendental motive to morality. Human spirit always tries to cross the boundaries of the finite and empirical reality. The religio-philosophical trend of India has been always insisting on the idea that every human being is a potential spirit and man in the depth of his souls something uncreated, deathless and absolutely real and hence they find the meaning of life not in this world but in something which is higher than historical reality. Infact man cherishes the ideal that transcends historical succession in space and time and that helps him to realise his own self. As D.S. Sarma observes - "If good will, pure love and disinterstedness are our ideals than our ethics must be rooted in other worldliness. This is the classical traditions of spiritual wisdom".<sup>89</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi who was also the torch bearer of this classical system of India regarded man to be a complete being. In his philosophy man has occupied a unique position. He believed that man has a great future and is evolving towards a higher and noble destiny. He was aware of the power of man. Man is not only endowed with physical body which is liable to decay according to the law of nature but also conscious, with emotion and some similar other mental qualities. These

are the expressions of his indestructible spirit or soul in him. So Gandhi declared - "It is a rare thing to be born as a man".<sup>90</sup> Hence, to make best use of his human life he dedicated his life to raise human beings into a higher spiritual plane and to remove the suffering of humanity in general.

According to Gandhi body and soul are not two ultimate and independent realities. He regarded God as the ultimate reality who manifests itself as body and as spirit, as matter and consciousness. Being a monist Gandhi believed in one all pervasive reality i.e. God. Gandhi tried to avoid the problem as to how two or more absolutely different and independent entities could at all be interrelated, the problem which is faced by the Dualists and the pluralists who try to understand and explain the world by assuming more than one reality. But it can not be denied that there is an interrelation between mind and body. To avoid the difficulty the monists try to understand the universe by assuming one all-pervasive Reality. According to Sankara all change and multiplicity are mere appearances. He regards body and mind as the finite appearances of one ultimate Reality, Brahman. So the self of man according to him is nothing but Brahman. Man thinks himself to be finite because of his ignorance of his own nature, which being known,

man realises his complete identity. This doctrine is known as Advaita or Non-dualism for it is the negative answer to the implied question - 'Are man and God (Brahman) two.

There is also other types of monism which accept the existence of one ultimate Reality. Brahman or God but regard external the objects, the bodies and selves are real though finite in opposition to Sankara's Advaitism. These monisms altogether deny Sankara's doctrine that man and God, the self and Brahman are absolutely identical in reality. And the followers of this view led to the existence of various Vaishnava schools in India. Though Gandhi sometimes claimed himself to be an Advaitan as D.M. Datta observes, he was not the strict follower of Sankara because Gandhi did not regard the world as mere appearances. Hence D.M. Datta observes - "By Advaita he (Gandhi) seemed to mean monism in general including both types distinguished above. This prestige term has sometimes been used in the wider sense of monism and he follows that trend".<sup>91</sup>

#### 4.7 MAN, GOD AND THE WORLD :

Mahatma Gandhi while dealing with the problems of the relation of man to God did not discuss from his own view point.

He accomplished it from the progressive Hindu thought particularly Advaita conjoined with the idea of Christianity and Islam and injected mobility and dynamism to it. D.M. Datta remarks that - "Gandhi tries to keep his conception of man and God mobile and dynamic by thinking God as force, as life etc; as if to make him admit of divergent lines of manifestation incarnation and inspiration".<sup>92</sup> To be precise Gandhi never entered into the intricacies of the exact relation between man and God. He showed a decisive preference for simplicity as against complexity. He tried to solve the problem in religious way. He regarded individuals as real and centre of the life of God and God as the ground of all individuals binding together in an inseparable relation. While in the one hand Gandhi regarded man as of supreme importance, on the other hand he also said - "I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore of humanity. What though we have many bodies we have one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction, but they have the same source".<sup>93</sup> This statement of Gandhi is in perfect accord with his positivistic Vedantic vision.

But Gandhi made certain statements in regard to the relation of man to God and these statements are having striking similarity with Vaishnavite theistic thoughts. It seems that

he was mostly influenced by Swami Vivekananda in consonance with the modern western emphasis that 'All this is nothing but Brahman'. He was mostly influenced by the humanitarian attitude of Christianity and inculcated the idea Man-God (Nara-Nārāyana) and regarded the service to humanity as the best worship of God and as the path of salvation. Gandhiji accepted this idea whole heartedly and practised it throughout his life.

In India religion is a life to be lived and it is not a thing to be accepted beliefs to be adhered to Gandhi regarded service to humanity as an approach to the divine. He presented this idea to modern India by combining them in thought living them in life and giving them social and political shape.

Gandhi believed that "God resides in human form indeed in every particle of this creation everything that is on earth".<sup>94</sup> This presence of God implies that man has reason, morality and freedom of will. And all these help only to a small extent in his march towards his goal. So it is through intuition or 'inner voice' that supreme power can be achieved. That was the reason why he exhorted man to lead his life listening to the dictates of his conscience (i.e. inner voice). Gandhi believed that man is the architect of his own fate. He must be able to understand his particular nature and try to

perform it with a view to attaining perfection in his life. He must not ignore truth, neglect conscience and indulge animal passions. He must try to cultivate the quality of love, goodness avoiding joy believing that the divine power is within us and we are Infinite. So he asked the people to follow the ideals of Gita thus - "Raise yourself, by yourself, do not depress yourself. You are your friend, you are your foe".<sup>95</sup> Man is free to choose any path either the path of degradation or the path of upliftment. He said - "The brute by nature know' no self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of and in so far as he exercises self-restraint".<sup>96</sup> According to Gandhi the human civilisation is possible for man because he can control the bases tendencies and he can flourish because he can replace those low tendencies by good will and love. He also says that God has given man freedom to play in his own game and only man must keep interest to improve himself inspite of repeated failures. Man must learn the lesson that 'failures are the pillars of success. He said in a balanced tone - "If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards Ahimsa (i.e. love) it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is Kinetic. If there is no progression,

then there is retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it be good by itself".<sup>97</sup>

#### 4.8 HUMANISTIC FEATURES :

The word humanism regards human interest as the most important. It's first and foremost aim is to guard and foster human inspiration and welfare. In the west humanism as an intellectual alternative has been developed under materialistic background. But this is not to lead us to think that humanism is bound to be materialistic. To be precise humanism as such is neither necessarily linked with materialistic or spiritualistic ontologies. If humanism develops at certain parts of the world with an accompanying feature of materialistic formulation, there is nothing wrong in locating humanism in another part of the world with the accompanying spiritualistic tradition. Whether humanism develops with materialistic or spiritualistic features depends upon the cultural set up in which human point of view has been found as being emerged. The religio-philosophical tradition of India being spiritual so the humanistic feature as found in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is based on this tradition. Referring to the opening verse of Isha upanishad Gandhi himself writes - "Socialism or even communism owes it's origin from the verse 'That God

the Ruler provides all those in the universe, so renounce and dedicate to Him and then enjoy or use portion that may fall in your lot. Do not covet anybody's possession".<sup>98</sup>

Hence, it is almost certain that he picked up certain ideas from tradition of India as well as Ruskin, Tolstoy etc; and he lay belief in God to ally his love for Indian people with his love of humanity in his own peculiar way. He even demonstrated his love for some Britishers in the opposite camp. He writes - "My love of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country becomes free, that if need be, the whole country may die so that human race may live".<sup>99</sup> This shows that he had no racial hatred.

Mahatma Gandhi never used the word humanism in any of his writings and declined to call his ideas a philosophy. That does not mean that humanistic ideas are absent in his preachings and activities. That he was a humanist is confirmed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan thus - "The humanism I see in his life, ideas and works, in an incipient recognition of his sympathy for people inspite of their weaknesses, disabilities and mistakes ..... his life evidences to the evolution of an attitude of love which healed many people and brought a note of sympathy into the world..... he emerged a giant among man and brought awareness of political, social and human freedom

to many millions of people and also gave him a practical method for achieving redress against wrong, by practising of non-violent assertion of rights. And as he succeeded in remaining essentially human that is to say, posted the feeling for the dignity of weakness human beings. It considers him to be one of the few important humanist of our time".<sup>100</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi laid much emphasis on the place and value of individual in the historical process. Contradicting the concept of Karl Marx he wrote - "Man is superior to the system under which he may be living or working".<sup>101</sup> Gandhiji believed - "If one man gains spirituality the whole world gains with him, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent".<sup>102</sup> He had also great faith in immense power possessed by man and once he said - "A small body of determined spirit fired the unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of human history".<sup>103</sup> He had so much faith in human power and capacity that only man can rise to the highest pinnacles of spiritual and moral greatness.

Ahimsa, according to Gandhi, is the main force of history. The goal of history is the oneness of humanity. He said - "I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives".<sup>104</sup> Non-violence or Ahimsa is a universal

principle, it is not a matter of practice for an individual only. It can be practised by groups or communities and nations. He described the non-co-operative movement in India to be an evolutionary revolution. According to him true democracy which guarantees equal freedom of all is only possible by the outcome of non-violence only. He also said that - "The structure of world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence and violence has to be totally given up in world affairs .... Non-violence is the most harmless and yet equally effective way of dealing with political and economic wrongs of the downtrodden portion of humanity".<sup>105</sup> At the same time his concept of non-violence was a message of personal suffering and sacrifice rather than inflicting suffering to others even on the wrong doer. He directed non-co-operation against natural civilisation and its attendants grow and exploitation of the weak.

In India his ambition was to get rid country of its division and to discipline the masses to self-dependence, raise woman to a position of economic, political and social equality with man. He wanted to make an end of religious hatred and cleanse Hinduism of its social abomination of untouchability. The success he achieved in removing the blot

on Hinduism would stand out as one of its greatest contribution to the progress of humanity. So long as there is a class of untouchables he belongs to it, he said - "If I have to be reborn I wish to be born an untouchable so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled against them in order that I may endeavour to free myself and then from the miserable condition".<sup>106</sup> He said that we love God as unseen and at the same time behave cruelly with people who move by his life or life derived from Him is a contradiction in terms. He taught to treat the poor and downtrodden as 'Nara-Nārāyana' and he equalised the service of man with worship to God. 'To serve man is to serve God' was his maxim. One of the striking peculiarities of Gandhi was that he practised whatever he taught to the people. Being a caste Hindu himself, he voluntarily decided to live with the untouchables to become one with them in appearance and standard of living. His identification with the poor and untouchables had a revolutionary influence upon the whole caste-system which had deteriorated to a system of social discrimination. He turned his position into a position of strength by identifying himself with the oppressed. He influenced the masses and protected the minorities with the same method of identification. Nehru writes - "In his (Gandhi's) single track and many sided nature, the dominating impression

that one gathered was his identification with the masses, a community of spirit with them, an amazing sense of unity with the dispossessed and poverty stricken not only of India but of the world".<sup>107</sup>

It has already been observed that his all forms of life as eternal part of God head, he directed all sorts of activities to serve eternal purpose. He often was willing to intensify his own life by fasting, suffering and prayer with a view to giving anything to the cause of human liberation. The essence of his teaching was the struggle for human decency and hence in this respect he may be regarded as a humanist. Keeping in view some doubts in him by some of his young colleagues he said - "He says, he does not understand my language and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language has no bar to union of hearts. And I know this when I am gone he will speak my language".<sup>108</sup>

The essence of his humanism lies in the repeated questions he made to himself - Oh God, how shall I serve the people new? He answered by himself - wipe out every tear from every eye. His heart bled for the poor and hence he said - "Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless one whom

you may have been and again ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him, will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him to controll over his own life . . . . you will find your doubts and your self melting away".<sup>109</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi's caste-system was entirely different from what we actually mean by it. He did not base caste-system on social superiority, but on duties. He said - "I am inclined to think that the law of heridity is an eternal law and my attempt to alter it must lead to utter confusion. 'Varna-Dharma' or caste-system is inherent in human nature. Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science".<sup>110</sup> According to him the various classes define duties and does not confess any kind of privilege. He said - "That does not mean that a Brahman is absowed from bodily labour, it does not that he is pre-dominantly a man of knowledge and fitted by tracing the heridity to impart to others. There is nothing again to prevent a Sudra from acquiring all the knowledges he wishes only he will best serve with his body and mind and not envy others their special qualities of service. Brāhmin who claims superiority by right of knowledge fails and has no knowledge. Varnāsrāmā is self restraint and conservation of economy and energy". Hence, it may be said that his conception of caste-system is based on abnegation and not on privilege enjoyed

by any man. Romani Rolland remarks - "Gandhi unlike our European revolutionery is not the maker of laws and ordinances. He is a builder of new humanity ..... His ~~keenest~~ earnest efforts, however, were given to regeneration of the suppressed classes ..... his cries to sorrow and indigestation at the monstrous social in equality which oppressed them, would alone immortalise his name".<sup>111</sup>

His patriotism is same as humanity. He said - "I am a patriot because my patriotism is not exclusive. I will not hurt England and Germany to serve India. Imperialism has 'no' place in my scheme of life. A patriot is so much less a patriot if he is a lukeworm humanitarian". His real doctrine is much broader and much more universal than that expressed in the gospel which he approved. As Rollan Romani observes - "Gandhi was much more a word, he is an example".<sup>112</sup>

His message of self-sacrifice both in teaching and action is a unique contribution to the world in bringing friendship with the whole world. Non-violence has come and it will remains. It is the annunciation of peace on earth.

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## CHAPTER V

### 5.1 RELIGION AND SELF-REALISATION :

The fundamental feature of religion from the beginning of history is that religion is an inward transformation, a spiritual change that helps in overcoming the discords within our own nature. Religion helps to satisfy the fundamental needs by giving him a faith and a way of life and thus restore the broken relationship between him and the spiritual world above and the human world around. Swami Vivekananda also identified religion primarily with spirituality. He did not regard religion to be a mere attitude of faith. To him religion is realisation. He said - "It is only at the level of transcendental experience which is what religion is really all about".<sup>1</sup> Religion is also a great cosmic force which enables humanity to transcend itself and to take the next step in its evolution. The very aim of religion in the long run is to bring into existence a higher species than man. This is one of the reasons why man in all ages and countries have clinged to religion in spite of its mistakes, defects and drawbacks of its manifestation in the world of man. Mere vague spirituality can never take the place of religion. To fulfill the true purpose of religion it

has to incarnate himself into some historical religion in accordance with the conditions prevailing in the various places and time on the earth.

Hinduism is one such historical religion. It is highly philosophical and at the same time practical of all religions. It is a fact that every religion has its own philosophy. The dichotomy of religion and philosophy has not been recognised in India as in the west. If philosophy is understood to be the search of the spirit religion brings about the immediate awareness of that spirit and thereby forms the very basis of religion. Swami Vivekananda said - "Religion without philosophy runs into superstition and philosophy without religion becomes a dry atheism".<sup>2</sup> Philosophy is the underlying basis of all religions while symbols, forms and mythology etc. are only stepping stones in the attempt to reach the ultimate.

This sanskrit word 'Dharma' which is roughly substituted for religion is difficult to translate. It is translated into English as Law, Duty, Morality etc. To be precise Dharma is Mokṣa in the making. If Mokṣa is taken to be the complete divinity then Dharma is divinity under human conditions. Dharma is half divine as well as half-human. It is divine in the sense that it is the call of the spirit, and it is taken to be human

because Dharma changes in accordance with the conditions of time and place. The code of law progress along with the progress of man but in each and every step there remains an element in it and hence it is to be obeyed as divine commandment untill it is abrogated.

At all stages and in different forms religion is also a concern of the personality as a whole and beliefs and practices are intermingled with strong emotional attitude. In most of the religions these beliefs refer to supernatural being or beings. The religions which do not believe in such supernatural beings, they believe in the validity of some supreme moral ideal. Thus every religion has faith either in some kind of transcendence, may it be some kind of or ideal. Each religion is also related to certain religious practices in the form of prayer and worship. The followers of each religion pray to the supernatural Being taking to be transcendent and yet not indifferent to His creatures. The followers of religions who do not believe in God they pray to the founder or the founders of the religion concerned and these founders are believed to be the embodiment of all that is highest, purest and noblest. For example - Buddhists pray to Buddha and the Jainas to Arhats. All kinds of prayers made always involve a spirit of self-surrender as well as intense

desire to get oneself purified from all kinds of ignorance and to be led to that which is pure and bright. These religions practices are nothing but the outward expressions of the inward desire for realising the supreme. As religion arises in the inner life of man so most of the religions believe in some stable character of the inner personality of man, i.e. soul. This soul is believed to be in relation to a power beyond and yet permeating it. It is believed that the soul has kinship with the spirit and has its destiny of its own and has continued existence beyond earthly life even after death. This soul may be absorbed in the Supreme soul or it may have some kind of separate existence. The advanced religions also point out the suffering to which the soul is subject and at the same time indicate the possibility of liberation. Buddhism which does not believe in permanent self also speaks of its liberation. The fact of suffering and the problem of escape from suffering has gained such an importance that many advanced religions even concerned with the means of removing them. To be precise, the various religious practices are connected with the problem of curing the evils and sufferings to which human beings are subjected. Hence, the concept of self realisation or Mokṣa has become an important subject of discussion for most of the living religions of the world in different forms and languages.

All religions have come into being owing to the personal experiences of the seers who became directly aware of an Infinite spiritual present beyond and within the range of the mundane world. Hence, the personal experience of union with the Absolute Reality or God has been a common and continuous feature of all the faiths of mankind. In Hinduism, particularly in the Upanishads we find the idea of religion as direct experience of the Divine - 'Brahmaanubhava'. It is a direct and active participation in the truth, the affirmation of the supreme identity of man in the depth of his being with the Absolute, the Transcendental Reality. They assert the oneness of the inward self and the Absolute. If a man fails to recognise the immortal in him, he is subject to the law of Karma, of necessity. He becomes a puppet pulled to and fro by invisible forces. But one who succeeds in realising the universal self in him, he begins to act from a new basis of freedom. Similarly the Bhagavad Gita also teaches that the soul being a portion of the Lord or a fragment of the Divine returns to its home in God. Hence, the ultimate aim of man should be the spiritual realisation or contacting ultimate Reality, i.e., 'Brahmasamparsa'. In order to have this communion the Bhagavad Gita emphasises on prayer and devotion. In Vaisnavism also we find that man can realise the supreme through devotion and love. The aim is regeneration of mankind,

a spiritual transformation of human nature. Religion is essentially rebirth, 'dvitiya-janam'. Similarly all historical religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity Islam etc. stress more on the renewal of life, the attainment of transcendental consciousness than the worship of personal God.

According to Buddha our subject to time, to Saṃsara is due to Avidya. From avidyā man must rise to vidyā, bodhi, enlightenment. It is an immediate, non-discursive intuitive relation with the Absolute truth. When a man has Vipassanā, knowledge by seeing, clear perception he will acquire unshakable calmness. The Buddha aims at a new spiritual existence attained through Jnana or bodhi, absolute illumination. He aims at spiritual experience in which all selfish worldly desires are extinguished. It is a pure state of perfect inward peace together with the conviction of having attained spiritual freedom i.e. Nirvāṇa.

Mahabira, the founder of Jainism, renounced the world and was able to realise the dignity of his own self. In order to attain self realisation he advocated three great principles like Darsana, jnana and charitra. According to him man must have faith, 'Sradhdhā that there is something superior to the things of the world. But mere faith in it will not do. He

must have knowledge - manana. By mere textual learning man can not get life eternal. He must embody these principles in his own life, caritra or conduct is equally essential. As the principles of caritra Jainism asks us to undertake certain vows like not to kill anything, not to lie, not to take what is not given, to preserve chastity and to renounce worldly pleasures. The most important vow is Ahimsā, the vow of non-violence. Absolute truth or Kevala-jnana should be the ideal of life. As truth has many sides man can have only partial view of it. The complete truth can not be attained in these vows. It is only realisation by the soul who can overcome their own passions.

In the Ādi-Grantha of Sikhism we find a wide range of mystical emotion, intimate expression of the personal realisation of God. It believes in the freedom of human spirit. According to Nānak the means to the knowledge of God is - self-surrender to God. God is something inward in the soul. By perfect self-surrender with humility ignoring the petty egoes man can attain super human reality. Man is a child of God, comes from God, is always in Him as a partial expression of God's will. When he becomes perfect manifests God's will perfectly. Man can freed from the rotating wheel of Samsāra by union with God attained through devotion. Man must accept God as the guiding principle.

belief in a separate self and its sufficiency is the original sin. Self-noughting is the teaching of Jainism.

In Christianity Jesus advocates that the ideal of man is to transcend the intellectual point and feel inward supra-social spiritual realities. Jesus demands inward renewal and inner change. According to him the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be found in space, but a state of mind. The Kingdom of Heaven is present, here, immediate. "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand",<sup>3</sup> He said. It is the attainment of truth which makes for Freedom or Liberation. By 'repent' he meant the change of the inner man. Man can attain higher level of being through violence to his own lower nature, through abstinence and self-control. He advised man - "ye must be born again from above".<sup>4</sup> means spiritual birth, not physical or natural. A proper understanding of man's whole nature is the meaning of salvation. Truth realisation is the meaning of the soul by contemplative prayer and ascetic practice.

The prophet of the Islamic religion, Muhammad teaches that God is an Infinite and Eternal being without form and place. He is present in our most secret thoughts by His own nature and derives from himself all moral and intellectual perfections. The Quran teaches that everything in the world is perishable except the Allah. It abides for ever. The unique

personality of Allah far above and beyond human reach became transformed into the one Real Being revealed in all created beings. He is the true self of man which man can find by ignoring his individual consciousness in ecstatic self abandonment. The definition of fanā as a transcendental state and the way to it by extinguishing all passions and desires is similar to Buddhist concept of Nirvana and the way to it.

Before Lao-tse, the Chinese regarded Tao as the ultimate reality. Tao is eternal, unchanging, all pervading principle of which all other developments are manifestations. It is the prime cause of all existence manifesting itself in the creator and the created universe. Tao is the source as well as the goal to which all things tend. From Tao comes the One, the great Monad which is the material cause of the world. Tao in man is not generally manifested. Man to regain tranquility must set out on the Quest of Tao. Vacuity and extinction of the worldly desires alone can induce man to have possession of Tao. Lao-tse demands that a man who is eternally free from worldly passions can apprehend the spiritual essence of Tao. This stage is called Purgation. The goal of Taoist is to attain unity with Tao. When Tao is attained we regain tranquility. Real virtue consists in spontaneous experience of Tao within. Tao cannot be attained by artificial conformity to moral law.

According to Zoroastrianism Ahurā. Mazda is the supreme Being, the law of life and matter, the cosmic Lord Isvara from whom have come out purusa and prakrti. Out of the three rays emanating from the supreme, Asha is the first ray which represents the will of God which planned out the universe. Asha stands for truth and righteousness. The highest ideal of man is to have union with the supreme and it can be attained through Asha by which man gains purity of mind, heart and soul. Unselfish work is the way by which human individual attain their spiritual welfare and thereby help in the progress of the world. To know the Supreme, Ahura-Mazdā, man stand act in accordance with the law 'asha', man has to perfect his nature through prayer and meditation. When the goal is reached, we get peace and unity.

From the above discussion it follows that in most of the religions of the world the ultimate aim of human life is Liberation or Mokṣa. This liberation not only implies freedom from the bondage of the flesh, it also implies free from the limitation of finite being. Mokṣa means "becoming a perfect spirit like the supreme spirit - but on his way to this final goal man has to satisfy the animal wants of the body, and the economic and other demands of his family and community."<sup>5</sup>

All religions have emotional attitude towards moral value and this moral value is not simply individualistic in outlook, but also social. Bhagaban Das opines that - "Every ideal religion aims at binding together a new again the hearts of all to each other and back again to God".<sup>6</sup> The unity sought in and through various religions practices and partly felt in individual is also social. The vedic Hindu desired social unity when he prayed - "united the thought of all that all may happily agree"<sup>7</sup> Hinduism which cherishes universal salvation (Sarvamukta vāda) it's outlook is social. The Jaina concept of Ahimsā shows consideration for all creatures. The zoroastrianism in and through their religious worship develops a strong sense of communal welfare. They believe that universal salvation will be brought about by the last saviour. Muhammad asked his followers to form themselves into a community of faithful. Similarly Christianity attaches much insistence on the doctrine of love and it advocates Brotherhood of man under the common Fatherhood of God. Though different religions insist upon different religious practices associating with an ideal, they aim at the same kind of spiritual upliftment of the individual concerned together with the establishment of some kind of bridge between the natural and the spiritual.

