GPH S6-02 (M)
Exam Code : PHM6C

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

SEMESTER: 6

PHILOSOPHY

Block-1

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Subject Experts

1. Prof. Sibnath Sarma, Dept. of Philosophy, G.U.
2. Prof. Sauravpran Goswami, Dept. of Philosophy, G.U
3. Mr. Pradip Kumar Khataniar, (Rtd.) Dept. of Philosophy, G.U

Course Coordinator: Dr. Bhaskar Bhattacharyya, K.K.H.S.O.U

SLM Preparation Team

Units	Contributors
1.	Dr. Jutika Devi, Handique Girls' College
2.	Dr. Prantika Sarmah
3.	Dr. Manashi Bora, M.S.S.V.
4.	Dr. Tejasha Kalita
5.	Dr. Bhaskar Bhattacharyya
6.	Shyamali Hazarika
7 & 8	Pallabi Sarmah

Editorial Team

Content Editor:	Dr. Bhaskar Bhattacharyya
	Dr. Tejasha Kalita
Language Editor:	Dr. Bhaskar Bhattacharyya
	Dr. Tejasha Kalita
Format Editor:	Dr. Bhaskar Bhattacharyya

July 2019

ISBN : .....

© Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University

No part of this publication which is material protected by this copyright notice may be produced or transmitted or utilized or stored in any form or by any means now known or hereinafter invented, electronic, digital or mechanical, including photocopying, scanning, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the KKHSOU.

Printed and published by Registrar on behalf of the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State **Open University.**

The University acknowledges with thanks the financial support provided by the **Distance Education Council, New Delhi**, for the preparation of this study material**.**

Housefed Complex, Dispur, Guwahati-781006; Web: www. Kkhsou

CONTENTS

	Pages
UNIT 1: TILAK'S INTERPRETATION OF THE *GÎTÂ*	**5-15**
Metaphysical position of Tilak, Tilak's View on Ultimate Reality The Individual Self, Ethical position of Tilak, Jñâna-Yoga or the Way of Knowledge, Karma-Yoga or the Way of Action, Bhakti –Yoga or the Way of Devotion	
UNIT 2: R.N. TAGORE'S HUMANISM	**16-28**
Humanism: What it is, Tagore's Humanistic Attitude, Bond of Humanity and Nature Desire to Serve God through Mankind, Religion is the Foundation of Humanity, Love and sacrifice is an integral part of Humanity, Service to Humanity is the Source of Salvation Humanity is greater than Community	
UNIT 3: VIVEKANANDA'S PRACTICAL VEDANTA	
Influences on Vivekananda's philosophy, Main Tenets of Vivekananda's Philosophical Thought, Vivekananda's Practical Vedanta, Four Yogas to attain Freedom	**29-43**
UNIT 4: GANDHI: RELIGION	
What is Religion for Gandhi? Features of Gandhi's Concept of Religion, The Way of Religion, Gandhi's Attitude towards Living Religions, Gandhi's Attitude towards Hinduism, Conclusion	**44-53**
UNIT 5: GANDHI: NON-VIOLENCE	
God and Truth, Truth is God, Non-violence, the Technique of Ahimsa: Satyagraha, Philosophy on End and Means	**54-71**
UNIT 6: GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF TRUSTEESHIP	
Economic basis of society, Trusteeship: What it is, Definition of trustee, Origin of trusteeship, Salient features of trusteeship, Trusteeship and Modern world	**72-82**
UNIT 7: AUROBINDO'S SUPERMIND	
Aurobindo's concept of Supermind, Triple status of Supermind, Triple transformation of Supermind	**83-97**
UNIT 8: AUROBINDO: EVOLUTION	
Notion of Creation and the world process, Nature and kinds of ignorance Theory of Evolution	**98-112**

COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course deals with Contemporary Indian Philosophy. This course consists of eight units. The first unit begins with 'Tilak's interpretation of the Gîtâ'. The concepts included in this unit are- metaphysical position of Tilak, Tilak's view on ultimate Reality, the individual Self, ethical position of Tilak, Jñâna-Yoga or the way of knowledge, karma-yoga or the way of action, bhakti –yoga or the way of devotion

The second unit is 'Tagore's Humanism". The concepts discussed in this unit are-

humanism: what it is, Tagore's humanistic attitude, bond of humanity and nature, desire to Serve God through Mankind, religion is the foundation of humanity, love and sacrifice is an integral part of Humanity, service to humanity is the source of salvation, and humanity is greater than community.

The third unit is 'Vivekananda's practical Vedanta'. The issues covered in this unit are

influences on Vivekananda's philosophy, Main Tenets of Vivekananda's Philosophical Thought, Vivekananda's practical Vedanta, and four yogas to attain freedom.

The fourth unit is Gandhi: Religion. The concepts included are what is Religion for Gandhi? Features of Gandhi's Concept of Religion, The Way of Religion, Gandhi's Attitude towards Living Religions, Gandhi's attitude towards Hinduism, and conclusion

The fifth unit is 'Gandhi: Non-Violence'. The concepts included in this unit are God and Truth, Truth is God, Non-violence, the Technique of Ahimsa- Satyagraha, and Philosophy on End and Means.

The sixth is **'**Gandhi's Concept of Trusteeship**'.** The issues mentioned in this unit are-economic basis of society, trusteeship: what it is, definition of trustee, origin of trusteeship, salient features of trusteeship, trusteeship and modern world

The seventh unit is Aurobindo's Supermind. The concepts mentioned in this unit are-

Aurobindo's concept of Supermind, triple status of Supermind, and triple transformation of Supermind.

The eights unit is 'Aurobindo: Evolution.' The issues reflected in this unit are notion of creation and the world process, nature and kinds of ignorance, and theory of evolution

While going through this course you will come across some boxes, which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will give us the meanings of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions included under Activity and Check Your Progress in every unit. Activities will increase our thinking capacity because questions put in Activity are not directly derived from the text. But answers to the short questions are put in the section Answers to Check Your Progress. Besides, there are some text-related questions which are put in Model Questions. These questions will help you in selecting and mastering probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.

UNIT 1: TILAK'S INTERPRETATION OF THE *GÎTÂ*

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Metaphysical position of Tilak

1.3.1 Tilak's View on Ultimate Reality

1.3.2 The Individual Self

1.4 Ethical position of Tilak

1.4.1 Jñâna-Yoga or the Way of Knowledge

1.4.2 Karma-Yoga or the Way of Action

1.4.3 Bhakti –Yoga or the Way of Devotion

1.5 Let us sum up

1.6 Further reading

1.7 Answers to check your progress

1.8 Model questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the philosophy of the *Gîtâ* as interpreted by Tilak.
- explain the different concepts of the *Gîtâ*like Brahman, ¹tman, World as interpreted by Tilak.
- discuss the different types of yogas as interpreted by Tilak.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born on 23.07.1856 in Sadoba Gore's house in the city of Ratnagiari. He was originally known as Keshab, but everyone later called him 'Bal' lovingly. He was selected to Bombay Legislative Council in 1895 and in 1897. He published anti-British articles for which he was sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment. He was kept in the Mandayalaya Jail where he wrote the famous book "*Gîtâ* Rahasya" which is comprised of two volumes, in

support of the independence and real human action. The ideal of the *Gîtâ* in the context of political and social life, took a vital position in Tilak's interpretation of the *Gîtâ*. Most probably, his commentary is the first, which interprets *Gîtâ*'s preaching from the ethico-pragmatic point of view laying much importance on Karma-Yoga than the theory of renunciation.

1.3 THE METAPHYSICAL POSITION OF TILAK

As metaphysics is the study of Reality, *Gîtâ*'s metaphysics can also be understood with regard to the concept of Reality. In the *Gîtâ* Krishna is considered as Ultimate Reality. Therefore,*Gîtâ*'s metaphysics involves the study of the nature of Krishna.Tilak in his interpretation of *Gita* has pointed out the metaphysics with the concept of Ultimate Reality, individual self, and the world. Let us have a brief detail of *Gîtâ*'s metaphysical concepts as interpreted by Tilak————————

1.3.1 Tilak's View on Ultimate Reality

By following SaAkara, Tilak describes the nature of *Gîtâ*'s Ultimate Reality as that, "howmuchsoever one may examine the visible world, and come to the conclusion that the sensory nerves of the eyes possesses particular properties,yet, the one has ascertained this remains a separate entity." Tilak adds that one should not use mere imagination and inference to derive conclusions about the Absolute Reality, which is beyond the reach of sense organ. So for Tilak, sruti i.e. úabda pramâna consisting of experiences gained by authorities alone is the valid source of the understanding of the nature of the Ultimate Reality. *Gîtâ*'s Reality is permanent and non-dual which is known as the Self, Purucottama, Paramapuruca, Parâmâtman, and Parâbrahman. In the *Gîtâ* Rahasya, Tilak describes two aspects of the Absolute Reality or Brahman, the manifest (vyakta) and the unmanifest (avyakta). Further, thereare two forms of unmanifest Brahman, the saguGa (with attributes) and nirguGa (without attributes). Tilak states that the *Gîtâ* describes only the manifest form of Lord

Krishna who is the incarnation of the creator Parameswara. However, the manifest form of Brahman is not the object of attainment, but an illusory manifestation. The unmanifest is the principal aspect. The change from the unmanifest to the manifest is due to the power of illusion known as 'mâyâ'.

Tilak has emphasised the necessity of the technique of superimposition and subsequent denial for the understanding of the nature of the non-dual Brahman. In order to help the aspirant to understand the nature of Brahman, first attributes like creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe are ascribed to the attributeless Brahman and subsequently denied. Thus, all the accidental nature of Brahman is denied finally, accepting only the essential nature of Brahman as Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Again, Tilak states that the different forms of Brahman are symbolic in nature meant for worship. He adds that the nirguGa Brahman can be realised only after understanding the nature of saguGa Brahman (the form with qualities) and by "gradually omitting quality after quality". In other words, by withdrawing the superimposed qualities gradually, one can realise the attributeless Brahman. Further, the *Gîtâ* uses some terms like distant, near, existent, non-existent to describe the nature of Brahman. These terms areself-contradictory as they cannot be applied to the one Being at the same time. But this is self-contradiction when applied to empirical being, while these contradictions have no sense when they are applied to the Supreme Being which is beyond empirical world. The application of these terms is implicative in the sense that Brahman can be considered as all pervasive and eternal Reality, which exists in an independent state.

1.3.2 The Individual Self

The individual self, is defined in the *Gîtâ* as a part (amca) of the Lord who is the soul inhabiting the heart of all created

beings. The individual self is called the Atman when it is imprisoned in the body, and Absolute self is called Paramâtman when it is released from the body or matter. The word 'part' should not be taken in the sense of 'an independent piece which has been cut out'. Infact, the individual is a part of the Absolute Self, which is wrongly viewed as apart due to ignorance. Tilak gives the argument to establish the identity between Brahman and Atman like that, " the Brahman and the Atman must be uniform; because, as the synthesis of the impressions created by the mind by the various objects in the world, which (synthesis) results from the activity of the Atman, must be the counterpart of the synthesis of all objects in the world made of Brahman (which is the root of those objects) by breaking up their diversity; if not, all knowledge will be without foundation and will fall flat. And it now follows a natural conclusion that though these two elements, which arrives at two exactly similar synthesis may be in two different places, they cannot be different from each other; and that, the form of the Brahman must be the same as the form of the Atman." Tilak points out that this identity can only be experienced. The non-dual experience is described in the *Gîtâ* as, "all created beings are within Him and He is in all created beings."

1.3.2 World

According to Tilak, in the *Gîtâ*, Kṛṣṇa is manifested in two types of nature. And the two types of nature are related to the creation of the universe. Prakṛti is the lower nature, between the two nature of Kṛṣṇa. It is also called the material cause of the universe. Prakṛti is eightfold. According to the *Gîtâ,* the eightfold Prakṛti is consisted of five great elements, mind Kṛṣṇa, intellect and ego. That higher nature is nothing but the Self, which is constituted of pure consciousness or awareness. The higher and lower nature of Kṛṣṇa, each functioning in the embrace of the other, cause all the manifestations of the world of plurality.

Without the presence of one nature, creation is not possible. Therefore, it can be said that in the *Gîtâ* that womb is prakṛti. From this womb, the world is said to be arisen. In that Prakṛti, Krishna is said to place the germ, the seed of the birth of Hiranyagarbha, the seed which gives birth to all beings. This affirms that all existence are manifestation of the Divine. He is the cosmic seed. With reference to the world, He becomes the Hiranyagarbha, the cosmic soul. Krishna is the father who deposits in the womb, which is not self, the seed which is essential of life, thus causing the birth of every individual. So the world can be considered as the play of the Infinite on the finite.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. According to Tilak, the *Gîtâ* talks about the identification of the.....

..... and.....

Q.2. According to Tilak, the *Gîtâ* describes two kinds of Brahman. They are.....

A)..... B).....

1.4 THE ETHICAL POSITION OF TILAK

Ethics is generally understood as the study of value and morals. It discusses what should one do in certain situations. The ethics of the *Gîtâ* was introduced at the very starting point of the book and it refers to the situation where the *Gîtâ* was written. In the battlefield, when Arjuna was perplexed by not being able to decide what to do, Lord Krishna taught him about his duty and helped him to decide what is better for him. With this regard the concept of yoga was introduced and the *Gîtâ* teaches how these three yogas i.e. jñâna-yoga, karma-yoga and bhakti-yoga will be helpful in living one's life as well as in getting liberation. Tilak interprets *Gîtâ*'s concept of three yogas. Let us discuss these three yogas. ————

1.4.1 Jñâna-Yoga Or The Way Of Knowledge

According to Tilak, in the *Gîtâ,* knowledge is the goal of action. Here knowledge does not mean any kind of knowledge of external objects. Rather it means the discriminative knowledge of the soul and matter. Knowledge means self-realisation, by which we become aware of our real nature. It isbelieved that wisdom grows within the knower. *Gîtâ* says, "there is nothing on earth equal in purity to wisdom. He who becomes perfected by yoga finds this of himself, in his self in course of time". In order to know the real nature of the self, one has to know that the self is different from the body. While the body undergoes changes, the soul remains unchanged. Here body can be considered as prakṛti and soul can be considered as puruṣa. However, unlike Saṁkhya system the dualism between puruṣa and prakṛti is dissolved in the *Gîtâ*, as these two are considered as the two nature of Krishna Himself. And, therefore, both of them are subordinate to God. The self realizes its freedom when it clearly realizes the differentiation from the evolutes of prakṛti. Prakṛti is made up of guṇas, which are responsible for the sense experience and these experiences are the cause of desires. When one gets knowledge about the differentiation from matter, it willnot be affected by the guGas, which are the constituents of prakṛti. Further *Gîtâ* says that when the soul can disconnect itself from matter, it can connect with the Indwelling God, which is of the same nature. Therefore, knowledge means the knowledge of the Supreme i.e., the highest self-knowledge. Tilak accepts jñâna-yoga as a path of attaining God, but as a subservient to karma-yoga.

1.4.2 Karma-Yoga or the Way of Action

According to Tilak, *Gîtâ*'s concept of karma-yoga is nothing but a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom from bondage. The main purpose of the *Gîtâ* is to show how Krishna teaches the science of karma-yoga to Arjuna when

the latter wanted to give up the Kurukcetra war and renounce the world. In this context, Arjuna asked Krishna, "if you think knowledge is superior to action, O Janardana why do you tell me to involve in this dangerous work? Then in answer Krishna replies by favouring karma-yoga as, "no one can remain even for a moment without doing work; everyone is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature." The problem with karma is that, it is supposed to bind man. And as it is a way of getting liberation, so it cannot bind anyone. So, the way *Gîtâ* suggested to perform action according to Tilak is that, "resigning all thy works to Me, with thy consciousness fixed in the Self, being free from desire and egoism, fight, delivered from thy fever". This is the basic concept of law of karma for attaining liberation.Thus, the *Gîtâ* condemns outer renunciation and commends inward renunciation. Tilak's view of karma-yoga is very significant not only to ethics, but also to politics. He could state that karma-yoga is not only the way of ethical goal-(Brahman), but also the way of political goal or swarajya and social good or goal. Political goal is based on swarajya, which comes from inborn aspect or nature of soul. Self-realised person can work for reality of swaraj.So, every self-realised performer or karma-yogi fundamentally knows the necessityof swarajya for which Tilak said, "to strive for freedom (of swarajya or ethics)" was an 'inherent right of every people'. According to Tilak, though the *Gîtâ* talks aboutjñâna-yoga and bhakti-yoga, yet it put emphasis on karma-yoga as the ultimate way to attain liberation. This is so because, the principal aim and purpose of the *Gîtâ* was to elaborate and critically evaluate the characteristic features and concepts of the karma-yoga as religious and moral attitude for the perfect development of man. The reason as to why Tilak considers karma-yoga as the supreme way to liberation is that even after getting jñâna-bhakti and liberation, that person must performs action until bideha mukti.Tilak's interpretation was the first systematic ethico-

pragmatic philosophy, which gives more importance on karma-yoga than the theory of renunciation and isolation from society as well as the world.

