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Religion and Reason

There is an age-old controversy, or rather, the age-old intellectual puzzle, concerning Matter and Spirit, Body and Soul, and about Science and Religion or Reason and Revelation. No philosopher has so far succeeded in harmonizing them. This same problem of Matter and Spirit had led the famous philosopher Descartes to be absorbed in the two separate worlds of Body and Soul (dualism of Matter and Spirit); occasioned his disciples to form a theory of 'occasionalism' calling forth God's continuous interference to touch mind and body; forced Spinoza to think that both mind and body are manifestations of an absolute single substance, God or Nature (Pantheism); confined Berkeley to the world of Spirit rejecting totally the existence of Matter (Subjective Idealism); permitted Leibniz to form the doctrine of 'Pre-established harmony' between body and soul; constrained Hume to deny to existence of both mind and body including 'ego' (Agnosticism, Empiricism); and later allowed Hegel to fly into the world of Absolute Idea. In Indian Philosophy, we find the Advaitic thinker trying to establish reality of the Spirit denying reality to the material world.

In the above contexts, it is abundantly clear that thinkers were unable to offer any satisfactory explanation to link Matter with Spirit. This ultimately caused the apparent dichotomy between Science and Religion. If holy thinkers and sages of yore struggled to establish the truth of the Spirit, the present-day materialistic thinkers strive hard to establish the claims of a world of Matter. Matter, unlike Spirit can be seen, touched and used. Hence they find no room or need for religion. However, some scientists, like Albert Einstein, stressed: "Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind."¹

Our attempt, hence, is to establish the harmonious and complementary character of Religion to go with Science and Reason.

1. "Science and Religion", in the *Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion*, edited by B. Bronstein (N.Y. Prentice-Hall Inc; 1954), p. 69

Science and Religion

Science is a matter of theoretical hypothesis; religion a matter of inner experience, not a theoretical conjecture. Science is a kind of knowledge reached by recognized methods of observation and experiment, registration and measurement. Albert Einstein defines Science as the age-old endeavour to bring together by means of systematic thought the perceptible phenomena of this world into as thoroughgoing an association as possible; Religion as the age-old endeavour of mankind to become clearly and completely conscious of supernatural values and goals and constantly to strengthen and extend their effects.²

According to A.N. Whitehead, Religion in its doctrinal aspect, can be defined as a system of general truths, which have the effect of transforming character, when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended. Religion is the art and theory of the internal life of man.³ Whitehead highlights four main features of Religion: ritual, emotion, belief, rationalization. There is a definite, organized procedure which is ritual; there are definite types of emotional expression; there are definitely expressed beliefs; and there is the adjustment of these beliefs into a system, internally coherent and coherent with other beliefs.

J. S. Huxley defines Religion as a way of life. It is a way of life which follows inevitably from a man holding certain things in reverence, from his feeling and believing them to be sacred. And those things which are held sacred by Religion primarily concern human destiny and the forces with which it comes into contact.⁴

Etymologically understood, Religion (from the latin root *Religare*), as J. B. S. Haldane affirms, "binds back" man to the World-Soul.

Religion and Superstition

Some eminent thinkers and philosophers would contend that Religion is not a work of Reason; it has its roots in superstition. J. S. Huxley, does not hesitate to say that Religion arose out of fear.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 68

3. "Religion in the making", *ibid.*, p. 65

4. J.S. Huxley, *Religion without Revelation* (London: Ernst Benn Ltd., 1927), p. 34

Some others attempt to prove that Religion is merely subjective. They argue that man is impelled by the feelings of fear and helplessness to invent the notion of a being greater than himself to supply his needs to assuage his loneliness, to serve as a focus for his emotions of reverence and worship and awe and to invest his life with purpose and significance, to place him high to fill an empty and meaningless universe, then to worship him as an objective independent being, the product of his own creativity. Having thus invented and projected, he then proceeds to devise and elaborate myths about the creature of his invention. The development and elaboration of these myths are what we now know as Religion. Religion then gives information not about a real external world, but about the nature of human needs. As the subjectivist would say, Religion in essence is a rationalization of man's innate needs, and a projection into the outside world of the 'father figure', as Freud would call him, and this satisfies the needs, assuages fear and comforts helplessness.