As regards to the ways or paths for self-realisation enunciated by Indian religions thinkers agreed on the point

that each path contains within it all the ethical codes and spiritual discipline. These paths have the generic name 'Yoga' in the Hindu philosophy. Swami Vivekananda recognised four different paths like - Karmayoga, Bhakti yoga, jnana yoga and Rājā yoga in this regard. According to him these divisions are not artificially made but all the yogas are deeply related to the complexities of human nature. Each has a special nature peculiar to one-self which one must follow and through which one will find his way to freedom.

## 5.2 FOUR WAYS OF SELF-REALISATION :

Going through the Indian philosophy it has been found that right from the Vedic age in regard to God there are three stages in Indian religious thought. The concept of God began with the personal or the extra cosmic God. From the external passed on to the internal cosmic body, God immanent in the universe and after this ended indentifying the soul with God and making One Soul, a unit of all the various manifestation in the universe. But a mere understanding of the three aspects of God - Personal, Impersonal and Absolute does not constitute religion. Hence, Swami Vivekananda in keeping with the spirit of Indian religious thought upheld the view that religion is realisation. Religion is to be known neither by ordinary sense of the word, nor by intellectual understanding. Religion is not mere rationalistic understanding of the real things but intense realisation which is much more real than the world of sense. He regarded religion as a real life force, not simply a make-belief. This is the only reason why even after decaying centuries various religions of the world have still a tremendous life force in them. Vivekananda holds that "Not one of the great religions of the world has died, not only so, each one of them is progressive".<sup>7</sup> All religions are nothing but abstractions of the same supreme Reality pointing to an Ideal

unit Abstraction putting down before us either in the form of a person or as Impersonal Being. Hence, the goal of all religions is same in essence. The ultimate end of mankind, the objective of all religions is the same - reunion with God, with the divinity which is every man's true nature.

With a view to helping man to attain the summum bonum of life the different religions essentially concern themselves with the practical life of man by transforming codes of conduct and spiritual disciplines. In different paths or ways formulated by the seers contains all these ethical codes and spiritual disciplines. These paths have the generic name of 'Yoga' in Hindu philosophy. The principal yogas are - Rāya yoga, Karma-yoga, Bhakti yoga and jnana-yoga. Vivekananda also elaborately discussed these yogas as the means for attaining self-liberation or Mokṣa. These different yogas may be regarded as the pillars upon which the whole edifice of Vivekananda's philosophy stands. Hence, it pertinent to discuss each one of them to highlight the religious teachings of Vivekananda.

#### Karma-yoga :

The word 'Karma' has been derived from the sanskrite term 'Kri' which means 'to do'. All action is karma. Technically it also means the effect of all actions. Meta-physically it

sometimes means the effects of which our past actions were the causes. But Vivekananda in his 'Karma-yoga' by Karma he meant 'work'.

In conformity with the ideal of Eastern philosophy Vivekananda holds the view that the goal of mankind is knowledge. This knowledge is inherent in man and does not come from outside. What a man learn in the real sense is what he discovers by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. Every mental and physical blow by which it's own power and knowledge is discovered is Karma. In this sense we are all doing Karma all the time in the form of walking, listening, breathing etc. whatever we do whether physical or mental is Karma and it always have it's mark on us. The mystery of Karma lies in the fact that whatever work we do, the mind is thrown into a wave and after the wave is finished that wave does not disappear. Had it been disappeared there would not have been memory at all. Hence, every action, thought just goes down and becoming fine they are stored up. All happy and unhappy thoughts that come from the senses bring pain for us. The more we enjoy the more thirst for it grows and leads to unlimited desires in man and consequently it creates pain for us. All these thirsts for unlimited desires stand in the way to the freedom of the soul.

According to Vivekananda doing good to others is necessary for one's own good. When we dedicate our body to the service of others more sincerely our heart get purification by work and we come to feel that my own self is pervading in all beings and in all things. Thus doing good to others constitutes the means for revealing one's own self. This is a spiritual practice for God realisation. So the ultimate aim of work is self realisation. Vivekananda once said - "all the secret of success is there to pay as much attention to means as to the end".<sup>8</sup> The great defect in life is that we are too much concerned with the ideal with too much mental vigour in our mental horizon that we lose sight of details altogether. In the case of 99% of our failures we meet because we do not pay attention to the means. If our means are all right the end must come by itself.

According to Swami Vivekananda Karma-yoga teaches that we should not work for our enjoyments sake. He said - "Do not give up the world, imbibe influences as much you can, but if it be for your own enjoyments sake, work not at all".<sup>9</sup> Work should be performed perfectly giving up the idea of attachment. If we at all believe in God we should believe that all those which we consider ours are really His.

Commonsuring with the Bhagavad Gita Vivekananda opines that we should work through yoga, concentration. We should work with such concentration that there is no consciousness of our lower ego present. He said thus - "The consciousness that I am doing this or that is never present when one works through yoga"<sup>10</sup> one who feels one with God through yoga performs all his work becoming immersed in concentration and seeks no personal benefit whatsoever, only such performance of work brings good to the world - no evil can come out of it. The result of every work is mixed with good and evil. The work done without selfish motive or attachment brings the highest bliss and freedom.

To Vivekananda work for work's sake should be the ideal of work. Work is not done as duty due to obligation; the Karma-yogi works as a free being unattached and considers as God's duty. He said - "unselfishness is more paying, only people have no patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech". Vivekananda hold that a man who can work even for five minutes without selfish end, he earns the capacity for making a moral giant. It is difficult to do so no doubt but in the heart of our hearts we know it's value. Self-restraint is the expression of greatest power than

all outgoing powers. Self restriction results in development of such a tremendous power that it produces a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha.

Vivekananda opines that a work, however, it may be lowest forms should not be looked down upon. Everyone should be allowed to work even for selfish end for name and fame, but every one should try to obtain higher and higher motives. Vivekananda said - "To work we have the right, but not to the fruits thereof".<sup>11</sup>

Vivekananda exhorts us to regard each and everyone as great in his own place. Every man is constituted of the three gunas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and because of the predominance of one or the other at different times man is prone to either activity, inactivity and by balancing both activity and inactivity or sweetness, calmness etc. Karma has specially to deal with these three factors. People should learn what they are and how to employ them to work better. Human society being a gradual organisation, all of us are aware of what is morality or what is duty. He was also aware of the fact that the significance of morality and ideal of duty vary from country to country and at different times to the same individual. Hence, he gave stress on the constitution of one universal ideal of duty. He remarked -

"Two ways are left open to us. The way of the ignorant who think that there is only one way and that all the rest are wrong, and the way of the wise, who admit that according to our mental constitution or different planes of existence in which we are - duty and morality may vary. The important thing is to know that there are gradations of duty and of morality - that duty of one state of life in one set of circumstances will not and cannot be that of another".<sup>12</sup>

According to Vivekananda our primary duty is to have faith in ourselves - then in God. The most important thing is to know whether he has the power of resistance or not. Having obtained that power if he renounces it and does not resist he is doing an act of love. But if he fails and try to deceive others into the belief he is doing something with the motive of highest love, he is doing opposite to it.

According to Vivekananda to be a perfect Karma-yogin a man must understand the highest ideal of non-resistance and in practising this ideal resistance of evil will be his first step on the way towards the manifestation of highest power i.e. non-resistance. Hence, before reaching this ideal to resist evil man must work and fight and then "only when has gained the power to resist will non-resistance be a virtue".<sup>13</sup> To be a Karma-yogin he must avoid inactivity, resist evil both physical

and mental, and if he succeeds in this the calmness will come to him.

Vivekananda holds the view that it is the duty of every man to take up his own ideal and try to accomplish it and this is the sure way to progress. He should not take up the ideal of others which he can never hope to accomplish. He also opines that no man or woman in any kind of society is of the same mind and capacity. They have different ideals and we have no right to hate any ideal followed by others. Every man must be given scope to do his best in order to realise his own ideal. We should not judge all men by the same standard. He says - "Unity in variety is the plan of creation. However man and woman may vary in individuality there is the unity in the background and classes of men and women are natural variation in creation. Hence, we ought not to them by the same standard or put the same ideal before them".<sup>14</sup>

Throwing light on the Varnasrama Dharma Vivekananda holds the view that householders also should be devoted to God. Knowledge of God should be his ideal of life. He must perform his duties and give up the fruits of actions to God. A man who performs his duty constantly doing good to others

without caring the criticism of other fellow beings he does his highest sacrifice. He must earn his livelihood by honest means with the idea that his life is meant for service of God and the poor. He must treat his parents as the visible representative of God and should try to please them. As regards woman Vivekananda opines that - "That man who has succeeded in getting the love of chaste wife has succeeded in his religion and has all the virtues".<sup>15</sup> A householder must avoid excessive attachment for food, clothes etc. and he must be a man of pure heart, clean in body, always active and always ready for work. He must be the hero to the enemies and must have reverence to the wicked. A householder by doing his duties purely and sincerely he also can obtain the same result like that of the yogis. He says - "If the householder dies in battle fighting for his country or his religion he comes to the same goal as the yogi by meditation".<sup>16</sup> Further he says - "Each is great in his own place but the duty of one is not the duty of the others".<sup>16</sup>

The whole gist of Karma-yoga is that we should work as a master and not a slave. Vivekananda says - "Work through freedom ! work through love. The word love is difficult to understand. Love never comes untill there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave".<sup>17</sup> True love can never react. Attainment of unattachment is almost a life's work, and

as soon as we reach that ideal of complete unattachment we reach the goal of love and we become free, bondage of all sorts falls from us. At this state we stand entirely free and do not take the result of the action, into consideration. Attachment comes to a man when he expects something in return. Might and mercy are the guide of our conduct of man. The exercise of might is necessarily the exercise of the selfishness Mercy is heaven in itself, to be God we have all to be merciful. All thoughts of obtaining return for our work stand in the spiritual progress of man and ultimately cause misery for us. This ideal of mercy can be put into practice by looking upon our work as worship provided we believe in personal God. We should give up all the fruits of work into the Lord and worship Him in such a manner that we have no right to expect for anything from mankind for the work we do for the Lord Himself is working incessantly without any attachment. Vivekananda says - "just as water can not touch the lotus leaf, so work can not bind the unselfishness by giving rise to attachment to results".<sup>18</sup> According to him he is Karma-yogin who "even act at the point of death to help any one without asking question".<sup>19</sup>

In Vivekananda's philosophy he made use of the traditional notions and images concentrating on the moral aspect of Hinduism for he thought that might form the foundation of socially

oriented moral consciousness. In doing this he appealed not to the outer-ritualistic aspect but to the inner religious conviction of Hinduism, ethics conditioned by the inner internal plan especially Vedanta which, he believed, could give satisfactory explanation of the moral norms and evince real essence of morality. Vivekananda also followed the teachings of the Bhāgavad Gita, yet he did not just perpetuate ancient tradition of the turning inwards of moral consciousness, He made prominent belonged in fact to a different quality joined mostly with assertion of the personality, man's self as having the initiative, free and able to make choice and to act with reconsidering the individual's role in society. He assessed the nature and essence of morality as contained in the thesis of the unity of the transcendental and the immanent spiritual principle - 'That is Thou'. According to Vivekananda a man can perceive general precepts of morality when he understands the 'oneness', one spiritual basis of all existence. The very notion of morality should include the realisation of one spiritual principle. When a man learns to regard the divine nature of his self, he learns to regard other people in the same way as himself.

In explaining the essence of ethics Vivekananda had recourse to the category of unselfishness. In Karmayoga he made a simple statement that "which is selfish is immoral

and that which is unselfish is moral".<sup>20</sup> Practically 'Selflessness' and 'egoism' appear as universal categories and are qualified in this respect corresponding to the general dichotomy of good and evil. Though Vivekananda was influenced by Vedanta and the Bhagavad Gita yet he introduced new, non-traditional components in treating the category egoism. He discussed the problem not so much in the plan of speculative metaphysics as in that of the practical life conditioned by social and political changes. He was deeply concerned with man treating as abstract individual who wishes to attain personal liberation but as an active member of the society. He never made contradiction between individual and society. Again, when the idea of selflessness in the Bhagavad Gita is renunciation of personal pleasures and pain as well as the liberation from the world to Vivekananda selflessness is above all the liberation from the worldly things that enrich an individual of wealth and money, power, name and fame, the ideal itself is pregnant with a new interpretation. Out of the four yogas Vivekananda gave much importance to Karmayoga because it corresponds to the greatest degree to the goal and tasks of the time. He gave too much importance in selfless activity for he thought that idea comprised not only call to religious activity in order to reach spiritual

and moral level in which man's self is completely unified with Atman but mainly a call to activity directed at social and political garbs.

Vivekananda in explaining the perfection of morality suggested certain concrete stages on the way to attaining it. To him perfection is to be achieved by gradual abnegation first of egoistic cares and desires starting from family to the good of the country step by step. But in each step one should not ignore the universal unity. A man who is not capable of sacrificing him for the sake of his motherland will not be able to achieve self-abnegation for the sake of humanity. This interpretation of self-denial suggested oversteeping the limits of traditional Vedantism on the way to practical tasks of modern life, the ideal fitted with socio-political content. Vivekananda's insistence on positive side of self denial for the sake of human service was surely a new thing to Indian ethics. Vivekanda's interpretation of the word 'Karma' is much wider than that of Sankara. This was due to the fact that while Sankara in considering Karma he was inclined to subjective viewpoint but Vivekananda to the objective view point. Apart from this Vivekananda had wider scope of Karma by allowing it a position independent of theistic faith and metaphysical doctrine particularly accepting the

Buddhistic ideal of selfless work as a means to Nirvana. Vivekananda said - "The Karma yogi need not believe in any doctrine whatsoever. He may not believe even in God, may not ask what his soul is, not think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special aim of realising selflessness, and he has to work out himself .....".<sup>21</sup> To be precise Vivekanda in introducing work as worship into the every sphere of life welded together his ethical and spiritual ideal. This may be regarded as his special contribution to the present age.

### Bhakti-yoga :

Swami Vivekananda was encouraged by Buddhism and Vaishnava theism in regard to their effort in giving due place to the affective side of man. His very aim was to soften the stern logic and monastic metaphysics of the Upanishads and the Advaita Vedanta. Because he understood that mankind could not be combined together through abstract concepts of reality that could only be done through love. He said - "The whole cosmos is the manifestation of love from the lowest atom to the highest idea love is the motive power of the universe ..... without it universe would fall to pieces in a moment. This love is God". He, ofcourse, maintained that

religious feeling is possible without having faith in God but also believed that the concept of God has greatest evocative power. He opined - "..... All the hopes, aspirations and happiness of humanity have been centred round that word. It is impossible now to change it. All that is great and holy is associated with it".<sup>22</sup> According to him the idea of God rouses the emotion of love and warm personal attachment and love is the secret of undying power. This was possibly the reason why he recognised Bhakti to be one of the paths for attaining liberation. For him Bhakti is the way of the heart leading to truth, to freedom.

According to Vivekananda Bhakti is a real, genuine search after God, a search beginning, containing and ending in love. He even holds the opinion that madness of extreme love of God for a single moment brings us eternal freedom. In defining Bhakti he refers to the great speeches of Bhakta Prahlada - "That deathless love which the ignorant have for the fleeting objects of the senses - as I keep meditating on Thee may that love not slip away from my heart".<sup>23</sup> In Bhakti love for God grows and assumes a form called parabhakti or supreme devotion in which all other forms vanish, rituals disappear, books are superseded and all kinds of limitations and bondage like images, temples, mosques, religious sects

countries and nationalities fall of completely. He defines Parabhakti thus - "As oil poured from the vessel to another falls in a unbroken line, so when the mind in an unbroken streamer thinks of the Lord, when we have what is called Parābhakti or supreme love. Bhakti is an undisturbed and every steady direction of the mind and heart to the Lord. This self surrender (Aṅgapratikūlya) of the devotee is a state of mind in which it has no interest and naturally knows nothing that is opposite to it".<sup>24</sup>

According to Vivekananda Bhakti is religion. But this religion is not for all but only for a few. This few want nothing but God. All of our wants are supplied by external world. But when our necessities go beyond the external world than want a supply for the internal, from God. A man may go through all the books in the universe but love is not to be had by the power of speech, not by the highest intellect or by studying various sciences, one who desires God gets love. This love is always mutual and reflective. It is the psychological phenomenon. We must desire God with the same spirit as a loving wife earnestly thinks of her departed husband. And only then we will find God. Mere reading books does not make a man learned. If a man reads really one word of love he becomes learned. So

we must want first to get that desire.

According to Vivekananda people who pray to God with the hope of getting material comfort in return can not be called religious. He says that it is better to be an atheist than to have such an idea of religion. Bhakti is the highest ideal and hence everyone of us should strive to attain that ideal.

Vivekananda compared love to a triangle. As a triangle has three angles so love is consisting of three angles - (a) Love is that knows no beginning, (b) Love knows no fear and (c) Love knows no rival because in it is always embodied the lover's highest ideal. Love is always the giver and not the taker. A true devotee is imbued with the spirit that - "If God wants I give Him my everything but I do not want anything from Him".<sup>25</sup> To ask for something from God is nothing but a shop-keeping religion which Vivekananda disliked like anything. Secondly, God is not to be looked upon as a Being sitting above with reward in one hand and punishment in the other. One who thinks Him so can not have love. A spiritual man who approaches religion, in whom spiritual insight is awakened regards those ideas as foolish and such a man rejects all ideas of fear. A man who succeeds in passing over the first two stages he begins to realise that love is always is the highest

ideal.

Vivekananda believed that every soul is destined to be perfect and every being in the end will attain that state. But the possibility of that state is always quickened by some influence from outside. These influences work upon our own possibilities and thereby growth begins, a spiritual life comes, becomes holy and perfect in the end. But this influence does not come from books for the self can receive impulse from another soul. Study of books may make us intellectual but can not develop spirituality sometimes we find that a man develops his intellect at the expense of the spirit. The self out of which influence comes is called called a Guru and the soul to which the impulse is transmitted tis called a disciple. The Guru must be a spiritual giant and he must have the power of transmitting the impulse and the disciple must be fit both physically and mentally to receive that impulse. Hence Vivekananda says - "The speaker of the religion must be wonderful; and so must be the hearer be and when both of them are really wonderful, extra-ordinary then alone with splendid spiritual growth comes and not otherwise".<sup>26</sup> A true lover of God instinctively can recognise his Guru. The conditions which are necessary for real teachers are - purity of heart real thirst for knowledge and perseverance.

According to Vivekananda God is both personal and Impersonal, prayer and praise are the first means of spiritual growth. Repetition made in the name of God has wonderful power. Mantras are not special words sacred texts or the name of God chosen by the Guru for repetition and reflection by the disciple. Such mantras are however not sounds of words but God Himself. God is within us. We should think of Him, speak of Him and we should not have desire for the world. The disciple must concentrate on a personality for prayer and should think of God as the only 'Istha'.

According to Vivekananda religion exists in pure and sincere love in the heart. He says - "External worship is only a symbol of love of internal worship and purely are the real things. Worship must be pure both physically and mentally. The supreme teaching of all worships is to be pure and to do good to others. To express in his words - "He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak and in the diseased, really worships Shiva"<sup>27</sup> one who has served the poor seeing Shiva in him of any caste, creed and religion etc. God is pleased with him than the man who sees in temples. Vivekananda says - "... those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants".<sup>28</sup> A perfect man sees nothing but God. Man should always worship the highest ideal and when he reaches that stage, when he loves

the ideal as the ideal, all sorts of doubts and arguments in him vanish for ever. The ideal of love is sufficient for him for he thinks the universe as the manifestation of love. God manifests itself starting from the lowest atom to the highest being, omnipotent and all pervading is the love. And imbued with this love the sacred souls dedicate their lives for the sake of humanity. Love is the motive power of the universe and without which universe cannot exist even for a moment. He said - "None, O beloved loves the husband for husband's sake but for the self that is in the husband..... None ever loves anything else except for the self".<sup>29</sup> Even the selfish love is the manifestation of the same love which deserves no condemnation for it differs from love only in degree. At first it was a love for the self and the claim of the little self made love selfish. But at last that appears the blaze of light when the self became infinite. God, who at the beginning was a Being existing elsewhere became resolved as it were into Infinite love. Man himself is also transformed. His desire for material attachment as well as selfishness vanishes and at the apex he finds love, lover and beloved are one.

Raja-yoga :

Exponents of the Raja-yoga declares that religion is not based upon the experience of ancient times and no man can be religious if he does not have the same experiences himself. Yoga is a means for having that experience. To them simply talking about religion does not make a man religious if he does not feel for it. If God really is man must see Him and the same is true in the case of self also. If not, better not to believe either God or self and still better to be an outspoken atheist.

In conformity with the Vedas Vivekananda opines that in order to remove all kinds of doubts or to dispel darkness of mind man must earn the distinction to experience truth for himself. He must grasp it, realise it and feel it within the heart of hearts. Raja-yoga is such a practical and scientifically worked out the method of realising the truth. A man may be pregnant with thousands of sermons but those sermons will not make a man religious untill he practises the method. Sages of all countries in all times declare that they found out some truth higher than the senses can bring us and they invited verification. They advised us to take up the method and practise honestly. If after doing this we do not find higher truth we

have every claim to say that there is no truth at all. But before we do so we are not rational to decry the truth of their assertions and so it is essential for us to work faithfully using the method prescribed by them for the attainment of truth.

Referring to science Vivekananda holds the opinion that in acquiring knowledge science makes generalisation based on observation of facts. Hence, he insists on the fact that to have knowledge of the mind, the internal nature of man, of thought, man must have the power of observing the facts going on within the mind. The science of Rājā-yoga is destined to supply such means of obtaining the internal states. The instrument is the mind itself. The power of attention should be properly guided and directed towards the internal world and this will help us to analyse the mind and illumine facts for us. With the help of concentration of the powers of mind it is possible to gain all the knowledge of the world. To Vivekananda the world is all the time ready give up it's secrets if we really know how to give the necessary blow to it. Concentration of mind gives us the necessary strength and force of the blow. The more concentration we give the more power we acquire to gain the knowledge in the world. But to concentrate upon the internal states is not so easy than the concentration made upon the external states. The object is

internal - mind studying mind, mind itself the object. Mind has the power of reflection. Man works and thinks at the same time, while a portion of the mind stands by the sees what he is thinking. The power of the mind penetrates it's own innermost secrets. And then will come to the basis of belief, the real genuine religion. The Rāja yoga proposes to teach how to concentrate mind or how to discover the innermost recesses of our own minds. This yoga also proposes to teach how to generalise the contents from, and conclusion from them. It never questions what our religion is - we are human beings that is all. Every human being has the right to seek and the power to seek religion. So Raja-yoga teaches us not to believe anything unless one finds it out for one itself. The study of Rāja-yoga takes a long time and requires constant practice - physical at the beginning but in the main it is mental.

Accepting the views of the ancient sages Vivekananda says that there is a continuity of mind. The mind is universal and our personal minds are the fragments of that universal mind - 'little waves in the ocean'. And owing to this continuity we convey our thoughts directly to another. The science of Rāja-yoga claims that it has re-discovered laws which develop personality; the personality that can influence the inner man.

It gives stress on proper attention to those laws and methods that can grow and strengthen one's personality. With the help of this personality it is possible to control over our thoughts thought at the root before it has become thought. At this stage it becomes possible for us to control the whole. A method must be there by which we can analyse, investigate, understand and finally grapple with those fine powers and final causes and only then we can control over ourselves. A man who has the power to control over his own mind surely he will be able to control over every other mind. And this is the reason why purity and morality have always been object of religion. A perfectly moral person has control of himself. Minds are same different parts of one mind. Vivekananda says - "who knows and control his own mind knows the secrets of every mind and has the power over every mind".<sup>30</sup>

Vivekananda also opines that to be a yogi one must undergo all kinds of excesses whether in talking, sleeping, working etc. for all these distract attention. The power of yoga is such that even the least of it brings tremendous effect or benefit. Neither it will hurt anybody but will benefit everyone. Such a yogi first decreases the nerve excitement and brings calmness and makes us fit to percieve things clearly.

It will improve not only health but also temperaments. In order to be a yogi one must take care of his diet. When a man begins to concentrate his mind the dropping of a pin seem like a thunder going through the brain. As the organs get finer, the perceptions get finer. To attain this stage several stages has to be cross over and a good deal of perseverance is essential. He must give up all sorts of argumentation and distractions. The things of the subtler planes have to be realised. He must study only those books written by persons that have that realisation. Leaving aside all nibbling things he should take up one idea and should make that idea his life. He should think of it, dream of it and live on that idea alone. This is the key to success and following this way the great spiritual giants are produced. Vivekananda says - "If we really want to be blessed and make others blessed, we must go deeper".<sup>31</sup> To be a yogi one must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. Having this energy and will, he should work hard and then he will reach goal.