1.4.3 Bhakti –Yoga or the Way of Devotion

Tilak holds the view that devotion or bhakti can never become the supreme path by following which one can ultimately attains Release. There are two ways to attain liberation and they are the way of knowledge and the way of action. Although bhakti may be called a yoga in the sense that it is a means, yet it can never be considered an ultimate way according to Tilak. So, for Tilak, the *Gîtâ* supports only one path viz. the path of karma-yoga which is based on knowledge and devotion is an important factor in it. In other words, devotion is necessary for knowledge and without knowledge the performance of disinterested action is not possible. Thus, Tilak stated that, "desireless karma which includes both knowledge and devotion is the most superior path of all, according to the *Gîtâ*. Now the query comes as, how devotion is auxiliary to knowledge and then action, Tilak states that as the process of devotion is based on the duality of the worshiper and the worshipped, no devotion or any kind of worship survives in the ultimate state of the merger of the Atman into Brahman i.e. liberation. Regarding the nature of worship, which is a factor of devotion, *Gîtâ* states that no matter in which way the devotee worships, God is ready to accept it. No one worships any image without believing that the Lord inhabits it. When the devotee surrenders himself completely to God, He gradually increases his concentration of understanding and makes him ultimately fully realize His own nature. In this regard*Gîtâ* states that, "by devotion, he acquires the essential knowledge of how and what I am; and when he has thus essentially recognised Me, he becomes merged in Me." As there is no conflict between knowledge and desireless action, similarly there is no conflict

between devotion and the kind of action that are performed with the idea of dedicating all fruits of action to God. Thus, according to Tilak, the *Gîtâ* advocates desireless action combined with intense devotion. Once one can devote himself fully to the Lord, he will no more be attached to the earthly things. In this way, devotion has become auxiliary to action, which is the supreme way to attain liberation, according to Tilak's interpretation of *Gîtâ*.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) According to Tilak karma-yoga is superior to jñâna-yoga and bhakti-yoga. (true/false)

b) Jñâna-yoga is the discriminative knowledge between soul and matter. (true/false)

c) According to Tilak karma-yoga is possible after attaining jñâna-yoga. (true/false)

d) Bhaktiyoga is auxiliary to jñâna-yoga and jñâna-yoga is auxulliry to karma-yoga. (true/false)



1.5 LET US SUM UP

- Tilak's *Gîtâ*-Rahasya basically deals with the metaphysics and Ethics of the *Gîtâ*.
- Within its Metaphysics, it discusses the *Gîtâ*'s concept of Brahman, Atman, and World.
- Within its Ethics, it discusses the three different yogas and how they are linked up.
- Tilak in this book tries to show how karma-yoga and swaraj are related and it involves both social and political Philosophy.



1.6 FURTHER READING

1) Tilak , B.G. (Volume I) (1935). *Úrîmad Bhagawadgîtârahasya*. Poona: M/S Tilak Bros.
2) Tilak , B.G. (Volume II) (1935). *Úrîmad Bhagawadgîtârahasya*. Poona: M/S Tilak Bros.
3) Saroja, G.V. (1985). *Tilak and SaAkara on the Gîtâ*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
4) Kalita, H. C. (201). *Gîtâ: A Synthesis Yoga*, Guwahati: EBH Publishers.



1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Individual self and Absolute Self.

Ans to Q No 2: NirguGa Brahman and SaguGa Brahman.

Ans to Q No 5: a) True b) True c) True d) True



1.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very short questions:

Q 1: Write the name of the book written by Tilak as a commentary on *Gîtâ*.

Q 2: How many volumes are written by Tilak on the *Gîtâ*?

Q 3: According to Tilak, *Gîtâ* accepts how many kinds f Brahman?

Q 4: Does *Gîtâ* accept the creation of the world or reject?

Q 5: Jñâna-yoga refers to the knowledge of internal objects/external objects. Write the correct anaswer.

Q 6: What kind of renunciation does the *Gîtâ* talk about?

Q 7: According to Tilak, which yoga is superior to the other yogas?

B. Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Write short notes on the following concepts.

a) The *Gîtâ*'s concept of jñâna-yoga.

b) The *Gîtâ*'s concept of karma-yoga.

c) The *Gîtâ*'s concept of bhakti-yoga.

c) Long Questions (Answer in question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the metaphysical concepts of the *Gîtâ* interpreted by Tilak.

Q 2: Discuss the ethical concepts of the *Gîtâ* interpreted by Tilak.

* *** *

UNIT 2: R.N. TAGORE'S HUMANISM

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Humanism: What it is

2.4 Tagore's humanistic attitude

2.5 Bond of humanity and Nature

2.6 Desire to serve God through mankind

2.7 Religion is the foundation of humanity

2.8 Love and sacrifice is an integral part of humanity

2.9 Service to humanity is the source of salvation

2.10 Humanity is greater than community

2.11 Let us sum up

2.12 Further reading

2.13 Answers to cheeck your progress

2.14 Model questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define, what is humanism
- explain Tagore's humanism
- analyse different features of Tagore's humanism

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), one of the most distinguished personalities of modern India had achieved international reputation within his lifetime, crossing the barrier of locals and nationals. He was not a systematic philosopher, but the worldview behind his works and his ideas are complex as well as original. Though he did not write a systematic philosophical treatise but authored many essays and lectures in which he depicts his worldview in a poetic way. It is therefore Dr. S. Radhakrishnan truly realised about Tagore's philosophy "It is a sigh of the soul rather than

a reasoned account of metaphysics; an atmosphere rather than a system of philosophy. But we feel that the atmosphere is charged with a particular vision of reality. Though poetry is not philosophy, it is possible for us to derive from Rabindranath's works his philosophical views." In another place he stated "Though it is not the aim of poetry as a species of art to tell us of a philosophy, still it cannot fulfill its purpose unless it embodies a philosophic vision. It must offer an interpretation of life; give us a fuller view of reality. Poetry would not delight and give joy if it did not reveal the eternal through its form." It is admitted that Tagore is known as a complete man who encompassed everything in his poetry ranging from religion, aesthetics, education, nationalism, and social dynamics to internationalism and race relations. Tagore has a vision of the world. The mysteries of man, of nature and of the vast universe have unfolded themselves before his vision and the truth he has realized from the bottom of this comprehension. This gives us the ground to claim Tagore a philosopher. His contribution in enriching and ennobling human life through his writings which reflect the feelings, emotions and passions of all men upon the earth has been phenomenal.

2.3 HUMANISM: WHAT IT IS

Humanism is a rationalist outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. It is a philosophical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively. Generally it prefers critical thinking and evidence over established doctrine or faith. The meaning of the term humanism has fluctuated, according to the successive intellectual movements which have identified with it. In this age of humanism we understand the concept of man as the centre of all things.

2.4 TAGORE'S HUMANISTIC ATTITUDE

The humanistic attitude of Tagore pervades all aspects of his thought, but he never allows it to fall down to the status of narrow

anthropomorphism. It can be assert that the philosophy of Tagore is largely expressed through the concept of inter-personal relationship. In order to expound his idea of humanism corresponding to inter-personal relationship, it is necessary to delve more on his concept of man. His concept of man provides us with the real knowledge of man, who is finite and infinite, biological and spiritual in nature. His views about man or personality can be found in his various writings, particularly in Sâdhanâ (1913), Personality (1917), Creative Unity (1922) and The Religion of Man (1930).

In his philosophical journey, Tagore was guided by the ancient Indian thought of the Upanishads and the Vedanta. These scriptures represent loftiest ethical and spiritual values of mankind and being inspired by it Tagore's philosophy also resolves round mankind, which is known as humanism. Like the ancient and contemporary Indian philosophers Tagore also inclined to spiritualism in his humanistic approach and man holds an exalted position in his philosophy. We always find a human touch in the writings, paintings and poems of Tagore. In this way he humanizes not only nature and objects but also God. The outer world, according to Tagore, is nothing but 'a cradle for the human spirit'. It is seen that in Tagore's thought all the human notions of life, rhythm, beauty, harmony, order, love, delight, music have become important. These concepts become more meaningful when they are related to human values. There are unanimous similes and analogies everywhere in Tagore's writings which indicate the intense human disposition of the poet philosopher.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESSS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks:

a) Some books, where Tagore analyses his concept of humanism are ……., ……..., and …… .

Q 2: Can Tagore be claimed as a philosopher? Show reason.

.....

.....

Q 3: What is Humanism?

.....

.....

The following features of humanism are derived from Tagore's extensive writings.

2.5 BOND OF HUMANITY AND NATURE

Tagore's concept of man or human personality is finding its fruition through the realization of the feeling of intimacy with nature. From his childhood days, he is fascinated by the splendour of nature-the rising of the sun, the chirping of the birds and the whistling of the wind through the trees. He is of the opinion that nature does not lose herself but reveals its true colour to a person's self, having its own eternal bindings with human nature. Nature is essentially related to man. In the vastness of nature, we are not unknown strangers; we are her kith and kin. He also compares the beautiful nature with our mother. Tagore writes "When in the morning I looked upon the light I felt in a moment that I was no stranger in this world, that the inscrutable without name and form had taken me in its arms in the form of my own mother." Tagore thinks that there are essentially two senses in which we can think of our relationship with nature- one in which we ordinarily treat it as an insentient, objective mode for information, binding down man to the physical and essential needs; and the other in which it satisfies our personality with manifestations that make our life rich and stimulate our imagination in their harmony of forms, colours, sounds and movements. S.C. Sengupta in his article, "The Surplus in Man: The Poet's Philosophy of Man," argues that the inter-relation between man and nature can be found at the lower or the communication stage and the higher or the communion stage. They are not two different stages. Rather, one stage is ultimately passing

over to the growth of another stage. Man has a very good communication with nature. Nature helps man to develop his personality in as much as man helps nature to reveal its beauty. Man grows along with nature in so far as he can identify himself with nature and makes it his messenger of communication. With the help of nature man creates his own nature, creates beauty, and creates art. In his creativity and self-expression, man becomes conscious of the abundance, his ability to go beyond his physical finitude and through creation of art, strives to send his communication to the Supreme Person who reveals Himself to him. Describing the integral relationship of nature with man Tagore quotes Wordsworth's line "The world is too much with us; late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers. Little we see in Nature that is ours". Rabindranath Tagore, Personality, in 'The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore', vol. 2, ed. by Sisir Kumar Das (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2008), 349. Tagore recommends that man should lead a life of nature tending trees, feeding birds and animals, learning to feel the immense mystery of the soil and water and air.

2.6 DESIRE TO SERVE GOD THROUGH MANKIND

The important aspect which makes Tagore's humanism more appealing and inspiring is that he has a strong desire to serve God through mankind. He conceives man in such a manner that without affecting the Godness of God, he gives to man also a special dignity and uniqueness. Tagore perceives God in every human being. In his philosophy God and man go together. It is therefore a clear picture of Tagore's conception of Jivan Devata emerges after having an idea of his philosophy of man. A deep insight in to the Tagore's explanation of the nature of man reveals the fact that there are two essential aspects of man's nature; lower or finite aspect and higher or infinite aspects. In his book 'The Religion of Man' when Tagore states about man that 'he is earth's child but heaven's heir' thereby he indicates clearly about these two aspects; the physical and the spiritual. The physical or finite aspect is determinable in terms of biological, physiological and psychological

facts. On the other hand the spiritual, which implies the infinite aspect of man expresses in loving and aspirations of a higher kind. This aspect of man's nature is sometimes described by Tagore as the 'Universal' in man, the 'Surplus' in man, the element of Divinity present in man, and so on. The important character of this infinite aspect of man which makes man God like is that all its expressions and activities are expressions of joy. Man's natural urge for realizing the Truth, the Good and the Beautiful is an expression of joy. Joy is both the condition of man's spiritual growth and also ultimate growth. It is on account of the element of joy inherent in the human soul, that whenever man rises above the mere physical he is able to forget the worries and anxieties of life. It is on account of these that Tagore calls this aspect of man's nature as 'Jivan Devata'. Jivan Devata is god in man, the element of Divinity present in man, which makes man God-like. He feels that man can take interest in the absolute only when it is humanized. His God or the universal spirit dwells not in heaven but in the heart of man. In the book 'Religion of Man' while describing the purpose of the book Tagore says, "The idea of humanity of our God, or the Divinity of man, the Eternal, is the main subject of this book". This represents truly the Tagore's sense of humanizing God. A clear picture of humanizing God by Tagore is emerged in the writings of B. K. Lal in his book 'Indian Philosophy' –"…….At times, man is raised higher to the status of God, at other times, God is brought down to man in so far as divinity is said to be discernible in the heart of man."

2.7 RELIGION IS THE FOUNDATION OF HUMANITY

Tagore's concept of Religion is colored by humanism. The account of religion as given by him is the realization of the universal within the individual through an act of supreme love. His humanistic attitude pervades in his religious thought. Though, initially as Brahmo-samaji he developed a religion combining elements of Brahmo samaj and of orthodox Hinduism; finally he comes to believe in what he called, 'the religion of man'. He claims that his religion towards all forms rituals and it is the true expression of the spirit in man. Without belonging to an

established religion, he could easily express the idea of a universal human religion, which can be termed as 'Humanism' in its purest form. Tagore clearly expresses in his writings how his spiritual realization was slowly transformed in to human religion. He visualizes in a way that as the wateriness of water is essentially its religion and in the spark of flame lays the religion of fire, in the same way man's religion is his innermost Truth. Religion of man grows within his mind as a religious experience. The aim of true religion is the realization of one's kinship with everything. Religion is therefore life and existence and ultimately it is the religion of Man. True religion is nothing but an attempt to realize the Divinity in Man.

2.8 LOVE AND SACRIFICE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF HUMANITY

Describing religion as the Religion of Man, Tagore recommends the rule of love in religion. Love is the main principle underlying Tagore's philosophy. He holds that the goal of man in the world is to annihilate the consciousness of separateness from the supreme reality and this can be attained by complete self sacrifices and self surrender. This can be realised only through love. Tagore never tired to repeat it that 'love' is distinct from attachment because it has no egoistic motive. True love identifies oneself with object of one's love. It means to go beyond oneself and hence a source of joy. It is on account of this, love is identified as comprehension which implies comprehending 'all' in a unity. In love the sense of difference is obliterated. Tagore states in his book 'Sadhana' p. 29 "….The meaning of this is that whomsoever we love, in him we find our own soul in the highest sense….because in them we have grown larger, in them we have touched the great truth which comprehends the whole universe." Therefore it is clear from his writings that it is only through love that our consciousness can be enlarged.

Another aspect of love is that it presupposes sacrifice. Love and sacrifices go together, without the one the other loses its function. Man begins his spiritual journey with the act of love and thereby able to sacrifice of all personal consideration. Tagore realized in a way that loves

removes the transitory state of man and he comes in contact with universal humanity. Repeating the importance of love Tagore states in 'The Gardener' "Trust love even if it brings sorrow…..let sorrowful love wake in your eyes." Mentioning the practical side of love Tagore states that love is not mere sentimentality or emotional attitude towards its object, as it demands some action on his part. The practical side of love refers to certain corresponding actions springing from and expressing the feelings of love. To increase the awareness about the importance of love in human society Tagore states that a civilization can be judged and prized by how much it has evolved and given expression to, by its laws and institution, the love of human unity.

2.9 SERVICE TO HUMANITY IS THE SOURCE OF SALVATION

According to Tagore perfect freedom is the harmony of relation and this harmony which the Upanishad speaks when it says that truth no longer remains hidden in him who finds himself in all. So service to humanity is the better source of salvation. He prefers dedication instead of renunciation as the path of salvation. Usually the Indian philosopher conceives liberation as freedom from rebirth – from the tendency to be reborn. Tagore thinks in a different way and states that renunciation of the individual self for the check of supreme soul positively means dedication to it. Human beings find joy in dedication. Thus the liberated man does not become an entirely different individual or a separate unit. On the other hand, his self centered outlook gives place to love and joy.

The ultimate destiny of man is the realization of immortality, of complete freedom. It is a state in which man rises completely over his egoistic life and has a realization of the essential unity of everything. This enables him to rise above even the distinction between pleasure and pain, and good and evil, because these distinctions arise only when we believe in the distinction between mine and yours. Following Gita, Tagore also believes that working for love comprises freedom in action. As a profound believer of freedom he states that freedom means the freedom

of consciousness, seeking and modulating our relationship with other beyond ego. To establish this concept he established an educational institute at Santiniketan, where he professed but never preached. This aspect makes Tagore a crusader of freedom for every human soul and thereby a true humanist.

