

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

RELIGION is defined as the realization of the connection with the Divine Reality, conceived as a personality of highest value. It is a religature or connecting again with Him from whom we have strayed away. Yoga also means connecting oneself with God (from yuj) to connect. Thus they mean the same thing. Undoubtedly late yoga meant the disjunction from outer nature or the world or separation from it so as to be able to connect oneself with God. Even so is it with religion—it meant a giving up of the word and taking of the life of connecting oneself with God.

There are thus two stages one of disconnection (nivr̥tti) and another of yoga, connection ; a turning away from the world is the outer sign of religion, an enjoyment of the ecstasy of Union with the Divine is the inner sign of it.

The outer predominates in the objective consideration, the inner dominates in the subjective experience. The second condition can be stated to be one of mystic or indescribable union or freedom in God as the Ultimate Reality beyond which there is seen or known or in any way apprehended no other higher.

It is in this sense that the mystic vision is of the Ultimate and it is all things to one who has apprehended it or experienced it with one's soul. It is not a sensory experienced however subtle and ample , nor is it the beholding of a Cosmic Ritam or Satyam, or Truth which is done by the purified mind of Reason, nor is it any comparable experience which the poets have intuited at all. Even the basic revelations of other seers (sruti) which we have heard cannot hope to make it a vision and experience of union for us. It is a direct plunge into reality so as to become with it entire and whole. In this sense the Divine is known as the Prursa (derived from *Puri – isa* the Lord of the City or body) which is ourselves.

That the soul finds itself to be a body of God , in whom the Divine enters wholly and also that the Divine is experienced to be the City of the Soul., the puri (Divine), are indeed two forms of Mystic experience which is beyond the comprehension and logic of the lower powers of cognition open to man.

Philosophy is defined as the love of wisdom (Sophia). Wisdom is stated to be the knowledge of Ultimate Reality, the most valuable of existing in the fullest sense of that term.

Existence is a value concept in addition to being a concept of fact. This requires elucidation: for a scientist a fact is that which he observes through his instruments of precision. It is a thing or a law which is the fixed rule availing between things or movements and so on. It is clear that these rules and laws are in themselves of no value unless they could be in a sense useful to man in his transactions with the world around him. Science grants useful knowledge about the world around man, and helps him to live in this world more fully or helps him to exist. Existence from being just an occurrence in space or time or a transaction of motions gets a different meaning as it involves further processes.

A metal existing, a rock existing or even a waterfall existing or a lighting process existing or a lightning process existing is different from a rat existing or rabbit or a man or plant. Even here to exist would mean something for man as distinguished from that of an animal. Existing for is of course different from existing as. The whole world perhaps exists for man, (?) but to be the world is not to exist for man.

Reality as existence would have to be different from different levels of interpretation. Indeed there is a truth in the idealistic view that reality has degrees not of course of reality but value (or/and perfection too).

As in the notion of value, so is the notion of reality and as such we have indeed several attempts to explain reality in terms of value though scientists and others do not see that all attempts at philosophising is not to know reality as it is in itself but as they appear or come to man. A materialist scientist would explain all reality as sense objectivity or even insensate objectivity from the fact of getting rid of the relativistic subjectivity of sensations, from the notion of reality as abstraction from the nature of reality or such reality as fall within range of perception by sense, useful albeit.

A biological scientist would think of all reality as governed by vital forces of growth and evolution. Indeed he will try to interpret reality even of the mechanical level in terms of biological degradation, even as all movement is explained in terms of entropy or rest. Mechanical experience and mechanical ability and creation or invention are sought to be shown to be governed by the biological somehow getting to act on matter.

If the mechanical conception of matter dominates the external aspect and sensate aspect, the biological conception of matter itself is in terms of discovering that matter (even the most elementary and rudimentary) is governed by the inner law of impulsion towards growth and modification.