There are, of course, certain human experiences, emotions, sentiments, cravings, needs and desires which have traditionally been regarded as specially connected with Religion. There is the sense of the awe and reverence, commonly interpreted as man's response to the vaguely felt presence of a Divine Person, the author of his being.⁵

Moreover, there are contradictory value-claims and beliefs in Religion. A value-claim of one Religion would require that the first-born be killed as a sacrifice; another would proclaim that killing is sinful. Some religions may hold that God has bodily forms, others, that God is merely spiritual. Some hold that God is personal, others impersonal. Some believe in salvation only through Christ, others through Krishna, Buddha, etc. It is impossible that all the beliefs of all religions can be true at the same time. These facts reveal the presence of conflicting beliefs and elements in religion. All the same, we can never prove as unreasonable all the value-claims of Religion in general.

The Problem

Is there a conflict between Religion and Reason, or rather, between Religion and Science? There is an alleged incompatibility between

5. Cf. C. E. M. Joad, *The Recovery of Belief* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd. 1951) p. 22

Science and Religion. It has often been represented that the conclusions of Science are opposed to the tenets of Religion, and the beliefs of Religion hostile to the scientific facts. No doubt, Reason can err, as also the intuitive faculty, a conscience, which receives the divine revelation.

Albert Einstein propounds, if one conceives of Religion and Science according to the definitions given by him, as stated earlier, then a conflict between them appears impossible. For, Science can ascertain only what *is*, but not what should be, and outside of its domain value-judgments of all kinds continue to be very necessary. Religion, on the other hand, deals only with evaluation of human thought and action, it cannot justifiably speak of facts and relationships between facts. According to this interpretation, the well-known conflict between Religion and Science in the past must all be ascribed to a misapprehension of the situation, as described above. For example, a conflict arises when a religious community insists on the absolute truthfulness of all statements recorded in the Bible. On the other hand, representatives of Science have often made an attempt to arrive at fundamental judgments with regard to values and aims in life on the basis of a scientific approach, and in doing so have set themselves up in opposition to Religion. These conflicts have all sprung from errors in judgment of the situation.⁶

Paul Roubiczek says, there are those who believe that the progress of Science alone matters and there are others who believe that Science is the root of evil, because it has undermined Religion.⁷ Arthur Thomson finds no justification for a "warfare" or conflict between Science and Religion, though their aims and moods are different. The opposition so conceived as a "false antithesis" is largely based on misunderstandings.⁸

Peter Anthony Bertocci expressed the above stated idea well when he wrote :

The clash between science and religion comes when science claimed that since God may not be found among scientific observation,

6. Cf. *Science and Religion, op. cit.*, pp. 68, 79

7. *Thinking Towards Religion* (London: Darwin Finlayson Ltd., 1957), p. 38

8. *Science and Religion* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1925), p. 2

belief in him has no foundation—this appears to be sheer dogmatism, and when religion held that conclusions of science (or reason) must be regarded as incomplete and untrue if they conflict with the religious knowledge; this too is dogmatism.⁹

The conflict between Science and Religion turns out to be one, he explains, between two ways of explaining events. One way, the scientific, satisfies the important human demand for accuracy with regard to the sequences of life; the other, the teleological, satisfied the important human demand to understand the purpose behind events, what the aim of the universe and human life is.