2.10 HUMANITY IS GREATER THAN COMMUNITY

Tagore through his extensive literature expresses and analyses all possible tenets of human characters and emotions. The important aspect of Tagore's humanism is that he considers humanism is greater than community. He advocates universal brotherhood and the poems specially written in his later life reflect his philosophy of humanism by pointing out the divinity in man. Tagore's humanism is guided by Vedantic ethics and holds that moral law is the discovery of man and it is the discovery of the wonderful truth that man becomes all the truer the more he realizes himself in others. Tagore feels in a way that the degradation which we cast upon others in our pride or self interest degrades our own humanity. The awareness of universal brotherhood exist in the soul that is spiritual unity of mankind is essential for lasting peace in the world. He states that the cultivation of the aesthetic sense and developing the artistic sensibility helps us to place humanity over and above community. According to him the world is a song, which is never separated from the singer. Every aspect of the universe is a note of this music, and therefore, every aspect of the universe reflects the Infinite. Art, music, cultivation of the aesthetic sense are the ways through which one can develop the feelings of universal brotherhood, the feelings of humanity. Tagore comments that when a man does not realize his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him. When he meets the eternal spirit in all objects, then is he emancipated for then he discovers the fullest significance of the world into which he is born; then he finds himself in perfect truth, and his harmony with the all is established.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Mention some features of Tagore's Humanism.

.....

.....

Q 5: What are the two essential aspets of man's nature described by Tagore?

.....

.....

Q 6: What is the aim of true religion?

.....

.....



2.11 LET US SUM UP

- Tagore was not a systematic philosopher. But he is known as a complete man who encompassed everything in his poetry ranging from religion, aesthetics, education, nationalism, and social dynamics to internationalism and race relations.
- Humanism is a rationalist outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. It is a philosophical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively. It prefers critical thinking and evidence over established doctrine or faith.
- Tagore's view about man or personality can be found in his various writings, particularly in Sâdhanâ (1913), Personality (1917), Creative Unity (1922) and The Religion of Man (1930).
- The humanistic attitude of Tagore pervades all aspects of his thought. His philosophy resolves round mankind, which is known as humanism. We always find a human touch in the writings,

paintings and poems of Tagore. In this way he humanizes not only nature and objects but also God.

- Nature helps man to develop his personality in as much as man helps nature to reveal its beauty. . Man grows along with nature in so far as he can identify himself with nature and makes it his messenger of communication.
- A deep insight in to the Tagore's explanation of the nature of man reveals the fact that there are two essential aspects of man's nature; lower or finite aspect and higher or infinite aspects. The physical or finite aspect is determinable in terms of biological, physiological and psychological facts. On the other hand the spiritual, which implies the infinite aspect of man expresses in loving and aspirations of a higher kind.
- Without belonging to an established religion, he could easily express the idea of a universal human religion, which can be termed as 'Humanism' in its purest form. . The aim of true religion is the realization of one's kinship with everything.
- Love is the main principle underlying Tagore's philosophy. He holds that the goal of man in the world is to annihilate the consciousness of separateness from the supreme reality and this can be attained by complete self sacrifices and self surrender. This can be realised only through love.
- Tagore states that freedom means the freedom of consciousness, seeking and modulating our relationship with other beyond ego.
- The awareness of universal brotherhood exist in the soul that is spiritual unity of mankind is essential for lasting peace in the world. The cultivation of the aesthetic sense and developing the artistic sensibility helps us to place humanity over and above community.



2.12 FURTHER READING

1) Tagore, R.N.(1917). Personality, London,Mamillan&Co.
2) Tagore, R.N.(1949). The Religion of Man, London, George Allen and Unwin.
3) Tagore, R.N. (1950). Creative Unity, London,Mamillan&Co. (Indian edition).
3) Tagore, R.N. (1947). Sadhana, London,Mamillan&Co.
4) Tagore, R.N. (1961). Towards Universal Man, Bombay,Asia Publishing House.
5) Lal, Basant Kumar. (1999). Contemporary Indian Philosophy, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers,



2.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Sâdhanâ (1913), Personality (1917), and The Religion of Man (1930).

Ans to Q No 2: Tagore was basically a poet, but he can be claimed as a philosopher. Though he did not write a systematic philosophical treatise but authored many essays and lectures in which he depicts his worldview in a poetic way. Tagore is known as a complete man who encompassed everything in his poetry ranging from religion, aesthetics, education, nationalism, and social dynamics to internationalism and race relations. This gives us the ground to claim Tagore a philosopher.

Ans to Q No 3: Humanism is a rationalist outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters.

Ans to Q No 4: Some features of Tagore's Humanism are- 1. The bond of Humanity and Nature is an important aspect of Tagore's humanism. 2. There is a desire to Serve God through Mankind. 3.

Religion is the Foundation of Tagore's Humanism. 4. Love and sacrifice is an integral part of Humanity. 5. Service to Humanity is the Source of Salvation. 6. Humanity is greater than Community.

Ans to Q No 5: The two essential aspets of man's nature described by Tagore are the lower or finite aspect and the higher or infinite aspect.

Ans to Q No 6: True religion is nothing but an attempt to realize the Divinity in Man. Therefore, the aim of true religion is the realization of one's kinship with everything.



2.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short question

Q 1: What is Humanism?

Q 2: Is Tagore a philosopher?

Q 3: Write the names of some books by Tagore.

Q 4: Write a note on tagore's religion.

Q 5: What are the two aspects of man's nature described by Tagore?

Q 6: How Tagore established the fact that Humanity is greater than community?

Q 7: What is love?

B. Short question (Answer in about 150 words)

Q 1: Write a note on Tagore's concept of Religion.

Q 2: What is Humanism? Briefly explain Tagore's humanism.

Q 3: How Tagore describe the integral relationship of nature with man.

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300- 500 words)

Q 1: Explain the different aspects of Tagore's humanism

*** **** ***

UNIT 3: VIVEKANANDA'S PRACTICAL VEDANTA

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Influences on Vivekananda's philosophy

3.4 Main Tenets of Vivekananda's Philosophical Thought

3.5 Vivekananda's Practical Vedanta

3.6 Four Yogas to attain Freedom

3.7 Let us Sum Up

3.8 Further Reading

3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.10 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain Swami Vivekananda's life and his philosophy
- discuss the influences which had shaped Vivekananda's personality
- analyse Vivekananda's concept of Practical Vedanta.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit attempts to make you understand the life and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, a contemporary eminent Indian thinker of pre-independence India. Swami Vivekananda was born on 12th January 1863 in Calcutta. He was named as Narendra in his early life. His father was Biswanath Dutta and his mother was Bhubneswari.He passed his B.A.in 1884. He received his early education in Calcutta. He was an all-rounder proving excellence in studying, physical culture, music, literature, riding, swimming, wrestling etc.

From his childhood, he was very religious and curious by nature. As such, Vivekananda had good knowledge of Indian scriptures as well

as Western thought. In 1881, he happened to meet Rama Krishna Paramhansa at Dakhineswar. This meeting proved to be a turning point in the life of Vivekananda who accepted Ramkrishna as his friend, philosopher and guide. Vivekananda travelled extensively, almost the whole of India. Thereby, he realised the real social and economic condition of the Indians. He felt that in spite of being strong in spiritual heritage, Indian culture is not able to remove poverty and social evils. For this a spiritual revolution in India is of utmost necessity. That is why, after the demise of his teacher Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda himself took the responsibility of spiritual leadership of Indian people. He represented India and participated in the Parliament of Religions which was held in Chicago, America in 1893 and continued for seventeen days. He delivered eleven lectures on Hinduism in the Parliament. In fact, he is considered as a key figure in the introduction of Hindu philosophies of Vedanta and yoga in Europe and America.



LET US SUM UP

Ramakrishna Paramhansa: (18th Feb. 1836- 16th August 1886) He was called as Gadadhar Chatterjee or Gadadhar Chttopadhyay at the childhood stage. He was an Indian mystic and yogi during the 19th century. His religious school of thought was known as Ramakrishna Mission. His chief disciple, Vivekananda took part the important role in this context. His guru, Tota Puri gave him the name Ramkrishna Paramhansa.

3.3 INFLUENCES THAT SHAPED VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY

Vivekananda's philosophy arises from the awareness of the social, religious and economic conditions of the Indian masses. He realized that gradually Indian people were losing faith in spiritual values. Therefore, he aimed at spiritual awakening among the Indians. He wanted to eradicate the religious rigidity and superstitions prevalent in the

society of that period. He advocated for a reformed religion so he made a spiritual awareness among the common people of the society.

Vivekananda's thought was deeply influenced by ancient Hindu Philosophy, specially by Vedanta philosophy. The main body of his thought was derived from Hindu scriptures – *Upanisads* and *Vedanta*. **His basic belief in the essential unity of everything, which is the** completely monistic nature of Reality, owes its origin to the Vedanta. His concepts of Man, Practical Vedanta are derived from the same source. It is true that he had emphasized on the need of re-interpretation of Vedanta in accordance with the demands and needs of the time. In fact, Vivekananda's philosophy is an attempt towards the end. For him, living a religious life is necessary for the spiritual upliftment of a person without which moksha or nirvana cannot be attained .This spiritual upliftment can be done by educating oneself with the teachings of Vedanta philosophy and apply these teachings in one's life.

In a certain sense, Vivekananda was inspired by Buddhistic ideal of Bodhisattva, Samyak Karmanta, Ajiva and humanitarian altruistic work. Vivekananda also took up the Christian ideal of service and Love. His conviction that man contains within himself the spark of Divinity and his optimistic belief greatly resemble Christian concept of kingdom of God. Again, Bhagavat Gita's ideal of Niskama Karma was a constant source of inspiration to Vivekananda.

But the profound influence that remodeled and shaped Vivekananda's life and mission was his Guru Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He taught Vivekananda the divinity of the soul, the non-duality of God-head, the unity of existence, the Universality or harmony of all religions. It was Ramakrishna who initiated him to spirituality.

3.4 MAIN TENETS OF VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

Vivekananda has revitalized the Indian thought. He is regarded as a practical Vedantist. His Vedantic thought is not simply abstract

metaphysical system. Man is defined basically in terms of spirit. He spoke about practical spirituality. When a person thinks of himself as a body he forgets that he has a mind. Again when he thinks himself as a mind he forgets the body. But behind the body and the mind, the idea of immortality is inherent in man. In the philosophical thought of Vivekananda we observe the following tenets -

1. The main tenet of Vivekananda's philosophy is non dualism. According to him, ultimate reality is only One, not only in the present but in the past and in the future also.
2. Vivekananda was very confident about his own capacity. He urges others to keep their self confidence. He believes that the Brahman power is inherent in everyman. Religion is the manifestation of this divine power latent in man.
3. Vivekananda believes at heart that every man can realize God in his life.
4. Tolerance to all men is very necessary to realize God. There is no higher or lower, developed or undeveloped, great or small religion. Every religion enquires after the same truth.
5. Vivekananda wants to establish good relation between the East and the West. Therefore, he transcends the dogmatism of Hindu religion. Hence, he could address the men of other religions as sisters and brothers in the parliament of religions which was held in Chicago, America in 1893.
6. Vivekananda laid much importance upon freedom of human soul. This point is beautifully expressed in his practical vedantin concept.
7. Each soul is potentially divine.
8. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature both external and internal.
9. Man's essential essence is pure consciousness that is pure, free and eternal.
10. Man is united with the Infinite. Realization of this unity and it must be the aim of human being.

11. An infinite eternal man is real, unlimited by space, time and causality where as an apparent man is limited.
12. As much as man realizes identity with the Infinite, he can feel unity with whole human race.
13. Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man.
14. Religion is the manifestation of divinity already in man.
15. Serving man is serving God.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1.: In which year was Swami Vivekananda born?

.....

Q.2.: Where did he take his early education?

.....

Q.3.: When did he met Ramkrishna Paramhamsa?

.....

Q.4.: In which year was the Parliament of Religions held?

.....

Q.5.: Was Vivekananda's philosophy influenced by ancient Hindu Philosophy?

.....

Q.6.: Was Vivekananda influenced by Buddhistic Ideal?

.....

Q 7: What is the main tenet of Vivekananda's political philosophy?

.....

Q.8 Fill in the gaps:

(a) Vivekananda was named as _____ in his early life.

(b) Vivekananda accepted _____ as his friend, philosopher and guide.

(c) The Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, America in _____.

(d) Vivekananda is regarded as a _____ Vedantist.

3.5 VIVEKANANDA'S PRACTICAL VEDANTA

True to the tradition of Advaita Vedanta, Vivekananda had great faith in the infinite potentialities of mankind. To him, man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and the spring is trying to unfold itself; and all the social phenomena that we see are the result of this trying to unfold. Everyman has an opportunity within the limits of his present development of making himself better. We cannot unmake ourselves. Nor can we destroy the vital force within us. We have the freedom to give it different directions. Vivekananda says that men should be taught to be practical and physically strong. A dozen of such lions will conquer the world and not millions of sheep. Secondly according to him men should not be taught to imitate a personal ideal, however great. He said "Imitation, cowardly imitation never makes for progress. It is verily the sign of awful degradation in a man ....Do not imitate! Whenever you are under the thumb of others, you lose your own independence...Bring out through your own exertions what you have."

Thus, Vivekananda gives us a dynamic and progressive idea of man. His concept of man as a divine spirit is the great gift to both the East and the West. Man may see the soul of the universe through his own soul. The *Katha Upanisad* maintains that the non-dual Brahman, Pure consciousness, ever calm and blissful, ensouls all individuals and yet transcends them all. So also Vivekananda holds that the Infinite self-consciousness reveals through everyman. The important fact in human personality is the heightened sense of self-awareness that distinguishes man from all other beings. Man, with the power of introspection, can discriminate his real self, the knower within from his psychophysical constitution. The differences between one Jiva and another lies in their psychophysical structure and not in the nature of the indwelling self. The self is in essence pure, free, luminous and identical with Brahman. The inner self of all Jivas is the same Brahman. But its manifestation varies from man to man and it is due to his psychophysical constitution. As the same shining sun shines differently through different mediums, so also

the Pure Consciousness is immanent in the whole universe as the supreme principle; only it manifests differently through various beings.

Vivekananda emphasised on Pure Consciousness, Pure Bliss and Pure Existence. Inside the physical or gross body of man there is the bright body. This bright substance remains even after the death of man. It is believed that the gross body is manipulated by something else which is not material. It is the Atman through which the bright body works on the gross body. This 'bright body', means, according to Swami Vivekananda, 'suksma sarira' or subtle body. It is the receptacle of the mind. Atman is beyond the gross body and the subtle body, "It is not the mind even; it works on mind, and through the mind, the body. You have an Atman, I have another, each one of us has a separate. Atman and a separate fine body and through that we work on the gross external body."

Swami **Vivekananda makes a distinction between the apparent and the Real Man**. The psychophysical structure constitutes the **apparent man**. The self or Atman is the Real man. In his words, "The **Real Man**, therefore is one and infinite, the Omnipresent Spirit. And the Apparent man is only a limitation of that Real Man...The apparent man however great he may be, is only a dim reflection of the Real Man who is beyond time and Space. It was never bound and cold not be bound. In the the apparent man, the reflection is limited by time, space and causation and is therefore bound...he appears to be bound, but really is not. This is the reality in our souls, this Omnipresence, this spiritual nature, this infinity. Every soul is infinite, and therefore there is no question of birth and death."

Vivekananda's concept of man as divided into Apparent man and Real Man is almost similar to Josiah Royce's view of self's. According to Royce, "A man has, as we sometimes learn, two selves – the inner and the outer, the nobler and baser. There is the natural man, who is by very essence evil, and the spiritual man, who is by nature good. It is to the natural man that the advice about self-abnegation is given; it is to the spiritual self that the well-known words of Burns make their stirring appeal. The fleshly self is the root of all evil. The spiritual self

belongs, by origin and by destiny, to a higher realm" The higher self is not originally myself at all but the spirit warring against the Flesh.

At a time when Sigmund Freud had hardly formulated his theory of the unconscious, Vivekananda spoke not only of the conscious and the subconscious but also of the super conscious. In the Western Psychology there is no conception of the super conscious. Only recently the parapsychologists headed by Dr. Rhine and others have come to admit the existence of Extra-Sensory Perception. With firm faith in Indian Psychology Vivekananda says, "The great task is to revive the whole man, as it were, in order to make him the complete master of himself. Even what we call automatic action of the organs within our bodies such as liver etc. can be made to obey our commands." He lays emphasis on the necessity of bringing the mind under control. So he does not stop with mere control of the conscious. "Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness. When this super conscious state is reached man becomes free and divine, death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power, and iron bondage becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the super consciousness." Freud had hardly discussed the super conscious. So, Vivekananda says, "Consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the subconscious and the super conscious." He further observes, "What does consciousness matter! Why it is nothing as compared to the unfathomable depths of the subconscious and the heights of the Super conscious." Practical Psychology directs first of all its energies in controlling the unconscious and we can do it according to Vivekananda. "But mind you, if the power of evil is in the unconscious so also is the power of good... True Psychology, would therefore, try to bring them under the control of the conscious."

3.6 FOUR YOGAS TO ATTAIN FREEDOM

The **Yoga Philosophy propounded by the sage Patanjali** is very helpful for man's physical, mental and spiritual development. Indian

philosophers from Yagyavalka to Sri Aurobindo have considered Yoga to be the most potent and indispensable method to attain mukti. For this man must know the Yogic techniques to control the body, mind, sense organs, intellect and ego so that he can realize the pure self. Yoga philosophy suggests a practical path, the way by following which man can realize the self.

