

Vol III Issue VI July 2013

Impact Factor : 0.2105

ISSN No : 2230-7850

Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

*Indian Streams
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND MODERN AGE

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Abstract: Human civilisation and culture which include literature, religion and fine arts, the creation of human heart, are as significant for man's meaningful existence as natural sciences. Sciences and Philosophy cannot replace religion. Religion is primarily a human enterprise and is concerned with the inner being or life of man and its fulfilment.

True religion also possesses two important limbs i.e. its philosophy and its ritualistic injunctions. Philosophy is the theoretical aspect of religion which, with scientific and rational analysis, elucidates the why and the wherefore of life and the universe and contains a coherent system of thought for interpreting the Reality.

We therefore have to take the valuable advice of our sages, Rishis and scriptures and try to live religion in the true sense of the term.

Keyword: Philosophy, Religion, Liberation, Self-realisation

INTRODUCTION:

Today's modern age of consumerism, materialism, hedonism lacks these values. Due to which the man, in this age suffers from its complications. If the world order has to be maintained we have understand the meaning and relevance of religion in this age. The freedom of faith and love are the inseparable parts of religion.

Religion is essentially a matter of faith and Philosophy, based on reason. Religion with faith and intuitive form involves the synthetic approach of the mind in order to experience or feel the object, whereas philosophy with its rational approach analyses the object of experience. On the practical side, faith is more than intellect since it involves emotions and the living needs of man. George Galloway says, "Religion calls for philosophic interpretation because it is an aspect of human experience"²

All religions and religious belief have been losing gradually their hold on the mind of man for the past couple of centuries. Religions, primitive or historical, are based on certain dogmas and contain a code of conduct and moral values. As matters of fact, with progress of civilisation and globalisation today, many primitive religions have been out of date simply because they failed survive against the revaluation and redistribution of the age-old values. People today meet at religious places more for social values than for religious ones. However, man is not becoming anti-religious but anti-traditional. Today we are trying to form a new religion called 'secularism'. As defined by J.C. Bennett is "Life organised apart from God

as though God did not exist" But to talk about religion apart from God is not properly speaking religion. But modern man is becoming anti-authoritarian and anti-traditional.

Looking at the modern age and the ills of the present situation Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly says, "it is an age of spiritual bankruptcy" – 'of ethical confusion and chaos' 'It is an age of economic and intellectual barbarism' Thinkers like Karl Marks and Sigmund Freud have levelled powerful criticisms against spirituality. Marx says "Man makes religion, religion does not make man..Religion is the sign of

the oppressed creature; the heart of a heartless world..." Freud believes, "religion is comparable to childhood neurosis." Such minds shape the world anti-traditional in spirit. The modern man is anti-traditional rather than anti-religious.

Man of the present age is in such a complex social situation that he finds it too difficult to accommodate with almost all of the injunctions of religious command. A person might fall in love with a beloved with who he cannot marry according to his religious sect. This leads to dilemma wherein a man has two choices. Either he gets rid of the religious ideals and feels guilty or obeys the religious commands and feels unhappy. Today's generation prefers to throw away religion rather than a beloved.

The term 'Religion' can be explained in different ways- 'it is belief in spiritual beings'. Sometimes it is considered as 'Propitiation of superior powers' Dewey describes it as 'Pursuit of an ideal end' Durkheim defines it as 'A socio-historical process'. In spite of all these differences, religion and human life cannot be seen apart from each other. Religion as a distinctive characteristic of man follows human history from time immemorial. We cannot have a line of demarcation between the history of religion and human history. Arnold Toynbee has rightly said, "To have religion is one of those distinctively human characteristics of mankind that differentiated us from our non-human fellow animals in the face of this planet. This assumption implies that every human being has religion; in fact that one cannot be human without having it in some form"

But today religion and modernity are now looked almost as antonyms rather than as complementary social forces. But is it proper to believe that religion has no relevance in modern age? The disastrous technological modern age creates the need for religion. Here I propose to analyse the views of Reinhold Neibuhr an outstanding American theologian of the century. He says, "Under the perpetual smile of modernity there is a grimace of disillusion and cynicism, for the modern mind fails to find a secure foundation for the individuality which it ostensibly cherishes so highly". He further adds, "The ultimate confidence in the

