

## CHAPTER-VI

### CONCLUSION

Religion, being an element of human culture is closely associated with the society. Religion is one of the most powerful, intensely felt, and influential forces in human society. It has shaped people's relationship with one another influencing family, community, economic and political life. Religious values motivate human action and religious group organise their collective religious expression. Thus, religion is a significant aspect of social life and the social dimension is an important aspect of religion.

It was found that right from the dawn of human civilization and culture, religion plays a very vital role on the part of the texture of human society. It is not possible to find a society in which religious issues have not been raised. History of religious study reveals that, religion can be seen to have dominated all kinds of human relationships. Political scientists, anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists have been concerned with various aspects of religion. In last two decades sociologists and psychologists of religion spent considerable time and energy on the conceptualization and measurement of religion in human society. The study of religion has played a vital role in the discipline of sociology since its very beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Sociology of religion often asked the question about what people believe how religion is organised and how religion affects various aspects of social life. Sociological study of religion explores religion from a variety

of different vintage points within the social science, and considers the influence of religion in different areas of social life including the family, race, imagination, and politics.

Sociologists are interested in studying religion for two reasons. First religion is very significant aspect of individual life, because religious practices are important part of many people's life and religious values influence many people's action, and religious meaning helps them to interpret their experiences. Secondly, religion is an important object of sociological study because of its influence on society and society's influence on it. So from the earliest foundation of the discipline sociologist have sought to understand the larger society through examining religion and its influence on society.

Three classical western paradigms that had the strongest impact on the sociological study of religion in the west are Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Marx Weber. They together did not expect that religion will disappear in due course of time, but they assumed that it would be transformed in the modern world. Religion is the eternal element of society. It is the ever-evolving spirit of society and guides the order of the society. Durkheim is of the opinion that the ritual and doctrinal distinction between sacred and profane performs a vital social function in balancing the inherent tension of every society, between structure and counter structure, order and chaos, morality and deviance. So Durkheim's sociology of religion is based on social order and its socializing, civilizing, and moralizing mission.

Marx contends that religion is an expression of material realities and economic injustice. Thus problems in religion are ultimately the problems in society. Man makes religion, religion does not make man. According to him religion

is the general theory of this world, a universal basis of consolation and justification. Religion is a social institution, dependent upon the material and economic realities in a given society. It has no independent history; instead it is the creature of productive force. Religion can only be understood in relation to other social systems and the economic structure of society. It dehumanizes man. It is a hopeless search of man for a divine meaning in the face of his own meaningless existence. Thus Marx advocates a materialist religion based on condition of real world as opposed to ideal religion based on the prerogatives of nonexistent deities.

Weber attempted to find out the reason for the different development path of the culture of the western and Eastern tradition. He wanted primarily to explain the distinctive element of the western civilization in which he found that religious ideas had a major impact on the social innovation and development of economic system of the west. Weber's historical study of the interaction between religion and capitalism reflects his understanding of the generative potential of religious meaning and practice in the wider organisation of society. Thus, such a transformation is potential for religion leading to radical changes in values and behaviour implying a favourable outcome implicit in Weber's argument. So it is found that in classical western perspective religion is conceived as having strong social significance but they did not emphasise any more on the inner as well as spiritual aspect of religion, they confined only to the material world keeping aside transcendental realm of human personality in which sacredness of mind consists.

On the basis of evaluative observation of the thesis it is found that according to Indian world view, as a social being, a person has no existence outside his network of relationship. According to them the interrelationship between man and

society is presumed to be complex and hierarchical, transcending the boundaries of the material world. The ego identity in this sense is considered to be a social construction, something which is contingent on one's life experiences and social background. Thus one's social self exists only in the mind of the person, not in reality. Self development lies in realizing this unreal existence and in promoting one's Dharma without a attachment. Thus, this view of religion (Dharma) provides 'ideal image' of life in Plato's sense and deals with prescriptive social behaviour for the sustenance of society. According to Indian view in its social implication, religion or Dharma is an inherent force in human being which holds the individual and society together, in other words, the force which makes individual and society hold each other together. Thus, philosopher's of ancient India speak of a universal religion based on solidarity with the earth and all beings. They stresse on an understanding of the intrinsic interdependence of all beings. According to them, such an understanding is essential for grasping the truth of the interconnectivity of all life. Hence, the religious thinkers of ancient India are known for accommodation, conciliatory and synthesizing attitude of the mind. So,it can be concluded that Dharma has been conceived as that, which maintains or sustains human society and the world. Dharma sustains human society in the sense that it governs the conduct and behaviour of the people and thus maintains order and balance in society. Society enjoys security, peace, order and harmony when the people act and behave in accordance with the moral and spiritual values laid down by Dharma in their personal, social and professional life.