The next important matter is how does human being attain freedom? Vivekananda says that by Yoga this freedom can be attained. The term yoga means both union and the way following which finite man can enjoy the bliss of the union with the Infinite Reality. **There are four yogas to attain freedom for human being corresponding to four aspects of human mind. These are (1) Karma Yoga (2) Jnana yoga (3) Bhakti yoga and (4) Raja Yoga**.

(1) Karma Yoga: It consists in performing detached actions and self-surrendering in the feet of God. Every man is to perform his duties only for duties sake without thinking of the fruit of the action. Karma yoga is the way of freedom by performing desireless actions. Such work leads to knowledge which in turn brings emancipation.

(2) Jnana Yoga: Jnana yoga is the way of realization of the truth that bondage arises due to avidya. The knowledge of Brahman within one's self is true knowledge. For acquiring knowledge of it, control of body, sense organ and motor-organs is necessary. Renunciation is an inseparable stage of the practice of jnana yoga.

(3) Bhakti Yoga: Bhakti yoga is the way to realize God through perfect devotion. It is the path of systematized devotion for the attainment of union with the absolute. According to Vivekananda man has the capacity to express the intense emotions and to utilize these in actions. Thus, emotions can be regularly guided to understand God. In this way ordinary emotion can be transformed to powerful emotion, ordinary love to divine love. This is called Bhakti marga. For this, earnest devotion is absolutely necessary. Bhakti is of two types – (1) Preparatory Bhakti, (2) Supreme Bhakti.

(4) Raja Yoga: It is the way of mukti propounded by the sage Patanjali in the regularization of body and mind and following concentrated in Samadhi. It is called Raja Yoga, because it is the shortest way to realize God. There are eight rules in Raja yoga which are known as Astanga Yoga – (1) Yama (2) Niyama (3) Asana (4) Pranayama (5) Pratyahara (6) Dhyana (7) Dharma and (8) Samadhi. Samadhi is of two types – (a) conscious and (b) unconscious. Vivekananda also advocates two types of freedom – (a) Jivan mukti and (2) Videha-mukti.

According to him, we are not individuals yet. We are struggling towards individuality and that is the Infinite; that is the Real nature of man. Hence "there is no individuality except in the Infinite." Thus, Vivekananda states that Infinite or the Spirit is only the individual. It cannot be divided nor broken into pieces. It is the same, single undivided unit forever and this is the individual man- the Real Man. The apparent man is struggling to manifest this individuality, which is beyond; evolution is not in the Spirit. The changes, which are going on in this world are not in the Spirit. They are evolution of nature and the manifestation of Spirit.

The traditional Hindu concept of life is that it is the bondage of the spirit in matter, and the goal of life is to escape from this prison house of matter. Vivekananda holds that life is not a prison but a battlefield, and every man has within him enough strength to come out of it victorious. His message to all suffering humanity is a message of strength and hope. His doctrine of strength is based on the potential divinity of man. "Say to your own minds, 'I am He, I am He' ... That is the truth, the infinite strength of the world is yours."

Some critics raise the point that Advaita Vedanta accepts Brahman as the only Reality at the cost of all others and thereby devalues human existence. Swami Vivekananda meets this criticism by holding that this is a wrong interpretation. The identification of Brahman and Atman shows that there is infinite strength and infinite possibilities in a man to become great and good. The difference between God and man is only of degree. Brahman manifests itself at different levels of

existence. Man is the supreme form of manifestation. According to Vivekananda, each man can realize his divine nature. The life of man is a self-evolving circle. It is his natural tendency to rise above his limitation and to be united with the universal self.

The human history reveals that the higher power and tendencies have been manifested again and again by different men at different times and at different places. These powers and tendencies are not superadded to human soul, they generate from within.Today human beings enjoy satisfaction using modern achievements of science. Among the discovereries, we ask ourselves -are we happy with this empirical world? Can we think or talk with others behind this world? These questions make man unhappy since nobody can escape from that. It is the ignorance due to which we are running after earthly enjoyments where as it remains unrealized that these fail to satisfy our inner self. The little individual self is the root cause of our distress. We should try to understand the true nature of our self. Our self is exactly the self of the absolute. The limited aspect of man is within the Infinite Reality.

Vivekananda was a firm believer of traditional vedantic philosophy and regards man as son of immortality. The same man enquires after the same human truth and reality. No theory regarding man is perfect and final up to this present day.

On the whole Vivekananda's ideal is to actualize the upanisadic ideal "Aham Brahmasmi" – I am Brahman.

Thus, Vivekananda is a true follower of Vedanta Philosophy. The only idea expressed throughout his whole philosophy is that finite man and Infinite Reality are essentially one. Infinite Reality is manifested through individual being. His view of man synthesizes the East and the West, the traditional and modern concept of man. Besides, his view is harmonious with the modern science also.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: State whether the following statements are true or false:

(a) Vivekananda was born in 12th January in Calcutta. (True/False)

(b) He was named as Narendra in his early life. (True/False)

(c) He had met Ramakrishna in 1981. (True/False)

(d) The Parliament of Religion had continued for seventeen days. (True/False)

Q 10: Fill in the Blanks

(a) The main tenet of Vivekananda's Philosophy is _____.

(b) Vivekananda makes a distinction between _____ man and _____ man.

(c) There are ____ yogas to attain freedom for human being.

Q 11: Make a distinction between the apparent and the real man. (Answer in about 60 words)

.....

Q 12: What is Jnana yoga? (Answer in about 40 words)

.....

.....



ACTIVITY 3.1

Vivekananda is a practical Vedantist. How do you establish it? Explain briefly.

Ans. :.....

.....

Yoga philosophy is very helpful for man's physical, mental and spiritual development. What are the yogas prescribed by Vivekananda for attaining freedom? Write briefly.

Ans.:.....

.....



3.7 LET US SUM UP

- Vivekananda was born in 1863 in Calcutta.
- Vivekananda is an eminent contemporary Indian thinker.
- He has revitalized the Indian thought.
- He is regarded as a practical Vedantist.
- The philosophy of Vivekananda is based upon the Advaitic ideal "Brahman Satyam, Jagat Mithya, Jivo Brahmaiva Naparah".
- Vivekananda urged man to be self confident.
- He makes distinction between the Apparent Man and Real Man. The psychophysical structure constitutes the Apparent Man. The self or atman is the Real Man.
- According to Vivekananda, human being attains freedom by practising Yogas. He emphasizes on Yoga practical psychology propounded by Patanjali.
- There are four Yogas to attain freedom – (1) Karma Yoga (2) Jnana Yoga (3) Bhakti Yoga and (4) Raja Yoga.



3.8 FURTHER READING

1. Swami Vivekananda. (1947). *Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*. Advaita Ashrama
2. Radhakrishnan. S.(1997). *The Principal Upanisads*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India Pvt. Ltd.
3. Lal, K. Basant. (1990). *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*. Motilal Benarsi Dass
4. Raju, P.T. (1995). *The Concept of Man*. Collins
5. Royce, Josiah. (1900) *The World and the Individual*. New Work: Mac Millan Co.

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No.1: Swami Vivekananda was born in 1863.

Ans. to Q. No.2: In Calcutta

Ans. to Q. No.3.: In 1881, Vivekananda met Ramkrishna

Ans. to Q. No 4: In 1893

Ans to Q. No .5: Yes

Ans to Q. No. 6: Yes

Ans to Q No 7: The main tenet of Vivekanada's philosophy is non-dualism.

Ans to Q No 8: According to Swami Vivekananda, the bright body implies 'suksma Sarira' or subtle body. It is the receptacle of the mind. Atman is beyond the gross body and the subtle body.

Ans to Q No. 8: (a) Narendra b) Ramkrishna Parmahamsa
(c) 1893 (d) Practical Vedantist

Ans. to Q No 9: (a) Yes (b) Yes (c) Yes (d) Yes

Ans. to Q No 10: a) Non-dualism (b) Apparent man and real man
(c) Four yogas

Ans to Q No 11: The psychological structure constructs the apparent man. The self or atman is the real man. The real man is one and infinite, the omnipresent Spirit. And the apparent man is only a limitation of the real man. On the other hand the apparent man is only a dim reflection of the real man who is beyond time and space.

Ans to Q No 12: It is considered one of the four yogas. It indicates the way out of ignorance which forbids us to get the knowledge of truth. Therefore, jnana yoga is considered one of the most important paths of salvation.



3.10 MODEL QUESTONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1.: In which year was Vivekananda born?

Q.2.: What was Vivekananda's early name?

Q.3.: Who was Vivekananda's friend, philosopher and guide?

Q.4.: Did Vivekananda participate in the Parliament of Religion?

Q.5.: Was he influenced by Buddhistic ideal?

Q.6.: 0n what was the Philosophy of Vivekananda based upon?

Q.7.: Vivekananda distinguishes between two aspects of man. What are these two aspects?

Q 8: Who is considered a practical vedantist?

Q 9: what is bright body, According to Vivekananda?

Q 10: Write the meaning of 'Ahom Brahmosi'.

B. Short Questions (Answer in about 150 words)

Q.1.: Briefly explain the biography of Vivekananda.

Q.2.: Explain briefly the influences that had shaped Vivekananda's philosophy.

Q.3.: Mention the tenets of Vivekananda's philosophy.

Q 4: Briefly explain the distinction between the apparent and the real man.

Q 5: What are the different kinds of yoga? Briefly explain.

Q 6: What are the eight rules found in Astagikamarga? Explain in brief.

Q 7: Write a criticism on Advaita Vedanta.

C. Long Question (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q.1.: Discuss Vivekananda's Practical Vedanta.

Q.2.: Explain the Yogas mentioned by Vivekananda for attainment of freedom by human being.

Q 3: Discuss the main tenets of Vivekananda's philosophical thought.

Q 4: Explain the importance of yogas to attain freedom.

*** **** ***

UNIT 4: GANDHI: RELIGION

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 What is religion for Gandhi?

4.4 Features of Gandhi's concept of religion

4.5 The way of religion

4.6 Gandhi's attitude towards living religions

4.7 Gandhi's attitude towards hinduism

4.8 Conclusion

4.9 Let us sum up

4.10 Further reading

4.11 Answers to check your progress

4.12 Model questions

4.1: LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- define what is religion for Gandhi
- explain the features of Gandhi's Concept of Religion
- explain the way of religion
- discuss Gandhi's attitude towards living religion
- discuss Gandhi's attitude towards Hinduism

4.2: INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you the Gandhi's concept of Religion. After going through this unit you will be able to know how Gandhi has defined the Concept of Religion. Gandhi was born in a Vaishnavite family. So he grew up in the atmosphere of Vaishnavism and Gita and Ramayana have played very significant role in his life. But he had read some important book of other religions too. Both Quran and Bible have played important role in his life. By reading all these great books finally he has stated that Truth is God. Now let us try to explain his concept of religion in details.

4.3 WHAT IS RELIGION FOR GANDHI?

According to Gandhi there is only one reality and that is God and according to Gandhi God is nothing but the truth. When Gandhi says that truth is God, sincere pursuit of Truth is religion. Religion is ordinarily defined as devotion to some higher power or principle. Gandhi is not against such description of religion, he only qualifies it further by saying that higher principle being truth, devotion to Truth (or God) is religion. According to Gandhi religion is nothing but the purification of soul. It is a journey to the truth.

4.4 FEATURES OF GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF RELIGION

So far as Gandhi's Philosophy of religion is concerned, it has certain special features. They are given as follows:

Firstly, religion is the expression of the permanent nature of man. The animal and the brutish aspect of man is not man's basic nature. According to Gandhi Divinity is the original aspect of man and the element of goodness is present in all man.

Secondly, religion should be like the, which has the capacity to purify and elevate one's nature. Gandhi believes that true religious spirit has the capacity of changing one's nature.

Thirdly, religion has the power of arousing in man a sense of spiritual restlessness develop a sense- a kind of a thirst- which enables the individual to cultivate and develop a sense to the right and the good, and makes him a truly moral man.

Fourthly, religious aspiration is based on a desire and a cognitive urge to know 'the beyond'. It has somehow the feeling that the ultimate religious ideal is nothing but the realisation of God.

And finally according to Gandhi, religion is something, which involves in a conscious and sincere love and striving for truth. According to Gandhi no religion is higher that Truth and Righteousness and if some

religion do not have these two characteristics, then that religion cannot be regarded to be a true religion.

4.5 THE WAY OF RELIGION

Gandhi is a pragmatic philosopher. It means that the philosophy presented to us by Gandhi is very practical in nature. According to him religion is not a theoretical concept of satisfying one's intellectual curiosity and urges. Religion according to Gandhi is the way of life and a practical necessity. A religion must have the capacity to help in solving the problem of practical affairs. That is why Gandhi says that religion should be involved in all spheres of like, including the political life. For Gandhi religion is nothing but to have faith on someone, who can be considered to be the ordered moral government of the universe. According to Gandhi there is not any difference between the religion and the metaphysics or morality. Ultimately it is the search of the reality and that reality is nothing but the Truth and the realisation of truth is equivalent to God. According to Gandhi truth is the ultimate end of human being and the non-violence is the mean to attain the end. According to Gandhi there is medium with the help of which we can surrender ourselves to God and that is Prayer.

4.5.1 Prayer

For Gandhi prayer is playing a significant role in one's life. Especial when Gandhi had to face a crisis situation, he had chosen the path of meditation and silent prayer. According to Gandhi, prayer cannot be the medium of asking, but it is a longing of the soul. Prayer is the only way by which one can bring peace, harmony and order in our life. In Young India, Gandhi mentioned that the Prayer is the very soul and essence of religion and therefore, prayer must be the core of the life of man, for no man can live without religion. At this point one question may arise that is why pray at all? Does not God know what he is to be done or is he not capable of not reading the heart of the people? Or prayer

is a reminder to God. Answer to all these question is 'no'. According to Gandhi God needs no reminder as he is within everyone. Nothing can be happened without his permission. Our prayer is a heart search. It is reminder to us. It only reminds us that we are helpless without His support. Prayer is regarded by Gandhi to be a call of humanity. It is nothing but the call to self purification to inward search. Prayer is the technique by which we can gain strength and prepare our own selves to share the sufferings of others.

Religion demands the awakening of the spiritual aspects of man, for that it is essential to subdue and to put to a check on the bodily and the sensuous aspects of man, this requires a ruthless curtailing of all our selfish motives- an attempt to reduce ourselves to zero. It is considered by Gandhi to be kind of renunciation and self-sacrifice. Gandhi's meaning of renunciation is very practical. For him renunciation means renouncing of the selfish and personal for the good of others. Gandhi recommends that the religious man must practice renunciation by living in the midst of men.

Gandhi believes in Gita. Gandhi is a strong believer of Niskama Karma. Gandhi has regarded Niskama karma to his Guru and tries to follow the Karma-marga as preached in the Gita. It is believed by Gandhi that we should concentrate on our karma, which fruits of it should be left in the hands of God.

4.6 GANDHIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIVING RELIGIONS

According to Gandhi, religion is more or less a way of life and every individual has the right to his way of life or religion. But one has to also know the fact that he/she must have a tolerance and respect for the points of view that others might have chosen for themselves. That is why it is said by him that the attitude towards different religions must be one of tolerance and respect. For Gandhi, it is much more than that. He has born in an Hindu family, so definitely the atmosphere in which he has

grown and religious principles which he has seen from his childhood is based on Hinduism. He himself declares that Gita and the Ramayana have become his invariable companies.

In his lifetime Gandhi has read many of the great scriptures, including Bible and the Quran. He was also influenced form many of the religious saints teachers. By taking into consideration of all this Gandhi has finally come to the conclusion that there are different ways of finding the Truth.

According to Gandhi all the religions contains good precepts and noble teachings. But he believes that many of the commentaries and interpretations of religions has somehow degraded and distorted the basic standard of the religions. He has found that almost all the religions has given birth o fanatics and unreasonable practices. That is why he said that all religions are both good and bad. So far their ideal is concerned; they can be regarded to be good and they can be regarded to be bad because they create hatred, fanaticism and crusades among the people. That is why he said that all these historical religions actually should never cross the limit of 'sober religion'. He always says that the human beings are rational animal. So while we practice in any religion, we should think with the help of 'rationality'. If rationality will guide us to handle a religion, then it may be called 'a fellowship of all religions' or the 'kingdom of God'. It is said by Gandhi that fellowship of religions should help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Muslim to better Muslim and a Christian a better Christian. Prayer should be like that that God can give all the lights and truth to the person he need for his development.

4.7 GANDHIS ATTITUDE TOWRADS HINDUISM

When Gandhi's attitude towards institutional religions will have to be discussed, we must have to be specially focused on his attitude towards Hinduism. Gandhi himself mentioned that his feeling towards Hinduism is like his feeling towards his wife. He says that it is not the case that Hinduism does not have any fault, but inspite of this the music of Gita or the Ramayana of Tulsidasa affects him like anything.