A discovery of paramount importance in this lies in the fact that biological persistence of any living creation is strictly conditioned by the process of deterioration and death though is also a process of conservation of life through perpetuation, continuity through progeny,

The discovery of evolution reveal many facts and the attempt to explain each and every thing genetically discovered even in matter things that did not even suggest themselves when it was dealt with mechanically. A vitalistic account of Reality in terms of evolution threw light on the very structure and persistence of matter in all its forms, and thus we came across stupendous discoveries about the continuous processes of matter building and breaking, comparable to or analogous to the processes of anabolism and catabolism, and more of growth and perpetuation and persistence in and through different forms of organization suitable to life or living (existing).

A philosophy of evolution however had not only to take into consideration the phenomena of biological growth and mutations, but also subjectively come to recognize the play of intelligence in and itself seems to have formed. But the more important feature is the emergence of external awareness or awareness of external objects which have to be dealt with and conquered or adapted to. Consciousness then became a factor that has to be reckoned with, and consciousness the handmaid of intelligence. If instinct is unconscious intelligence, it will be found that intellect or mind is conscious

intelligence. We became aware that at the back of all Reality including matter there is an intelligence which works or is working as law planning and scheming inviolately, and its cosmic proportions and reveal its many planal existence; as unconscious, sub-conscious, and conscious, and amid ignorance or inertness there is a prodigality of intelligence, before which human intelligence and reason quakes in awe and wonder.

The mentalistic attempt to know Reality is of course said to be humanistic in so far as it approaches Reality through Reason which is said to be not available to the lower living creatures. To us generally speaking the ideological approach to Reality or approach through Ideas is natural. But ideas themselves are in one sense taken from the perceived world, and as such there are sensate ideas (images which have tended to become symbolic of things or sensations-actions), and in another sense they are also the peculiar products of reason that sees them to be universal or in many objects and things etc.... The discovery of identity -- idea, universality of idea, is not a biological reaction as such but as whole comprising particulars in which the particulars participate. The particulars themselves contain the phase or facet of the universal. This is not a discovery of the sense or even of instinct but of reason. The grasping of the universal in the particulars, the general in the individual things etc., is the exclusive function of the reason: sense does not contribute to it and as such it is the differential of Reason, and in this sense innate. Human experience is not possible without reason grasping the universals. Man is a universalizing entity.

It is not so much psychology as the reasoning factor that differentiates man from the animal. Human thinking is based on his reason. Philosophy at this level is idealistic, in the sense that it deals with ideas as the material of its knowledges: all knowing is through ideas, generals or universals. Even the collective is a biological fact and one wonders whether lower animal minds work in collective as the unity or unit of their existence and not the universal. However human mind again is not of the same power of perception at all places. As there are grades in the elements and in animals, so too there are in men; and thus we find materialistic men particularize their existence and collectivise it; the biologically minded human wishes to act organically and is far from universalized thinking and his unity is organic unity of the

collective mass. The dialectical mechanism is replaced by the organic and it is of course more suited to man than the mechanical unity of the machine, robot, etc....

Man is the creature who classifies and generalizes and yet it is all done with the power of analysis that is going along with synthesis. Yet he deals with the particulars, but he becomes aware of the whole. He is aware of a universe and indeed constructs a plan of his universe and sees laws operating in the sphere of his world. All his culture is based upon his attempt to know the world and himself and the law of their relation. He has also the rare inventiveness of hypothesizing and hypostatizing relations and entities. Undoubtedly his philosophies have varied from sense knowledge and construction to abstract ideation and construction. His supreme merit lies in his wielding his mind in a beautiful manner of sheer imagination. He had oscillated from one extreme of sheer deterministic materialism to deterministic spiritualism, and from the strings of instinctive fear and materialistic determinism and dialectic has helped him to build a world of his own. Thus Philosophy took birth or rather philosophies took birth, and it was a fact that philosophy did not care a hoot for utility or existence also. It discovered a new dimension to existence. Reality for its own sake and not for the sake of man. Such a selflessness of man's reason was a triumph over biology.

Philosophical thinking has canvassed all its past, and has prepared itself for its future. Reality instead of being discovered was made to discover itself.