The famous scientist—philosopher—theologian, Teilhard de Chardin says that the problem of the controversy between Science and Religion exists in the common sense view, as “the universe is still divided into two watertight compartments, the domain of the world of God, the domain of matter, and the domain of life.”¹⁰ This common sense exists because of a misconception of the cosmos as a static-in the first place, under the cosmos-system; a fatal dualism was thus inevitably introduced into the structure of the universe. ‘But on the other hand, in the conception of a world of evolution, of cosmogenesis, these two ‘things’ of matter and spirit become no more than two aspects or phases of a single interiorizing arrangement.’¹¹

The Limitations of Science and Religion

Neither Science nor Religion taken by itself can explain the whole of reality. Paul Roubiczek says that scientists thought that everything could be explained by a single concept such as atom, or force, or evolution, and thus scientific materialism could answer all the questions. But further advances of Science destroyed that dream by revealing the complexity of the material world. It is impossible to survey both material and spiritual events from a single point of view. Scientists try to be as objective as possible but a man, however successful in Science, still remains concerned with his own subjective experience.¹²

9. Peter Anthony Bertocci, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Boston University, Prentice-Hall Inc. 1951), p. 127

10. Teilhard de Chardin, *Activation of Energy* (London: Collins. 1970), p. 132

11. *Ibid.* p. 258

12. Paul Roubiczek. *Thinking Towards Religion, op. cit.*, pp. 14, 39

Viscount Samuel affirms that Science is unable to tell us how it is possible for all or any—matter, energy, ideas, life, mind, God—to exist at all. Here we pass beyond the range of human faculties. Imagination, speculation, inference have nothing to work upon. When Science comes to a halt, Philosophy and Religion can still go on. Undoubtedly there is much waiting to be discovered by them. From the known we may infer something of the nature of the unknown.¹³

“What we see”, writes Donald Iversion, “in this world of manifestation is but the outpicturing of that which already exists ethereally. And if it is such a matter of much adaptation, study and perception to understand the secrets of this form side of life, how much more difficult it must be trying to understand the forces which rule the invisible, lifese, of manifestation.”¹⁴

Emerson has to say something more profound when he writes :

The philosophy of 6000 years has not searched the chambers and magazines of the soul. In its experiments there has always remained in the last analysis, a residuum it could not resolve. Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not where.”¹⁵

George Galloway has expressed the same idea when he writes :

Our deductive procedure always breaks short, there always comes a point when we have to accept something simply as given without being able to rationalize it. Thus the man of science is constantly confronted with unrationalized elements in the realm of nature.¹⁶

Anthony Bertocci strongly suggests that a sensory observation in science needs re-thinking, re-checking and expand their thinking and observation of the world. What is the value, or aim of science itself? This cannot be answered without going beyond the realm of science

13. Viscount Samuel, *Religion in the Modern World* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1952), p. 27

14. Donald Von Iversion, *Higher Metaphysics* (California: Debris & Co., Publishers, 1955), p. 14

15. Quoted *ibid.*, p.14

16. George Galloway. *Faith and Reason in Religion* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1927).

and relating to scientific venture to human concern as a whole.¹⁷ "The only alternative that lies", says Sir Henry Jones, "before the sceptic is the view, that at the heart of the real there lurks the insane."¹⁸

Science has never succeeded in defining the relation of the vital Body-Mind problem. "It is natural that the philosophies congenial to Science should be those of materialism and behaviourism."¹⁹ Science often accuses Religion of sheer dogmatism. But it can never be denied that scientists are also dogmatics in certain ways when they say, for example, the universe is an ordered universe, the world is uncreated, Matter is eternal etc. Moreover, scientists believe other scientists. Alburey Castell writes :

"To rely on science for every explanation will bring out only a partial world of truth. Science is dependent on nature. There is no such thing as morality in nature. For there to be morality there must be humanity."²⁰

What we have seen is only one side of the coin. None can deny that Religion has its limitations. It is possible for Religion to err in giving its doctrines a concreteness of form which cannot possibly be accepted by the scientific mind. Even assuming an authoritative revelation, we must realize that human interpretation, ignorance, pride and wishful thinking might make themselves felt in the interpretation of revelation. As Teilhard de Chardin remarks: Revelation was received by men who could only know and speak according to their time and language. Teilhard, himself, a champion of religious faith, further remarks: "some pessimists say that our world is floundering in *atheism*. But should we not rather say that what it is suffering from is unsatisfied theism."²¹