S. Radhakrishnan's social philosophy is wholly pervaded by his religious ideas. Radhakrishnan bases his conception of religion on idealism. His approach to

religion is synthetic in nature. His thoughts are the harmonizing force in the world of religion. His synthetic approach to religion is meant to achieve harmony between the old and new, between wisdom of the ages and the forces of rationality, science, progress etc. So, Radhakrishnan did a very excellent job by presenting Indian treasure of wisdom in contemporary terms to the cause of interreligious and intercultural understanding. The spirit of Radhakrishnan's religious philosophy consists fundamentally in the attitude of synthesis or the concept of organic unity which has intrinsic value in interreligious dialogue of present society. Arnold Toynbee<sup>1</sup>, a modern historian, philosopher, concludes that history of mankind does not progress in a straight line, but is the sum of civilizations that are held together by a common culture which is religion. It is observed that with the rise of globalization people of the world become close to one another as a result of which faiths of the world become one, so the synthetic religion of Radhakrishnan is gaining much more importance in present context of religious study.

With a profound grasp of the modern situation, especially in religion, Radhakrishnan greatly emphasised the important of value in comparative religion, which is the most relevant to the present context of encounter between religions and cultures which is the most common phenomenon of present society throughout the world. Radhakrishnan rightly gave more emphasis on empathy and openmindedness for understanding other faith. Thus he emphasised much more on fellowship of religion but not fusion of religion which seems to be most significant in resolving interreligious conflict in this multicultural society of present world. His call to different religions to co-operate in building a better civilization is gaining grounds day by day.

On the basis of discussion of Radhakrishnan's conception of religion it is seen that basic features as well as characteristics of Radhakrishnan idea of religion are:

(i) **Perennial :** He tries to find out central core of religion which he terms as "Sanatan Dharma" or perennial religion which is free from dogmatic interpretation of religion. It asserts that there is a single divine foundation of all religious knowledge referred to as universal truth. Each world religion, independent of its culture or historical context is simply different interpretation of this knowledge of universal truth. For him the unchanging substance of religion is the evolution of man's consciousness. Radhakrishnan believes that the true religion, however, agrees with the social idealist in affirming unity of human life on this earth life with society. According to Radhakrishnan we must seek our evolution through life itself, by transforming it, by changing our self. For him religion reflects both man and god. He admits that true religious life must express itself in love and aim at the unity with mankind.

(ii) **Spiritual:** According to Radhakrishnan the essence of religion is spirituality, based upon experience, which reveals an infinite that outstrips human intelligent. For him Religion which unifies all values and organizes all experience is the reaction of the whole man to the whole reality, which Radhakrishnan called spiritual life, It is the essence of religion, as distinct from a merely intellectual or moral or aesthetic activity or a combination of them. It is experience of the identity of the true self with the absolute. Radhakrishnan has beautifully explored the whole gamut of man's spiritual experience with an amazing sense of consciousness used to

describe the wholeness of it as forming the core of religion as spirituality. Spirituality is the core of religion and its inward essence, and mysticism emphasizes this side of religion. So, to him the endeavour of religion is to get rid of the gulf between man and God and restore the lost sense of unity in the society.