<p style="text-align: center;">PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND MODERN AGE Manali Londhe</p>	<p>Indian Streams Research Journal ISSN 2230-7850 Volume-3, Issue-6, July-2013</p> <p>meaningfulness of life, therefore, rests upon a faith in the final unity, which transcends the world's chaos as certainly as it is basic to the world's order.”</p> <p>The etymological meaning of religion (to bind soul with God) and Dharma (Dhri- to hold) and the meaning spoken in Mahabharat and Manusmriti guide us to hold the view that religion is a necessary force for the human being. Human Civilization an culture , which include literature, religion and fine arts, the creation of human heart, are as significant for man's meaningful existence as natural sciences. In the modern world today though the Globalisation has brought the entire world together and nearer, the man is moving away from humanity. Science cannot replace religion. Religion is primarily a human enterprise and is concerned with the inner being or life of man and its fulfilment. Religion gives us the strength of love, oneness and unity. Thus it has got relevance in the modern age. Prof. Niebuhr explains the nature of Love as sacrificial and mutual. He admits a triangular relation in God, man and his fellow being. His emphasis upon the ideal of Loge as an actual possibility makes him to think of the relevance of religion in modern age. He believes that Love is the norm of life. Love is quintessence of the character of God. And he adds, “To believe in God is to know life in its essence and not only in its momentary existence.”</p> <p>Thus faith is the motivating force and love is a kind of inclined plane. Both faith and love towards God are the beginning and end of life. Love is the norm of life. It is the quintessence of the character of God. Today's modern age of consumerism, materialism, hedonism lacks these values. Due to which the man, in this age suffers from its complications. If the world order has to be maintained we have understand the meaning and relevance of religion in this age. The freedom of faith and love are the inseparable parts of religion.</p> <p>At this juncture one must bear in the mind that the relation between sacrificial and mutual love. Mutual love needs sacrificial in order to remain mutual love. Mutual love without sacrificial love has no meaning at all. Love is purest where it desires no returns for itself; and it is most potent where it is purest. Complete mutuality with its advantages to each party to the relationship, is therefore most perfectly realised where it is not intended, but love is poured out without seeking returns. Prof Neibuhr believes that, 'Mutuality is not a possible achievement if it is made with the intention and goal of any action.' In the modern age today the relationships are broken as there is mutual understanding and love between the parties. This causes problems in the interpersonal relationships and the life becomes unhappy, unsatisfactory. It might further lead to personal and social problems and the peace within and without is lost.</p> <p>The self according to Neibuhr possesses freedom that transcends the body, for the self is not particular self merely because it is in a particular body. This is referred as spirit. The modern age lacks this sense of freedom in man. And because of this very reason, man, in this age suffers from its complications. If the world's order has to be maintained we have to understand the meaning and relevance of religion in this age.</p> <p>True religion also possesses two important limbs</p> <p>i.e. its philosophy and its ritualistic injunctions. Philosophy is the theoretical aspect of religion which, with scientific and rational analysis, elucidates the why and the wherefore of life and the universe and contains a coherent system of thought for interpreting the Reality. The ritualistic injunctions deal with the practical aspect of religion and lay down the spiritual practices to be followed for reaching the ultimate of goal in life.</p> <p>Mere performance of rituals without understanding their meaning and significance is superstitious living which, when prolonged, distorts our personality. On the other hand learning the entire philosophy without patient application in our daily life is like a donkey carrying gold on its back. Hence, let us take the valuable advice of our sages, Rishis and scriptures and try to live religion in the true sense of the term. Liberation is considered as an ultimate goal of life. It is the acquisition of value; it is the realisation of the Sprit, Ultimate, and Perfection. It is to be released from samsara . i.e. to be released from the confusions and delusions of the worldly affairs. Many a times this state of liberation is misunderstood as the way of contemplation and inaction. By the Liberation or salvation it is believed as the path of escapism, way of world negation. Bur truly speaking liberation is the self-realisation, and acquisition of the highest value. Liberated people cannot remain silent in the society and cannot escape or move away from the world. The mystics, saints, thinkers and leaders may be regarded as the liberated personalities. They all have emphasized on the reality of world and have worked for the sake of society. Liberation is the enlightenment or spiritual freedom. And the enlightened the enlightened spirits are of utmost importance for the welfare of the society. They are the guidelines to achieve the highest value in the society.