In practising yoga Vivekananda advised to adopt the following means - "Take the easiest posture of sitting. Hold the three parts straight the ribs, the shoulders and the head

leaving the spine free and straight, no leaning backward or forward. Then mentally picture the body as perfect, part by part. Then send a current of love to all the world. And then pray for enlightenment".<sup>32</sup> Regarding time for practising yoga the junction time of dawn and twilight should be selected. Through yoga the 'Cilta-vriltis' - the mind waves which are gross can be easily controlled. All feelings should be controlled in the germ, the root in their finer forms before we have come conscious that they are acting on us. One of the important means of controlling these feelings is meditation. He says - "when a man practises meditation for days and months and years, it turns into a habit and then all sorts of emotions are controlled".<sup>33</sup>

According to Vivekananda concentration is the key to all knowledge. When the mind is concentrated mind turns back upon itself, all that we have within us will be servants and not masters. Yoga is the means of controlling senses, will and mind. The good result that we obtain from yoga is that we learn to control instead of being controlled. The mind seems to be layer on layer. Our real aim is to get over all the intervening states of our being and find God. The aim of yoga is to realise God and in order to accomplish this we must go beyond relative knowledge, go beyond the sense world. Concentration is restraining

the mind.

Vivekananda mentions eight processes for restraining mind. They are - (i) Yama - It means control of mind avoiding externals. One should not beget evils and injure no living creatures. One should be chaste in thought, word and action. Chastity is the basis of all religions. (ii) Niyama - One should not allow one's mind to wander in any direction. (iii) Āsana - It means posture. There are 84 postures, but one is to follow that one which one deems to be natural to him. (iv) Pranayama - It means restraints of breath. (v) Prālyahāra - One is to draw in of the organs from the object. (vi) Dhāraṇa - it means concentration of mind (vii) Dhyāna - it signifies contemplation or meditation. (viii) Samādhi - it means super consciousness. The more pure the body and mind, the more easily one can have the desired result. If one is perfectly pure and practise sincerely one can make one's mind a search-light of infinite power. When a man reaches this state all feelings of the body disappear and then only he can become free and immortal. To him all external appearances, unconsciousness and superconsciousness are the same. A man whose whole soul is given upto God, he reaches the super-conscious plane.

According to Vivekananda the path that leads man to perfection is always slippery than a stair case. Hence, ethical preparation is the primary pre-requisite for spiritual insight. The mind must be free from all kinds of impurities and make a clean mirror in which divine can be reflected. The successive stages of yogas of the Rājā-yoga are intended to stabilise human nature and aid the systematic purification of the whole being essential for an integral reflection and taking in of divine reality. When a man succeeds in making him spiritual his conflicts are resolved and he finds himself in the great current of life. No human remains alien to him. He does not feel to be a member of this or that group but belongs to humanity as a whole. He obtains primary patriotism which is the love of humanity. He learns to respect for the diversity which is natural to the constitution of things and understands the unity underlying all. He feels in his deeper self his oneness with his fellowmen and unity with life. The wellbeing of humanity becomes his deepest concern. He loves humanity with tenderness and depth unknown to others. The realised person becomes an elemental force of nature, a dynamo of spirit, works with stupendous high velocity. The renunciation he has practised does not require him to escape from the world but only to destroy the ego sense. He finds eternal life here and now. It is the life of the eternal part of us, of the light within us.

jnana-yoga :

Every man is troubled with the question if the world is real. Religion begins with the question and comes to an end with it's answer. Metaphysics, Philosophy and religion, all these really filled with the various answers to the question. So long as death is inevitable to the life of man can not but think to this eternal problem. Human body is perishable so the question naturally arises - if anything remains after death ? A great discussion follows as to whether the aggregate of materials we call body is the expression of the force that we term as soul, thought etc. It can not be denied that all religions of the world are of opinion that force called thought manifests the body and not the reverse. What is that force which manifests itself through the body. It is the soul or the Atman. The soul of man is neither the body, nor the mind. The soul has neither form or shape, it is Omnipresent. It is beyond time, space and causation and hence Infinite. This Infinite can not be two; it must be one and hence the individual souls that we have are not real. Vivekananda says - "The Real man is one and Infinite, the Omnipresent spirit and the apparent man is only a limitation of that Real man".<sup>34</sup>

An apparent man however great he may be is nothing but the dim

reflection of the Real man who is beyond. The apparent man is bound by time, space and causation while the Real man being not bound by all these, it is free. The apparent soul appears to be bound but really is not. This is the Reality in our souls, the spiritual nature. Hence, every soul is infinite and hence the question of birth and death does not arise at all.

Vivekananda holds that we are all slaves of Māyā. We born in Māyā, live in Māyā. This world is a prison cell where we are confined. And as such a question arises - Is there any way out of this Māyā? He says that even though we are troubled with the question of birth, death, sufferings of life etc. there is a small voice that is ringing through all ages, through every country and in every heart. This is the voice that leads man forward, man has heard it and is hearing still all through the ages. So it is impossible for man to get rid of the riddle of Māyā. Of course, it is difficult to get over it. Vivekananda said - "Be not despair, the way is very difficult like walking on the edge of razor, yet despair not. Arise, Awake and find the ideal, the goal".<sup>35</sup> All human beings should try to attain freedom. He says that all the religious systems of the world believe that the human soul whatever it

be, whatever it's relation to God - is essentially pure and perfect. Every religion holds that man is divine, he has divinity in his nature. The soul is one with freedom.

In order to realise the true nature of the soul or to attain jñāna or wisdom Vivekananda has referred to certain steps following which man can attain freedom or realisation. The first requirements of this are - (1) Shama and Dama. Sama consists in not allowing the mind to externalise and Dama means checking the external instruments (2) Uparati - it means total abstaining from thinking of the objects, of senses (iii) After this stage comes - 'Titikṣā' which means following the ideal of forbearance - 'Resist not evil ; One should be without any feeling of hatred, anger etc. Mind must be kept calm and quiet (iv) To be jnani the next requirement is 'Sṛaddha' or Faith. He must have absolute faith in religion and God and consequently ardent anxiousness to reach God. (v) After Sṛaddha comes 'Inamukṣhatva'. It means ardent desire to be free. The human nature is such that everybody runs after momentary pleasures and before he reaches that they are no more. And still man is made after sensual pleasures and thereby he makes himself fool for ever. Man should be disinterested in both pleasure and pain for both of them are derogatory. A man can

seek freedom when he really understands that he is slave of nature and it is his primary duty to throw out his slavery (vi) The next discipline is 'Nilyanitya viveka'. In this stage man is able to distinguish what is true and what is false, between the eternal and the transitory. The world of things are in a constant flux and there is one who never changes - that is God. When man is able to reach Him he conquers nature and nature can have no effect on him.

Vivekananda opines that religion is such which can never be attained either through the senses or brain or studying religious scriptures. There were and are many intellectuals but only a few of them succeeded or succeed in coming to God. God is beyond the sense and consciousness even. He says - "consciousness is only one of the many planes in which we work".<sup>36</sup> Man can attain God only when he transcends consciousness, go beyond senses. The proof of God is direct perception, 'Pratyaksha'. This perception is, however, not ordinary perception of the senses but super-sensuous super-conscious state and to attain this state requires arduous training to rise beyond the senses.

According to Vivekananda true religion is entirely transcendental. He believes that every being has the potentiality of transcending the limitation of senses. He is quite optimistic

in holding that a time will come when all beings will be able to reach God. He says - "The highest as well the lowest life God ever projected will come back to the Father of all lives from where all beings projected in whom all lives and unto whom they will return - that is God".<sup>37</sup>

Vivekananda also holds that man mistakes self either for body, the force or the mind. But self is beyond all these. He can realise his own self provided he really seeks for it. He himself is the Being. He must find it for himself. He says 'Thou that art'. He himself is the self beyond all thought, one without birth or death, neither beginning nor end, the immortal, intangible, Omniscient and Omnipotent Being. But very few have the power to grasp the higher fewer still have no patience to attain it. Vivekananda opines that - upon the same tree there are two birds, one on the top, the other below. The upper bird is calm, silent and majestic, immersed in his own glory i.e. God and the lower is the human soul eating both the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. When the lower bird eats the bitter fruits and gets disgusted and then he stops eating and goes towards the unknown God and understands the world as a vain show. But soon his senses drag him towards the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. But he is again confronted

with the hard blow and the self approaching God and try and try goes near and near to Him. It's old soul starts melting. But when he comes still near enough, it then comes to know and realise that he is none but God himself. jnana yoga teaches that 'Thou art that' and makes man aware enough that he is essentially divine. Referring to Upanishads Vivekananda says - that the self is only attained by him whom the self chooses, which means that we are the self and we choose ourselves. Though Vivekananda elaborately discussed yogas classifying under four divisions but these divisions were not artificially made by him. These divisions are deeply related to the complexities of human nature. To express it in his own words - "Each has a special nature peculiar to himself which he must follow and through which he will find his freedom".<sup>38</sup> He tried to teach that each path has efficacy of it's own if pursued sincerity, good intention, reason and non attachment and renunciation. Each man can follow one of these paths in accordance with his temperament. He repeatedly warned us that none of these paths is exclusive in character. He said - "There is not really so much difference between knowledge (jnana) and Love (Bhakti) as peoples sometimes imagine. We shall see, as we go on, that in the end they coverage and meet at the same point. So also with Raja yoga, which when

persued as a means to liberation ..... lead to the same goal. .... work, endless work, without looking at the results and always keeping the whole mind and soul steady fast at the lotus feet of the Lord ... this is Karma-yoga. You must harmonise the four different yogas - otherwise, how can you always keep your mind and heart on the Lord<sup>39</sup>.

Vivekananda also opines that these spiritual practices are essential for building one's character. In complex human nature the elements of all four natures are intermingled. Hence, a harmonious blending of all the modes of practice helps immensely in framing an ideal character. Vivekananda was optimistic in holding the view that the spiritual disciplines to be followed in his organisation should be based on the synthesis of four different yogas.

In modelling the seal of the Ramkrishna Math and Mission Vivekananda depicted the symbolic representation of the synthesis of all the yogas. In the seal we get a lake in which there is a lotus, swans and the sun and all these are encircled by a serpent. Vivekananda interpreted this in this way - "The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma, the lotus of Bhakti and the rising sun of jñāna. The encircling serpent is indicative of yoga and the awakened Kundalini Shakti, while the swan in the

picture stands for Paramatman. Therefore the ideal of the picture is that by the union of Karma, jnana, Bhakti and yoga, the vision of the paramatan is obtained".<sup>40</sup>

One of the greatest contribution of Vivekananda was that he tried to find out a new gospel of synthesis by accepting the safe paths of accepted ideals in regard to thought and practice of religion. According to him the philosophical problems like concept of Absolute and the correct paths to approach it are responsible for the creation of immutable religions and religious sects of the world. He regarded these two problems to be universal and all other problems related to religions can be grouped within their range. Hence, he made active effort to resolve the conflicts existing in different religions by an appeal to reason, broad mindedness and tolerance in order to help mankind to have a new realisation. The chief mission of his life was to spread the spirit of harmony, not dissention. He opined that all religions of the world together with their various spiritual paths laid down by the seers lead to the same goal - i.e. Self-realisation or God realisation and hence he accepted all religions to be true. He advised the people of the world belonging to various religions to practise toleration for "..... The

avatara is always one and the same plunging into the ocean of life, He rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, diving again and rising elsewhere, He is known as Christ.... I have practiced all disciplines. I accept all paths".<sup>41</sup>

The knowledge and love of God are intimately one. There is no difference between pure knowledge and pure love. Each soul is potentially divine and the goal of mankind is to manifest that divinity within by controlling nature external and internal. Hence, he appealed to mankind to manifest that divinity either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy, by one or more or all of these. Hence if the followers of all religions realise the true spirit of religion as preached and practised by Vivekananda then they can not but cultivate the spirit of tolerance and pay respect for any religion in order to ensure peaceful co-existence of all living beings on the planet.

### 5.3 TRUTHFULNESS, SATYAGRAHA AND NON-VIOLENCE :

According to Gandhi man is free to choose any path as he thinks to be conducive to attain perfection in life. He said - "there are as many paths as there human beings as man differ in temperaments paths also differ".<sup>42</sup> But <sup>FOR</sup>attaining perfection Gandhiji laid great importance on guru who is spiritually advanced and morally proficient. If such a guru is not found than "It is better to grope in the dark and through millions of errors to truth than to entrust oneself to one who knows not that he knows not".<sup>43</sup>

Gandhiji also remarked that it is not possible for man to attain perfection in life without the grace of God. He said - "Perfection or freedom from error comes only through grace, without an unreserved surrender to His grace, complete mastery over thought is impossible. This is the teaching of the every book of religion and I am realising the truth of it every moment striving after the Bramhacharyya".<sup>44</sup>

To him one must be able to shelter the claims of egoism to attain perfection in life. It is only through detached and unselfish action man can free himself. He must dedicate everything to God the fruits of actions and surrender himself

to Him. His whole interest must be absorbed in God to have attained to yoga. When a man becomes free from all desires and even the desire to see God, only he can hope to attain perfection. Perfection or truth can be attained only through the selfless service to humanity. He said, - "They can be done by service to all I am part and parcel of the whole and I can not find Him apart from the rest of humanity".<sup>45</sup>

Gandhiji also opined that prayer must be regarded as the core of life and this prayer must accompany purification of heart. He suggested that man must devote to follow the middle path to have fixed time for worship. He said - "True pilgrimage or supreme effort is to make shelter in the core of the heart to perceive God there".<sup>46</sup>

Being an ardent devotee of the Bhāgavad Gita Gandhiji put equal importance to Karma (action), Bhakti (devotion) and jnana (knowledge) as the means to attain perfection and he regarded all these paths to be interrelated. To express in his own words - "without Bhakti human effort by itself will not succeed and without jnana Bhakti will not be effective. Bhakti and Jñana are the means which help us in performing right Karma".<sup>47</sup> He would seek God's help to guide him along

the right path for he believed - "Him who worships Me, I guide along the right and see to his needs. My God is myriad formed, and while at the other time see Him in the communal unity, then again in removal of untouchability and that is how I establish communion with Him according as the spirit moves me".<sup>48</sup> Gandhi wanted to see God in his action. Service to His creation he regarded as service to God. He said thus - "We may not know God but know his creation. service to His creation is the service to God"<sup>49</sup> and this is the way to attain perfection.

Gandhi also mentioned five rules of life like truthfulness, Non-violence, non-stealing, non hoarding and Bramhacharyya. These he named as cardinal virtues which are obligatory to all aspirants of perfection.

### Truthfulness :

Truthfulness is one of the most important cardinal virtues recognised by the Indian philosophical systems. Even Manu, the greatest of the Indian law-giver also mentioned truthfulness as great virtue. Gandhi accepted these virtues and interpreted them in the light of his own experiences to suit the needs of the days he lived. And in doing this he

accepted the great Indian formula of truth in thought, in speech and in action (Manana, Vachana and Kayema).

Truth for Gandhi did not simply mean a detail of partial knowledge nor regarded it as a metaphysical fact. He regarded it as a normative concept and thereby he deduced from it the ideal for right action. The sanskrit word 'Satya' (Truth) means not only truth but also truthfulness. Gandhiji included in the concept of 'truth' ontological truth (Reality), a value metaphysical ideal (Moksa), natural justice and truthfulness. The concept of truth is very wide. In principle the different meanings of truth can be deduced from Ontological or metaphysical truth. Truth at the same time is the goal of life. Every man must reach this goal, it's unimpeded and efficient realisation of the natural right. Our knowledge of all these is completely increasing, never comes to an end. That is why moral norm of truthfulness cannot be avoided.

According to Gandhiji it is dangerous to identify 'Satya' erroneously <sup>with</sup> positive justice that we find in formal law. By avoiding such an interpretation Gandhi had to appeal to truth instead of justice.

Gandhiji holds the opinion that there is an intimate relation between truth and truthfulness. Truth is the end and

truthfulness is the means. Gandhiji asserted that means and ends are convertible terms in his philosophy of life. He believes that a man who tries to realise truth must be truthful, in speech and in action. By truthful in thought he meant sincere devotion to facts which consists in earnest search to discover truth. According to Gandhi reason is the voice of God within us. In order to solve any problem it is our duty to follow the dictates of reason. He said - "Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear".<sup>50</sup> If a man fails in his attempt to follow the dictates of reason then the search for truth will automatically set it right. But discovery of truth is a difficult task because it requires self-analysis and self-purification etc. to get rid of six deadly enemies like lust, anger, hatred, greed, infatuation etc. To express in his own words - "For the quest of truth involves tapas - self-suffering even unto death. In such self-less search for truth nobody can lose his bearings for long directly he takes the wrong path he stumbles and is thus restricted to the right path. Therefore, the pursuits of truth is the Bhakti (devotion). It is the path that leads to God".<sup>51</sup>

According to Gandhi truthfulness in speech and action is the natural outcome of the truthfulness of thought. The

nucleous to the votary of truth must bear in mind all the time that - Truth alone prevails' (Satyameva jayate). Asat or untruthfulness can never help a man to attain success. He said - "Even when falsehood momentarily succeeds it so long passing under the gerb of truth. So the strength of falsehood ultimately is derived from the stimulating truth. Truth is thus can make it prevail. Falsehood has no legs to stand upon. It is doomed by it's own nature to ultimate destruction".<sup>52</sup> Gandhiji always emphasised on the perfect harmony of thought speech and action. He believed that our sincere love for our fellow beings gives rise to truthfulness in speech and action. True love and not of deceiving others are always incompatible in character. According to him the ideal of vow of truthfulness generates true love which is a matter of heart. This vow is to speak what is true, good and pleasant which Gandhiji reflected in life.

According to Gandhiji truth as means is always within our reach. If we take care of the means we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. Whatever difficulties we may face we should not give up the quest for truth. We are sure of attaining perfection in life. With this hope in mind Gandhiji made ceaseless striving for truth. He said - "I am but a poor

struggling soul yearning to be wholly good, wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but everfailing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. It is a painful climb but pain of it is a positive pleasure to me, each step forward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next".<sup>53</sup>

The uniqueness of Gandhiji's philosophy and his technique lie in the fact that his sensitive moral nature constructed world view, gave truth a social basis and expanded Ahimsā into a community ethics. He resolved moral dilemma of modern time by giving a shake up, a stirring to old postulates. It was Gandhi who proved that a new mode of seeing is the function of philosophy. The opinion that philosophy is a mere perception of Brahman leaves behind it a residue of vestalgia, Gandhiji proved his genius in the foundation of eternity by proving that philosophy is the criticism and synthesis of life and philosophy can assume tasks on the social and political planes. Gandhiji was a revolutionary thinker in history who gave a collective vision and community ethics. He walked over the philosophical chasm of knowing and doing. He placed ethical significance in terms of man's social responsibilities. He related philosophy to human affairs and gave philosophy a sovereign accent. He teared the straight attire of the Absolute and enabled philosophy to

enter into action by his concept of truthfulness.

Commenting on Gandhi's concept of truth Y.G. Krishnamurthi observed - "Gandhi demonstrates truth in the dynamic movement of the self toward vester centres of awarness. It throws of psychic protecting circle round man. Gandhi's spiritual revolution starts in the blaze of august noon. It's ending truth is still in the zenith. It is beyond the reach of the pilgrim. This truth is nourished not by hand of granade but by reverance for life".<sup>64</sup>

#### Satyagraha :

In India there were pluralistic and emperical trends in classical thoughts no doubt, but they did not become a part of practices. Scales of value and the mode of social action were relatively unaffected either bringing about change in social conditions or by varied philosophical discourses. Philosophy remained far removed from solving the problems of man. A particular school of philosophy rooted so much into Hindu way of life that no scope was there for other philosophers either to criticise or improve upon the traditional practices. philosophical opposition was merely confined to intellectual gymnastic. Thought and action were completely divorced. But

due to the impact of Western influence intellectuals, however, started reflecting on the problems of life. The conflict between the traditional beliefs and matter of fact knowledge became manifest. For the first time an opportunity emerged for philosophy to participate in the problem of man to criticise the existing ways of life and to foreshadow those to which future may conform. Gandhi was of opinion that the social inconsistencies can be remedied when man begins to relate thought and action to a common ideal. To him when beliefs fail to meet the demand of the circumstances they tend to lose their instrumental character. Ideas that can not be translated into action, beliefs which are impracticable and the values that can not be shared must be discarded. And here arises the need for classifying ideas and beliefs in action and experience. When circumstances precipitate action and man fails to understand its intellectual significance either there is a divorce between thoughts and action, intent and consequences, means and ends, the individual and society. Such a relation is fundamental to and beginning point of the philosophy of Gandhiji.

The idea of Satyagraha as developed by Gandhi is directly connected with the identification of reality and value with truth. Satyagraha is a truth force. To Gandhi -

"Truth is soul or spirit, it is therefore also truth force."<sup>55</sup>  
 In ancient time wise men like Jesus, Buddha etc. regarded this force most powerful and they draw their inspiration and confidence from this knowledge. In modern world the great potentiality of this force had been forgotten. Gandhi meditating upon the ideas of Thoreau and Tolstoy tested this discarded weapon and found that it could work wonders. Gandhi wrote -  
 "It is a force which would revitalize social ideals and to do away with despotisms and the emerging militarism under which the nations of the west are groaning".<sup>56</sup>

Initially Gandhi used Satyagraha as a technique to gain political independence no doubt, but that was not the end. To him Satyagraha has deep rooted meaning. For him political freedom is necessary to gain spiritual freedom. He said - "My patriotism is for me in my going to the land of eternal freedom and peace".<sup>57</sup> Satyagraha ultimately developed in Gandhi's hand as a whole way of life with a philosophy, ideology and discipline of its own.

In Satyagraha there is always unflinching adherence to truth. Its root meaning is holding to truth hence truth force. He termed it as love force or soul force. It signifies the vindication of truth not by inflicting sufferings on the

opponent but to one's self. The word Satyagraha used by him out of two sanskrit words - 'Satya' (Truth, Right) and 'Agraha' (firmness or determination). His Satyagraha did not remain only a technique of non-violent resistance. The name positive resistance which Gandhiji used as a technique was subsequently named by him as 'Satyagraha'. This change was made subsequently by him because the word 'passive resistance' suggested a negative sense, whereas the word 'Satyagraha' suggests the active principle of love. Gandhiji always believed that love is the only means for realising truth. Satyagraha is a truth-force as opposed to armed strength or violence. It excludes the use of violence because as man is capable of knowing Absolute truth he is not to punish anybody. Self-purification is another name for Satyagraha. Satyagraha is the way of non-violence. According to Gandhiji beauty and efficacy of Satyagraha is very great but it is also too simple that it can be preached even by a child also. He regarded Satyagraha as a kind of education in the real sense of the term. He said - "In brief the sign of satyagraha consists in the quest for the principle of life".<sup>48</sup>

According to Gandhi Satyagraha is like an all sided sword and can be used every where and at any time. He deduced the laws which operate in the acceptance of Satyagraha both

as a way of life and as a method of fighting injustice in various fields, economic, social and human self-respect, human dignity, human freedom and human progress in terms of higher moral and spiritual life which were the basic values to which he attached greatest importance. Satyagrahi can attain a far reaching result without shedding a single drop of blood. It never rusts and not to be stolen. It is not a weapon of the weak. It requires physical and mental training. It depends only on truth and one's capacity to suffer for truth. For where there is no strength of mind then there can not be strength of soul. So a Satyagrahi who wants to serve the country has to cultivate certain moral qualities like perfect chastity, poverty, truthfulness and fearlessness. Thus it signifies that it needs for proper education to create an altitude of mind towards truth. Truth, therefore, has necessarily to be followed and at any cost.

According to Gandhiji there can not be Satyagraha for an unjust cause. Even for a just cause it may fail to achieve the end if the satyagrahis are not having strong determination and capable of fighting and suffering to the end. A satyagrahi must exclude the use of violence in any form whether in thought, speech and action. If the cause is just one and the Satyagrahi

retains the capacity for endless suffering avoiding violence the victory is a must. A Satyagrahi must always remain calm and unperturbed even under any kind of provocation.

According to Gandhi the method of Satyagraha is possible only when people by nature is fearless and lovers of poverty and cultivate the spirit of tolerance. He can be a Satyagrahi who has the heart to sacrifice his poverty and even his own family whenever necessary. To quote Gandhiji's words - "I see that satyagrahi is assured of divine help, and that is testing a satyagrahi the creator imposes on him at every step only as much burden as he can bear".<sup>49</sup> For Gandhi suffering undergone in the purest form of satyagraha is tapasya or penance.