(iii) **Dynamic:** Through the study of Radhakrishnan's interpretation of religion it is found that, he affirms progressive forces behind the world process which according to him is based upon the affirmation that the world is the progressive manifestation of the Absolute. Progress is not inevitable. It requires to be achieved by man who grows by aspiration and effort. Religion is a dynamic process, renewed effort of the creative impulse, seeking to uplift mankind to a new level. So Radhakrishnan's exposition of religion brings out dynamism as the very nature of religion. According to him religion has the capacity to adjust with the changes taking place around society. People must adopt a world view which will make him a leader to control the great ideals of the spirit. Religion is a progressive concept, it grows to meet the challenges of the world. Religion, the living faith of mankind according to Radhakrishnan carries not only the inspiration of centuries but also the encrustation of error. The profound intuition of religion requires to be presented in fresh form, more relevant to our own experiences, to our own predicament. Thus it is found that, for Radhakrishnan the unchanging substance of religion is the evolution of man's consciousness towards a goal on which foundation of our civilization rests.

(iv) **Scientific:** According to Radhakrishnan it is untrue to believe that there is an opposition between science and religion. It is observed in the light of Radhakrishnan's religious philosophy that science and religion are complementary

to each other. Religion has to be based on scientific view of life, on the other hand science has to be managed by religion as well as spiritual motives of the man. He treats both religion and science as instrumental in realization of progress of human civilization. He observes both religion and science affirm the unity of nature. Thus it reflects that according to Radhakrishnan scientific assumptions are ultimately validated by intuition of religion. Radhakrishnan believes that under the influence of the universal experience of religion and modern science and technology, mankind is being moulded into a single community.

(v) **Humanistic:** Radhakrishnan in developing his idea of religion is quite inspired by the traditional as well as contemporary Indian thought on the one hand and on the other by the western rational thinking. Apart from giving a western interpretation of humanism based on rational thinking, Radhakrishnan emphasised humanism as having spiritual orientation. Radhakrishnan observes that self sufficiency of natural man, the belief that only human values is the central faith of the humanist, clearly reflects that the deeper needs of the soul required to be satisfied. We are not really human if we do not feel that we are related to something that is transcendent and the inconceivable. In other words according to Radhakrishnan a mere improvement of the world is not the aim of life, but an ideal transfiguration of it. The roots of man's being are in the unseen and eternal, and his destiny is not limited to the duration of his life on earth. Hence according to Radhakrishnan humanism is confessedly rationalistic, and ignores elements in life which cannot be dealt within an intellectual term. But the higher will in man becomes identified with the spirit in man. Without the recognition of such a spiritual centre, which helps us to coordinate the variety of unlike elements which help human nature consistent our life have no integrity.



Thus, Radhakrishnan is not in a position to accept humanism as substitute for religion. In Radhakrishnan's view humanism lacks that indefinable touch, that *élan* of religion which alone can produce that majestic faith, whose creativity is inexhaustible, whose hope is deathless and whose adventures are magnificent. So humanism according Radhakrishnan thus leads to a view of itself as rooted in a reality deeper and comprehensive, in which it finds completion. For him, Humanisms is concerned with value, religion relates value to reality. In other words he humanized religion.

(vi) **Mystic:** According to Radhakrishnan religion is essentially an experience of living contact with ultimate reality. It is an apprehension of something that stands over against the individual. The effort of religion according to Radhakrishnan is to enable man to realize the divine in him, not merely as a formula or as a proposition, but as the central fact of his being, by growing into oneness with it. In other words religion is rooted on some kind of special experience known as religious experience. It is a kind of undivided consciousness in which there is no differentiation between subject and object. He admits that religious experience is not mere "consciousness of value" (as Kant has said) nor it is a "form of knowledge"(as Hegel has said), Enriched with Indian tradition he maintains that in religious experience there is a mystical element, an apprehension of the real and an enjoyment for its own sake.

Hence, it reflects that Radhakrishnan's understanding of religion embraces whole aspect of human being in terms of spirituality. It is a search for comprehension of universal truth on which foundation of civilization rests.

