

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**MASTER OF ARTS-PHILOSOPHY
SEMESTER -III**

MODERN INDIAN THOUGHT

OPEN ELECTIVE 304

BLOCK-2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

MODERN INDIAN THOUGHT

BLOCK -1

Unit 1: Introduction

Unit 2: Modern Indian thought: background I

Unit 3: Modern Indian thought: background II

Unit 4: Swami Vivekananda: universal religion

Unit 5: BalGangadharTilak

Unit 6: Sri Aurobindo

Unit 7: Md. Iqbal: intellect and intuition; self; perfect man

BLOCK- 2

Unit 8: Rabindranath Tagore: man and God.....6

Unit 9: Gandhi: Non Violence Philosophy45

Unit 10: K.C. Bhattacharya.....68

Unit 11: S. Radhakrishnan91

Unit 12: J. Krishnamaruti 113

Unit 13: B.R.Ambedkar: critique of social evils155

Unit 14: neo-Buddhism178

BLOCK 2: MODERN INDIAN THOUGHT

Introduction to the Block

Unit 8 deals with Rabindranath Tagore: man and God. Rabindranath Tagore who lived in the stirring and crucial time of the history of India and contributed a lot to the philosophical, ethical, social, political, religious, and economic systems and theories.

Unit 9 deals with Gandhi: Non Violence Philosophy. Gandhi's indictment of modern civilization, his view of politics and especially of social and individual ethics are firmly based upon his assumptions regarding human nature and his understanding of man.

Unit 10 deals with Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's 1936 essay, "The Concept of Philosophy," in which he distinguishes different grades of theoretic consciousness and connects the hierarchy of cognitive attitudes to an account of the limits of language.

Unit 11 deals with Radhakrishnan's salient features comprise universal outlook, synthesis of the East and the West in religion and philosophy, the spiritualism and humanism, and openness to the influences of science, art and values.

Unit 12 deals with Krishnamurti was not an educator in strict sense of the term, as he had no formal qualifications to either propagate or promote educational goals or establish educational institutions.

Unit 13 deals with Babasaheb Ambedkar is one of the foremost thinkers of modern India. His thought is centrally concerned with issues of freedom, human equality, democracy and socio-political emancipation.

Unit 14 deals with The Neo – Buddhism movement in India arose neither from a missionary enterprise which carried its own organizational structure and nor from the Buddhisation of a highly developed existent religious structure.

UNIT 8: RABINDRANATH TAGORE: MAN AND GOD

STRUCTURE

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Theory of Freedom and Self-Realisation
- 8.3 Emphasis on Human Reason
- 8.4 Critique of Nationalism
- 8.5 Differences with Gandhi
- 8.6 Analysis of Bolshevism
- 8.7 Let us sum up
- 8.8 Key Words
- 8.9 Questions for Review
- 8.10 Suggested readings and references
- 8.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To discuss the Theory of Freedom and Self-Realisation
- To know about Emphasis on Human Reason
- To critique of Nationalism
- To understand Differences with Gandhi
- To analysis of Bolshevism

8.1 INTRODUCTION

No philosophical consideration will be complete without any reference to Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore who lived in the stirring and crucial time of the history of India and contributed a lot to the philosophical, ethical, social, political, religious, and economic systems

and theories. The most important objective of this unit is to help the students follow the philosophical stream of thoughts evident in the works and teaching of both Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. Rabindranath Tagore is a religious poet. It is right to call him a seer, visionary or mystic. It is from his poetry that we know of his philosophy. He does not present his philosophy in an academic manner. His philosophical thoughts are scattered in his literature. So, one has to systematically arrange his thoughts in a particular manner so as to make it fit into the mould of an academic philosophy.

8.2 THEORY OF FREEDOM AND SELF-REALISATION

Tagore was born on 7th August 1861, in Kolkata, Bengal. He belonged to an eminent and influential Bengali Brahmin family. He was born and brought up as an aristocrat and a lover of beauty. He became conscious of his higher mission of bringing human beings close to each other and to God. Tagore ranks with the greatest seers, sages and the devotees of India, who valued human being above everything else. Under the influence of the liberal tradition of his family and the philosophy of the Upanishads, he developed a positive view of life and love of humanity. He died on 7th August 1942. Tagore had been deeply influenced by the thoughts of Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita. The medieval Indian religious and social philosophy also made an impact on his philosophical thinking. Though the metaphysics of Buddhism does not attract the poet much, the humanistic tradition of the Buddha and the Buddhist way of life appealed to him the most. In the spirit of the medieval saints and poets, he talked of the divinity of man\woman. Besides them, humanism of Vaisnavism, the mysticism of medieval saints, the philosophy of human being of the Baul sect of Bengal, humanism of Christianity and Buddhism helped him form his humanistic ideas and ideals. Apart from these, Brahmasamaj, the revival and reform of Bengali literature guided by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and the naturalistic and scientific movement also moulded his thinking.

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Tagore was a lover of human freedom. Influenced by the western liberalism, Tagore opined that freedom of a nation will provide ample scope to its citizens to express their view openly. His idea on freedom contained the following things.

Enlightenment of soul through self-realization:

Freedom will provide opportunity to attain enlightenment of soul. It is only because by pursuing a goal in an atmosphere of freedom, one will get scope to realize one's self. That self-realization will enlighten the soul and illumine it.

Political freedom accompanied by spiritual freedom:

Tagore envisaged that political freedom is not freedom unless it is accompanied by spiritual freedom. Spiritual freedom is the guiding force behind political freedom. It will show right path to an individual in realizing his political goal. The same is also applicable in case of a nation too.

Freedom, according to Tagore, has a spiritual root. It includes freedom of expression and freedom of conscience. Thus, his concept of political freedom was a spiritualized one like Gandhi, where the use of force will suppress the legitimate demands of the people creating frustration in their mind. His 'Geetanjali' reflects his idea of freedom thus.

“Where the mind is without fear,

And the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up.

Into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Regulation of Almighty in guiding the soul:

Tagore had great faith in God. The spiritualism within him prompted him to say that the Almighty guides the soul of a human being. He changes the civil mind of a man (or a race) and enlightens his soul. To him “The turning of the wheel of fortune will compel the British one day to give up their British empire.”

Comprehensive social and cultural growth:

Tagore viewed that freedom will lead to ‘the comprehensive social and cultural growth. For that growth, he never accepted the idea of either the Moderates or Extremists. To him, the Moderates failed in revealing the real worth of Indian culture while the Extremists put emphasis on techniques of action being unmindful of Indian social customs and traditions. Thus, both the ways were rejected by Tagore for social and cultural growth.

Self-government:

To pursue freedom, Tagore needed self-government for India. Through that, the country will attain enlightenment. It will lead the country on the path of progress. Self-government is the medicine to cure all the political ailments. He therefore, pleaded for the freedom of India; China and Siam.

Fundamental claims of Indian humanity and independence:

Tagore raised fundamental claims of recognizing Indian humanity and told the British authority to free India. When Gandhiji launched Civil Disobedience Movement, Rabindranath Tagore appealed the British to free India from their clutches. Thus, he pleaded for the mutual friendship and co-operation among the people of India and England.

Freedom of individual and freedom of nation:

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Tagore wanted freedom of individual and freedom of nation. Without one, the other is incomplete. This will provide opportunity to the individuals to see one within him self and within the world. This will help an individual also to project himself in the midst of May. That will be the lasting impact of freedom on mankind.

Tagore not only wanted political freedom but he wanted the freedom of 'an individual too. Freedom, to him, is to illumine the soul and an individual to make him feel that he was a component part of the great creation of God where freedom pervades.

The general conception of spiritual freedom or 'Mukt?' is that which is a state of non-worldly existence. The freedom of soul described in most of the Indian philosophical systems, is also a state of non-worldly existence. The self realises God and after that it leaves the cosmos, and is passively united in oneness with the Absolute which is indeterminate, nameless, transcendental and eternal. In the Gita, Soul has been described as immortal and eternal. It is beyond death, indestructible and has formless existence. It neither dies, nor born. The Bhagavad Gita says, "It is never born, nor does it ever die, having once been, does it cease to be unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. It is not slain when the body is slain" (Bhagavad Gita. 2.20). It is generally believed that the ultimate aim of human being is freedom from bondage by the realisation of God within himself. Lord Krishna says, "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these kings of man. Never will there be a time hereafter when any of us shall cease to be". (Bhagavad Gita -2.19). It means that the soul is conceived to be co-eternal with God. There is an eternal companionship between the soul and God. Dr. Radhakrishnan also wrote "It is only in marriage with the finite that the infinite can bear fruit; divorced from it, it remains barren"¹ The unity of God is manifested through plurality of souls only, the manifestation of the infinite itself in the finites. God manifests his truths, blessedness and omnipotence in the finite beings. Radhakrishnan said that God is immanent in the universe and our material body is also surcharged with the Divine existence. He also said that the world is a play ground where we have to build our souls. Nature and society are the media for the

manifestation of the infinite in the finite. Man's goal is the realisation of the Supreme Being or the Infinite seated in the 'lotus of our heart.' To realise our oneness - with the Supreme Being is the highest aim of our life. This is our Dharma. Dharma literally means nature or essence, the implicit truth, of all things. The essence of man is the Infinite, which is inherent in him. His Dharma is to become the Infinite which is already in him. Spiritual practice (Sadhana) may broadly be divided into two important phases - negative and positive. The negative side commonly represents the elimination of the obstructions (Bandhan) in realizing the goal, i.e. the elimination of attachment to anything finite, while the positive aspect helps to bring out the element of infinitude in the vacuum created by the negative phase of Sadhana. The negative is thus logically prior to the positive aspect, but in reality the two aspects are intermingling and they help each other. We know that ignorance is the root cause of our bondage and suffering. So, to attain the liberation from suffering, true knowledge of the real nature of the world and the self is essential. Bondage means the process of birth and rebirth. Liberation (Mukti or Moksa) means a complete cessation of the process of birth and rebirth. Generally Indian thinkers are unanimous in their opinion that liberation can not be attained without dispelling ignorance (Avidya). Ignorance of our mind can be removed by right knowledge. But the Carvaka system does not accept this view. In philosophy, there are many words which are used to mean freedom. They are - Liberation, Salvation, Nirvana, Moksa, Kaivalya, Perfection, Self realisation, Independence etc. It is generally believed that the Indian conception of Moksa is the highest type of freedom. Though all the expressions of freedom stand for the same thing, but there is some deference among them. They are as follows.

Indian philosophical and Tagorean concept of spiritual Freedom :

The idea of Salvation or freedom of soul is common: all systems of Indian Philosophy excluding Lokayata. The Nyaya and the Vaisheshika (orthodox schools) regard ignorance and Karma to be the cause of bondage. Karma leads to merits and demerits which involve pain. So the

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Nyaya, Vaishesika philosophers hold that liberation or Moksa consists in the complete cessation of pain. It consists in the absolute destruction of the qualities of the soul - pleasure, pain, cognition, aversion, desire, merit and demerit. The Mimamsa agrees with the Nyaya Vaisesika in this regard. The thinkers of this school also regard destruction of merit and demerit, and absolute extinction as release. According to Samkhya, liberation is the complete freedom from threefold suffering - Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhidaivika. Here freedom of the self means freedom from pains without any possibility of return to this state. Yoga regards complete isolation of the self from the mind and its modes and disposition as liberation. Moksa, according to the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara, is the complete identity between the Self and Brahman. It is possible when Maya (Avidya) is completely removed. Moksa is claimed to be blissful (Ananda Svamrupa) as it is pure and free from any negation and is complete freedom. Sankara introduced the concept of Jivana Mukti, i.e., possibility of mukti while living in this world. The fullest liberation comes only after the death of the body, i.e., 'Videhamukta'. But Ramanuja advocates moksa to be fusion with God, because the Jiva does not lose its identity. The Jiva on attaining liberation lives as a mode of God in constant companionship with Him. This state of existence is claimed to be blissful. The Visistadvaita regards sameness of the Self with God as Moksa, which is a blissful state. Among the heterodox schools, Carvaka holds that death alone is liberation. It regards sensual pleasure as the highest end, because death is certainly not desired by anybody. Hence, liberation is not the highest goal. According to Buddha, Nirvana can be attained by complete extinction of suffering. For him, the state of mukti is called Nirvana, which is the state of bliss and happiness. Again, according to Jain philosophy, moksa stands for the complete separation of Jiva from Karma. This separation is made possible by three jewels - Sarnyak-darshan, Samyak-Jhana and Samyak-Charitra. The Vaisnava, Sakta and Saiva, which are religiously theistic systems, hold that the ultimate stage is, where the Jiva as bhakta realizes his God of worship and devotion, and lives in communion with Him. According to Saiva-Siddhanta moksa is the attainment of a suddhayasha or the state of purity in which it is one with Siva. The concept of

Jivanamukti has been also accepted, but the final mukti comes along with the death of the body. Tagore's concept of salvation is not similar to any one of the above mentioned conception of freedom. Neither he believes in any spiritual world other than ours, nor he accept, the identity between Paramatma and Jivatma in salvation. For him heaven beyond this world is unintelligible. Tagore rejects the Advaita conception of salvation, according to which the individual merges into Brahman and loses its existence. The state of Salvation is, for them, the state of complete absorption, complete merging of the one in the other. Such conception of 'Mukti' is not found in Tagore's works. Salvation for him is not a state of absolute oneness of Jiva and Brahman, nor a state dwelling in a transcendental world. Tagore's conception of Salvation is not negative, as for him freedom is not a state of complete void or emptiness. In Vedanta philosophy, it is said that in liberation the soul is isolated and it is a state of passive existence of man. But the liberation as described by Tagore is not to be found in isolation, but is union with the world. His concept of liberation is thus contradictory to Buddhistic concept of 'Nirvana' which means extinction. Tagore accepted cosmic salvation also. Freedom and 'Mukti' to him means 'Cittamukti' or freedom of Consciousness or Mind. Like Mahayana Buddhism, Tagore argued that it is not the aim of man to try to perfect himself only. He must work for the freedom of consciousness of other members of society, then only he can get freedom in true sense of the term.

Tagore's concept of Spiritual Freedom is highly influenced by the Upanishadic concept of freedom. There are two views of the liberation in the Upanishad. (i) One is, Jivana- Mukti (ii) and the other is Videha- Mukti. One who attains Brahman even in this life is called 'Jivana- Mukti'. On the other hand, One who attains Brahman after death is called 'Videha- Mukti'. Tagore subscribed to the former kind. To Upanishad, the law of Karma is inexorable. Nobody can escape it. There will not be dissipation of consequence of an action. This will lead to conservation of moral force. Thus the soul will be moulded according to Karma. One becomes free from the law of Karma, when one becomes one with Brahman. Tagore's attitude to death was different. Life is

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flower, death's^ From the fruit again there will be flower, i.e. life. “ Jivan phul photd hala m aranerphal” (G itanjali - 38, Bengali. Ed) This attitude is akin to the view of the Upanishad. To Upanishad, where there is realisation of infinite, death becomes a non-entry. The infinite is the deathless stage. In the finite there is death. If death is viewed with an integrated grasp, death brings “anandam ” to the finite also.

Swami Ranganathan maintains in his book “The Message of the Upanishads” (P -54) that, “The Upanishads boldly proclaim that spirituality is the prerogative of every individual. This Atman, the Divine, the immortal is the self of every man and woman and child. It is true nature of man. It is also the true nature of all animals, but animals can not realize it..... Man is specially fitted for this great adventure”. Tagore also entertained the same view, “Of all manifestations of the Divine, man is incomparable. The human self is unique, because in it God reveals Himself in a special manner. Tagore is deeply concerned with humanity. Humanity and immortality are intimately connected with each other.

The concept of Spiritual freedom is one of the most significant aspects of Tagore’s Philosophy. His concept of humanity and immortality are intertwined. So, he says that there may be death of individual, but mankind will continue to exist. Immortality lies there in the following stream of mankind. He was occupied with mankind as a whole. Hence, he said that “Humanity is a necessary factor in the effecting of the Divine truth. The infinite, for its Myself-expression, comes down into the manifoldness of the Finite; and Finite, of for its self-realization, must rise into the unity the Infinite. Then only is the Cycle of Truth complete Dr. S. Radhakrishnan maintains in his book 'The philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore' that “there are two views regarding his philosophy of life, if we believe one side, he is a Vedantin, a thinker who draws his inspiration L from the Upanishads. If we believe the other he is an advocate of theism more or less like, if not identical with, Christianity, Rabindranath inclines to the former view” Tagore also expresses Upanisjadic belief in his book ‘Sadhana “ To me the verses of the Upanishads and the teaching

of the Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them, both in my own life and in my preaching, as being instinct with individual meaning for me, as for others and awaiting for this confirmation, my own special testimony, which must have its value because of its individuality”

It is clear that Tagore’s philosophy is influenced by ancient Indian wisdom and his writings are working as a commentary on the Upanishads. According to Tagore, man has the physical, rational and spiritual aspects and his true freedom is constituted in the realms of matter, mind and spirit. There are some ways (principles) and means for attaining the highest end or Mukti in every religion. We know that, Mukti means the liberation of the Soul. Tagore said that all the higher religions of India speak of the training of the minds for Mukti. “ In our soul we are conscious of the transcendental truth in us, the Universal, the Supreme Man; and this soul, the spiritual self, has its enjoyment in the renunciation of the individual self for the sake of the Supreme soul”. Tagore thought that in India, poetry and philosophy go hand in hand, only because the later has claimed its right to guide man to the practical path of their life’s fulfillment. The fulfillment of life is found in our freedom. Tagore said that ‘Satyam is Anandam, and the Real is Joy ’. Man has a craving for the fullest expression of his own self. Tagore realised that a human being is painfully chained on the one hand within the boundaries of his own psychological self and on the other, with the oppressive customs and conventions of society. Tagore believed that the ideal method of self-discipline and charactertraining was cultivated in Ashramas of ancient India through Brahmacharyya under the guidance of Gurus which was a synthesis between freedom and restrain. Simple way of living, controlling impulses, engaging oneself in manual labour as a part of daily life, practicing concentration of mind in studies and meditation were the parts of Brahmacharyyasram in ancient India. The poet was highly impressed by these methods of character building and personality development. He also believed that the final goal can be achieved through a hierarchical process. In this regard, “His view is comparable to the ‘PanchaKosha’concept of Upanishadas in the

realisation of Brahman. 'Mukti? can be achieved at the physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual levels.' All these hierarchical stages appear in the realization of Mukti of the individual man. But Tagore was also very much aware of the necessity of freedom or Mukti at the social, economic and political levels. Combining all these factors he created an atmosphere in which the fearless, free personality flourishes.

8.3 EMPHASIS ON HUMAN REASON

According to Tagore the aim of human life is to search for truth. Man is both finite and infinite being. So man combines in himself spirit and nature. He is earth's child but heaven's heir. Tagore said "At one pole of my being I am one with sticks and stones...;but at the other pole of my being. I am separate from all". Man is related with the natural chain of events and the law of necessity. So man becomes a member of the spiritual realm i.e. The free stage. Human life is a quest after the perfect truth, perfect beauty and perfect goodness. But man cannot completely possess them in the finite world. Men are continually engaged in setting free in action his powers, his beauty, his goodness, his very soul. The Upanishads said that "In the midst of activity alone will thou desire to live a hundred years". It is saying of those who had amply tasted the joy of the soul. It is absolutely true that man has the joy of life, the joy of work or art etc. The Upanishads also said, "Man becomes true if in this life he can apprehend God; if not, it is the greatest calamity for him" When a man truly realizes what his possessions are that he has no more illusions about them; then he knows that his soul is far above these things and he becomes free from their bondage. Hence man can truly realize his soul by following the path of eternal life. "Thus our soul must soar in the infinite, and she must feel every moment that is the sense of not being able to come to the end of the attainment is her supreme joy, her final freedom According to Tagore, truth is the only way to attain spiritual and social fulfillment. He said that religion is a knowledge or leang, a science of what is truth. He described our freedom in truth, which allowed the basis of all kinds of social justice. He advocated the purity

not only of ends but also means. Tagore argued that when humanity lacks the music of soul, society becomes a mechanical arrangement of compartments for the sake of convenience. He claimed that the spiritual aspects of man is as real as his material counterpart and later finds its fullest expression only in the perspective of the freedom. Rabindranath expressed the freedom of the intellect. Its outer freedom is the freedom from the guidance of pleasure and pain, its inner freedom is from the narrowness of self-desire. When intellect is freed from the bondage of interest it discovers the world of universal reason, with which we must be in harmony fully to satisfy our needs; in the same manner when will is freed from its limitations, then it becomes good. That is to say, when its scope is extended to men and all time, it discerns a world transcending the moral world of humanity. The poet said that the world, where he has his freedom of creation, where he is in communion with the infinite, where his creation and God's creation become one harmoniously, that is the place where we can realise spiritual freedom. Intellectually we aspire after an ideal of truth, which is complete. There is a struggle between the infinite within and the lower finite. So, Tagore expressed that "O great Beyond, O the keen call the flute! I forget, ever forget, that the gates are shut everywhere in the house where I dwell alone "u There is a tension between the higher self and the lower self. This conflict is described in 'Gitanjali', "Obstinate are the trammels, but my heart aches when I try to break them. Freedom is all I want, but to hope for it I feel 13 ashamed.....I quake in fear lest my prayer be granted". The higher being on whom I could depend presided over the struggle between good and evil. The seekers of spiritual freedom of all ages demand an extirpation of desire and an attainment of inner freedom. The world is full of contradictions and human life is in great discord. Man in his battle with matter requires the help of God. God along with mankind struggles to overcome the forces of evil and darkness. But a finite God can not satisfy the religious soul. He is one among many, subject to the limitation of man. Man'spires to reach his fullest expression. It is desire for self-expression that leads him to seek wealth and power. But he has to discover that accumulation is not realization. It is the inner light that reveals him in fullest expression. When this light is lighted, then in a

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moment he knows that Man's highest revelation is God's own revelation. Hence, man's cry is for nothing but the manifestation of his soul which is the perfect manifestation of God in his soul. In this process man becomes perfect man. The perfect expression of his self is more deeply inherent in man. Tagore maintains that "It is in soul of man. For there will seek its manifest in will, and freedom turns to win its final prize in the freedom of surrender" . 14 Rabindranath declared "God has stood aside from our self, where his watchful patience knows no bounds, and where he never forces open the doors if shut against him. For this self of ours has to attain its ultimate meaning, which is the soul, not through the compulsion of God's power but through love, and thus become united with God in freedom"

According to Tagore, we have to pay a price for the attainment of the freedom of consciousness. What is the price? It is to give one's self away. Our soul can realize itself truly only by denying itself. The Upanishad says "thou shall gain by giving away; Thou shalt not covet". The state of supreme bliss is not death but completeness or perfection of consciousness; - Where darkness is vanished by God's rays. It is complete harmony, perfect love and Supreme joy. In that state of consciousness the finite and infinite are united in one. It is the self-transformation of the personality into an explicit organ of the Absolute. The false will is destroyed here. The perfect surrender of the will to God makes the will, "The Divine will".

Like ancient Indian and medieval philosophers, Tagore believes in the gradual perfection of individual till the ideal is attained. Before reaching the goal, the soul must pass through many lives. This concept has come to light in his 'Gitanjali', "The time that my journey takes is long and the way of its long. I came out on the chariot of the first gleam of light, and pursued my voyage through the wilderness of worlds leaving my track on many a star and planet. It is the most distant course that comes nearest to the self..... Utter simplicity of a tune " In the progressive manner man can attain perfection, so he has to renew his body, and this renewal is what we call death. Death is only a preparation for a higher and fuller

life. S. Radhakrishnan also said, “As Indians have it, he is bound in the cycle of births and deaths. He goes from life to life; death becomes only an incident in life, a change from one scene to another. But when the individual completely surrenders himself to the universal life, and the self becomes one with the Supreme, then he gains the bliss of heaven and shares the life eternal.

According to Tagore, the ideal which lies at the heart of spiritual endeavour in India is ‘Mukti ’ or Freedom. He said that “The mantram, or text, for meditation, which was given to me when I was a boy, is composed to three different sentences from three Upanisads. In my own spiritual path toward the attainment of inner freedom, it has been the guiding light, At first I used it only as a recitation, and its meaning was merely philological, with added significance of the words is being gradually unfolded in my mind. The text runs- “Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma, Anandarupam Amritam Yadvibhati, Shantam Shivam Advaitam ’. Brahma is truth, he is wisdom, He is infinite; He is revealed in peace, He is Goodness, He is One” . 18 We can realise that deeper freedom which gives us joy. True freedom lies not in throwing off our bonds, but in the realisation of a truth of relationship where - in we need not abide as aliens. In the world of nature we may take part in that perpetual tug of war, which we call the struggle for existence; yet in the realm of spirit we can and do realize a unity of kinship with supreme one. In this sense of union lies truth, for Brahman is Satyam, Truth; in this union lies Mukti, (Freedom).

Truth is also undam, wisdom, the eternal reality of knowledge. We can only realize our fiill freedom when in all our relationship we achieve JHanam or wisdom. The character of inner harmony of conscious relationship is Shivam, Goodness or Love. Tagore said “Through law, we find the freedom of peace in the external world of existence, through Goodness or love we find our freedom in the world of deeper social relationship. Such freedom of realisation is possible only because Supreme Truth is Shantam, is Shivam, is Peace, is Goodness, is Love”19. Again Brahman is also Advaitam, (non - dual). We know this, through

Notes

our union with another in Love. We realize freedom of spirit in its deepest sense. But, generally in our educational system the technique of leading a life is not taught. The art of living is a great art. If we fail to know this art; we may miss many valuable things of life. Therefore we miss the Shantam, the peace. Rabindranath Tagore's view of freedom is different from the general idea of Salvation or Freedom. He does not conceive of any transcendental universe in which the selves live in the eternal body. For him, Salvation is neither a state of non-worldly existence and cessation of life, nor it is a state of passive union with the formless and nameless Absolute. Tagore holds a unique conception of Salvation. According to him Salvation is a state of divine life on earth. His conception of Salvation is influenced by Bhftgavadgita. Like Gita, he too conceives the divine soul existing in us as immortal. There is no death of soul. In the series of the births and deaths, the soul undertakes its eternal journey and leaves one body for the other.

Here question may arise, if Salvation means not the destruction of ones individuality, what is it? For Tagore, when one destroys his ego or narrow self and diffuses his self to other selves and thus gets united with the world, it becomes free, liberated. Man's Salvation lies in freeing his personality from the narrow limitations of selfhood. We see that Tagore's conception of Salvation does not lie in renunciation of the world, but in perfecting human personality. When we realise divinity in us we get Salvation within this worldly frame. ^Again, Salvation is a condition of Jivana mukti ih the embodied state of an individual. For Tagore, to be a Jivanamukta one is to realise Salvation. The infinite without the finite selves is a bare emptiness, a void and a vacuum. The selves too without God have no perfection and meaning. Tagore said that the one without the second is emptiness, the other one makes it true. The poet thought that Salvation is a state of Jivanamukta in which there is union and love with God. Salvation is not a state of inactive existence. It is a state, in which the Jivanamukta becomes the centre of God's activity. Salvation in Tagore's philosophy is the realization of the state of! Jivanamukta, in which one realises union with God. In that Supreme state, man lives for God and becomes the media of his manifestation. He

is a divine being who ever lives in the Infinite. Never-the-less it is true that Tagore said that Salvation removes the barrier between man and God. Man becomes God, when the barrier is removed. The Upanisfid says, He who knows Brahman obtains liberation.

Tagore preached to us spiritual yoga, but he did not talk about the asanas or different yogic postures. He said that yoga is “the daily process of surrounding ourselves, removing all obstacle to union and extending our consciousness of Him in devotion and service, in goodness and in love.”

Music is a yoga and this is the direct means for communion with God. According to Tagore, painting, drawing, literature, poetry, dance, drama and the other forms of art bring about the expression of soul and the annihilation of the ego lead to communion of the finite with the infinite. Tagore conceived music to be the most perfect art to attains Salvation and he said that the musician comes in contact with God more closely and readily in comparison to the dramatist, and painter.

The second method of the realisation of Salvation is through devotion. It is the love of God, which is a direct path for communion with God. We are united with God through worship, prayer, meditation, surrender and dedication. Love and devotion depend upon the removal of ego from the individual. Tagore said that when the soul is left free, the love and prayer bring the individual in contact with God. Salvation lies in loving the infinite. The poet conceived that the relation between finite and infinite man and God is like that between a lover and a beloved.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss the Theory of Freedom and Self-Realisation.

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2. Discuss the Emphasis on Human Reason.

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8.4 CRITIQUE OF NATIONALISM

Today's buzzwords are "national security" and "national interest." Any action is legitimate in the name of the nation, no matter how remote it may be from truth or justice. How many wars have been waged in the name of the nation? How much innocent blood has it claimed? Yet people are worked up into a frenzy when the idea of the nation is invoked the same hollow hysteria that religion aroused in the medieval era and still does among some in the so-called "third-world" nations. Nation is the most desirable political institution of our time; a fictive concept, without any scientific grounding, it is still inviolable and enshrined in the modern imagination. Competing visions of the nation are now pushing the world to the brink of destruction. Metropolitan nationalism, with its robust secular ideology, is bent on wiping out the pan-religious nationalism that still enjoys some acceptance in parts of the "third world," considering it an anathema and anachronism. This monocular, exclusivist approach, an attempt by the forces of secularism to appropriate the centre of civilization, has resulted in a cycle of retribution and retaliation, a horrific dance of destruction, opening the doors to a new pandemonium.

Given this present global crisis, in which nations are flying at each other's throat, sometimes unilaterally and in pre-emptive action, ignoring world opinion, perpetuating a logic of mutual malevolence and fear, it

may be appropriate to pause for a moment and review in hindsight the anti-nationalitarian ideology of the Bengali poet, and Asia's first Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's alternative vision of peace, harmony and the spiritual unity of humankind seems more relevant now than ever. What the world needs in the face of present widespread unrest and agitation, is Tagore's healing message of love, simplicity, self-reliance and non-violence or ahimsa.

Tagore's critique of nationalism emerges most explicitly in his essays and lectures: "Nationalism in the West," "Nationalism in Japan," "Nationalism in India," "Construction versus Creation" and "International Relations." It is also foregrounded in his novels, *The Home and the World* and *Four Chapters*, as well as in several poems of *Gitanjali* and "The Sunset of the Century." In these works, he roundly criticizes nationalism as "an epidemic of evil" or a "terrible absurdity," posing a recurrent threat to mankind's "higher humanity," through the canonization of "banditry" or the "brotherhood of hooliganism" (Tagore's phrases).

Tagore was born in 1861, a period during which the nationalist movement in India was crystallizing and gaining momentum. The first organized military uprising by Indian soldiers against the British Raj occurred in 1857, only four years before the poet was born. In 1905, the swadeshi movement broke out on his doorstep, as a response to the British policy of partitioning Bengal. Initially, propelled by the injustice and irrationality of the act, Tagore got actively involved in the movement, writing patriotic songs with such explosive fervour that Ezra Pound quipped, "Tagore has sung Bengal into a nation." But soon after, the movement took a violent turn and he made an about-face, never having anything to do with nationalism again, except to launch a systematic indictment to "destroy the bondage of nationalism." Even Gandhi's urgings to join the satyagraha movement, which eventually brought about Indian independence, after the protracted period of colonial rule, in 1947, could not alter Tagore's position on nation and nationalism. In a letter to Gandhi, he questioned the latter's wisdom, when he asked dismissively, after explaining how in the West many

Notes

"higher minds" were trying to rise above the superficiality of nationalism, "And are we alone to be content with proceeding with the erection of Swaraj on a foundation of telling the beads of negation, harping on others' faults and quarrelsomeness?"

Tagore's foremost objection to nationalism lies in its very nature and purpose as an institution. The fact that it is a social construction, a mechanical organisation, modelled with certain utilitarian objectives in mind, makes it unpalatable to Tagore, who was a champion of creation over construction, imagination over reason and the natural over the artificial and the man-made: "Construction is for a purpose, it expresses our wants; but creation is for itself, it expresses our very beings". As a formation, based on needs and wants rather than truth and love, it could not, Tagore suggests, contribute much to the moral/spiritual fulfilment of mankind. To him, race was a more natural, and therefore acceptable, social unit than the nation, and he envisioned a "rainbow" world in which races would live together in amity, keeping their "distinct characteristics but all attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of love."

He took the view that since nationalism emerged in the post-religious laboratory of industrial-capitalism, it was only an "organisation of politics and commerce" that brings "harvests of wealth," or "a carnival of materialism," by spreading tentacles of greed, selfishness, power and prosperity, or churning up the baser instincts of mankind, and sacrificing in the process "the moral man, the complete man... to make room for the political and the commercial man, the man of limited purpose."

Nationalism, according to Tagore, is not expressive of the living bonds in society; it is not a voluntary self-expression of individuals as social beings, where human relationships are naturally regulated, "so that men can develop ideals of life in cooperation with one another," but a political and commercial union of a group of people, in which they come together to maximize their profit, progress and power; it is "the organised self-interest of a people, where it is least human and least spiritual." Tagore deemed nationalism a recurrent threat to humanity, because with its propensity for the material and the rational, it trampled over the human

spirit and human emotion; it upset man's moral balance by subjugating his inherent goodness and divinity to a soul-less organisation.

Tagore found the fetish of nationalism a source of war and mutual hatred between nations. The very deification of nation, where it is privileged over soul, god and conscience, cultivates absolutism, fanaticism, provincialism and paranoia. Thus every nation becomes inward-looking and considers another a threat to its existence, while war is hailed a legitimate, or even "holy," action for national self-aggrandisement or self-fulfilment. Both its existence and success, as an institution or a discourse, is grounded in the binary of self/other, us/them; every nation operates for itself, and the presence of the other is but a recurrent and looming peril to this self.

Tagore maintained that British colonialism found its justification in the ideology of nationalism, as the colonisers came to India and other rich pastures of the world to plunder and so further the prosperity of their own nation. They were never sincere in developing colonised countries/nations, as to convert their "hunting grounds" into "cultivated fields" would have been contrary to their national interest. Like predators (and nationalism inherently cultivates a rapacious logic), they thrived by victimising and violating other nations, and never felt deterred in their heinous actions by the principles of love, sympathy or fellowship. The logic is simple but cruel, and is sustained by a privileging norm, that in order to have rich and powerful nations, some nations ought to be left poor and pregnable: "Because this civilization is the civilization of power, therefore it is exclusive, it is naturally unwilling to open its sources of power to those whom it has selected for its purposes of exploitation." By its very nature as an organisation, nationalism could ill afford any altruism in this regard.

One might think that Tagore's critique of nationalism is lofty and far-fetched, or "too pious," as Pound might have said; his arguments are layered in atavistic spiritualism and romantic idealism. But he was a practical-idealist, an inclusivist and a multilateral thinker. "I am not in

Notes

favour of rejecting anything," he wrote, "for I am only complete with the inclusion of everything." He believed in the symbiosis of body and soul, physical and spiritual, wealth and conscience. The lord of poetry was also an effective and efficient landlord; he was ascetic and yet worldly; he cherished seclusion at moments of creativity but still remained very much a public figure, both at home and abroad a chirapathik, he went from place to place and country to country, ever acting as an unofficial ambassador of (united) India. His critique of nationalism was that of a wholesome and holistic thinker arguing against discourses couched in essentialism and one-sidedness that champion power and wealth but not soul and conscience, greed but not goodness, possessing but not giving, self-aggrandisement but not self-sacrifice, becoming but not being.

Much of what Tagore said is no doubt intellectually valid and some of it is borne out by contemporary post-colonial criticism. Critics concur that nation is a necessity, it has laboured on behalf of modernity, and it helps to bolster the present civilization; as a political organization it befits the social and intellectual milieu of present-day society. However, they hardly claim its moral authority, or its beneficial role in the reinforcement of human virtue.