But he in the same time he strongly opposes animal sacrifice. Gandhi also strongly criticises practice of untouchability. He says that it is something, which is totally against of principle of Truth and non-violence. Gandhi supported Varnasrama Dharma. But he is against of present cast system. According to Gandhi, present caste system has totally distorted the original Varnasrama Dharma. According to Gandhi, Varna does not admit the superiority or the insuperiority of any Varna over any other, it purely question to duty. It simply means that one has to perform the duties that his ancestors had been performing. In fact the original recommendation was based on the consideration that man is born with some specific missions, obligations and duties. Gandhi tries to incorporate Varnasrama in his socio-political scheme.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This is in brief about Gandhi's theory of religion. So from the above discussion, it becomes clear that for Gandhi God is truth and there is not any religion which is greater than truth. Gandhi believes that truth is the end and the non-violence is the means to attain this truth. This is found that so far as Gandhi's concept if non-violence is concerned, he has given equal respect to all and urges us all to respect all the religions equally and to take the good things forms all the religions. He has also said that if we will think rationally and try to find a religious harmony, then we will find a harmonious and peaceful world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Which religion background Gandhi belongs to?

Q 2: According to Gandhi what is the original aspect of man?

Q 3: What is God according to Gandhi?

Q 4: Fill in the blanks:

a. According to Gandhi no religion is higher that Truth and _____.

b. Gandhi is a _____ philosopher.

c. Prayer is regarded by Gandhi to be a call of _____.

d. Religion demands the awakening of the _____.

Q 5: Who has written the book, "Young India"?

Q 6: Who is regarded by Gandhi to be his Guru?

Q 7: What is the way of life according to Gandhi?



4.9 LET US SUM UP

- According to Gandhi there is only one reality and that is God and according to him God is nothing but the truth. When Gandhi says that truth is God, sincere pursuit of Truth is religion. Religion is ordinarily defined as devotion to some higher power or principle.
- According to Gandhi Divinity is the original aspect of man and the element of goodness is present in all man.
- Religion should be like the, which has the capacity to purify and elevate one's nature. Gandhi believes that true religious spirit has the capacity of changing one's nature.
- Religion has the power of arousing in man a sense of spiritual restlessness develop a sense- a kind of a thirst- which enables the individual to cultivate and develop a sense to the right and the good, and makes him a truly moral man.
- Religious aspiration is based on a desire and a cognitive urge to know 'the beyond'.
- According to Gandhi no religion is higher that Truth and Righteousness and if some religion do not have these two characteristics, then that religion cannot be regarded to be a true religion.
- Gandhi is a pragmatic philosopher. It means that the philosophy presented to us by Gandhi is very practical in nature.
- A religion must have the capacity to help in solving the problem of practical affairs.

- For Gandhi religion is nothing but to have faith on someone, who can be considered to be the ordered moral government of the universe.
- According to Gandhi there is not any difference between the religion and the metaphysics or morality.
- According to Gandhi truth is the ultimate end of human being and the non-violence is the mean to attain the end.
- According to Gandhi there is medium with the help of which we can surrender ourselves to God and that is Prayer.
- According to Gandhi, prayer cannot be the medium of asking, but it is a longing of the soul. Prayer is the only way by which one can bring peace, harmony and order in our life.
- According to Gandhi God needs no reminder as he is within everyone. Nothing can be happened without his permission.
- It only reminds us that we are helpless without His support. Prayer is regarded by Gandhi to be a call of humanity.
- Religion demands the awakening of the spiritual aspects of man, for that it is essential to subdue and to put to a check on the bodily and the sensuous aspects of man, this requires a ruthless curtailing of all our selfish motives- an attempt to reduce ourselves to zero.
- Gandhi's meaning of renunciation is very practical. For him renunciation means renouncing of the selfish and personal for the good of others.
- Gandhi believes in Gita. Gandhi is a strong believer of Niskama Karma.
- According to Gandhi all the religions contains good precepts and noble teachings. But he believes that many of the commentaries and interpretations of religions has somehow degraded and distorted the basic standard of the religions.

- Gandhi has a great faith and attachment with Hinduism but he strictly criticizes animal sacrifice, untouchability, and the distorted from of Varnashrama Dharma, that is present caste system of the society.



4.10 FURTHER READING

Barua, M. (2002). *Religion and Gandhian Philosophy.* Akansha Publishing House.

Gupta, R. K. (2011). *A Gandhi Note book.* Apple Book.

Lal, B. K. (1973). *Contemporary Indian Philosophy.* Motilal Banarsidas Publishers.

Mishra, A. D. (2010). *Mahatma Gandhi on Ethics.* Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd.

Parel, A. J. (2006). *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Hamony.* Cambridge University Press.



4.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q 1: Vaishnava

Ans to Q 2: Divinity

Ans to Q 3: Truth

Ans to Q 4: a. Righteousness

b. Practical

c. Humanity

d. Soul

Ans to Q 5: Gandhi

Ans to Q 6: Gita

Ans to Q 7: Religion



4.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions:

1. What are two Hindu religious book, which influenced Gandhi?
2. How Gandhi has defined religion?
3. Who is the author of the book entitled, 'Young India'?
4. For Gandhi is religion important for political life?
5. During crisis situation, what path he uses to choose?
6. What is the 'fellowship of all religions' or the 'kingdom of God'?

B. Short Questions: (Write in about 100-150 words)

1. Write a short note on the Gandhi's concept of religion?
2. Briefly explain Gandhi's concept of prayer.
3. What is Gandhi's attitude towards living religion?

C. Long Questions: (Write in about 300-500 words)

1. What is Gandhi's concept of religion? Discuss.
2. What are the main features of Gandhi's concept of religion?
3. What is the way of life according to Gandhi? Explain.
4. Discuss Gandhi's view regarding living religions?

** ***** **

UNIT 5: GANDHI: NON-VIOLENCE

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 God andTruth

5.4 Truth is God

5.5 Non-violence

5.5.1 The technique of ahimsa: satyagraha

5.6 Philosophy on end and means

5.7 Let us sum up

5.8 Further reading

5.9 Answers to check your progress

5.10 Model questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of Gandhian concept of God is truth
- describe the meaning of Gandhian concept of truth as God
- discuss the concept of non-violence
- explain the technique of ahimsa
- analyse Gandhian philosophy of end and means

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Non-violence or ahimsa is a fundamental concept in M.K. Gandhi's philosophy. This is a loaded concept in the sense that it includes the other related concepts like Truth or God and Satyagraha. The concept of ahimsa or non-violence cannot be meaningfully practiced unless and until Satyagraha is used as a technique. Therefore, this unit is followed by the concept of God, truth, and the technique of ahimsa.

5.3 GOD AND TRUTH

Gandhi's concept of God is theistic in nature. Like an Advaitist, he mentioned the nirguna character of the real. He did not accept the academic distinction between Saguna and Nirguna concept of God. Rather he held that the concept of God is important not only for intellectual curiosity, but also for imparting strength and solace. By believing in God we can get mental peace. However, the difficulty involves when God and Truth are sought to be identified. He showed that the nature of truth is impersonal and in contrast to this, he opined that the nature of God is personal. Thus, the question emerges- how can the two be identified?

5.4 TRUTH IS GOD

In order to solve the issue- whether Truth is identical with God, he maintained that Truth is God.By this statement it can be held that the concept of Truth is not ambiguous like the concept of God. In favour of this statement it can be viewed that none of the views regarding the concept of God forwarded by differentreligionsareidentical. So, the concept of God may be polytheistic, theistic, pantheistic, atheistic etc. But, this problem is not involved in the concept of Truth. We can deny the existence of God, but we cannot reject the Truth. As for instance, skeptics may deny the concept of God, but they cannot reject the Truth. Therefore, the concept of Truth is universal and comprehensive.Gandhi in this context holds that "I do not care for God if He is anything but Truth."We can worship truth irrespective of cast, creed, and nation. Therefore, the concept 'Truth is God' can bring together Hindus, Muslims, Marxists and Atheists alike.

5.5 NON-VIOLENCE

Gandhi's concepts of God and Truth paved the way towards the concept of non-violence. He, therefore, says: "I have nothing new to

teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is try to experiments in both on as vast as a scales as I could. In doing so, I have sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence…….In fact it was in the course of my pursuit of truth that I discovered non-violence." (N.K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* p.13.) Truth and non-violence are so intertwined that it is impossible to discuss one without the other. They are the two sides of the same coin.WhileAhimsa is the means and truth is the end.

There are two aspects of the word Ahimsa. One is positive and the other is negative. Gandhi consideredthe positive aspect as fundamental, because it represented its essence andincluded the negative aspect as well.

The literal meaning of the term Ahimsa is non-killing or non-injury.Therefore, ahimsa is considered different from himsa. He held the view that himsa means causing pain or killing any life out of danger or from a selfish purpose or with the intention of injuring it. Ahimsa implies the act of refraining from such activities. Gandhiji in this context seemed to be influenced by Jainism.This system of Indian philosophy recommended the path of Ahimsa not only in thought but also in speech and action. But, Gandhi was not a strict follower of Jainism. He held the view that himsa is unavoidable in case of eating, drinking, walking, breathing etc. It is impossible to continue one's life without harming or injuring other bodies to some extent. Therefore, Gandhi recommended himsa to some extent.

The positive meaning of Ahimsa is not merely a 'non-injury' or 'non-killing'of creature, rather it holds that we should be non-violent to other living beings in a wider perspective which we should practice. On the other handthe negative meaning of ahimsa is nonkilling or non-injury, so it presupposes that a non-violent act is free from hatred, anger, malice and the like. However,Gandhi viewed that the positive meaning of ahimsa is more basic than the negative kind of ahimsa. In this context he held the view that ahimsa is considered the basic and essential qualities of

mankind. But,it does not mean that there is no place of himsa or violence in our life. Because we have to commit himsa to some extent in order to sustain our life.

According to Gandhi, ahimsa is natural to human being. Although human nature represents himsa in some cases, yet it is not permanent. The only permanent nature of mankind is ahimsa which is inherent in human beings as essential nature. For instance,we can injure a person externally for some personal reasons, but we cannot injure the internal organ of the person that is soul. Therefore, himsa is a by-productto human beings.

By the positive meaning of ahimsa we understand that ahimsa is nothing but love. Gandhi maintained that love is a kind of energy which can sublimate one's mind and uplift the quality of human beings. As a result, through love one can comprehend the noble feelings like benevolence, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, generosity, kindness, sympathy etc. Therefore, it can be viewed that love-force or energy helps us to free our mind from the feelings of anger, malice, hatred, revenge, jealousy etc. On the other hand, these ill feelings forbid us to comprehend the nature of love.

Gandhi held that the act of violence is not for a coward or weak person, but for a strong person. He opined that a person who is inwardly weak is a fearful person in the sense that he develops a kind of fear. And out of this fear he starts fighting against real or imaginary enemies.That is why, it can be viewed that violence grows out of fear. Thus, it can be opined that one can be a non-violent person when he is able to win over fear. Although violence may be a picture of strength, yet it is rooted in fear, so, it is a sign of weakness. So, he stated that "Non-violence presupposes the ability to strike". By this view he indicated that a non-violent person in the true sense has the capability to win over violence or brutal force.

Non-violence is a dynamic or a continuous or a relentless effort. It involves sacrifice and suffering. Itis connected with the concept of love

which denotes going beyond or self transcendence. Hence,it is a kind of self-suffering or tapasya.

Gandhi's belief is that non-violence can be practised in the universal sensewhich is not restricted to time, place or other people.But, it prescribes some values like sincerity and purity which can be practiced by anyone or even by societies or nations.

Gandhi's concept of ahimsa is essentially linked with the concept of God. He held the view that one cannot practice ahimsa unless and until he/she is an ardent believer in God. By believing only in God's nature, one canfollow the concept of ahimsa. It also shows that by the act of faith or belief in God, one can develop the concept, that is, we are essentially one. This kind of feeling generate the concept of ahimsa. It also implies that the concept of ahimsa is conditional in a sense that one has to be a firm believer in God for practicing the concept of ahimsa.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Give a brief distinction between God and Truth. (Answer in about 25 words)

.....

Q 2: What are the two aspects of Ahimsa?

.....

.....

Q 3: State the literal meaning of the term ahimsa.

.....

.....

Q 4: What do you mean by the negative meaning of ahimsa? (Answer in about 30 words)

.....

.....

Q 5: Make a distinction between positive and negative meaning of freedom from Gandhi's viewpoint.

.....

.....

Q 6: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) Gandhi's view is that truth is God. (True/ False)

b) The concepts of Truth and God are required to comprehend the concept of non-violence. (True/False)

c) Non-violence is a kind of self-suffering. (True/False)

d) The concepts of Truth and God are the two sides of the same coin. (True/False)



ACTIVITY: 5.1

Is non-violence inescapable for a peaceful society?

.....

.....

5.5.1 The Technique Of Ahimsa- Satyagraha

Satyagraha is a priceless and matchless weapon which Gandhi used in order to free India from the shackles of British administration. He knew that it is impossible to defeat the English through other ways. So, he utilised the technique of Satyagraha through the concepts of Truth, Non-violence etc. He compares the word "Satyagraha to a banyan tree in which satya (Truth) and ahimsa (Non-violence) together represent the parent trunk with innumerable branches of which civil-disobedience is one."For the first time Maganlal Gandhi coined the word 'sadagraha' (Sat=Truth, Agraha=firmness). But in order to make it clear Gandhi changed the word to 'Satyagraha' which had been used in Gujrati language as a designation for the freedom movement. Satyagraha is a model of Gandhi's life. Because it indicates values like love, tolerance, patriotism, truth, ahimsa etc. His view is that 'The sword of the satyagrahi is love and the unmistakable firmness that comes from it.'

Abune Panlos writes that "Gandhi's definition of the word 'Satyagraha' given to the movement implies truth, openness,

honesty and fairness, encompassing physical and mental non-violence and self-sacrifice, instead of inflicting suffering on the opponent. All these values indicate harmony with the teaching of the holy books. That is why, today all peace-loving and genuine nations individuals or groups in the world, regardless of their religious or philosophical outlook, ethnic background, etc. give great value to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi."Gandhi's technique of Satyagraha is a multidimensional concept. So, the question naturally emerges that is, is there any relevance of the concept of Satyagraha in the present context? In reply it can be readily viewed that it has relevance in the present context too. To Gandhi-"it is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It can be used not only in political but also in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by man, women and children as well. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak."It is known to all that violence begets violence just as love begets love. But it cannot give us the opposite result. As for instance, we take a simple example, suppose someone slaps a man and in retaliation the later one also behaves in the same way, then the question can be asked from the given instance that is- what is missing here? The answer is that values like love, tolerance, sympathy etc. are missing in this instance, which cannot be bought from today's global market. Again the (values) are not palpable like bank accounts. Rather they come from within. From this context, we can make a distinction between *freedom of* and *freedom from*. Gandhi did not accept the concept of *freedom from*. He thought that external freedom (freedom from) can bring untruth or violence. Generally, we are following the concept *freedom from* in our domestic, political and economic field. As a result the values like Love, Truth, Non-violence, Concern for others, Justice and Tolerance etc. are missing gradually from human life. So, the

question naturally comes to our mind, what are the reasons of emerging conflict in the present context of society? Answers not only can be placed from social and political backdrop but also from economic viewpoint. If we go through the social backdrop then we see that we generally emphasis on only search for individual peace rather than the concept of searching for Truth. Peace does not come from heaven. It comes from the concepts of Love, Truth, Non-violence, Equality, Tolerance, Justice, and Patriotism etc. which have latent forces, which are unseen, unperceived and unobserved. That is why, they have intrinsic value. Therefore, Gandhi wrote: “there is no defeat for the satyagrahi’s till they give up the truth. Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and determination to reach truth. In the path of Satyagraha there is always unflinching adherence to truth. The sword of Satyagraha is love and the unmistakable firmness that comes from it. Satyagraha is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience, and brightest faith.”Today’s people follow the technique of Satyagraha only in black and white. So, it can be undoubtedly said that we are taking Gandhi only as a model for delivering lectures in the meetings instead of using it in our daily life.

Again if we see it from political viewpoint then it can be opined that politicians are busy with their party work. They ignore public sentiments like the concept of equality, justice etc. which are really the subjects to discuss in public forum. It is clear from the present scenario of politics. As for instance we can talk about welfare of a state. It is a fact that we are free Indians, but the important question is- are we enjoying freedom in a real sense? From the Gandhi’s point of view no one will be free from the concept of Satyagraha. Satyagrahies always can enjoy their freedom not only from external side but also from internal side because they adhere to truth. Therefore, Gandhi chose to employ the technique of Satyagraha not only in domestic but also in

political and economic fields in order to achieve freedom not only from the British but also from within.