S. Radhakrishnan's social philosophy is wholly based on his religious ideas. In other words his ideas of religion have very strong social significance. He

emphasised the importance of spirituality as the guiding principle of civilization. As a discipline of mind, he holds that religion contains the key and essential means of coping with evils which threaten the existence of the civilized world. He pointed out that growth cannot be measured in terms of only material and technical advance but by creative changes of the mind and spirit of the people. Spiritual values like, Love for truth and beauty, righteousness, justice and mercy, sympathy with the oppressed and belief in the brotherhood of man are the qualities which can save the world. Thus in this context religion is very much relevant in social relation since Radhakrishnan emphasises religion as the embodiment of such kind of spiritual values. It is observed that according to Radhakrishnan crisis of present society lies in lack of spiritual standpoint of man. To him so long as man's life is confined to only science and art, technical invention and social programmes, he is incomplete and not truly human, if we are insolent and base, unfair and unkind to one another, unhappy in personal relationship, and lacking in mutual understanding. Hence Radhakrishnan affirms that we need today a profound change in man's way of life which can secure the future of this civilization. It is the submission of the self to reality. It is the practice of religion which affirms that things spiritual are personal, and that we have to reflect them in our lives. We must discover our roots in the eternal and regain faith in the transcendent truth which will order life, discipline discordant elements, and bring unity and purpose into it. P.A Sorokin, a modern sociologist considers that the process of human interaction involves three essential elements: human actor as subject of interaction; meanings, values, and norms that guide human conduct<sup>2</sup>. Sorokin's sociological thought lays emphasis on the importance of cultural factors. To understand personalities as subject of interaction, and society as the totality of

interacting personalities rests on a foundation of culture- a culture that consists of the totality of meanings, norms and values possessed by interacting person.

It is observed that for Radhakrishnan the purpose of religion is to restore the lost relationship between the individual and the eternal. Religion, in its etymological interpretation suggests that religion should be the binding force of society which deepens the solidarity of human society in spite of the obvious shortcoming of historical forms. Radhakrishnan also observes the present crisis of society and feels the need of religion in society. . Everywhere according to Radhakrishnan we hear the sound of breaking, changes of social, political, and economic institution , and changes in the dominant of belief and ideas, changes of fundamental categories of human mind. He observed that it is a vast convulsion of society as a whole. It is not mere war, but a world revolution; a major alternation in the entire thought and structure of human civilization is required. We live in a period of agonising strain, of grave anxiety, of manifold disillusionment. It is an age in which there is no coherence in thought and there is indecision in action. Our values are blurred, our thought is confused, our aims are wavering, and our future is uncertain. So according to Radhakrishnan if we are to overcome the danger that threatens us, we must confront them fearlessly and take the necessary measure. The issue of religion as understood by Radhakrishnan in current situation is very significance. For him, mind of the world requires to be pulled together and the present aimless state of dementia should be replaced by collective rational purpose. Thus, Radhakrishnan's ideas of religion are encouraging and have relevancy in resolving deep rooted problems of modern society.

It is found that Radhakrishnan is in search of a spiritual religion that is universally valid, vital, clear cut, one that has an understanding of the fresh sense of truth and the awakened social passion which are the prominent characteristics of the religious situation today. According to Radhakrishnan intellectual honesty and burning passion for social justice are the expressions of spiritual sincerity. Our religion must give us energy of thought, energy of will, which gives us the strength to say that we believe and do what we say. Radhakrishnan points out that presently religions are inadequate in moulding the social relations due to disparity between outward allegiance and inward betrayal among the people. Religion is confused with the mechanical participation in the rites or passive acquiescence in the dogmas. Many people observe the forms of religion, the gesture of faith, the conventions of piety, but they do not model their lives on the precepts they profess, but for Radhakrishnan religion insists on behaviour more than on belief and we must live religion in truth and deed and not merely profess it in words. So it is found that in Radhakrishnan's view there should not be disparity between outward allegiance and inward betrayal in religious matter. Hence it is seen that religion, in order to be an effective force in social relation, demonstrate that there should be no difference between our belief and our behaviour. Belief and behaviour must go together. But what we witness in our society is that, there is always lacking of coherence between the belief and behaviour which leads to confusion among the individuals of the society regarding the status of religion in social contexts. But for Radhakrishnan no religion has a claim to our allegiance if it does not produce a tradition of humanity and social responsibility. Thus Radhakrishnan thinks that religion brings the forms and activities which shape and sustain human life. We have diverse

interests, various desires, conflicting needs, which grow and change in the growing. To round them off into a whole is the purpose of religion, as Radhakrishnan affirms. So it very explicitly shows that though the essence of religion according to Radhakrishnan is spiritual it has significant practical influence on society.