Gandhiji mentioned three principles regarding the goal, means and results of satyagraha. The first implies that the original demand for satyagraha should not be increased, the second implies that whatever is gained by satyagraha should be retained by satyagraha alone. Lastly whatever is not attainable by satyagraha can not be gained by any other means. It knows no defeat either side. From the lowest point of view the aim of satyagraha is the service to humanity and from the standpoint of higher, it is Moksha or liberation. The result of satyagraha

is always good if the principles are strictly followed. It should be practised without thinking of the result and it should make no difference whether the expected goal is reached or not. He said - "The extraneous factors can not affect satyagraha ..... the victory of a single member may be taken to mean victory of all, but the defeat of the side as a whole does not spell defeat for the person who has not yielded".<sup>60</sup> Satyagraha presupposes the ultimate victory of truth, it incites the freedom of the soul. Gandhiji compares satyagraha "to a banyan tree in which 'satya' (Truth) and Ahimsa (Non-violence) represent the parent trunk with innumerable branches of which civil disobedience is one".<sup>61</sup>

Satyagraha is not a new word. Gandhiji discovered it only to give new meaning to it and used it in every field of human activity. He used it ultimately as a technique for the realisation of the soul-force in man because this principle is based on the faith in the inherent goodness of man. Hence, the sole aim of Gandhiji was to make aware of this point and to make best use of it for bringing about peace with an earnest zeal and for the realisation of the truth. He often refers Satyagraha as a science, and an art. He always approached the subject as a scientist with an open mind and made a number of

experiences in his life. For Gandhi Satyagraha was not simply a technique for non-violent resistance. He developed it also as a whole way of life with a philosophy, ideology and discipline of its own. He found out the laws which operate in the adoption of Satyagraha both as a way of life and as a method of fighting injustice in all disciplines like economics, politics etc. and other human self-respect, human dignity, human freedom and human progress in terms of higher spiritual life on which he attached much importance.

Non-violence :

Non-violence as an ethical norm is basic to Gandhi's philosophy, a kind of foundation stone. He repeated several times that truth as a goal precedes non-violence. He considered truth as a hierchical order of values. Truth as a goal to be reached has greater values than the means i.e. non-violence used to reach it. But whatever may be the case, non-violence is necessary part of Gandhiji's philosophy. We can evitably reach the goal sooner or later provided we take care of the means.

Gandhi admitted himself that he had nothing new to teach the world in the case of non-violence. He said - "I have nothing to teach the world ..... Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both as vast a scale as I could".<sup>62</sup> This ideal is nothing but the continuation of ancient philosophical tradition particularly Buddhism and Jainism.

Ordinarily ~~the meaning~~ of non-violence is the ideal of non-killing or non-injuring in any form of life under any circumstances, ~~not~~ even thinking or speaking of non-injuring others. This meaning of non-violence was made elastic by Manu

who allowed killing of animals or sacrifice and food or for self-defence. But Gandhi's conception of non-violence lies in between the two extremes. Because his chief aim of life was to make the ideal more practical, positive and dynamic in character. Basically he was a votary of truth but in search of it he discovered non-violence. He said - "..... In fact it was in the course of my pursuit of truth that I discovered non-violence".<sup>53</sup>

Gandhiji in explaining the relation between truth as 'End' and non-violence as 'Means' expressed the opinion that they are inseparable. He explained thus - "Means may be compared with the seed, ends with the tree, the same unbreakable connection exists between means and ends as between the seed and the tree".<sup>54</sup> Like the Indian general ethics Gandhi's more doctrine is teleological in principle.

As Gandhi was a practical minded man he could not ignore the reality of the human progress. To him Non-violence is the law of the species. The primary duty of man is to keep this divine element alive and make possible effort to use it by practising love. He did not interpret non-violence in the negative sense i.e. in the sense of physical and mental injury. He liked to interpret non-violence in the positive sense as

the greatest love and greatest charity. To him non-violence borns out of love and the true criteria of non-violence is the inner feeling of the heart that lie implicit in non-violence. It reveals itself as love in the working state. One who clings to the inner feeling cannot but non-violent. The more we practise morally elevated to understand truth more.

According to Gandhi morality is thus the means. Right behaviour by itself has no value. Morality is the key, it is necessary means for achieving the goal - i.e. truth. Hence, Gandhi gave much more importance to moral questions. He did not accept violent means for achieving the goal, individual or collective. A goal achieved by wrong means is not a real goal, but proves itself to be an illusion.

From the standpoint of ends, morality always implies purposeful human behaviour which gives rise to best possible result. According to Gandhi it is morality upon which depends the real development of individual or the community. Morality advances freely for others, creates harmony, peace and happiness.

According to Gandhi means always must be within our reach. We can control means but not the goal. The basic importance in aiming the right goal falls on morality or means, i.e. on deeds

which can be performed in practice. We may not be aware of the final goal except as a formal idea, still in accordance with the border value theory of truth we may have a number of intermediary goals, relative truths. Consequently according to the best of our ability we esteem certain achieved goals correct and experiences others as wrong and thereby we can solve our moral problems in relation to these achievements. And it is impossible for us to separate 'ends' and 'means' or morality and hence according to Gandhi they are interchangeable terms.

According to Gandhi whether an action is right or wrong, violent or non-violent can be studied both from the point of view of motives and consequences. To get sure good results we must take care of the plurality of means and ends. Hence, Gandhi opines that self-analysis and purification of one's motives is more certain way to right action than the analysis of external aim.

According to Gandhi a non-violent man must restrain all impulses. Non-violence is meant for the strong and not for the weak. He said - "My creed of non-violence is extremely active force, it has no room for cowerdice even weaknesses".<sup>55</sup> To him violence is the expression of inner sense of weakness. But a

truly non-violent man goes on observing it even at the cost of his life. The capacity for self-sacrifice develops fearlessness in the non-violent individual. He said - "The path of truth is narrow as it is straight even so that of Ahimsā. It is like balancing oneself on the edge of the sword.....".<sup>56</sup> One must learn the art of dying in the training of non-violence. It is the art of discovering the cause of fear. The non-violent man has to cultivate the capacity for self-sacrifice of the highest order to make free from fear.

Non-violence is the positive spirit of treating all beings as one's self. A votary of non-violence grants maximum convenience to others even at the maximum inconvenience to one-self. Gandhiji said - "Non-violence is not the mechanical performance. It is the finest quality of heart and comes by training".<sup>57</sup> It requires difficult course of training to attain this mental state. His principle of non-violence is in principle teleological even though in practice the main stress is upon plurality of man. According to Gandhi perfect state can be reached when body, mind and speech are in complete harmony. To him while violence is required for production of external things, non-violence is the protection of the Atman. It is the highest type of renunciation which implies complete freedom from the attachment of

earthly possessions as the meanest". A non-violent man as Gandhi said "takes refuge in God, ought to have a glimpse of Atman that transcends the body, and the moment one has a glimpse of the imperishable Atman one sheds the love of perishable body".<sup>58</sup>

But inspite of Gandhi's yearning for non-violence he holds that killing may be necessary in certain exceptional cases. For example the using of violent means to restrict the activities of the drunkard. But these exceptional cases should not set the rule to encourage violence.

To Gandhi non-violence is the supreme ideal of life. It is supreme because truth can not be attained without non-violence. He said - "When you want to find truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, i.e. non-violence".<sup>59</sup> Being a practical idealist he believed that non-violence prepares the way of life to be followed equally at all times in the domain of economics, politics and day to day life even. It is not meant for the rishis alone, but for the common people also. Commenting on Gandhi's concept of non-violence R.R. Diwakar says - "Gandhi realised that the abstract form of Ahimsa was of no use in the world of thought and metaphysical

speculations. It is as good as the abstract idea of Reality. We have to deal with life as we lived to-day and as it ought to be lived for making an instrument all sided evolution . . . . To Gandhi all life was one as well as sound but at the same time he could not lose sight of values and the process of evolution of life in his eyes, it was through Ahimsā that humanity had realised the present level of culture and civilisation and it was through Ahimsa alone man could negotiate the next stages of his progress. Ahimsa emerges as the fundamental condition of human relationship<sup>10</sup>.

Civilisation is an ethical endeavour and its progress and the existence of human race can be saved only by continued affirmation and practice of ethical virtues such as reverence for life in all its forms. Self-correctedness is the key of all that is highest and finest in our life and thought. Mahatma Gandhi envisaged the progressive decay of humanity, losses of all human virtues of spontaneous understanding and sympathy and the sapping of man's spiritual and moral freedom. Hence, he put much importance on Ahimsa or non-violence as the valid rule of conduct for civilised man and his concept of non-violence was revitalised by his personal view of history. He wrote - "Man has been steadily progressing towards Ahimsa since the beginning of history, our remote ancestors were cannibals, next came a

stage when man took to agriculture, settled down to stable civilised life ..... all these are signs of progressive Ahimsa and diminishing himsa".<sup>71</sup> Gandhiji was opinion that all prophets of religion taught us Ahimsa with it's attributes of truth, harmony, brotherhood and justice. To Gandhi Ahimsa has been the motive force of history and the goal of history is oneness of humanity. He said - "I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives...."<sup>72</sup> His concept of history is not the gospel of passivism but progressive realisation of Non-violence in the affairs of man in it's fullest connotation of truth, Justice and oneness of mankind destined to achieve the fullest realisation on earth. In the historical process he put much importance on the place and value of the individual. To him individual was of supreme importance. He believed man is superior to system under which he, his working or living. He found no single virtue which aims at and satisfied with the welfare of an individual alone but concerns the whole world. The individual's moral and spiritual progress is not only the meaning of history but also the motive force behind historical process both for the good and the bad. He had much faith in human nature and never suspected it. He opined - "If we know only how to strike the right chord in the human heart, we can bring out the music .

of human unity".<sup>42</sup> According to Gandhi non-violence is an universal principle and it is not a matter of practice for individual, but for the humanity as a whole. He asserted that equal freedom of all could be given only through non-violence. He also believed that non-violence is the penacea for world peace. The credit lies with Gandhi in the fact that he succeeded in making the principle of non-violence as the principle of socio-political dynamics in which tolerance works as the inner force in bringing about a harmonious relation between man and man.

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## CHAPTER VI

### DIVERSITY OF RELIGIONS

6.1. The proper study of mankind is man. This study of man is incomplete if he does not include the study of religion for religion has wide spread significance in the history of mankind. Religion always implies an interpretation of the nature of reality involving interpretation of the meaning of the universe in term of it's value for human life. Religion is a complex phenomenon and as such it is really difficult to explain how religion originated from the earliest period of human existence.

Anthropologically we may study religion in regard to it's historic or pre-historic origin - how religion first appears in time and place, how man expresses his religious nature first, what is the most rudimentary form of religion from which all other religions may be said to be developed. Psychologically we may study what is the source of man's spiritual nature not only at the begining but also everywhere and always, what are the constant factors in their inner life of man which are in interplay with the environment that generate the religious attitude of man, what impulses or motives prompted man to apprehend the supernatural and to adjust his life in it.

These two sets of questions are inseparable. They need the help of each other. The anthropologist needs to have an insight into the psychology of the primitive mind before man can hope of reconstructing the religion of the primitive man. The task is purely psychological for there are no records of the oldest form of religion either in written documents or trustworthy traditions. We can not, therefore go back in history to the beginnings and make a study of man in the process of becoming religious for at the dawn of history man was already religious. Our primary concern is to discover the root of religion in man's inner nature. Hence, to trace the origin of religion is simply a guess work.

Anthropologically it can be maintained that at a certain stage of culture man everywhere attributed a kind of soul to the phenomenon of nature. Man projected his own experience into the objects around him making conscious use of the principle of analogy. Religion arose as the animistic view of the world. Religion arose owing to the attempt of man to establish relationship between him and some of the spirits around him and he tried to propitiate the powerful spirits and to exercise the evil ones.

It may also be maintained that origin of religion was due to ancestral worship, ancestors appearing in the form of ghost. Some kind of fear of the ghosts of the dead prevails wildly among savages and they offered sacrifices to the spirit of the ancestors.

We may again believe in Totemism as the most important form of religion. A ~~Totem is a species~~ of animal or plant, a class of inanimate objects to which social group stands in an intimate relationship with the idea that these are the ancestors of the clan. This totem is not exactly God but a being and are to be respected. This view is appealing to those people who believe that religion is wholly a social phenomenon for they believe that all religions belief lies in the idea of a mysterious impersonal force controlling life and this sense of force is derived from the authority of the society over the individual.

Modern anthropology bends more and more to find the origin of religion in common with magic in pre-animistic stage where people by a sense of fear in the presence of indefinable mysterious power or powers, not regarded as personal.

Psychologically, it may be said that man is religions by nature because he has a religious instinct. Thus religion is

something innate in nature. One of the popular views of religion is that the attributes of religion is simple elemental emotion i.e. fear. It is believed that emotion of fear does an important part particularly in the lowest religions. We may also think that the sense of awe in the presence of mysterious potencies of the universe is the most fundamental religious emotion. But this awe is not to be identified with fear for fear is only an ingredient of it. In the developed stage emotion of fear is absorbed into positive emotions like wonder, admiration, love reverence etc. Hence, it may be said that religion had it's origin in a sense of kinship with the Gods rather in fear of them as hostile beings. It is not the vague fear of unknown powers but with a loving reverence to unknown Gods who are knit to their worshippers by strong bonds of kinship, that religion in the true sense of the term begins. In the higher religious fear is sublimated by love into an adoring reverence. This is a favourite doctrine of the Old Testament, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of religion.

Religion may have genesis in feeling as the core of psychological life. Religion is the soul's feeling of immediate contact and fusion with the infinite. The feeling that puts forth a claim to govern religious experience is mysticism.

A mystic desires to contact with divine reality through intuition and emotion of the heart. As feeling is purely private and does not account of itself, it declines to justify them rationally. It is the reason that can get rid of religion from privacy of oneself and give public status and universal right of way to deliverances. Religious feeling must pass through the crucible of will and of the intellect. Feeling must be not only thought out, but lived out. It must be translated into practice. This impels us to believe that religion is a kind of activity, a type of behaviour for intense emotion naturally issues in action. Religion as an inward feeling demands outward expression. It is a kind of behaviour controlled by purpose. Hence, religion originates in practical needs under the pressure of struggle for life and grows with the growth of these needs. The organisation of religious life in outward behaviour is responsible for the establishment of the cult or institutional religions. But religious behaviour is not confined to rituals alone. Religious services were there from the very early times and with the development of religion became more ethical to include conduct beyond the range of cult because such conduct was regarded as well-pleasing to the higher powers. Morality came to be placed more and more under the guardianship of religion. Duty towards

God widened to embrace the sphere of daily conduct, duty towards fellow men sanctioned by religion.

Can we then treat religion as Belief ? It is seen that religion has it's intellectual as well as emotional and volitional aspect. It does not indicate that religion had it's origin in man's effort to seek intellectual solution of the problems of life and reality. Man's conscious reflective thought emerged in subsequent period and it emerged as the instrument of the 'will to live' than that of man's motiveless "will to know". "But religion is not a product of intellectual leisure, but of the grind of existence - a grind that ever seeks to transform itself into freedom and joy". Coe-aptly aptly remarked. Even in most elementary stages of religious life some element of cognition or belief is present. At this stage though thought was in bondage to instinct still some kind of judgement, some kind of belief for when an object is taken as real is qualified by the predicate of divinity. With the development of thought thought becomes free to soar on the swings of creative imagination and this is excuplied in mythology that we find in most of the religions of the world.

But the above mentioned concepts as to the origin of religion are not satisfactory. For example, Totemism which

is the most important ancient form of religion is also not adequate for there are large parts of the world wherein no trace of totemism can be found. Psychologically if it is said that religion had its origin owing to the presence of religious instinct in man, that religion is something innate in man then also we find that religion is a complex phenomenon and to attribute it to religious instinct is an act of oversimplification, for religion is a synthetic organisation of elemental instincts and emotion of our being in the pursuit of an ideal Being.

Divine Revelation is also regarded as the possible reason for the origin of religion as we find in Jewish, Christian and Muhammedan theologies. It has taken the form of a belief in the primordial monotheism of the divine origin from which polytheism is a later relapse. Against this it may be said that as revelation is primarily an act of God and hence, it does not help us to understand how it was conditioned by the nature of experience of man and how it was psychologically mediated.

We may also prone to hold the view that religion finds its origin in human reason. The fundamental truths of religion can be established with the certainty of mathematical truths

which constitute the natural religion and it is the common element in all the varied religions of the world. The religion of reason is natural to man and hence known to man from the beginning. But it is not correct to give much emphasis on reason as the originating source of religion ignoring the emotional and intuitional illumination as fruitful source of religious ideas.

From historical perspective religion is an empirical entity which can be forced historically and mapped geographically. It is a human phenomenon. Various historical religion like christianity, judaism, Taoism, zoroastrianism, Islam etc. are human creation whose history is a part of history of human culture. Religion is a clear and bounded historical phenomenon and its notion is far from being universal and self-evident. Religious life of humanity is a dynamic continuum within which some major disturbances were there from time to time and as a result set up new fields of force displaying complex relationships of attraction and repulsion, absorption, resistance and reinforcement. These major disturbances are the great creative religions moments of human history from which the various religions traditions sprang up. From theological standpoint these moments are seen as intersections of divine grace, divine

initiative, divine truth with human faith, human response human enlightenment. They made heavy impact upon the stream of human life so as to affect the development of cultures and the various religions like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism are among the resulting historical cultural phenomenon. For example, Christianity developed through a complex interaction between religious and non-religious factors, the ideas of Christianity have been found within the intellectual framework supplied from Greek Philosophy and the Christian church was moulded as an institution by the Roman empire, its systems of laws, the Catholic mind reflects Latin Meditterian and protestant mind reflects Germanic culture. Hence, there is a connection between historical christianity and continuing life of humanity in the west and what is true of Christianity, in their own ways of all other religions of the world. To be precise, the distinguishable religio-cultural streams within human history are nothing but expressions of the diversity of human types, temperaments or thought forms. The differences that we find between Eastern and western mentality that are revealed in Christianity different conceptual and linguistic, social, political and artistic forms underlie the contrasts between Eastern and Western religion. As regards to the meaning and end of the

religion the development of religion from its original religious ideas - be it be insight of Buddha or life of christ etc; in each case the development stands in a questionable relationship to that original idea. Religious as institutions equipped with their theological doctrines and the codes of behaviour that form the boundaries did not come about because the the religions reality required this, but because such a development was a historical necessity in the days of undeveloped communication between different cultural groups.

In studying historical necessity of plurality of religions in the past we must take into account the broad course that has been taken by the religious life of humanity. Man is naturally religious being expressing an innate tendency to experience the environment as being religiously and naturally significant and to feel required to live in it as such. This tendency is universally expressed in the culture of ancient people and this has been shown by them in their belief in sacred objects endowed with manu, in nummerable spirits needing to be carefully propitiated. They apprehended divine reality as quasi-animal forces. In subsequent period the ancient people combined together and formed Tribes and started believing Gods. These tribal gods were then ranked in hierchies dominated. For example, in the

middle east, by great national gods such as Sumerian Ishtar, Anu of Thebes, the Greek zens and in India Dyas, Varun etc. These gods were treated by them to be martial and cruel and sometimes required human sacrifices. All these prove that the state of humanities awareness of the divine at the beginning of human history. This kind of religions may be regarded as natural religion which started with primal spirit expressing fear in unknown forces of nature and subsequently that gave rise to regional deities. This shows that prior to any special intrusion of divine revelation humanity had a religious life. So some kind of religion existed with the very dawn of human civilization. But that religion has been undergoing changes adjusting with new circumstances to suit the needs of man with the onward march of time. Dr. Radhakrishnan also observes - "Religion in everywhere a historical growth and a new system has always to begin by adjusting and adopting what it can from older systems. All great religions indicate features which thy have inherited from their civilised predeccessory so the elements of the roots of religion were there as back as we can trace the history of mankind".<sup>2</sup>

A golden age of religious creativity dawned after 1000 B.C.E. In this age a series of revelatory experiences occurred

in different parts of the world and which helped a lot in deepening and purifying people's conception of divine and that religious faith can only attribute to the divine reality upon human spirit. At the beginning of this period some of the great Hebrew prophetic individuals like Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah etc. were born, and they claimed that they had heard the word of the Lord claiming their obedience and demanding a new level of righteousness and justice in the life of Israel. The prophet Zoroaster appeared in Persia, Greece and produced Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato etc. In China there were Confucius, and the authors of the Taoist scriptures in India formation of the Upanishads, the lives of Goutama the Buddha, Mahavir, the founder of Jainism and around the end of this period the writing of the Bhagavad Gita. Both Christianity and Islam have their roots in the Hebrew religion of the Axial age. But during this period the revelatory communication was so limited between different groups of humanity that these different groups were unknown to each other. And as a result a number of local religions came into existence with certain local civilizations. Hence, divergent religions developed separately within different historical and cultural atmospheres.

In addition to what has been said above in order to dig out the possible causes for the development of different

religions of the world, it is essential to make distinction between human encounters with the divine reality in various forms of religions experiences and at the same time theories and doctrines that were developed by various religious thinkers to conceptualise the meaning of these encounters. These are the most important components of religion which are distinguishable but not separable. Both of them continually reacting upon one another in a joint process of development, experiences giving the basis of our beliefs but these ultimately influence the forms taken by our experiences. The divergent religions are various streams of religions experience each of these began at a different point within human history and each having formed its own conceptual self-consciousness with a different cultural atmosphere. All the great religions of the world at the very experiential roots are in contact with the same ultimate divine reality and their differing experiences of the divine reality interacting over centuries with the different thoughts, forms of different cultural atmosphere led to the growth of divergent religions of the world.

To be precise, there are three aspects which led to the growth of divergent religions of the world. They are (1) Differences in the modes of experiencing the divine reality (II) differences of philosophical or theological theories

regarding the implication of religious experiences and (III) differences in the revelatory experience that unify a stream of general life.

The most important difference that we find in various religions of the world is centring round the question - whether the divine is personal or non-personal. While judaism, Christianity, Islam and theistic Hinduism apprehend the ultimate as personal goodness, will and purpose under the different names like jehweh, God, Allah etc. Advaita Vedanta and Theravada Buddhism apprehend it as non-personal.

In regard to the differences of Philosophical and theological theory considering the reality they are part of the still developing history of human thought and they belong to the historical culturally conditioned aspect of religion and is subject to change.

Each religion has it's holy founder or scriptures or both, in which the divine reality has been revealed - the Buddha, the Christ and the Bible, Muhammad and the Quran etc. wherever the Holy revealed, each claims an absolute response of faith and worship which may be incompatible with a like response of any other kind.

In the great religions of the world a distinction is recognised between the Real or ultimate or Divine in and Real conceptualised by human beings. The common assumption is that Reality is infinite and hence beyond the grasp of human thought and language. The describable and experienceable objects of worship are not ultimate but the ultimate in it's relationship to finite perceivers. For example - In Advaita vedanta Sankara's concept of Nirguna Brahman belong to the first category and Saguna Brahman belongs to the second. Similarly in christian religion mystic Eckhard drew a parallel distinction between the God Head (Deitas) and God (Deus). In Taoism the Tao Te Ching says - the Tao that can be expressed is not the Eternal Tao. The jewish Kabbalist mystics made a similar distinction absolute Divine Reality beyond human distinction and divine experienced. The Muslim suffis also maintained that the Real appears to a similar concept to En-soph as the deep (abys) of God head underlying the self-revealing Allah. In modern time paul Tillich has expressed the view that the God above the view of theism. If it is admitted that Real is one and our human perceptions are plural there is every reason to believe that the various streams of religions experience represent diverse awareness of the same transcendental Reality perceived in different ways by various human mentalities

forming and formed by different cultural histories. In this regard Immanuel Kant provided a philosophical frame work where in such a hypothesis can be developed. Kant made a distinction between the world as it is in itself i.e. Transcendental world and the world that appears to human consciousness, namely phenomenal world. His view can be interpreted in such a way that the phenomenal world is the numerical world as humanely experienced. According to Kant the innumerable sense data are brought under human consciousness with the help of a system of rational concepts or categories in terms of which we are aware of our environment. It indicates that the environment perceived by us is a joint product of the world itself and selecting, interpreting and unifying activity of the perceiver. Though Kant was interested in the psychological contribution to our awareness of the world yet his basic principle can be seen in the physiological level. As for instance our sense organs can respond only to a minute proportion of the full range of sound and electro-magnetic waves - that are impinging upon us all the time. As a result when we experience the world it represents human selection from the innumerable complexity and richness of the world as it is in itself. Now, if this broad Kantian distinction between the 'world-in-itself' and the 'world as it appears to us' is applied to the relation

between the ultimate reality and our human awareness of reality then we may form the hypothesis that the Real 'in sich' is experienced by human beings in terms of two basic religious concepts - (i) Concept of God, the Real conceived as personal which we find in theistic form of religion (ii) The concept of the Absolute, the Real experienced as non-personal that we find in non-theistic religion. Each of these basic concepts is made more concrete (Schemata) as the range of particular images of God or particular concepts of the Absolute. These images of God are found within the varied religious histories.