Critics also view the constructed aspect of nationalism as a weakness in the ideology. It is always vulnerable to regressing into more natural social units of clan, tribe and race, or language and religious groups. Its very formative process introduces a self-deconstructing logic in it. The process of its formation/invention further makes it a potent site of power discourse; although it is meant to stand for a horizontal comradeship, exploitation and inequality remain a daily occurrence in its body, and the nation never speaks of the hopes and aspirations of its entire "imagined community." In conceiving its overarching ideologies it often places the dominant group at the centre, pushing the minority population to the periphery. Thus, instead of a fraternity, it creates a new hierarchy and hegemony within its structure, and exposes the fracture between its rhetoric and reality.

Several post-colonial critics also agree with Tagore's view that nationalism begets a disquisition of intolerance and othering. Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Tom Nairn have pointed out the irrationality, prejudice and hatred that nationalism generates, and Leela Gandhi speaks of its attendant racism and loathing, and the alacrity with which citizens are willing to both kill and die for the sake of the nation. Like Tagore, contemporary critics also point out how self-serving nationalism legitimises colonial/imperial discourse, in which the lesser nations are oppressed and exploited by the colonising/imperial Other for its own advancement. A colonising nation is never benevolent to its colonised subjects, as its objective is to inscribe its authority on its colonised people through a power discourse, and plunder them of both their wealth and culture; to empty their coffers as well as their heads, so that in the process they are left impoverished, dehumanised and thingified.

Tagore was opposed to the idea of the nation; he was even more fiercely opposed to India appropriating the idea. He believed, it would compromise India's history and culture, and make it a "beggar of the West." His predictions have come true, because although India is now politically free, its joining the bandwagon of nationalism has cast the shadow of western civilisation over it. The appropriation of nationalist ideology has erased the sense of India's difference as a society capable of standing on its own; and the forging of links with the West has allowed neo-colonialist controls to operate over the country both explicitly and implicitly, spelling political and cultural doom for its people. Perhaps it is time for India and the rest of humanity to rise from their horrific moral slumber and take note of the path that Tagore sought to pave for the world the path of love, justice, honesty, equality and the spiritual unity of all mankind. Though not anti-modern or anti-progressive, throughout his life Tagore aspired to redeem modern man from the tyranny of money, matter and machine. His vision of a free world, free from the fetters of materialism and nationalism, is most passionately expressed in the following poem, written in the form of a supplication for India but meant, by extension, for all mankind:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

The world that the poet envisions in the above poem stands superior to the violent, war-ravaged world of "getting and spending" (Wordsworth's phrase), of jealousy, suspicion and mutual fear that we currently live in.

It is a world of love, truth, harmony, creativity and conscience, with no artificial walls to separate its people or to keep their souls, or personal humanity, in bondage; in which, as Tagore puts it elsewhere, every country would "keep alight its own lamp of mind as its part of the illumination of the world" and no country would deprive another "of its rightful place in the world festival."

8.5 DIFFERENCES WITH GANDHI

History is full with the great personalities, who can never be forgotten as they had contributed a lot in their life period. Among them are Gandhi and Tagore, who made a great contribution in world history. Both of them are born in last quarter of the nineteenth century. Tagore in 1861 and Gandhi in 1869 and lived up to the India got independence from the colonial rule. Gandhi and Tagore were so famous that their mutual friend Andrews once argued Tagore as modern, while as Gandhi is the St. Francis of Assisi. While as John Haynes Holmes compared Gandhi and Tagore as Erasmus and Luther (the poet's anxiety). Although both of them were close friends of each other throughout their lives, but there was difference in their intellectual understanding. Besides these differences their friendship remains entirely unbroken.

By reading about Gandhi and Tagore conclusion comes that they argued each other with love and there was no selfishness among them. Their arguments were fully combined with learning, understanding, knowledge, feelings and emotions. By virtue of Andrews Gandhi and Tagore knew each other. When Gandhi was in South Africa fighting for human rights got publicity in India and Tagore respected Gandhi's mission and sent his blessings through Andrews and Pearson and this was the beginning that they began to know each other. When Gandhi left South Africa in 1915 and leaving his phoenix ashram, Tagore provided accommodation to Gandhi and his inmates in Santiniketan. This was the first face to face contact between Tagore and Gandhi in 1915 and Gandhi spent six days and some say one month. Gandhi tried to imply the experiments which he had done in South Africa like how to run the kitchen and keep the ashram clean and pointing out that special treatment should be provided to Brahmin boys. When Tagore came to know about this statement of Gandhi, he did not tolerate these practices. The other thing that the inmates of Gandhi influenced the Tagore's ashram and students of ashram gave up sugar and ghee and started fasting in order to do well. Tagore did not accept such ideas of Gandhi and called Fasting an evil instead of doing well. "Between 1915 up to 1941 Tagore and Gandhi argued upon personal, national and international issues. Their intellectual difference countered on non-cooperation movement, nationalism and internationalism, the significance of charkha for the attainment of swaraj and on science and faith. Besides these differences their friendship remained unended as it was Tagore whom Gandhi had invited to open annual Gujarati literary conference in 1920 and it was Gandhi who gave the Tagore the title of Gurudev. Meanwhile Tagore has given the name Mahatma to Gandhi when he came back to India 1915. However both Gandhi and Tagore had same aspirations for the freedom of India, but they could not understand the principles of non-cooperation for achieving complete independence. Tagore supported Gandhi wholeheartedly during the Rowlatt Acts. However Tagore had some differences on Hindi-Urdu as a national language. His view was that it creates a problem for the people living in south. In this connection Gandhi said

Notes

that Kabir, Nanak, Shivaji greater than Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Tilak. Tagore was not pleased and strongly protested saying Gandhi is admired in his own principles, which is dangerous form of egotism that even greater people suffer at times. However when the tragedy of the Jallianwala bagh massacre happen, Tagore followed whole heartily and first he used the word “Mahatmaji” for Gandhi when he was arrested on 08 April 1919. In an open letter Tagore wrote to Gandhi that you can lead the country to the path of conquest. Tagore was disappointed with the actions of General Dyer and opposed openly and supported Gandhi. After that Gandhi launched non-cooperation movement in 1920. Tagore was outside India, after returned back he feel himself disturbed in such environment and soon he attacked the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi in his famous speech at Calcutta university institute called Satyagraham or the call of truth. Tagore openly criticizes the noncooperation calling it as political asceticism. He argued that instead of non-cooperation, India should stand on cooperation of all people of the world. Tagore further wrote that non-cooperation hurts the truth. Love is the ultimate truth of soul in meeting the east and west. The other difference between them was like nationalistic and Internationalistic, Gandhi was a nationalistic and Tagore argues that nationalistic is always selfish and leads to moral pervasion. The burning of foreign clothes is selfish nationalism. While Gandhi argues that anyone who is not nationalist does not become an internationalist. Not only Tagore, their mutual friend C.F Andrews also criticized Gandhi on behalf of word foreign. They both thought that it created hate chaos among the people.

Gandhi respected the criticism of Tagore and gave answer to the poet in an essay called the poets anxiety. In this essay Gandhi praised the works of Tagore and said that the poet of Asia has rendered his service to India by his poetic interpretation. Gandhi argues that the poet is anxious that India must take false steps and poet should not fear that it is a step of separation, exclusiveness, narrowness. It is only a doctrine of negation and despair. “He thinks that non-cooperation is like Chinese wall between India and west. Non-cooperation is based on voluntary and mutual respect and trust. Non-cooperation is a protest against an

unwitting and unwilling participation in evils". The poet was anxious that the students leave schools and joined in the non-cooperation that is not good for the development of India. Tagore firmly criticized Gandhi that the students should not be called upon to leave the governments schools. Gandhi answered him that I am sure that the government schools unmannered us, rendered us. They filled our hearts with discontent and intended to become clerks and interpreters and take their own benefits. They are keeping us as slaves. Gandhi argues that it becomes sinful to send our children to government schools. For Gandhi non-cooperation is a kind of invitation to government to cooperate with their own terms and it is right of every nation and it is duty of every government. The debate of Gandhi and Tagore were published in two newspapers like modern review and young India. Reading the arguments behind non cooperation movement given by Gandhi in the poet's anxiety. Tagore issued an essay in October 1921, namely the call of truth. Tagore argues that that all human beings were parasites of the environment. Their progress and growth is dedicated with nature. Tagore argues that man enjoys his inner freedom, for him nothing is impossible. First a man should not attain Swaraj at his inner environment then they would be deprived of the Swaraj from the outside world also. Tagore argued that the inner freedom is more precious than the prayers and petitions that create constant burden. Tagore warned in this essay that Gandhi's main motive is to hate the foreigners and not love of country.

Non-cooperation took many forms like civil disobedience, fasting, swadeshi, burning of foreign clothes and use clothes produced in the country and propagation of spinning wheel, strikes, Hartals and nonpayment of taxes. Tagore did not like these ideas of Gandhi and he termed these as narrowness. In the call of truth, Tagore argues that these things create hatred towards foreigners and Tagore was fully supported by Andrews on the matter of burning of foreign clothes. Tagore argues that "power in all forms is irrational". It is like a horse cart that drags the people blindly. Tagore remained critical towards burning of foreign clothes and spinning wheel. He argued that it leads us towards destruction and closed the doors of economic advances. He further

Notes

argued that “Swaraj is not a matter of mere self-sufficiency in the production of clothes. Its real place is with us, the mind with its diverse power goes on building Swaraj for itself”. Tagore firmly said that that I don't obey to burn foreign clothes as I strictly put fight against bad habit of obeying blindly orders and secondly the clothes burnt were not mine, but they belonged to those who sorely need them. My eyes did not see the nakedness, which had already kept our women as prisoners in their homes. Tagore criticizes both non-cooperation and khadi movements as there is to create despotism, chaos and hatred among the country and lead bad effect on economy. Thus the call of truth ends with the limitations of narrow nationalism and sees the vast dimensions of India in world context. So call of truth of Tagore was to know the answer of urgent call of universal humanity. The Tagore-Gandhi controversy is based on two aspects of the meaning of Swaraj in its fullest sense. Tagore argued that India choose a leader who did not lead the country towards the development but towards destruction, as India followed him blindly without not knowing the result of that. Tagore argues that Gandhi's teachings had implications at international level and restricted the freedom of India without the knowledge and advances of western world.

Gandhi replied back on 13th October 1921 in young India. His article “the great sentinel”. Gandhi appreciated the poet that had criticized the charka, boldly declare revolt against it and there is blind obedience on scale of his leadership. It is a true fact that the educated did not understand the truth underlying spinning and weaving. As Tagore's essay warns all those whose impatience are betrayed into intolerance and Gandhi called the poet as a sentinel warning us against the enemies' bigotry, intolerance and ignorance. Gandhi in his essay tried to answer the arguments which Tagore had highlighted in the call of truth charkha and why charkha was considered important. Gandhi believed that the spinning wheel as the giver of plenty. Gandhi tried to prove the truth which was underlying beneath the spinning wheel. Gandhi argues India as a house on fire, as man hood is being daily scorched. People are dying with hunger, as there is no work to buy food. Gandhi's vision was that only cities were not India. India has seven hundred and fifty thousand

villages. Gandhi believed that India is growing poorer and poorer and if we don't look towards it, India will collapse together. Gandhi called Tagore as undisputed master of the world as he lived in the world of his own creations, own ideas and me as a slave of somebody else creation the spinning wheel. The poet is an inventor and he creates, destroys and recreates and me as an explorer discover a thing and cling to it. Gandhi argued that poet is thinking that charka as the death of the nation. The truth is that charka is essential to live an honorable life like prince. There should be no difference between a prince and a peasant. For Gandhi spinning wheel was the recognition of dignity of labour. Tagore criticizes Gandhi's charkha not only in the call of truth, but in another essay the cult of charkha and raised question that why Gandhi narrowly say spin and weave, spin and weave and why not bringing all forces of land into action. Gandhi considered it as a sin to wear foreign clothes or to eat American wheat and let my neighbor grain dealer starve for customers. To wash my sins I consider that foreign clothes should go into flames and it is better to wrap my naked body with the cloth that my neighbor spins at home. In my country it is insult to naked by giving them cloth instead of work which they sorely need. It is act to commit sins by giving them cloth, which I cannot do.

Another difference that arose between Gandhi and Tagore when Bihar was rocked by a severe earth quake on 15th January 1934. Gandhi this time was working on the untouchables and considered the earthquake as a divine punishment sent by God and we are doing sins and related untouchability with the Bihar earth quake saying that there is some connection between them. When Tagore read this statement he got angry and condemned the statement strongly. As Gandhi considered modern science as destruction for humanity. Not only Tagore, Nehru and Andrews also criticize Gandhi for relating everything with God and don't look behind the scientific reason

8.6 ANALYSIS OF BOLSHEVISM

In their 2002 volume of Translation and Power, Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler compile and edit works of contributors who see

Notes

translation as an activity that takes place not in an ideal neutral site but in real social and political situation. Interestingly, such a rationale of selection involves and concerns incumbents who have vested interests in the production and reception of texts across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Translation is not simply a faithful reproduction but involves deliberate actions of selection and omission. It is linked to issues of cultural dominance, assertion and resistance – in short to power – viz., governments, churches etc. They might influence the translation process. Homi Bhabha talks about the “cultural translation” i.e. representation of other cultures in signifying codes of a historical community. Referring to Victor Hugo’s comment that “when you offer a translation to a nation... that nation will almost always look on the translation as an act of violence against itself”, Lefevere points out

Translation is not just a window opened on another world, or some pious platitude. Rather translation is a channel opened often not without a certain reluctance, though which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture, challenge it and even contribute to subverting it.

(Translation, History, Culture, p.2)

Moreover, although empirical historical research can document changes in modes of translation, to explain such changes a translation studies scholar must go into the

Vagaries and vicissitudes of the exercise of power in a society and what the exercise of power means in terms of the production of culture of which the production of translations is a part.

(Translation, History and Culture, p. 5)

My paper is premised on these grounds of how reception and circulation of translated texts often struggle with conditions of power thereby resulting in incompleteness and fragmentation. I hereby take up Rabindranath Tagore’s *Russiar Chithi* (1930) as a case study.

Rabindranath Tagore published his travelogue *Russiar Chithi* in 1930 after his Moscow visit. An English translation of his experiences appeared in *The Modern Review* in June 1934 translated by Dr. Sasadhar

Sinha and published by Visva Bharati in 1960 as Letters from Russia. Interestingly, the Bengali letters were published in Prabasi and escaped censure while a Russian translation appeared in 1956. The British immediately censored the volume of The Modern Review by banning the volume since it compared the claustrophobic exploitation by the coloniser to the new sense of freedom in Russia. The Russian government ironically deleted all criticism of communist excess in the translation thereby producing a highly sensitised text. Further, Letter number 13 was carefully deleted from the volume showing its discomfort with Tagore's stinging criticism. This once again reiterates the limitation of translation and the problems of cultural translation. This issue may also be seen from the perspective of how Russia created a multiplicity of responses from Rabindranath.

His visit to Russia was one that had been fruitful after several aborted attempts. His ailing health conditions hindered his visits even after elaborate preparations in 1926 and 1929. But his excitement is evident from what he writes to Surendranath Kar from the ship S.S. Bremen on October 3, 1930.

I am on my way to the American shores. But today my mind is filled with memories of Russia. The chief reason is that the other countries I have visited have never so wholly stirred my mind.

(Letters from Russia, p. 53)

His admiration for Russia also exudes in these lines

...I have continually heard contradictory statements about them. I had my doubts about them because in the beginning their path was one of violence...One must admit that to come to visit Russia at my age and in my present state of health was a rash undertaking. But since I had received invitation, it would have been unpardonable not to see the light of the mightiest sacrificial fire that has been lit in the world's history.

Notes

(Letters from Russia, p.14)

Rabindranath finally landed in Moscow on September 11, 1930 in company with Harry Timbers, Margot Einstein, Somendranath Tagore, Aryan Williams and Amiya Chakraborty. During his two week tour he met students' representatives and visited the Pioneer Commune, looked at models of collective agriculture and interacted with editors and trade union leaders. Before his departure Tagore in his interview published in Izvestia on September 25, 1930, with Professor F. N. Petroff, Chairman of VOKS Society for Cultural Relations said:

He has come to learn about endeavours of our country to understand how, in the new and revolutionary conditions, the human personality, destined to advance human progress in economic, social and cultural conditions which are all new, expands and formless ... Many are the lies which have been spoken and written about us, and monstrous are the ruinous industriously spread abroad.

(Letters from Russia, p.167)

But I note the details of Tagore's short and busy travel schedule to underscore the fact that his visit was restricted to Moscow alone and thereby his observations on Russia was a largely restricted one. As Satyendranath Ray points out:

Russia is a huge country with a diversity of people and multiple subject positions. How much of this could Rabindranath have witnessed? ... All of it was restricted to Moscow and that too confined with the supervision and planning of the government.

(Roy, p.19)

Two aspects about Russia fascinated Tagore: education and its massive dispersal;

They have realised that education alone can give strength to the weak: food, health and peace all depend upon it. Law and order may be a great

boon but never when they thrive upon destination that starves one body and kills our mind.

(Letters from Russia, p.17)

Here he critiques the Congress political leaders for feeling “no sympathy for their own people who belong to the basement of society” (Letters from Russia p. 20) and the English government for ruthlessly maintaining “law and order” at the expense of economic exploitation and education.

But his later writings suggest a sharp veering away from the soviet experiment largely as the news of Stalin’s atrocities leaked out. Here I quote his letter to Nitindranath Tagore dated July 31, 1931 where he specifically identifies the Bolshevik doctrine as cannibalistic:

As famine spreads in Europe, fascism and Bolshevism are gathering roots. Both are symptoms of disease. Men with a healthy rationality can never believe that you can cause human benefit after stifling the freedom of thought ... I fear Bolshevism might spread in India ... Avoid the contact of this false epidemic. I am sure there are these possessed people where you stay - do not associate with them.

(Chithipatra, Vol. XI,p.179)

In his letter to Amiya Chakraborty dated March 7, 1939 he associates the Soviet censorship and dictatorial principles squarely with Nazi fascism:

Chekhov was a writer prior to the Russian revolution. He was bourgeoisie and it was doubtful whether he could sit in the same league with proletariat writing. I had hoped to see The Cherry Orchard but it proved impossible. In Hitler’s administration I hear the classics are evaluated on the basis of race ... that the issue is ridiculous has been overridden by the enormity of the act.

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(Chithipatra, Vol. XI, p. 256)

The same letter written in the last years of his life, express a sense of acute anxiety about the arts in India:

What if there is a Nazi or a Soviet rule on literature? Ultimately in the near future if the country is faced with the dominance of Bolshevism? Then what Marxist graveyard lies ahead?

(Chithipatra, Vol. XI, p.256)

This underscores Tagore's contradictory stances towards Russia in approximately the same period of his life – his last writings. Here we must note that *The Crisis of Civilisation* had the fundamental aim to critique European exploitation in general and English imperialism in particular. Despite eulogising Russia he nowhere, however, mentions the possibility of the utopian saviour emerging from Russia as it is implicated in the same kind of violence that Europe was engaged in. Thus, he upheld his construct of an ideal Russia as an ideal for a regenerated India – equal, educated and without sectarian bias knowing fully well that his Russia was sharply different from the reality.

Here we may note that the Bengali letters published in *Prabasi* were published between 1337 and 1338, the conclusion (being a letter to Ramananda Chattopadhyay) printed in Baisakh 1338. The Bengali letters were collected as *Russiar Chithi* and published in 1931. The conclusion translated by Sasadhar Sinha was published in *The Modern Review* (June 1934), banned by the British government and the publisher was warned to desist printing similar content any further. Justifying this restriction on the English translation the Under Secretary of India observed:

The translation into English of a particular chapter, which was clearly calculated by distortion of the facts to bring the British administration contempt and disrepute, and its publication in the forefront of the widely read English magazine, puts a wholly different complexion on the case.

(The Times, November 13, 1934, in Letters from Russia, p.158)

The English were baffled by Tagore's critique of their failure to provide India with a meaningful education and instead inflicting a brutal law and order upon it. But interestingly, Rabindranath Tagore's concluding letter was more about India's peasantry and a potential to escape the problem. It is rather baffling to speculate why the text was prohibited during British rule. In Letter number 13 he talks about the newly opened Moscow Park of Education and Recreation:

The park has a uniquely marked out area meant for children. There the adults are not allowed with a signboard saying "Do not torment the children". It houses play gadgets amongst other play items. There is also a children's theatre run by children and performed solely by them as well...

(Russiar Chithi, Visva Bharati, Ashwin 1411 print, p.91; the translations are here made by the author)

He concludes the letter

...the greed of uncontrolled power disrupts our intelligence... freeing the mind on the one hand and imposing oppression on the other is not easy. The impact of fear upon the human mind can work temporarily. But the educated mind would eventually relegate it to manifest freedom of thought with full force and insistence very spontaneously.

(Russiar Chithi ,pp. 14-15)

The textual history in Russia is comparatively simpler to understand. The edited version of Tagore's travelogue was published in 1956 with Letter number 13 carefully deleted and other references to dictatorship carefully edited. Rabindranath Tagore's interview to the Izvestia prior to his departure was also suppressed since Tagore appealed for freedom of speech:

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If you dwell too much upon evil elements in your opponents and assume they are inherent in human nature meriting eternal damnation, you inspire an attitude of mind with its content of hatred and revengefulness ... There might be disagreement where minds are allowed to be free. It would not only be an interesting but a sterile world of mechanical regularity if all our opinions are forcibly made alike.

(Russiar Chithi, pp. 214-15)

An unpublished draft of a letter at the Tagore Archives, Santiniketan provides a clue to Tagore's reevaluation of the Soviet Regime writing on behalf of The Circle of Russian Culture, (a group of Russian immigrants in New York). The group accused

He visited Russia ... Much to our surprise, he has given praise to the activities of the Bolsheviki, and seemed rather delighted with their achievements in the field of public education. Strangely not a word did he utter on the horror perpetrated by the Soviet Government and the Ogper in particular ... Does he know that according to the statistical data disseminated by the Bolsheviki themselves, between 1923 and 1928, more than 3,000,000 persons, mostly workers and peasants were held in prisons and concentration camps which are nothing but torture houses?

He cannot be ignorant of the fact that the Communist rulers of Russia, in order to squeeze the maximum quantity of food out of the peasants, and also with the intent of reducing them to a state of subject misery, are, and have been penalising dissenters by exiling them to the extreme north, where these who by a miracle are able to survive the severe climate are compelled by force to perform certain work which cannot be compared even with the abomination of the gallery of olden times. These unfortunate sufferers are being daily and systematically subjected to indescribable privations, humiliations and torture ... with all his love and humanity, wisdom and philosophy he could not find words of sympathy and pity for the Russian nation? ... By concealing from the world the truth about Russia he has inflicted ... great harm upon the whole population of Russia, and possibly the world at large.

(Rabindra Bhavana Archives)

Tagore’s text stirred very strong relation both in government and dissident circles.

In a way these two texts and their contradictions in translation also comment on Tagore’s Sriniketan project which was undoubtedly inspired by his visit to Russia. By looking into the source text and the translated texts we may also justify how his Sriniketan project would never replicate the Soviet regime. It has been further supplemented by the subsequent correspondences in response to both the English version in The Modern Review (1930) and the 1956 Russian version.

Looking at the translated versions and Tagore’s source text, Letters from Russia and Russiar Chithi there are interesting insights that question the very paradigm of translation theory vis-a-vis the notions of culture and power. Reading them together along with the other responses bring out these problematic nuances. By itself, Tagore’s text is a fascinating narrative contradiction – alternating between admiration and critical warning. Such translations emerging within multifoliate hegemony thus highlight the incompleteness and fragmentation of the process.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.
- ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Write about the Critique of Nationalism.

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2. What are the Differences with Gandhi?

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3. Analysis of Bolshevism.

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8.7 LET US SUM UP

By summarizing the whole debate between Gandhi and Tagore, we came to the conclusion that both Gandhi and Tagore were close friends and intellectually opponent in nature. Louis Fischer argued that both Gandhi and Tagore were opposite in nature. “Gandhi as wheat field and Tagore as the rose garden”. Both Gandhi and Tagore were great personalities who sacrificed their every portion of life for the welfare of their country. They respected each other a lot and were friendly related. However there were differences in their ideas, thoughts. Their arguments were not based on learning, knowledge, understanding and emotions. Both gave names to each other like Tagore gave the name Mahatma to Gandhi and Gandhi gave him the title Gurudev. Both of them met in March 1915, when Gandhi came to shantiniketan and their intermediator Andrews played a great role in between them. The poet was an imaginative thinker, while as Gandhi was a reflective thinker. Both were the worshippers of Satyam, Shivam and Sundram. The poet was known for his universality and his love for humanity. This came to know through his songs which he played during swadeshi movement in Bengal and Gandhi got inspired with these songs.

Tagore fully supported Gandhi against the Rowlatt act and he uses Mahatmaji in his letters and was hopeful that Gandhi can lead us towards the path of conquest. However with the adoption of noncooperation movement which comes out in different shapes like civil disobedience, burning of foreign clothes, strikes, hartals, fastings, charkha and non-

payment of taxes. Tagore did not like the ideas and thinking of Gandhi and termed his non-cooperation a political asceticism and burning of foreign clothes as selfish nationalism. Tagore believes that Gandhi's egoism can lead India towards destruction and Gandhi is leading the people blindly. In short we can say that their differences in ideas were based on non-cooperation, burning of foreign clothes, charkha, fasting, Hindi-Urdu as a national language. Both arguments in the essays or letters namely the poet's anxiety, the call of truth, the great sentinel and the cult of charkha. According to Jawaharlal Nehru, both Gandhi and Gurudev were one hundred percent India's children, the inheritors, representatives and expositors of her age culture. The surprising thing is that both of these men should differ from each other so greatly. No two persons could probably differ as much as Gandhi and Tagore.

8.8 KEY WORDS

Spiritual: The meaning of spirituality has developed and expanded over time, and various connotations can be found alongside each other.

Self Realisation: Self-realization is an expression used in Western psychology, philosophy, and spirituality; and in Indian religions. In the Western understanding it is the "fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality"

8.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- 1) Discuss the Theory of Freedom and Self-Realisation.
- 2) Discuss the Emphasis on Human Reason.
- 3) Write about the Critique of Nationalism.
- 4) What are the Differences with Gandhi?
- 5) Analysis of Bolshevism.

8.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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8.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 8.2
2. See Section 8.3

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 8.4
2. See Section 8.5
3. See Section 8.6

UNIT 9: GANDHI: NON VIOLENCE PHILOSOPHY

STRUCTURE

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Human Nature
- 9.3 Philosophy of Man
- 9.4 Implications
- 9.5 Let us sum up
- 9.6 Key Words
- 9.7 Questions for Review
- 9.8 Suggested readings and references
- 9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit we can able to know:

- To know the Human Nature
- To find the Philosophy of Man
- To understand the Implications

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of human nature is of vital significance in any system of thought. In fact, it is the different views of human nature which are to a great extent responsible for different ethical and metaphysical systems. Gandhi's indictment of modern civilization, his view of politics and especially of social and individual ethics are firmly based upon his assumptions regarding human nature and his understanding of man. His theory of human nature was closely bound up with his views on God and religion. He had a very definite conviction about what man is in his essential nature and of what he becomes through a false view of himself, of what he should be and can become, and of his place in a law-governed cosmos. The cosmos was a well-coordinated whole whose various parts

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were all linked in a system of interdependence and mutual service. It consisted of different orders of being ranging from the material to the human, each governed by its own laws and standing in a complex relationship with the rest. Human beings were an integral part of the cosmos, and were tied to it by the deepest bonds. Gandhi considered all life sacred whether human or non-human, for non-human beings too were divine in nature and legitimate members of the cosmos. The Unit aims to cover Gandhi's views on human nature and seeks

- to understand Gandhi's philosophy of man;
- to know his understanding of the essence of man.

Gandhi fought for the liberation of humanity, and particularly of his countrymen for almost five decades of his public life and in that period he had to deal with millions of people belonging to various social groups. This mass contact provided him with opportunities to study and discover as to how human nature actually expresses itself in day-to-day social life. He developed a very clear concept of self and of human nature which forms an integral part of his world-view. ² Despite his belief in the 'consciously-divine', rational and sociable nature of man, he realized that its manifestation in social life often betrays its distinctive characteristics, that is, that there is an apparent gulf between God and man owing to the immersion of the latter's soul in ignorance. Because of this, he declared that man is an imperfect and a fallible being. He felt that man takes in vice far more readily than virtue. He believed that there is no human being in this world who is wholly good or wholly bad. The difference between human beings is after all a difference only in the degrees of virtues possessed by them and not the fundamental difference between the wholly good and the wholly evil as such. Human nature, he repeatedly asserted, will only find itself when it fully realizes that to be human it has to cease to be bestial or brutal. He claimed to be a fairly accurate student of human nature and "vivisector of my own failings. I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounds." In his autobiography, he declared that the brute by nature knows no self-

restraint, and man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint. Elsewhere, he states that the duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast. Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow men. The differences between men are merely those of degree, not of kind. Gandhi never isolated man from society primarily because he finds no distinction between man and man. To him all men are equal because all men are divine. This serves as the fundamental principle of the essence of man from Gandhian perspective. That he wants a radical change in the society from the point of view of this fundamental principle of the essence of man is undeniable. When a society shares a conjoint, communicated and disciplined vision of man, the essence of man as a divine entity finds its positive avenue of exposure. As Gandhi embraces everyone in the society as his constant divine partner in the total efflorescence of man, he shows an altogether radical and different avenue of conquering social maladies like fanaticism, superstitions, hatred, ill-will, anger, fear, falsehood and so on by honoring the inner divine essence of man. That Truth, Goodness and Beauty must come out effective and victorious in man, because man alone knows how to overcome all constraints related to the advancement of humanism, is the sine qua non of the Gandhian philosophy of man. An iconoclast in the concept of man and radical visionary, Gandhi shows the avenue of respecting woman and eliminating differences between men and women. He draws our attention to the invaluable words of Swami Vivekananda who regards and adores every man and woman as a brother and a sister and teaches the age-old Indian lesson of humanism in the right perspectives of respect and nobility. He strongly believed that the souls of mankind are one and inseparable. The absolute oneness of humanity also encouraged him to purify his imperfect soul along with the purification of all the souls of mankind, for he strongly believes in the struggling spirit in man to be divine in essence and excellence. The practical consequence of this awareness of the divinity of the individual is that it compels one to look upon other individuals as ends in themselves and not as means to serve the purpose of others. This ensures the dignity of the individual. In fact, human dignity is grounded in

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human divinity. As the human individual partakes of the divinity of God, Gandhi believed that man is inherently and basically good. This provides the master key to Gandhi's concept of human nature.

Gandhi considered himself to be a religious man and that it was his study of religions that led him from piety to ethics and from ethics to metaphysics. Gandhi imbibed a passion for truth and belief in God from the religious atmosphere of his family. At the early stages of his spiritual evolution his passion for truth was only an insistence on telling the truth and his belief in God was only theistic in nature. From theistic position where God is personal. Gandhi's attitude developed into a metaphysical position where God is 'The Eternal Principle' and 'the Universal Law'. His world-view is rooted in the fundamental metaphysical ideas. God (Truth), World and Man constitute his basic ontological principles

Gandhi's philosophy, which he called "an experiment with truth," was not a philosophy in which he merely interpreted or analyzed things for himself. It was an experience, or experiment, in which he changed himself and his environment. In the process, Gandhi re-oriented many traditional ideas practice. He said: "I do not claim to have originated any new principle. I have simply tried in my own way to apply eternal truths to our daily life and problem." He was an ordinary man who became a mahatma, a man of great soul. Gandhi said the eternal truths could be applied to daily life and problems. He said they were everywhere in history. He found that life persists amidst death and that there is compassion and friendliness amidst bitterness and hatred and persecution and war. Devotion to truth was the one characteristic of Gandhi. It was his greatest quality. Love of truth led him to all kinds of disciplines and experiments. He always began with smaller problems and applied the success he achieved to greater problems. "One step 2 is enough for me" was his motto and he progressed from one step to another. The non-violent non-co-operation movement which won India's freedom was the outcome of the smaller success of his satyagraha or "passive resistance" in South Africa. India's freedom was, for him, a means to the larger problem of world peace. Satyagraha is a moral or spiritual struggle

against political and economic domination which implies denial of truth. The reason is the colonial power in order to rule India takes the means of falsehood and manipulation. The struggle for freedom thus does not mean only to attain political and economic freedom but more importantly it is an upliftment of human conscience that lends to the nonviolent battle for the victory of truth. The concept of truth in Gandhi bears multiple meanings in view of the rich theoretical and practical dimensions. For Gandhi, truth is not only a metaphysical category but also a moral and spiritual concept signifying the importance of truth in life. We will look into the notion of truth and theoretically explicate some of the connections it has with associated concepts like non-violence.

Gandhi's Notion of Truth

While ahimsa by definition denotes activity and action, it is the way Gandhi develops his philosophy of temporal action, namely through an examination of truth, which makes his philosophical contribution decisive. As a result, our discussion becomes an exploration of Gandhi's truth and its role in both the spiritual and temporal world. Studying Gandhi's emphasis on worldly existence is significant insofar as his philosophy is one that engages action. It is through the practice of ahimsa – the practice of Truth - that one realizes Truth. Gandhi most often places truth and non-violence on the same level and claims that truth and nonviolence are the two sides of the same coin. He is of the opinion that a truthful man is bound to be non-violent and vice versa. That is why it is supposed that truth and non-violence cannot be kept apart. However, one can see the difference between the two principles in morality. While truth is the bed-rock principle, non-violence follows as a corollary. All forms of non-violent behaviour follow from the one adhering to truth as a deep moral commitment. A satyagrahi is necessarily nonviolent because he contradicts himself if he is not so. This necessary relation between truth and non-violence need not commit Gandhi to the identity of the two. A non-violent person is in better position to realize truth as the supreme value. Truth qualifies to be a moral law in view of the fact that it shows how moral values are possible at all. The presupposition of truth as the

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fundamental moral principle makes it into a moral law in the sense that truth prevails as the principle of good life in the world. Truth has the character of the Kantian categorical imperative because it demands absolute obligation from the truth-seeker. Truth acts as the moral law which is absolutely imposed on the truth-seeker by moral reason or the "inner voice".

Truth is God Gandhi equates truth with God keeping in view the primacy of truth as an ontological category. He says: truth is God, rather than God is truth. This formulation speaks of the fundamental change that has occurred in Gandhi's concept of God. That also speaks of his approach to religion and metaphysics. The ideas of truth-based religion and truth-based metaphysics³ dominate Gandhi's philosophy. The following implications are entailed by the formulation "Truth is God": 1. Truth has a spiritual dimension in addition to the moral dimension. 2. Truth is a metaphysical category as it characterizes the fundamental nature of reality. 3. Truth is the Absolute Reality which is the source of all existence. Thus Gandhi makes it clear that truth has a transcendental significance in his metaphysical system in view of the all-comprehensive character of this concept. Truth does not have a partial presence because; if partial it amounts to a distortion of itself. Truth cannot be domain-specific, nor can it be confined to any particular discourse. Those who argue for the discourse dependence of truth do not understand the deeply absolute character of truth. Thus Gandhi emphasizes this point by showing that truth is God or the Absolute Reality. The concept God signifies the Absolute Reality that cannot be subsumed under any other Reality. This leads to the idea that God is the ultimate ground of all existence. Gandhi makes his concept of God theology-free in order to get rid of the attempt to absorb it to any particular theological tradition. Gandhi's God is free from the theological frameworks which relativise God to their particular conceptions. Gandhi writes: "The word satya comes from sat, which means 'to be', 'to exist'. Only God is ever the same through all time. A thousand times honour to him who has succeeded, through love and devotion for satya, in opening out his heart permanently to its presence. I have been but striving to serve that truth".