Again if we see it from economic side then it can be viewed that Gandhi also employed the technique of Satyagraha in the economic side in order to enrich India. If it is not entertained, the welfare of mankind cannot be thought of. If bureaucrats are corrupt and financial packages are not properly utilized, it will deter the economic growth of a country. That is why Gandhi wrote-"in Satyagraha there is no place for fraud or falsehood or any kind of untruth. The very nature of Satyagraha is such that the fruit of movement is contained in the movement itself. Satyagraha is based on self help, self-sacrifice and faith in God."Gandhi therefore, through the concept of Satyagraha wanted to render the following messages to masses for the betterment mankind: the message of love, the message of truth, the message of non-violence, the message of tolerance, the message of equality, the message of justice, and the message of self- discipline. The time has come to rethink on Gandhi's concept of satyagraha in order to save human being from the value-crisis that emerged in our society as a threat, otherwise society will be paralyzed or jeopardized soon. That is why Gandhi put enormous emphasis on the concept of Satyagraha which can play a vital role by preserving human values for a peaceful society. Therefore, he said "Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violent. Hatred can be overcome only by love." And he also viewed: "If liberty and democracy are to be truly saved, they will only be by non-violence resistance no less brave, no less glorious than violent resistance."He significantly mentioned that any result based on violence cannot be enduring and lasting. That is why, peace based on war cannot be everlasting. He was against hatred, anger, war and other vices. Wars can never be the means of achieving any positive result. Just as love begets love so also a war can start another war. Therefore, only love can stimulate

the spirit of peace. So, Gandhi said: Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. And hatred can be overcome only by love.

Gandhi held the view that the concepts of truth and non-violence can be practiced only when there is a way of practicing or using the concept of ahimsa. It indicates the developing stage of ahimsa which can be named as Satyagraha.

The concept of Satyagraha is based on love. Therefore, it is a love force. Gandhi considered it as the religious pursuit because it maintains that there is one God who is omnipresent. Love is the basis of human beings and without this basis we cannot practice the concept of Satyagraha.It is also known as truth force or soul force or love force.Gandhi throughout his life attempted to use the concept of Satyagraha and succeeded in his life.

Gandhi formulated the concept of Satyagraha against violence, tyranny and injustice. He held the view that the problems involved in our society due to our ignorance that truth is universal, eternal, all-pervasive and all-comprehending. In this context Gandhi views that we should not reply the context of violence through violence, evil through evil, anger through anger. Rather we should think of how we can get rid of this problem involved in front of me. Gandhi's answer is that there is only an answer to this crisis that is to embrace the concept of Satyagraha.

Satyagraha also provides a chance to a wrong doer to amend or realize the mistake done in life. It is based on the belief thatthere is an essential quality that is goodness present in every man because each man holds divinity within himself. Therefore, the important aspect of human beings is to awake the concealed essential qualityin order to be free from anger, hatred, intolerance etc.

Gandhi asserts that a satyagrahi can amend him/her by taking painfor the sake of truth. In this context ahimsa or non-

violence is conscious suffering. Therefore, a satyagrahi can convert the opponent mind.

Satyagraha consists of the concepts of love, ahimsa and conscious suffering. By the help of these concepts, the forces of evil can be thrown out in the sense that it is a way of truth. Gandhi in this context points out that it is universal in a sense that it can be practised by children and adults, by men and women, by individuals and communities and by societies and nations.It also can be employed in domestic, social, and political field. This universal nature of the concept of Satyagraha is derived from the concept of God.

5.6 PHILOSOPHY OF END AND MEANS

This is a very significant and interesting concept in Gandhi's philosophy. It can be related to the traditional ethical concepts 'right' and 'good'. The word 'Right' is considered the means to the realisation of 'good', so the end is 'good' and the means is 'right'. Here we have seen a necessary relationship between 'right' and 'good'. We cannot think of the concept of 'good' withoutthe concept of 'right'. Just as there is a necessary relationship between 'right' and 'good', so also there is an intimate relationship between 'end' and 'means'.

These two concepts have a link or connection with Gandhi's concepts of truth and non-violence. According to Gandhi, end and means are essentially related to each other and both are convertible terms in his philosophy. Whilementioning the relationship between the two Gandhi wrote that "the means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree." (Hind Swaraj, p.39) This saying symbolises the necessary relationship between seed and the tree andthrough this relationship he shows the intimate connection between means and the end.

This relationship involves the important questions in Gandhi's philosophy. The questions are: Does the end justify the means? Can we

attain good ends by whatever means we adopt? Should means also be good if a good end is to be realised? Is purity of means an essential aspect of the way to the realization good? Gandhi in this context emphasises that a good end cannot justify any and every means. Rather, he shows that if a good end is to be realised, the means to attain the good should be essentially good. Therefore, Gandhi in his philosophy of life gave importance to means. So, he said, "means are after all everything". Again it can be viewed that in order to realise the good end, the means which we adopt for attaining the good end may not be the same from person to person as we consider that means are many.That is why; Gandhi had answered that end cannot justify the means.

Gandhi's concepts of 'end' and 'means' have a direct relation with the notions of 'truth' and 'ahimsa'. In order to realise the end or the ideal that is truth, Gandhi adopted the path of ahimsa as a means. That is why, Gandhi said:truth is the end and ahimsa is the means. Gandhi during the Freedom Movement of Indiautilized the weapon of non-violence as a means of attaining freedom as an end or ideal from British colonisation. And Gandhi was succeeded in case of attaining freedom by the means of ahimsa.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: State whether the following statements are True or False

i) Satyagraha is a technique which Gandhi employed in his philosophy. (True / False)

ii) Satyagraha is a multidimensional concept. (True / False)

iii) Satyagraha is also known as love force. (True / Fase)

Q 8: Who for the first time coined the word 'satyagraha'?

.....

.....

Q 9: What do you mean by *freedom from*, to Gandhi? (Answer in about 40 words)

.....

.....

Q 10: Why did Gandhi employ the concept of Satyagraha in his philosophy? (Answer in about 50 words)

.....

.....

Q 11: Why is Satyagraha known as love force? (Answer in about 40 words)

.....

.....

Q 12: What do you mean by the concept that 'Satyagraha' is universal in nature? (Answer in about 50 words)

.....

.....

Q 13: Does the end justify the means? According to Gandhi? (Answer in about 60 words)

.....

.....



ACTIVITY: 5.2

Is the concept of Satyagraha relevant in the present moment? What do you think?

.....

.....



5.7 LET US SUM UP

- Gandhi viewed that the nature of truth is impersonal, on the other hand the nature of God is personal. In order to solve the significant issue, Gandhi opined that truth is God. He mentioned the reason that we can deny the existence of God, but we cannot reject the truth. So, the concept of truth is universal in nature.

- Truth and non-violence are interconnected in the sense that one cannot be discussed without the other. They are the two sides of the same coin. *Ahimsa* is the means and truth is the end.
- The literal meaning of the term is non-killing or non-injury. So, *ahimsa* is considered different from *himsa*. His view is that *himsa* means causing pain or killing any life out of danger or from a selfish purpose or with the intention of injuring it. Hence, *ahimsa* implies the act of refraining from such activities.
- There are two aspects of the word *ahimsa*. One is positive and the other is negative. The positive aspect holds that *ahimsa* is not merely a 'non-injury' or 'non-killing' to creature, rather through this aspect heheld the view that we should be non-violent to other living beings at the same time. Besides, it denotes the concept of love. Love is a kind of energy which can sublimate one's mind and uplift the quality of human beings. On the other hand by the negative aspect of *ahimsa* Gandhi means non-killing or non-injury. It implies that a non-violent act is free from hatred, anger, malice etc.
- The concept of *ahimsa* is essentially dealt with the concept of God. One cannot practice *ahimsa* unless and until he/she is an ardent follower or believer in God. By believing in God's nature, one can follow the concept of *ahimsa*. It is also significant that by the act of faith or belief in God, one can develop the concept that is we are essentially one.
- Gandhi utilised the technique of Satyagraha through the concepts of love, tolerance, patriotism, truth, ahimsa etc. His view was that 'The sword of Satyagrahi is love and the unmistakable firmness that comes from it'.
- Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and the determination to reach them. In the path of Satyagraha there is always unflinching adherence to truth. The sword of Satyagraha is love and the unmistakable firmness comes from it.

- Satyagrahis always can enjoy their freedom not only from external side but also from internal side because they adhere to truth. Therefore, Gandhi chose to employ the technique of Satyagraha not only in domestic, but also in political and economic fields in order to achieve freedom not only from British but also from within.
- Gandhi viewed that the concepts of truth and non-violence can be practiced only by using the technique of Satyagraha. That is why the developing stage of *ahimsa* is known as Satyagraha.
- The concept of Satyagraha isbased on love. It is also known as love force or soul force. Gandhi succeeded throughout his life by this force.
- The concepts of 'right' and 'good' have a direct relation with the notions of 'Truth' and 'Ahimsa'. Just as 'right' is the means of obtaining 'Good', so also ahimsa is the means of achieving the result of 'Truth'. Gandhi was successful in getting freedom from the English rule by the means of *ahimsa*.



5.8 FURTHER READING

1) Lal, B.K. *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1973
2) Sharma, Anand (ed.) *Gandhian Way*. Academic foundation. 2007
3) Verma, B.R. & Bakshi, S.R. (ed.) *Gandhian Satyagraha and His Techniques*. (1920-1928). Commonwealth Publications. 2005
4) Chakravarty, Meera. *Essays on Philosophy and Culture*. New Bharatiya Book Corporation.2009



5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Gandhi held the view that the nature of truth is impersonal and in contrast to this he views that the nature of God is personal.

Ans to Q No 2: Positive and negative meaning of ahimsa

Ans to Q No 3: The literal meaning of the term ahimsa is non-killing or non-injury.

Ans to Q No 4: The negative meaning of ahimsa implies non killing or non-injury, so it presupposes that a non-violent act is free from hatred, anger, malice etc.

Ans to Q No 5: The positive meaning of ahimsa is not merely a 'non-injury' or 'non-killing' to creature, rather it holds that we should be non-violent to other living beings in a wider perspective which we should be practiced. The positive meaning also indicates the concept of love.On the other hand,the negative meaning of ahimsa is non killing or non-injury, so it presupposes that a non-violent act is free from hatred, anger, malice etc.

Ans to Q No 6: a) True b)True c)True d)True

Ans to Q No 7: a)True b)True c)True

Ans to Q No 8: Maganlal Gandhi

Ans to Q No 9: By the concept *freedom from,* he indicates the external freedom (freedom from) which can bring untruth or violence. Generally, we follow the concept *freedom from* in our domestic, political and economic field.

Ans to Q No 10: Satyagraha is a priceless and matchless weapon which Gandhi used in order to free India from the shackles of English. He knew that it is impossible to defeat English through other ways. So, he utilised the technique of Satyagraha through the concepts of Truth, Non-violence etc.

Ans to Q No 11: The concept of Satyagraha is based on love. Love isconsidered the basis of human beings and without this basis, we

cannot practice the concept of Satyagraha. That is why, it is known as love force.

Ans to Q No 12: Gandhi's context of Satyagraha is universal in a sense that it can be practiced by children and adults, by men and women, by individuals and communities and by societies and nations. It also can be employed in our domestic, social, and political fields. This universal nature of Satyagraha is derived from the concept of God.

Ans to Q No 13: Gandhi held the view that end cannot justify the means in a sense that there can bevarious means to realisethe ideal or end, so end cannot justify any and every kind of means. Besides, Gandhi laid emphasis on means than the ideal which is considered the ultimate aim of actions. Hence, end cannot justify the means in the language of Gandhi.



5.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Objective Questions

Q 1: What is the nature of truth, to Gandhi?

Q 2: What is the main distinction between Truth and God?

Q 3: State the positive meaning of ahimsa.

Q 4: What do you mean by the negative meaning of ahimsa?

Q 5: Write the literal meaning of ahimsa.

Q 6: Does Gandhi advocate the nirguna character of God?

B. Short Questions (Answer in about 50 words)

Q 1: What is meant by *Truth is God?* To Gandhi

Q 2: Do you find any link between the concepts of*God is truth* and *Truth is God?* Explain in brief.

Q 2: Briefly explain the difference between positive and negative aspect of *ahimsa*.

Q 3: Write a short note on ahimsa.

Q 4: Write a short note on Satyagraha.

Q 5: Explain a brief note on the concept of God is truth.

Q 6: What ismeant by the technique of *ahimsa*? Briefly explain.

Q 7: Does end justify the means? Briefly explain

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain the nature of *ahimsa*.

Q 2: What is meant by the technique of *ahimsa*? Explain

Q 3: Is that Satyagraha a way to the concept of non-violence? Explain

Q 4: Describe the concept of Satyagraha.

Q 5: Can we discuss the concept of Satyagraha without the concept of non-violence? Explain

Q 6: Can a Satyagrahi change the opponent mind? What do you think? Explain

Q 7: Does end justify the means? Explain

Q 8: Do you find any relationship between means and end? Explain with reference to Gandhi's viewpoint.

** **** **

UNIT 6: GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF TRUSTEESHIP

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Economic basis of society

6.4 Trusteeship: what it is

6.5 Definition of trustee

6.6 Origin of trusteeship

6.7 Salient features of trusteeship

6.8 Trusteeship and modern world

6.9 Let us sum up

6.10 Further reading

6.11 Answers to check your progress

6.12 Model questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain Gandhi's idea about the economic basis of society
- explain the concept of trusteeship
- define what is trustee
- explain the origin of trusteeship
- explain the basic features of trusteeship
- discuss the relevance of the concept of trusteeship

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the greatest Indian of all time, is also known as the apostle of peace and non-violence. He was not only famous for his political or social works but also known for his unique but practical economic thought. The background of gndhian economy is very strong. Gandhi was influenced by the writings of Karl Marx, Adam smith, tolostoy, Ruskin bond, R.C. Dutta and many others and he examined

their writings in the context of india and started to think about various economic problem and adopted various action plan for solving those problem.

Gandhi was fighting against the extreme poverty, backwardness and socio –economic challenges as a part of his independence movement, of that time. Gandhi thought that economic self-sufficiency is very much essential for an individual and nation. He thought that the important economic wealth of the nation is human being so throughout his life he was working for the overall development of the individual and also for the economic equality. Working for economic equality means abolishing the conflict between capital and labour section of our society. To build the economic foundation of the nation and individual strong and make the country economically self sufficient he used many non violent means. swadeshi, swaraj, sarvodaya, trusteeship are some of them.

Swadeshi literally means "belonging to one's own country". Gandhi applied this notion almost in every spare of life - social, political and economic. Swadeshi doctrine is a doctrine employed for the protection of home industry. By protecting the home industry Gandhi tried to make the individual and the nation economically self sufficient.

Swaraj means self rule or own government. Gandhi realised that to attain ideal state political freedom is essential i.e swaraj is essential. Gandhi also explained swaraj from the economical point of view. Economically swaraj means full economic freedom for all the people of the country. Gandhi says"the swaraj of my dream is the poor man's swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by priences and monied man"

Sarvodaya is a movement which is literally means betterment of all. The main aim of this movement is rural reconstruction and upliftment of all.

To abolish the distinction between poor and rich and to establish permanent peace in society he introduced the concept of trusteeship. It is a concept where one voluntarily gives up one's right on wealth earned by him and dedicates it to the welfare of the weaker section of the

society. The idea of trusteeship is based on the notion that nobody can be the permanent owner of property. Everything belongs to god. We can only hold the thing or property as a benevolent custodian. In this chapter we are going to discuss about trusteeship elaborately.

6.3 THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF SOCIETY

According to Mahatma Gandhi the economic basis of a society should not be separated from morality and spirituality. Gandhi believed that to establish peace and harmony in society the economic basis of society should based on love and trust. He never separated his economics from ethics. He said that economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and sinful. Gandhi was always working for establishing economic equality in society. But to establish equality he never used external force but use only soul force. He believed that if people develop the quality of sympathy, kindness, benevolence and the feeling of oneness then voluntarily they will think about the weaker section of the society. Gandhi said a good individual would love to share his things with other because for such people life is not meant for enjoyment only but it is meant to help other.

6.4 TRUSTEESHIP: WHAT IT IS

Trusteeship is a Socio-economic Philosophy which was developed by Mahatma Gandhi as a part of his non-violent revolution. It is a concept where one voluntarily gives up or relinquishes one's right on wealth earned by him and dedicates it to the welfare of the poorer section of the society. Gandhi had a firm believe that every capitalist being a human have in them the element of goodness which every individual necessarily possess. So, if they realize that without the labour of the poor it would not possible for those to acquire wealth, then the capitalist would function only as trustee for the poor. They would then keep all the surplus money or wealth in trust for the welfare of the poor which would establish economic equality in society. Gandhi described trusteeship very simply

by the following words" Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth either by way of legacy or by means of trade and industry. I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me. What of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community".

Mahatma Gandhi used it as a powerful tool for removing economic and social disparity and ultimately establishing peace in the society. Gandhi had no doubt about its abiding value. He said, "My theory of Trusteeship is no makeshift, certainly no Camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of Philosophy and religion behind it..... No other theory is compatible with non-violence." He used trusteeship as an instrument for establishing economic and social equality. In fact Gandhi said that his trusteeship is a gift from india to the world. Mahatma Gandhi himself was an example of this idea as his worldly possessions were just a pair of cloths, watch, stick and few utensils. Gandhi was not an arm- chair philosopher. He never believed in theory only. He believed in experimenting his own theory and he made a first test on him.