In the previous paragraph though attempts has been made to discover the origin and development of historical religions. But Hinduism is not to be placed within the fold of historical religion. One of the obvious reasons is that all the religions derived their inspiration to the personal insights of their prophet founder. But Hinduism in it's pure form never leaned as strongly as other religious do on authority. It is not 'founded' religion and it does not centre round any historical events. Hinduism has certain distinctive characteristics and it always insists on the inward life of the spirit. It's very aim is to know, possess and to be spirit in the physical frame and to convert an obscure mentality into

clear illumination, to build peace and self-existent freedom in the stress of emotional satisfactions and sufferings, to discover and to realise the life divine in a body subject to sickness and death. The Hindu turn-back to the vedic period as the epoch of their founders. The vedas, the wisdom is the name for the highest spiritual truth to which human mind is capable. The vedas are the work of the ṛṣis. The truth of the ṛṣis are not evolved as the result of logical thinking or systematic philosophy; but they are the products of intuition, dr̥ṣṭi or vision. They are not the authors of the truths written in the vedas as the seers who are able to know the eternal truths by raising their life spirit to that plan of the universal spirit. The ṛṣis were the pioneers reseachers in the realm of the spirit who saw more in the world than other fellows. The utterances are based not on impermanent vision but on a continous experience of resident life and power.

In regard to the existence of diverse religions Vivekananda opined that ~~all religions~~ are only different expressions of the Eternal Religion and these expressions are neither contradictory nor antagonistic to each other. He said - "... the truth that religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of the

eternal religion. That one eternal religion is applied to the opinions of various minds and various races. There never was my religion or yours, my national religion or your national religion, there never existed many religions, there is only one. One infinite religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist and this religion is expressing itself in various countries in various ways".<sup>3</sup> All religions starting from the lowest fatishism to the highest form are nothing but so many attempts of the human soul to grasp or realise the Infinite. Each religion is determined by the conditions of it's birth and association and each of these a stage of progress. Each religion is true and authentic in it's own way. Hence, no man should change his religion for another. Ideally clining to one's own religion ~~one~~ should absorb the best elements of other religions. Religion, he said, is realisation. It is only at this stage of transcendental experience which is what religion is really all about. To him Religion is a total concept. All the religions of the world together constitute one whole. To have religions consciousness of mankind not a single religion should be left out. He once said - "Each religion as it were takes up an part of the great universal truth and spends it's whole force in embodying out

typifying part of the great truth, it is therefore addition, not exclusion".<sup>4</sup> Vivekananda also opined that to assimilate the spirit of other religions one must preserve his own individuality and in doing this he needs proper understanding of the spirit of his own religion as well as that of for every religion has a behind it a soul and that soul may differ from the soul of another. Every religion has the capacity to take it's followers to supreme peace, perfection freedom. And hence he was averse to prosely zation. He said - "Do I wish that the christian would become a Hindu? God forbids. Do I wish that Hindu or Buddhist would become a christian? God forbid The christian is not to become a Hindu . . . But each must assimilate the spirit of others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to the law of "growth"<sup>5</sup> Vivekananda wanted that man "must make conscious effort to see the thread connecting all religions, forming as it were, a beautiful garland adoring the supreme Being who is neither a Hindu, nor a christian . . . . . not belonging to any religion whatsoever. All belong to Him but He transcends all".<sup>6</sup>

Vivekananda believed - unity in diversity is the very plan of nature. So there and will be diversity of religions contributing towards the understanding of the proper spirit

of religion to lift human race from momentary meaningless provincialism to the significance of the eternal, to transform the chaos and confusion of life to that pure and immortal essence.

According to Mahatma Gandhi also all great religions of the world though in certain points are absolutely one. All religions are one in regard to their fundamental principle and it is man who is responsible for the different religions of the world. It is the failure of man to grasp the very spirit of religion that has led to the appearances of many religions. He said - "Even as a tree has a single trunk but many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect religion but it becomes many as it passes through human medium".<sup>7</sup> To Gandhiji all religions are God given and also necessary for the people to whom these religions are revealed. He was not in favour of religions conversion. He only exhorted the people to realise his own religion truly and sincerely for every religion has it's own precious grains. He believed that the end of all religions is realisation of God in soul. This is the universal realising. Man must be conscious of the fact that though the ideas and methods of various religions differ yet, all religions coverage to the same centre. Religions

are given to mankind so as to accelerate a process of realisation of fundamental unity.

Realising the very true spirit of religion. Both Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi opined that the need of the present day world is not one religion on earth but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of divergent religions. Man should not attempt to root out tradition, effects of heredity, climatic and other surroundings which are responsible for the appearance of divergent religions of the world. The crying need of the hour is the conversion in the sense of self-purification and self-realisation to ensure peaceful co-existence of human race. Harmony and not dissention was the motto of both Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi.

## 6.2 ROCK BOTTOM UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS :

Religion is not a make-believe. It is a real life force and its very aim is to bind together the heart of all living beings to each other and to God. To use the words of Vivekananda - "of all forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destiny of the human race, none certainly is more potent than that the manifestation of which we call religion .....".<sup>8</sup> He also remarked that "the goal of all religions is also the same in essence. The ultimate goal of all mankind, the end of all religions, is but one - reunion with God or what amounts to the same with the divinity which is every man's true nature".<sup>9</sup> There are so much similarities in different religions that suggest the idea that the particulars of different religions have been copied from one another. Realisation of self in all as God in all is the principal teaching of all religions. It is the belief in all religions that service to all living beings is the service to God and this is the way of attaining perfection in life. All religions believe in super-natural Being, transcendental but not indifferent to His creatures. All religions also believe that this supreme imposes its all pervading, all embracing unity upon the countless multitude. Comparative study of all major religions of the world shows that except

certain differences in regard to non-essentials or superficial elements, all religions teach the same fundamental truth. All religious practices are the expressions of the inward desire for realising the supreme. The founders of different religions agree in holding that underlying differences there is essential unity. To use Vivekananda's words - "Religion is of the soul and finds expression through various nations, languages and customs. Hence, it follows that the difference between the religions of the world is one of expression and not of substance, and their points of similarity and unity are of the soul, are intrinsic, the language of the soul is one in whatever peoples and under whatever circumstances it manifests itself. The same sweet harmony is vibrant there also, as it is on many and diverse instruments".<sup>10</sup> All religions believe in one supreme spirit as the source from which the world proceeds, by which it is sustained and ends. This ultimate reality manifests itself and it can be conceived as various ways and it suggests different paths to perfection. In fact, no founder of a religion does preach absolutely new truth. That there is no difference in regard to fundamental truth and different prophets preach the same fundamental truth in varied languages at different times is found in almost all religions of the world. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord Krishna

says to Arjuna - "The royal saints, the kings, the philosophers of ancient days from one unto the other did pass this wisdom from age to age, that same eternal yoga, ancient vision. Here I declare to this day to strengthen they mind and heart of life's perpetual strife".<sup>11</sup> Buddha and Jaina speak respectively of the past Buddhas and Tirthankaras and they admit that they have vivified and codified the same truths taught by them. In Christianity, Christ says - "I am not to destroy the law of the prophets but to fulfill them".<sup>12</sup> Similarly in Islam Muhammad says - "This that I now telling unto you, the Holy Quaran it is to be found within the ancient seers too".<sup>13</sup> Kung-pen-Tu (confucious) declared - "I could hand on, I can not create new things".<sup>13(a)</sup> The Sufis declared that - "just it is lustre of one Sun that shines in the different sea waves and bubbles, so it is one truth that is expressed under the cover of different forms".<sup>14</sup>

In all religions we find that each religion appears to an ethical ideal. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, all of them advise their followers to be aware of the operation of the inexplicable moral Law of Karma and to follow the path of righteousness and wisdom to get rid of bondage. The path that Buddha taught categorically is known as 'Majjhima Pratipada',

i.e. the middle path. Confucianism primarily teaches - "Commit no excess, do nothing injurious, there are few who will not then take you for their pattern. The will should not be gratified to the full; pleasures should not be carried to excess".<sup>15</sup> The Bhāgavad Gita also teaches - "He who avoids extremes in food and fast, on sleep and waking and in work and play. He winneth yoga had once peace and joy".<sup>16</sup> Taoism also teaches five moral principles and puts much importance as moderation. "Continuing to fill pail after it is full, the water will be wasted . . . . He who possesses moderation is lasting and enduring. Too much is always a curse, most of all in wealth".<sup>17</sup> Shintoism teaches it's followers certain moral offences for it leads to the displeasure of God. Zoroastrianism is ethical and it asks it's followers to follow three principles - "Think God, speak God and do good".<sup>18</sup> It teaches 'Ahura Mazda (the principle of light, justice and good) in order to reap the benefit of righteousness Christianity, which is primarily a religion of love, preaches to follow the Golden path and to establish the kingdom of God on earth following the path of righteousness. The Bible says - "Be not righteous over much, neither make thyself over-wise, not over-wicked, neither thou be too foolish".<sup>19</sup> Islam also asks its followers to develop a calm resignation to the Almighty God for guidance of the right path and to form one Brotherhood. It asks to perform

"only those acts are good and safe to do the golden mean which studiously pursue".<sup>20</sup> Sikhism asks to have simple faith in God and to have plain living with high moral spirit. All religions believe - "Every question has two inevitable sides. Wisdom consists in reconciling the two, by just compromise between them in accord with requirements time-place circumstance".<sup>21</sup>

It is, however, to be noted that the ethical ideas to be pursued by the followers are not individualistic but social in outlook. It is the principle of all the religions of the world. In Hinduism this universal outlook has been found since the period of Rg. veda. "United be the thought of all that may happen to agree".<sup>22</sup> Its concept of universal salvation is a testimony to this. Bhagaban Das points out that - "all these religions aim at binding together anew again the hearts of all to each other and back again to God".<sup>23</sup> Jaina's conception of Ahimsa is nothing but another name for universal love. Zoroastrains believe that - "the souls of the faithful of both sexes in the Aryan countries - in all countries all these do we venerate".<sup>24</sup> Islam and Christianity teach the brotherhood of man under the common faith in God. In fact, all religions teach us to rise above selfishness and to develop a spirit of universal love.

Every religion advises it's followers to make attempts for reaching forward to something super-natural which transcends the physical world. Every religion believes in some stable character of inner personality, called the soul. And this soul is believed to be kinship with the spirit. Thus soul has destiny of it's own even after death. It may be absorbed in the Supreme soul or continue in everlasting communion with Him. The supreme spirit dwells hidden in the hearts of all and make possible for man to understand and help each other in the difficulties of life. It is the one soul force of whatever unity is there is in all human thought. The realisation of soul alone as eternally present in oneself and in all selves brings deathless happiness and peace. The suffering to which the soul is subject and at the same time show that the possibility of liberation or salvation. All religions give importance to suffering and problem of escape from them and suggest means of overcoming the suffering.

Hinduism looks upon liberation as the highest goal of life. For Hinduism liberation ultimately means the union with God or God realisation. The upanishads declare - "The one God is hidden in all living beings, the living witness binding all hearts. The wise who seek them and find them in themselves, to them one else, is eternal joy".<sup>25</sup>

The idea of salvation is bound up with Christian conception of God. It regards "the spirit of man as candle of Lord and which is to be lit up with divine flame, "and advises it's followers" Be ye perfect even as your heavenly father is perfect".<sup>26</sup> Islamic religion also declares - "Every child is born in Islam, it is their parents who make them jew or christian".<sup>27</sup>

According to Vivekananda various expressions of religion have only one common central point and that is preaching of freedom and to find the way out of this world. These religions never came into existence to reconcile the world and religion but to cut the gordian knot, to establish religion in it's own ideal, and not to compromise with the world. This is what each and every religion preaches. He also believed that all the religions of the world help their respective followers in gradual development towards the realisation of truth. He said - "Holy, perfect and pure men are seen in all creeds, therefore, they all lead to the same truth for how can nectar be the outcome of poison". He compared Christianity and Islam to the dualist branch of Hinduism. Vedanta contains in it all the religions of the world. By Vedanta he meant universal oneness of humanity and not in sectorian sense. He said - "All of religion is contained in the Vedanta. There are three stages

of vedanta Philosophy, the Dvaita, Visista-advaita and Advaita. One comes after another. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each is necessary . . . . vedanta applied to the various ethnic custom and creeds of India is Hinduism. The first stage i.e. Dvaita applied to the ideas of the ethnic groups of Europe, is Christianity, as applied to semitic groups, Muhammedanism, and the Advaita as applied in it's yoga perception form is Buddhism etc. #28

Religion, to Vivekananda is not a mere dogma or body of beliefs. He urged upon the followers of various religions to make it a living thing so that society is benefitted. Religion should help in the development of humanitarian values. He said - "It is man making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want".<sup>29</sup> To Vivekananda the goal of all religions is Divine awareness - Arising and awakening to the individual insensitivity and callousness to our divinity, to the injusticés nearly all round, to the sad and sickness of the world.

Amidst the variety of religions, Vivekananda found the universal element in God concieved as a generalised entity. He said "It is through this generalised entity that I see you as a man or a woman. So it is with this universal religion which runs through all the various religions of the world in the form of God, it must and does exist through etenity. I am the thread

that runs through all these pearls and each pearl is a religion or even a sect thereof<sup>30 (1)</sup>. This God may be conceived as personal omnipotent or it may be described as the universal existence or the ultimate reality of the universe.

To Vivekananda all religions of the world preaches oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man. All religions of the world have inspired deep spiritual attainment among saints and prophets who had never taught the religion to divide the masses, break solidarity and unity mankind. Various religious altars like mosque, church temple etc. are the centres of worship for unifying our invisible spiritual links.

Similar to Vivekananda Mahatma Gandhi also opined that belief in one God is the corner stone of all religions. In theory there is one God no doubt, but thereby we can not expect that there will be one religion on earth. Because no two persons have the identical conception of God. As a result there will and always be different religions answering to different temperaments and climatic conditions. Still the teachings of religions are the same. No religion can stand on injustice, untruth or violence. He said - "Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. That religion and that nation will be blotted

out of the face of the earth which pins it's faith in injustice, untruth or violence".<sup>31</sup> According to him the central teachings of all religions can be realised only "... if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from that standpoint of the followers of those faiths, we should find that there were at the bottom all one and were helpful to one another".<sup>32</sup> From all these it is clear that by religion Gandhiji did not mean formal religion or customary religion but the religion which under lies all religions which brings us to face with the Maker. To Gandhiji at bottom all religions preach the same maxim - struggle to realise the truth. Referring to divergent religions existing he said - "..... Each one of them, in my judgement embodies a common motivating force, the desire to uplift man's life and give it a purpose".<sup>33</sup> Prophets of various religions are not the exclusive property of any religion, they belong to all. He said - ". . . Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that He belongs not solely to christianity, but to the entire world, to all races and people - it matters little under which flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors".<sup>34</sup> To Gandhi all religions preach the same gospel of peace and universal brotherhood. He said - "I do regard

Islam to be a religion of peace in the same sense as christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are. No doubt there are differences in degrees but the object of these religions is peace".<sup>35</sup> Gandhiji opined that friendly study of the world religions is a sacred duty. We should have the richness of various traditions for we are the heirs of the heritage of the whole humanity and not simply of our nation or religion. The founders of all religions like Jesus, Isiah, Zoroaster and Buddha etc. concieved and uttered the same truth. There is only one divine light, and every man in his measure is enlightened by the same God yet, each has the only a few rays of that light which needs all the wisdom of all human traditions as manifest the entire compass of it's spectrum.

From the above discussion it follows that the new religious are only Re-proclamations of the same essential truths in different languages, new forms amidst new settings and new conditions of life. They are new "in the sense that after each reclaiming reform his followers have gradually built up new faiths, new rites, ceremonies, forms around the core teaching in consequence of new conditions of time".<sup>36</sup>

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## CHAPTER VII

### RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE : VIVEKANDA AND GANDHI

#### 7.4 THE NEED FOR RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE :

7.1 The present system of modern life indicates that the present is a transition time. The most striking features of our modern age are the slow dissolution of traditional norms of social customs, confusion in regard to social ethics, the application of the methods of science to the facts of religion and all these together have given rise to insettlement of religious beliefs. While a handful of people are in sympathy with the traditional convictions, beliefs in personal God, personal immortality etc. in another side some educated men are also bidding good-bye to those religious beliefs. People who claimed to have seen the vision of God or heard voices from heaven are regarded now as highly suggestible folk of disordered brains and intemperate imaginative. To be precise it is an age where people seek positive proof and tangible evidence for traditional arguments.

The tremendous achievement of science by mastering over the natural sources has intoxicated the modern life with a sense of material success and intellectual conciety. A wide spread tendency has already in operation to account for the scheme of the universe without any reference to region of transcendent.

The world is regarded as a vast mechanism where natural forces automatically bring about changes. Bertrand Russel in his essay "Free man's Worship" describes the religion of mechanical scientists thus - "Life is an incident in the cooling of the Solar system. Man comes into being in the midst of unconscious forces which will eventually destroy them. Humanity on earth as inevitably bettles as a drughill. The cosmic fate of all values is to perish without force. The end of it all is darkness, death".<sup>1</sup> As a result the mechanical scientists instead of restricting it's activities to natural sciences, it is gaining upperhand in almost all the diverse disciplines of life even to philosophy and religion. "The application of the scientific method to the field of religion strikes at the very root, meaning and significance of religion. The commitment of science to the emperical world precludes it from accepting any trans-emperical reality of truth. The scientific conception of space-time world leaves no scope for any transemperical reality".<sup>2</sup> Human values particularly spiritual and moral are constantly being thrown into the dustbin. To them what can be explained in terms of scientific method of nature is neither acceptable to science nor in philosophy and religion. Being influenced by scientific laws of nature many thinkers particularly in the west trying to interpret Christianity detaching it from all

reference to super-natural principles and seeks to establish religion on purely scientific positivistic grounds. Hervey Cox in his book "The Secular City" remarks that 'we no longer think in terms of super-natural'. Even the idea of God which is the focal point of all religious stands threatened by scientific scrutiny to be meaningless. Dr. Hiroshi Motayama - started an international association for religion in a scientific manner. Dr. Freud also treated God as a mental product to pacify man's restlessness. Ludwig Foerbeck claimed religion to a by-product of human instinct longing for happiness. Even Bertrand Russell remarked - God is nothing but a childish fancy or a by-product of emotional desire to satisfy the longing for security. The people who are anxious for religion confronted with such a cold view of religion started building for themselves different ways of escape. In this regard we can mention Fundamentalists who ask us to shut eyes to the facts of modern thought and enquiry.

Durkheim and his followers find in merely a social phenomena. According to them truth is a social utility. The hypothesis of God has value as it helps mankind to an adjustment of our desires. According to him - "Religion is a part of social mechanism. It has a social purpose, a social interest and a social hope. We can use God though we cannot know him. Religion has little to do with

discovery of truth; it's chief aim is the enhancement of life. It does not express the meaning of the universe or the deeper reality of the historical process, but yet fulfills man's innermost and deepest wants, his highest hopes and aspirations".<sup>3</sup> They simply direct us to use religion as a means of social culture and social environment.

There are certain lazy sceptics who upheld that truth is unattainable. They are indifferent to religion and highest interest of life. On certain circumstances they are prone to give God the benefit of doubt. Again there are a few people who repudiate any spiritual reality in the world and anyway anything might happen. To them the world itself is changing in an unknown direction and not even God knows what will come in subsequent time.

From what has been discussed above it is crystal to us that during the present century religion has become the main of vehement attack from different corners. These tendencies have been prompted by the desire for political advantage or racial prejudice or general ignorance. So it has become a matter of grave concern for serious thinkers really desire to save religion from it's dangerous catastrophe. Now the question is - Do the religious thinkers seek to rehabilitate religion making compromise

with scientific criterion ? Or will they seek beyond science with a view to securing religion its rightful meaning and significance ? What kind of religion do we want then ? Is it religion of love and brotherhood for the upliftment of the entire human race or religion of power and hatred to allow the entire human race to meet its inevitable end ? Religion or no religion at all ?

In answering these questions it is necessary to determine if there is any dichotomy between science and religion or is science opposed to religion ? Truly speaking the dichotomy between science and religion may be traced back to the two dimensions of human nature. In intellectual pursuit man makes an attempt to discover the mystery of nature and in doing this the logical dimension of human nature predominates. Apart from this human nature is so constituted that while man looks outward to see the external nature - he also looks 'within' - into his deeper subjectivity. He also tries to see more and more on some source of knowing which are non-intellectual or non-logical. Due to this capacity man profoundly nurses many aspirations which can not be explained by spatio-temporal extension alone. It is a fact that there are two dimensions of human nature - intellectual and a logical or personal. Commenting on the relation between

science and religion Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also observes -  
"Rightly understood science is essentially spiritual in its temper and leadings, instead of abolishing the mysteries of the world, it has deepened them".<sup>4</sup> Referring to the theory of evolution he also opines that the hypothesis of evolution substitutes for theory of development for that creation But in regard to the question of ultimate causation this evolution theory is silent. Scientific theories or disciplines are limited to secondary causes. But such theories are sometimes mistaken for metaphysical speculations. In his own words "when rightly interpreted we shall see that the doctrine of evolution is not inconsistent with the highest idealism whatever be the value of the theory of evolution as a description of observed facts, it is thoroughly unsatisfactory as an interpretation of the ultimate nature of the universe. Evolution presupposes an interaction between the organism and the environment. Given the two, it can not account for their action and interaction, but the process of evolution can not create the conditions for its own possibility. It assumes something behind all evolution which, is not the product of evolution, though its ultimate ground and driving power. In this of evolution to be conceived as one or many blind or purposive, immanent or transcendent ? .....The supreme reality is difficult to grasp and impossible to define.

We can see some of what God is not, but not what God is".<sup>5</sup>

Hence, though in the 17th and 18th centuries a rational outlook started working owing to the impact of science, on the otherhand, as a reaction against this the other aspect of human nature non-rational personal element gave rise to existentialism or Bergsonian Vitalism. Why a man resort to this personal or alogical approach can never be explained on logical grounds. It is this personal aspect of man which is responsible for immense creativity in man which allows human mind to move unbounded by logical constraints. This personal self which decides much of our choice is our active force in our life which can not be dismissed on the plea that it falls outside the realm of logical and rational aspect. "Religion is not an compartmental affair which concerns only some aspects of human life. It reveals diversity which is perpetually manifested in a variety of attitudes and beliefs ..... human life demands all round satisfaction. This can be achieved by giving fair deal to all elements in human nature".<sup>6</sup> When all these aspects of human nature are taken into consideration then it provides justification for religion. But we find in case of certain individual these two elements alternately asserts. Thomas Altizier, one of the advocates of American 'Death of God Movement' also asserted - "The contemporary Christian God beyond the God of Christian".<sup>7</sup>

Hence, Religion is a total response by the total being of man. Scientific methods give us only information about the facts of our life. But when we relate those informations about the facts to our life, there it becomes inadequate. We need something more i.e. wisdom. Informations acquired through scientific methods are not irrelevant to our life but their proper usefulness depends upon appreciation and understanding of their purpose. The spirit of science leads to the refinement of religion. Religion is not certain outdated dogmas, incredible superstitions etc; It does not spoil simplicity of spiritual life. Intellectual authority should be treated with respect. Besides science requires us to adopt empirical data of perception and introspection. All religions are rooted in experience. But religious phenomena are not mere curiosity, it is spiritual adventure. Hence, practically there is no dichotomy between science and religion. Even some eminent scientists like Albert Einstein, Eddington, J.B. Haldane etc; stressed on the importance of spirituality. Prof. Sir Eddington says - "The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine".<sup>8</sup> Einstein also said - "I believe in God ... who reveals himself in the ordinary harmony of the universe ... the basis of scientific work is the conviction that the world is an ordered and comprehensive entity and not a thing of choice ....".<sup>9</sup> Dr. Radhakrishnan also observes - "The spirit of science does not

suggest that the ultimate beginning is matter, we may split the atom. The mind of man is superior to atom as witness to the spirit of man<sup>10</sup>.