Thus Gandhi gives absolute status to truth keeping in mind his predilection towards equating truth with God. This makes truth a metaphysical reality more than the moral law. Gandhi uses the term truth in two ways, namely truth as Absolute Truth, and truth as relative truth. While the significance of Gandhi's use of the term Truth reflects the importance of the term in many Indian philosophical and religious traditions, the distinction between Absolute Truth and relative truths is most succinctly described through the Buddhist paradigm of truth. The Buddhist understanding of truth broadly differentiates between the Absolute Truth that is the transcendent truth, and the conditional truth that relies on the Absolute Truth. Both these forms of truth include factual and scientific truths. However, Gandhi understands and application of truth in formulating his philosophy is primarily concerned with morality and social relations.

Absolute Truth Absolute Truth is characterized by its fixed and unalterable nature. For Gandhi, Absolute Truth (hereafter Truth) is the only fundamental truth. He uses the term interchangeably with God and maintains "beyond truths there is one absolute Truth which is total and all embracing. But it is indescribable because it is God. Or say, rather, God is Truth". He later updated this idea, arguing "... it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth". 'Truth' understood as 'God' is in some ways a pragmatic word choice for Gandhi. This pragmatism comes from the need to effectively communicate in a language that is understood by the many. His faith and devotion to his religion, together with the religions he studied, informed his interpretation of Truth to an overwhelming degree. Gandhi went so far to insist "I can live only by having faith in God. My definition of God must always be kept in mind. For me there is no other God than Truth; Truth is God". As a term, then, God becomes an embodiment of the idea of Truth. If God is accepted as an external force or agent, with an omniscient role in the entire cosmos, the use of the title is effective. If, however, God is understood in a physical form or even as the divine creator of destinies, the descriptor does not capture that which Gandhi is attempting to illustrate. Yet God is not the only characteristic Gandhi

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assigns to Truth. He also equates Love to Truth. That is to say, in describing Love, Gandhi combines the working definitions of love with the negative and positive elements of ahimsa insofar as integration of the responsibility of self and communal realisation is necessary for the realisation of Truth. Love for the self is as significant as love for the other and for the community as a whole. Indeed the realisation of Truth demands the realisation of all three entities. Gandhi's choice of the term "love" is interesting because of its intensity. Rather than discussing care or responsibility, which are open to interpretation of scope and passion, love denotes a very particular, albeit indefinite, depth and zeal that incorporates near extreme elements of care and responsibility. Truth as Love underscores the all-embracing nature of Absolute Truth. Hence, Gandhi does not define Truth. The terms God and Love are too broad to be seen as "defining" terms. In part Gandhi uses these terms to ensure there are no boundaries to Truth. That is he does not consign limits to Truth, and therefore he does not claim to have discovered a universal absolute. As a result, Gandhi further argues that Truth can never be realized. At the same time, Gandhi has provided us with the qualities of Truth and, therefore, a path for its achievement. Given Gandhi's belief in the Indian conception of moksha, the spiritual release as the supreme end of life, and in the relationship of Truth to God, the realisation of Truth is a significant piece of Gandhi's puzzle. He supports the claim that Truth is unattainable partially through his religious beliefs. Because Gandhi insists that there cannot be a complete transcendence of desires and pleasures as long as we are in our physical form, it becomes impossible to understand Truth completely. The limitations of the physical form denote the importance of moksha. Gandhi insists that a person comes closer to Truth as s/he controls her/his passions. Yet the limitations of the physical form deny a person complete transcendence from violence. While confined to our physical form and living in the elements of existence it is impossible for us to know Truth fully. The implication of the unattainability of Truth is that ahimsa also becomes impossible to practice in its entirety, as complete transcendence of desires and pleasures is impossible. Hence, Gandhi establishes Truth as a guiding principle in our existence as it provides principles to spiritual, emotional

and active elements of “this-worldly” life. Truth’s all- embracing nature is best articulated through an understanding of the use of Truth in Indian languages. “The word 5 satya (truth) comes from sat which means “to be” or “to exist.” To live through Truth is “to be” or “to exist” in wholeness.

Relative Truth The unattainability of Truth does not diminish its importance. Instead, Gandhi stresses the need for the use of relative truths to strive for Truth. Relative truths are those definitive ideas that provide guidance to our thoughts and actions, yet are not static. They change and morph to provide guidance in versatile situations. These truths maintain as their guiding principle the idea of Absolute Truth and, therefore, ahimsa. Relative truths are describable and definable. It is the relationship of relative truth to Absolute Truth that is at the core of Gandhi’s argument. Relative truth becomes the form of truth that is attainable in the human condition or the temporal world. Truth characterized by God, Love, and ahimsa must be manifested through action in order to attain moksha. “He... who understands truth follows nothing but truth in thought, speech, and action, comes to know God and gains the seers vision of the past, present, and future.” Gandhi insists that there is no part of our lives that Truth cannot guide. The discussion of Absolute Truth and relative truth can also be seen as a discussion of means and ends insofar as relative truth is the means and Absolute Truth is the end. This logic however, confronts yet another form of dichotomy whereby a mean cannot be an end in itself. Gandhi insists that this is not the case. The relationship of means and ends in Gandhi’s thought is most apparent through his insistence on characterizing Absolute Truth rather than defining it. His characterization is a means to the achievement of the end and an end in itself. Hence, to make reference to means and ends as two distinct entities is somewhat incorrect. Truth understood solely as a means or as an end leaves the breadth of Gandhi’s ahimsa at the surface. The benefit of acting through ahimsa is retained for oneself. The existence of a better society and the realisation of moksha are not engaged. That is to say, one’s social responsibility is denied if Truth is treated as a means only. Truth understood as a means and an end implies

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that Truth is the means to defining relative truths and is also the ultimate end. Using the end as a guide for the means without diminishing its role as the ultimate end is the truest expression of ahimsa. As a means and an end, Truth engages the individual and the community insofar as it defines the individual and the community as a whole: it is that which allows one to see her/his community as an extension of her/himself. Gandhi's uses the term truth both as means and ends conterminously. Ahimsa is the means and Truth is the end. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that is practically impossible to disentangle them. Means and ends work together in Gandhi's paradigm for the realisation of Truth. This truth while it is ontologically absolute, it is also relative seen from the epistemic angle. This notion of relative is no concession to relativism. It is relative rather in relation to our ability to access it. Gandhi's ideas on Truth allow people to interpret moral principles in a way that preserves the individual and embodies an understanding of the individual as a member of the community. Accepting this as Gandhi's understanding of the individual, Gandhi's Truth allows the individual to find the "best reasons" for acting in moral situations. As a result of Gandhi's understanding of the individual as embedded in community, autonomy is value-laden whereby both individuals and the community have the goal of realizing Truth. It is not merely individual autonomy. The concept of autonomy must incorporate idea of communal autonomy as it relates to individual autonomy when making moral judgments. This nuanced version of autonomy, which includes a characteristic of social responsibility, is not the only way in which Gandhi incorporates autonomy as a way of making moral judgments. As outlined above, Gandhi also ensures that individuals have the right to interpret, and act upon moral principles as they see fit. Truth without definition leaves itself without boundaries, open to inquiry, and encourages personal assessment. Even though Gandhi puts forth a notion of Truth that is to guide moral judgments, he does not confine the notion to how we must make judgments. Instead his notion of Truth seeks to provide a method for allowing his conception of the individual in a community, rather than an individual that stands alone, for determining his moral judgments. Gandhi's method of philosophical inquiry, namely praxis, inadvertently

incorporates moral judgments. In fact, for Gandhi it is through actions in the public sphere that moral judgments manifest themselves. The deduction of moral judgments rests with an individual who is defined through her or his membership in the community, and underscores the social responsibility Gandhi's praxis demands. Glyn Richards in *The Philosophy of Gandhi* correctly emphasizes Gandhi's metaphysical concept of Truth as key to understanding the theoretical and practical dimensions of his philosophy. His concept of Truth (satya) provides a rationale and coherence to his political theory and practice. Truth is an exploration and an adventure of engagement with the spiritual and moral and the political seen as a unity, the oneness of these was never in doubt for Gandhi. He frequently expressed his view of reality and of political truth in terms of the formulation "Truth is God" in his reflections on Truth; Gandhi expressed a personal preference for the Hindu impersonal formulations of the non-dualistic Advaita Vedanta with its view of the all-encompassing, spiritual Self as Atman and its identification of Atman with the impersonal absolute Brahman. Gandhi was also extremely flexible in his formulations of Truth, frequently referring to God, Rama, and many other personal and impersonal terms.

9.2 HUMAN NATURE

This 'wonderful piece of work, noble in reason and infinite in faculty', man, engaged the attention of Gandhi too. In fact, implicit in any world-view is the concept of self and human nature and Gandhi paid considerable attention to it. His autobiography is full of observations about the manifestations of human nature. Therein, we find him stating that "a man often succumbs to temptation"; that "Selfishness turns them blind". In *Harijan*, he says that "people find the easiest of things oftentimes to be the most difficult to follow"; that "we are all thieves"; that "listlessness is common to us all"; and that "Love of power is usual in man and it often only dies with his death". We also find him observing that habit gets mastery over men; that they "follow the authority of one man like sheep". Notwithstanding his pronouncements on the darker side of human nature, it should, however, not be construed that Gandhi was always confronted with the darker side of human nature, he did come

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across its purely moral expressions as well. Recording such reminiscences, he wrote that "man is both matter and spirit, each acting on and affecting the other"; that "however bitter a man might be, he is sure to come round if we bestow upon him pure love in thought, word and deed"; that "generally those who believe in taking a tooth for a tooth, after a time forgive one another and become friends"; and that somehow he was "able to draw the noblest in mankind" and that is what enabled him to maintain his "faith in God and human nature". Gandhi continued to maintain that man possesses an inborn, though limited, capacity of correcting his mistakes and of cultivating his special virtues. He believed that human nature is infinitely modifiable; that is, "it was also given to human beings to learn from the mistakes and not to repeat them". In other words, he thought that "there are chords in every human heart, If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music". In this connection it should be mentioned that, Bhagavad Gita had taught Gandhi that man can only strive to cultivate his special virtues, he cannot command results. Secondly, he believed that man's capacity to cultivate his special virtues is limited and that, therefore, his nature could not be changed "in a moment". In other words, he was not so naive as to think that men could be transformed overnight. Further, he recognized the role that circumstances play in moulding man's nature, though he could never be sure as to how far a man is free and how far a creature of circumstances. His belief in the monistic doctrine of the metaphysical unity between God and man enabled him to describe the relationship between man and man as also divine. Believing that "all life in its essence is one", he declared that we are all children of the same God and that, therefore, potentially human nature is the same everywhere. This is to say that soul is one in all and that its possibilities are the same for everyone. It is interesting to note, in this context, the metaphors of a tree and an ocean with which he often used to describe the divine equality of human beings. Employing the metaphor of a tree he once said: "We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth, The mightiest wind cannot move it". And, taking recourse to the metaphor of an ocean he stated that "No one has the capacity to judge God. We are drops in that

limitless ocean of mercy". In his autobiography, he observed: "We are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of one and the same creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite". It was this belief that enabled him to declare Truth to be "a social virtue".

His recognition of "conscious-divinity" as the important feature led him to include the virtues of moral-progression, non-violence, and benevolence, Subscribing to the view that there is nothing in this world which is not subject to change he regarded human nature also to be dynamic, and not static. He declared that "Human nature either goes up or goes down". And, this virtue of moral progression, he thought, distinguishes man both from the God and the beast. He argued that for them the question of progression just does not arise, as God is already perfect and the beast is essentially dormant. Distinguishing man from God he observed that "No one can remain without eternal cycle unless it be God himself ". And about man's distinction from the beast he declared that "Progress is man's distinction, Man's alone, not beast's". This distinction enabled him to regard man as "a special creature of God, precisely to the extent that he is distinct from the rest of His creation". Emphasizing the need for cultivation of virtues, he opined that striving alone can enable man to bridge the apparent gulf between God and man's soul and thereby, to realize his self (that is soul or atman). And Self-realization was regarded by him to be the only vocation of man's life, something which is absolutely desirable. In other words, he firmly believed that "that alone is worth-having or worth-cultivating which would enable us to realize our Maker and to feel that, after all on this earth we are merely sojourners". In Harijan, he insisted that "Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities; social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God." In other words, man is born in order to know his Maker and' he should live to that end. The natural course of man's evolution he, thus, thought is "From beast, through man, to God". Unlike the sages of India's great past who suggested the path of withdrawal from the struggles of social life, Gandhi suggested that the' only way through which man could attain the ultimate state of Brahmanirvana (self-realization) was the way

of involvement in the struggles of social life, that is the way of the service of God's creation.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the important features of human nature?

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2) Are all humans same in the Gandhian framework ?

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9.3 PHILOSOPHY OF MAN

Based on his metaphysical presuppositions, Gandhi believes in the essential goodness of man. This conviction that man is inherently good is so fundamental in Gandhian thinking that one may even say that Gandhi's entire attitude and approach to the questions related to life was based on this belief in the innate goodness of the human individual. The unique weapon of satyagraha and his revolutionary agenda for social transformation were all based on this belief. Although Gandhi put his implicit faith in the goodness of the individuals he was not unaware of the element of error and evil in him. With his deep insight into human nature Gandhi knew that just as there is the divine spark in man there is also the brute in him. Gandhi makes a distinction between the 'higher self' and the 'lower self' and at the nadir of the lower self he identifies the 'brute'. The very fact that man has a body brings in with it certain natural limitations which cannot be ignored or under estimated as insignificant. But one shall not identify man with his lower nature, nor shall the ideal of life be identified with the attainment of the needs of the body. Man, Gandhi contends, is a mixture of good and evil, and the upward and downward tendencies are inherent in him. But as man is essentially good,

goodness being his basic nature, Gandhi argues that man is also perfectible. "Godliness implies that it is more natural for man to be good than to be evil, though apparently descent may seem easier than ascent". This is the ground for Gandhi's optimism. Of course, to err is human but to try to overcome error is divine. "There is no one without faults, not even men of God", wrote Gandhi.

They are men of God not because they are faultless but because they know their own faults and are ever ready to correct themselves. One hears in these words of Gandhi an echo of the famous saying that every saint has a past and every sinner a future. Man must choose either of the two courses; the upward or the downward but as he has the brute in him he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful grab. Although the downward course is easier than the upward as we are born with brute strength, "we are born in order to realise God who dwells in us. That is the privilege of man, it distinguishes him from the brute creation". He is more concerned with how to bring out the divinity that is already there in human nature. For this, Gandhi believed, human individuals have to be trained to extricate themselves from the pulls and pressures of the lower nature. He propounded a set of rules and vows for facilitating this upward impulse to perfect himself and to realise his ultimate end. Entering deep into the genesis of man, Gandhi believes that the inner worth of mankind lies not by exhibition of external force but by silent and struggling endeavor to rise to the ascent and excellence of man the unknown. The striving for perfection is, therefore, one of the inner adventure always thrilling, pulsating and poignant. The concept of man in relation to the society as Gandhi formulates has no parallel in the contemporary times. He says, " I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. we have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint" (Harijan, 1927).

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A perfect synchronization between man and society is the fundamental requisite to the march of man and society as a living and dynamic force of civilization. Man marches ahead not because he excels in scientific marvels or in utilitarianism but he continually makes an adventure for inward excellence. This inward excellence always encompasses everyone in and around him. He forsakes himself for others in and around him to be nearer to himself by embracing all. The more he is dedicated to this mission for self-sacrifice, the greater is the possibility of better efflorescence of the vision of man within him. In fact, he is reborn with this vision that promises him to be an ideal partner and sympathizer of the society to which he belongs. Society, then, becomes an indispensable part of his very being, -the existence, worth and fullness of man. Side by side with socialization as the essence and excellence of man, Gandhi reminds man of cultivating the true spirit of religion which guides and directs man towards the avenue of purity and perfection. This true spirit of religion can be exercised through prayer. Only a prayerful heart, as he ardently believes, can make a bridge between man and man. It should be the 'vital concern' of every human being who cares for discipline and orderliness. Gandhi is concerned more with the excellence of man than with customs, principles, rites and rituals which serve as mandatory components of one's so-called religion. That man is the only essence of religion and divinity is the radical approach to religion which he time and again highlights in the vision of man and religion. Moreover, he emphasizes on environment of oneself by means of exercise of the nobler qualities that contribute to the excellence of man and his religion. These are love, truth and non-violence in particular. Love as Gandhi considers, truly reveals man as man. The essence of man is the essence of love. Bereft of the inner spirit of love, man degrades himself down to the level of an animal. An ardent optimist in the fullness of man, he awaits better days of purer efflorescence of man. The quest for Truth is the quest for the inner essence of man. It is the quest that calls forth means for synchronization between Truth and non-violence. As the core of religion is prayer, so is Truth that constitutes the highest and noblest prayer that leads to the harmonized essence of Truth and Ahimsa. And as prayer is the core of the lift of man so is his endeavor at making a fusion between

Truth and Ahimsa that becomes a part and parcel of the essence of man. Gandhi banks upon Ahimsa essentially because it is a means--a very effective means which shakes hands with Truth, the end or the goal of man. To arrive at this goal, one must, as Gandhi emphasizes, continually strive even in the face of repeated failures. He is more interested in visualizing God in the quest for Truth than in anything else, and so, he takes recourse to Ahimsa which serves as a certain and definite means for Truth.

When Gandhi advocates for cultivation of Truth as the essence of man, he also advocates for practice of patience. The lesson learnt through cultivation of patience is the lesson of love and mutual understanding between man and man. Therein lies the fountain of greatness that leads man towards unison with Truth. To be baptised with the spirit of patience is to be baptised with the training of how to purify oneself amidst sorrows and sufferings, obstacles and constraints. The path of Ahimsa is, therefore, the path of patience and suffering, the path of continual crystallization for whatever is good for mankind. For adherence to true idealism which conforms to the practical and living aspects of religion, Gandhi makes inroads to the concept of inwardness in man. This means that man must strive hard to be worthy of an ideal which has its close alliance with Truth. He allows man to keep open the doors of consciousness in order to celebrate the essence of religion in idealism not in a narrow compass but in a wider context of the religion of boundlessness. To orient oneself with this spirit of idealism is to orient one's faith in religion in the right perspective of perfection. Herein lies the virtue of an ideal that coordinates religion in the spirit of boundlessness. Otherwise, man becomes a victim to imperfection and parochialism. What, therefore, contributes to the excellence of man is the continual assessment of an ideal he so enriches on or sticks to it for crystallization. Gandhi is aware of crystallization further beyond man by means of aesthetics. This means that in the process of continual advancement, man must practice the aesthetics of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. A continual process of refinement of sensibilities will allow him to see into the purity and perfection of everything in which he is

Notes

involved. He cannot, therefore, but evaluate himself in terms of Goodness awaiting better exploration and identification with Truth and Beauty. The aesthetics of soul-force as Gandhi visualizes in his concept of non-violence forewarns man against demolishing conscience which hinders him from being led astray. It is also an acid test for every person in the face of violence, when the aesthetics of serenity and calmness of mind elevates him from man the animal to man the divine and a part inseparable of the All Beautiful. Gandhi also heightens the concept of man in his aesthetic role in negotiating violence by nonviolence from two other vital perspectives. First, to err is human and to forgive and forget, divine. Herein lies the beauty of non-violence that enables man to rise above petty self-interest and self-glory. Second, violence replaced by non-violence shows the indomitable power of man who knows how to win over erudities and littleness in his very approach to evaluating the antecedents and consequences of violence.

Moreover, it also indicates that by dint of application of the aesthetics of goodness for one and all in course of following the principles of nonviolence; he restrains himself from being unjust and indecisive by means of violent actions and even of contemplation. That focal point of interest in Gandhian religion is man. Bereft of man, religion as Gandhi considers, turns out to be a dogma. Here, too, he adorns man not merely as a religious being, but obviously as an aesthetically religious being. Religion, therefore, becomes an aesthetics life force for man with inner poignance of Truth. The religion of man, as Gandhi advocates, is the religion of compassion, of living together, and never torment the orgy of irreligion in apathy and hatred for man. Gandhian religion also re-ensures the fact that man is never brutal but always friendly and benevolent. 'Brutalization of human nature', as he thinks, can be encountered most successfully not by brutal force or violence, but by admitting the divine essence of man, which is beyond destruction and, therefore, always alive and inspiring and stimulating to anyone who cares for the muse of the glory of man. Man, the apparently brutal being, frantically seeks an antidote to his animal passion, which is always to be had within himself only when he is allowed to identify and eliminate his brutal behavioural

designs and spurts. Gandhi also reminds man of the fact that as a human being each man is an indivisible part of God. All men are, according to him, the sons of God and, as such, the wrong committed by one man is also the wrong of the other.

Man: A manifestation of God

In keeping with his religious beliefs he modestly accepted the Hindu view which states that "man is a complex, multi-dimensional being including within him different elements of matter, life, consciousness, intelligence and the divine spark". But Gandhi did not rest content with accepting blindly the Hindu concept of man. He gave it a revolutionary thrust by uncovering the dynamism inherent in it. Basic to Gandhi's concept of the human self is the belief that man is essentially a manifestation of God. Gandhi understood and acknowledged the physical, psychological, intellectual and moral dimensions of the human self. But underlying all these, as the informing principle, is the spirit or the soul which is 'original and co-eternal with God' though part of God and as such dependent on God. It is clear that this view is logically connected to his view of the world also. As everything in the universe is a manifestation of God man cannot be otherwise. He says, if the world is but a reflection of Brahman, the individual self is but a spark of the Universal effulgence. Indeed both are one, but for the limiting conditions. For quite some time this Upanishadic vision that atman the individual self, and Paramatman, the Imperishable, Unmanifest, Exhaustless and Supreme Brahman, are not two but one. So, in order to describe his concept of the self especially the relationship between God and the individual soul, Gandhi used to quote an Urdu couplet which means "Adam is not God, but he is a spark of the divine". But later the Upanishadic vision became clearer to him and he whole-heartedly subscribed to that view of non-dualism between the universal self and the individual self. In a letter to Mira Behn, Gandhi confessed that the meaning of the last two lines of the first verse of the morning prayer in the Ashram, which means: "I am that immaculate Brahman which ever notes the states of dream, wakefulness. and deep sleep, not this body, the

compound made of elements", upset him. He wrote, "Formerly I used to shudder to utter this verse, thinking the claim made therein was arrogant. But when I saw the meaning more clearly. I perceived at once that... we are the Being, the witness pervading the countless bodies". What actually Gandhi wants man to have it to undergo trying transcendence in order to be a global partner of One World. One man, one great family of man. Let the Upanishadic spirit, the spirit of oneness of mankind, be the guiding spirit of man. Let man march ahead to fulfill the global mission of man: Vasudhaivakutumvakam-the endearing relationship between man and man.

9.4 IMPLICATIONS

The doctrine of man's oneness with God and humanity has several implications. First of all, this doctrine is incompatible with the belief that an individual may gain spiritually and those that surround him suffer. Gandhi believed that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent. There is not a single virtue which aims at or is content with the welfare of the individual alone. Conversely, there is not a single moral offense which does not, directly or indirectly, affect many others besides the actual offender. Hence, whether an individual is good or bad is not merely his own concern, but really the concern of the whole community, indeed of the whole world. Secondly, the monistic doctrine implies that all human beings are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of that identity. Thirdly, what one man is capable of achieving is possible for all to attain. The soul is one in all. Its possibilities are the same for everyone. Fourthly, it is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to attack and resist the author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. Fifthly, man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavor, simply because the only way to find God is to see God in creation and be one with it. This can only be

done by service of all, as he says, "I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity."

Oneness of man and of all life:

Another implication of the conviction that man is the manifestation of the Supreme is the belief that all life is one. And like an advaitin, Gandhi did believe in the essential oneness of everything, sentient and non-sentient. This belief further implies that the universe is a harmonious whole whose parts should naturally and spontaneously function together. So everything and everyone has its role or duty, value and significance. Thus equality comes up as a natural corollary to this belief. It follows that inequality, segregation, discrimination, violence or exploitation of any sort is unnatural and against the law of God, world and man. Gandhi's proclaimed stand against exploitation and injustice of any kind, whether it be untouchability, racism, or suppression of women, is in keeping with this belief that all life is one. In short, a whole set of new attitudes and values are born out of this vision and they serve as the foundation on which a new order in tune with the perception of oneness is to be evolved. The sense of oneness of the entire humanity and non-human nature has another insight to offer regarding the impact of human action on society and the natural environment. Since all life is one and man is gregarious every single act of the individual whether intentional or otherwise, exerts its impact on society. So Gandhi considers it the bounden duty of every one to exercise his reason and will carefully and cautiously and modulate his behaviour in such a way that the whole community, nay, the whole world gains out of it.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) How are Man and God related?

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- 2) Reflect on the implications that flow from Gandhi's concept of human nature.

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9.5 LET US SUM UP

We have attempted to have a bird's-eye-view of Gandhian understanding of human nature and its essence. The significance of the Gandhian views on the condition of man is the preparedness for error in our endeavors and the readiness to take large risks, checked by a continuous exercise of self-analysis and the willingness to make amends for mistakes made through weakness of will. Such involvement in the affairs of the world combined with the discipline that comes with the cultivation of inwardness merges the ideal of individual enlightenment and collective welfare. One should strive towards this awareness which can only be the outcome of one's realization of self and its nature.

9.6 KEY WORDS

Cosmos: a well-coordinated whole whose parts were all interdependent.

Brahmanirvana: self-realization through the service of men.

Consciously-divine: endowed with the potential of divinity.

9.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What are the important features of human nature?
2. Are all humans same in the Gandhian framework ?
3. How do you know the Human Nature?
4. How do you find the Philosophy of Man?
5. What do you understand the Implications?

9.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 9.2
2. See Section 9.2

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 9.3
2. See Section 9.4

UNIT 10: K.C. BHATTACHARYA

STRUCTURE

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Subject as freedom

10.3 The absolute and its alternative forms interpretation of Maya

10.4 Let us sum up

10.5 Key Words

10.6 Questions for Review

10.7 Suggested readings and references

10.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.0 OBJECTIVES

This chapter presents Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's 1936 essay, "The Concept of Philosophy," in which he distinguishes different grades of theoretic consciousness and connects the hierarchy of cognitive attitudes to an account of the limits of language. Bhattacharyya is perhaps the best-known academic philosopher of the colonial period. He held the King George V Chair (now the B. N. Seal Chair) in Philosophy at the University of Calcutta and trained many of the eminent philosophers of the post-independence period. He is best known for his highly technical and even forbidding work on metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, and the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. In his essay, Bhattacharyya explores the concept of philosophy and offers his position regarding the possibility that philosophy is a body of knowledge distinct from science by stating where he differs from the Kantian view of the subject. He also considers metaphysics and what philosophy has to say about the object before concluding with an analysis of the philosophy of truth.

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know Subject as freedom

- To know The absolute and its alternative forms interpretation of Maya

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Born in Serampur (Bengal) in a modest Brahmin family, Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (1875- 1949) brilliantly graduated from the Presidency College (Kolkata) and served all of his career as a teacher of philosophy in Government Colleges in Bengal. Due to his intellectual independence and his reluctance to please British officers, however, it was only after his official retirement that he became professor and director of the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner (1933-1935) and George V Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kolkata (1935-1937) (G. Burch 1956, 486– 87; K. Bhattacharyya 1983, xvii– xviii). Bhattacharyya is often claimed as the most creative academic philosopher writing in English during Indian colonial times; his work is characterized by the thoroughness of his speeches contrasting with the aphoristic density of his writings. A collection of his texts is available in the two volumes of his *Studies in Philosophy* (K. Bhattacharyya 1983; see also K. Bhattacharyya 1976). A recent translation of the Bengali *Kāntdarśaner Tātparya* (Implications of the Philosophy of Kant, K.C. Bhattacharyya 2011) completes the collection. The novelty of his contribution not only to classical and contemporary Indian philosophy (EOPR0182) but more generally to world philosophy is enormous, on linguistic, methodological and philosophical levels. Linguistically, Bhattacharyya anticipated postcolonial reflections on the reversal of colonial assimilation and the alienation of one's own philosophical traditions: his art of commentary, his conceptual framework, and his vocabulary, all shaped by his Sanskrit formation, outline the precision and efficiency of Navya-Nyāya (EOPR0264) and Advaita Vedānta (EOPR0003) use of language (Chatterjee, in K. Bhattacharyya 2011, 1– 40), as is seen even in the English translation of his reinterpretation of Kant. His introduction to *Studies in Vedāntism* (K. Bhattacharyya 1983, 1–6) elaborates an original hermeneutic methodology as opposed to the philological-historical commentary characteristic of the colonial Indology of his time. His critique of the latter, addressed to George

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Thibaut, thus clarifies the difference between Indological (interpretive) and Indian (constructive) philosophical approaches. He defends a view of philosophy as a “living fabric,” which should be approached with an “aesthetic sympathy” and humility, ideas further developed by Jonardon Ganeri with cosmopolitan consequences (Ganeri 2016), defined as an attitude of inhabiting creatively one’s tradition to decolonize it. Philosophically, three phases of his work can be delineated. The first focused upon the “constructive interpretation” (K. Bhattacharyya 1983, xix) of Advaita Vedānta and of earlier texts on negation and the indefinite in logic. Creatively and critically exploring his own Vedāntic standpoint as he inherited it, his account is far from being simply exegetical but rather lays the ground for his theory of the Absolute. Burch maintains that in this first phase Bhattacharyya considers the Absolute as indefinite, according to the Upanishadic (EOPR0399) idea of ‘neti neti’ (“not that, not that”) (K. Bhattacharyya 1976, 4). His metaphysics leads to a second period, characterized by a Vedāntic-Kantian study of the self (Bagchi 1981, 21). In Burch’s classification, Bhattacharyya qualifies the Absolute as Subject according to the Vedantic pronouncement ‘tat tvam asi’ (“that art thou”) (K. Bhattacharyya 1976, 13). The transcendentalism of the self as subject raises questions regarding its knowability as a nonobject, or the “epistemic singularity” of the subject (Garfield 2017, 355).

This question concerns the knowability of the self, which Bhattacharyya engages from Śaṅkara (EOPR0350) to answer Kantian problems. The self demands to be known, but through a direct experience of being a subject, which leads Bhattacharyya to develop different grades of subjectivity. This gradual awareness of the self, progressively detached from any object and distinction, is freedom, the idea of self-realization. Bhattacharyya appears as an early instance of comparative philosophy, questioning concepts between Advaita Vedānta and Kant and Hegel, a dialogue he later pursued with Sāṅkhya (Daya Krishna 2001, 296–99) and Yoga (EOPR0349, EOPR0420). This question is finally explored in the most original and singular contribution of Bhattacharyya in his last period: the concept of an alternative Absolute, or the method of

alternation (as later developed by his son (Kalidas Bhattacharya 2016, EOPR0048) and clearly marked by the Jaina theory of *anekāntatā* (“manifoldness of truth,” K. Bhattacharyya 1983, 331, EOPR0187). There is an “indefinite distinction” (K. Bhattacharyya 1983, 489–90) at a reflective level between content of consciousness and consciousness. To determine this distinction, Bhattacharyya elaborates a threefold structure of the one Absolute considered in relation to the three spheres of consciousness (knowing, feeling, willing).

This threefold structure of the one Absolute enables a plurality where it should be impossible per definitionem. The prevalence attributed to each realm leads to the Absolute as an alternation of truth (the absolute for knowing), value (the absolute for feeling) and reality (the absolute for willing) – all equally valid. This shows a plurality in the unity of the one Absolute, which also justifies the alternation of philosophies themselves, according to the predominance of one realm (Daya Krishna 2001, 295–99). The implications of this development are not only significant for metaphysics, but go as far as to enable different philosophies without relativism or pluralism, with further possible political relevance ((K. Bhattacharyya 1976, 53–54)). In this regard, a recent promising development of Bhattacharyya’s philosophy has been derived from his speech *Svaraj* in *Ideas*, delivered at the Hooghly College around 1928–1930. The concept of *svaraj* (self-rule) applied to intellectual life, liberating oneself from the “cultural subjection” and “slavery of the spirit” (K. C. Bhattacharya 1984, 383) opened the way for a renewal of Indian postcolonial categories, reflecting on how to avoid both nativism and alienation (K. C. Bhattacharya 1984; Ganeri 2016; Daya Krishna 2001, 294–95).

Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, one of the preeminent Indian philosophers of the 20th century, proposed that the absolute appears in three alternative forms – truth, freedom and value. Each of these forms are for Bhattacharyya absolute, ultimate, not penultimate. Each is different from the other, yet they cannot be said to be one or many. He contends that these absolutes are incompatible with each other and that

Notes

an articulation of the relation between the three absolutes is not feasible. This paper will review Bhattacharyya's presentation of the absolute in its alternative forms and will place these abstractions within the context of three specific religious traditions that he sees illustrating his point. Then, using a model based upon holography, I will illuminate with 'concrete images' that which Bhattacharyya could deductively formulate but could not logically integrate. Holography, the process by which three-dimensional images are produced from an imageless film – a film in which each part can reproduce the whole – will be used as a heuristic device to illuminate the simultaneous and mutually interpenetrating existence of the absolute in three forms. This model will illumine how these three forms can be conceived of as not the same yet not other and how these forms can be incompatible as absolutes, but metaphysically inseparable.

There appears to be some discrepancy in the presentation of his last name. The two volumes edited by his son, Gopinath Bhattacharyya, use a double 'y' while other texts use a single 'y'. In what follows, I will use the double 'y' but will also follow the format of authors who use a single 'y' when quoting from such texts.

In the foreword to Burch (1972), Clarke makes the following point about the logic of Burch's proposal, which is essentially indebted to and an expansion of Bhattacharyya's proposal. About the proposal in general Clarke says: 'The thesis proposed by the book is a truly radical one, so radical, in fact, that one experiences a kind of intellectual vertigo as he slowly awakens to what the author is really saying. The thesis ... the Absolute is not one but many ...' (Clarke, 1972, p. 1). And Clarke adds: 'This, of course, does not prove it is not true in some domain unreachable in my logic, but only that I cannot see any way of affirming it as intelligible, not because I see it as mystery but as contrary to intelligibility.' (Clarke, 1972, p. 4). Kadankavil (1972), pp. 181 ff. also finds difficulty with K.C.B.'s logic of alteration understood as a logic of exclusive disjunction.

This paper will draw primarily from two works – ‘The Concept of the Absolute and its Alternative Forms’ and ‘The Concept of Philosophy’, approximately written at the same time, 1934–1936. One should also see ‘The Concept of Value’ and ch. 7, ‘The Nature of Yoga’, in ‘Studies in Yoga Philosophy’, found in Vol. I of his collected works (Bhattacharyya, 1956). The nature of the absolute and its alternative form is also related to a number of other topics such as his theory of negation and the notion of the indefinite.

Before proceeding any further, I should note that the holographic model is drawn from my new book, *Different Paths, Different Summits: A Model for Religious Pluralism* (Kaplan, 2002). First, I would like to express my appreciation to Rowman and Littlefield for the use of certain passages. Second, I must admit that when I wrote this book, I had not read Bhattacharyya's articles on this topic. I had studied a number of other pieces by K.C.B. and had used his theory of fourfold negation in the formulation of my model. Likewise, I had not read the work of Burch who has written some of the clearest expositions on K.C.B. and who has also developed the notion of the absolute and its alternative forms in his own writings. These oversights in my research have ruined any claims that I might make to originality of thought, but, on the other hand, they have produced intellectual allies. Third, I must thank Professor Raimundo Panikkar whose personal correspondence about my book led me to reexamine Bhattacharyya's writings and to discover his notion of the absolute and its alternative forms (April 2002). Finally, I would like to thank Richard Goldman (Ithaca, NY) for his assistance in wrestling with K.C.B. and the nuances of his thought.