Philosophy in different keys has begun to operate. It limited itself to know only one field of its action and produced a naturalistic philosophy and this too it divided into two sectors, the living and non-living. Then it limited itself to the study of man and produced a philosophy for oneself and philosophy for others a personal and the descriptive and also a philosophy of self and others also. It began to look at man through nature as a natural product and nature as from the standpoint of oneself and as a product of mind of man. It transcended itself when it discovered that Nature is not a construction by all. Astronomical dimensions and irreducible plurality prevented a

solipsistic construction of Reality. Above all man's attempt to dismiss reality as a myth or illusion has only aroused problems of deepest concern – the future of man himself.

A love of wisdom has shewn that all materialistic, biological or vitalistic or mentalistic constructions or views of Reality are unsatisfying. Man's own reason is riddled with a contradiction, a will to be exact with instruments that he has, and a will to know what is beyond them: neither senses however development and evolved through instinct impulsion to greater and greater endeavours nor instinctive knowing dependable but altogether specific to certain ends and incapable of being used beyond them, nor even mind with its dichotomic classifications and explanations or generalizations have helped to satisfy the growing love of Reality as it is .

Mentalistic or idealistic philosophy has come to a brilliant end. So philosophers have to go beyond mind, the mind of man. This of course is to be pessimistic about the humanistic ends and optimisms. Certain thinkers aver however that the lack of faith in man is something amounting to treachery. Humanistic thinkers have been fighting hard against bringing in the power and the light that might directly come from reality , if it could come. Lack of faith in the human mind – what has not the human mind prepared for man, his present civilization and comfort and scientific gadgets and amenities that make life livable ! There persons who think that the human mind if it is but educated in the proper way, socially or sociologically conditioned, will make man a more tamed creature for good and make him accept socialism as a heaven of ultimate value, Unfortunately the social habituation may deprive man of the very value which he grants to himself and indeed it is the one fact that refuses to yield to the lures of paradise even of gods, not to speak of pleasures of socialism.

A philosophy that removes the individual man of 'soul' , (now we can speak of this as soul because it cannot limit itself to the material body, vitalistic life and mentalistic ideation – generality, but seeks a greater truth of itself) cannot be satisfying. Whether anthropcentricism is a variant of ego- centricism or not, it is clear that ego—centricism seeks to be truly interpreted in its highest value and if necessary refuted or superseded

but it cannot be dismissed by the mind and its social generalizations or hedonistic promises of socialistic paradise.

Thus our survey showed how philosophy has come to a point when it can no longer be content with the knowing of matter, life or mind, brilliant and useful though such knowledge has been, for it does not include the basic fundamental sense of existence or Reality for the soul of man.

Many indeed have been the attempts to circumvent this want : God has been proposed as the alter "other" for the individual, one who can complement his lack or supplement it. Man had always been able to feel his finiteness. All the efforts of philosophers and other have been to assure man of his freedom from finiteness or bondage to the limitations of his body, breath and intelligence.

As has been his philosophy so has been his god or ideal : thus a materialist requires a visible and tangible reality for his ideal or object of worship which will help him to get over the limitations of his finite existence. Threat to this even is one of the constant things he is aware of. Thus he has idols or icons as objects of his worship or rivers and trees, which in a sense may suggest the majesty and power of God. (As has been remarked that which you worship that do you become.). there is the steadiness of matter and assurance of basic being in such a worship.

Thus we get at men who are interested in just preserving old customs and patterns of living and being and want no change. Changelessness is the one significant gain of this consciousness.

But no sooner than the materialist perceives change to significant he refuses to hug to permanence and seeks change. His God is a vital living God and even a struggling victorious Godhead , biological master of growth but unfortunately even such vital Godheads pass away. Avatars and prophets pass away. To them the conquest over death has not been possible. There finiteness remains as a significant reminder that the best have yet not been the best at all. However man has worshipped leaders and saints and Avatars, made icons of them and built temples too to imitate

their excellence and feel fulfillment of oneself. The day of the finite Gods and sufferings Gods however has made worship of gods themselves meaningless. Again if you worship a dying God you too will seek death though through martyrdom and so on.