Long before Teilhard, Hegel wrote: "Our religion seeks to educate men to be citizens of heaven whose eyes are always turned upwards

17. *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, op. cit.*, p. 135

18. Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires* (London : Macmillan & Co., 1922), p. 91

19. C.E.M. Joad, *op. cit.*, p. 136

20. In his introduction to *Essays in Pragmatism* by William James (New York : Hafner Publishing Co., 1966), p. xi

21. *Activation of Energy, op. cit.*, p. 240

and that makes them strangers to human feelings.”²² We must admit the anthropomorphic character that has crept in the description of the Divine Being; human phantasy created gods in man’s image.

Relationship between Religion and Reason

Einstein finds a strong reciprocal relationship and dependencies between Science and Religion. Though Religion may be that which determines the goal, it has nevertheless learned from Science, in the broadest sense, what means will contribute to the attainment of the goals it has set up. Science can only be created by those who are thoroughly involved with feelings which however, spring from the sphere of Religion. True Religion should be ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge. Science not only purifies Religion’s impulse of the dross of its anthropomorphism, but also contributes to religion’s spiritualization of our understanding of life. A genuine religiosity must not be through the fear of life, and the fear of death and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge.²³

Iverson argues that Science deals entirely with the form side of life—the effect side only, while Religion, Philosophy and the Bible deal with the cause side of life, the invisible, intangible side of life.²⁴

According to C.E.M. Joad, Science can explain *how* things happen, it cannot explain *why* they happen as they do.²⁵ Religion, in common with all the other higher activities of the human mind, is a product of a combination of Reason and Intuition, and it is an error to regard Reason as the special province of Science, relegating Religion to that of Intuition. Since the universe to which Science introduces us is not self-created—for to postulate self-creation is to offend against science’s own causal principle—nor self-explanatory—for pieces of matter moving about the space are not, nor do they carry with them the explanation of *why* they are and move—something else must exist to perform the office of the creation and explanation; this something is lying outside the scope of Science.²⁶

22. Hegel, *Theologische Jugend Schriften*, ed. Hermann Nohl (Tübingen: 1907) p. 28

23. *Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 & 72

24. *Higher Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 15

25. *The Recovery of Belief*, *op. cit.*, p. 87

26. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 115 and 135

Science and Religion are not disciplines dealing with different worlds or different ways. According to Teilhard and H. H. Farmer there are two aspects of reality: 'external reality' and 'internal reality', or the 'the world of things' and 'the world of persons'. Each of them represents one aspect only of the whole of reality and our knowledge will remain onesided and incomplete so long as we rely on one alone.

The turning away from the material world by the Middle Ages had not only contributed to estrangement from external reality, but also to the reduction of internal reality to a completely abstract system, as exemplified in extreme scholasticism. Similarly, the neglect of internal reality by Science has not only lead to an estrangement from internal reality but also to an abstract knowledge of external reality as best exemplified by modern physics.²⁷

George Galloway affirms that Faith and Reason are really complementary and neither should be sacrificed to the other. Theology deals with truths supernatural and super-rational. . . Theology usually has no quarrel with natural knowledge, but it professes to go beyond it. Faith and Reason represent two different attitudes to the world, two distinctive ways of reacting to an experience. God is conceived not only as transcendent, but as immanent. Man meets a 'many-sided world both material and spiritual, visible and invisible.'²⁸

Dr Bhagavan Das sees Science and Religion as but different aspects of, or even only different names for, the same great body of Truth and its application which may be called Science or code of life.²⁹

Henry Jones goes still deeper to the root of the matter :

"Science proposes," he says, "that the universe is ordered. Religion professes to reveal the ultimate principle of that order. He calls the religious faith the supreme hypothesis, because religion bears upon the whole destiny of man and of all that he values, as does the scientific hypothesis upon all that comes within the borders of science. There is nothing real except in virtue of it, nothing intelligible except in its light. If the hypothesis breaks

27. Cf. *Thinking Towards Religion, op. cit.*, p. 50

28. *Faith and Reason, op. cit.*, p. 115

29. *Essential Unity of All Religions* (Adayar : The Theosophical Publishing House, 1955), p. 19

down, nothing remains except unintelligible chaotic particulars.”³⁰

He then vehemently states that the universal is the truth of the particular, and the particulars are the manifestations of the universal.