It should be noted that here, as in the other two modes of consciousness, Bhattacharyya distinguishes a realistic view and an idealistic view. While a full discussion of this distinction is beyond the scope of this paper, it may be noted that in the case of willing, K.C.B. says: ‘That we objectively act to be subjectively free, that the good will and nothing but the good will is the value for which we will an act – the view, in fact, of Kant – may be called the idealistic view in this connexion. The realistic

Notes

view here then would be that we act for an objective end and not for the subjective end of being free; and an extreme form of the view may be conceived that we objectively act in order that we objectively act for evermore' (Bhattacharyya, 1958, p. 137).

'Holographic film typically has a resolution of 2500 to 5000 lines per millimeter (10–3m), in contrast to standard photographic film, which has about 200 lines per millimeter. The higher resolution is achieved by using smaller grains of the photosensitive silver in the emulsion. The smaller grains are less sensitive to light and decrease the "speed" of the film substantially' (Iovine, 1990, p. 1).

A laser is a single frequency light source that is in phase – in other words, the light waves are in step with each other. (Light from an ordinary light bulb is neither in phase nor single frequency.) The hologram records not only the varying intensities of the light as it reflects off the object, as does a photograph, but it also records the phase relations of the light reflecting off the object.

The use of these terms is indebted to David Bohm, the renowned physicist. Bohm developed a very different holographic model with a different understanding of the relation between the two domains. His model is a scientific model and it is also a model for the ultimacy of undivided wholeness. In spite of the significant debt that my project owes to Professor Bohm, my project aims at resolving problems in religious thought, not physics. This project also imagines a plurality of ultimate answers, corresponding to Bhattacharyya's threefold formulation of the absolute, not just one absolute.

For an extended analysis of these three traditions, one is referred to Kaplan (2002, ch. 5).

Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya's (1875– 1949) most important systematic work, *The Subject as Freedom* (1923), is first and foremost a sustained engagement, from the standpoint of Vedānta, with Kant's

discussion of self- knowledge in the Critique of Pure Reason . In the Critique , Kant argues that while we can think the transcendental subject — and indeed necessarily must think it as a condition of the possibility of subjectivity itself — we cannot know the subject, or self. Because knowledge requires intuition, and the forms of intuition are spatiotemporal, and because the self lies outside of space and time as their transcendental condition, Kant argues, the self lies outside of the domain of knowledge. It cannot fall under any category; it cannot be schematized; it cannot be the object of any judgment. Nonetheless, he argues, it must be possible for the “ I think ” to accompany any representation, and so we must think ourselves as unitary subjects in order for any experience to count as the experience of a subject. While Kant is one of the most important influences on Bhattacharyya ’ s thought, this central doctrine of the Kantian critical philosophy is anathema to him. From the standpoint of any of the major Indian traditions, including prominently the Ved ā nta and Vaishnava tantric traditions that form the backdrop of Bhattacharyya ’ s thought, Kant gets things completely backwards. From the perspective of Ved ā nta, knowledge of the self is the very goal of philosophical and spiritual practice, and the self, being that with which we are most intimately involved, must be knowable, if indeed anything is truly knowable — since anything that is known as object must be known in relation to the self. On the other hand, given that the self is never object , but only subject , and given that thought is always objective — that is, directed upon an object — the self, from the standpoint of this tradition, cannot be thought. So, there is broad agreement between the Kantian and the Ved ā nta perspectives that the self is a kind of epistemic singularity: it is the transcendental condition of discursive thought yet cannot be the object of discursive thought. It is this deep affinity that leads Bhattacharyya to explore the points of contact between the Kantian and the Ved ā nta frameworks. Nonetheless, there is a sharp disagreement about the nature of this singularity: while Kant sees the self as in the domain of thought, but not in the domain of knowledge, Ved ā nta sees it as falling within the domain of knowledge but not within the domain of thought.

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1 So much for a tension between two traditions. But why does Bhattacharyya defend the Ved ā nta side of this dispute? I believe that this is primarily because he sees a deep tension in Kantian philosophy that can only, on his view, be resolved from the perspective of Ved ā nta

2 : Bhattacharyya sees the Kantian view as committed to a series of claims about the self that undermine its own commitment to the self ' s unknowability. The first of these is the obvious claim that it is unknowable. To assert this is to assert something about it, and to know that it is unknowable is to know something about it.

3 But more importantly, Bhattacharyya takes seriously Kant ' s own association of transcendental subjectivity and freedom, especially as that doctrine is developed in the second and third Critiques and in the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals , but also as it emerges in the doctrine of the spontaneity of thought in the f rst Critique . Indeed, this connection is the focus of The Subject as Freedom . The awareness of our acts — including our act of thought — as our own, is at the same time the awareness of our freedom as thinkers, as subjects and as actors. And it is a condition of our subjectivity that we know that these acts are ours; hence that we know that we are free; hence that we know the self. T is knowledge of the self is not a knowledge of acquaintance, but rather a direct (though as we will see, in an important sense nondiscursive and intuitive) awareness of the fact that we are selves, a knowledge of who we are, and of our freedom. For these reasons, Bhattacharyya takes it that on Kant ' s own terms, self- knowledge must be possible. Ved ā nta, because of the af nities we have just noted to the broader Kantian perspective, provides the entr é e for the explanation of how this is possible. Here is how Bhattacharyya himself puts the predicament: The metaphysical controversy about the reality of the subject is only about the subject viewed in some sense as object. The thinnest sense in which it is objectif ed is “ being taken as meant. ” Ordinarily the validity of this degree of objectif cation of the subject is not questioned, nor therefore the possibility of a dispute about its reality. If, however, the subject is taken, as explained, to be what is expressed by the word I as expressing

itself, it is not meant or at best meant as unmeant and is accordingly above metaphysical dispute. There is properly no metaphysic of the subject, if by metaphysic is understood an enquiry into the reality conceived as meanable. Even the unknowable thing-in-itself of Spencer and Kant is not taken to be unmeant. It is at worst taken to be a problem in meaning. The knowable is meant and the negation of the knowable is, if not meant, tried to be meant, being not a gratuitous combination of words but a believed content that is problematically formulated. The subject which is also believed is formulated as I which is, however, understood as unmeant though not as a mere word like abracadabra. The understanding here is not a mystical intuition though it may point to its possibility, nor an intuition of a meaning that can be a term of a judgment, nor yet the thought of a meaning that is not known because not intuited or that is known without being intuited. It is somewhere midway between a mystic intuition and the consciousness of a meaning, being the believing awareness of a speakable content, the negation of which is unmeaning and which, therefore, is not a meaning. What is claimed to mystically intuited is speakable only in metaphor which represents a contradiction in meaning and what is affirmed or denied in metaphysic is a meanable. The subject as I is neither contradictory nor meanable and the exposition of it accordingly is intermediate between mysticism and metaphysic. As, however, the subject is communicable by speech without metaphor, it cannot be taken as falling outside philosophical inquiry. (93) 4 Let us pause to unpack a few important ideas that run through this discussion. First, all of this trades on Bhattacharyya's distinction between the speakable and the meanable. The meanable roughly coincides with Kant's knowable. Whatever can be designated intersubjectively as an object falls, for Bhattacharyya, under the head of the "meanable."

In fact Bhattacharyya explicitly ties meaning to intersubjective agreement and availability of referents for terms. 6 This anticipation of Wittgenstein and Sellars takes him a bit beyond Kant, of course, but the ideas are nonetheless congruent. The speakable, on the other hand, is whatever can be spoken of or communicated about through language. It

Notes

is a broader category than the meanable, since there may be some things we can communicate — that are not nonsense — even though we cannot assign them meanings. 7 So, we can talk about ourselves, even though there is no term that can mean the self. With this distinction in mind, we can return to the dilemma Bhattacharyya poses for the Kantian view: The subject cannot be taken to be meant, for it is not intersubjectively available as the referent for I. Nobody but me is aware of my own subjectivity, and so there is no way to establish a convention of reference or meaning. And the first-person pronoun has a unique role in designating the self. Were I to refer to myself using a name or a description, in the third person, the possibility of error through misidentification intrudes. 9 But the first-person indexical gets immediately, directly, at the speaking subject, and is so understood by addressees as well as by the speaker. So, although the word “I” has no meaning in this strict sense, it is not meaningless. It conveys something, and is understood; indeed, it is indispensable. It is therefore speakable, but not meanable. But it is therefore not nonsense, and hence denotes a possible object of knowledge. But knowledge of what kind? Not discursive, or “metaphysical” knowledge, for that would suggest that the self is an entity among entities, an object, and not the subject we wish to know. Nonetheless, it is communicable, but communicable as a kind of “intuition,” not entirely mystical, but not entirely empirical either. To answer these questions and to explain the manner in which the self is known is the goal of Bhattacharyya’s inquiry. Reading *The Subject as Freedom* is challenging in part because of the forbidding density and terseness of the text itself and because of Bhattacharyya’s idiosyncratic and of an opaque prose style. Its opacity in part arises from Bhattacharyya’s peculiar philosophical neologisms. It also emerges from the fact that he is always thinking, even while writing in English, with Sanskrit senses and contrasts in the background, but never making these Sanskrit references explicit. But reading this text is also challenging because Bhattacharyya does not signal the objects of his frequent anaphoric discussions. It is left to the reader to figure out whether he has Husserl in mind, a particular Indian school, or whether he is working out his own ideas. Interpretation of this book is hence always fraught. My

aim here is not to provide a reading of *The Subject as Freedom* as a whole. That would require a book-length study. Instead, I simply intend to focus on the structure of Bhattacharyya's account of self-knowledge. I will begin with a brief discussion of his account of the relationship between subjectivity and freedom. I then turn to his hierarchy of grades of subjectivity, developing the relation between the various levels of bodily subjectivity, psychic subjectivity, and finally spiritual subjectivity, showing how each implicates a greater degree of freedom. I will then turn to the account of self-knowledge by that hierarchy, an account according to which self-knowledge is complex and multileveled. We will then consider how that account of self-knowledge squares with Bhattacharyya's view that the subject cannot be thought, before concluding with some thoughts about the view of freedom that emerges from this discussion and the respect in which Bhattacharyya takes himself to have solved Kant's problem. My aim is neither to defend nor to criticize Bhattacharyya's framework, but rather to articulate it as clearly and as sympathetically as possible so as to make it available for critical reflection and consideration by contemporary philosophers.

10.2 SUBJECT AS FREEDOM

At the end of the first chapter of *The Subject as Freedom*, Bhattacharyya returns to the Kantian problem. Here he develops the direct connection between subjectivity and freedom. The persisting objective attitude of Kant in his first Critique explains not only his admission of the thing-in-itself and his denial of self-knowledge, but also his disbelief in the possibility of a spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason through which self-knowledge may be attainable. From the subjective standpoint, object beyond knownness, this beyond this-ness is, as explained, meaningless. It may be that, wedded as we are to our body, we cannot get rid of the objective attitude and the tendency to look beyond the constructed object to the purely given. But not to be able to deny need not imply admission and though the Kantian disclaimer of idealism as accomplished knowledge is intelligible, his admission of the unknowable

Notes

reality appears to be an unwarrantable surrender to realism. . . . (100; emphasis in the original)

Self- knowledge is denied by Kant: the self cannot be known but can only be thought through the objective categories . . . there being no intuition of it. (101) That is the summation of Bhattacharyya ' s diagnosis of the Kantian predicament. Kant allows the reality of the self, and indeed its necessity, but denies us any knowledge of it, including, presumably, the knowledge that it lies beyond knowledge. The “ surrender to realism ” is the commitment — incoherent on Kant ' s own grounds — to something that is real , yet in its nature independent of our mode of intuition and knowledge. We will see that when Bhattacharyya examines the self as an object of knowledge, it will importantly not be real in this sense, but will turn out to be transcendently ideal, not given independent of our modes of subjectivity, but determined by those very modes. In this sense, as we will see, Bhattacharyya takes himself to be even more of a transcendental idealist — more relentlessly consistent in this commitment — than Kant himself. Bhattacharyya continues later in this paragraph: The subject is thus known by itself, as not meant but speakable and not as either related or relating to the object. It is, however, believed as relating to object and symbolized as such by the objective relations. The modes of relating are at the same time the modes of freeing from objectivity, the forms of the spiritual discipline by which, it may be conceived, the outgoing reference to the object is turned backwards and the immediate knowledge of the I as content is realized in an ecstatic intuition. (101) Self- knowledge, that is, is knowledge of the self as it exists independent of its objects, even though that must be knowledge of a self that is essentially capable of objective relations. And this is the first link of subjectivity to freedom. The self must be capable of being understood simply as a self, free of any relation to a particular object. That knowledge must be immediate, on pain of turning the self into an object, but can only be realized through an act of ecstatic transcendence in which subjectivity stands outside of itself. Bhattacharyya emphasizes this in the next paragraph:

Spiritual progress means the realization of the subject as free. . . . One demand among others — all being absolute demands — is that the subjective function being essentially the knowing of the object as distinct from it, this knowing which is only believed and not known as fact has to be known as fact, as the self- evidencing reality of the subject itself. (101) The plan of *The Subject of Freedom* is to develop this self- knowledge gradually, moving through progressively more abstract and complete levels of freedom, each corresponding to a more adequate form of self- knowledge. As we will see, complete self- knowledge, while achieved at the final stage of this hierarchy, comprises all of the stages, and depends on each sense of freedom to be adumbrated. Here is Bhattacharyya ' s outline of the plan: The steps . . . correspond to a gradation of subjective functions, of modes of freedom from the object. Identified as we are with our body, our freedom from the perceived object is actually realized only in our bodily consciousness, though even this, as well appear later, is only imperfectly realized The next stage of freedom is suggested by the distinction of the perceived object including the body from the ghostly object in the form of the image, idea, and meaning, which may be all designated “ presentation. ” Consciousness as dissociated from such presentation, but dissociated from the perceived and felt body, may be called presentational or psychic subjectivity. The dissociation of the subject of consciousness from this presentation conceived as a kind of object would be the next stage of freedom, which may be called non- presentational or spiritual subjectivity. The three broad stages of subjectivity would then be the bodily, the psychical and the spiritual Wedded as we are to our body, actual freedom is felt only in bodily subjectivity and freedom in the higher stages as suggested by psychology is believed not as what is actual but as what has to be achieved or realized. . . . The elaboration of these stages of freedom in spiritual psychology would suggest the possibility of a consecutive method of realizing the subject as absolute freedom, of retracting the felt positive freedom towards the object into pure intuition of the self. (102)

Let us be clear about this plan, as it structures the remainder of the account. Bhattacharyya identifies three broad stages of subjectivity, each consisting in a distinctive level of freedom. The first is bodily subjectivity. In being aware of ourselves as bodies in space, we are aware of our determinate location in relation to other objects, and so our freedom to consider or to disengage with other objects in space and time. In psychic subjectivity we are aware of ourselves as mental subjects, whose direct intentional objects are representations. In this awareness, we recognize our freedom from our bodies and from our location in space and time, and the fact that we can entertain representations in the absence of any external object to which they correspond. In the final level of subjectivity, spiritual subjectivity, we recognize our freedom from those representations. We come to realize that our existence is not dependent upon our objects, but they depend upon us. At this point we intuit ourselves as spiritual subjects per se. We complete this process of self-knowledge, Bhattacharyya intimates, when we adopt the same cognitive attitude of freedom toward ourselves that we are able to develop in relation to our objects, an unbeatable sense of ourselves as pure subjects. We will turn shortly to the account of the successive grades of subjectivity and freedom, but first we must turn to Bhattacharyya's general account of introspection.

10.3 THE ABSOLUTE AND ITS ALTERNATIVE FORMS INTERPRETATION OF MAYA

The philosophical view propounded by Sankara is known as Advaita Vedanta / , Sankara maintains that Brahman is the only Reality and the world of multiplicity is false. The individual self or the jiva is non-different from Brahman and this is meant by him as Advaitism or non-dualism i.e., the Atman is identical with Brahman or Reality.

It is the view of the Advaita Vedanta that the very derivation of the word Brahman indicates its nature. The word is derived from the root 'brh' with the addition of the suffix man. The root 'brh' means to grow, to be great etc. The suffix man denotes unlimitedness. Hence Sankara regards

Brahman as Vrddhacamatvat Brahman . It indicates the unparalleled greatness of the Advaitic Absolute. According to him, Brahman is nirguna and nirvisesa. He is the Self or Atman. When viewed from the objective side He is Brahman. But when the subjective side is being considered He is the Atman or the eternal Self. Reality is fully realized only when He is viewed both subjectively and objectively. For, “Not only does Brahman denote the eternal Self or the reality of the external world: the inner Self of man, too, more often referred to as Atman, is Brahman.” 8 / Sankara defines Brahman by regarding Him as truth, knowledge, infinite and bliss.9 By sat is meant that Brahman alone is existence. He is the pure, uncontradicted existence. All other things are superimposed on him. When Brahman is regarded as jndna, it does not mean that Brahman is the object of knowledge, but knowledge itself, like satya, it is not an adjective, but the essence of Brahman which overcomes the dualism of the knower and the known. Again, though He is described as jndna, yet He is not transient. Again to guard against this, He is described as ananta, endless. Brahman is regarded as ananda to refer to Brahman as bliss. The word ‘ananda’ (bliss) does not mean ‘anandamaya’(blissful one) Sankara has emphatically refuted the view that Brahman is blissful. In his view the word bliss refers to His very nature. / . Sankara contends that from the transcendental point of view Brahman is nirguna. But from the point of view of man of the world He is qualified or saguna.

In this aspect he is the cause of the origination, sustenance and destruction of the world. Now cause is that which changes. If Brahman is regarded as the cause then the immutable nature of Brahman will be destroyed. To avoid this impasse the Advaita Vedantins recognise a saguna Brahman or Isvara. So in the view of Sankara from the transcendental point Nirguna Brahman is the only reality. But for the explanation of the world appearances three factors are simultaneously necessary, viz., maya, jiva, and Isvara. According to the Advaita Vedanta these three factors are interdependent. Sankara opines that Brahman as associated by maya is the Isvara or the Saguna Brahman. So maya ornescience - , constitutes the very essence of Isvara. Sankara does

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not accept God as an independent reality and accordingly he rejects all arguments viz., cosmological, moral, ontological, to prove the existence of God. God is not the ultimate reality. He has only a phenomenal reality. So Sankara maintains that, “The nirguna Brahman is distinct from Isvara in as much as the former is beyond the sphere of all activities. It cannot be related to time , space, cause etc. The multiple powers associated with Isvara do not apply to the Absolute whose freedom from all adjuncts is unqualified”.

According to Advaita Vedanta maya is an indescribable cosmic principle, because of which Brahman appears as Isvara, Jiva and the world. Sankara maintains that maya, mithyajnana, avidya, and ajnana are more or less interchangeable in meaning. Maya is the power of Isvara by which he creates this world. It consists of three gunas, viz., sattva, rajas and tamas. In this regard it is similar to the Prakrti of Samkhya. But unlike the Prakrti of Samkhya maya is not an independent reality. Prakrti in Samkhya is one of the two independent realities. 8 Maya is dependent on Isvara for its existence and functioning. Advaita Vedanta explains the appearance of many selves and the multiple world with this concept of maya. So maya can be regarded as the key-concept by which the Advaita Vedanta bridges the unbridgeable gulf between the appearance and reality. It is by accepting this inscrutable maya the Advaita-Vedahtins established the non-duality of Brahman, the Absolute. Maya has two kinds of powers viz., avarapa and viksepa. By its avarana sakti it conceals the real nature of Brahman and by its Yiksepa sakti it projects the multiple worlds. So it is because of maya that the non-conscious and imperfect world seems to be existing independently of Brahman. From the transcendental point of view, the world of our ordinary experience is unreal or false. When the knowledge of the true nature of Brahman arises, the world of our ordinary experience ceases to exist and is revealed as Brahman. Maya is indescribable or amrvacamyā. It cannot be regarded as real since Brahman is the only reality. Again it cannot be regarded as unreal, since then the world appearance will not be possible. It cannot be both real and unreal, as reality and unreality are

contradictory in nature. Again it is neither real or unreal, which will violate all logic. Thus, maya is indescribable as sat (real) or asat (unreal).

According to the Advaita Vedantins individual souls or the jivas are in essence non-different from Brahman. The Advaita Brahman appears as jiva being associated with the psycho-physical complexes. Sankara maintains that it is due to maya that the Absolute is associated with these upadhis (adjuncts) and becomes the God, the world, and the jivas. Again, it is because of this maya that the jiva or the empirical self appears to be subject to birth and death and also to be the doer of actions and the enjoyer of their fruits. From the transcendental point of view, the individual self is absolutely identical with Brahman. But in the empirical level this real nature of the jiva is not revealed. The transcendental jiva is not limited by time, space etc., and as such, is eternal, transcendental and all-pervading. It does not undergo births and deaths. It has neither origination nor destruction. But so far as the empirical existence is concerned, its existence is limited by time, space and matter or mind-body complex being associated with mciyd. It is not eternal as it undergoes births and deaths. It is also not pure, as it is subject to desire, hatred etc. As the empirical jiva does not realize its real nature so it thinks itself as bound and as subject to the sorrows and sufferings of this world. Bondage is not natural to the jivas, in its real nature it is unsurpassable bliss. The jivas are in bondage when they identified themselves with the mind-body complexes. So jiva? can come out of bondage only when they realize their real nature. And this is called liberation or mukii. According to the Advaita Vedantins liberation consisting in the realization of the real nature of the self or Brahman is of the nature of infinite bliss. So it is said that, "Liberation is the cessation of avidya which is said to be the bondage."

The general view of all the Advaita Vedantins is the same as with the view of Sruti. In the Sruti, it is said that sravana (hearing), manana (thinking) and mdidhyasana (meditation) for the realization of Brahman. Actually in the view of Sahkara immediate intuitive knowledge of Brahman is the means of liberation. But he maintains that sravana,

manana and nididhyasana are the internal means of liberation. These three internal means destroy the obstacles like doubt etc. about the real nature of the jiva. As a result Brahma ^ n a n a is attained. It is found that all the Advaita Vedantins agree on the point that liberation consists in the knowledge of Brahman as non-different from the jiva and that such, a knowledge is conveyed / by the Sruti only.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

- 1. Discuss the Subject as freedom.

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- 2. Write about the absolute and its alternative forms interpretation of Maya.

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10.4 LET US SUM UP

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya, also known as K.C. Bhattacharya, (12 May 1875 – 11 December 1949) was a philosopher at the University of Calcutta known for his method of "constructive interpretation" through which relations and problematic of ancient Indian philosophical systems are drawn out and developed so that they can be studied like problems of modern philosophy. He was especially interested in the problematic of how the mind (or consciousness) creates an apparently material universe. Bhattacharya encouraged the idea of an immersive cosmopolitanism in

which Indian systems of philosophy were modernized through assimilation and immersion rather than through a blind imitation of European ideas.

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya is an early comparative philosopher of the Indian colonial period. To overcome cultural subjection, he developed creative Vedāntic approaches to Kant and Hegel, and vice versa. Contributing to the fields of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and politics, he elaborated an intercultural framework through which to address the problems of knowledge of the self, subjectivity and freedom, and the alternation of Absolutes in philosophy, answering Kant's Critiques with Neo-Vedāntic analyses.

10.5 KEY WORDS

Absolute: In idealist philosophy, the Absolute is "the sum of all being, actual and potential". In monistic idealism, it serves as a concept for the "unconditioned reality which is either the spiritual ground of all being or the whole of things considered as a spiritual unity.

Advaita Vedānta: **Advaita Vedanta** is a school in Hinduism. People who believe in **Advaita** believe that their soul is not different from Brahman. The most famous Hindu philosopher who taught about **Advaita Vedanta** was Adi Shankara who lived in India more than a thousand years ago.

Colonial Period: The colonial history of the United States covers the history of European colonization of America from the early 16th century until the incorporation of the colonies into the United States of America. In the late 16th century, England, France, Spain, and the Netherlands launched major colonization programs in America.

Comparative Philosophy: **Comparative philosophy**—sometimes called cross-cultural **philosophy**—is a subfield of **philosophy** in which **philosophers** work on problems by intentionally setting into dialogue sources from across cultural, linguistic, and **philosophical** streams.

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Epistemology: Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge, justification, and the rationality of belief.

Indian Philosophy: Indians distinguish two classes of **Indian philosophies**: astika and nastika. The astika systems respect the Vedas to some degree. They are: Sankhya, Yoga, Vedanta, Mimamsa, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika. The nastika systems reject Vedic thought. They are: Jainism, Buddhism, and Lokayata.

Kant: Immanuel Kant was an influential Prussian German philosopher in the Age of Enlightenment. In his doctrine of transcendental idealism, he argued that space, time, and causation are mere sensibilities; "things-in-themselves" exist, but their nature is unknowable.

Metaphysics: Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that examines the fundamental nature of reality, including the relationship between mind and matter, between substance and attribute, and between potentiality and actuality

Neo-Vedānta: **Neo-Vedanta**, also called Hindu modernism, **neo-Hinduism**, Global Hinduism and Hindu Universalism, are terms to characterize interpretations of Hinduism that developed in the 19th century.

10.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

3. Discuss the Subject as freedom.
4. Write about the absolute and its alternative forms interpretation of Maya.

10.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 10.2
2. See Section 10.3

UNIT 11: S. RADHAKRISHNAN

STRUCTURE

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Life and Work
- 11.3 God and absolute
- 11.4 Intellect and intuition
- 11.5 The idealist view of life
- 11.6 Let us sum up
- 11.7 Key Words
- 11.8 Questions for Review
- 11.9 Suggested readings and references
- 11.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To discuss the Life and Work of Radhakrishnan
- To know God and absolute
- To know about Intellect and intuition
- To discuss the idealist view of life

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Radhakrishnan's salient features comprise universal outlook, synthesis of the East and the West in religion and philosophy, the spiritualism and humanism, and openness to the influences of science, art and values. The values, culture, tradition, religions and philosophies of different countries are in synthesis in Radhakrishnan's philosophy. His philosophy does not aim at merely a constructive synthesis, but at a creative assimilation of mystic perception and experience.

11.2 LIFE AND WORK

He was born on 5th September, 1888 at Tiruttani, a small village, forty miles northeast of Madras. He was the second child to his parents. From 1900 to 1904, he studied in Voorhees College, Vellore. Later he moved to Madras and studied in Madras Christian College. He rendered his service as a teacher in philosophy in Madras Presidency College and in the University of Mysore. He was Vice President from 1952 to 1962 that is for two consecutive terms. Later he became the President of the Indian Union securing 97.98% vote for the term of five years. His main works include: East And West, Eastern Religion and Western Thought, East and West in Religion, The Reign of Religion In The Contemporary Philosophy, Religion and Society, The Recovery of Faith, Indian Philosophy, An Idealist View of Life, The Hindu View of Life etc. Radhakrishnan had deep study of the classical literature. He studied the Indian philosophy in depth, which had influenced him very much. The study of Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, Commentaries on Brahman Sutra by Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbaraka, and others, The Dialogue of Buddha and The Buddhist and Jain Scriptures broadened his thought. Western philosophers such as Plato, Pontinus, Kant, Bradley, Bergson and Whitehead also influenced him in his writings. Amongst the contemporary thinkers of India, Gandhi and Tagore were his friends and they had definite influence on him. Radhakrishnan is a mystic philosopher. His religious thought serves as the data to his philosophy. Though he had widely read the ancient, medieval and modern philosophies, still for the real source of his writing he relies on his personal spiritual experiences.

Radhakrishnan in Tiruttani, near Madras. He did his BA with philosophy honours. He married Sivakamuamma in 1904 and had five daughters and a son. Radhakrishnan graduated with a Master's degree in Philosophy from the prestigious Madras Christian College.

He became a philosophy student by chance. One of his cousins who graduated from the same college passed on his philosophy textbooks to Radhakrishnan and that's how he picked his course.

Discovering Indian Identity through philosophy

Radhakrishnan graduated in 1906 with a Master's degree in Philosophy with flying colors. His thesis for Master's degree, "The Ethics of the Vedanta and Its Material Presupposition" was published two years later. That established his credentials as a great and brilliant philosopher in the national and international academic circles.

In writing the above, he showed that he was able to express abstract and obscure, and yet profound philosophical thoughts in simple intelligible language with ease and simplicity. His philosophical observations were grounded in Advaita Vedanta. He interpreted Vedanta in western terms for contemporary understanding and defended Hinduism against uninformed western criticism and showed that it was imbued with reason and logic.

To him, philosophy was a way of understanding life and his study of Indian philosophy served as a cultural therapy. Through his writings and lectures, he raised consciousness of the Indian students to a new sense of dignity and esteem, and enabled them to overcome certain inferiority complex prevalent because of western rule and domination in the country. He also made clear to them that their long and rich tradition required further evolution and exhorted them to cast off much that was corrupt and abhorrent.

He believed that it was a philosopher's duty to keep in touch with the past while stretching out to the future. This commitment to society, the crusading urgent tone in his scholarly writings, the modern note in his interpretations of even classical texts and his intellectual resistance to the deforming pressures of colonialism gave Dr. Radhakrishnan a distinct public image. He earned the reputation of being a bridge-builder between India and the West.

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Philosophy and teaching became his first love. He became one of the few popular lecturers of philosophy, a subject that was usually considered as very dry!

Popular Teacher

Dr. Radhakrishnan's popularity with the students was seen when he was transferred from the University of Mysore, where he was teaching philosophy at Maharaja's College. The students carried him in a specially constructed carriage of flowers all the way to Railway Station. He taught his students to raise their curiosity and evoked in them admiration for Indian culture and ethos.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "teachers should be the best minds in the country". This approach was not limited to study and interpretation of the past, but he engaged in interpreting the movements in the country then led by Gandhi and Nehru. He was able to articulate through "sophisticated and exalted analysis of Gandhi's work and thought and provide the ideological armor for Nehru's foreign policy."

When he was less than 30 years old, he was offered professorship in Calcutta University. From there he moved to become the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936. International recognition of his scholarship came in 1936 when he was invited to fill the Chair of Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University, a position he retained for almost 16 years. His mastery of the subject and clarity of thought and expression made him a much sought after teacher. He became very popular also for his warm heartedness and his ability to draw out people. This aspect of his personality continued to win him countless admirers throughout his long and distinguished public life. Later he was appointed the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University and two years later, headed the Sayaji Rao Chair of Indian Culture and Civilization in Banaras.

Political Appointments

It is because of such intellectual pursuits as an academician that, despite not being part of Congress party, Dr. Radhakrishnan was selected to represent the country in several international forums. In 1931 he was nominated to the League of Nations Committee for International Cooperation. When India became independent Radhakrishnan represented India at UNESCO and also as Ambassador of India to the Soviet Union from 1949 to 1952. He was also elected to the Constituent Assembly of India. In 1952, he was elected as the Vice-president of India for two terms. During this tenure the country conferred on him its highest civilian honor 'Bharat Ratna' in 1954 in recognition of his meritorious service to the nation and humankind.

When he was elected President, Bertrand Russel commented, "It is an honor to philosophy that Dr. Radhakrishnan should be President of India and I, as a philosopher, take special pleasure in this. Plato aspired for philosophers to become kings and it is a tribute to India that she should make a philosopher her president." It was a glorious period for Indian democracy that an eminent educationist, aloof from politics but with an international acclaim as a profound scholar, was elected to be the President of India.

Dr. Radhakrishnan saw during his terms in office an increasing need for world unity and universal fellowship. The urgency of this need was pressed home to Radhakrishnan by what he saw as the unfolding crises throughout the world. At the time of his taking up the office of Vice-President, the Korean War was already in full swing. Political tensions with China in the early 1960s followed by the hostilities between India and Pakistan dominated Dr. Radhakrishnan's presidency. Moreover, the Cold War divided East and West leaving each side suspicious of the other and on the defensive. Dr. Radhakrishnan retired from public life in 1967. He spent the last eight years of his life at the home he built in Mylapore, Madras, and died on April 17, 1975.

Teachers' Day Celebrations

It was only natural for Dr. Radhakrishnan to suggest to his friends who wanted to celebrate his birthday when he was the President of the country that it be celebrated as 'Teachers Day', and thus pay tribute to teachers who shape the future citizens of the country. Since then, 5th September, the birthday of Dr. Radhakrishnan, is remembered and celebrated as Teachers' Day because he fundamentally remained a teacher all his life, whether he held the offices of an Ambassador, Vice-President or the President. The teaching profession was his first love, and those who studied under him held him in high esteem with gratitude for his great qualities as a teacher.

How he carried his vocation and habits as a teacher stood in good stead when he was Vice-president of India (26 May 1952 – 12 May 1962). In the long ten years of infancy of the Republic, as he presided over the Upper House of the Parliament, there were several occasions when political leaders rose simultaneously to argue and present their own viewpoints. The teacher in Dr. Radhakrishnan would outsmart all others and bring about peace to prevail. It is said that he would calm the atmosphere in an unusual way, by reciting verses from the Bhagavad Gita or Bible to instill discipline within the crowd. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru once remarked that "Dr. Radhakrishnan made the Parliament sessions seem more like family gatherings."

Jawaharlal Nehru paid his ultimate tribute when he said: "He has served his country in many capacities. But above all, he is a great Teacher from whom all of us have learnt much and will continue to learn. It is India's peculiar privilege to have a great philosopher, a great educationist and a great humanist as her President. That in itself shows the kind of men we honor and respect."

Nature of his philosophy

His basic philosophical position is of a kind of a synthesis of Advaita Vedanta and the philosophy of Absolute Idealism. Like Vedanta he

believes that the reality is one, like Absolute Idealism, he shows that everything is a necessary aspect of the One. So, it can broadly be described as a philosophy of monistic idealism. Since Radhakrishnan conceives reality as spiritual, he is an idealist. He realized the need for a re-awakening of the soul and a recovery of the spiritual life. Thus his philosophical thinking seems to be an attempt to illustrate that the ultimate nature of the universe is spiritual. Because of his tremendous emphasis on spirituality, he appears to be a

11.3 GOD AND ABSOLUTE

Radhakrishnan conceives the nature of the absolute as monistic. In other words, the absolute in itself is essentially one. He has come to realize that the world expresses a unity within its process. This is the reason why he emphasises the monistic character of the absolute. The absolute is conceived by Radhakrishnan as 'Pure Consciousness', 'Pure Freedom', and Infinite Possibility.' According to Radhakrishnan, the Absolute has to be spiritual. It is conceived as a free spirit. It is free in such a way that there is nothing to limit it. Its freedom is uninterrupted. The absolute is also infinite. It is self-grounded and is the foundation of everything else. Since it is infinite it is changeless. It is also self-existent and complete-in-itself. It is also eternal in the sense of being timeless. Radhakrishnan calls the Absolute 'the whole of perfection'. Because of these reasons he asserts that the Absolute is beyond all kinds of expression.

Absolute and God

Radhakrishnan distinguishes between the Absolute and God. He feels that in order to explain the universe it is necessary to think of a principle that would account for the order and purpose of the universe. He also feels that there has to be a principle, a God- a non-temporal and actual being by which the indeterminateness of creativity can be transmitted into a determinate principle. So it implies that the Divine Intelligence- the creative power- has to be conceived as the intermediary between the Absolute Being and the cosmic process. It is here that the principle of God appears in the philosophy of Radhakrishnan. The supreme has been

conceived as revealing itself in two ways; Absolute and Ishwara. God is the Absolute in action; it is God, the creator. The real in relation to itself is the Absolute and the real in relation to the creation is God. He believes that the Absolute is the object of metaphysical aspiration and God is of religious aspiration.