But breaking the barrier between science and religion will not help us in bringing about a mutual harmony among mankind. If the world is to endure we also need psychological unity and spiritual coherence. If mankind is to save itself it must also change its attitude. All must put their heads together to find out the best possible means for the survival and betterment of the entire human race. Hence, Dr. Albert Schleietzer observes - "Western and Indian philosophers must not contend in the spirit that aims at the one proving itself right in opposition to the other. Both must be moving together towards a way thinking which shall eventually be shared in common by all mankind<sup>11</sup>."

Though self-perfection is the ultimate aim of religion yet so long as its aim fails to take hold of society as a whole, the world is not safe for civilisation and humanity. The religious persons must seek for divine fulfilment not only in heaven above but on earth below. Each man should be spiritually sound enough to become a fit member of the kingdom of spirit. To

make the world the ideal destiny of mankind, it can not be reconciled with a gladiatorial theory of human life. Man should cultivate the spirit that on earth one family is the rule of the righteousness. Every one should follow the noble idea as the Mahabharata says - "To you I declare this holy mystery, there is nothing nobler than humanity".<sup>12</sup> Brotherhood of all men irrespective of race and nationality should be the ideal of man. The freuds and agitations which sow seeds of hatred among different nations should be eradicated civilization based on injustice can not exist for long. A religion which does not make social reform and international justice as the essential part of it's teaching can not appeal to the modern mind. Religion should not be taken as simply state of the individual. It is the practice of divine rule among man. One who believes in God loves his fellowmen as he loves himself and seeks highest good of all by redemptive service and self-sacrifice. One should put justice above civilisation, truth above patriotism.

Vivekananda also correctly realised that science and technology have brought man much closer to each other and has made man interdependent. He was equally aware of the fact that science and technology may bring disaster to mankind if they are not properly used for human welfare. The root cause

that brings disaster is passions and bad temper. Hence, he emphasised time and again to practise love and abjure hate, restraint waywardness of senses and whims of the heart. Selfishness of the nations leads to conflicts. Hence, the narrow interests of the nations must be given up and all nations should develop consciousness of their own peculiarities and toleration towards others. Each nation must realise it is identity with humanity. Mutual recognition of general interest and growth of a common sentiment alone can ensure establishment of world unity. He believed in the ultimate unity of the whole mankind. But this kind of world unity can not be achieved by physical unification accomplished by science. This physical unification must be supplemented by spiritual unity of mankind. And for bringing this spiritual unity religion plays an important role. To Vivekananda religion has remained and continues to be a potent force in shapping the destiny of mankind. So it is the primary duty of the followers belonging to various religions to realise the true spirit of religion and to cultivate toleration realising the fact that all religions are true from the standpoint of Purusartha. Realisation of God is the primary purpose of all religions. Every religion may have it's own nomenclature and unique way of God realisation. The difference is only in language. Every religion has it's goal of transcending the limits of senses and to contact the Reality beyond. They are

all true from the standpoint of 'Tattva' or metaphysical ideal for ultimate Reality is one which expresses itself in various forms (or formless) and is known by various means. All religions are also equally true from the standpoint of 'Hita' or welfare of the humanity as a whole. According to Vivekananda most of the human tragedies are due to people's disbelief in this great truth. Patriotism and love for one's own religion and culture are good but these noble sentiments should not be directed against others to develop hatred for others to breed conflict. False sense of superiority of a particular religion and culture, narrow love for one's own country, blind bigotry about the greater of one's religion bring about great disaster to humanity. It is only in ignorance and selfish blindness to truth that bad people stand against others. Vivekananda pointed out that to avoid conflict of any type people will have to realise that their national life must contribute to and co-operate with the general welfare of mankind. People's view must be based on toleration and universal brotherhood. Vivekananda realised that the path to the universal peace and good will depend upon the realisation of the unity of existence and solidarity of mankind. He said - "One atom in the universe can not move without dragging

the world with it".<sup>13</sup> Vivekananda mightly observed that at the close of the 19th century the world was standing at the cross-roads and was unable to judge correctly which path to follow. He also found the scent of ammunition of war which might result in untold miserable catastrophe to entire human race. Hence, he made an active effort to outlaw war once for all and hence preached the gospel of universal brotherhood and spiritual unity to abolish war and to establish peace in the world.

Vivekananda was perfectly correct in assessing the situation prevailing at that time both in the East and the West. The social life in the west was like a peal of laughter ending in a sob, while in India, it was a sad and melancholy on the surface but underlying it colousness and merriment. He wanted both in the West and the East to work hand in hand for the good of the world without destroying peculiarities of their own. He wanted to make future to be shaped by proper fusion of two ideals - Materialism of the West and spiritualism of the East. He wanted to remove the distinction between the East and the West and to make one humanity. In order to accomplish this he brought to the world the essence of unity of universal religion wherein the christian is not to become a Hindu, or a Buddhist to become Christian. But each must assimilate the

spirit of others preserving his own individuality and good in accordance with the law of growth. He developed a religious theory of nationalism which was prelude to internationalism. He wanted that each nation should make active effort to become perfect, i.e. to be one with Brahman. He advocated spiritual internationalism, an expression of spiritual unity of mankind. He believed it is not the material prosperity but spiritual awareness that generates real peace and happiness, love and unity in the world.

Vivekananda said that religion or cultural diversity and variety of individual temperaments are so much that no single religion can satisfy the spiritual and cultural needs of all people of the world. All religions are nothing but different expressions of universal Religion. This Universal Religion is the sum total of all religions and not a single religion. It is the co-existence in a spirit of give and take. He said - "Universal Religion about which the philosophers have dreamt in every country already exists. It is here. As the universal brotherhood of man is already existing, so also the universal religion only there are numbers of the persons who fail to see this and only upset it by crying for new brotherhood".<sup>14</sup> He also said - "The reformation of the world

must start with the reformation of individuals of your own, to begin with what the modern world needs to-day is more and more individuals who are able to derive their substance directly from eternal transcendental Religion without remaining bound within the narrow particular religion that is their 'own' because they were born into it".<sup>15</sup> A proper understanding of the relation between the Eternal Religion and its expression is the crying need of the modern world.

But owing to certain political reasons intolerance, communal feeling have existed in the world and religious social and racial differences have been brought out in order to expediate communal differences threatening the very peaceful and harmonious co-existence of humanity. Hence, the followers of various religions should try to promote brotherhood among men of different religions faiths by sympathetic attitude and appreciation not of the external form of religion but of one another's deepest spiritual experiences and convictions. And it is on this spiritualism on which Vivekananda put much emphasis. He himself embraced all paths of spiritual progress and thus became the personification of harmony of religions.

Similar to Vivekananda Gandhiji also opined that man singing the glory of the scientific and technological achievements,

has neglected the inner stability and has lost his soul. And consequently it has resulted in collected fear, fanaticism, susceptibility to crude and cunning artificiality. Gandhiji always tried to assert the supremacy of moral values and spiritual truths. And he did this not by his arguments or sermons, but especially by his existence and his acts in flesh and blood. He himself said - 'My life is my message'. He never turned a deaf ear to the social agonies of the age. Hence, he tried heart and soul to ensure equality of opportunities for all by means of non-violence. He also sought to achieve the political and economic goal in an ethical setting with a religious faith. He wanted that religion must be a creative faith and must not be inconsistent with the spirit of science or reason. Religion should satisfy the demands of the intellect and the needs of humanity and should be the active force for social regeneration. It creates the ideal of world unity provided the spirit of true religion is realised by human beings. Man should perceive the common good in all and tolerate in a positive sense the good in other religions. Genuine religion is not opposed to rationalism. Religion is primarily spiritual experience that results in personal signification and in the feeling of humanity. It liberates human heart from all sorts of monstrous catastrophe and develop in man the capacity for

humanity, charity and tolerance. He highlighted the central essence of religion by disclosing the power of love and suffering for others. According to him to be a satyagrahi he must cultivate the spirit of renunciation and sacrifice. What has brought religion into a disrepute and made it suspect is the hypocritical profession of religious faiths and this is at complete variance with life. Our words are not in conformity with our deeds. A truly religious man always develops the spirit of toleration for divergent religious faiths of the world and sacrifice his life for the welfare of the human race realising the oneness of humanity. Thus Gandhiji put much emphasis on the spiritual unity of mankind only which can ensure peaceful harmonious co-existence of human race avoiding religious rivalry among the followers of diverse religions of the world. To sum up it may be said that both Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi advocated human religion, the main object of which is to be good and to do good. This must be the maxim of all human beings irrespective of any religion they may be and this must be carefully engraved on the doorway of the temple of heart of all well-wishers. Universal love accompanied by mutual good will and active co-operation is the aim of all religious principles and philosophy of religion.

## 7.2 ATTITUDE TO OTHER RELIGIONS - SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAHATMA GANDHI :

The religio-philosophical tradition of India being spiritualistic in nature, hence it sets before mankind that the goal of life is communion with the Supreme. It is a life of realisation, an inner intuitive vision of God. This goal can not be attained by merely improving human conduct and character, it can only be attained by transforming human consciousness. From the time immemorial it has been insisting that man should develop a spirit of comprehension with a view to breaking down all understanding on religions matters and bind all human beings together as varied expressions of single truth. Hinduism is such a rich and varied mass of beliefs and practices that we can easily find in it the neucleons of the basic ideas of other religions. The spirit of assimilative genius of the Hindu mind is to welcome the basic ideas of other faiths and to appreciate them in it's own way. Hinduism has been developing a feeling which permits equal right to other religious followers to follow their respective religions. Tolerance, sense of synthesis, universal outlook etc. are the most outstanding characteristics of Hindu traditions. And this tradition of Hinduism has been practised by all Hindu followers.

Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were being the torch bearer of this age-old tradition of India tried to keep it intact and this becomes clear to us when we come across with their teachings and activities. In this regard we can quote the opinion of Dodwell - "What peculiarly distinguished India from the rest of the world is the strong survival of direct inheritance of the remote past".<sup>16</sup>

By religion Vivekananda did not mean it's external form, he meant internal soul of every religion. He said - "Every religion has a soul behind it, and that soul may differ from the soul of another religion. But they are not contradictory to each other. Each religion is a part of the great universal truth and spends it's whole force in embodying the part of that truth. It is, therefore, addition, not exclusion".<sup>17</sup> According to him the march of humanity is from truth to truth, not from error to truth. He said - "Man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth - from lesser truth to higher truth - but never from error to truth".<sup>18</sup> All religions are looking at truth from different stand points which may of course vary according to our birth, education, surroundings and so on. His idea was that all religions are different forces in the economy of God, each religion is working for the good of mankind. Universal religion for which philosophers

are looking for, is already exists in every country like universal brotherhood. For him the heart of every form of religion is sound - it is a throbbing beating every heart. Every religion has a great mission to fulfill. Referring to Muhammedanism he said that Islam makes it's followers all equal. It stands to preach to the world the practical brotherhood of all belonging to their faith. In Hinduism, he said, we find one national idea spirituality. Hinduism tries to define the idea of the soul so that no earthly touch can destroy it. Renunciation and spirituality are the great ideals of India is still clining to these ideas. According to Vivekananda the central idea of christianity is to preach - 'Watch and pray, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand'. - it means that man should purify his heart and should be ready to that spirit never dies.

Swami Vivekananda was in favour of acceptance and not in exclusion in regard to religious faith. He said - "Our watch word then, will be acceptance and not exclusion. The so-called toleration is often blesphemy and he did not believe in it. According to him toleration means - "that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing to live. Is it not a blesphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live ?"<sup>19</sup>

So Swami Vivekananda was ready to accept all religions of the past and hence he said - "I worship God with every one of them in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Muhammedan, I shall enter the christian church and kneel before the crucifix, I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge to Buddha and in His law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu who is trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of everyone".<sup>20</sup> He was ready not only to accept all the existing religions and to keep his heart open to accept any religion that may come into existence in future also. According to him the book of God never finishes. Revelation is never ending. He said - "It is a mervalous book - these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and in infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave my heart open for all of them".<sup>21</sup> Vivekananda paid equal respect to all ~~prophets~~ already appeared and yet to be appeared in any religion of the world. He said - "Salutations to all the prophets of the past, to all great one's of the present and to all that are yet to come in the future".<sup>22</sup>

Vivekananda took delight in multiplicity of religions and religious ideas. He saw life in variation. He regarded

difference as the first sign of thought. And hence he said -  
 "I do not want to live in a grave like land. I want to be a  
 man in a world of men ..... variation is the sign of life....  
 Difference is the first sign of thought ..... I pray that  
 they (sects) may multiply so that at last there will be as  
 many sects as human beings ...." <sup>23</sup>

Vivekananda was never the man to trouble with religious  
 matters. He uttered the great truth - "It is well to be born  
 into a church, but it is terrible to die there". <sup>24</sup>

Being a lover of humanity Vivekananda was naturally  
 drawn to the compassionate Buddha as a person than to Sankara.  
 He described the Buddha as "beyond compare the greatest  
 combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest  
 soul power ever manifested". <sup>25</sup> In spite of conflict that existed  
 between Hinduism and Buddhism Vivekananda accepted the value of  
 Buddhism in it's own right. He said - "The relation between  
 Hinduism and what is called Buddhism ..... is merely the same  
 as that between judaism and Christianity ..... the Buddha came  
 to preach nothing new. He also like jesus came to fulfil and  
 not to destroy". <sup>26</sup>

So according to Vivekananda when a man says - 'My prophet  
 is the only true prophet' - he is not correct in saying so -  
 truly speaking he does not know the three R's of religion. To

Vivekananda religion is neither talk nor theory nor intellectual consent. Vivekananda also says - "Religion is the realisation in the heart of our hearts. It is touching God. It is feeling, realising that I am a spirit in relation to the universal spirit and all its great manifestations".<sup>27</sup> Vivekananda holds the opinion that - "There is no one system, no real religion which does not hold the idea that the human soul ..... is essentially pure and perfect. Whether expressed in language or mythology or allegory or philosophy. Its real nature is blessedness and power, not weakness or misery".<sup>28</sup> The mission of life of Vivekananda was to apply this truth for the development of man's life - physical, mental, aesthetic and spiritual. Apparently Vivekananda taught a particular religion called Hinduism, but really he delivered a message of universal truth. He said - ..... Religion is to the highest motive power and therefore ought to be studied from that standpoint. All narrow limited fighting ideas of religion have to go. All sect ideas and tribal or national ideas of religion must be given up. That each nation and tribe should its own particular God and think that everyone is wrong is a superstition that should belong to the past. All such ideas must be abandoned".<sup>29</sup>

Vivekananda was the personification of his messages. He spoke from his realization of the oneness of all multiplicity.

To him this oneness is the common ground of all metaphysical ideas of all religions doctrines, of all ethical principles, of all scientific truths. This is where ancient and modern and also the East and the West meet. In his view there should be one humanity, neither eastern nor western.

The mission of Vivekananda was the reconstruction of humanity on a spiritual foundation which consists of universal truths that underlie not only in all religions but all phases of life. And in accomplishing his mission not only he studied all great religions of the world but also realised them, assimilated them and put them into practice to ensure peace of the world for all time to come. Vivekananda preached the philosophy of unity and solidarity of all existence ensuring happiness and welfare of all beings. He himself embraced all paths of spiritual progress and thereby became personification of harmony of religions.

Mahatma Gandhi in his own sense claimed himself a Santanani Hindu. He had a great respect for his own religion Hinduism and wrote - "I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my wife ..... even so I feel for Hinduism with all it's faults and limitations..... I know the false that is going to day in all Hindu shires. I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal takes me of any of the

essential things in Hinduism"<sup>30</sup> Gandhi was not blind to evil practices and superstitions prevailing in the then Hinduism during the course of its development through a long period of time under diverse influences. Still he believed that it was sound at its source and in its essentials which preached highest ethical principles. According to Gandhiji - "Hinduism is like the Ganges pure unsullied at its course, but taking in its course the impurities in the way. Even like the Ganges it is beneficent in its total effect".<sup>31</sup> As Hinduism is free from dogmas and gives the votary the immense scope for self-expression so he was much impressed by Hinduism. What attracted Gandhiji was that Hinduism helps its followers to pay respect to other religions and as well as inspires to assimilate whatever is good in other religions. He said - "Hinduism tends to regard all religions as containing the elements of truth in them and enjoins the attitude of respect and reverence towards all".<sup>32</sup> Gandhiji felt that Hindu religion offered him opportunity to foster with him the horizon of rational, spiritual and moral outlook. He was charmed by the dynamic attitude of Hinduism. He writes - "Hinduism could be reformed and has been reformed in all ages according to the best lights of the time. ...Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay".<sup>33</sup> He boasted himself of being a Hindu owing to its humanitarian and universalistic outlook.

This is because of his firm belief in Hinduism that helped him to intensify his respect for other religions of the world. After a long study and experience he was of opinion that - "(a) all religions are true, (b) all religions have some error in them, (c) all religions are almost dear to me as my own Hinduism".<sup>34</sup> In conformity with the great spiritual tradition he declared - "The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of Christian and Isvāra of the Hindus".<sup>35</sup>

Gandhiji's attitude to other religions is crowned with positive appreciation and not merely negative toleration. By religion he did not mean sectorial religion but Religion which transcends all other religions, a religion which changes the nature of man and bind all indissolubly to the truth. The manifold religions of the world are one one the fundamental teaching that no man or woman with an impure heart can possibly appear before the 'Great White Throne'. According to Gandhiji man is responsible for the appearance of different religions but they are all one in regard to fundamental principles. He said - "Man whatever religion they belong care only for the external aspects of religion and gave good-bye to all it's fundamental principles".<sup>36</sup>

As man can not grasp the very spirit of religion so it leads to the appearance of different religions. He said - "Even as

a tree has a single trunk with many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect religion, but it becomes many as it passes through human medium".<sup>37</sup> Hence, it is absolutely necessary for we the human beings to grasp the rock bottom unity of all religions and have a glimpse of universal and Absolute truth. According to Gandhiji the fundamental truth of all religions are God given and as such these are necessary for the people to whom they are revealed. He said - "I believe in the fundamental truth of all religions of the world, I believe they are all God given....".<sup>38</sup> So every human being should cultivate the spirit of toleration. Man should learn to respect each others religion with the strong belief that - "Different religions like different roads leading to the same point".<sup>39</sup> True knowledge of religion breaks down the barrier between different faiths. Gandhi was not happy in using the word tolerance but he had used this word for he could not find a better for substituting it. He once said - "I do not like the word 'Tolerance' whence but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to One's own whereas Ahimsa teaches us to entertain the same respect for religious faiths of others as we accord to our own .... This admission will readily be made by a seeker of truth who follow the laws of love".<sup>40</sup>

In keeping with the spirit of Hinduism Gandhi was averse to proselyzation of any kind. This he opposed because he regarded religion to be a personal matter which teaches the very heart of man. He wanted that - "we must help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, Mussalman to become a better mussalman ..... we must eradicate from our midst the sacred pride that our religion is more true and that others less. Our attitude to other religions must be clear and sincere".<sup>41</sup>

Gandhiji never believed that there would be one Religion on earth. All religions believe in one God, but in reality no two persons held identical conception of God. On the otherhand, there are certain religions who do not believe in the existence of God. Hence, different religions will continue to exist fulfilling the diverse religions aspirations of mankind. He wrote - "I do not foresee a time when there would be only one religion on earth in practice ..... therefore, there will perhaps be different religions answering to the different tempaments and climatic conditions".<sup>42</sup> He, ofcourse, expected that people of various religions to have mutual understanding for peaceful co-existence. He only hoped unity in diversity.

The heart of Gandhi was touched by almost all religions of the world. He said - "Jesus occupies my heart the place of

the greatest teachers who have made me considerable influence on my life".<sup>43</sup> He found no difference in regard to the essential teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and the Surmon of the Mount. To quote in his own words - "I have not been able to see any difference between the 'Surmon on the Mount' and the Bhagavad Gita. What the Surmon describes in a graphic manner, the Bhagavad Gita reduces it to a scientific formulae. It may not be a book in the accepted sense of the term. But it has argued about the law of love, the law of abandon as I call it in a scientific manner".<sup>44</sup> He looked upon Jesus as an embodiment of self-sacrifice and self-suffering. He regarded Jesus as divine as Ram, Krishna, Muhammad and Zoroaster. On Bible he said - "The Bible is as much a book of religion with me as the Gita or the Koran".<sup>45</sup> To him Jesus belongs to all races of the world not simply to christian alone. The cross is the symbol of self sacrifice. This spirit of self-sacrifice of Jesus influenced Gandhi in strengthening his faith in non-violence. S.K. Goerge hence remarked on Gandhi - "... that it was Gandhi who carried on the principle of self-sacrifice to prove it to be principle of universal application".<sup>46</sup>

Thus we find that both the thinkers Vivekananda and Gandhi were the champions of such religion which binds all

followers of diverse religions into a world community instead of separating them in the name of religion. What they preached is not this or that theoretical religion but human religion that concerns only man and can satisfy the various aspirations of humanity as a whole in marching towards the state of spiritual unity. While science has been progressing in the physical unification of the world and it is the task of religion to establish a spiritual unity in man. Both these kinds of unity must work together hand in hand to ensure peace and harmony among the people of the world. This spirit of dynamism must be injected to religion with scientific outlook. Both of them were interested in such a religion that can solve the crisis of civilization looming at large in the world. It is the religion of love that they preached. For them love is the another name for religion. Religion of love is the keynote of their teachings. But in order to bring about this kind of religion the followers of diverse religions must come out from their narrow area of institutional religion and cultivate the spirit of tolerance for other religions and ready for sacrificing everything at the altar of truth for the welfare of the human race as a whole. People must have heroic spirit as Gandhiji declared - "I would sacrifice India herself not at the altar of freedom but of truth".<sup>47</sup> Human unity can be achieved only by strong religious souls whose patriotism knows

no limits of geography and History, but only those of justice and truth. The present day world is in dreadful need of this heroic spirit. Both Vivekananda and Gandhi tried to infuse this heroic spirit into the minds of the people of the world so that the world might survive peacefully against all sorts of ills practised in the name of religion. Though both of them tried to preach religion centring round God but their primary concern was man and it's wel-being. Toleration gains it's meaning only when religion is treated purely as a human concern. They taught to treat man as living Gods and whom we are to worship as 'Nara-Narayana' or 'Daridra-Naranaya' as they called. Spiritual regeneration is the key note of their religions teachings.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

In the light of our discussion in the foregoing Chapters we may take note of the following points to be of fundamental importance in the standpoints of Vivekananda and Gandhi so far as the question of religious tolerance is concerned. And before we make a final statement by way of conclusion it is also necessary to state summerily the philosophical foundations of the them and it's impact on the socio-cultural heritage of our society from the down of Indian civilisation. But we must keep in mind that to consider the relevance of an individual or an idea depends upon the points of view which a man looks at the question.

The survival of Indian culture from antiquity to modern times is a unique phenomenon in history. Prof. Macdnell in his book 'History of Sanskrite Literature' writes - "In spite of successive waves of invasion and conquest by Persians, Greeks, Scythians and Muhammedans the national development of life and literature of Indo-Aryan race remained practically unchecked and unmodified from without down to the era of British occupation. No other country except China can trace back it's language and literature it's religious beliefs and rites, it's dramatic and social customs through an uninturupted developments of more than three

thousand years. Still India was not isolated and throughout this long period of history she had continuous and living contacts with the Iranians and the Greeks, Chinese and Central Asians and others. In her basic culture survived these contacts there must have been something in that culture itself which gave it the dynamic strength to do so some inner vitality and understanding of life. For them these and four thousand years of cultural growth and continuity is remarkable".<sup>1</sup> Max Muller also observes - "There is ~~infact~~ an unbroken continuity between the modern and the most ancient phases of Hindu thought extending over more than three thousand years".<sup>2</sup> Romain Rolland expresses his view on Indian culture thus - "If there is any place on the earth where all dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when men began to dream of existence - it is India".<sup>3</sup>

Being imbibed with this rich tradition of tolerance of India both Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi not only tried to preserve that spirit but also wanted to inundate it all over the world for all time to come in order to pave the way for harmonious co-existence of all living beings on earth. The circumstances under which these two sacred souls of India had to work were not all favourable. By that time the world stood on the cross roads of civilisation and India in particular.

Hence, they felt it necessary to reinterpret the religious and philosophical ideas of India and inject into it the spirit of dynamism to meet the challenge of the time.