Criteria of Religious Truth

In former times Religion was imposed on the people of a country by political authorities. Doubt was impious, dissent was penalized. One creed was given monopoly; all others were deliberately discouraged or even forcibly suppressed. This is generally no longer the case. The creeds now must stand or fall on their own merits. Their claims to truth have to be defended by reasonable arguments.

The mutual consistency of beliefs with reference to experience is the test of truth of the religious truth. Can any of the logical criteria be applied to religious truth? Possibly not. There might be two ways of arriving at truth: *The empiricist way* and the *absolutist way*. As E.S. Brightman remarks, religion is not an observable physical process; it is not a syllogism or mathematical formula; it is a conscious experience that includes reference to other minds, human and divine. It is, therefore, unreasonable to expect a religious belief to be verified or falsified by sense observations or by formal logico-mathematics operation. Can the absolute be tested? Nothing is absolute short of the Absolute.³¹

Moreover, as William James warns us, no concrete test of what is really true has ever been agreed upon. Some make the criterion external to the moment of perception, putting it either in revelation, the *consensus gentium*, the instinct of the heart or the systematized experience of the race. Others make the perceptive moment its own test. Descartes, for instance, with his clear and distinct ideas made his assessment by the “Veracity of God”; Reid with his “common sense” and Kant with his “form of synthetic judgment *a-priori*.” Some tried to establish truth by the inconceivability of the opposite, the capacity to be verified by senses, the possession of complete organic unity or self-realization. “The much lauded objective evidence,” says William James, “is never triumphantly there; it is a sense of aspiration.”³²

30. *A Faith that Enquires*, *op. cit.*, pp. 93 & 96

31. *Approaches to Philosophy of Religion*, *op. cit.*, p. 9

32. Cf. William James, *Essays in Pragmatism* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1966), p. 98

Argument from contradiction seems inapplicable to religious truth. Or, rather we may ask, could any religious truth be of such a nature as to be irrelevant to experience? Could belief in God be entertained without regard to its relation to the facts of experience?

Is universal agreement (*consensus gentium*) a test of truth? Cannot be. Because, there was an agreement on animism and flat earth. We find a contradictory array of opinions such as, there is a personal God, God is impersonal Absolute, God is Spiritual, God is the world etc.

Some have appealed to 'feeling' as a test of truth. But the varying modes of feeling contain no principle for determining which of two equally strong, but conflicting, feelings is true. Instincts, customs or traditions also fail to serve criteria of truth, since there exist conflicting instincts, customs and traditions. The criterion of intuition also fails, since it is not possible to distinguish a genuine intuition from a disguised appeal to feeling. Revelative claims are advanced as intuition, but often they contain contradictory beliefs.

Some thinkers present pragmatic proofs for religious truth. An idea is true if it works or has practical consequences. Pragmatism is a radical challenge to dogmatism. However, there is a difficulty in pragmatism, and that is the ambiguity of its fundamental criterion of practical results. Pragmatists have not been able to arrive at any clear agreement on definition of 'practical' and 'works'.

The above inapplicability of logical criteria to religious facts have created a religious scepticism in many minds. Is religious knowledge possible? A.J. Ayer's answer to this question is: "This possibility has been ruled out by our treatment of metaphysics."³³ Santayana says: "Religions are the great fairy tales of the consciousness."³⁴ These recent philosophers have been forced to deny any religious knowledge by their verification theory, which in itself it has not been possible to verify.

Thinkers find Reason for Religion

What we have described, in the previous pages is only a shadow of religious truth. Though some are sceptical about God and religion,

33. *Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion, op. cit.*, p. 110

34. G. Santayana, "My Philosophy of Religion", in *Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion, op. cit.*, p. 42

the world's great thinkers are not, as we can see from even a cursory glance at their teachings. They find sufficient reason to have religion. According to them religion and reason are both inseparable and complementary.