It has been seen that in Radhakrishnan's view, absence of true religion is the cause of the all round unrest and crisis in the present world. For him a spiritual renewal, a true religious revival, alone can save the world from the imminent disaster. He is of the opinion that culture of the spirit has suffered set-back, life has become aimless, a sport to passions, racial prejudice, national antagonisms. The neglected and suppressed spirit of man has been the cause of perpetual unrest in individual, social and national realm of human society. This unrest is the sign of an unbalanced civilization which lays stress on one aspect of man and ignores the rest. Thus, according to Radhakrishnan, we are in the need of a harmonious development of the spirit in man, which can be acquired only through the religion of spirit. As Sorokin observed "mankind should be grateful to the sensate culture(material culture) for its wonderful achievement(in the field of science and technology). But now .....when its products is poisonous gas rather than fresh air, when through its achievement it has given to man's hand terrific power over the nature and the social and cultural world without providing self control, with power over his emotion and passion, sensate appetites and lust-now in the hands of such a man , with all its achievement of science and technology, it has become increasingly dangerous to mankind itself and to its values"<sup>3</sup> Hence religion (Dharma) is the obligation to become a universal self; it is also the realization of the Brahman-*Atman* unity in a cultural as well as in an individual context. In this sense, Dharma comes to mean the

ideal of the summum bonum of human life. In Radhakrishnan's view, the ideals of civilization are generated and prescribed by Dharma. Hence motive behind Radhakrishnan's insistence on the necessity of religion is his insight into the nature of human civilization, its survival and growth. The essence of civilization according to him does not consist in racial unity or politics or economic organisation but in the fundamental value system and religion is the embodiment of such values. So a civilization can attain stability and perfection through religion. Sorokin emphasises that the sensate culture degrades man to the level of mere reflex mechanism, a mere organ motivated by sex, a mere semi-mechanical, semi-psychological organism, devoid of any divine spark, of any absolute value, of anything noble and sacred. Hence, it is seen that spiritual religion of Radhakrishnan is gaining significance in contemporary social philosophy by insisting on the spiritual aspect of human life. Sorokin feels that there is an urgency of shifting from the subjugation and control of nature by man to the control of man by himself. Sorokin says "this control is impossible without a system of perennial values. Such value is irreconcilable with the sensate mentality and culture which by their nature are relative, utilitarianism, hedonistic and expedient only."<sup>4</sup> Hence the crisis of present age is in search of a absolute, eternal, and spiritual values which leads the direction of society in right way which is reflected prominently in Radhakrishnan's idea of religion. So it is found that Radhakrishnan has contributed to greate deal towards the evolution of a world culture based on spirituality and it has tremendous relevancy in contemporary social philosophy.

The spirit is not the physical body or vital organism, the mind or the will, but something which underlies them all and sustain them. " It is the basis and

background of our being, the universality that cannot be reduced to this or that formula<sup>5</sup>” The spiritual consciousness cannot be reduced to any other consciousness. Moral, social, political and economic consciousness are various product of the spiritual consciousness. Therefore spiritual consciousness cannot be defined in terms of this modes.’ On this ground Radhakrishnan rejects the theories which try to comprehend man in terms of social or economic formula. Man’s being is not exhausted by realization of socio-economic goal. Radhakrishnan observes “ Modern man is lost in the crowd to an extent which is pathological. The disease of conformity is what we suffer from. There is no time for independent reflection ; we accept the views which are furnished to us by our society. By this attitude, truth suffers as much as our intellectual integrity does. It is by resisting such methods of conformism that we abolish slavery, fortune and other forms of inhumanity<sup>6</sup>.”He further observes “ In spite of social and national differences we must evolve a relation, a unity of mind and heart, a feeling which will bring us intimately close to one another.... world goverment may be a long way off but we must continue at an everincreasing rate to blunt the edges of national soverignty<sup>7</sup>.”