Vivekananda appeared in a scene in such a time when ascendancy of materialistic science was unquestionable. Still in London he attacked rather boldly and with much conviction on the so-called orthodoxy of those days and succeeded in giving out the ideas of Vedanta which he called 'the Science of the Soul'. He said - "If anything is uttered by Tyndall, Huxley or Darwin it is swallowed without soul".<sup>4</sup> He devoted himself to single out the most valuable and dynamic elements of Vedanta.

The teachings of Vivekananda may be regarded as a commentary on the teachings of Sankara. He represented the return of the soul from the high alter of 'Neti-Neti' to the world of forms and names. In contrast to the transcendence of God he emphasised God's immanence and expanded Sanditya's famous text in the Chandogya upanishad - 'Sarvam Khalu idam Bramha' (All this indeed Brahman). He emphasised that Vedanta should be brought out of the caves, temples, books etc; and should be applied in solving the practical problems of human beings in general. He evolved a 'Neo-Vedanta' which is known as 'Practical Vedanta'.

Neo-Vedantism as distinguished from old Advaita or Non-dualism or unqualified Monism of Sankara is also Advaita in as much as it believes in Brahman to be the ultimate Reality, One without a Second (Ekam eva advitiam); but it is a synthetic Vedanta which reconciles Dvaita or dualism and Advaita or Non-dualism and also other theories of Reality. It is concrete Monism for it believes Brahman is both qualified and qualityless (Saguna and Nirguna) His mission was to show that Vedantic schools are not contradictory, all that necessitate each other, an era as it were, is the stepping stone to the other.

Vivekananda gave an original interpretation of dualism different from Western Philosophy. While Western thinkers believe in two opposite substances, 'Mind' and 'Matter' and totally irreducible to each other to be the source of all beings but Vivekananda by dualism he meant existence of two worlds, the 'other-world' (the world of Brahman) and 'this world' (the world of phenomena). To him the quarrel between the Materialists and Idealists which rests on their choice of the primary principles is meaningless. Both 'matter' and 'spirit' are phenomena of the world, they are both nature. Matter is crude and the spirit is fine. That matter is caused

by matter and matter is caused by thought, both these statements are wrong. Matter and thought are co-existent. There is third something i.e. Brahman of which they are products. In Vivekananda's words - ". . ." the external and internal natures are not two different things, they are really one nature, it is sum-total of phenomena. Nature means all that is, all that moves, we make tremendous distinction between matter and mind. Actually they are but one nature, half of which continually acting upon the other half. Matter is continually pressing upon the mind in the various forms of sensations. These sensations are nothing but force. If analysed then far enough you will find that at the root they are one".<sup>5</sup> He also says - "The very fact that external force somewhere evoke internal force shows that somewhere they join each other - they must be continuous and therefore basically the same force since the same force appears in one form as matter and in another form as mind, there is no reason to think mind and matter are different. Mind is changed into matter, matter is changed into mind".<sup>6</sup> Hence, they differ only in degree. The whole world may be called either mind or matter; it does not matter which we may call the mind the refined matter or the body concretised mind, it makes little difference by which we name we call

which. Thus nature is homogeneous. Differentiation is only the manifestation. The sanskrite word - 'Prakritti' used by the Vedantists to denote nature literally means differentiation. The fact that mind becomes matter and matter in its turn mind, is simply a question of vibration.

The greatest merit of Vivekananda lies in its attempt in reconciling Advaita, Dvaita and Visista advaita. For him God is personal and Impersonal at the same time. Man is also both personal and Impersonal. Man as soul or spirit infinite and impersonal but living in a body is a finite being. The Impersonal is a living God, a principle. The difference is - that the personal is only a man, and the impersonal idea is that he is the angel, the man, the animal and yet something more because impersonality includes personality, is sum total of everything in the universe and infinitely more besides. So we find that his Advaita is friendly, not antagonistic to Dvaita and Visista-advaita. These are accepted by him not in a patronising way, but with the conviction that they all lead to the same conclusion as the Advaita has reached. This reconciliation rests on his recognition of different knowledge and level of human existence.

In conformity with the Advaita of Sankara Vivekananda holds Brahman as Infinite Existence, Infinite consciousness

and Infinite Bliss (Sat-cit-Ananda) which is the ultimate Reality. These are the only attributes we ascribe to Brahman and they are one. Brahman without a have or form or stain, beyond space, time and causality. It is without a second. There is neither nature nor God nor the universe, only that Infinite Existence, out of which truth, name and form all these are manufactured.

Traditionally the Vedantists believe the world to be unreal, illusory, rejecting also the right the true doctrine of it to exist. But Vivekananda probably the first philosopher in the history of Vedantism to speak so openly and definitely in defence of the reality of the world. Most of the religious, of the world teach that the world is nothing. Beyond this world there is something which is only real and there comes the difficulty. He opined that if the world is the means towards the attainment of the next then how this world be nothing. He said - "To believe that mind all all, that thought is all, is only a higher materialism . . . . I am a materialist in a certain sense because I believe that there is only one. That is what the materialist wants you to believe, only he calls it matter, and I call it God. The materialists admit that out of this matter all hope and religion and everything

has come, I say all these have come out Brahman".<sup>7</sup> Hence, the real basic philosophy of the dualist Vivekananda is that of objective Idealism.

But the Vedantic thought of Brahman is the negative movement of thought in Vivekananda. Apart from the negative path he also follows positive path where he affirms all that to us at first negated in a new light and with a new meaning. He says - "In order to understand Brahman we have to go through the negation and then the positive side begins, we have to give up ignorance and all that is false and then truth would begin to reveal itself to us. When we have grasped the truth things which give up at first will take new shape and form, will appear to us in a new light and become refined. They will become sublimated and then we shall understand them in their true light. But to understand them we have at first to get glimpse of truth, we can not give up at first and then we get them back again deified".<sup>8</sup> So according to Vivekananda the world of objects is not totally negated in Brahman. It is not like Sankara's Advaitism which says - "Only Brahman is Real" and the world is unreal, but there is a sense the world is also real. Vivekananda does not in-reality denounces the world. He teaches deification of the world and not in its annihilation.

He said - 'Deify it (the world), it is God alone'.

The word 'Māyā' which is used to denote illusion or delusion or some such thing but according to Vivekananda the transition of the word Māyā is neither happy nor correct. The Māyā of Vedanta in its developed form is neither in Dualism nor Realism, nor is it a theory. It is a simple statement of facts - what we are and what we see around us. He says - "We see this world through our five senses and if we have another sense, we should see it something else; if we have still another sense it would appear to something different again and so on as we go . . . . the universe as we see it, therefore, it is a mixture of existence and non-existence".<sup>9</sup> Pertaining to the question - how the Infinite has become finite, Vivekananda holds that the Absolute has become the universe by coming through time, space and causality, the differentiated world is the manifestation of Absolute to conscious bound by space, time and causation. Māyā which is the cause of the universe with its manifold objects is also responsible for our maintaining personal God, Isvara. When we take this world to be real, we think that the world must have a creator or a Supreme Ruler, which is not only transcendent but also immanent in the world. To him it is the same

Brahman who is also Isvara, the Impersonal and the personal in one. Personal God is nothing but the Absolute seen through Māyā. Isvara is the highest manifestation of the Absolute Reality or in other words the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind. With regard to their relation Vivekananda holds that any relation is possible where there are more realities than one. But the Absolute and the personal God are not the two but one and the same. The same Impersonal is conceived by the mind as the creator, the supreme ruler, the living and loving in the highest sense. Personal God is nothing but the personified Impersonal Absolute.

One of the greatest merits of Vivekananda lies in his synthesis between Religion and Science. He opines that there is need to-day to view science in its proper perspective - the perspective of total human knowledge and welfare. This is one of the vital contribution of Vivekananda to modern thought. He has shown that Vedanta and the modern science are close to each other in spirit and objective. Both are spiritual disciplines. Even the cosmology of the physical universe the two reveal points of contact. The fundamental position in the cosmology of both is what Vivekananda calls 'the postulate of self-evolving cause, Vedanta calls it Brahman which is the

universal principle. Referring to their kinship between them Vivekananda said - "Manifestation and not creation is the world of science to-day and Hindu is glad that what has been cherishing in the bosom for ages to be taught in more forcible language and further light from the latest conclusion in science".<sup>10</sup> The whole of the modern thought is in the theirs of a silent spiritual evolution with the emergence on the horizon of scientific thought of mind and consciousness and consequent need to develop what of cause calls a new background of science. Julian Huxley and Choridon find the spiritual character of the world staff successful revealed in the course of scientific evolution. Biology in it's theory of evolution reveals what Choridon calls it 'within' to nature over and above different from that 'without' of nature revealed by Physics and Chemistry. Vivekananda holds that Vedanta terms the 'within' as the 'Pratya kshrūpa' of nature

When the significance of this 'within' of things are recognised in the modern science scientific background of material with undergo a spiritual orientation and thus comes closer to the Brahman of Vedanta. The synthesis of the knowledge of the 'within' and the 'without' is what India achieved in the Vedanta ages as 'Samyak jnāna'. Reality itself does not know

any description. One made only by human mind for the convenience of study and research. According to Vedanta science and Vedanta are complementary.

Vivekananda in his Neo-Vedanta reconciles the paths of liberation and this he has accomplished in his conception of Brahman. To him existence without knowledge love can not be, knowledge without love and love without knowledge can not be. What we want is the harmony of Existence, knowledge and Bliss infinite. Instead of mere knowledge (jñāna) or mere love (Bhakti) or mere work (Karma) he would fair combine them all in that ideal life and the ideal spiritual path. Vivekananda wants harmony, not one sided development and to him it is possible to have the intellect of Sankara and the heart of Buddha. Love is a universal principle and only moving power of the whole universe. He says - "Love is that wonderful thing, unselfishness, renunciation, Love the real, the real living force in existence".<sup>71</sup> All the paths have equal value, all of them touch the fibres of our being and appeal to our nature as spiritual beings. Neo-Vedanta combines jñāna, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga. He wants religion that are equally acceptable to all minds, it must be equally conducive to action. To become harmoniously balanced in all directions is his ideal of religion.

And this ideal he attained by Yoga - Union. He writes -  
 "To be worker it is the union between man and the whole  
 humanity, to be mystic between his lower and the higher  
 self, to be lover union between him and God of love and to  
 be philosopher it is the unity of all existence"<sup>12</sup>. Though  
 he stressed in the integral cultivation of all the paths  
 but he opines that if any one of these paths is followed  
 sincerely and entirely will lead to ultimate goal e.c.  
 Liberation.

In the light of Vedanta which sees the unity of the  
 self and the not-self that Vivekananda approached pressing  
 the national and international problems. The freshness of  
 his strength in his approach is derived for his comprehensive  
 vision of unity and synthesis. He pleaded for a 'tounet'  
 down materialism to suit an immediate requirements for affecting  
 the uplift the India's sunken millions. He taught the way that  
 God can come to the hungry man is in the form of a piece of  
 bread. He pleaded for materialism in the service for spirituality.  
 Material improvement is the condition precedent for India's  
 spiritual and moral advancement. One is the 'means' and the  
 other 'end' and ~~found~~ no conflict between them. It is  
 Vivekananda's supreme glory that he enunciated that all

embracing spirituality of Vedanta and demonstrated the end and aim of all life endeavours. To Vivekananda life's struggle consists in freedom - freedom from all bondages, actual or possible, physical, intellectual and spiritual. This all embracing touch comes out mostly in definition of religion. To him each soul is potentially divine. The goal of man should be to manifest his divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal both. He emphasised that the presence of God should be recognised and practical steps should be taken for eliminating the ignorance of the masses. The status of women should be elevated and religious education should be imparted to each man and woman with a view to making them sanyasins of the land, a body of social workers should be organised so as to make the nation physically strong, mentally alert and spiritually alive. He dealt with critically that kind of religion which sets up walls of separation between man and man. He made a clarion call to the people to get over 'kitchen religion'. Vivekananda may be regarded as a patriot worker but his patriotism was nothing but the expression of his universal religion which he called practical Vedanta. Swami Ranganathananda observes thus - "He brings down Vedanta to fertilise the fields of common life so that life may be raised to unknown heights and made capable to taste Vedanta at its purest source".<sup>13</sup>

Vivekananda struck the Keynote of the Parliament of Religions, namely the note of universal toleration based on Hindu belief that all religions are one path way to the self-same God. He believed not only in universal toleration but accepted all religions to be true. He felt proud for being a Hindu which gives shelter and refuge to all religions and nations on the earth. He ended his speech by saying - "I fervently hope that the bell that has tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be death-knell of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending them to the same goal".<sup>14</sup> It was a speech which only a Hindu could make in that august assembly - Hindu whose faith in universal toleration and oneness of religion. He preached that each religion must assimilate the spirit of others and yet preserve its own individuality and grow according to its own land of growth. Vivekananda is the first in modern times who gave to the west the Vedanta philosophy of the essential divinity of life in their own language of reason and science. The highest truth the Vivekananda preached - absolute divinity everywhere within and without. He also claims that the society is the greatest where the highest further become practical. To him

self sacrifice is the basis of civilisation.

Intellectually Vivekananda was undoubtedly an Advaitan and a votary of Karma-yoga but emotionally he was a bhakta deeply influenced by the dualistic interpretation of Vedanta and it's concept of personal God to be both wooed and retained by love. And it was his heart which was moved by what he saw and responded to the overshelling heed of his people for economic and social betterment.

By common consent Gandhi is also regarded as a politician, a social reformer and an economist and so on. But he was at bottom a religious man. He was trying to see God through his activities, individual and social. Gandhi himself writes - "what I want to achieve, what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years is self-realisation - to see God face to face, to attain Mokṣa".<sup>15</sup> These sentences sum up the entire philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

In India Gandhi appeared as a political leader because he believed that political freedom is the basis of economic security, moral enrichment and spiritual growth. So he stressed on the attainment of Swaraj i.e. self-rule or political postulate of the freedom movement which Gandhi led, but Gandhi understood

the word Swaraj in religious and ethical sense. This means mastery over one's self, self-control which is connected with the old Indian maxim 'Jitendriya' i.e. one who has come to his own self. For Gandhi Swaraj in it's highest and most spiritual sense meant the final freedom from it's earthly bondage. Hence, Gandhi prescribed to the world not a political but a moral remedy. His personality appeared as the synthesis of the Eastern tradition of the agonistic disinterestedness and western tradition of social and political liberty. He symbolised brotherhood, peace and justice. He is a living personification of love. He had a spiritual vision of mankind. He accepted the inner oneness of all existence in the cosmic spirit. He became a world teacher because he dedicated his life to the concrete realisation of the teachings of Hinduism.

Gandhi also believed that individuality lies at the root of progress. Gandhi also made aware of the modern thought and importance of moral idealism and subjectivism. By putting emphasis on personal experience and spiritual individualism in his life and thought constituted a new contribution to modern thought and philosophy where there is little stress on revelation of thinker's personality. He exhibited his life itself as a open book and writings he made repeated reference to

his own self and to his experiences. This self-conscious subjectivism as a corollary of spiritual individualism may be treated as a new note in Indian thought.

As a believer in creative role of spiritual ideas Gandhi criticised the political and materialistic conception of the western philosophers and sociologists who put no importance on the working of the soul-force and Ahimsa in human history. History as conceived by Western sociologists is a record of every inhibition of the ever working of the force of love and of the soul - soul force being natural for man is not noted in history. But Gandhi advocated a spiritual interpretation of history.

Gandhi was not satisfied with mere constructing and perfecting the concepts and theories. He dedicated his life to give vent to pragmatic and technological suggestions in order to solve the contemporary problems. He made subjective affirmation of the old spiritual truths substantiated by experiment and sadhana by Gandhi himself. He found the world by that time he was living the world of discent due to domination of materialism, agnosticism and industrial science. The older religions and moral values were relegated to mystical and transcendental religion, while the social and political

condition was underlying a phase of secularism. The ultimate moral and spiritual values were not to be found in the national and international politics. As a result a chaotic condition prevailed all over the world. A state of unstable equilibrium prevailed among the contending groups. In tolerance and distrust spreaded all over the world. Hence, the situation demanded a radical synthesis and gospel of harmony. Even the radical social reconstruction and economic revolution put forwarded by some sociologists also failed to achieve the desired end. So Gandhi believed that a meta-economic solution was needed and the entire commercial and economic activities had to be conducted on the basis of moral justice instead of the basis of rationality and formal efficiency. So Gandhi preached and practised the Absoluteism of Ahimsa or non-violence which postulates the cultivation and realisation of the unity of mankind and consequently the activation of the sentiments of reciprocity, harmony, peace and spontaneous co-operation. Hence, Gandhi advocated the metapolitical solution. Gandhi was not satisfied with the mere change of the external structure of the society. So he taught metasocial solution which postulates a rational interpretation of the human soul.

Gandhi regarded man as a subjective entity. Every human soul has it's social, economic, political, intellectual and

spiritual aspects and no one exhausts its confines and possibilities. As he regarded self or Atman as integral and organic unity of the different phases of man so he was in search of a comprehensive solution. So in order to cure the crisis of civilisation arising out of its moral and spiritual degeneration he laid more stress on moral and spiritual aspects rather than on intellectual and scientific. So Gandhi believed the trouble of India did not lie on the political plane but by on the acceptance of soulless civilisation of the West. So advised the Indians that they should cling to old civilisation because he had a firm conviction that Indian culture is oriented to ethical conduct and spiritual aspect of philosophy. Gandhi emphasised on the role of religion in the cultural and political solution of mankind. He advocated that the predominance of the religions ethics must be preserved in the resurgent India. Gandhis concept of ethicisation of politics also followed due to his acceptance of the primacy of Dharma. Dharma in the sense of moral entellecty in the world for he believed that the world is pervaded by the spirit and man should act as having constant awareness of the spiritual presence. And this view made Gandhi tolerant.

The most outstanding characteristic of the life of Gandhi was that he made a distinction between objectives of

life and objectives of living were simplicity of life and Non-violence. Realisation of self was his objectives of life. To him living is a process through which life manifests himself with the help of our words, thoughts and actions. Life is subtle, fundamental and most permanent force, while living is more concrete, superficial and transient and ends with inevitable death. Gandhi's ultimate objectives of living were meant to subserve his objectives of life. Hence, objectives of living and objectives of life are found to be mixed up in the ordinary activities of Gandhi. Hence, if we want to understand the significance of Gandhi's non-violence, his innovative method of Satyagraha, his fasts, his trusteeship and the advocacy of decentralisation then we must understand all these in the light of objectives of life. However, it is not proper to hold the view that his objectives of life was 'Swaraj' to make India free from the British subjugation. Had it been the objectives of life then he would not have been loved and appreciated so much by the people of the world. Truly speaking Gandhi fought against injustice, colonisation and exploitation, not against the Britishers. He was admired due to his purity of ends and means and purity of motives and intentions. He symbolised the union of goodness and greatness as a leader of man and action. Gandhi was lean and frail but he had a mighty and fearless spirit within him. To

the prostrate, frustrated and desperate Indian people he appeared as a masiah of a new dispensation. His teaching of 'Abhayam' (fearlessness) brought about a psychological revolution in India. He was committed to raising the dignity and enacting the spirit of a vast nation. He felt that before India could play it's legitimate role in the world politics and cultures, Indian manhood was to be revitalised and purged of all deadly sins and moral weakness. Hence, his cry of independence was not a gospel of aggressive isolation but of redemption of denied justice.

Gandhi believed that religion has two dimensions - personal and social. As personal religion leads to freedom. As a social phenomenon it works as a cohesive force. Religion is a bond of unity between God and man. Religions are not meant for separating man from one another, but to bind them. So in order to ensure this social bond Gandhi rediscovered and practised himself the traditional method of Non-violence - the law of our own species. This non-violent spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows not but physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to higher law, to the strength of the spirit. His concept of non-violent society is similar to his 'Panchayat Raj' based on religion. This signifies that it will be based not merely on territorial

loyalty and political attachment but on spiritual consensus. To him religion is sense of philanthropy, tolerance, justice, universal brotherhood and all-embracing love on the basis of the existence of the world. So he discouraged any attempt by a state for enforcing religious conversion. He was for religious tolerance. So he firmly declared - the state should be undoubtedly secular.

Gandhi in his attempt to reach classical Hindu spiritualistic ideals mapped out a new hitherto untrodden path towards this destination. For him the point of departure was truth, the absolute and uncompromising truth. He, therefore, concludes the elucidation of his life ideal by remarking that his experiments and experiences are communicable, spiritual or rather moral for, the essence of religion is morality. Thus raising morality from mere pre-requisite of spirituality to spirituality itself Gandhi brought about a decisive change in values which anticipated the needs of the future. His primary aim was to train up his followers and through the medium of them the entire people to strengthen their moral power in order to make them worthy of freedom. Because he believed the 'Swaraj' (in political terms) would automatically come to India once percepts of truth and non-violence had

been instilled in the people. Otto Walft writes - "He (Gandhi) does not reach out for objects but for the hearts of the people. Behind the deadly bomb there is human mind which releases it and behind every hand there is human heart which sets forth in action. It is to this motive centre that he appealed over and again."<sup>16</sup> He says - "I want to teach their hearts. His example proves that even in the field of politics hearts may be changed."<sup>17</sup> His aim was to establish a firm union of hearts of the people of the world in order to ensure permanent peaceful co-existence.

When the world is running after mad rush for power Gandhi laid the foundation of 'Sarvodaya' which he regarded as the only way to salvation of India and the world. Sarvodaya appeals to our minds and hearts in terms of values and goals which is implicitly present in our culture. Sarvodaya stands for the emancipation and elevation of all. Gandhi derived the theoretical roots of it from the Vedic and Vedantic teachings with regard to all beings as participants of a super material reality. Since all beings are reflections of Supreme Reality so all have to be provided with the opportunity for their greatest development and perfection. Sarvodaya emphasises on the distributive social and economic justice. It accepts the

concepts that all forms of wealth belong to society. At the later part of his life Gandhi became an advocate of radical economic doctrine, namely, Trusteeship being a theorist of spiritual socialism. According to Gandhi - "Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught 'all land belongs to Gopal'".<sup>18</sup> In political sphere Sarvodaya is an intellectual attempt to construct a political and social reconstruction on the metaphysical Idealism. Commenting on Sarvodaya Hiren Mukherjee writes - "A recent study discovers his links with T.H. Green's concept of 'common Good' and his insistence on duties rather than rights somewhat reminiscent of Bradley's observation 'My station and its duties' . . . . he was, it goes without saying, a great deal more than such affinities must suggest".<sup>19</sup>

The real credit of Gandhi, however, lies in the fact that he brought about a synthesis of the theological, the metaphysical and the scientific positive attitude. He was able to reconcile the age-old belief in the Karma, rebirth, inner voice etc; with the mechanical objectivistic value, neutral value of modern science. In his own life he enabled himself to achieve some kind of synthesis and deep integration of the different phases and aspects of his personality. He tried to

combine transcendental and secular in his life and teachings. "If he would pray and contemplate for sometime, the next hour or so he would be given to sanitation and cleanliness. If in myrters of teaching and soul and God. Gandhi would rule out dialectical discussions as problems of neutral politics, village economics, communal harmony etc; he would listen to arguments, weigh pros and cons of constructive suggestions, would observe himself the field of action and would take his steps after rational deliberations".<sup>20</sup>

Gandhi turned his position of strength by identifying himself with the oppressed and the minorities. He inspired the people and protected minorities with the method of identification. Nehru writes - "In his (Gandhi's) single work and many sided nature, the dominating impression that one gathered was his identification with the masses, a community of spirit with them, a amusing sense of unity with the disposed and poverty stricken not only of India but of the world".<sup>21</sup> Gandhi wanted that everyone should stand for minorities and those in need. He accepted a thoroughgoing cleansing of hearts.