Plato's dialectic considers the forms, not as isolated essence, but as constituting a systematic unity—as related to the form of Good, which is God. The universe is basically a rational universe a spiritual system. "Wherefore we ought to fly away" writes Plato, "from earth as quickly as we can, and to fly away is to become like God."³⁵

Aristotle too finds "the essential unity" shared by all things from the Supreme God at the top as the supreme 'Form'. He states that it is necessary that there should be, as the first cause of the series of motions, an unmoved 'Mover' or God, God in complete actuality, and 'God is thought-thinking thought.' Man's reason is conceived as a spark of the divine reason.

When we come to the Middle Ages, we don't find an absolute bifurcation between reason and faith in the beginning. St. Augustine and St. Anselm linked reason to faith as embodied in the formula *Credo ut intelligam* (I believe in order that I may understand). The dominant tone—before St. Thomas Aquinas was one of confidence in reason as an adjunct of faith.

The conformity of faith and reason, grace and nature was central to the thought of St. Thomas. He acknowledged the amplitude of reason in such a way as to make it possible to have a natural theology founded on reason alone. He had provided notable classical proofs for establishing the existence of God founded on reason. Duns Scotus believed in the harmony of faith and reason. Unfortunately, after Scotus, the radical separation between faith and reason widened. However, that separation did not last very long, since rationalists like Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz came into the field. According to Descartes, God is the base of the whole being and knowledge. He was a rationalist and a dogmatist. He believed in the power of human reason to reach sure and universal knowledge. Descartes distinguished sharply between God and Nature, between mind and body. Spinoza,

35. Quoted by Frank Thilly in *A History of Philosophy* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1973), p. 90

on the contrary, identified God with Nature. The single, eternal, indefinite, self-caused and necessary principle of things is called God or Nature. Spinoza deemed it possible to have direct knowledge of God and intellectual love for Him. Blessedness consists in love towards God; this arises from knowledge. By using the principle of sufficient reason Leibniz establishes the existence of God. Thus Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Locke emphasized the rational side of religion.

Though in his "Critique of Pure Reason" Kant denied the knowledge of God, freedom and immortality, he established firmly a place for them in the 'Practical Reason'. For Kant, the element of sense-perception was essential to knowledge. The moral consciousness did not come under the dominion of phenomenal world in space and time. Man has practical reason and his will belongs to a transcendent or noumenal world, and, in shining after ethical ends, he makes demands on that real and intelligible world. Kant's moral postulates transcend the realm of knowledge. How then do we apprehend their realities? The answer is by faith. Faith is the faculty or organ by which we establish contact with a supra-sensuous or real world. For Kant, faith is distinguished from knowledge by its sphere and object.

Hegel rationalized the universe to meet the unity of phenomenal and noumenal worlds. He identified Absolute Idea with God and the world of things. Idea or Reason is the only true reality; it pervades the whole and all the parts of the whole. Bradley found an Absolute in which all contradictions are harmonized. "Philosophy demands", he writes, "and in the end rests on, what may be fairly termed faith."³⁶ For the 'process-philosophers' such as Bergson, Samuel Alexander, A. N. Whitehead and Teilhard de Chardin, there is no dichotomy between the natural and supernatural. The same evolutionary process reaches up to God, as the 'ultimate' of the series. They all find a place for God in a naturalistic universe. The *Elan Vital* of Bergson and the 'Omega Point' of Teilhard de Chardin are divine principles beneath the evolutionary universe guiding and completing it to the ultimate, God.