Reconciliation between Sankara and Ramanuja

Radhakrishnan reconciles the views of Sankara and Ramanuja by maintaining that the Brahman of Sankara is Absolute and that of Ramanuja is God. God is a person, but the Absolute is not. God is an object of the intellect, but the Absolute is known through intuition. The Absolute is pre-cosmic God and God is the projected power of the Absolute. Intuition is higher than intellect and it overcomes the dualism of subject and object. Our thought is limited, and when it tries to grasp the Supra rational Absolute, it imposes its own limitations on the former. Thus, God is the Absolute pressed into the moulds of thought, which can't do away with the distinction between the self and the other; but this distinction is overcome by intuition, which is Supra-rational.

Since he considers God as the creative principle of the world, he presents a spiritualistic account of creation and the world. The universe is conceived as expressing an aspect of the Divine plan. The world is created by God. The world has a beginning and an end. God is not separate from it. God is said to be the past, the present and the future of the world; and yet he is quite different from the world. This distinction is between the creator and the created. Creation is the actualization of one of the inherent possibilities of the Absolute. Radhakrishnan explains that the Spirit enters into the spirit of the non-spirit to realize one of the infinite possibilities that exist potentially in the spirit. He also speaks of the accidental nature of the world where he affirms that the creation is a free act of God. In other words, creation is not a necessary act for the creator. He also says that though the universe is an accident, it is real so far as it is the Absolute's accident.

Human Being and Soul

In explaining the nature of soul, Radhakrishnan seems to be a realistic. He accepts the ultimate spiritual nature of the soul and at the same time, he asserts the reality and value of the biological life also. He affirms that human being cannot be fully known through the science alone. There is still something in man\woman which is beyond intellect and senses. So, according to Radhakrishnan, there are two aspects of human being. They are known as finite and infinite aspects of man\woman. Radhakrishnan used the word 'soul' in a very wider sense; so much as even those bodily activities which have tendency towards self-transcendence are called as soulactivities. Human being, unlike other beings, has a peculiar ability to reflect and to plan. He\she can go beyond himself\herself. Radhakrishnan calls it as 'self-transcendence.' For him it is one of the important aspects of the soul. Radhakrishnan defines the finite aspects of man\woman as those aspects that are determined by the empirical or environmental conditions. He calls this aspect of man\woman differently- 'the empirical man', 'the physical man', 'the natural man', 'the bodily man' etc. He also speaks of the infinite nature of human being. Beyond his\her external conditioning, there lies a capacity of self-transcendence. It is different and higher than the empirical. Radhakrishnan calls it as 'the spirit' in man /woman. In other words, the infinite aspect of man\woman consists in his\her spirituality.

Karma

Everything in the universe is an effect of its past and is the cause of its future changes at the same time. It embodies the energy of the past as well as causes changes in the future. Karma is not so much a principle of reward and punishment but as one of continuity. Karma has two aspects, retrospective and prospective, continuity with the past as well as creative freedom of the self. The karmas bind us with the past by giving structure to our self and thereby determining it to that extent, yet man\woman is free in his\her actions and acquires fresh potencies. Radhakrishnan says that we are both determined and free. Our actions are determined by our

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past Karmas. In whatever we do we are determined by the character of our self. The dynamic organisation of the tendencies of self is evidently a matter of our past karmas. But still we are free in our actions and have wide scope for fresh activity. Radhakrishnan removes the prevailing misconceptions by asserting that the theory of Karma is not one based on reward and punishment and it is also wrong to think that moral and virtuous Karmas lead to success and evil to failure.

Freedom and Self Determination

Free will is action done by self-determination. When an individual performs an action of his\her own choice, the act done is a self-determined one. Radhakrishnan here explains the meaning of the word self-determination. A self is an organised whole, it represents a form of relatedness. Self-determination means action done by the whole of the self's nature. Only that action is free or self-determined in which "the individual employs his\her whole nature, searches the different possibilities and selects one which commends itself to his\her whole self."

Human Being as Relatively

Free There is no complete freedom in human being's action; it is only God who is absolutely free. When the self becomes co-extensive with one's whole being only then the self becomes absolutely free. Human being is only relatively free; it is a matter only of degrees. When an action is done by the whole self, we are most free. But our actions are least free when done by sheer habit or convention. A human action is motivated with some ends or purposes. All his\her activities are regulated towards some purposes, and, therefore, our actions are determined by some external goals or ends in view. But our actions are also governed by our past. If men\women were free from their past deeds, there remains no moral responsibility on them. Therefore, no action is absolutely free either in the human or in the external world. There is the continuity of the past in the present and the present conditions the future.

Radhakrishnan is against the view of pre-destination, in which God is the sovereign who works without law or principle. For him life is a gracious gift of God, who expresses his sovereignty through law. He says, "Such a view of divine sovereignty is unethical. God's love is manifested in and through law."

Importance of Rebirth

Dr. Radhakrishnan speaks of rebirth in a concrete sense. According to him rebirths are essential for the realisation of the distant goal – salvation. It cannot be realised in a single life. As the span of life is short and realisation of union with God is a far-off goal, pursuit in the series of rebirths is essential. Radhakrishnan conceives that rebirths are essential for the realisation of the different possibilities existing in us.

Salvation

Radhakrishnan believes in the simultaneous salvation of all and not individual salvation. As God is the creator of the world, so long as the world lasts, God must continue as God without becoming one with Absolute. But the individual (jiv who is a creature of God must remain with God till the latter enters the Absolute. The world cannot disappear if there is a single soul without salvation. So individual salvation can only be incomplete salvation. The self is the most integrated and highest product. The more a human being pursues his/ her ideals, the more integrated and organised he/she becomes. The highest degree of unity in an individual self is attained when life is identified with one supreme purpose. The supreme purpose of human being is to become God. The cosmos is working towards that end; it is rushing for the union with God. It is by meditation and ethical life that an individual breaks off his/her narrow individualism and unites with the spiritual universalism. When all selves obtain communion and oneness with God, when all become prophets and seers, the world realises its destiny. The final salvation of an individual is dependent on the cosmic salvation. At the ultimate end all the selves unite with the Absolute. There is achieved then the freedom

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from rebirth, cessation of worldly existence and eternal oneness with Saccidananda. The final salvation is attained when the selves lose their individuality and get united with the all-pervading Absolute. The selves merge in the Brahman and they lose their identity, existence, name and form.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss the Life and Work of Radhakrishnan

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2. How do you know God and absolute?

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11.4 INTELLECT AND INTUITION

Man\woman looks for meaning and direction in life. Reason alone cannot give meaning to him\her. Man\woman has a natural tendency to transcend/go beyond the phenomenal world. There is an innate impulse for perfection. He also speaks of universal religion, where all religions come together and contribute towards each other's growth. Authentic religion is "the wisdom of love that redeems suffering man". Religion is not a set of dogmas, beliefs, rituals, rites, creeds etc., but it must lead to Inner Realization. It is not institutionalized. He dreamed of a secular

India/India as secular nation. Secularism can't reject religion. Secularism is an attitude of respect for all religious faith or anything, which human beings hold as sacred. It is based on the sanctity of individuals. The essence of democracy is consideration for others, respecting each one as sacred and encouraging the rich variety and diversity. The aim of democracy is 'just society'.

11.5 THE IDEALIST VIEW OF LIFE

Radhakrishnan was not a follower any one system of thought, but open to various viewpoints presented by different philosophers. Among all the viewpoints, of course, he was more at home with the metaphysics, epistemology and ethics of Advaita Vedanta which became his line of thinking. Metaphysics Following Sankara, Radhakrishnan was of the opinion that reality is Brahman that is one, spiritual, transcendent and absolute. He called it spiritual because it is not material. He called it transcendental because world cannot exhaust it and it is absolute because it is one, pure consciousness, pure freedom with infinite possibility. Brahman is indescribable and manifests itself as God who is the creator of the world. According to him, there are two worlds: the material world that science studies and the spiritual world that the spiritually inclined perceive. He calls it transcendence or infinite aspect of soul. Upanishads speak of it as "sarvam khalvidam Brahma" – everything permeated by Brahman or the spirit which cannot be perceived in any other way. This spirit comes to its fullest expression in human who has a unique position. According to him human is a peculiar combination of egoism and self-transcendence, of selfishness and universal love. This is due to finite and infinite aspects in human. Thus human has a special role in creation. Human is a being capable of selftranscendence, self-reflection and planning. Since human is embodied spirit (finite-infinite, with body and soul), one cannot attain one's ultimate destiny directly. Therefore the first aspect of one's destiny would be freedom from embodied existence. But although that may make one free, that will not put an end to creation; and so long as the cosmic process does not come to an end, complete unity will not be established. Therefore, the final aspect of one's destiny must be the realization of unity at the end of the cosmic process. One

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cannot be free from cosmic process till all others are saved. The world process will reach its final goal when every individual will realize Divinity. Radhakrishnan calls it “Sarvamukti”. Once this is realized, the purpose of creation is fulfilled and everything will go back to Brahman.

Epistemology

Radhakrishnan accepts three sources of knowledge - sense experience, intellectual cognition (discursive reasoning) and intuitive apprehension. Sense experience acquaints us with the outer characteristics of the external world. We come to know the sensible qualities of the objects. The data yielded by sense experience constitute the subject matter of natural science. Discursive reason or what Radhakrishnan calls logical knowledge depends on analysis and synthesis of the data of perception. He calls logical knowledge indirect and symbolic. We are able to handle and control the objects of nature with such knowledge. Logical knowledge and sense-experience are the means by which we are capable of practical purposes and control over our environment. Though he accepts the two means of knowledge, they fail to reveal the “original integrity of the perceived object” (IVL, p.106). Intellectual symbols cannot represent perceived realities, as what they are. Moreover, the entire life of feeling and emotion, ‘the delights and pains of the flesh, the agonies and raptures of the soul’ remain out off from thought. He thinks of a higher mode of apprehension where thought, feeling and volition are blended into a whole, where there is no duality, the distinction between the knowledge of a thing and its being. It is a type of knowing by becoming. Radhakrishnan calls it Intuitive Apprehension. In the intuitive apprehension the knower establishes an identity with the known. This can be made clear by taking the example of anger. No intellectual deliberation can give us any idea of the emotion of anger.

We can know it only by being angry. Thus we say intuition establishes a unity – almost an identity between the knower and the known. The object known is seen not as an ‘object outside the self, but as a part of the self’. When he speaks of intuition he uses the word “integral insight.” This

doesn't mean that he makes a compartmentalization in the knowing faculty of human. Rather he says "human's awareness is broadly speaking of three kinds: the perceptual, the logical and the intuitive; manas or the sense-mind, vijnana or logical and ananda which for our present purposes may be defined as spiritual intuition. All three belong to the human consciousness". When Radhakrishnan uses the term "integral experience" to refer to intuition, he emphasizes three things. First, intuition is integral in the sense that it coordinates and synthesizes all other experiences. It integrates all other experiences into a more unified whole. Second, intuition is integral as it forms the basis of all other experiences. In other words, Radhakrishnan holds that all experiences are at bottom intuitional. Third, intuition is integral in the sense that the results of the experience are integrated into the life of the individual. For Radhakrishnan, intuition finds expression in the world of action and social relations. Intuition is the ultimate form of experience for Radhakrishnan. It is ultimate in the sense that intuition constitutes the fullest and therefore the most authentic realization of the Real (Brahman). The ultimacy of intuition is also accounted for by Radhakrishnan in that it is the ground of all other forms of experience.

Finally, intuition, according to Radhakrishnan, is ineffable. It escapes the limits of language and logic, and there is "no conception by which we can define it" (IVL 96). In such experiences, thought and reality come together and a creative merging of subject and object results" (IVL 92). While the experience itself transcends expression, it also provokes it (IVL 95). The provocation of expression is, for Radhakrishnan, testimony to the creative impulse of intuition. All creativity and indeed all progress in the various spheres of life is the inevitable result of intuition.

Religion and Ethics

Radhakrishnan's ethical teachings must be understood from the background of his religious faith and metaphysics. Every philosophy and religion begins with an intuition. When the need of explaining intuition

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to others, need of language comes up. When we are born in a tradition the basic content of intuition comes to us as a 'condition of sensibility,' in which we are born, brought up and have our being. In this sense, Radhakrishnan 'never lost faith in a spiritual power beyond the experiential flux of phenomena' From his study of Indian culture he got two more basic principles namely; universality of outlook and democracy in view of life. (This universality of outlook refers to his faith in the basic oneness of humanity, as all are identical with Brahman or sharing the same qualities of God from whom all came or received the common quest. Democracy in view of life refers to the tolerance of different points of views, different ways of looking at and different ways of living etc. When we speak of Religion, as Radhakrishnan understands it, we must make a distinction between Religion and religions. Religion for him is personal intuitive experience. It is an insight into the nature of reality (darsana) and experience of reality (anubhava) (HVL p.15). It is an inward and personal experience which unifies all values and organizes all experiences. It is the reaction to the whole of reality by the whole human. In his book, *Idealistic view of Life*, he calls it spiritual life, the culmination of intellectual, moral and aesthetic activity or a combination of them.(IVL p. 88-89). Different religions according to him are different explanations of this experience. In the course of time, in its effort to explain the intuitive experience there came up external structures in the form of rites, ceremonies, institutions, programmes etc. According to him when the central fact touches a devotee, an experience within, of abounding vitality or inner life which transcends consciousness is the result. When overwhelmed by this, a new humility is born in the soul, cleanses it of pride, prejudice, privilege thoughts and creates a feeling of tenderness and compassion for one's fellow humans. According to him when such humans abound in society, a difference in the life of the society is the result (S. Radhakrishnan, *A Centenary Tribute*, p. 376). According to him, the need of the time is to go from religions to religion, and for that two things are to be emphasized: inner experience and ethics. Religion also means spirituality which is impossible without ethics, which is the sum total of values and virtues that makes social life smooth and good. Thus he says: "After all, what counts is not creed but conduct.

By their fruits ye shall know them and not by their beliefs. Religion is not correct belief but righteous living. 'Religion is universal to the human race. Wherever justice and charity have force of law and ordinance there is God's kingdom', there is Religion. The truly religious never worry about other people's beliefs. Look at the great sayings of Jesus; 'other sheep I have which are not of this fold' (HVL p.37). Jesus' ethics is universal. He says "do unto others what you like them to do to you". When we have such an ethical stand, we are creators of God's kingdom or Religion. While speaking about Hindu ethics Radhakrishnan explains the purushartas (the four supreme ends of human craving). He writes 'ancient Rishis of India were not only spiritual masters, they were also psychologists, who looked at the motives behind our actions, and they realized that desires or cravings are the very center of our life. Each of these cravings tries for satisfaction. Basically they are four: parental instincts and sexual instincts (kama), desire for power and wealth (artha), desire for social harmony and common good (dharma), and union with the unseen (moksa). These desires are not distinct and independent, but always try to win upper hand and win over the other. The greatness of the person consists in making a co-operation of the four and bringing an overarching unity in life. For each one is a whole in oneself' (HVL p. 56). The meaning of the word Dharma is really complex. The whole of Ethics could be reduced to this concept. Etymologically it comes from 'dhr' means to hold. Dharma is that which holds. It is classified differently. First, as vyaktidharma (or individual duty) and sadharana dharma or ordinary duty. When dharma is applied to social life it becomes vyaktidharma and on the basis of it again we have varnadharma and ashramadharma. There are four varnas: Brahmana, kshatriya, vaisya and sudra, and that is based on nature and capability and each one has to perfect one's nature. Then ashramadharma based on four ashramas: brahmacharya for student, garhastya for family people, and then when one grows in age Vanaprasta and sannyasa. Then Sadharanadharma is obligatory on every one irrespective of caste, creed and status. This consists of practicing charity, peace, benevolence, fortitude etc. According to Radhakrishnan freedom is one of the foundations of ethics. Freedom can be understood in three levels.

Psychologically it is freedom to act this way or that way. Moral freedom is freedom to choose between alternatives with knowledge and volition. But here knowledge may not be perfect, so error, evil or ignorance may occur. This is what we see around us. Human made enormous progress in knowledge and scientific inventions. But along with that corresponding moral and spiritual progress has not happened, rather declined in standard. Our natures are becoming mechanized, void within, we are reduced to atoms in a community, members of a mob. Science and experiments of communism and capitalism brought possibilities of material well-being that has ability to wipe out poverty and illiteracy but actually they are not going away due to lack of fellowship and co-operation, due to mutual conflict, lack of confidence and exploitation. All these come up from baser passions of human nature, its selfishness and hatred, its insolence and fanaticism. Thus we must go beyond psychological and moral freedom into spiritual freedom that leads to integral liberation, liberation of the 'whole human', not like economic or political liberation. For the cultivation of a complete human being, we require the cultivation of inward peace, the grace and joy of souls overflowing in love. For this all-round growth needs physical efficiency, intellectual alertness and spiritual awakening.

Education

The universities are the means to a new world and higher education is an instrument in solving problems. The object of education is to bring forth the ethical human, the human in whom all the 6 capacities are fully developed. Being truly educated means having the light to see the truth and the strength to make it prevail.

Social and Political Philosophy

The cornerstone of Radhakrishnan's social philosophy is the axiom that all human beings are of equal worth, entitled to the same fundamental rights. The human individual is the most concrete embodiment of the

Spirit on earth and anything that damages one's dignity is morally wrong. "The state that governs least is the best." Democratic government is the most satisfactory since it rests on the consent of the governed.

Economics Social justice is possible with economic justice. In capitalism, there is unequal concentration of economic power. He also opposed communism and fascism. Radhakrishnan advocated an international state in which the differences need not be fused, but they need not conflict.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.
- ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

3. What do you know about Intellect and intuition?

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4. Discuss the idealist view of life.

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11.6 LET US SUM UP

Radhakrishnan's philosophy can be termed as monistic idealism. One of his main concerns was to give a spiritual outlook to everything. He also makes a distinction between the Absolute and God. The world is considered as the creative work of God. But at the same time both God and the world are different. The credit goes to Radhakrishnan for providing a holistic understanding of human person. He affirms the

spiritual nature of human soul but at the same time gives due respect to the value of the biological aspect of human person. He provides a very reasonable and practical explanation of the theory of karma by removing the traditional misconception regarding it. While speaking about the self-determination, he assumes that the human being is relatively free. His explanation on the cosmic salvation explains that cosmic salvation is possible when all identify themselves with the Absolute losing each one's identity. Though many consider him as an interpreter, the greatness of Radhakrishnan lies on the fact that he presented his philosophical conviction systematically and with an academic precision.

11.7 KEY WORDS

Mysticism: The word mysticism has been derived from the Greek word *mystikos*. It is the pursuit of communion with, identity with, or conscious awareness of an ultimate reality, divinity, spiritual truth, or God through direct experience, intuition, instinct or insight.

Karma; The universal causal law by which good or bad actions determine the future modes of an individual's existence. Karma represents the ethical dimension of the process of rebirth.

Fanaticism: Fanaticism is a belief or behavior involving uncritical zeal, particularly for an extreme religious or political cause, or with an obsessive enthusiasm for a pastime or hobby. The fanatic displays very strict standards and little tolerance for contrary ideas or opinions.

Liberalism: Liberalism is the belief in the importance of individual freedom. This belief is widely accepted today throughout the world, and was recognized as an important value by many philosophers throughout history.

11.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is the main philosophical stand point of Radhakrishnan?
2. What are the factors that shaped the philosophy of Radhakrishnan?
3. How does Radhakrishnan make a distinction between the Absolute and God?
4. Discuss the Life and Work of Radhakrishnan

5. How do you know God and absolute?
6. What do you know about Intellect and intuition?
7. Discuss the idealist view of life.

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11.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 11.2
2. See Section 11.3

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 11.4
2. See Section 11.5

UNIT 12: J. KRISHNAMARUTI

STRUCTURE

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 The self- The Concepts and Meaning of the Words 'Philosophy' and 'Education'
- 12.3 Freedom from the known
- 12.4 Inner revolution
- 12.5 Let us sum up
- 12.6 Key Words
- 12.7 Questions for Review
- 12.8 Suggested readings and references
- 12.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit we can able to know:

- To know about the self- The Concepts and Meaning of the Words 'Philosophy' and 'Education';
- To understand Freedom from the known;
- To know about the Inner revolution.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Krishnamurti was not an educator in strict sense of the term, as he had no formal qualifications to either propagate or promote educational goals or establish educational institutions. His concern for what he considered 'right education' was clearly not an attempt to provide temporary solutions to society's problems or seeks to correct them through merely educating people to read or write. Krishnamurti has been described as a 'revolutionary teacher [...] who worked tirelessly to awaken people—to awaken their intelligence, to awaken their sense of responsibility, to awaken a flame of discontent', and this commitment to awakening the

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consciousness of people was undoubtedly based on a 'strong moral passion'. " In this chapter we will be analysing first the concept of philosophy and education. And then clarify the notion of the philosophy of education and Krishnamurti's contribution towards the philosophy of education.

Jiddu Krishnamurti (/ˈdʒɪduːkrɪʃnəˈmɜːrti/; 11 May 1895 – 17 February 1986) was an Indian philosopher, speaker and writer. In his early life he was groomed to be the new World Teacher but later rejected this mantle and withdrew from the Theosophy organization behind it. His interests included psychological revolution, the nature of mind, meditation, inquiry, human relationships, and bringing about radical change in society. He stressed the need for a revolution in the psyche of every human being and emphasised that such revolution cannot be brought about by any external entity, be it religious, political, or social.

Krishnamurti was born in India. In early adolescence he had a chance encounter with occultist and theosophist Charles Webster Leadbeater on the grounds of the Theosophical Society headquarters at Adyar in Madras. He was subsequently raised under the tutelage of Annie Besant and Leadbeater, leaders of the Society at the time, who believed him to be a 'vehicle' for an expected World Teacher. As a young man, he disavowed this idea and dissolved the Order of the Star in the East, an organisation that had been established to support it.

Krishnamurti said he had no allegiance to any nationality, caste, religion, or philosophy, and spent the rest of his life travelling the world, speaking to large and small groups and individuals. He wrote many books, among them *The First and Last Freedom*, *The Only Revolution*, and *Krishnamurti's Notebook*. Many of his talks and discussions have been published. His last public talk was in Madras, India, in January 1986, a month before his death at his home in Ojai, California. His supporters — working through non-profit foundations in India, Great Britain and the United States — oversee several independent schools based on his views on education. They continue to transcribe and distribute his thousands of

talks, group and individual discussions, and writings by use of a variety of media formats and languages.

Krishnamurti was unrelated to his contemporary U. G. Krishnamurti (1918–2007), although the two men had a number of meetings.

Family background and childhood

Krishnamurti in 1910

The date of birth of Krishnamurti is a matter of dispute. Mary Lutyens determines it to be 12 May 1895 but Christine Williams notes the unreliability of birth registrations in that period and that statements claiming dates ranging from 4 May 1895 to 25 May 1896 exist. He used calculations based on a published horoscope to derive a date of 11 May 1895 but "retains a measure of scepticism" about it. His birthplace was the small town of Madanapalle in Madras Presidency (modern-day Chittoor District in Andhra Pradesh). He was born in a Telugu-speaking family. His father, Jiddu Narayaniah, was employed as an official of the British colonial administration. Krishnamurti was fond of his mother Sanjeevamma, who died when he was ten. His parents had a total of eleven children, of whom six survived childhood.

In 1903 the family settled in Cudappah, where Krishnamurti had contracted malaria during a previous stay. He would suffer recurrent bouts of the disease over many years. A sensitive and sickly child, "vague and dreamy", he was often taken to be intellectually disabled, and was beaten regularly at school by his teachers and at home by his father. In memoirs written when he was eighteen years old Krishnamurti described psychic experiences, such as seeing his sister, who had died in 1904, and his late mother. During his childhood he developed a bond with nature that was to stay with him for the rest of his life.

Krishnamurti's father retired at the end of 1907. Being of limited means he sought employment at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at

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Adyar. In addition to being a Brahmin, Narayaniah had been a Theosophist since 1882. He was eventually hired by the Society as a clerk, moving there with his family in January 1909. Narayaniah and his sons were at first assigned to live in a small cottage which was located just outside the society's compound.

Discovered

In April 1909, Krishnamurti first met Charles Webster Leadbeater, who claimed clairvoyance. Leadbeater had noticed Krishnamurti on the Society's beach on the Adyar river, and was amazed by the "most wonderful aura he had ever seen, without a particle of selfishness in it." [a] Ernest Wood, an adjutant of Leadbeater's at the time, who helped Krishnamurti with his homework, considered him to be "particularly dim-witted". Leadbeater was convinced that the boy would become a spiritual teacher and a great orator; the likely "vehicle for the Lord Maitreya" in Theosophical doctrine, an advanced spiritual entity periodically appearing on Earth as a World Teacher to guide the evolution of humankind.

In her biography of Krishnamurti, Pupul Jayakar quotes him speaking of that period in his life some 75 years later: "The boy had always said "I will do whatever you want". There was an element of subservience, obedience. The boy was vague, uncertain, woolly; he didn't seem to care what was happening. He was like a vessel with a large hole in it, whatever was put in, went through, nothing remained."

Krishnamurti by Tomás Povedano

Following his discovery by Leadbeater, Krishnamurti was nurtured by the Theosophical Society in Adyar. Leadbeater and a small number of trusted associates undertook the task of educating, protecting, and generally preparing Krishnamurti as the "vehicle" of the expected World Teacher. Krishnamurti (often later called Krishnaji) and his younger brother Nityananda (Nitya) were privately tutored at the Theosophical

compound in Madras, and later exposed to a comparatively opulent life among a segment of European high society as they continued their education abroad. Despite his history of problems with schoolwork and concerns about his capacities and physical condition, the 14-year-old Krishnamurti was able to speak and write competently in English within six months. Lutyens says that later in life Krishnamurti came to view his "discovery" as a life-saving event. When he was asked in later life what he thought would have happened to him if he had not been 'discovered' by Leadbeater he would unhesitatingly reply "I would have died".

During this time Krishnamurti had developed a strong bond with Annie Besant and came to view her as a surrogate mother. His father, who had initially assented to Besant's legal guardianship of Krishnamurti, was pushed into the background by the swirl of attention around his son. In 1912 he sued Besant to annul the guardianship agreement. After a protracted legal battle Besant took custody of Krishnamurti and Nitya. As a result of this separation from family and home Krishnamurti and his brother (whose relationship had always been very close) became more dependent on each other, and in the following years often travelled together.

In 1911 the Theosophical Society established the Order of the Star in the East (OSE) to prepare the world for the expected appearance of the World Teacher. Krishnamurti was named as its head, with senior Theosophists assigned various other positions. Membership was open to anybody who accepted the doctrine of the Coming of the World Teacher. Controversy soon erupted, both within the Theosophical Society and outside it, in Hindu circles and the Indian press.

Growing up

Mary Lutyens, a biographer and friend of Krishnamurti, says that there was a time when he believed that he was to become the World Teacher after correct spiritual and secular guidance and education. Another biographer describes the daily program imposed on him by Leadbeater

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and his associates, which included rigorous exercise and sports, tutoring in a variety of school subjects, Theosophical and religious lessons, yoga and meditation, as well as instruction in proper hygiene and in the ways of British society and culture. At the same time Leadbeater assumed the role of guide in a parallel mystical instruction of Krishnamurti; the existence and progress of this instruction was at the time known only to a select few.

While he showed a natural aptitude in sports, Krishnamurti always had problems with formal schooling and was not academically inclined. He eventually gave up university education after several attempts at admission. He did take to foreign languages, in time speaking several with some fluency.

His public image, cultivated by the Theosophists, "was to be characterized by a well-polished exterior, a sobriety of purpose, a cosmopolitan outlook and an otherworldly, almost beatific detachment in his demeanor." Demonstrably, "all of these can be said to have characterized Krishnamurti's public image to the end of his life." It was apparently clear early on that he "possessed an innate personal magnetism, not of a warm physical variety, but nonetheless emotive in its austerity, and inclined to inspire veneration." However, as he was growing up, Krishnamurti showed signs of adolescent rebellion and emotional instability, chafing at the regimen imposed on him, visibly uncomfortable with the publicity surrounding him, and occasionally expressing doubts about the future prescribed for him.

Photograph of Krishnamurti with his brother Nitya, Annie Besant, and others in London 1911

Krishnamurti in England in 1911 with his brother Nitya and the Theosophists Annie Besant and George Arundale

Krishnamurti and Nitya were taken to England in April 1911. During this trip Krishnamurti gave his first public speech to members of the OSE in

London.[29] His first writings had also started to appear, published in booklets by the Theosophical Society and in Theosophical and OSE-affiliated magazines. Between 1911 and the start of World War I in 1914, the brothers visited several other European countries, always accompanied by Theosophist chaperones.[31] Meanwhile, Krishnamurti had for the first time acquired a measure of personal financial independence, thanks to a wealthy benefactress, American Mary Melissa Hoadley Dodge, who was domiciled in England.

After the war, Krishnamurti embarked on a series of lectures, meetings and discussions around the world, related to his duties as the Head of the OSE, accompanied by Nitya, by then the Organizing Secretary of the Order. Krishnamurti also continued writing. The content of his talks and writings revolved around the work of the Order and of its members in preparation for the Coming. He was initially described as a halting, hesitant, and repetitive speaker, but his delivery and confidence improved, and he gradually took command of the meetings.

In 1921 Krishnamurti fell in love with Helen Knothe, a 17-year-old American whose family associated with the Theosophists. The experience was tempered by the realisation that his work and expected life-mission precluded what would otherwise be considered normal relationships and by the mid-1920s the two of them had drifted apart.

Life-altering experiences

In 1922 Krishnamurti and Nitya travelled from Sydney to California. In California they stayed at a cottage in the Ojai Valley. It was thought that the area's climate would be beneficial to Nitya, who had been diagnosed with tuberculosis. Nitya's failing health became a concern for Krishnamurti. At Ojai they met Rosalind Williams, a young American who became close to them both, and who was later to play a significant role in Krishnamurti's life. For the first time the brothers were without immediate supervision by their Theosophical Society minders. They found the Valley to be very agreeable. Eventually a trust, formed by

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supporters, bought a cottage and surrounding property there for them. This became Krishnamurti's official residence.

At Ojai in August and September 1922 Krishnamurti went through an intense 'life-changing' experience. This has been variously characterised as a spiritual awakening, a psychological transformation, and a physical reconditioning. The initial events happened in two distinct phases: first a three-day spiritual experience, and two weeks later, a longer-lasting condition that Krishnamurti and those around him referred to as the process. This condition recurred, at frequent intervals and with varying intensity, until his death.

According to witnesses it started on 17 August 1922 when Krishnamurti complained of a sharp pain at the nape of his neck. Over the next two days the symptoms worsened, with increasing pain and sensitivity, loss of appetite, and occasional delirious ramblings. He seemed to lapse into unconsciousness, but later recounted that he was very much aware of his surroundings, and that while in that state he had an experience of "mystical union". The following day the symptoms and the experience intensified, climaxing with a sense of "immense peace". Following — and apparently related to — these events the condition that came to be known as the process started to affect him, in September and October that year, as a regular, almost nightly occurrence. Later the process resumed intermittently, with varying degrees of pain, physical discomfort and sensitivity, occasionally a lapse into a childlike state, and sometimes an apparent fading out of consciousness, explained as either his body giving in to pain or his mind "going off".

These experiences were accompanied or followed by what was interchangeably described as, "the benediction," "the immensity," "the sacredness," "the vastness" and, most often, "the otherness" or "the other." It was a state distinct from the process. According to Lutyens it is evident from his notebook that this experience of otherness was "with him almost continuously" during his life, and gave him "a sense of being protected." Krishnamurti describes it in his notebook as typically

following an acute experience of the process, for example, on awakening the next day:

... woke up early with that strong feeling of otherness, of another world that is beyond all thought ... there is a heightening of sensitivity. Sensitivity, not only to beauty but also to all other things. The blade of grass was astonishingly green; that one blade of grass contained the whole spectrum of colour; it was intense, dazzling and such a small thing, so easy to destroy ...

This experience of the otherness would be present with him in daily events:

It is strange how during one or two interviews that strength, that power filled the room. It seemed to be in one's eyes and breath. It comes into being, suddenly and most unexpectedly, with a force and intensity that is quite overpowering and at other times it's there, quietly and serenely. But it's there, whether one wants it or not. There is no possibility of getting used to it for it has never been nor will it ever be ..."

Since the initial occurrences of 1922, several explanations have been proposed for this experience of Krishnamurti's.[e] Leadbeater and other Theosophists expected the "vehicle" to have certain paranormal experiences, but were nevertheless mystified by these developments. During Krishnamurti's later years, the nature and provenance of the continuing process often came up as a subject in private discussions between himself and associates; these discussions shed some light on the subject, but were ultimately inconclusive. Whatever the case, the process, and the inability of Leadbeater to explain it satisfactorily, if at all, had other consequences according to biographer Roland Vernon:

The process at Ojai, whatever its cause or validity, was a cataclysmic milestone for Krishna. Up until this time his spiritual progress, chequered though it might have been, had been planned with solemn deliberation by Theosophy's grandees. ... Something new had now occurred for which

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Krishna's training had not entirely prepared him. ... A burden was lifted from his conscience and he took his first step towards becoming an individual. ... In terms of his future role as a teacher, the process was his bedrock. ... It had come to him alone and had not been planted in him by his mentors ... it provided Krishna with the soil in which his newfound spirit of confidence and independence could take root.

As news of these mystical experiences spread, rumors concerning the messianic status of Krishnamurti reached fever pitch as the 1925 Theosophical Society Convention was planned, on the 50th anniversary of its founding. There were expectations of significant happenings. Paralleling the increasing adulation was Krishnamurti's growing discomfort with it. In related developments, prominent Theosophists and their factions within the Society were trying to position themselves favourably relative to the Coming, which was widely rumoured to be approaching. He stated that "Too much of everything is bad." "Extraordinary" pronouncements of spiritual advancement were made by various parties, disputed by others, and the internal Theosophical politics further alienated Krishnamurti.

Nitya's persistent health problems had periodically resurfaced throughout this time. On 13 November 1925, at age 27, he died in Ojai from complications of influenza and tuberculosis. Despite Nitya's poor health, his death was unexpected, and it fundamentally shook Krishnamurti's belief in Theosophy and in the leaders of the Theosophical Society. He had received their assurances regarding Nitya's health, and had come to believe that "Nitya was essential for [his] life-mission and therefore he would not be allowed to die," a belief shared by Annie Besant and Krishnamurti's circle. Jayakar wrote that "his belief in the Masters and the hierarchy had undergone a total revolution." Moreover, Nitya had been the "last surviving link to his family and childhood. ... The only person to whom he could talk openly, his best friend and companion." According to eyewitness accounts, the news "broke him completely." but 12 days after Nitya's death he was "immensely quiet, radiant, and free of

all sentiment and emotion"; "there was not a shadow ... to show what he had been through."

Break with the past

Over the next few years, Krishnamurti's new vision and consciousness continued to develop. New concepts appeared in his talks, discussions, and correspondence, together with an evolving vocabulary that was progressively free of Theosophical terminology. His new direction reached a climax in 1929, when he rebuffed attempts by Leadbeater and Besant to continue with the Order of the Star.

Krishnamurti dissolved the Order during the annual Star Camp at Ommen, the Netherlands, on 3 August 1929. He stated that he had made his decision after "careful consideration" during the previous two years, and that:

I maintain that truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. That is my point of view, and I adhere to that absolutely and unconditionally. Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or coerce people along a particular path. ... This is no magnificent deed, because I do not want followers, and I mean this. The moment you follow someone you cease to follow Truth. I am not concerned whether you pay attention to what I say or not. I want to do a certain thing in the world and I am going to do it with unwavering concentration. I am concerning myself with only one essential thing: to set man free. I desire to free him from all cages, from all fears, and not to found religions, new sects, nor to establish new theories and new philosophies.