6.5 DEFINITION OF TRUSTEE

A Trustee is one who holds property in trust for the benefit of others. A trustee is legally and morally bound to manage the trust properly in responsible and productive manners for the benefit of the trust's beneficiaries. A trustee may have a share of the benefit of the trust like the other beneficiaries. A trustee cannot leave his property to his children as a heir except the public. Gandhi thought that the very idea of ownership is at root a form of violence. So if the capitalist or the rich people realize that their surplus property is actually not their property and if they willingly keep their surplus money in trust then it will definitely guarantee social and economic equality. Gandhi desired the capitalist to become trustees of the nation by running their business with integrity for the welfare of the people.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. what is trusteeship?

.....

.....

Q.2. What is trustee?

.....

.....

Q.3. Define sarvodaya

.....

.....

6.6 ORIGIN OF TRUSTEESHIP

The concept of trusteeship comes from the ideas of Ahimsa and Aparigraha. For Gandhi, Ahimsa is the greatest virtue. Ahimsa generally means non-killing. Gandhi gave a new dimension to the highest human value in theory and practice. The usual meaning of Ahimsa is not merely refraining from causing injuries to creature, it stands for certain positive attitudes towards other living beings that one must cultivate. In fact in its positive aspect Ahimsa is nothing but love. This positive attitude inspired Gandhi to think about the concept of trusteeship.

It is true that one cannot acquire excess wealth without exploiting the labours of others. Exploitation is one kind of violence. A true believer of non-violence can never exploit the labour of others for having excess wealth. A votary of non-violence then can hold anything in excess of what he needs only as a trustee for others. Gandhi believed that at its very root the concept of ownership or capitalism involves the form of violence. Centralization of power creates social and economic inequalities in society. But Gandhi did not believe that the evil could be removed from the society by transferring the concencetrated ownership from the individual to the state. So he offered trusteeship as an alternative. Trusteeship which is based on non-violence is nothing but only the qualitative transformation of the attributes and meaning of ownership.

Aparigraha is the ethical ideas of non-possession of the renunciation of ownership. It also means non-attachment of worldly objects and things. It simply means honest living and avoidance of avarice. Gandhi was very deeply influenced by this ethical idea and so he developed the concept of trusteeship. Gandhi thought that absolute non-possession is impossible since one possesses the body. But one should distinguish between needs and wants, reduce one's wants to the barest minimum. Gandhi believed that God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. So acquire things more that what we need is against the fundamental law of nature.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4. Write the positive meaning of Ahimsa.

.....

.....

Q.5."Ahimsa is the greatest virtue" who said this?

.....

.....

6.7 SALIENT FEATURES OF TRUSTEESHIP

The following are the salient features of trusteeship:

1. Trusteeship is a socio-economic philosophy, which provides a means by which the wealthy people would be the trustee of trust that looked after the welfare of the people in general. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an equalitarian one.

2. Gandhi used trusteeship as a powerful tool to establish permanent peace in society by removing economic and social inequalities. Gandhi did not believe in capture of power, but accumulation of power to the many. He believed that the very concept of ownership or capitalism involves at its root the form of violence. He believed in the

equal distribution of wealth. So, he used trusteeship as an instrument to remove social and economic disparities from society.

3. Trusteeship tries to reduce the gap between rich and the poor. Economic eqauality is the master key to non violent movement. so Gandhi want to abolish capitalism not capitalist. He invites capitalist to become a trustee.

4. It tries to change the attitude of the capitalist. Because without the labour and the co-operation of the poorer section of the society it would not possible for the capitalist to accumulate wealth. So, they should voluntarily surrender their excess wealth and keep that in trust for the welfare of the working and the poorer section.

5. Gandhi's trusteeship covered not merely material source of wealth and power but also non-material possessions such as special talents that some individual have possessed. Gandhi believed that every individual has got some talents or ability. But we exploit that talent or ability for personal gain in the beliefs that we own the talent. But Gandhi said that we do not own the talent but we are appointed as trustee by God and so we should use the talent to help others who are less fortunate or talented.

6. The idea of trusteeship is inherent in the idea of non-violence. Gandhi believed that the economic basis of society must be based on love and trust. A non-violent society is always non-exploitative society. One who believes in non-violence cannot therefore believe in inevitability of class war. Trusteeship then has to be understood as a part of the scenario of a non-violent revolution, as an instrument in the Satyagrahi's struggle for economic equality. Gandhi was also highly influenced by the moral concept "Aparigraha" of Bhagabhat Gita, the Hindu scripture. Aparigraha means non-attachment for worldly object or non-possession. Gandhi felt that the tendency to possess things is at once the cause of all evils. Therefore one must cultivate the discipline of living with that amount of minimum wealth with which one can live a happy and comfortable life.

7. Gandhi's trusteeship is not Philanthropy. Gandhi himself said, "if trusteeship idea catches, philanthropy, as we know it will disappear". Distribution of wealth is not about charity but about ensuring basic human dignity. Gandhi believed that giving charity to healthy person is shameful acts. The core of trusteeship is the protection of human dignity not mere materialistic prosperity.

8. Gandhi's concept of trusteeship gives more importance to socialism. But his socialism is something different from Karl Marx. In Gandhi's social order the individual will be at the centre and the state has to promote his welfare. But, under Marxism individual will be subordinate to the state. Again while Marx considered force and violence as inevitable in the birth of a new order, Gandhian Socialism is based on non-violence.

9. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its welfare.

10. Trusteeship should be regulated by Government. No individual should be allowed to use his wealth for his own interest.

6.8 TRUSTEESHIP AND MODERN WORLD

Gandhi's concept of trusteeship has been criticised for some of its limitations. Some critics opine that it wants to destroy capitalism and support socialism. But now a days instead of socialism capitalism proving very successful all over the world.

Some wants to blame that it will take away the working spirit of the businessman which will slow down the economic development of a society.

Again in today's competitive world every businessman tries to accumulate more wealth. So such attitude never let them to accept easily the concept of trusteeship. But in spite of all these we cannot consider trusteeship as an impractical and imaginary theory of Gandhi. It is true that not all of Gandhi's theories are relevant in modern day context but some of them are relevant. Trusteeship is one of them. If we go deep in to the corporate world then we will come across the concept

of corporate social responsibility. The welfare activities undertaken by corporate world are known as corporate social responsibility (CSR). The root of corporate social responsibility lies in Gandhi's concept of trusteeship. This CSR connect corporate sector to social sector. Every company draws its resources from society so they must have some responsibilities towards society. It has seen that now a day every company expenses a huge amount in the name of social service. Many of them have their own NGOs, some company involve themselves in doing charity works etc. Ratan tata, the founder of TATA Group was highly influenced by trusteeship of Gandhi and he developed his life based on this idea. So if CSR activities are backed by Trusteeship they can bring real prosperity and permanent peace to our life.



6.9 LET US SUM UP

- Trusteeship is a unique concept advocated by Gandhi in order to establish social and economic inequality. It is a concept with its origin in spirituality wherein one voluntarily surrender one's excess wealth ,and keep that in trust for the welfare of the poorer section of society.
- A trustee is a person who holds property in trust for the welfare of its beneficiary. He must morally and legally bound to manage the trust.
- The concept of trusteeship flows from, the ideas of Ahimsa and Aparigraha . Positively Ahimsa stands for love and negatively it means non-killing. The very concept of trusteeship is inherent in the concept of Ahimsa. Because a true believer of non-violence can feel the actual meaning of trusteeship, a votary of non-violence cannot hunger for possessions.
- With the help of trusteeship Gandhi tried to establish permanent peace in society by removing economic and social disparity.

- Socialism of Gandhi is something different from the socialism of Marx. Gandhian Socialism was completely based on non-violence but Marx considered force and violence as inevitable in the birth of a new order.
- Protection of human dignity and enrichment of human life is the core of trusteeship.



6.10 FURTHER READING

1) Lal, Basanta Kumar. 1973. Contemporary Indian Philisophy, Motilal Banarasidas Publication, Delhi.
2) Kumar Ravindra, India and Mahatma Gandhi, Kaplaz Publication, New Delhi.
3) Dutta, Mishra Anil (edt). Gandhian approach to Contemporary Problems. Mittal Publication, New Delhi.
4) Lokonathat, V. A History of Economic thought, S. Chand and Company Ltd. New Delhi.



6.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to the Q. No.1. Trusteeship is a Socio-economic Philosophy adopted by Gandhi with a view to establish a equalitarian society. It provides a means by which the wealthy people would be the trustee of trust that looked after the trust for the welfare of the poorer section of the society.

Ans. to the Q.No.2. A trustee is one who holds property in trust for the benefit of others.

Ans to the Q.No. 3 sarvodaya is a comprehensive, economic, political and above all a spiritual movement which aims at betterment or upliftment of all.

Ans. to the Q.No.4. 'Love'.

Ans. to the Q. No.5. Mahatma Gandhi



6.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short questions

Q.1. Define Ahimsa.

Q.2. What is Aparigraha?

Q.3. Is absolute non- possession possible?

Q..4. Gandhi's Trusteeship is Philantrophy. Is it true?

B. Short question. (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q.1. Explain Ahimsa both positively and negatively.

Q.2. Distinguish between socialism of Karl Marx and Gandhi.

C. Long questions (Answer in about 300-350 words)

Q.7. Explain Ahimsa and Aparigraha as origin of Trusteeship.

Q.8. What are the salient features of Trusteeship? Discuss.

** **** **

UNIT 7: AUROBINDO'S SUPERMIND

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Aurobindo's concept of Supermind

7.4 Triple status of Supermind

7.5 Triple transformation of Supermind

7.6 Let us sum up

7.7 Further reading

7.8 Answers to check your progress

7.9 Model Questions

7.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain the nature of Supermind.
- describe the various types of ignorance.
- explain the triple stages of Supermind

7.2. INTRODUCTION

Among the many remarkable men born in the latter half of the 19th century who tried to mould India's destiny Sri Aurobindo Ghose was one of them. He was a contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi, an admirer of Swami Vivekananda, a colleague of Tilak and the idol of Rabindranath Tagore. His original name is Arabinda Akryod Ghose. He was a non-academic Indian philosopher. But the philosophical thought and ideas contained in the teachings of some social, political, cultural and religious leaders of outstanding ability and consecrated life influenced him strongly. Sri Aurobindo is the exponent of ancient Indian Philosophy. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy carries on it the stamp of a number of influences. He was well acquainted with classical western philosophy and idealistic philosophies of modern times as well as classical Indian philosophy

specifically Advaita Vedanta and Yoga. All these influences are reviewed and reorganized in the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo. As a result his philosophy is the blending of both classical and contemporary thoughts of east and west. We find a new synthetic, comprehensive vision of Reality in his thought. His philosophy can also be called as Integral Advaitism. It is said as Advaita as Sri Aurobindo regards Brahman or the Absolute as one and the fundamental reality. It is Integral for it does not deny the reality of any of the aspects of existence.

In the broad sense Sri Aurobindo's philosophy can be called idealistic. Firstly, it conceives reality as spiritual and secondly, it fixes up an ideal for mankind towards which all human efforts have to be directed. But his philosophy can never be said as Monism. According to Haridas Choudhury, "The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo may aptly be described as integral non-dualism (purna-advaita) or integral idealism (purna-vijnana) or integralism (purnavada)." This non-dualism is different from rationalistic Monism which is based on a conceptually formulated, determinate principle of unity. In fact in a principle of integralism, reality has to be indeterminate and even monism can not be attributed to it. It is called Integral as it both aspects and sublimates the opposition between the lower nature and the higher nature.

The material out of which Aurobindo tried to evolve his grand system was in a sense much richer, vaster and more varied than that of any other compatriots. His mastery of Greek and Latin classics not only enabled him to understand by comparison the classical roots of Indian thought, Indian epic and mythologies, into all of which he dived deep with a receptive mind and out of which he gathered new and precious ideas. He translated, annotated, reinterpreted and expounded many of the creative and non-technical sources of Indian philosophy—the Vedas, the upanisads, the Bhagawad-Gita and the later epics. He explores an integral point of view which would harmonize the divergent trends of Indian thought, and synthesize them also with the valuable elements of western thought. He builds, with rare confidence, on the divergent spiritual trends, the perennial streams of western and Indian thought.

Besides these his main work on philosophy is *The Life Divine*, *The Human Cycle, Lights on Yoga, Synthesis of Yoga, The Ideal of Human Unity, Savitri* etc.

The fundamental basis upon which the whole structure of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo stands is the recognition of the reality of both spirit and matter. He is aware that Materialism and Spiritualism are the two prevalent and rival theories that have attempted to explain the world in their own ways. His philosophy synthesizes or integrates the two. Either spirit or matter can give the human mind only some sense of ultimate reality for a time being. Thus it must seek always a complete affirmation that can be found only by a luminous conciliation. Here all the conflicts and the contradictions of existence which represent the central truth can be synthesized. In reality both matter and spirit are the two modes of manifestation of the one ultimate reality. According to Aurobindo, the fact is that matter and spirit are like the two aspects of the same thing. If matter is to ascend to the spirit, there must be corresponding descent of the spirit in matter. The material can not be completely false; even if it has to be spiritualized that it has to be given some status and reality. Ancient Indian philosophy has committed the mistake that it does not realize that every evolution must have a corresponding involution. That is why Sri Aurobindo tries to work out an integral view in which both spirit and matter are given their dues.

Sri Aurobindo regards Ultimate Reality as, in its essence, utterly transcendent which can not be described. This Ultimate Reality is above and beyond all that is thinkable or conceivable. Creation is the expression of the essential unity of Reality. In order to understand the nature of Reality, it is essential to consider the levels or the cords of Being. So the cords of Being are the expressions of the Reality viewed from the standpoint of creation. Aurobindo talks about eight such principles. These are Existence, Consciousness-force, Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Psyche, Life and Matter. The first three principles are the triune principle of Saccidananda or the Ultimate Reality. The first four belongs to the higher hemisphere and the last four to the lower hemisphere. The lower

hemisphere seeks to represent the stages that evolution has been able to reach and the higher hemisphere seeks to represent the stages into which evolution is going to enter.

7.3 AUROBINDO'S CONCEPT OF SUPERMIND

The human mind is the highest form of existence in the universe. The philosophical system, began by Aurobindo, is started with this belief. He says that the Ultimate Reality does not descend directly into the human consciousness or mind. In order to connect the Absolute (Super-Consciousness) with Mind (ordinary consciousness) a bond is essential between them. This bond is known as Supermind according to Aurobindo. Supermind belongs to the higher hemisphere and yet it is the end and the ideal of mind—that which mind is going to be. As a result it must have complete consciousness of Saccidananda. Similarly it is not mind itself but it is its culmination and fulfillment. It is only through the instrumentality of Supermind that Mind can raise to the Absolute and the Absolute can descend to the mind. It is creative and comprehensive. The Supermind develops the three aspects of the Absolute or Saccidananda without separating them. These are

- It has the knowledge of the One but is able to draw out of the One its hidden multitude.
- It manifests the Many but does not lose itself in its differentiation.
- It contains and upholds the diffusion of the One into the Many and prevents it from being a real disintegration.

Regarding Supermind Aurobindo says, "It is a power of conscious force expressing real Being, born out of real Being and partaking of its nature. It is neither a child of the Void nor a weaver of fictions. It is conscious Reality throwing itself into mutable forms of its own imperishable and immutable substance." The Supermind is the consummation of Mind. It is all that Mind strives for but can never attain. The Mind is not the principle of knowledge that we suppose it to be. It is merely a 'faculty for the seeking of knowledge, for expressing as much

as it can gain in certain forms of relative thought'. The Mind merely interprets the truth of universal existence for practical uses. It is a fall from the Supermind and its salvation lies in 'climbing back' to its original condition.

The nature of Supermind must through light on two aspects—

a) Supermind as Truth-Consciousness-as the spiritual principle having complete knowledge of Saccidananda and
b) Supermind as the ideal and the culmination of mind.

These two aspects are discussed below—

a) Supermind as Truth-Consciousness: Reality, in the philosophy of Aurobindo, is known as Saccidananda. It is expressed by him as the Creator, the Real-idea and the Supreme Truth-Consciousness. In Saccidananda we posit three entities and unite them in order to arrive at a trinity. These are Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

The universe is an expression of consciousness which although manifesting itself in the multiplicity. And through this consciousness creation essentially sees things as basically one. However it differentiates the One without dividing it. That is why it is called Truth-Consciousness. It is also called Supramental Consciousness which is differed from mental consciousness. Mind essentially makes divisions and thereby creates appearances contrary to the nature of real. Supermind neither creates divisions nor gives false pictures. It never misses the real unitary nature of the One and therefore it is called Truth-Consciousness.