A.N. Whitehead further affirms that religion is founded on the concurrence of three allied concepts: that of the value of an individual for itself; that of the value of the diverse individuals of the world for

36. "Essays on Truth and Reality".

each other; that of the value of the objective world which is a community derived from the inter-relations of its component individuals, and also necessary for the existence of each of these individuals. Religious consciousness starts with self-evaluation. Religion is a realm of values. It is an intuition into an actual world. It exhibits emotions, purposes and physical conditions, as subservient factors in the emergence of value. The world of religion is an objective world.³⁷

Viscount Samuel in his essay "Does Religion stand to Reason?" writes :

We know that the creation of the world as we perceive it has not been a single act, but a process, an evolution. . . The picture of the universe given by science the factual universe that we perceive, physical and mental together, cannot be all that there is. It is not a closed system. It is not self-created. It does not explain itself. Evidently there must be something else.³⁸

J.B.S. Haldane says that the world is not a soulless mechanism, and is not the work of blind chance : There is Mind behind the veil of Matter. The material world, in reality is a spiritual world seen very partially and imperfectly. The one real world is the spiritual world. The truth is that, not Matter, not Form, not any physical thing, but Mind, Personality, is the central fact of the universe. God is the unifying principle of the universe.³⁹ Einstein propounds that the doctrine of a Personal God interfering with natural events could never be refuted.⁴⁰

The well-known maxim of Francis Bacon : "a little philosophy inclineth men's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth minds about to religion." According to him Religion makes an ultimate harmony, so that religion, in its interest, is a more conscious and direct pursuit of the Life of Reason than is society, science or art. Religion, though it sometimes has an instinctive and blind side, finds its way toward the heart of things, and from whatever quarter it may come, veers in the direction of the Absolute.⁴¹

37. Cf. *Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion, op. cit.*, p. 67

38. *Religion in the Modern World, op. cit.*, p. 27

39. *Essential Unity of Religions, op. cit.*, pp. 26-28

40. *Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion, op. cit.*, p. 71

41. *Ibid.*, p. 47

William James sums up in the broadest possible way, the characteristics of the religious life. It includes the following beliefs:

1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance; 2. That union and harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end; 3. That prayer or inner consciousness with the spirit "God" or "law" is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, physical or material, within the phenomenal world.

4. Religion includes the following psychological characteristics :
 (a) A new zest which adds to itself like a gift to life: and takes the form either by lyrical enchantment or appeal to earnestness and heroism.
 5. An assurance of safety and as temper of peace, and, in relation to others, a preponderance of loving affection.⁴²

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the late president and philosopher of India, writes :

In order to be able, to say that religious experience reveals reality in order to be able to transform religious certitude into logical certainty, we are obliged to give an intellectual account of experience. Hindu thought has no mistrust of reason. There can be no final breach between the two powers of the human mind, reason and intuition.⁴³

The Place of Belief

What we attempt to prove in what follows is that some kind of belief or faith is necessary for religious or even scientific knowledge. Absolute certainty is never obtained even in scientific facts. Some part of the fact might be proved by scientific verification, the other part of the fact rests on our belief in the thing. After Newton scientist believed that the mango falls to the ground because of the gravitational attraction of the earth to its centre. However, after Einstein's Theory of Relativity, they may not believe in the gravitational theory.

No logical criterion is accepted as a sure measure of any kind of truth. As William James puts it: What a contradictory array of

42. *Essays in Pragmatism, op. cit.*, pp. 110., 132-3

43. Quoted by C.E.M. Joad, *The Recovery of Belief*, p. 114

opinions have objective evidence and absolute certitude been claimed! Even when James advocates strongly for 'practical needs' he acclaims: no philosophy can hope for acceptance if it proposes a conception of the world in which no provision is made for the defining capacities of human nature. Now, one such human capacity is for faith, the capacity to believe on incomplete evidence and to act on such belief. Faith is the ability and the willingness to believe and act when doubt is still possible. A view of the world, therefore, which makes no provision for faith will not generate the sentiment of rationality. He calls those philosophers 'tough-minded' who deny a place for faith or would legitimate only those acts of faith needed to define their (usually the scientific) point of view.