Krishnamurti in the early 1920s.

Following the dissolution, prominent Theosophists turned against Krishnamurti, including Leadbeater who is said to have stated, "the Coming had gone wrong." Krishnamurti had denounced all organised

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belief, the notion of gurus, and the whole teacher-follower relationship, vowing instead to work on setting people "absolutely, unconditionally free." There is no record of his explicitly denying he was the World Teacher; whenever he was asked to clarify his position he either asserted that the matter was irrelevant or gave answers that, as he stated, were "purposely vague."

In hind-sight it can be seen that the ongoing changes in his outlook had begun before the dissolution of the Order of the Star. The subtlety of the new distinctions on the World Teacher issue was lost on many of his admirers, who were already bewildered or distraught because of the changes in Krishnamurti's outlook, vocabulary and pronouncements—among them Besant and Mary Lutyens' mother Emily, who had a very close relationship with him. He soon disassociated himself from the Theosophical Society and its teachings and practices,[f] yet he remained on cordial terms with some of its members and ex-members throughout his life.

Krishnamurti would often refer to the totality of his work as the teachings and not as my teachings.

Krishnamurti resigned from the various trusts and other organisations that were affiliated with the defunct Order of the Star, including the Theosophical Society. He returned the money and properties donated to the Order, among them a castle in the Netherlands and 5,000 acres (2,023 ha) of land, to their donors.

Middle years

From 1930 through 1944 Krishnamurti engaged in speaking tours and in the issue of publications under the auspice of the "Star Publishing Trust" (SPT), which he had founded with Desikacharya Rajagopal, a close associate and friend from the Order of the Star.[g] Ojai was the base of operations for the new enterprise, where Krishnamurti, Rajagopal, and Rosalind Williams (who had married Rajagopal in 1927) resided in the

house known as Arya Vihara (meaning Realm of the Aryas i.e. those noble by righteousness in Sanskrit). The business and organizational aspects of the SPT were administered chiefly by D. Rajagopal, as Krishnamurti devoted his time to speaking and meditation. The Rajagopals' marriage was not a happy one, and the two became physically estranged after the 1931 birth of their daughter, Radha. In the relative seclusion of Arya Vihara Krishnamurti's close friendship with Rosalind deepened into a love affair which was not made public until 1991. According to Radha Rajagopal Sloss, the long affair between Krishnamurti and Rosalind began in 1932 and it endured for about twenty-five years.

During the 1930s Krishnamurti spoke in Europe, Latin America, India, Australia and the United States. In 1938 he met Aldous Huxley. The two began a close friendship which endured for many years. They held common concerns about the imminent conflict in Europe which they viewed as the outcome of the pernicious influence of nationalism. Krishnamurti's stance on World War II was often construed as pacifism and even subversion during a time of patriotic fervor in the United States and for a time he came under the surveillance of the FBI. He did not speak publicly for a period of about four years (between 1940 and 1944). During this time he lived and worked at Arya Vihara, which during the war operated as a largely self-sustaining farm, with its surplus goods donated for relief efforts in Europe. Of the years spent in Ojai during the war he later said: "I think it was a period of no challenge, no demand, no outgoing. I think it was a kind of everything held in; and when I left Ojai it all burst."

Krishnamurti broke the hiatus from public speaking in May 1944 with a series of talks in Ojai. These talks, and subsequent material, were published by "Krishnamurti Writings Inc" (KWINC), the successor organisation to the "Star Publishing Trust." This was to be the new central Krishnamurti-related entity worldwide, whose sole purpose was the dissemination of the teaching.[79] He had remained in contact with associates from India, and in the autumn of 1947 embarked on a

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speaking tour there, attracting a new following of young intellectuals. On this trip he encountered the Mehta sisters, Pupul and Nandini, who became lifelong associates and confidants. The sisters also attended to Krishnamurti throughout a 1948 recurrence of the "process" in Ootacamund.

When Krishnamurti was in India after World War II many prominent personalities came to meet him, including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In his meetings with Nehru Krishnamurti elaborated at length on the teachings, saying in one instance, "Understanding of the self only arises in relationship, in watching yourself in relationship to people, ideas, and things; to trees, the earth, and the world around you and within you. Relationship is the mirror in which the self is revealed. Without self-knowledge there is no basis for right thought and action." Nehru asked, "How does one start?" to which Krishnamurti replied, "Begin where you are. Read every word, every phrase, every paragraph of the mind, as it operates through thought."

Later years

Krishnamurti continued speaking in public lectures, group discussions and with concerned individuals around the world. In the early 1960s, he made the acquaintance of physicist David Bohm, whose philosophical and scientific concerns regarding the essence of the physical world, and the psychological and sociological state of mankind, found parallels in Krishnamurti's philosophy. The two men soon became close friends and started a common inquiry, in the form of personal dialogues—and occasionally in group discussions with other participants—that continued, periodically, over nearly two decades. Several of these discussions were published in the form of books or as parts of books, and introduced a wider audience (among scientists) to Krishnamurti's ideas. Although Krishnamurti's philosophy delved into fields as diverse as religious studies, education, psychology, physics, and consciousness studies, he was not then, nor since, well known in academic circles. Nevertheless, Krishnamurti met and held discussions with physicists Fritjof Capra and

E. C. George Sudarshan, biologist Rupert Sheldrake, psychiatrist David Shainberg, as well as psychotherapists representing various theoretical orientations. The long friendship with Bohm went through a rocky interval in later years, and although they overcame their differences and remained friends until Krishnamurti's death, the relationship did not regain its previous intensity.

In the 1970s, Krishnamurti met several times with then Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, with whom he had far ranging, and in some cases, very serious discussions. Jayakar considers his message in meetings with Indira Gandhi as a possible influence in the lifting of certain emergency measures Gandhi had imposed during periods of political turmoil.

Meanwhile, Krishnamurti's once close relationship with the Rajagopals had deteriorated to the point where he took D. Rajagopal to court to recover donated property and funds as well as publication rights for his works, manuscripts, and personal correspondence, that were in Rajagopal's possession.

The litigation and ensuing cross complaints, which formally began in 1971, continued for many years. Much property and materials were returned to Krishnamurti during his lifetime; the parties to this case finally settled all other matters in 1986, shortly after his death.

In 1984 and 1985, Krishnamurti spoke to an invited audience at the United Nations in New York, under the auspices of the Pacem in Terris Society chapter at the United Nations. In October 1985, he visited India for the last time, holding a number of what came to be known as "farewell" talks and discussions between then and January 1986. These last talks included the fundamental questions he had been asking through the years, as well as newer concerns about advances in science and technology, and their effect on humankind. Krishnamurti had commented to friends that he did not wish to invite death, but was not sure how long his body would last (he had already lost considerable weight), and once

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he could no longer talk, he would have "no further purpose". In his final talk, on 4 January 1986, in Madras, he again invited the audience to examine with him the nature of inquiry, the effect of technology, the nature of life and meditation, and the nature of creation.

Krishnamurti was also concerned about his legacy, about being unwittingly turned into some personage whose teachings had been handed down to special individuals, rather than the world at large. He did not want anybody to pose as an interpreter of the teaching. He warned his associates on several occasions that they were not to present themselves as spokesmen on his behalf, or as his successors after his death.

A few days before his death, in a final statement, he declared that nobody among either his associates or the general public had understood what had happened to him (as the conduit of the teaching). He added that the "supreme intelligence" operating in his body would be gone with his death, again implying the impossibility of successors. However, he stated that people could perhaps get into touch with that somewhat "if they live the teachings". In prior discussions, he had compared himself with Thomas Edison, implying that he did the hard work, and now all that was needed by others was a flick of the switch.

Death

Krishnamurti died of pancreatic cancer on 17 February 1986, at the age of 90. His remains were cremated. The announcement of KFT (Krishnamurti Foundation Trust) refers to the course of his health condition until the moment of death. The first signs came almost nine months before his death, when he felt very tired. In October 1985 he went from England (Brockwood Park School) to India and after that he suffered from exhaustion, fevers, and lost weight. Krishnamurti decided to go back to Ojai (10 January 1986) after his last talks in Madras, which necessitated a 24-hour flight. Once he arrived at Ojai he underwent medical tests that revealed he was suffering from pancreatic cancer. The cancer was untreatable, either surgically or otherwise, so Krishnamurti decided to go back to his home at Ojai, where he spent his last days.

Friends and professionals nursed him. His mind was clear until the very last. Krishnamurti died on 17 February 1986, at ten minutes past midnight, California time.

12.2 THE SELF- THE CONCEPTS AND MEANING OF THE WORDS 'PHILOSOPHY' AND 'EDUCATION'

Philosophy: Meaning and Definition The word 'philosophy' is derived from two Greek words *philia* (love) and *Sophia* (wisdom). This term was in vogue in the Greek world of the fifth century before Christ. In Greek antiquity there were in all six definitions of philosophy.

1. 'The knowledge of things existent, as existent'.
2. 'The knowledge of things divine and human' (These two definitions are from the object matter and both were referred to Pythagoras).
3. 'Philosophy is a meditation of death'.
4. 'Philosophy is a resembling of the deity in so far as that is competent to man'. (The third and fourth definitions are from Plato).
5. 'The art of arts, and science of sciences'. (Aristotle)
6. 'Love of Wisdom'. Pythagoras is said to have called himself a lover of wisdom. But philosophy has been both the seeking of wisdom and the wisdom sought.

Originally, the rational explanation of anything; the general principles under which all facts could be explained; in this sense indistinguishable from science. Later the science of the first principles of being; the presupposition of ultimate reality.

The real definition of philosophy, as contrasted with the nominal definition already discussed, tells us that philosophy is the science of all things naturally knowable to man's unaided powers, in so far as these

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things are studied in their deepest causes and reasons. We shall presently ponder each phrase of this definition. But first it will be well to inspect the meaning of the term philosophy as it is loosely employed in casual speech.' Philosophy is knowledge in general about the Ultimate Reality, man and the universe. It is that department of knowledge, which deals with the ultimate reality or with the most general causes, and principles of things. Philosophy is an activity; it is the search for meaning and understanding. A philosopher tries to grasp the essential nature of things. It is a reflective and reasoned attempt to infer the character and content of the universe taken in its totality. It is a "resolute and persistent attempt to understand and appreciate the universe as a whole". Philosophy is a quest for a comprehensive understanding of human existence. The objective of philosophy is to consider the rational justification of logical inferences, human values, criteria for establishing the claims of knowledge and certainly, and interpretations of the nature of reality. The diverse insights of significant philosophers from ancient times to the present contribute resources to stimulate contemporary philosophical thinking in each of these areas.

Historically, philosophy has been concerned with the rational explanation of existence or, as some philosophers would have it, the search for a comprehensive view of nature, a universal explanation of everything. This conception of the purpose of philosophy led to the formulation of philosophical systems, which attempted to present an all-encompassing, completely unified, theory of reality. Philosophy has, in the words of John Dewey, "implied a certain totality, generality, and ultimate ness of both subject and method." The traditional conception of philosophy has presented philosophy as a fundamental or architectonic discipline, laying the foundation for all other disciplines of knowledge. The philosopher becomes an investigator into all knowledge and philosophy is the summary of all branches of knowledge. Traditional philosophy has generally been organized into subdivisions, each with its own particular questions and problems. The nature of all reality in its most general aspects has been the subject of study of the branch of philosophy referred to as metaphysics and the nature of truth and

knowledge, including the establishment of the criteria of truth, has usually been the subject of study of the branch called epistemology. Various other subdivisions of philosophy have been ethics or moral philosophy, political philosophy, and aesthetics.

Logic

Logic is the study of the principles which direct us to distinguish sound from unsound reasoning and arguments; it explains also the different types of reasoning. What is the difference between deductive and inductive thinking? (Is this a valid statement? All dogs are cats; Plini is a dog; therefore, Plini is a cat?) Or Logic is a critical thinking which investigates the methods and patterns of inference and specially demonstrates ways of an accurate assessment of the logical strength of arguments and disclosing erroneous reasoning. Philosophy is based on argument, on giving reasons. Logical theory is a great help to distinguish in criticizing ideas and to evaluate reason given in support of an idea.

Moral Philosophy / Ethics

Socrates attempted to discover the meaning of his own life and the presuppositions that make the life worth living. How ought one to live? That is the major question ethics tries to tackle. Ethics derives from ethos, meaning, usage, character, custom, disposition, manners. It investigates the topics like "ought", "should", duty, moral rules, right, wrong, obligations, responsibility etc., Ethics study the concepts and principles that underlie our evaluations of human behaviour. What is the criterion to judge and distinguish between morally right and morally wrong actions? How to understand the relation between what is and what ought to be? Can I live as I like? Are there only individual interests or must we subordinate them to moral obligations? How do we know that such and such moral obligations are binding and how can they be verified?

Epistemology

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The world is not necessarily that what it looks like. We have to investigate the what we can know and the nature and extent of human knowledge. Theory of knowledge (Epistemology) investigates into the sources, nature and limits of human knowledge. Is experience the only source of knowledge? How do we know that some beliefs are true and others are false? How to judge about the reliability and validity of sense perception? Senses do provide us with our basic knowledge of the world, but the senses can be also deceptive. Knowledge must be grounded on rational thinking. Moreover our senses are unable to unravel the great mysteries of the world, for example the extends of time and space. Sense perception and reason are distinct sources of human knowledge. There are some, the empiricist who assert that sense perception is the foundation of human knowledge. Some, the rationalists, emphasize that reason functions independently of the senses. What is the relationship of human knowledge to belief, doubt, faith and revelations?

Metaphysics

What is really human life? Metaphysics discusses reality as a whole. Metaphysics inquiries into the basic nature of reality, the existence of God, human nature, freedom, consciousness, mind, time, space, the soul etc., what is the unifying factor behind the variety of objects, events and experiences? What is the difference between unity and variety, appearance and reality? Are there only bodies or minds as well? Besides physical realities is there a God? What is the relation between mind and body? Is reality essentially spiritual or material? Metaphysics investigates the ultimate nature of reality. Anthropology ^ It deals with the philosophical knowledge of human person, human person as a whole being, as a being in the total scheme of reality and in its light - Human person as a self-conscious and knowing being; an individual and as a person related to other people, as spirit in - the - world. Human being is unique, he has cognitive and affective faculties but he also possesses the capacity for self-reflection and self-transcendent; he is also at the same time immaterial and spiritual.

Philosophy Of Science / Cosmology It is that branch of metaphysics which treats of the origin of the universe, creation, eternity, vitalism (mechanism), space, time and casualty. Cosmology asks the most fundamental questions regarding die world; and why's and whereofs of the world and of material reality. Cosmology is referred to as philosophy of science. It is the study ofthe methods, assumptions, and limits ofscientific practice

Theology It is the philosophical treatise about God, investigates what is meant by the term God. It takes into account the ways of speaking about God; God is given die name 'true reality' the highest and deepest cause and the ultimate meaning of all that exists. While philosophy is the loving pursuit of the most fundamental question one can raise about reality as a whole, theology is the culmination and crown of all the philosophical treatises.

Philosophy Of Religion

It is the study of the nature, kinds and objects of religious creeds. What is the link between reason and faith? What is religion? Can God be known by direct experience? How can we reconcile the notion of a perfect God with the existence of evil?

History Of Philosophy cir Intelligent people of all times and everywhere have attempted at tackling the fundamental problems of existence, and found some answers which humanity has contributed at various stages of history. It studies the history of the emergence, evolution of philosophical ideas expounded by the philosophers. What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the teachings of different philosophers? The history of philosophy offers background information; the historian of philosophy seeks to interpret, analyse and expand our knowledge about a definite philosopher or philosophical school, like that of Greek philosophy, Socrates or Plato, Thomas Aquinas etc., in the course ofhistory. History of philosophy is actually a great repository of the philosophical insights and investigations of the past which serve as

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summary of the past achievements as well as failures which are indispensable materials for future philosophical inquiry.

Historical Development of Philosophy

The history of Western philosophy can be divided into three main periods: ancient, medieval and modern. The ancient philosophy deals with the teaching of great thinkers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and others. They questioned the fundamental philosophical issues pertaining to the cultural and religious aspects of the ancient world. The ancient philosophy deals with the intellectual movement which originated and grew in the Greek world. They laid the foundations upon which all subsequent systems of Western philosophy are built. ^ Western philosophy had its foundation in the Greek world in the 6th century BC and refers to philosophy in its development in Europe or European culture. The early centuries of the Christian era marked the decline of the Roman Empire and of the Hellenistic (Greco Roman) philosophy. Medieval philosophy comprises of two major periods: patristic and scholastic. It investigates the philosophy of Christianity as associated with the Church of Rome. Medieval philosophy attempted at fusing the main ideas of Christianity into a comprehensive world vision whose exponent are St. Augustine (354...430) at the early medieval period, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225... 1274) at the end of the medieval age. Christian religion has been consolidated both as a doctrine and as an institution and Christianity took upper hand in the religious and intellectual life of the Western Europe.

Modern philosophy begins in the 16th century. It marks the emergence of the rediscovery of humanity (humanism) and the revival of the culture of Greece and Rome (renaissance). The scholastic method is criticized and efforts are made to devise a new logic, a new thinking pattern. Rationalism was represented by Descartes, Spinoza and his followers, Empiricism was represented by John Locke, Berkeley and Hume, Idealism represented by Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher and Hegel.

12.3 FREEDOM FROM THE KNOWN

“Knowledge is power” said the British philosopher Francis Bacon. It is, therefore, that some educators very strongly advocate that the aim of education should be the acquisition of knowledge. They believe that “every advance in knowledge has a practical bearing on life, either on the material or on the mental side.” “It is knowledge that has enabled humanity to make progress. Human greatness is measured by power of thought. Both Bacon and Comenius wanted ‘all knowledge for all.’” Education is training for life for complete living. To live life well, it is essential to know life first of all. Knowledge of life comes through intellectual training, which results in power to understand the world. Man becomes resourceful through knowledge. It fits the mind for anything, everything and all things. Fuller knowledge of men and things creates human values in man. Herbart declared that character and personality are also developed through the implanting of ideas. Socrates also said that “one who had true knowledge could not be other than virtuous.” It is knowledge, which makes a realist a visionary. It is knowledge which ensures success in any profession, vocation or calling. In fact whatever the sphere of life - physical social, moral, spiritual and economic - knowledge is sine qua non. True knowledge consists in possessing “ideas of universal validity.” They should be functional and valuable. Learning inert ideas is no knowledge. They should be active ideas, ideas which really change the way of thinking and behaviour of a person who possesses them. Acquisition of knowledge should not be confused with information-mongering. In the words of Adams neither the schools be converted into ‘knowledge shops’ nor teachers into ‘information-mongers.’ Since knowledge is great power it must be relevant to the situations of life.

Good intellectual training according to Adams has two aspects, “(1) Nurture aspect (2) Disciplinary aspect. Intellectual education is nature in the sense that it is the food of the mind and this does for the mind what food does for the body. Just as the food does not remain something foreign in the body but is assimilated and helps the growth of the body, similarly the correct ideas are assimilated by the mind and enable the mind to grow in such a way that it is fit to tackle the problems of the

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world. True ideas not only enrich the mind. Intellectual training has disciplinary values as it trains the mind.”

After all what is knowledge? It is the experiences of the race. The worthwhile experiences gathered by us cause our mind to grow. These experiences integrate themselves with each other and thus they become powerful influence in determining our activities and attitudes. The advocates of this aim, therefore, say that the end of all of our educational policies and programmes should be intellectual training. But it must be said that knowledge gathering is not the whole aim of life of a person. Knowledge may be indispensable but it is not the whole. We should not take hold of a branch and think that it is the whole tree. Knowledge is necessary but the mind and the heart should not be suffocated by inter knowledge. Knowledge is only a segment, a part. In the words of Whitehead, “A merely well-informed person is the most useless bore on God’s earth.” True education is the acquisition of the art of utilising the knowledge gained. Ideals must be followed by action. Men with knowledge and wisdom should not become egoists in the sense of enjoying the bliss and aroma of knowledge by themselves. They should not lead a life of retirement, seclusion and exclusive contemplation, unmindful of what is happening around them. Their knowledge and wisdom must be for the good of the greatest number. It has been truly said that “knowledge worship and lust of the head” should be avoided. Knowledge worship and lust of the head” should be avoided. Knowledge transmission and the sharing of experiences must be encouraged. Acquisition of knowledge should not be considered as an end in itself. It is, and should be a means to other ends - may be individual development, civic efficiency, economic competency, living a fuller and richer life etc., it should be means to generate happiness of man and promote the welfare of humanity.

“Knowledge for knowledge sake” has been advocated by many. Just as an artist, with high ideals, practises “art for art sake”, and not for any obvious material gain, similarly idealists believe that knowledge should be secured for knowledge sake. Such a knowledge, in the words of

Newman, will create attributes like “freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom,”¹¹⁰ With the development of these attributes a man is sure to fare better in every walk of life. It is the knowledge which leads to culture. “Culture means something cultivated, as a result of long experience of the race, something cultivated, as a result of long experience of die race, something ripened. It is receptiveness to beauty and human feelings.” Worthwhile experiences of the race, are so assimilated in the mind that they improve the quality of the mind and that mind is called a culture mind. Mahatma Gandhi attached far more importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literary and said, “Culture is the foundation, die primary thing. It should show itself in the smallest detail of your conduct and personal behaviour, how you sit, how you walk, how you dress, etc, Inner culture must be reflected in your speech, the way in which you treat visitors and guests, and behave towards one another and towards your teachers and elders.”

Culture is a broad and very inclusive term. It is something organic which is lived into. It comprises vast array of inter-related knowledge, skills; values and goals. A cultured person is expected to (1) appreciated ideas and art (2) have broad human interests (3) have social efficiency and socially acceptable behaviour and (4) understand the best thoughts (past and present) of the community. When we put, culture, as the aim of education, we evidently mean that education should cater for all the attributes and refinement as stated above. When the children foster in themselves these attributes, they raise the ideals and the standards of the community. Their personalities are refined, their tastes are developed and they live a socially desirable life. One essential and binding feature of human relationship is to be a man of culture. If education produces such a man it has done its job nicely. A man of culture is an invaluable asset to society. Culture is the true behaviour of thought. It helps man in being reluctant to do or to say anything which any offend the feelings of others. A cultured person is neither too assertive nor too dogmatic and aggressive. He does not manifest extremes of passion or violence of feelings or extravagance of language. He is never thoughtless, meaningless and flippant in his remarks. All these virtues are inculcated

by education. But we must endorse the views of White-head who says that education should produce men, “who possess both culture and expert knowledge. Their expert knowledge will give the children the ground to start from, and culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as art.” A synthesis of knowledge and culture will be a good aim of education.

12.4 INNER REVOLUTION

In a collection of talks given throughout the 1950's and gathered together in the book, *The Revolution From Within*, Jiddu Krishnamurti stressed the urgency of staging a revolution in our thinking.

Our habitual ways of thinking have led us to where we are now, he says, and nothing less than radical, fundamental change has any hope of remaking our thoughts, attitudes, and ultimately the societies in which we live. Anything less than fundamental change is a mere modification of what has come before, and key aspects of what has come before has in turn failed a large proportion of our population.

The paradox that Krishnamurti relentlessly demands us to consider, however, is that nothing we can DO can bring about this change. We can only observe the operations of our own mind, and ask questions about everything that we think we know.

Consider the question, “Is fundamental change possible?”, the jumping-off point leading to the multitudinous questions that Krishnamurti is asking us to examine deeply.

It's where we have to begin if we want to observe the functioning of our own minds on a level that will have real significance with respect to the outside world, and how we live our lives.

So let's go into this question, friends, with an open mind, a mind that is open to revelation.

If we go into it with the idea that we already know the answer, then we won't turn up anything worthwhile. **This is a question with real**

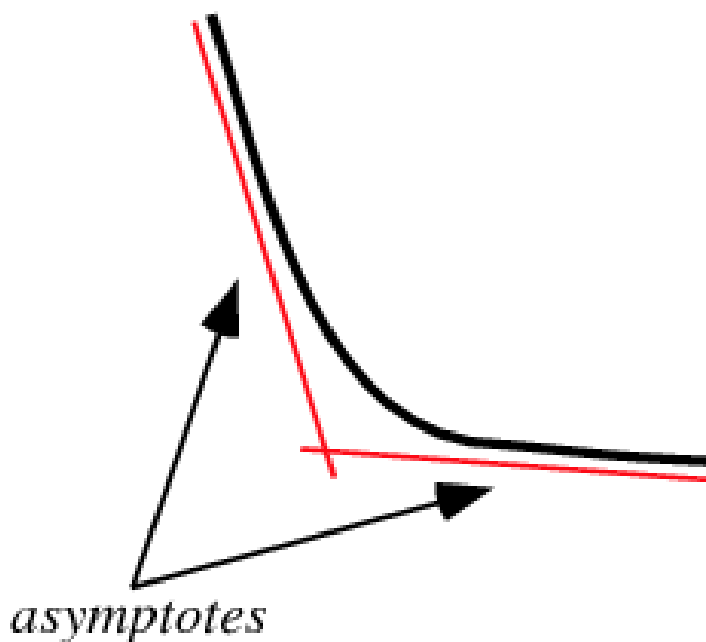
consequences for the way we organize our societies, parent our children, and direct our lives.

We must pursue the idea of fundamental change in the same way that Jiddu Krishnamurti relentlessly posed questions to his listeners.

You'll notice, if you read the transcripts of some of his greatest talks, that Krishnamurti asks multiple questions for every single 'answer' that he gives. He might answer one, only to pose three others that each attempt to get at the original question in a more nuanced way.

Krishnamurti does this because **life's biggest questions have no final answers.**

Given the asymptotic nature of perfect Truth, we can only approach it by negation; by discarding what isn't true or helpful, in an effort to move past our conditioned thinking and to achieve radical, fundamental change.



Perfect Truth will always elude us, no matter how vigorously or inventively we pursue it.

But is such a change indeed possible?

This is something that must be gone into, and not just accepted because someone has said it. It has no meaning if you just merely accept

it. Arguments from authority, that common logical fallacy, have no essential relationship to perfect Truth.

Truth needs no defenders or justification.

Rather, you must ceaselessly question what you think you know, and approach life's biggest questions from the viewpoint of someone who knows nothing. And it really is clear that we do know nothing, in an absolute sense, as we will discuss later in more depth.

If I were to ask you who you are, where you came from, where you'll ultimately end up, and where you are right now, you would have no satisfactory answers to any of these questions. There would always be a deeper level of Truth that you could never penetrate with your limited, conscious mind.

WHAT IS FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE?

What exactly is it that we can point to as evidence that a revolution in the mind has taken place that is not simply a modification of what was there before?

It's clear that anything that can be incrementally added is not fundamental change. It's a modification, and it's improvement, but it is not the fundamental change that we are seeking.

This "adding to" the mind, such as one can achieve by [reading books](#) or [watching documentaries](#) or [listening to talks](#) is simply an incremental increase of knowledge. No matter how compelling or insightful, this newfound knowledge will always be an addition to what was there before.

While learning is important, and proper education is never a waste of time, it's merely representative of change on the surface, and change on the surface can never lead to radical, fundamental change. What we're really after is **meaningful** change.

What kind of change IS meaningful? Is only fundamental change meaningful? How do we get closer to understanding what it might look like?

Let's first take a look at a few examples of surface change, or simple modifications, in order to get an idea of what radical change is NOT. Thereby, we can approach the idea of fundamental change via negation.

For example:

If you are unhappy, and you are trying to BECOME happy, then you have instantaneously DEFINED YOURSELF as an unhappy person struggling to overcome his or her unhappiness.

You can become MORE happy, sure, but you will always be an unhappy person, always in the process of becoming slightly more happy, adding to your happiness, instead of experiencing the radical, fundamental change that brings with it a revolution in the mind.

Happiness will always be somewhere 'over there' and you will always be struggling to arrive there.

That can never be said to be true happiness and fulfillment, and it is certainly not what we mean by fundamental change.



Notes

In the same way, trying to become virtuous, we never acquire virtue, but rather expand our Self in the 'guise' of virtue.

Simply, a man who cultivates virtue ceases to be completely virtuous, because there is a part of him that is not, a part of him that is increasing his virtue. Likewise, a man who practices humility is no longer completely humble.

And further:

When violent, the mind has an ideal of non-violence which is 'over there' in the distance. It will take time to achieve that state, and in the meantime, the mind can continue to be violent.

This, too, is not the radical, fundamental change which we are seeking to illuminate.

So now that we know what fundamental change is not, do we know any more about what it is?

Is it not instantaneous, unconditional freedom in the here and now? Is it not timeless, in that we don't have to wait for it to appear?

Are there any preconditions that have to be met?

I think that we can conclude, provisionally, that we have the freedom to drop our resentments and sadness at any time we so choose.

Easy for me to type, extremely difficult for you to do. I get that.

But from our current position, we can see that it is our mind, this thing that we call the self, that is preventing fundamental change from occurring. As we get further into our discussion, we'll have a better handle on whether or not we can discard the restraints of the self, and realize radical, fundamental change.

THE NECESSITY OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

Assuming that we can become radically different than we are today, we must ask ourselves:

Is this a pursuit that's worthwhile?

Is it necessary?

Do we need to change at all?

I think it would be obvious to many people that we DO need to see fundamental change in our societies and our patterns of social interaction.

A world in which [billions of people currently live on less than \\$2.00/day](#) is crying out for change.

And to be clear, that figure is, shockingly, adjusted for purchasing power. It's not what \$2.00 would buy you in a developing country, although that would be bad enough; rather, *billions* of people are living on what you could buy for \$2.00 a day in a country like Canada or the US.

Aside: There is commendable, although insufficient, progress being made by extremely committed individuals and organizations all over the world. In fact, [the World Bank recently predicted that global extreme poverty will soon fall to under 10%](#). To make matters more complicated, there is an ongoing debate concerning what exactly constitutes [“extreme poverty.”](#)

To say that fundamental change isn't necessary in a world like ours is akin to being in a sinking ship and saying: “I'm sure glad the hole isn't in OUR end!”

However, we can state rather confidently that trying to change society, while leaving the individuals who constitute that society unchanged, is a dangerous error.

Simply put, we cannot afford to be “ordinary” any longer; the challenge of the world is too great.



We are the world; we are not on the sidelines. What we are, of that we make the world, and [everywhere we face real problems that demand our urgent attention.](#)

Thus, we return to the question at hand: Is fundamental change necessary?

I think it's clear that it is necessary, if by fundamental change within our societies we mean implementing societal structures that would do better in meeting the needs of all our world's inhabitants.

Obviously, this is a vastly more complex problem than it even may seem at first. It has many moving parts, but we can only begin where we are. A total revolution of the mind has to start from within. Society is comprised of individuals, and radical societal change starts at the level of the individual.

Yet, most of us are so eager to reform others and so little concerned with the transformation of ourselves.

Can we not see that this whole attitude is very confused?

We often look up to those who can help us or who can do something for us, and look down on those who cannot. So we are always looking up or looking down. Cannot the mind be free from this state of contempt and false respect?

Is it even possible to look through the lens of our own confusion and get a clear picture of the idea of radical, fundamental change?

It is to this question that we now turn.

WE ARE ALL CONFUSED

“There is a path to the known, but not to the unknowable. Thus every system of finding truth breaks down.”

— Jiddu Krishnamurti

Before going further in our discussion, I think it's helpful to take a look at our own confusion when confronted with the problem and necessity of fundamental change.

We've asserted that it's both possible and necessary, but what are the impediments to action? Why are we not all enlightened already? If it's supposed to be instantaneous, why is it so difficult for us?

The answer has to lie somewhere within our own confusion.

It's very difficult to admit to yourself that you are confused, but clearly, we are all confused.

And, truth be told, those who say they aren't confused, are the most confused of all.

In order to be free from confusion, we would have to know that which it is impossible to know. We'd need to know where the universe in its

totality is headed, we'd need to know our precise place within it, who we are fundamentally, and what we need to do with our lives.

Philosophers are good at coming up with “-isms” that seek to explain the world and its direction. We can look for answers in logical positivism, consequentialism, [possibilianism](#), dialectical materialism, populism, liberalism, empiricism, and every other kind of ‘-ism’ that we can conceive of, but we are still going to remain confused. Every book and every teacher is only going to add to this confusion that prevents us from knowing what life is all about.

It may be that we do not know what living is about at all, and that is why death seems to be such a terrible thing. Obviously, everyone is confused about death, and many more things besides.

The whole totality of the mind is confused, and there simply isn't a higher part of the mind which isn't.



So how are we supposed to make sense out of all this confusion?

Is it possible to bring clarity to our naturally disordered minds?

Is there a method we can follow, or a path we can take towards clarity?

Krishnamurti explains that whenever one is confused, one must stop all activity, psychologically. Otherwise, anything new is just translated according to our own confusion.

Notes

If I'm confused, then I may read, or look, or ask, but my search, my asking, is the outcome of my confusion, and therefore it can only lead to further confusion.

We know this, but [is there anything we can do about it?](#)

The problem is not the real issue; rather, it is **the mind which approaches the problem.**

So, again we return to the necessity of radical, fundamental change.

We can't keep incrementally increasing our store of knowledge and, at some distant point, realize fundamental change. So we have to drop down to the level of the mind, and see if we can't somehow bypass the problem of incremental change altogether.

So, you see how our desire for the resolution of our confusion can never lead to fundamental change.

All solutions are based on desire, and the problem exists BECAUSE of desire.

Basically, thought is not the way out. All of our thought is conditioned, and a confused mind cannot resolve its own confusion.

You have chosen your political leaders, your religious leaders, out of your confusion.

You have chosen your career, your friends, your daily activities out of your confusion.

The books you've read, the experiences you've had, the lessons you've learned, have all been assimilated according to the confusion that already exists in your mind.

Collectively, we've established our social order based on our confusion. Our efforts to help the poor are based on our confusion. Our educational institutions are based on our confusion.

“Sirs, life is something extraordinary, if you observe it. Life is not merely this stupid little quarreling among ourselves, this dividing up of mankind into nations, races, classes; it is not just the contradiction and misery of our daily existence. Life is wide, limitless, it is that state of love which is beauty; life is sorrow and this tremendous sense of joy. But our joys and sorrows are so small, and from that shallowness of mind we ask questions and find answers.”

— Jiddu Krishnamurti

If there can be any conclusion at all, it's that freedom is not at the end; it is at the very beginning, the now.

The end is at the beginning, which lies outside of time.

Radical, fundamental change does not come at the end. Rather, it's our starting point. If we're not happy now, then we never will be. If we don't remake our societies now, then we never will.

Fundamental change doesn't occur across time, but rather it is available to us at every moment.

Revolutions of the mind occur instantaneously, at the very moment when we cease our anguished searching.

And that is what our lives often are, correct?

We say: "I am 'this', and I would like to be 'that,'" but the struggle to be something different is still within the pattern of our desire.

All suffering comes from desire, and so any incremental change that we pursue throughout our lives is not only going to be fraught with confusion, but will carry with it all the attendant suffering and anguish which it necessarily implies.

So where can we find relief for this condition of the mind?

Where can we go for some form of final answer to our continued searching and relentless questioning?

In the end, we must realize that life's biggest questions have no definite answers. Indeed, the right question has no answer.

Notes

We must also conclude that a mind that seeks peace will never find it, and thought is not the way out.

When you see that fundamental change is instantaneous, and is a function of observing the workings of your own mind, you can break free of your past at any moment, and start to unravel your own conditioning.

It's simple: The mind can never free itself through some system or method. Anything that your mind DOES can never bring about this kind of radical, fundamental change that we are discussing.

Anything that can be KNOWN is not what we're looking for.

All that can be left to us is to observe the functioning of our own minds.