Gandhi made his edifice of 'Swaraj' on four pillars and out of these Hindu-Muslim unity was the most important. Hence, his concept of Swaraj was also based on tolerance. The other

pillars are Khadi, prohibition and removal of untouchability. His concept of Muslim unity does not signify the unity between Hindu and Muslims only, but all those who regarded India as their mother irrespective of any religion to which they belonged. He said - "Both Hindus and Muslims are sons of India as their motherland, whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Persians and Christians . . . . are equally her children and are therefore brothers united together with a bond stronger than that of blood".<sup>22</sup>

This broad based outlook he had for other religions communities is nothing but the echo of his tolerance. Hence, Gandhi preached the message of communal harmony because he believed that it is indispensable for the freedom and prosperity of our nation and for the progress of the world. The partition of India on communal basis considered by him to be a sin. His soul revolted against pernicious 'Two nations theory' and he said - "My soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic culture and doctrines. To assert such a doctrine is for me denial of God. For I believe with my whole soul that God of Quran is also God of the Gita and we are all, no matter, what names designates children of the same God".<sup>23</sup> Gandhi was a man of God and he never lost faith in the ultimate triumph of truth. In a most moving appeal once he said - "Let us work for help from God - the all powerful and tell Him that we, His tiny

creatures have failed to do what we ought to do, we hate one another, we distrust one another .... let us wash His feet with tears of blood and ask Him to purge our hearts of all hatred in us. We are disgracing His earth, His name and this sacred land by distrusting and fearing one another. Although we are sons and daughters of the same motherland, although we eat the same food, we have no room for one another. Let us ask God in all humility to give us sense, to give us wisdom".<sup>24</sup>

From what has been discussed above it is clear that apart from manifold qualities that Gandhi possessed, he was an apostle of tolerance. And because of his virtue of tolerance he deserved respect from the people all over the world. E. Stanley Jones rightly observed - "I am still an evangelist, I bow to Gandhi but I kneel at the feet of Christ and give Him my allegiance. And yet a little man who fought of a system in the frame-work of which I stood has taught us more of the spirit of Christ than any other man East and West".<sup>25</sup> Gandhi did not alter the teachings of Christ and what he explained to Stanley Jones made him see the beauty of Christ more fully and appreciate the excellence of Christianity more thoroughly. This was possible for Gandhi because he laid bare the fundamentals of religions. And even the Christians learnt the

lessons on tolerance from Gandhi.

The greatness of Gandhi lies in the fact that he has revived the old value in the old heritage and culture. He has revived the ancient Indian culture to assimilate it in a creative manner to the environment of the present. Under the overwhelming influence of the West the Indian people to see the past in it's own light. It was 'Swaraj', his ideal that sets us by him as the goal of Indian people. Jawaharlal Nehru writes - "I have been attracted by Gandhi's stress on the right means and I think one of the greatest contributions to our public life has been this emphasis. This idea by no means new, but his application of ethical doctrine in public activity was certainly novel".<sup>26</sup>

From the above it follows that there are certain affinities between the teachings of Vivekananda and Gandhi. Still some differences in regard to their teachings and the methods they adopted may be noticed.

Vivekananda did not take part in active politics. He once said - "I will have nothing to do with the nonsense politics".<sup>27</sup> But the leaders of national movement who took collective action of organised masses might be owing to the

initial shock of the mighty 'Lazarus come forth' of the message of Madras. His message of energy had double meaning. In one sense it was the universal meaning that primarily dominated and in another sense that message revived the spirit of Indians. It was Vivekananda who germinated the seed of political independence of India in Indian soil and the subsequent leaders watered and nourished that to grow into a plant. Even the British Government thought of banning the religious activities of Vivekananda fearing that his activities were pregnant implicitly with political motivation. But there is every possibility that Vivekananda never thought of any political theory that can help mankind. He believed that the solution to human problems lies in man becoming man in all dimensions by manifesting his divinity within. Once he said - "Let no political significance be ever attached falsely to any of my writings or sayings. I am not a politician or am I social reformer. It is my job to fashion man . . . . I can only for the spirit of man, when it is right everything will be righted itself".<sup>28</sup> The philosophic and religious outlook made him to explain the particular by the general, the general by the most general principle. He regarded politics particular and needed to be explained by the universal general principles of religion. As a result

the religious ideal he expounded also explained their utility in terms of social and political life. If religion is perfect all things of the world would become perfect. To him political concepts are intermingled with religious teachings. His advocacy of following political principle has been interpreted to bring about the political ideals. He had a profound intellect and knowledge of history. His personal experience helped him to realise the merciless and capitalistic exploitation of the Britishers. Hence he indirectly but precisely influenced the then leaders of the Congress to change their mendicant policy. It was Vivekananda who repeatedly warned them to come down to their pedestal of intellectual and worldly superiority of the masses to the grass root level and mingle with the lowliest and share their sufferings. The Swadeshi movement launched by Gandhi subsequently was the modes and methods preceded in Vivekanand's teachings.

Though Vivekananda repeatedly asserted that he did not believe in politics, God and truth are the only politics in the world still on being asked by a journalist in London if he had given any attention to Indian National Congress Movement his reply was that - "I can not claim to have given much, my work is in another world"<sup>21</sup>. This statement too indicates that

Vivekananda was not interested in the struggle for freedom which was the crying need of the time. But he realised that a growing plant derives its nourishment from its root, and his root was spirituality. He believed that if India becomes aware of the realisation of unity, call of integrity, sacrifice, strength and selfishness, political freedom is sure to emerge.

Gandhi, on the other hand, took active part in politics first in South Africa and subsequently in India. But he approached to politics with a religious spirit. He felt that he could not lead religious life if he did not identify himself with the whole humanity or took part in active politics. He found it difficult to understand religion apart from politics. He also found it difficult to understand religion apart from activity. Religion provided him a moral basis to all other activities without which life becomes meaningless. To him even social work is not possible without politics. Political works must look upon in terms of social and moral progress. Real power, according to him lives in the people, not in the law making authority. He believed that if people help themselves, politics takes care of itself. He also regarded politics to be an unavoidable evil. But he could not but take part in active politics as far as Thoreau in regarding politics not merely

as the gizzard of the society, but also as infra-human kind of vegetation, an activity which should be unconsciously performed".

The real credit of Gandhi lies in the fact that he both narrowed and broadened the meaning of politics. He also realised the word religion divorcing it from sectorial religion. He said - "To me political power is not the end but one of the means enabling people for better their condition in every development of life"<sup>30</sup>. He always placed truth and Non-violence in the forefront of his political programmes. It was Gandhi who for the first time, in history of mankind, raised politics to the level of religion. In his autobiography he opined - the aim of his life was Moksa or self-realisation and that his appearance in active politics were directed to that end. He worked for 'Swaraj' in India, but always preferred truth in Swaraj. He made constructive programmes of social and economic unity too. His aim was to bring about a peaceful non-violent social system providing conservation of natural resources and doing away with the problems of exhaustion of resources. He wanted to make an end of pollution, ecological imbalances and establish peaceful socio-economic changes in conformity with the change of time and popular aspirations even while

permitting individuals and small groups and communities to retain leadership among them. His principal method was non-violence and Satyagraha for changing the present day world order. In his method three principal elements can be mapped out - (a) To create human society employing non-violent methods of resisting evil, (b) To educate the oppressed with a view to resisting exploitation and to develop relationship between 'haves' and 'have nots' (c) To usher non-exploitive decentralised economic and political institutions. Through his career Gandhi pleaded earnestly for the removal of sufferings of the Indian people and for the emancipation of womanhood. Gandhi took over it, as it were from Vivekananda's social programmes and supplemented to it his three original items of his own - basic education, total prohibition and the cult of spinning wheel. Gandhi devoted to politics as he said - "to see the universal and all-pervading spirit of truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest creation as one-self. And a man who aspires after that can not keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics and I can say without slightest hesitation and yet all humility that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not

know what religion means".<sup>31</sup> Hence, it may be said that he took part in active politics as a means to attain spiritual goal of life, i.e. Liberation or Mokṣa.

Regarding the technique of resistance the views of Vivekananda and Gandhi are identical. Both of them were exponents of selfless activity, fearlessness (abhayam) and truth. They emphasised on the purity of means and permitted individual resistance as moral obligation. Both of them attacked social injustice and exploitation to establish a just society and spiritual resistance.

But there is only a degree of difference of growth between non-violent resistance of Gandhi and non-resistance of Vivekananda. Non-violence and non-resistance are of evolutionary growth in individual as well as social life. Violence is the early phase of non-violent resistance, non-violence is another higher stage and the highest stage is non-resistance. While violence is for animal life, non-violence is for common men's social and political life but non-resistance, the highest stage is for spiritually developed person. The history of huminity itself is the history of progressive non-violence which culminates in non-resistance. Social life is a must which prepares the way for the highest

spiritual life of non-resistance. Hence, Satyagraha of Gandhi is a via-media between violent resistance and spiritual non-resistance. Non-violent resistance is creative from the standpoint of society and non-resistance stands for man-making process. The Gandhian Satyagraha is in the process of 'becoming' and Vivekananda's non-resistant individual is himself 'Being' who is free from the social nexus.

Vivekananda being a spiritualist studied extensively nearly all books on philosophy and particularly Indian philosophy and derived deeply the spiritualistic idea of India and consequently he realised the 'oneness' of humanity and this deep rooted philosophic tradition of India made him religious tolerant. He wanted to preach the gospel of 'Advaita' not only in India but in all over the world. He wanted to regenerate human race as a whole with the message of his spirituality for establishing permanent peace and harmony. So it may be said that the basis of his religions tolerance was more philosophical than religions.

Gandhi was also a spiritualist no doubt, but he became an apostle of religions tolerance owing to practical necessity

quite different from that of Vivekananda. Gandhi divided his ends into proximate and remote. His proximate end was to regenerate Indian people spiritually and morally in order to attain political independence of India with this end in view he had to preach and practise religious tolerance in order to have united effort of the people of India belonging to divergent religions to fight against the Britishers. But his remote end was, however, to regenerate mankind spiritually to attain summum bonum of human life, i.e. salvation or Moksa. Because he also believed that no lasting peace and harmonious living is possible in the world if they lack spirituality; only spiritual bond can ensure that end. The foundation of Gandhi's toleration was religious than philosophical for he frequently referred to religious ideas of various religions.

Though Vivekananda recognised four paths like jñāna, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga, yet it seems that he gave more priority to jñāna for he frequently resorted to Sāmādhi or meditation in order to attain the intuitive vision of Reality. His concept of 'Yoga' is also a means to have inner communion with the Supreme. He also advocated Karma as the path of attaining salvation yet selfless activity or Nishkāma Karma is possible only when a man attains the knowledge of Reality. He must

attain spirituality and only then he can offer selfless activity for the welfare of the huminity as a whole. So a man can become perfectly tolerant when he reaches the stage of spirituality. He realised that jñāna marg is difficult and not meant for all people for it depends on the predominance of Sattva quality. Man being a mixture of all the qualities more or less like Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, so it is much easiler to follow the Karma-marga. Bhakti is also difficult to perform for it requires perfect knowledge. So he stressed on Karma for it easier to follow even by the ordinary people.

Gandhi was also an Advaitan but he was more prone to Vaishnava Bhakti cult. His frequent devotion to individual and community prayer is testimony to this. When he confronted to any practical problem he started silently praying to God for help or grace like a Vaishnava. He regarded man to be imperfect who requires constant grace of God for attaining perfection in life. He devoted himself to selfless activity for the welfare of the human race as he believed that God is both transcendent and immanent in the world. To him to serve the creation of God is equivalent to serve God. What made him religiously tolerant because he believed God is the father of all. God was to him a matter of faith and that

is why he did not like to prove the existence of God. As for himself he required no proof for it but he advanced certain arguments in order to make others believe in it. Hence, there is every reason to believe that his religious tolerance was based on religion rather than philosophy. But this does not mean that he was not an Advaitan for a Vaishnava can be Advaitan; it differs only in the level of experience attained by man. Gandhi might believe that complete intuitive vision of Reality is not attainable and hence man must work in accordance with the partial vision of Reality that a man attains.

Having studied the philosophical ideas of Vivekananda it sounds that he carried out his activities with Missionary Zeal. He tried to flood the world with Vedantic ideas of spirituality. He established various vedantic societies in America and Europe. His method of establishing the Vedantic societies was manastic. He himself wore the grab of sannayas in though he opposed to asceticism. He was an activist through and through. The reason of his wearing yellow-red cloth might be to symbolise the ideal of renunciation for he dedicated his life to the service of human race in general without least self interest.

But Gandhi did not carry out his activities with any missionary zeal. He confined his activities within the four walls of India. To carry out his religious political and social programmes he also established 'Ashramas' in different parts of India but not with any missionary zeal. Gandhi also led a very simple life wearing white cloth above his knees. In conformity with the ancient Indian religio-philosophical tradition he tried to exhibit the ideal of simple living and high thinking. His wearing of white cloth might be to symbolise 'Truth' because he himself was a seeker of truth. His half-naked dress might serve the symbol of poverty stricken condition of the then Indian people. This proves that Gandhi not only realised the sufferings of the people but also identified him as one of them. But this should not lead us to think that what he did was for the upliftment of the Indian people but his ideal made a heavy impact on the people of all over the world. Had it not been that then hundred foreigners would not have written panegyric of him. Gandhi was the first man in India on whom hundreds of leading foreigners wrote appreciating his multidimensional personality.

Vivekananda presented his ideas in languages that are sometimes persuasive and reasoned, in many cases militant and even ironical but always mixed with metaphors of great beauty. This was possible for him for he was an intellectual giant ever born in India.

Gandhi presented his ideas in languages mostly persuasive and reasoned. When he found disagreement of ideas with others in stead of reacting in an emotional way he expressed his dissatisfaction resorting to fast. But he was militant in temper particularly when he had to do something untruthful and injustice. He always reacted to anything untruth following peaceful means.

Vivekananda was of the view that social and political ideals and institutions were not eternal and they would face decay and death if they failed to adapt to changing circumstances. However, to make them effective and lasting and to create a dynamic society he pointed out that they must be laid on a spiritual basis. As for India he made it clear that religion must precede over politics. He proclaimed that his mission was to show religion in everything. His socialism is based on spiritual oneness of life. He preached socialism on the spiritual basis of social unity with it's conferment of

freedom and equality. Vivekananda acclaimed socialism is not synonymous with of Karl Marx. Marx gave unqualified support to socialism but Vivekananda did not regard socialism as a perfect system but he had accepted it because socialism to some extent alleviate the misery of human being because he was deeply moved by the misery of vast masses of people. He was far ahead of his time in the course of social change, socialist change and a new and rejuvenated Indian society. His title to socialism or vedantic socialism rests on the climate of change he wanted to bring about in Indian life, conduct and character and rousing spirituality.

Like Vivekananda Gandhi too advocated class co-operation and oneness of huminity. In the Gandhian socialism "The princess and the peasants, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are on the same level. In terms of Religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity".<sup>32</sup> Gandhi advocated individual trusteeship to ward-off class-conflict. He believed that - " what is needed is not extinction of Landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something hereafter and purer. Indian socialistic

thought lays emphasis on the class-co-operation."<sup>33</sup>

Vivekananda considered socialism only as a means. His end was to seek and promote human unity and divinity. As he preached class-unity and love it was natural to him avow human unity and uplift. This was the ideal of Gandhi also. But the point of difference between a socialist - particularly by the Marxist and a humanist is the socialist regards man only as a means to society, while a humanist asserts the resplendent glory of human nature. Vivekananda as a humanist regarded man not only as an end in itself but also held that man is divine by nature. He made it clear that "Each man should be treated not as what he manifests, but as what he stands for".<sup>34</sup>

Vivekananda's humanism defends the purity of human nature, attacks social, economic and religious evils of society and inculcates faith and strength of the individual. His spiritualistic assumption of human nature forms the basis of humanistic Advaita.

But inspite of their humanistic socialism advocated by Vivekananda and Gandhi still there are certain people imbued with a smattering of Marxism Vivekananda and Gandhi as reactionery. This charge of reactionery levelled against

Vivekananda is more than that of Gandhi. Vivekananda was regarded as reactionary by many social reformers of his time for he did not approve to re-marriage of widows and inter-caste-marriages. This is because of the fact that Vivekananda did not think these reformatations were not sufficient enough to bring about Indian's regeneration. To him these reformatations did not meet the crying need of his time. The primary task was in his view was to raise the masses and elevate them in the scale of advanced humanity.

Vivekananda travelled all over India and was at pain to see the grinding poverty of the masses and their generation. But none of these reformers and politicians of his time neither paid heed to that nor worked for them. Hence, in anguish he cried out - "Do you feel that millions and millions of descendents of Gods and sages have become next door neighbour to brutes ? Do you feel that millions are starving for ages ?"<sup>35</sup> He also said - "Aye in this country of ours, the very birth place of Vedanta, our masses have been hypnotised for ages. To teach them is pollution, to sit with them is pollution, hopeless they are and hopeless they remain".<sup>36</sup> And at last he gave his programme - "But above all tell me once more remind you here is the need of practical work and first part of is

that you should go to the shunken millions of India and take them by the hand".<sup>37</sup> Further in order explain his programme he said - "A hundred thousand men and women fired with the zeal of holiness will go over the length and breadth of land preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up in the gospel of equality."<sup>38</sup> In order to explain his programme he said - "The only hope for India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead". He not only preached his ideals but also practised in his own life to uplift the suffering humanity, ~~in his own life to uplift the suffering humanity.~~ Gandhi also sacrificed everything for the toiling masses. What in what sense they were reactionery is shrouded with mystery.

However, it may be said that if there were differences between Vivekananda and Gandhi in regard to their ideals and methods of realising the ideals that might be owing to the differences of the situation that prevailed in India. Vivekananda had to work at the critical juncture of history of the world particularly India when the vessel of India was passing through a critical stage in all directions - religious, philosophical, political, economic and so on. Consequently

the spirit of Indian nationality suffered setback. It was Vivekananda who practically had to make alive a dying nation firing in them national spirit. When Vivekananda was working in India as well as the nooks and corners of the world at that time Gandhi was in South-Africa and he joined in Indian politics much later when Vivekananda was no more. Hence, it may be said that Vivekananda created the atmosphere for rousing national spirit through his preachings and activities. But unfortunately he did not get much time to translate his dreams into practice as he had to meet his prematured death. His incomplete task, as if, was left for Gandhi to accomplish but this might not lead us to think that Gandhi simply followed the teachings of Vivekananda and extended his activities in Indian soil. He also studied the situation of India and means to solve the burning problems of India with the help of his creative genius. If there are similarities between them that is due to the fact that both of them followed the ancient Indian religio-philosophical tradition of tolerance and worked for the welfare of the entire human race.

What made Vivekananda and Gandhi religiously tolerant was that they were welfare of the fact that Indian tradition of tolerance is not merely attitude of indifference to others.

The basic postulate of Hindu thought is that every way of life has its own way of life, has its own contribution to make human welfare communities - that none's way is right - which gives the Indian doctrine of tolerance its special significance. It is this spirit of tolerance that gives harmony to the Indian culture. Indian culture is such that it is firm in its own firm faiths, it is also prepared to approach other faiths with an open mind. This result of this tolerance has been to add to the richness and variety of Indian life. Through many centuries Hinduism retained its basic tenets even the outward forms but the interplay of forces generated by toleration for other religions had to a continuous reinterpretation of its doctrines and readjustment of its approach give birth to a new characteristic sense of synthesis of Indian culture. The very foundation of Hindu civilisation was also laid down due to the synthesis of Dravidians and the Aryans. In modern time Vivekananda and Gandhi are also unique examples of this genius for synthesis.

As the ideal of Hinduism is the relentless search after truth so this helps India to cultivate her spirit of tolerance and helps her to accept fearlessly anything pregnant

with permanent value and forces on her a philosophy of unity in diversity. Both Vivekananda and Gandhi derived these religious ideas from the Indian tradition so naturally they cultivated the virtues of tolerance and never claimed exclusiveness and absoluteness of Hindu religion. To express in the words of Gandhi - "Hinduism is not a religion which has to be spreaded. It allows all prophets of the earth to be worshipped. It allows each one to worship his God according to his own belief or Dharma and so it lives in peace in all religions. Vivekananda also realised that the vitality of Indian culture has enabled it to service the ravages of time is due to the virtue of tolerance among Indian people." 37

Jawaharlal Nehru also writes - "There is something living and dynamic about this heritage which showed itself ways of living and philosophical attitude of life and it's problems. Ancient India like ancient China was a world in itself, a culture and civilisation which give shape to all things .... it is something deeper and within it's fold the widest tolerance of belief and customs practised and even variety acknowledged and encouraged". 38

Vivekananda and Gandhi believed that the cultural unity pervaded the multitudinary diversity of the Indian people underlying the unity was the religions

ideas of the virtue of tolerance and universal brotherhood. They did not only teach but also alive this tolerance of a substantial nature which differentiate from formal tolerance of sufferance.

But the significance of both Vivekananda and Gandhi has to be assessed, however, in the context of growing intolerance among the masses due to socio-economic reasons.

They tried to bring about a revolution in the psyche of the Indian people as well as the world to enable them reassert the supremacy of spirituality and even secular supremacy which breeds intolerance. They were opposed to Western mechanics and externalistic civilisation that make a soulless society. They, however, advocated cultural synthesis based on Eastern and Western religions. They were in favour of building a new cultural synthesis based on spirituality, a new culture where each and every culture, East and West, finds its legitimate place. Their advocacy for cultural synthesis is also the outcome of this virtue of tolerance.

We must note here that the word tolerance often degenerated in the past in fatalism, callous indifferences to important changes taking place in the environment and

submissiveness. But all these evils are distorted versions of tolerance. According to Vivekananda and Gandhi Vedanta truly represents the spirit of tolerance pervading the cultural outlook of India. According to Vedanta every human being is entitled to be regarded as Brahman. We are all Brahman but only with difference that Brahman within us is not manifested to us because we approach to it through our material mind or due to our ignorance. Buddha also seeks to uphold the ideal of human unity. The ideal of man is the ideal of 'Bodhisattva'. It can be attained by each one by a process of spiritual evolution. So an individual, however, insignificant, has overriding right by virtue of his personality. So it evolves a denial of the right of the state or church or the community to compel his obedience in matters of affecting his conscience or his belief. Vivekananda and Gandhi being Vedantist believed in the spiritual 'oneness' of life. For this reason they placed man at the apex to be respected by all and this respect for man constitutes the humanism and the philosophy of both Vivekananda and Gandhi.

Tolerance is the virtue of the society which is generated according to the principle of democratic pluralism. From the political point of view it is a state of mind and

condition of society which enables pluralistic democracy to function well and realise the ideal of pluralism. The pre-condition for the maintenance of pluralism in the political sphere is the cultivation of the attitude of tolerance among the people. Toleration without reasonableness leaves the social disagreements undecided. Vivekananda and Gandhi, therefore, regards the concept of tolerance as a 'categorical imperative'. The basic content of toleration must take care of the fact that man's fundamental rights must not prove inconsistent with other fundamental rights.

The scheme of values accepted by Vivekananda and Gandhi puts spiritual freedom at the apex. Cultural and social disorder derive their meaning from the value structure. Moral and spiritual law have conferred a special dignity in human existence. A sense of blissful harmonious existence is the background of Vivekananda and Gandhiji's philosophy.

To consider the relevance of an individual or an idea depends upon the point of view from which a man looks at the question. What he wants himself. To be precise what are his own ideas and ideals. For a man who has one type of ideas and one set of ideals and aims for him Vivekananda and Gandhi are entirely irrelevant. But a man who is interested in other

ideals, who thinks for other values of life, who sets himself other social, economic, political objectives then Vivekananda and Gandhi would be intensely relevant to him.

Vivekananda proclaimed to every man - 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached'.<sup>41</sup> He believed in infinite soul behind every man having capability of becoming good and great. His philosophy is an unceasing effort to awaken humanity. His philosophy is the philosophy of fundamental unity underlying in all religions. He urged upon men to understand the philosophy of religious tolerance and universal acceptance. He advised all men to accept all religions as true. He wanted to foster oneness among all followers of divergent religions together with call for action. He preached the message of hope and courage. He tried to restore the lost spirit of man and to become conscious of his heritage, dignity and responsibility and to strengthen the self-confidence and inner conviction of man. He preached the gospel of love and brotherhood. To my view these are absolutely essential for the all round progress and prosperity of human race for all time to come particularly in India.

Similarly Gandhiji also believed that true religion unifies mankind, makes them sympathetic and tolerant, inspires

morality among them and spreads love and brotherhood within. Witnessing the present trend of religions perversion towards political machinery of the nation and modern conditions engendered by science and technology. I think all these call for transformation of energies of hatred, violence, arm-race and strife, religions bigotry, fanaticism, insurgency etc. into the moral forces of co-operation and service, love and peace. The moral education of modern man and in step with his intellectual attainments and technological achievements is the crying need task facing humanity to-day. Under such circumstances Non-violence, Satyagraha adopted by Gandhiji must serve as become light to dispel the darkness of exploitation, hatred fanaticism etc. the banner of love and service in the midst of socio-economic programmes and the banner of non-violence in one's personal life must be held high. Human race must recognise value and must be capable of expressing the dignity and worth of man in order to have a new kind of civilisation and progress where man will be able to live peacefully. These are all the more important in India which is a world in miniature inhabited by people of all religions of the world. And this <sup>is</sup> possible only, I think, when the people of India as well as the world will realise and practise the ideals of Vivekananda and Gandhi who preached the message of optimism, dynamism and tolerance all over the world.

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No. 103175  
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