</p> <p>Dr. Radhakrishnan has maintained two characteristics of liberated person i.e. he is free from the egoistic self and its tyrannous desires. He is convinced of the unity with all and so has love for others. The freed man works for the good of others. To this Dr Radhakrishnan has correctly emphasised and interpreted the idea of Sarva-Mukti. Sarva Mukti does not mean earthly paradise or the gradual accumulation of material comforts through the ages. It deals with the value of spirit. It is real humanism. The spirit of humanity is disappeared in the economic age. So in order to provide an eternal foundation to the civilization, the value of spirit must be saved. This is the relevance of liberation.</p> <p>Philosophy is a pure science of life and when translated into practical living, it is termed religion. Religion is an applied science of life. A faithful adherence to religious precepts and doctrines develops a proper sense of integrity amongst individuals constitute a healthy community. Such united efforts of human beings can only build up a nation. Religion provides the strategies to be followed and the methods to be adopted to achieve the inner change and transformation. The material world of today has been well designed and made attractive but what we need more is planned rehabilitation of the individuals that constitute the society and the nation. This personality reconstruction is the need of the hour.</p> <p>A united country, wherein each citizen is inspired to give out his very best in a spirit of selfless dedication,</p>	
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	<p>Indian Streams Research Journal ISSN 2230-7850 Volume-3, Issue-6, July-2013</p> <p>demanding nothing for himself except the privilege of serving the country, develops into a nation asserting itself with power, prestige and strength. This dynamics of togetherness is to be discovered in the context of the present world. The answer to this great challenge of the times assures us of a continued future as a happy, united and progressive nation serving as a beacon star for the restless world to follow and gain a more rewarding peace and a more meaningful progress. Every one of us aspires to live in such a peaceful, united society. Only all of us together can bring this true. Interfaith dialogue can bring this change and the entire planet will become peaceful place to live and can bring 'Vasudhava Kutumbakam'in true sense...!!</p> <p>REFERENCES: i.A Ramamurty (2002) , ' Indian Philosophy of Religion', Decent Books, New Delhi, ii.John Cogley, (1868) 'Religion In a Secular Age', Praeger, , London. iii.Dr. S.G.Nigal and Prof. N.H.Phapale, (2012)., 'Philosophy of Religion' Sanskar Niketan, Nasik. iv.Edward Burnett Tylor, (1861) 'Religion in primitive Culture', Longman, Green Longman and Roberts., v.George Galloway, (1960) 'The Philosophy of Religion', Charles Scibner's Sons, New York vi.James George Frazer , (2006) 'The Golden Bough', Nuvision Publications, LLC vii.John Dewey,(1934) , 'A Common Faith', Yale University Press. viii.Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'On Religion', (1964), Schocken Books. ix.M. Kirti Singh,(2007) 'Philosophy and Religion' Akanksha Publishing House, New Delhi x.Prof. D.A.Gangadhar, (1980), Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, Chowk , Varanasi xi.R. Niebuhr, (1941), 'The Nature and Destiny of Man, Charles Scibner's Sons, 2 vos, New York. xii.R. Niebuhr, (1985), 'An Interpretation of Christian Ethics', A living age Book, New York, 1985 xiii.S.Radhakrishnan, (1960), 'Brahma Sutra-The Philosophy of Spiritual Life, George Allen & Unwin, London. xiv.S.Radhakrishnan,(1957) 'An Idealist View of life' , George Allen & Unwin, London. xv.Swami Chinmayananda,(1990),'The Art of Living' Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, xvi.Freud Sigmund, (1929), 'The Future of Illusion', translated by W.D.Robertson Scott, New York</p> <hr/> <p>¹George Galloway,, 'The Philosophy of Religion'page-25. ²'Christianity and Our World' page-1 ³Fragments of a confessions, in the 'Library of living Philosophers' Vol on Radhakrishnan, page-20 ⁴Ibid, Page-22 ⁵Karl Marx and F. Engels: On Religion, Moscow, page- 41-42 ⁶The Future of Illusion, translated by W.D.Robertson Scott, New York, 1929, page- 92</p> <p>⁷Tylor, 'Religion in primitive Culture', page- 1 ⁸Frazer, 'The Golden Bough'page-50 ⁹Dewey, 'A Common Faith', page-27 ¹⁰Durkheim, 'The Elementary Forms of Religious Life' ¹¹Quoted form a Preface written by Arnold Toynbee in Religion In a Secular Age, by John Cogley, London 1868, page-IV. ¹²R. Neibuhr, 'The Nature and Destiny of Man, Charles Scibner's Sons, page-131 ¹³Ibid, 'An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, A living age Book, page- 15 ¹⁴Ibid, page- 195 ¹⁵ Ibid, 'Nature and destiny of Man', Vol-2, Page-69. ¹⁶S.Radhakrishnan, 'Brahma Sutra', page-213 ¹⁷Ibid, An Idealist View of life', page-307.</p>	<p>PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND MODERN AGE Manali Londhe</p>
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