According to Radhakrishnan, religious life culminates in spiritual or mystic experience which is the foundation of all religions, which is higher than ritual worship of God or the sense of awe and reverence. As a true philosopher of religion, like Rudolf Otto, he argued with good amount of evidence in his favour for the universality of spiritual or mystic experience which he considers as unbound or undetermined by cultural or historical forces. “Such perspective is obviously conducive to the establishment of universal brotherhood.”<sup>8</sup> Mystics are in favour of “open religion” in contrast to the creedal and ritualistic ones. Mystic lays stress on

direct communion with the Divine and thus contains the seeds of universal harmony. So, in this turmoil of uncertainty, discord and alienation, the world needs the saving power of an open religion. Radhakrishnan's main contribution to religion lies in his insistence on the place of mysticism, which alone can discover the religious unity. Hence the "future belongs not to the organised religions but to mysticism, not to creedal dogmatism but to spiritual experience, not to any race or nation but to humanity"<sup>9</sup>

A society is stable when its different components, economic and political, cultural and social, are in harmony. If these elements fall into discord, the social order disintegrates. If the purpose of the world is to be realised, all nations require going through a process of inner renewal. World unity cannot be achieved only through the social mechanism such as U.N.O. and its agencies. There is the religious view, that man with his sense of value is the most concrete embodiment of the Divine on earth and can restore unity of the world. We can develop our intellectual unity through the diffusion of ideas and its implementation, "but human solidarity and coherence are possible only through the radiant moments of the profound revelation of the spirit which work like a ferment in the course of history. They constitute the goal and justification of the human endeavour for world coherence"<sup>10</sup>

Universal acceptance of the scientific method, studies in comparative religion, the challenge of world unity produce in all religions a movement of religious creativity. Progressive thinkers of the different faiths are getting together in a common endeavour to realise the good life through truth and love. "The world is groping not for the narrow stunted religion of the dogmatic schools, not one of fanaticism that is afraid of the light but for creative spiritual religion. It should not



be inconsistent with the spirit of science. It should foster humanist ideals and make for world unity.”<sup>11</sup>

Modern societies have by nature a corrosive effect on traditional forms of religious life and lead to decline in the scope and influence of religious institutions and in the popularity of religious beliefs<sup>12</sup>. But as Bell<sup>13</sup> notes, existential questions of culture remain inescapable and some new efforts are made to regain a sense of the sacred point to the direction in which our culture or its sentient representatives - will move." After observing the global rise of religion, Peter L. Berger<sup>14</sup>, who was once the proponent of secularization theory, admits "that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions.... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever".

We have to be alive both to the ultimate significance of religion and the genuineness of the secular demands. The genuine growth and progress of man would consist in a sort of reconciliation of our mundane requirement and spiritual aspirations. The spiritual, in Radhakrishnan's view, is not a denial of secular but a comprehensive continuation of it. Radhakrishnan seeks to maintain a balance between the realistic position and the idealistic philosophy. He tries to restore faith in the dignity and potentiality of human individuals. This is of special significance in the present context where the world is looked upon as a mechanical whole and the individual is treated as its insignificant unit and is used for the production of material goods at the expense of his spiritual aspirations.

Therefore, we can conclude that religion provide the foundation for the unity of the society. Religion insists more on behaviour than on belief. Throughout his study of religion and comparative religion he tries to find out the central core of

religion. The sacred of religion according to Radhakrishnan is inwardness, self-security, inner cleansing, change of heart, and renunciation which provide the foundation of social life as well as civilization. So the religion as understood by Radhakrishnan has strong social relevance in modern period particularly in the context of encounter among religions and cultures.

**Reference:**

1. Arnold J. Toynbee: *The study of History*, p-315
2. Pitirim Sorokin: *The Social and Cultural Dynamics*, p-615
3. Ibid:p-624
4. Ibid: p-625
5. S. Radhakrishnan: *An Idealist view of Life*, p-162
6. S. Radhakrishnan: *Religion in a changing world*, p-12
7. Ibid: p-179-180
8. Paitoon Patyaiying: *S. Radhakrishnan's philosophy of religion*, p-164
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10. Robert A. McDermott: *The basic writings of S. Radhakrishnan*, p-294
11. Ibid: p-294
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13. D. Bell: *Return of the Sacred*,p-448
14. Peter.L. Berger: *The Secularization of world*,p-2