Just as permanence was not secure so too change shewed the difficulty of having it as a constant ideal or goal for man.

Men tried to find the permanent in the permanent Ideas or Reason discovered abstract concepts which survive the passage of the individual things and teachers. The dream of _Utopias , the Celestial world of Ideas or things which never suffer any change being beyond all time and its processes , was one of the most exciting adventures of thought and mental philosophers found supreme consolation in the Impersonal Reality of these Eternal Ideas such as Good, Truth and Beauty. Value itself was transformed into a concept and man himself found himself to be a mind – not any one's mind. Law became more important than any law-giver or maker. An impersonal God if we so speak of this Nirguna System of Ideas has been the result. Liberation from particulars meant the dissolution of oneself in the Ultimate Absolute beyond all temporal process. This vast discovery of the intellectual God—the law of Dharma has played the role of Religion of Reason profoundly.

And man became depersonalized : as is the god you worship that do you become is a true here also. An extension of the same formula or axiom is you become a member of the sangha or company and of their mind association brings about changes in oneself on a par with those of other members.

However the individual man rebels sooner or later. Not because he remembers his animal and material nature and refuses to live up to the demands of mind impersonalising , but because there is a large truth beyond it.

As it has been pointed out, there can be observed the recurring similarity between the materialist and the mentalist, due to their being inversions of the vital : and conceived to be opposites because of the twist. So too vital must be apprehended as a lower twist of the intuitive.

The superpersonal nature of Reality when it undergoes an inversion arrives at an impersonalism and this when it turns and twists becomes the vital particular, and this in turn becomes the mechanical particulars. This is the principle of anatrope or invertendo of Plato or vivarta (a concept not properly understood by Shankara and Mayavada).

Man realizes that the impersonal is not all and its meaning and significance do not lie in itself but in something higher. Even as the meaning of light does not lie in itself nor of the life in itself. The whole gamut of Reality comprising as it does all these phases is to be known through Wisdom which perceives the Highest as being represented in all that has descended from it. The lower find their explanation and fulfillment in the Highest and the Ultimate. This highest or even the higher than the mental we can call luminous even as it has been the luminous to the animal. The World conceived as the Luminous to the mental will find the religion of Luminous a Godhead who will explain all and connect ourselves with other fellows of our kind and Nature below us and around us.

The higher powers are called Divine invariably, though here again we must emphasize that there can be hierarchies among these powers -- ranging from the least of the most or the Ultimate.

Mankind has worshipped different Gods owing to the philosophies of Reality they have had. Natural powers when recognized as luminous to man's activity and apprehension have been apotheosized; and we have been able to find the apotheosis of the warriors of the world, the saints and prophets of the world, who have contributed to the rich abundance of human technical efficiency: these people brought joy into the home of man, and gave him culture and civilization that lasts as tradition and custom and law long afterwards: we have also apotheosized the mental powers even as we have done the vital powers and personalized the impersonal and impersonalized the personal. The logic of the human mind has delighted in this constant transaction and transformation of the personal into the impersonal law, and in the sphere of politics has constantly indulged in specious generalizations, by force and

selection of material and so on. Atheism is the significant acceptance of Philosophy without Religion, a world of law without any possibility of personal relationship with its central being. It is objectivity on the plane of mind ruling out all else.

This impersonalistic religion if so it may be called is an unstable one not because the impersonal are not universals, but because the human individual is not impersonal.

The realm of Ignorance ends here for man for with this impersonalism and impersonal God ends the search for a complete philosophy because as rightly remarked for by Śrī Aurobindo, the mental world is a world of infinite possibilities, and possibility of skepticism and doubts is as real as the contrary possibility of certainty and faith. With a world thus poised on disjunctive possibilities and basic relativity. Thus one is compelled to go beyond the mental philosophy. Intellectual philosophy is committed to agnosticism and its impersonalism cannot make one pass beyond it. Religion must be an act of will which goes beyond the given of intellect and its "relative" absolutes.