When we realize this, we also realize the truth of Krishnamurti's words when he says:

“To have that inward fullness of life, which includes death, the mind must free itself from the known. The known must cease for the unknown to be.”

When you don't know what it is that you're looking for, and you don't know what it'll look like when you find it, all that remains to you is to examine the operations of your own mind.

Naturally, this leads to the falling away of every answer that has been and could be given concerning happiness and fulfillment, and concerning how we should govern our societies.

Since we see that the ideas of happiness and fulfillment are constantly changing, we must ask ourselves if there really is such a thing.

We've been discussing the necessity and possibility of fundamental change for some time now, and if you have been following the logical progression of our discussion, you can see that observing the function and operation of your own mind without judgement is the only way out of our collective confusion.

I can also assume that you WANT to love your children, that you WANT to overcome the destructive patterns of society, and that you WANT to affirm the meaningfulness of daily life.

So what's stopping you?

What's holding you back from experiencing this revolution of the mind?

In the final analysis, there is nothing to do, and nothing to attain.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. How do you know about the self- The Concepts and Meaning of the Words 'Philosophy' and 'Education'?
2. How do you understand Freedom from the known?
3. How do you know about the Inner revolution?

12.5 LET US SUM UP

This in turn leads us to the question of, "What is the 'self', the center of the 'me' from which all activity seems to spring?"

The self for most people is a center of desires, manifesting itself through various forms of continuity.

Notes

We ceaselessly desire to perpetuate ourselves, to satisfy our cravings, and to set ourselves up as an object of specialness in a world of meaning.

None of these desires are permanent except in the memory of what we have been and would like to be, although we try to make them permanent through clinging to various ideas, perceptions, and relationships.

For those who want more, more, more, life is an everlasting struggle.

Life is one thing, and what we want is another. We get what we want, only to discover that it's not ultimately what we wanted at all. We wanted some other thing, tantalizingly just a little further up the road.

Can we live in this world without any effort to be or become something, without trying to achieve, to reject, to acquire?

I mean, of course, without trying to become something other than your authentic self?

Can the mind cease to think in terms of continuing, of the "me"?

The concern to become something more, to become something others want you to be, is the constant preoccupation of the mind and the primary cause of its superficiality.

What we are, of that we make the world. So in order to avoid superficiality and meaninglessness, there must be ceaseless questioning.

Any conscious effort on my part to become something other than what I am, or other than what I consciously want to become, only produces still further suffering, sorrow, and pain.

A man like Jiddu Krishnamurti would never tell his listeners that education was a waste of time. However, we must never believe that our education is over, or that we have somehow reached the end of our confusion.

Everything around us tells us what to think, books and teachers included, and we must continually renew our freedom from traditional and historical thinking in every moment.

Linear thinking and the all-too-human propensity to settle for easy answers has failed the bottom 40%. It even plagues those in the so-called 'developed' nations who are today stricken by existential anxiety.

At bottom, acquisitiveness and greed have destroyed our potential for gratitude.

Nationalism and eschatological certitude have crippled our capacity for understanding and reconciliation.

A radical, fundamental revolution from within can restore the unrestrained lust for life that gives us our reason for being. We can revive our capacity to greedily enjoy our friends, instead of our possessions.

But so long as there is the idea of the "me" or the "I", then there must necessarily be loneliness.

And you can't seek the immeasurable because you don't know what it is; hence the futility of seeking.

If you have been following what has been discussed so far, you will see that fundamental change is absolutely critical to the dissolution of the threats to our continued existence.

Violence and suffering on a global scale can be reduced to the individual. It is the mind of the individual that approaches the problem that needs to change, and the world is made up of individuals.

Society is based on violence and comparisons, and as long as it is so, there will always be struggle within that society, not to mention all the struggles, pains, and difficulties that naturally accompany human existence. That is what Krishnamurti is driving at here.

Everything that we do is based on striving, ambition, success, achievement; but none of it is the abandonment of the self.

12.6 KEY WORDS

Revolution: In political science, a revolution is a fundamental and relatively sudden change in political power and political organization which occurs when the population revolts against the government, typically due to perceived oppression or political incompetence

Inner Sense: The **inner sense**, or The internal **sense**, capacity of the mind to be aware of its own states; consciousness; reflection

12.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know about the self- The Concepts and Meaning of the Words 'Philosophy' and 'Education'?
2. How do you understand Freedom from the known?
3. How do you know about the Inner revolution?

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12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 12.2
2. See Section 12.3
3. See Section 12.4

UNIT 13: B.R.AMBEDKAR: CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL EVILS

STRUCTURE

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Life Sketch
 - 13.2.1 His Writings
- 13.3 B. R. Ambedkar's Thought and Ideas
 - 13.3.1 Ideological Orientation
 - 13.3.2 Reason and Rights
 - 13.3.3 Religion
 - 13.3.4 Caste
 - 13.3.5 Untouchability
 - 13.3.6 Constitutional Democracy
- 13.4 Social Justice and Supportive Polity
- 13.5 Let us sum up
- 13.6 Key Words
- 13.7 Questions for Review
- 13.8 Suggested readings and references
- 13.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know Life Sketch of Ambedkar
- To discuss the B. R. Ambedkar's Thought and Ideas
- To know about Social Justice and Supportive Polity.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Babasaheb Ambedkar is one of the foremost thinkers of modern India. His thought is centrally concerned with issues of freedom, human equality, democracy and socio-political emancipation. He is a unique thinker of the world who himself suffered much humanitarian, poverty

Notes

and social stigma, right from his childhood, yet rose to great educational and philosophical heights. He was a revolutionary social reformer who demonstrated great faith in democracy and the moral basis of a society. He was one of the principal critics of India's national movement led by M.K.Gandhi. He built civic and political institutions in India and criticized ideologies and institutions that degraded and enslaved people. He undertook several major studies on the economy, social structures and institutions, law and constitutionalism, history and religion with methodological rigor and reflexivity. He was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution and defended its key provisions with scholarly precision and sustained arguments without losing sight of the ideals it upheld while, at the same time; ideology fairly to the ground. He embraced Buddhism, recasting it to respond to modern and socially emancipatory urges, with hundreds of thousands of his followers and paved the way for its resurgence in Modern India.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14 April, 1891 in Mahar caste. The Mahar caste was one of the 'untouchable' castes. This created many difficulties in Ambedkar's higher education. With the help of a scholarship from Sayajirao Gaekwad, Maharaja of Baroda, he attended Columbia University, USA, and later on with hard work managed to study at the London School of Economics. In England he attained a doctorate and also became a barrister. On returning to India he virtually dedicated himself to the task of upliftment of the untouchable community. Soon he won the confidence of the- untouchables and became their supreme leader. To mobilize his followers he established organisations such as the Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha, Independent Labour Party and later All India Scheduled Caste Federation. He led a number of temple-entry Satyagrahas, organized the untouchables, established many educational institutions and propagated his views from newspapers like the 'Mooknayak', 'Bahishkrit Bharat' and 'Janata'. He participated in the Round Table Conference in order to protect the interests of the untouchables. He became the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and played a very important role in framing The Indian Constitution. He was also the Law Minister of India up to 1951.

Right from 1935 Ambedkar was thinking of renouncing Hinduism. Finally, in 1956 he adopted Buddhism and appealed to his followers to do the same. He felt that the removal of untouchability and the spiritual upliftment of the untouchables would not be possible by remaining a Hindu. Hence, he embraced Buddhism. Ambedkar was not only a political leader and social reformer but also a scholar and thinker. He has written extensively on various social and political matters. 'Annihilation of Castes', 'Who Were the Shudras', 'The Untouchables', 'Buddha and His Dharma' are his more important writings. Besides these, he had also published many other books and booklets propagating his views. His thinking was based on a deep faith in the goals of equity and liberty. Liberalism and the philosophy of John Dewey also influenced his thinking. Jotirao Phule and Buddha have exercised a deep influence on Ambedkar's ideas on society, religion and morality. His political views were also influenced by his legal approach. Ambedkar's personal suffering, his scholarship and his constant attention to the problem of bringing about equality for the downtrodden untouchable community forms the basis of his thinking and writings.

Ambedkar was aware of the drawbacks inherent 'in foreign rule. The British government had introduced some representative institutions in India. But full self-government could not have any alternative. Besides, Ambedkar always complained that the plight of the untouchables did not change under British rule. The British rulers were not interested in removing untouchability. Their policy had always been cautious in the matter of social reform. Reforms were likely to anger the upper castes and give them an opportunity to rally against' British rule. Therefore, British rulers did not encourage rapid social reforms. In the field of education, Ambedkar felt that the government was not sincere in spreading education among the untouchables. All educational facilities were utilized by the upper. castes only. Moreover, the interests of the upper castes and those of the untouchables were opposed to each other. Ambedkar' wanted the British government to mediate on behalf of the untouchables. But the government neglected this responsibility. Because of this attitude of neglect, the untouchable community could not get any

benefit from the British rule was also not very happy about British administration. He was particularly critical of the administration on account of its over expensive character and general neglect of public welfare. But he knew that abrupt departure of the British would result into political domination of the upper castes. Therefore, a political settlement was necessary clearly mentioning the powers of and safeguards for the untouchable community. Without this, independence would be meaningless for the untouchables. In short, Ambedkar criticized the British rule for failing in its duty to uplift the untouchables. For this reason he supported the cause of self-government. But he insisted that in free India, the untouchable community must get a proper share in the power structure; otherwise independence would merely mean rule by the upper castes.

13.2 LIFE SKETCH

Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-1956) was born in the untouchable Mahar Caste in Maharashtra on 14 April, 1891. He suffered all kinds of social humiliations in childhood as well as in his life.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was a jurist, social reformer and politician. He is also known as the Father of Indian Constitution. A well-known politician and an eminent jurist, his efforts to eradicate social evils like untouchability and caste restrictions were remarkable. Throughout his life, he fought for the rights of the dalits and other socially backward classes. Ambedkar was appointed as India's first Law Minister in the Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honor, in 1990.

Childhood & Early Life

Bhimrao Ambedkar was born to Bhimabai and Ramji on 14 April 1891 in Mhow Army Cantonment, Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh). Ambedkar's father was a Subedar in the Indian Army and after his retirement in 1894, the family moved to Satara, also in Central

Provinces. Shortly after this, Bhimrao's mother passed away. Four years later, his father remarried and the family shifted to Bombay. In 1906, 15 year old Bhimrao married Ramabai, a 9 year old girl. His father Ramji Sakpal died in Bombay, in 1912.

Throughout his childhood, Ambedkar faced the stigmas of caste discrimination. Hailing from the Hindu Mahar caste, his family was viewed as "untouchable" by the upper classes. The discrimination and humiliation haunted Ambedkar at the Army school. Fearing social outcry, the teachers would segregate the students of lower class from that of Brahmins and other upper classes. The untouchable students were often asked by the teacher to sit outside the class. After shifting to Satara, he was enrolled at a local school but the change of school did not change the fate of young Bhimrao. Discrimination followed wherever he went. After coming back from the US, Ambedkar was appointed as the Defence secretary to the King of Baroda but there also he had to face the humiliation for being an 'Untouchable'.

Education

He cleared his matriculation in 1908 from Elphinstone High School. In 1908, Ambedkar got the opportunity to study at the Elphinstone College and obtained his graduate degree in Economics and Political Science in the year 1912 from Bombay University. Besides clearing all the exams successfully Ambedkar also obtained a scholarship of twenty five rupees a month from the Gaekwad ruler of Baroda, Sahyaji Rao III. Ambedkar decided to use the money for higher studies in the USA. He enrolled in the Columbia University in New York City to study Economics. He completed his Master's degree in June 1915 after successfully completing his thesis titled 'Ancient Indian Commerce'.

In 1916, he enrolled in the London School of Economics and started working on his doctoral thesis titled "The problem of the rupee: Its origin and its solution". With the help of the former Bombay Governor Lord Sydenham, Ambedkar became a professor of political economy at the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay. In order to

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continue his further studies, he went to England in 1920 at his own expense. There he was received the D.Sc by the London University. Ambedkar also spent a few months at the University of Bonn, Germany, to study economics. He received his PhD degree in Economics in 1927. On 8 June, 1927, he was awarded a Doctorate by the University of Columbia.

Movement Against Caste Discrimination

After returning to India, Bhimrao Ambedkar decided to fight against the caste discrimination that plagued him throughout his life. In his testimony before the Southborough Committee in preparation of the Government of India Act in 1919, Ambedkar opined that there should be separate electoral system for the Untouchables and other marginalised communities. He contemplated the idea of reservations for Dalits and other religious outcasts.

Ambedkar began to find ways to reach to the people and make them understand the drawbacks of the prevailing social evils. He launched a newspaper called “Mooknayaka” (leader of the silent) in 1920 with the assistance of Shahaji II, the Maharaja of Kolhapur. It is said that after hearing his speech at a rally, Shahu IV, an influential ruler of Kolhapur, dined with the leader. The incident also created a huge uproar in the socio-political arena of the country.

Ambedkar started his legal career after passing the Bar course in Gray’s Inn. He applied his litigious skills in advocating cases of caste discrimination. His resounding victory in defending several non-Brahmin leaders accusing the Brahmins of ruining India, established the bases of his future battles.

By 1927, Ambedkar launched full-fledged movements for Dalit rights. He demanded public drinking water sources open to all and right for all castes to enter temples. He openly condemned Hindu Scriptures

advocating discrimination and arranged symbolic demonstrations to enter the Kalaram Temple in Nashik.

In 1932, the Poona Pact was signed between Dr. Ambedkar and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, representative of the Hindu Brahmins relinquishing reservation of seats for the untouchable classes in the Provisional legislatures, within the general electorate. These classes were later designated as Scheduled Classes and Scheduled Tribes.

Political Career

In 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labor Party. In the 1937 elections to the Central Legislative Assembly, his party won 15 seats. Ambedkar oversaw the transformation of his political party into the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, although it performed poorly in the elections held in 1946 for the Constituent Assembly of India.

Ambedkar objected to the decision of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi to call the untouchable community as Harijans. He would say that even the members of untouchable community are same as the other members of the society. Ambedkar was appointed on the Defence Advisory Committee and the Viceroy's Executive Council as Minister for Labor.

His reputation as a scholar led to his appointment as free India's first Law Minister and chairman of the committee responsible to draft a constitution for independent India.

Framer of the Constitution of India

Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as the chairman of the constitution drafting committee on August 29, 1947. Ambedkar emphasized on the construction of a virtual bridge between all classes of the society. According to him, it would be difficult to maintain the unity of the country if the difference among the classes were not met. He put particular emphasis on religious, gender and caste equality. He was

Notes

successful in receiving support of the Assembly to introduce reservation for members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in education, government jobs and civil services.

Dr Ambedkar & Conversion to Buddhism

In 1950, Ambedkar travelled to Sri Lanka to attend a convention of Buddhist scholars and monks. After his return he decided to write a book on Buddhism and soon, converted to Buddhism. In his speeches, Ambedkar lambasted the Hindu rituals and caste divisions. Ambedkar founded the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha in 1955. His book, "The Buddha and His Dhamma" was published posthumously.

On October 14, 1956 Ambedkar organized a public ceremony to convert around five lakh of his supporters to Buddhism. Ambedkar traveled to Kathmandu to attend the Fourth World Buddhist Conference. He completed his final manuscript, "The Buddha or Karl Marx" on December 2, 1956.

Death

Since 1954-55 Ambedkar was suffering from serious health problems including diabetes and weak eyesight. On 6 December, 1956 he died at his home in Delhi. Since, Ambedkar adopted Buddhism as his religion, a Buddhist-style cremation was organized for him. The ceremony was attended by hundreds of thousands of supporters, activists and admirers.

Annihilation of Caste

This famous address invited attention of no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Ambedkar observes that the reformers among the high-caste Hindus were enlightened intellectuals who confined their activities to abolish the enforced widow-hood, child-marriage, etc., but they did not feel the necessity for agitating for the abolition of castes nor did they have courage to agitate against it. According to him, the political

revolutions in India were preceded by the social and religious reforms led by saints. But during the British rule, issue of political independence got precedence over the social reform and therefore social reform continued to remain neglected. Pointing to the Socialists, he remarked that the Socialists will have to fight against the monster of caste either before or after the revolution. He asserts that caste is not based on division of labour. It is a division of labourers.

As an economic organisation also, caste is a harmful institution. He calls upon the Hindus to annihilate the caste which is a great hindrance to social solidarity and to set up a new social order based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in consonance with the principles of Democracy. He advocates inter-caste marriage as one of the solutions to the problem. But he stresses that the belief in the 'Shastras' is the root cause of maintaining castes. He therefore suggests, "Make every man and woman free from the thralldom of the 'Shastras', cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the 'Shastras' and he or she will interdine and intermarry". According to him, the society must be based on reason and not on atrocious traditions of caste system.

13.3 B. R. AMBEDKAR'S THOUGHT AND IDEAS

Like many other national leaders Ambedkar had complete faith in democracy. Dictatorship may be able to produce results quickly; it may be effective in maintaining discipline but cannot be one's choice as a permanent form of government. Democracy is superior because it enhances liberty. People have control over the rulers. Among the different forms of democratic government, Ambedkar's choice fell on the parliamentary form. In this case also he was in agreement with many other national leaders.

Ambedkar viewed democracy as an instrument of bringing about change peacefully. Democracy does not merely mean rule by the majority or government by the representatives of the people. This is a formalistic and

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limited notion of democracy. We would understand the meaning of democracy in a better fashion if we view it as a way of realizing drastic changes in the social and economic spheres of society. Ambedkar's idea of democracy is much more than just a scheme of government. He emphasizes the need for bringing about an all-round democracy. A scheme of government does not exist in vacuum; it operates within the society. Its usefulness depends upon its relationship with the other spheres of society. Elections, parties and parliaments are, after all, formal institutions of democracy. They cannot be effective in an undemocratic atmosphere. Political democracy means the principle of 'one man one vote' which indicates political equality. But if oppression and injustice exist, the spirit of political democracy would be missing. Democratic government, therefore, should be an extension of a democratic society. In the Indian society, for instance, so long as caste barriers and caste-based inequalities exist, real democracy cannot operate. In this sense, democracy means a spirit of fraternity and equality and not merely a political arrangement. Success of democracy in India can be ensured only by establishing a truly democratic society. Along with the social foundations of democracy, Ambedkar takes into consideration the economic aspects also.

It is true that he was greatly influenced by liberal thought. Still, he appreciated the limitations of liberalism. Parliamentary democracy, in which he had great faith, was also critically examined by him. He argued that parliamentary democracy was based on liberalism. It ignored economic inequalities and never concentrated upon the problems of the downtrodden. Besides, the general tendency of the western type of parliamentary democracies has been to ignore the issues of social and economic equality. In other words, parliamentary democracy emphasized only liberty whereas true democracy implies both liberty and equality. This analysis becomes very important in the Indian context. Indian society was demanding freedom from the British. But Ambedkar was afraid that freedom of the nation would not ensure real freedom for all the people. Social and economic inequalities have dehumanized the Indian society. Establishing democracy in such a society would be

nothing short of a revolution. This would be a revolution in the social structure and attitudes of the people. In the place of hereditary inequality, the principles of brotherhood and equality must be established. Therefore, Ambedkar supported the idea of all-round democracy.

13.3.1 Ideological Orientation

Dr. Ambedkar described himself as a 'progressive radical' and occasionally as a 'progressive conservative' depending upon the context of demarcation from liberals, Marxists and others as the case might be. He was an ardent votary of freedom. He saw it as a positive power and capacity, enabling people to make their choices without being restrained by economic processes and exploitation, social institutions and religious orthodoxies and fears and prejudices. He thought that liberalism upheld a narrow conception of freedom which tolerated huge accumulation of resources in a few hands and the deprivation and exploitation that it bred. He thought that liberalism is insensitive about social and political institutions which, while upholding formal equality, permitted massive inequalities in the economic, social and cultural arenas. He argued that liberal systems conceal deep inequalities of minorities such as the conditions of the Blacks in U.S.A. and Jews in Europe. He further argued that liberalism was often drawn to justify colonial exploitation and the extensive injustices it sustained. Liberal stress on the individual ignored community bonds and the necessity of the latter to sustain a reflective and creative self. Further liberalism ignored the repression and alienation of the self that exploitative and dominant structures bred. He found that liberalism has an inadequate understanding of state and the measures that state has to necessarily adopt to promote and foster good life. He felt that the principle of equality before law is truly a great advance as compared to the in egalitarian orders that it attempted but it is not adequate. He advanced stronger notions such as equality Consideration, equality of respect and equality of dignity, He was sensitive to the notion of respect and the notion of community was central in his consideration.

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Ambedkar identified certain crucial areas on which he was in tune with Marxism. He argued that the task of philosophy is to transform the world, as Marx suggested in his teachings on Feuerbach, and he saw the central message of the Buddha as mentor. There is conflict between classes and class-struggle is writ large in social relations. He argued that a good society demands extensive public ownership of the means of production and equal opportunity to everyone to develop his or her self to the fullest extent. He, however, rejected the inevitability of socialism without the intervention of human agency concretely working towards it; the economic interpretation of history which does not acknowledge the crucial role that political and ideological institutions play and the conceptual of the withering away of the state. He decried the strategy of violence as a means to seize power and called for resolute mass action to bring about a good society. He underscored the transformative effect of struggles in transforming those launching the struggles and the social relations against whom they are launched. He further argued that a desirable political order can be created only by acknowledging a moral domain which he saw eminently expressed in the Buddha's teachings.

He was very critical of the Brahmanical ideology which, he felt, has been the dominant ideological expression in India. He argued that it reconstituted itself with all its vehemence by defeating the revolution set in motion by the Buddha. It subscribed to the principle of graded inequality in organising social institutions and relations; defended the principle of birth over the principle of worth; undermined reason and upheld rituals and priest-craft. It reduced the shudra and the untouchable to perpetual drudgery and ignominy. It defended inequality and unequal distribution of resources and positions and sanctified such measures by appeal to doctrines such as karma-siddhanta. It upheld the principle of the superiority of mental labour over manual labour. It had little sympathy towards the degraded and the marginalised. It left millions of people in their degraded condition, away from civilization, and defended their abominable conditions. It had little place for freedom and for re-evaluation of choices. It parcelled society into umpteen closed groups making them unable to close ranks, foster a spirit of community and

strive towards shared endeavours. It took away from associated life its joys and sorrows, emasculated struggles and strivings and deplored sensuousness and festivity. He constructed Brahmanism as totally lacking in any moral values and considerations based on such values. Ambedkar was a bitter critic of Gandhi and Gandhism. He attacked Gandhi's approach to the abolition of untouchability, an approach that denied its sanction in the shastras and which called upon caste Hindus to voluntarily renounce it and make reparations for the same. Ambedkar felt that rights and humanity cannot be left to the mercy and prejudices of people who have developed a vested interest in undermining them. He did not demarcate the caste system and varna system, as Gandhi did, but saw both of them as upholding the same principle of graded inequality. Even if untouchability is abolished through the Gandhian appeal to conscience, which Ambedkar did not think possible, untouchables will continue to occupy the lowest rung of society as a layer of the shudras. He saw Gandhi not merely caving in to Hindu orthodoxy but reformulating such orthodoxy afresh, Gandhi was dispensing moral platitudes to untouchables and trying to buy them with kindness while letting others to promote their interests, without hindrance. He rejected the appellation 'Harijan' that Gandhi had bestowed on untouchables and poured scorn on it. Ambedkar rejected many central notions as propounded by Gandhi such as Swaraj, nonviolence, decentralisation, Khadi, trusteeship and vegetarianism. He subscribed to a modern polity with a modern economy. This-worldly concerns were central to his agenda rather than other-worldly search. He felt that an uncritical approach to Panchayat Raj will reinforce the dominant classes in the countryside handing over additional resources and legitimacy to them to exploit the social classes and groups below them.

13.3.2 Reason and Rights

Ambedkar saw the modern era as heralding a triumph of human reason from myths, customs and religious superstitions. The world and man, he argued, can be explained by human reason and endeavour. The supernatural powers need not be invoked for the purpose. In fact the a

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supernatural powers themselves reflect weak human capacities and an underdeveloped state of human development: He therefore saw the expression of human Person in science and modern technology positively. If there are problems with regard to them then the same reason is capable of offering the necessary correctives. Further, he saw knowledge as eminent practical rather than speculative and esoteric. He felt that speculative knowledge divorced from active engagement with practice leads to priest-craft and speculation. Ambedkar's attitude to religion remained ambivalent. While he did not subscribe to a belief in a personal God or revelation, he felt that religion, as morality, provides an enduring foundation to societies and enables collective pursuit of good life. Such a religion elevates motives, upholds altruism and concern for others, binding people in solidarity and concern. It cares and supports and strives against exploitation, injustice and wrong-doing. He argued that freedom, equality and fraternity are essential conditions for good life and a regime of discrete rights need to be constructed on them as the foundation. He understood rights not merely with it the narrow confines of liberal individualism but as individual and group-rights. He defined both types of rights in the Constituent Assembly debates. Further he argued for both civil and political right. and social and economic rights. He did not see them in opposition but as reinforcing one another. If there is a conflict between them, they have to be negotiated through civic and political He also subscribed to the rights of minority and cultural groups to maintain their distinctive beliefs and identities while at the same time affording them proper conditions to take their rightful place in public affairs. He defended preferential treatment accorded to disadvantaged communities not only for reasons of equality but also on grounds of egalitarian social structures, and for the pursuit of a sane and good society.

13.3.3 Religion

Ambedkar dwelt extensively on major religions of the world, particularly Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. He wrote a great deal about Hinduism and Buddhism. The mainstream trajectory of religious

evolution that he traced in early India was the Vedic society getting degenerated into Aryan society; the rise of Buddhism and the social and moral transformation that it brought about and the counterrevolution must in the development of a specific ideological and political expression which he termed Brahmanism. He found that the Hindu scriptures do not lend themselves to a unified and coherent understanding. They reflect strong cleavages within and across sects and tendencies. There are cleavages within the Vedic literature; the Upanishadic thought, often, cannot be reconciled with the Vedic thought; the Smriti literature is, quite often, in contention with the Sruti literature; gods come to be pitted against one another and Tantra is in constellation with the literature. The avatars of Hinduism, such as Rama and Krishna, cannot be held up for adulation as exemplariness. He saw the Bhagavadgita as primarily putting forward a set of arguments to save Brahmanism in the wake of the rise of Buddhism and the inability of the former to defend itself by appeals to rituals and religious practices. Ambedkar developed a new interpretation of Buddhism and saw it as socially engaged. It privileged the poor and the exploited and was concerned with the sufferings and joys of this world. It does not subscribe to the existence of God or the eternity of soul. It upholds reason, affirms the existence of this world, subscribes to a moral order and is in tune with science. He saw the great values of freedom, equality and community as central to the teachings of the Buddha. Ambedkar had both theological and sociological criticism against Christianity and both of them subscribe to a transcendental domain which, apart from its affront to human reason, begets authoritative and paternalistic tendencies. In a sense they dwarf human reason, freedom of equality and equality of persons. Their pronouncements cannot be reconciled with scientific reason. Christian belief that Jesus is the son of God militates against reason. Both these religions, he felt, accommodated themselves to graded inequality and ranking to different degrees. Their precepts have often led their adherents to resort to force and violence. He saw the Buddha standing tall against the protagonists of both these religions.

13.3.4 Caste

Ambedkar's understanding of caste and caste system underwent certain significant changes overtime. Initially he identified the characteristics of caste as endogamy superimposed on exogamy in a shared cultural milieu. He finds that evils such as sati, child-marriage and prohibition of widow remarriages were its inevitable outcomes. Once a caste closed its boundaries, other castes too followed suit. The Brahmins closing themselves socially first gave rise to castes. Ambedkar continued of caste but roped in other features such as division of, absence of inter-dining and the principle of birth which he had initially considered as integral to endogamy. He also found that caste name is important for the continued reproduction of caste. He argued that castes as discrete entities have to be distinguished from caste system based on the principle of graded inequality. At the pinnacle of this system are the Brahmins. We argued that ranking on the basis of graded inequality safeguards the stability of the system and ensures its continued reproduction which simple inequality would not have permitted. The dissenting members are accommodated as another grade in the hierarchy of deference and contempt that deeply mark the caste system. Ambedkar thought that caste is an essential feature of Hinduism. A few reformers may have denounced it but for the vast majority of Hindus breaking the codes of caste is a clear violation of deeply held beliefs. The principles governing varna system and caste system are one and the same. Both of them uphold graded inequality and subscribe to the doctrine of birth rather than worth. Ambedkar argued for the annihilation of caste without which wielding community bonds, and upholding freedom and equality becomes well-nigh impossible. He suggested inter-caste marriages and inter-caste dining for the purpose although the latter, he considered, is the feeble an exercise to constitute enduring bonds. He further argued that shastras which defend 'varnasratndharma' have to be abandoned as they justify and legitilnise graded organisation of society. He also felt that priesthood in Hinduism should be open ta all the co-religionists on the basis of certified competence rather than on birth. At the same time he thought this project is well-high impossible to be carried out because what is to be renounced is believed to be religiously ordained.

13.3.5 Untouchability

Ambedkar distinguished the institution of untouchability from that of caste although the former too is stamped by the same principle of graded inequality as the latter. Untouchability is not merely an extreme form of caste degradation but a qualitatively different one as the system kept the untouchable outside the fold and made any social interaction with him polluting and deplorable. He argued that in spite of differences and cleavages all untouchables share common disadvantages and received the same treatment by caste Hindus: they are condemned to ghettos on the outskirts of the village, are universally despised and kept away from human association. He did not subscribe to the position that untouchability has its basis in race. He saw it as a social institution defended by the ideology of Brahmanism. While he did not extensively probe the reasons for the origin of untouchability in one instance, he proposed a very imaginative thesis that untouchables were broken men living on the outskirts of village communities who, due to their refusal to give up Buddhism and beef-eating, came to be condemned as untouchables. Given the deep-seated beliefs and practices of untouchability prevailing in India, Ambedkar thought that no easy solution can be found for the malaise. Removal of untouchability required the transformation of the entire society wherein respect and rights towards the other person becomes a way of life rather than a mere constitutional mechanism. Given the entrenched interests and prejudices revolving around the institution of untouchability, it was something too much to expect from entrenched groups. Therefore he felt that the primary burden of emancipating themselves fell on the untouchables themselves. Such-self-help required not only struggles but also education and organisation, Further a constitutional democracy with preferences at various levels can help enormously in such an endeavour.

13.3.6 Constitutional Democracy

The major area of Ambedkar's work was on constitutional democracy. He was adept in different constitutions of the world particularly those that provided an expansive notion of democracy. Rule of law as a bond uniting people and according equal participation of people in collective affairs was quite central to his imagination. He was deeply sensitive to the interface between law on one hand and customs and popular beliefs on the other. He however felt that customs may defend parochial interests and popular beliefs might be deeply caught in prejudices and may not uphold fairness. They may not be in tune with the demands of time, morality and reason. But if law upholds freedom and democracy then it could be placed at the service of common good. Given the long-drawn prejudices and denial of justice in public culture he thought that the role of the state based on law and democratic mandate is crucial. He envisaged a democracy informed by law and a law characterized by sensitivity to democracy. Law puzzled reason and morality but without the authoritative of law, the former had no teeth. Such a stress on democracy and law made Ambedkar to strongly stress the autonomy of the state. State needs to transcend the parochial interests galore in society which often tend to reduce the state as an instrument of their purpose. He argued that a scripture majorities which are permanent, and not amenable for political dissolution and reconstitution, too can be considered as parochial interests. They can undermine rights but at the same time pretend that they are upholding constitutional democracy.

13.4 SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SUPPORTIVE POLITY

Ambedkar was the first major theoretician in India who argued that consideration for the disadvantaged should be the constitutive basis of a state if the state is committed to the upholding of rights. He developed a complex set of criteria to determine disadvantage. Untouchability was only one of the great social disadvantages, although it was one of the most degrading and despicable one. He concentrated on socially engendered disadvantages not because he was unaware of natural and hereditary disadvantages but he felt that most disadvantages are upheld

by dominant social relations who attempt to convert them as natural disadvantages foreclosing attention to them and absolving larger society from any responsibility towards them. He left behind a system of safeguards for the disadvantaged in general and the untouchables in particular. He thought that a set of positive ineasilres are a better guarantee than merely the moral conscious of society although the latter is a prerequisite to sustain such measures in the longer run. With regard to a scheme of safeguards he advanced three types of measures although all these three types of measures were not seen by him as appropriate to all the disadvantaged groups and equally so. Their appropriateness is something to be worked response to the concrete conditions of the concerned group. He demanded an autonomous political representation to the disadvantaged groups not merely to ensure their political presence but to ensure that the concerned groups undertake their pursuits of development, preservation or reproduction, as the case may be, by themselves. He envisaged definitive constitutional measures for the purpose rather than merely rely on public conscience. He argued that such representation will enable these groups to take into account the larger and the common issues into account and pitch their specific demands accordingly. I-le sought reservation for the disadvantaged groups in public employment to the extent they fulfill the requirement for such employment.' He felt that they would be inevitably marginalised if such supportive legally extetided to them. He sought extensive supportive policy measures towards these groups so as to extend to them the benefits of various developmental and welfare measures that a state undertakes. Ambedkar saw preferential measures as resting on an inclusive conception of rights rather than merely the goodwill or benevolence of the majority. In fact goodwill itself needs to be cultivated with an awareness of such rights. In the absence of such cultivation, goodwill and benevolence often collapse into narrow pursuit of interests masquerading themselves in the language of altruism.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. How do you know Life Sketch of Ambedkar?

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2. Discuss the B. R. Ambedkar's Thought and Ideas.

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3. How do you know about Social Justice and Supportive Polity.

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13.5 LET US SUM UP

Ambedkar has often been portrayed as a leader who upheld the partisan cause of the untouchables. He was of course partisan and he upheld the cause of the untouchables as the most disadvantaged and reviled segment of the Indian society. But such partisanship and advocacy were grounded on a body of thought and ideas built defensible arguments which he very ably and effectively deployed. He critically engaged with the ideas and ideologies in place in the world of his times and attempted to devise his own valuations and judgement on them. He did not cave in to their popularity and preeminence. He had a place for religion in the private domain as well as in the moral life of societies but such a place was grounded in good reason. An inclusive conception of rights and an assertion of this world was central to his understanding of public life. He

was an ardent votary of democracy. But democracy cannot be confined to a mode of rule but needs to become a way of life. He was a trenchant critic of the caste system and untouchability and strove hard to put an end to them. He saw divorced from active engagement with practice leads to priest-craft and speculation. Ambedkar's attitude to religion remained ambivalent. While he did not subscribe to a belief in a personal God or revelation, he felt that religion, as morality, provides an enduring foundation to societies and enables collective pursuit of good life. Such a religion elevates motives, upholds concern for others, binding people in solidarity and concern. It cares and supports and strives against exploitation, injustice and wrong-doing. He argued that freedom, equality and fraternity are essential conditions for good life and a regime of discrete rights need to be constructed on them as the foundation. He understood rights not merely within the narrow confines of liberal individualists but as individual and group-rights. He defends both types of rights in the Constituent Assembly debate. Further he argued for both civil and political right. and social and economic rights. He did not see them in opposition but; is reinforcing one another. If there is a conflict between them, they have to be negotiated through civic and political forums He also subscribed to the rights of minorities and cultural groups to maintain their distinctive beliefs and identities while at the same time affording them proper conditions to take their rightful place in public affairs. He defended preferential treatment accorded to disadvantaged communities not only for reasons of equality but also on grounds of egalitarian social structures, and for the pursuit of a sane and good society.