In his essay "The Will to Believe", James defends our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters even when evidence may be insufficient. It was at a time when the religious consciousness was hard pressed by the more aggressive representatives of the nineteenth century's conception of the "scientific point of view." The right to believe on insufficient evidence, to exercise the will to believe, was certainly denied and castigated by some philosophers speaking in the name of science. James had no difficulty in assuring: questions of right and wrong are not scientific questions. They are ethical questions. They are, therefore, questions which must be decided by reference to the facts not of nature but of human nature—a point of view whose reference is nature cannot legislate on questions which refer to human nature. If the will to believe must answer to the notions of rights and duties, then no veto can be placed on it by science, since it is the business of science to settle what is the case, not what ought to be the case. The "scientific veto" thus ruled out, James proceeds to offer reasons for the claim that we do have a right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters.

"Suppose," he writes, "for example, that I am climbing in the Alps, and have had the ill-luck to work myself into a position from which the only escape is by a terrible leap. Being without similar experience, I have no evidence of my ability to perform it successfully, but hope and confidence in myself make me sure I shall not miss my aim, and nerve my feet to execute what without those subjective emotions would perhaps have been impossible. But suppose that, on the contrary, the emotions of fear and mistrust preponderate: or suppose that, having just read the ethics of belief, I feel it would be sinful to

act upon an assumption unverified by previous experience—why, then I shall hesitate so long that at last, exhausted and trembling and launching myself in a moment of despair, I miss my foothold and roll into the abyss. . . There are then cases where faith creates its own verification.”⁴⁴

If a man chooses to turn his back altogether on God and the future, no one can prevent him; no one can show beyond reasonable doubt that he is mistaken. If a man thinks otherwise and acts as he thinks, I do not see that any one can prove that he is mistaken.⁴⁵

J.S. Huxley assures: “I believe in the first instance, that it is necessary to believe something.”⁴⁶ George Galloway is of strong conviction that we may hold that it is fit and right that we should have some justification for what we believe, but it does not follow that the only justification which is admissible is one in which it can be cast in the form of logical demonstration. There may be an inner conviction which is itself “sufficient evidence.” Early religions brood over the shadow of gloomy fears, but fear in itself cannot create the spirit of religion. Man trusts the spirits, and his trust is born of a dim sense of his limitation. Here is the living germ from which faith grows.

Faith is the completion of knowledge. Through faith man wins a world-view in which human life, and the larger whole of experience within which it develops, receive a satisfying meaning and value. Of course, religious faith should naturally go beyond the sphere of reason, to a great extent.

It is fitting to recall the words of St Augustine: *praecedit fides, sequitur intellectus, fides quaereus intellectum* (faith preceeds, knowledge follows; faith seeks knowledge). St Anselm proclaims: *Credo ut intelligam* (I believe in order to understand).

There are, however, different aspects of faith. The scientist believes that the world is not a chaos. Now, the religious person also believes that the world is not a chaos. But the word ‘chaos’ means one thing for the religious and another for the scientist. The world

44. From the Essay “Sentiment of Rationality” (1879) by William James.

45. William James, essay “The Will to Believe”.

46. *Religion without Revelation, op. cit.* p. 24

is chaotic for the religious mind if the most important values (love, justice, truth and beauty) are not inherent in things, chaos for the scientist is the absence of regularity.

Conclusion

What we have tried to discuss in this paper is that science and religion do not represent two separate realms of knowledge, but both are complementary. Reason does not object to religion, nor is religion devoid of reason. Science and religion together reveal the whole of reality, neither is able to explain the whole truth stand apart from the other. Science has nothing to say to the question 'why'. It deals only with 'how'. Likewise, religion answers only the question 'why' not 'how'.

Science is limited only to some experience and that only in 'part'. Scientific concepts are empirical, and religious concepts are transcendental. God, soul, freedom, immortality—are all outside the scientific universe of experiment; they belong to the realms of finalities and transcendental relationship between the existing realities.

No criterion of truth is proved to be able to account for all kinds of truth. Therefore, belief or faith, or rather an inner conviction is necessary for human knowledge. Science and religion are thus two complementary activities of the spirit in man.