One discovery of the intellect has been the discovery of the triple modes of its being, as thought, as feeling and as the will and the further discovery that will that discovers that thought cannot lead it to a solution of the complicated problems of self must jump beyond thought itself to the larger perceptions open to it alone.

Thus Will becomes the instrument of our ascent, a will guided by a faith in the Vast Reality transcending the intellect. It is not a mere exercise of power which the vital knows; it is not will to live of or perpetuate or preserve oneself: it is not a will merely to adapt oneself or a will to happiness here. It is the will that seeks a basic sense of its own value of the Universal Reality which it was constantly seeking but not finding in intellect. It is not pessimism about man and his mind but a realisation of the fact of its utter incompetency to grant to man the sense of ultimate value to himself and to Reality.

Supermanism is said to be a kind of snobbery and a quick solution which cannot be a solution at all unless it realised and made real to man as his own possibility even as

the technical progress of science has done. Thus it is usual to dismiss supermanism as a dream and fantastic biological illusion. Unfortunately though the evolution of the superman from out of the stock of men may be achieved biologically (and perhaps must be), yet it fits not exclusively as such we have to accept the appearance of the supermind or supermental activity. Already most of the intellect in its discoveries of intuitive insights which could not be explained since they could not emerge from the activities of the logical process of deduction and definition and induction or leaps of imagination or generalising.

Intuition as peculiar in-knowing of objects both things and processes and man and crowds, has played the supreme part in our creative civilization and culture. Again and again we find men of supreme intuition have posed axioms which of old knowledges or assumptions. By changing the assumptions or granting revolutionary assumptions sages and saints have produced changes of the human mind. Our present human mind is three-fourths living on insights and intuitions and all that intellect has done is to discover reasons, rationalizations, i.e. good or bad reasons, for these acceptances. In fact if we consider that all laws of Nature and psychology are insighted assumptions and our philosophies also, then it follows that intellect has played an admirable part of servant of intuition rather than led up to intuition at all. Of course there are humanistic philosophers who would rather suggest gravely that intuition itself is a product of thinking hard, though more appropriately it may be claimed that intuition comes in when intellect has given up thinking. When intellect has blocked all passages of descent of higher knowledge and has declared itself bankrupt then does Intuition discover a way or venue of descent, either subjectively or objectively or vividly as symbolic implication or assumption. A new set of assumptions come into the vision of the Seer or prophet or Thinker with a flash of insight into Reality. Thus new philosophies are born and new Gods become our objects devotion.

The intuitive mind is personal and yet it is universal; it is not limited to a specific experience or object but grants a whole ultimate organic relation both in function and non-function, as growth and in change.

The is the first definition of the Infinite and the whole of Religion is the attempt to discover this logic of the Infinite and thus Philosophy is bound to lean on this religious quest for its own fulfillment. Religion as intuition and not a tradition or ritual is bound to augment the forces of the will that wills the Universal and Ultimate and not merely the Good. Thus we pass beyond the claims of intellectual philosophy to be philosophy as such or the Ultimate philosophy. Similarly we have to reject the claims of religion of the material and vital and mental as not beinginsighted by Ultimate value and point out that out that a New Religious spirit which includes the daring mystic will alone can grant that Wisdom which the philosopher yearns for.

Can I now state that it has been the endeavour of Śrī Aurobindo in all his to disentangle the threads of philosophy and religion in order to place in clear light the double play of the Uitimate and the individual through the flashes of the insight that not merely to Reality and not less to Humanity itself.

If humanity is not willing to lose its name then may it be that it will exalt itself with a new connotation in power and not just in name and claim for itself divinity of the impoverished intellect and ill-directed vital and ignorant matter.

However the true reconciliation of philosophy and Religion cannot happen at the level lower than the Supermind:their integration lies in the personality of the superman.