13.6 KEY WORDS

Society: A society is a group of individuals involved in persistent social interaction, or a large social group sharing the same geographical or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations

Caste: Caste is a form of social stratification characterized by endogamy, hereditary transmission of a style of life which often includes an

occupation, ritual status in a hierarchy, and customary social interaction and exclusion based on cultural notions of purity and pollution.

13.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know Life Sketch of Ambedkar?
2. Discuss the B. R. Ambedkar's Thought and Ideas
3. How do you know about Social Justice and Supportive Polity.

13.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 13.2
2. See Section 13.3
3. See Section 13.3

UNIT 14: NEO-BUDDHISM

STRUCTURE

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 History and Background
- 14.3 The Path finder: B. R. Ambedkar
- 14.4 After Ambedkar's death
- 14.5 Relationship with Hindu nationalism
- 14.6 Let us sum up
- 14.7 Key Words
- 14.8 Questions for Review
- 14.9 Suggested readings and references
- 14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit 14 we can able to know:

- To know History and Background
- To find out the contribution Path finder: B. R. Ambedkar
- To discuss the implications After Ambedkar's death
- To know about Relationship with Hindu nationalism

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The Neo – Buddhism movement in India arose neither from a missionary enterprise which carried its own organizational structure and nor from the Buddhaisation of a highly developed existent religious structure. Unlike any other mass conversion in history, this new religious movement was almost completely on its own. The massive conversion, which began in 1956 largely, affected low castes, particularly Mahars of Maharashtra, who had been involved for decades for political, social and religious rights. Buddhism was chosen as the religion of conversion

because of its qualities or rationality, equality and intellectual creativity – because it offered a way out of the psychological imprisonment of the Hindu caste system. Buddhism as an organized religion, however, was almost non – existent in India at that time, and the ex-untouchables who chose to convert had to create leadership, structure, religious, observances and activities from very indirect models and what they created had to be a religion that would fit their own needs. Neo – Buddhism and Dr. Ambedkar are more or less synonymous in the sense Buddhism and Gautama the Buddha would be understood. In studying the Dynamics of Neo –buddhism, we have to appreciate the state of Buddhism in its original form which was static more or less in India (even after its resurgence), until one person made it a dynamic force, making it possible to be reckoned as one of the living faiths in Maharashtra of today. That person was Dr.Ambedkar. but ot highlight a few events in his life which were responsible to bring the best out of a man, we must write. In normal course of life he should have lived and died an untouchable menial. He, who would been an ordinary sweeper – servant, went on to become a scholar – statesman. An untouchable having no identity by way of his religion – for the panchamas are deemed outside the caste system – was destined to revive a religion and little did he know how his community was to be benefited by this revival for posterity and Indian Buddhism in the history of religious which was to take a new shape altogether.

14.2 HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

THE AMBEDKARITE BUDDHISM (NEO - BUDDHISM)

Ambedkar chose to follow the Hinayana form of Buddhism. He preferred Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination, which no other religion has. These are Prajna (understanding against superstition and supernaturalism) Karuna(love) and Samatva (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life. He felt that the attitude of the Buddhists towards women was s great advance on the ancient Hindu attitude towards women, which deteriorated even more with Manu. Buddhism was understood to be continuous with ancient Indian culture.

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The fundamental principle of Buddhism is equality. In the time of Buddha, most of the converts were Brahmins then Sudras⁸⁵. According to Ambedkar Buddhism is the religion that does not recognize caste and offer full scope for progress. It gives hope to the downtrodden. Buddhism is based on reason. There is an element of flexibility inherent in it, which is not founded in any other religion. Buddhism has a rational way to eradicate suffering.

The Nature of the Conversion Movement

According to Ambedkar, the nature of Buddhist philosophy as follow: Buddhism demanded living experience and a life divine, attainable here and now, not after death. It was realism and never idealism. It upheld liberty, equality, truth and justice; it emphasized humanity, love and peace. It was dynamic, scientific and all embracing. Its explanation of life and its meaning and purpose of birth and death and its aftermath were very clear, intelligible and logical. Above all, man was the centre of his study and examination and not anything outside of him. He visualized that Hindu society was static, untouchability was recognized by Hindu religion and caste was the corner- stone to the arch of Hinduism. He weighed the merits of the Hindu dharma against the above merits of Buddhism and finally resolved to embrace Buddhism . He tried to prove that the untouchables were Buddhists. In his thesis on the origin of untouchability he made it clear, that today's untouchables were once Buddhists. Buddhism was an Indian religion and Buddha was nearer to the untouchable masses. Buddhism could withstand even the severest scientific test and had power and capacity to direct the destinies of the modern world Buddhist community and thus pave the way for world brotherhood.

Faith in B.R.Ambedkar

For many, the first incentive to adopt Buddhism comes from faith in B.R.Ambedkar. He is the father of inspiration. Ambedkar, our leader, Mr.K.B.Talwatkar said, he did not have to tell us to becomes Buddhist.

We naturally followed him⁸⁹. Responding to the questionnaire and interview 88 called him a great man; 15 called him a god; 3 considered him as an avatar and another 3 percent as a Buddha, for 2 percent a bodhisattva, for 2 a messenger of Buddha. His picture is venerated as the second Buddha and some say prayers in front of it. According to prabhakar saluba Zine, who responded in the interview said, 'we bow before lord Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar not as god but respecting their teachings. We keep photos and statue of their, in Buddha Vihar and in our residence by bowing we say:

Buddhaga Namame (I follow Buddha)

Dharmang Namame (I follow Dharma or religion)

Sanghagm Namame (I follow monks, religion teachers)

The presence of the picture of Dr. Ambedkar in all Buddhist Vihars and at all Buddhist functions seems to set the Indian Buddhists apart from the main Buddhist tradition. Efforts have been made to place Dr. Ambedkar in the traditional Buddhist framework. Some Buddhists acknowledge Dr. Ambedkar as Bodhisattva in recognition of his role in bringing modern Indian converts into Buddhism, i.e. as a savior. This use has been justified by, at least, one traditionally trained Theravada Buddhist Bhikshu. Other Buddhists reject the Bodhisattva concept as Mahayana Buddhism, which they see as inferior to the rational, non-supernatural, humanity.

On the other hand, Ambedkar worked as a leader and as an intellectual, wrote volumes, among which is the Constitution of India, but finally realized that the religion is the source of liberation here and salvation hereafter. He created a new religion-Navayana Buddhism. Through this process, he even liberated Buddha from imprisonment in the Dashavatar. Unlike the other prophets, Ambedkar never performed miracles, but his birth, growth, education and finally his pitting of Buddhism against Hinduism itself appear miraculous. If Jesus giving spiritual water to a Samaritan woman in exchange for well water is a miracle, if Mohammed civilizing the Arab tribes is a miracle, Ambedkar reviving Buddhism as

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the answer to iniquitous Hinduism is a miracle. Nehru-like some other intellectuals thought Ambedkar's Buddha and Dhamma would be an innocuous book. But that book is attaining the stature of Buddhism's holy book. Gandhi and Nehru now remain uppercaste heroes and agents of the state, whereas Ambedkar is the prophet of the poorest of the poor—the Dalits.

The difference between a prophet and a leader is that a prophet becomes a living hope of liberation and salvation of the poorest of poor. That is what Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed are. They always stood by the poorest of the poor. They too never peeped into the houses of the rich and the exploiters. Ambedkar did the same. Ambedkar infused soul into a soulless people. As Buddhists, they now walk with their head high. In drawing his cartoon, Shankar could not even imagine this. He was just an upper-caste man living off fun pictures. This is okay with Gandhi and Nehru. That funny game cannot be played with prophets who changed the lives of poor people, who were hitherto never allowed to be human beings. Yes, prophets too play politics. But their politics is meant to liberate the oppressed. Ambedkar did that without any compromise at any stage of his life 92 . Ambedkar's personality is a visually impressive one. His intelligence, his leadership qualities, and his political achievements conjure up a symbolic entity that answers the expectations of the Buddhists and allow them to appreciate him, know him and recognize him. These pictures are omnipresent and are the normative decorative for every Buddhist and Ritual and ceremony. These images are found on the walls, in the houses of Buddhists and at their work places. The pictures of Ambedkar are standard ones where he always wears the same clothes a blue coat, a white shirt and, a pen in the coat pocket. In every Buddhists house we find the images of Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar. Along with this in some families we also found the images of Hindu god and goddess especially Laxmi and even Ganpati. When we asked one of our respondent why she has kept the image of Laxmi when she knows that their religion does not permit worshipping Hindu deities is wrong she said she finds it difficult to throw away the image of Laxmi as she is worshipping her since long time and fears that something wrong

would happen to her family if she throws the image of Laxmi. The image of Ambedkar as it is so often depicted in the homes of the Buddhists and in statues in the railway towns of Maharashtra is almost always as a westernized man, complete with a coat, shirt, tie shoes, fountain pen and usually a book [representing the Constitution]. The portrait or statue shows a man serious, determined and proud.

Buddhism as a Religion of Human Liberation

Neo- Buddhist concept of Buddhism is primarily that of a religion of liberation of the oppressed on society Buddha delivered the message of liberty, equality and fraternity. Because Buddha established a new society based on equality, low – caste people also embraced Buddhism. Theme is compassion for the human individual. Buddhism opposes the graded social inequalities. It is humanistic, Secularist, Democratic and scientific. As Neo - Buddhism is certainly down to earth; it would overcome the problem of untouchability leading to social ostracism, gross ignorance, and static, degraded social status. Especially the Mahars by becoming Buddhist were not merely out of any caste, but within the framework of a religion, which assures billions all over the world practice equality for all and which. A Tamil leader in Madras Experienced eighteen years of casteism in the Roman Catholic Church before he took the principle of Dr.Ambedkar and changed faith⁹⁴. It is said “only those who suffer from untouchability and discrimination want to be Buddhists. The young Maher teacher in Wali expresses the attraction of Buddhism.

14.3 THE PATH FINDER: B. R. AMBEDKAR

Dr.Ambedkar Born on 14 April 1889 at Mhow, A village now in Madhya Pradesh Bhimrao Ramji Ambavade a later known as Ambedkar, was the fourteenth child of of Ramji Maloji Sakpal and Bhimabai Murbadkar. They belonged to mahar caste, one of the several untouchable castes in Maharashtra. The Mahars lived through many a humiliating and painful experience. They were conscious of their inferior position and were

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sensitive to it. Originally Mahars were farmers. The Mahars were always at the service of the upper castes. Their traditional duties were to serve as messengers – informing people of deaths and the cremation of dead bodies. As reward for such work they were paid by the upper - caste. People thrice a year with grain. The Mahars had the right to beg for food from the upper caste house. Food would be thrown into the basket of the Mahars which they carried on their heads. This prevented the upper caste from touching the Mahars and getting polluted. One of the vital aspects of the social system was the caste rules that regulated human relations in the villages. The caste rules were based on taboos relating to inter-dining, inter-marriage and social contract. The higher castes practiced these taboos relating to lower caste according to the accepted system of caste hierarchy. Dining or drinking water by an upper caste person with a person of lower caste led to pollution of the upper caste person. There was a taboo that a person of higher caste should not sit to eat with a person of lower ritual status in the same now. The worst and most degrading form of taboo was the practice of untouchability. There was a distinction in the degree of pollution caused by low caste persons. The mere touch by certain lower caste was defiling, whereas certain other lower castes should be employed by the Brahmins to do some of the domestic chores. However, in case of certain outcastes, atishudras or untouchables such as Mahars, Mangs and Dhors, their very shadow was considered polluting. These castes were not permitted even to reside within the village precincts and had to live outside and away from the village where they would live together in their own areas called Mangwadis and Maharwadis. With the coming of the British, the Mahars were given opportunity to serve in the army. Bhimrao ancestors held commendable positions in the army. His father and his six uncles served in the Indian Army at the time of the British. Ramji Maloji Sakpal, Bhimrao's father, a subedar major, served in the Mhow cantonment and was a teacher in the military school. Thanks to the benefits of colonial rule, he had received formal education in Marathi and English. He was devotee of saint kabir and Bhimrao's house hold always resounded with devotional signing and recitation from holy texts. Kabir and his bhakti movement attracted the family as kabir was against the rigidity of caste

system and had a broader and humanizing vision. His mother Bhimabai too could boast of an equally honorable family history, with generation of dedicated men serving in the army. Ramji sakpal retired in 1894 and the family relocated to satara two years later. Shortly after moving to satara Ambedkar's mother died – Bhimrao was only five years old then, The children grew up under the care of their paternal Aunt, Meerabai, until his father remained. Of the fourteen children only three sons, Balaram, Anandrao and Bhimrao, and two daughters Manjula and Tulasa, survived. The youngest was Bhimrao. Although Bhimrao's family had risen in social status after years of committed service in the army the glory and fame was limited to within the Mahar community. None of this could gain them respectable positions in society. They could not free themselves from evil of caste.

School Education

Bhimrao started his school education in 1900 in the government High School, Satara. At that time, his name in the school was Bhiva Ramji Ambedkar. One Brahmin teacher named Ambedkar in the satara High school, through which the teacher was attempting to give him a socially acceptable identity. As a mark of love and respect for him, Bhimrao started calling himself "Ambedkar". Throughout his life, he remained grateful to the teacher who treated him kindly during his school days. During his school days, Ambedkar had several humiliating experience, which made him realize what the stigma of untouchability. Bhimrao's first day at school as a six – year old is too alarming an incident and beyond imagination for us today. He was sent out of class and made to sit outside the classroom on the floor and listen to his teacher, while his upper – caste classmates sniggered at him. The lonely and hurt child learnt his lesson from the corridor.²⁸ He was never allowed to drink water from the common tumbler shared by upper – caste children. He was made to hold palms together into which the Peon poured water from a distance. This was to ensure that the untouchables did not contaminate drinking water by touching it accidentally. Often he went thirsty if he failed to locate the peon. He often wondered why he was treated so. But

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soon be realized that it was the fate of every other child born in the untouchable communities. Ambedkar's teachers never corrected his class work. They feared contamination. He was never asked any questions; he was never allowed to answer. His place was always outside the classroom. It was believed that an untouchable could pollute anything he touched. As a child, he was helpless and suffered the indignities gracefully. On one occasion, Bhimrao went to the fair and thought that he could get a hair cut like other children of his age. But it turned out to be another humiliating experience when the barber learnt that he was a Mahar, He was sent out crying. The pain and humiliation was ingrained in his heart. Another day, Bhimrao and his brother were to travel to Goregaon to meet their father. They had to travel by train upto masur and then hitch a ride by bullock cart for the remaining part of the journey. Half way through the cart rider ask the children, which caste they were belongs to, while replying as they are from Mahar background, the cart man was screaming that he and his cart was polluted by Ambedkar and his brother and they were thrown out from the cart, because they were untouchables. He yelled back that his day was ruined and that he will have, to go home and cleanse himself, his cart, and the animals. Untouchables were considered less than animals. Today one does not want to believe it happened in the India. What is done cannot be undone, but one can always see that it is never done again. Bhimrao passed matriculation examination in 1908. He was then seventeen years old. The same year his marriage, with Rami later renamed Ramabai was only nine years old at that time she was the second daughter of her then deceased father, Bhiker walangkar, who worked as a porter. The marriage was sole was solemnized in the open sheed of the byculla market of Bombay. In those days, the marriages were arranged in quite young age. While Bhirao was seventeen, his wife was just nine years old. However, he continued his studies as usual sfter his marriage to Ramabai gave birth to her first son yashwant in the in the same year. Later, on 15 April, 1948 many years after the death of Ramabai in 1935, he married a saraswatha Brahmin lady - Dr.Sharda Kabir, she was working in the same hospital at Bombay where he was treated for same time.

Higher Education

Ramji shifted to Bombay in 1904 and admitted Ambedkar to Elphinstone - High school. He was the first Mahar to pass the matriculation exam from the prestigious institution, A brilliant achievement. As passing the matriculation exam was not common amongst untouchables, his family and his community celebrated the occasion. A meeting was held to honour him. It was presided over by an eminent Maratha scholar, Dr.Kaluskar, who presented him with a book on Buddhism. As fate would have it, it was Buddhism that later changed Bhimrao's life.

As a student, Bhimrao showed remarkable talent and deep knowledge of subjects. He was a voracious reader and in school, he outshone the student from the upper caste. The Maharaja sayajirao Gaikaward of Baroda had announced scholarship for higher studies to any promising untouchable student. Ambedkar welcomed the opportunity and joined elphinstone college, Bombay. One of his teachers, Professor Muller, lent him books and gave him cloths. However, the overall environment was humiliating. The college hotelkeeper, who was a Brahmin, would not give him tea or water. But Ambedkar concreted all his energies on his science studies and passed his B.A in Economics and political examination in 1912 with English and Persian as his subjects. In the same year his wife gave birth to their first son, yashwant. After his graduation, Ambedkar joined the Baroda state service. He had hardly served for fifteen days when his father died on February 2, 1913. The higher office in Baroda state was manned by upper caste Hindus. The idea of pollution by touch was so strong that even the peons in his office used to throw office files at him from a distance. He could not get residential accommodation in any decent locality. He was staying with Pandit Atma Ram, an Arya samajist. The social conditions were highly unfavorable and it was different for him to continue in service. He therefore decided to resign his post at the earliest opportunity. Ambedkar got another opportunity to pursue high education when the Maharaja of Baroda decided to send some students to the U.S.A for higher studies at Columbia University New York. The freedom and equality he experienced in America made a very deep impact on Bhimrao.³⁴ It was

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refreshing for him to be able to live a normal life, Free from the caste prejudice of India. In June 1915, Ambedkar obtained his M.A. Degree for his thesis on “Ancient Indian Commerce”. In may 1916, he read a paper on “caste in India, their mechanism, Genesis and development at the anthropology seminar of Dr.A.A.Goldenweizer. It was published in the Indian Antiquary, In May 1917, the first published work of Ambedkar. In that paper, Ambedkar described endogamy as the “essence of caste”. He expressed the view that the caste was a “Closed class”. In June 1916, Ambedkar submitted his thesis for the degree of Ph.D. entitled, “National Dividend for India: A Historical and Analytical study”. It was published eight years later as the evolution of provincial finance in British India. Ambedkar left Columbia University in June 1916 to Join London School Economics and political science as a graduate student. In October 1916, he was admitted to Gray’s Inn for law. However, he had to return to India after spending a year in London, because the scholarship granted to him had lapsed. In London, he had been working on a thesis for the M.Sc (Economics) degree. In July 1917, Bhimrao returned to India to take up a high post Baroda as agreed. He was given good job in the Baroda Civil Service for the post of the state’s Finance Minister. Yet, he again ran into the worst features of the Hindu caste system. He could not get accommodation in any hotel or hostel in Baroda. He took shelter in a Parsee hotel and stayed there and he received similar treatment in his office. Peons flung office files on his table; drinking water was not available in his office. The humiliations reached a climax, when one day a group of Parsees armed with lathis forced Ambedkar to vacate the Parsee hotel where he was living. No Hindu or Muslim was prepared to give him shelter in the city. He was very alone there with no one to talk. All this was unbearable to him. He sent a note to the maharaja, but the Diwan expressed his inability to do anything in the matter. Ultimately, Ambedkar left Baroda and went to Bombay in November 1917. In Bombay Ambedkar tried to mould his life afresh. He started a business firm offering advice to dealers in stocks shares. Nevertheless, he closed permanently as the customers were not ready to come an “untouchable” for advice. In November 1918, he joined as professor of political Economy in Sydenham College, Bombay. He

served the college from November 1918 to March 1920. As his fame spread, students from other colleges attended his lectures. The high caste professors objected to his drinking water from the pot reserved for the professional staff. Gandhi's travails in South Africa are well known. It is a pity that Ambedkar had to face similar, or even worse, treatment in his country. In January 1920, Ambedkar started a Marathi fortnightly Mooknayak³⁸ (spokesman of the voiceless) to champion the cause of the depressed classes in India. Ambedkar used this Journal to criticize orthodox Hindu politicians.

Leader of the Downtrodden

Armed with a doctorate and law degrees from the best of institutions Ambedkar returned to India to serve the nation. Freedom struggle was at its peak at that time in India. The knowledge and exposure gained from his travel to foreign nations gave him an edge over others. Ambedkar engaged himself more and more in social and political activities. Organizing the Bahishkrit Hitarini Sabha in 1924 was a great leap in that direction. The primary objectives of the organization were to promote, encourage and create awareness among the untouchables of the necessity of education. He believed that education is the right weapon to cut social slavery. He reiterated that only education will enlighten the downtrodden masses to come up and gain social status, economic betterment and political freedom. Educate, agitate, organize remained his powerful slogan. He firmly believed that education could not only bring new consciousness among the downtrodden but also impel them towards praxis of self-liberation. At Aurangabad on 1st September 1951, Dr. Ambedkar said, "Coming as I do from the lowest order of the Hindu society, I know what is the value of education. The problem of raising the lower order in India is not of feeding them, clothing them, but the problem is to remove from them the inferiority complex which has stunted their growth and made them slaves to others, to create in them the consciousness of the significance of their lives for themselves and for the country, of which they have been cruelly robbed of the existing social

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order. Nothing can achieve this purpose except the spread of high education.

He went around organizing marches and sathyagrahas, in March 1927 Ambedkar led his followers on a sathyagraha march to a public water tank in Mahad called the Chavdar Tank. Ambedkar led around ten thousand people to the tank. He knelt down and drank water from the tank breaking century-old traditions (untouchables were not allowed take water from well or tank) and rewriting history. In March 1930, Ambedkar led yet another march to be allowed entry into Kala Ram temple in Nasik. Around fifteen thousand men and five hundred women participated in this. The gate of the temple was closed by the upper castes and the procession was attacked. The fight for equality and justice continued, relentlessly. The fight for equality and justice continued, relentlessly. Through almost a decade of political involvement, Ambedkar realized that the Britishers were not sympathetic to their cause and the Gandhi was soft on the orthodox Hindu. This set him against Brahmanism and against Gandhi. On 25 December 1927, Ambedkar and his followers publically burned mansmriti. This act sent shockwaves across the country. It was clear that Ambedkar was on a journey to eradicate untouchability. Meanwhile the freedom movement in the country was gathering momentum. Britishers for the first time invited various leaders of the country to London for a Round Table Conference to discuss the subject of self-rule. Round table conference was held in 1930 and Ambedkar was invited to attend it as a representative of the depressed classes. The conference was a golden opportunity and Ambedkar spoke passionately for the untouchables. He argued that they were a minority and that they should be granted the same treatment like other minorities, such as the Muslims, Sikhs, and the Christians. Most of all he demanded separate electorates. If Muslims were given this privilege as a significant religious minority, he argued, untouchables as a minority oppressed by caste equally deserved a similar guarantee of self-representation to protect their own interests against the encroachments of Hindu majority rule. It was indeed a great achievement. But this eventually distanced Gandhi and Ambedkar. Gandhi's contention was

that it would create an unbridgeable divide between the untouchables and the caste Hindus. Gandhi felt that Ambedkar's only focus was on promoting the untouchables and that he failed to see the consequence from a broader perspective. During the meeting with Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar asked the Mahatma to his face: 'How can I call this land my own and this religion my own, wherein we are treated worse than cats and dogs, wherein we cannot get water to drink Gandhi reacted "I am against the political separation of the untouchables from the Hindus. That would be suicidal. At the second Round table conference in November 1931 Gandhiji claimed himself as the sole representative of India, which was not accepted. The statement of the Mahatma that "So far as the untouchables are concerned..." I would strongly resist any further representation led to Ambedkar's reply: "This is nothing but a declaration of war with Mr.Gandhi and congress against the untouchables...". Whether I am a nominee or not, I fully represent the claims of my community... Ambedkar always openly expressed his anger and disagreement with Gandhi. On 11 February 1933 Gandhi started the weekly Harijan. He asked Ambedkar to give a message for the first issue of the magazine. Ambedkar refused to give a message. Ambedkar often wrote with anger and he is known to have frequently reiterated, Mahatma's have come and Mahatma's have gone, but the untouchables have remained untouchables. The confrontation between Gandhi and Ambedkar continued for years. Being so passionately involved in the fight for rights for the depressed classes, Ambedkar had no time for his family. His wife Ramabai fell seriously ill and she died on 27 March 1935. Her wish to worship Vittaldev at Pandurpu remained unfulfilled, as the untouchables had not yet been allowed into the tempels for worship. This left Ambedkar broken hearted.

Architect of the Indian Constitution

On 15th August 1947, India won independence after two centuries of struggle under the British. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the first prime minister of Independence India appointed Ambedkar as the first minister of law of the country. He joined the cabinet on 19th August 1947. He

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took a leading part in the framing of the Indian Constitution. The process began with forming of thirteen committees and sub-committees to advise the constituent assembly on various aspects of constitution. Members of the drafting committee with Ambedkar as chairman were Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, K.M.Munshi, Sayyad Mohammad Sadulla, B.L. Mitter, N.Gopaldaswami Ayyangar and D.P. Khaitan. It is believed that the knowledge gained through extensive reading of Buddhist scriptures came to his aid. Ambedkar sought to provide constitutional guarantees and protections for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, eradication of untouchability and abolition of all form of discrimination. The part of the constitution that declared the abolition of untouchability was approved on 29 November 1948. Ambedkar won the Assembly's support for introducing reservations of jobs for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the civil services, schools and colleges. He also argued for economic and social rights for women, the final draft of constitution was accepted on 26 November 1949. The constitution came into effect on 26 January 1950 and India becomes a Republic. Ambedkar declared: on 26 January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of "One man one vote" and "one vote one value". In our social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle "one man one value". How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? We must remove this contradiction of the earliest possible moment else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of democracy which the constituent assembly has so laboriously built up. By the late 1940's especially after the hard and tedious work on the constitution, his health deteriorated. His loneliness too added to it. In 1948, he married Dr. Sharadha Kabir. She was doctor by profession and a Saraswat Brahmin. He married her in a civil ceremony. She remained his compassion till the end. In 1951 Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet. The major reason for his resignation was the withdrawal of support by the cabinet on the Hindu code bill. Ambedkar had drafted this bill and had introduced several important amendments. Although Prime Minister Nehru and many other

Congress leaders supported it, it received vehement criticism from a large number of members of parliament. Ambedkar felt that he was betrayed by Congress party and Nehru and simply walked out of parliament and offered no explanation. In 1952, he independently contested an election to the Lok Sabha but was defeated by a Congress candidate N.S. Kajrolkar. In March the same year, he was appointed to the Rajya Sabha and would remain a member until his death.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. How do you know History and Background?

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2. Discuss the contribution Path finder: B. R. Ambedkar.

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14.4 AFTER AMBEDKAR'S DEATH

The Buddhist movement was somewhat hindered by Ambedkar's death so shortly after his conversion. It did not receive the immediate mass support from the Untouchable population that Ambedkar had hoped for. Division and lack of direction among the leaders of the Ambedkarite movement have been an additional impediment. According to the 2011 census, there are currently 8.44 million Buddhists in India, at least 6.5 million of whom are Marathi Buddhists in Maharashtra. This makes Buddhism the fifth-largest religion in India and 6% of the population of Maharashtra, but less than 1% of the overall population of India.

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The Buddhist revival remains concentrated in two states: Ambedkar's native Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh — the land of Bodhanand Mahastavir, Acharya Medharthi and their associates.

Developments in Uttar Pradesh

Acharya Medharthi retired from his Buddhapuri school in 1960, and shifted to an ashram in Haridwar. He turned to the Arya Samaj and conducted Vedic yajnas all over India. After his death, he was cremated according to Arya Samaj rites. His Buddhapuri school became embroiled in property disputes. His follower, Bhoj Dev Mudit, converted to Buddhism in 1968 and set up a school of his own.

Rajendranath Aherwar appeared as an important Dalit leader in Kanpur. He joined the Republican Party of India and converted to Buddhism along with his whole family in 1961. In 1967, he founded the Kanpur branch of "Bharatiya Buddh Mahasabha". He held regular meetings where he preached Buddhism, officiated at Buddhist weddings and life cycle ceremonies, and organised festivals on Ambedkar's Jayanti (birth day), Sambuddhatva jayanthi, Diksha Divas (the day Ambedkar converted), and Ambedkar Paranirvan Divas (the day Ambedkar died).

The Dalit Buddhist movement in Kanpur gained impetus with the arrival of Dipankar, a Chamar bhikkhu, in 1980. Dipankar had come to Kanpur on a Buddhist mission and his first public appearance was scheduled at a mass conversion drive in 1981. The event was organised by Rahulan Ambawadekar, an RPI Dalit leader. In April 1981, Ambawadekar founded the Dalit Panthers (U.P. Branch) inspired by the Maharashtrian Dalit Panthers. The event met with severe criticism and opposition from Vishva Hindu Parishad and was banned.

The number of Buddhists in the Lucknow district increased from 73 in 1951 to 4327 in 2001. According to the 2001 census, almost 70% of the Buddhist population in Uttar Pradesh is from the scheduled castes background.

In 2002, Kanshi Ram, a popular political leader from a Sikh religious background, announced his intention to convert to Buddhism on 14 October 2006, the fiftieth anniversary of Ambedkar's conversion. He intended for 20,000,000 of his supporters to convert at the same time. Part of the significance of this plan was that Ram's followers include not only Untouchables, but persons from a variety of castes, who could significantly broaden Buddhism's support. But, he died 9 October 2006 after a lengthy illness; he was cremated as per Buddhist tradition.

Another popular Dalit leader, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati, has said that she and her followers will embrace Buddhism after the BSP forms a government at the Centre.

14.5 RELATIONSHIP WITH HINDU NATIONALISM

The rise of Hindu nationalism in India has posed a threat to Indians who practice religions other than Hinduism. Under the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government ruled by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ambedkarite Buddhists continue to protest against the caste structure purported by Hindu nationalists in the form of mass conversions. The BJP has attempted to lure Dalit votes using more updated, inclusive Hindutva rhetoric, but this has been met with pushbacks by Dalit Buddhist leaders.

Since the 1980s, Hindutva politics has incorporated Dalit culture and folklore in their political rhetoric in attempts to attract them to a greater right-wing ideology. Groups such as the BJP have gone so far as to involve them in the anti-Muslim riots in the state of Gujarat in 2002. The greater RSS-BJP Hindutva movement also employs other manipulative tactics such as misleading less-fortunate Dalit groups to gain votes, This has given some Dalits recognition and a sense of inclusion in Hindu India in the contexts of electoral participation and self-mobilization. The

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BJP has also co-opted Dalit political movements, denying their distinctiveness and viewing them as part of the Hindu project. This “saffronizing” of Dalit movements systematically erases local Dalit identities.

Despite its supposed support for a majority Dalit populace in India, the BJP has committed atrocities against the group among others who go against the grain of the BJP ideology. Specifically, Dalits have been targeted by mobs of upper-caste Hindus for voicing their opinions on Dalit issues on social media channels such as Facebook. The Dalit conversions from Hinduism to Buddhism have continued through the incumbency of the BJP government as late as 2018. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a paramilitary Hindu nationalist volunteer organization that oversees the BJP, has voiced its concerns regarding the ongoing conversions. It has threatened and even physically attacked against those who attempt to convert from Hinduism into other religions as an act of protest.

The Dalit Buddhist movement today is kept alive through educated, middle-class Dalits and other loosely related groups. These castes still use Ambedkarite ideology as a guiding and unifying force of political mobilization against the BJP majority. Many Ambedkarites have been drawn to the movement as a result of exclusionary policies in many Indian states that prevent Hindus from converting to Islam or Christianity from Hinduism. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution designates Buddhism as a sub-sect of Hinduism — although this policy inherently downplays the separation between Hindus and Buddhists, Ambedkarites use it as a loophole in order to legally and symbolically convert away from Hinduism as a means of protest. Dalits who do not identify with Dalit Buddhism but aim to escape their "untouchable" social status view the legality of conversion as a simpler avenue to freedom than navigating the bureaucracy associated with converting to religions such as Islam.

Prime Minister Modi himself has explicitly co-opted Buddhism as a means of garnering support for the BJP among Dalit Buddhists in India.

In 2016, he launched a movement titled Dhamma Chakra Yatra, a political/religious pilgrimage wherein almost 100 Buddhist monks traveled around the state of Uttar Pradesh in order to speak to voters about Modi's views on Buddhism and Ambedkar. This was another attempt to reconcile the Ambedkarite narrative with the predominantly Hindu-centric BJP rhetoric. Prominent Buddhist leaders in Uttar Pradesh voiced their concerns and made clear their separation from any Buddhist monks who contributed to this cause, stating that Dhamma Chakra Yatra was actually a movement to slander Buddhism

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

- 1. Discuss the implications After Ambedkar's death.

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- 2. How do you know about Relationship with Hindu nationalism?

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14.6 LET US SUM UP

Dr. Ambedkar is the true champion of Human Right in India, and pioneer of human right advocacy. When babe sahib said “Educate” it is sure that in broader sense of providing a humanistic education, not merely academic, but and education of life and for life that is education for human dignity. Human rights and Justice in India, which will make Dalits restless or to agitate and to unit. The problem of Dalits, who are divided on the basis of occupation, community, culture, language etc.. can be resolved if the untouchables have learnt that we are human beings first, , and we have to respect our fellow Dalits who are born as human beings and paradigm of relationship is respect for human dignity and the

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paradigm for growth is respect for Human. Dignity of labour, which is naturally found in every Dalit Village. Professor Kancha - Illaiah once said that “Dalit village portrays equality centered productivity, an embryonic creativity, human values, a democratic civil society all of which need to be strengthened.

The Buddha and his Dhamma can be treated as the religious text of NeoBuddhism and in it are the Doctrinal tenets. The text indicates a definite mind of Dr. Ambedkar as to the form of Buddhism, he and his fellow Mahars would be adopting. It also provides a concise Buddhist text like Bible should we call it Bhīma Pitakar? It was and is the first and the last religious text on Neo-Buddhist faith. On its publications in 1957, the reaction of Buddhist monks and scholars overseas was varied. One reviewer wrote: Indeed the whole book explains the hatred and aggressiveness they (the Neo-Buddhist) nourish and display. Ambedkar’s Buddhism is based on Hate, the Buddha’s on compassion... The title should be changed from Buddha and Dhamma to that of Ambedkar and his Dhamma for he preaches Non-Dharma as Dharma for motives of social and political reform. The other reviewer in the light of Dharma observed: “Although this was a book by a great man, unfortunately, it was not a great book which the author with all his manifold virtues was not fit to write... The great doctor tampered with the texts and whenever he found view inconvenient to his own, denounced them as later accretions made by Monks. Nearly thirty years after Buddha and Dhamma was published and reviewed, the British Monk Mahasthavir Sangharakshita’s book Ambedkar and Buddhism was published Sangharakshita had known Dr. Ambedkar personally and he was the only Monk who administered Buddhist catechism to the early converts. He has made painstaking and illuminating review. Sangharakshita drives home that Buddha and his Dhamma was begun in right earnestness but completed in a hurry. He compares Ambedkar’s magnum opus with that of Paul Carus’s the Gospel of Buddha: traces where Ambedkar have drawn the sources from; and interprets the mind of Ambedkar chapter by chapter. For him the Buddha and his Dhamma was meant for those who were disillusioned with Hinduism.

14.7 KEY WORDS

Neo Buddhism: The Dalit Buddhist movement is a religious as well as a socio-political movement among Dalits in India which was started by B. R. Ambedkar. It radically re-interpreted Buddhism and created a new school of Buddhism called Navayana. The movement has sought to be a socially and politically engaged form of Buddhism.

Nationalism: Nationalism is an ideology and movement that promotes the interests of a particular nation especially with the aim of gaining and maintaining the nation's sovereignty over its homeland.

14.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know History and Background?
2. Discuss the contribution Path finder: B. R. Ambedkar
3. Discuss the implications After Ambedkar's death
4. How do you know about Relationship with Hindu nationalism?

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14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 14.2
2. See Section 14.3

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 14.4
2. See Section 14.5