It is already mentioned that Supermind is also named by Aurobindo as the Creator or the Creative idea. But it is not like the Brahman of *Advaita Vedanta* which is only real. And *Isvara*, *Maya* and the world-all become unreal. Therefore Sri Aurobindo feels that the creative principle must not be viewed as something over and above the one, but as something which is able to do justice both to the oneness of the one and to the world. Saccidananda is pure, conscious and blissful existence—beyond space and time. Creation, on the other hand, is a

movement or a development in space and time. There must be a link in between the two as it is capable of explaining both the unity of the one and its development. It is not anything different from Saccidananda. It is its own consciousness, its own idea. As pure consciousness, it is unitary, as an Idea, it is capable of development. For that reason Aurobindo says that Supermind is the vast self-extension of the Brahman that contains and develops on the one hand and that by the Idea it develops the triune principle of existence, consciousness and bliss out of their indivisible unity on the other hand. It differentiates them but not divide. So creation starts when Supermind differentiates the original unity of the three principles. It is Saccidananda itself that itself that is this principle (of Supermind) but it is not resting in its pure, infinite, invariable consciousness, but proceeding out of this primal poise….into a movement which is its form of energy and instrument of cosmic creation.
b) Supermind as the ideal and the culmination of mind: Supermind is the culmination and consummation of mind. Sri Aurobindo here creates a distinction between Mind and Supermind. It consists in the difference between their manners of apprehending reality, mind, by its very nature. It is like the relation of part and whole. Generally Mind creates divisions not only between the knower and the known, but also in the objects that it apprehends. On account of this mind is not capable of having knowledge of the reality. Reality can be known only as one. Mind first breaks the original unity of the object of its knowledge and then tries to synthesize the broken parts again into a whole. That is why the mind fails to 'know' in the proper sense of the word 'know'.

The difference between mind and Supermind lies in the fact that mind is nothing but an urge to realize the Supramental level. As Supermind has already descended into mind so mind is capable of spiritual activities. By some means Supermind is already present in the mind. That is why Aurobindo says that mind is actually a fall from Supermind. This fall is a necessary condition of creation as it represents the descent of the spirit. That makes it a precondition of evolution also.

This transmission of mind to Supermind is not abrupt or sudden. Mind belongs to the lower hemisphere and it has to ascend to the higher hemisphere. Hence there must be some intermediary steps through which this transition will be brought about. These steps are Mind, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Over Mind, and Supermind. The passage from mind to Supermind is a passage from Nature to Super-Nature and as such mind must pass through some stages which would demonstrate the continuous nature of this transition.

Mind is essentially a consciousness which measures, limits and cut out forms of things from indivisible wholes and treats them as if each were a separate element. We have seen that Reality can not be known by such a process that mind somehow has to rise above its normal activities and try to cultivate some capacity for unification. The first condition for this transformation is that mind must somehow become aware of its own capacities and must be able to possess them. The necessity of such an observing intelligence which is conscious of its own actions is called by Aurobindo 'the Higher Mind'. Higher Mind is the spiritual parent of our conceptive mental ideation. In the Higher Mind there is no need of the analytical activities that mind normally performs and there is no need of ratiocination. So Higher Mind is a self-aware activity towards integration. Here Truths are not established by Logic and so they are sought to be seen in their pre-reflective unity. In this stage there is the initial attempt to break away from the bondage of logic and rational analysis and to enter into the realm of the ideal.

In the process of transformation from Mind to Supermind there is no need of a mind of higher thought, but a mind of spiritual light. Light is essentially illuminative. Through gradual steps thought process reveals its object piecemeal but there is the necessity of a sudden and a direct insight. And the stage in which mind can ascend is Illumined Mind. It does not work by thought, but by vision. Here thought is only a subordinate movement performed in order to make effortless insight. It only creates a representative-image of Truth. Higher Mind catches something of the

substance of the Truth also. As higher Mind brings a greater consciousness into the being through the spiritual power of its Truth so that the illumined Mind brings in a still greater consciousness through a Truth-sight and Truth-light and its seeing and seizing power.

But these two stages of the ascent of mind can get their authority and fulfillment only by a reference to a third level i.e. Intuition. Intuition is conceived as a power of consciousness. When the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, it sees, feels and vibrates with the knowledge of that which it contacts. According to Sri Aurobindo, Intuition is the beginning of knowledge as it brings message from the higher or spiritual realm. Intuition has four fold power viz. a power of revelatory Truth-seeing, a power of inspiration or Truth-hearing, a power of Truth-touch or immediate seizing of significance and a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth. These are the fourfold potencies of intuition. It is the capacity to see Truth and to hear it in its organized form in an act of direct and immediate revelation. Aurobindo admits that Intuition can perform all the functions or reason and intelligence, with the difference that its grasp of the object is direct and not mediate like reason.

The faculty into which Intuition has to develop is called the Over Mind. It is described by Aurobindo as 'a super conscient cosmic mind in direct contact with the supramental consciousness. Such a description of Over Mind emphasizes the two sides of its nature which is a kind of cosmic consciousness and it is in contact with the Supermind. Cosmic consciousness implies that the consciousness which has been ascending through the three previous stages. The previous stages including the stage of Intuition are not cosmic in nature but the knowledge of over mind becomes global and cosmic by going beyond the representations of consciousness in particular centre.

Over Mind is the proper link between mind and Supermind. It performs the mental activities in a spiritual manner and its cosmic consciousness is the consequence of its affinity with Supermind. It has been limited to individual's consciousness. And due to this limitation the intuitive

consciousness does not have universality about it. Over mind is capable of reflecting the universal light and that is why its consciousness is cosmic. But Over Mind is not Supermind. In spite of being super conscient and cosmic it lacks the integral character of Supermind i.e. it can not apprehend the Supreme Truth—the Absolute-as a unity.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is the original name of Sri Aurobindo?

.....

.....

Q 2: What is the fundamental reality, according to Aurobindo?

.....

.....

Q 3: Mention the significant work of Sri Aurobindo on Philosophical thought

.....

.....

Q 4: What are the three aspects of the Absolute or Saccidananda developed by the Supermind?

.....

.....

Q 5: According to Sri Aurobindo, "Intuition has four fold power." What are these four powers?

.....

.....

7.4 TRIPLE STATUS OF SUPERMIND

Supermind descends down to mind and mind seeks to ascend back to its supramental status. The process of Involution goes down from Mind to psychic, Life, Matter and even to Nescience. Again the process of Evolution is a reverse process from Nescience to Supermind.

But Supermind can not have the same poise through out the entire process of Involution and Evolution. Here Aurobindo speaks about its three general status or poise. These are nothing but the three different sessions of its cosmic and spiritual consciousness. Through these poises we are to understand Supermind as the Creator. The integral status of Supermind consists in its pure unitary consciousness, for that is a timeless and space less concentration of Saccidananda itself. Every status of Supermind has a definite relation with the world-process.

The first stage is the state when unity is ready to be disturbed. It is the state of 'Pure Ideation' Aurobindo gives here an analogy to understand the nature of this poise. Just as thoughts and images that occur to our minds are not separate existences to us, so to this poise of Supermind, individuals and the world are not separate existences. Just as thoughts and images appear to us as forms of consciousness, so are all forms to this primary poise of Supermind.

The second stage is the stage in which the Supermind appears to be expressing its consciousness in all forms. It realizes itself as one in many and again as many in one. The process of Creation has now begun and Supermind has to come out of its state of inalienable unity. Here jivatma is distinguished from the universal Divine. The individual jivatma would express and realize itself in an individual centre of unity while the universal Divine realizes itself in all soul-forms universally. In fact the universal play in which the one has manifested itself in many though the multiplicity is regarded as having a unity behind. In the first stage everything was regarded as unity and in the second poise the multiplicity appears and still in the multiplicity unity is received.

In the third poise Supermind has to project itself in the movement and in a way involved in it. The first poise is the casual stage—*Karana-avastha* -in which the play has begun. The poise is understood as the fully manifested state—the *Purna-Vyakta-avastha* -in which creative processes are fully at work and consciousness, is expressed in all forms and centers.

The three poises can be described differently in a different way also. The first poise is the stage in which the unitary character of the supramental consciousness is still intact, though it is potentially ready to be differentiated. In the second poise, the process of differentiation starts and multiplicity makes it appearance. And in the third stage this multiplicity is fully expressed. But the urge towards unity is always there in all the poises since consciousness of integral unity represents the basic character of Supermind.

7.5 TRIPLE TRANSFORMATION OF SUPERMIND

In the ascending process of evolution it begins with matter as having descended to the level of matter consciousness feel that the veiling or the closing up has been carried to the farthest limit. Consciousness made itself the prisoner of matter and forces matter to take up the upward gradient. As a result life is born that signifies the first sprouting of consciousness in matter. But consciousness is not satisfied and still ascending higher to higher. The next step in evolution must necessarily be an ascent to the level of Supermind. It can be achieved through a three fold process of transformation. These transformations would first require a complete and radical change of our terrestrial existence—of the material, the vital and the mental and it require then a final transformation resulting from the combined forces of one's own efforts. These triple transformations consists the stages namely Psychic transformation, Spiritual transformation and Supramental transformation. These three can be stated below—

Psychic transformation: The unfolding of the psychic soul is the first step towards supramental change. The psychic entity is the subliminal aspects of our being. Psychic change consists in the removal of the veil which hides our psyche or soul. Aurobindo describes the psyche as 'the ever-pure flame of the divinity in things' which remains undimmed through all the experiences of our life. It is necessary that the light of psyche should flood the whole of our being and permeate life, mind and

matter within us. This is accomplished through psychic change. In this regard Sri Aurobindo attaches great importance to the education of emotions since it is only through such education that we feel the pressure need for a psychic transformation. Yoga is such an education leading to the Awakening of the soul within us.

Spiritual Transformation: Psychic change has to be supplemented by the spiritual change, the descent of a higher light into our being. By the process of psychic transformation matter, life and mind are purified but there must also be an opening out of the soul to spiritual intimations. The psychic being must be turned towards whatever seems to belong to a higher reality. This is spiritual transformation. When the soul is awakened and is able to guide and regulate life and mind, it must try to bring about a spiritual change in its conscious life.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the soul may attempt to achieve this contact through the thinking mind as its instrument. It may also put a psychic impression on the intellect and higher mind and intuitional intelligence and turn them in that direction. As this transformation will become more and more perfect, the spiritualized mind will move beyond all forms and figures, beyond all ideas of good and evil or true of false. Such a spiritual consciousness will tend towards the apprehension of that which transcends all dualities.

Supramental Transformation: Spiritual transformation leads the soul to the apprehension of spiritual unity. But this transformation does not give us the integral transformation. The psychic transformation is replaced by a spiritual change on the high summits, but it is not the complete divine dynamism of nature. For this purpose supramental transformation is necessary. According to Sri Aurobindo, psychic transformation and spiritual transformation uplift man to higher reaches of consciousness. Nevertheless if the soul is left only with these, there will only be a vision of unity above us, not a realization of it. And as it happens with every vision of it will tend to grow fainter and weaker. This happens with all cases of intuitional experiences. So the vision must be transformed into a realization. So a descent of higher consciousness is necessary.

Aurobindo says, "The Truth consciousness or Supermind finding evolutionary Nature ready has to descend into her and enable her to liberate the Supramental principle within her". The Supramental presence in matter, life and mind will change entirely the nature of the material, the vital and the mental.



7.6 LET US SUM UP

- The philosophy of Aurobindo is the meeting point of both Indian and Western thought.
- In his philosophy the concept of Supermind is a very imperative concept.
- It is the principle of active will and knowledge superior to Mind and creation of the world. It is the intermediary power and state of being between that self-possession of the One and this flux of the Many.
- Supermind is the mediator between mind or ordinary consciousness and Absolute or Supreme consciousness. Through Supermind Mind can ascend to the Absolute and Absolute descends to the mind.
- Supermind is exhibited by Aurobindo as Truth Consciousness through which the reality of Saccidananda is understood. But Mind and Supermind are not the same.
- The basic concept found in the philosophy Aurobindo is the evolution of the world and of man, through different stages, points to the divine destiny of man.
- A harmonious and integral culture of his physical, vital and mental potentialities alone enables and divinizing his total being. Man can thus become a superman, thinking, feeling and acting in unison with the Divine.



7.7 FURTHER READING

1. Aurobindo, Sri (1949). *The Human Cycle*, Pondichery
2. Aurobindo, Sri (1953) *Foundation of Indian Culture*, The Sri Aurobindo Library, New York,
3. Choudhury, Haridas.,(1960) (ed) The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London
4. Das, Adhar Chandra.(1934). *Sri Aurobindo and the Future of Mankind*, Calcutta University
5. Das, Jutika (2010) *Karl Jaspers and Neo-Advaitism*, Anwesha Publication, Panbazar. Assam
6. Dutta, D. M. (1972) *The chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy* (Of Europe, America, India and Japan)
7. Lal, B.K. (1973) *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarasidass Delhi,
8. Langlay. G.H. (1949) *Sri Aurobindo, Indian Poet, Philosopher and Mystic*, David Marlow Ltd
9. Naravane, V.S. (1964) *Modern Indian Thought—A Philosophical Survey*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay
10. Purani, A.B. (1966) *Sri Aurobindo, Some Aspects of his Vision*. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay
11. Reddy, V. Madhusudan. (1973) *SRI AUROBINDO—AN INTERPRETATION*, Ed. by V.C. Joshi, Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd Delhi



7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Sri Aurobindo Ghose

Ans to Q No 2: Brahman or Absolute

Ans to Q No 3: The life Divine, The Human Cycle, Lights on Yoga, Synthesis of Yoga, The Ideal of Human Unity and Savitri

Ans to Q No 4: It has the knowledge of the one but is able to draw out of the one its hidden multitude.

2) It manifests the many, but does not lose itself in its differentiation.

3) It contains and upholds the diffusion of the one into the Many and prevents it from being a real disintegration.

Ans to Q No 5: 1) A power of revelatory truth seeing

2) A power of inspiration and truth hearing

3) A power of truth-touch

4) A power of true and automatie discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth



7.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q.1. What is the original name of Sri Aurobindo?

Q.2. His philosophy is known as___idealism. (Fill in the Blanks)

Q.3. Is his conception of Reality a combination of matter and spirit?

Q.4. Name one of Aurobindo's famous book.

Q.5. What are the three basic principles of Ultimate Reality?

B. Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q.1. Write short notes on

a) Supermind as Truth-Consciousness

b) Integral Idealism

c) Explain the role of triple status in Supermind.

d) Write the name of eight principles of Reality or Saccidananada.

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q.1. Explain triple transformation of Supermind.

Q.2. Elaborate the concept of Supermind.

Q.3. Describe the movement of Mind to Supermind.

** **** **

UNIT 8: AUROBINDO: EVOLUTION

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1. Learning Objectives

8.2. Introduction

8.3. Notion of Creation and the world process

8.4. Nature and kinds of ignorance

8.5. Theory of Evolution

8.6. Let us sum up

8.7. Future Reading

8.8. Answers to cheeck your progress

8.9. Model Questions

8.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- describe the nature of creation.
- Illustrate the various kinds of ignorance.
- explain the relation between evolution and involution.
- discuss the theory of evolution.

8.2. INTRODUCTION

In the ocean of Indian thought the philosophy of Aurobindo is like a stunning island. He is one of the most outstanding figure of Indian Nationalism and a dazzling star of ancient Indian thought. Aurobindo's entire attitude to Indian philosophical thought is based on the presumption that the highest truth of philosophy, social life and even Science are contained in the Vedas. The Vedas are the original foundation or roots of Indian wisdom. Aurobindo tried to reveal how the tree of Indian Culture and Philosophy is rooted in the Vedas which are deep, sturdy and tenacious. So in his philosophy we find a gigantic synthesis in which the gains of modern scientific thought are fully recognized on the metaphysical plane.

In the Indian National Movement Sri Aurobindo was a most popular revolutionary leader, a brilliant orator and a journalist. He declared a political struggle against alien rule can be waged by peaceful means. His political work was marked by absolute faithfulness to the high ideals of truth and universal love that he had made his own. After some years he shifted to Pondicherry where he lived remaining forty years of his life.

The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is the meeting point of both Indian and western thought. Western thought aims at a fuller realization of the evolutionary and cosmic character of its thought. But it is hampered by its intellectualism and its existential outlook. On the other hand its requirement is spiritual standpoint. Similarly Indian thought is spiritual but individualistic and static. It must break its narrow walls of individualism and acquire a dynamic and cosmic character. Aurobindo's philosophy fulfils this function by dealing with the main problem of Evolution.

The idea of Evolution is undeniably more prominent in western philosophy than Indian philosophy. Greek philosopher Aristotle says evolution is teleological as it was the gradual transformation of the potential into the actual. In fact the problem of creation has been stumbling block in Greek philosophy. According to Plato, creation is not a material process, but an ideal and intellectual process. So he says the idea of creation existing prior to creation. So in Plato we find a double set of creators—the ideas which are the ultimate creators and God. God evidently has not got the power to create without getting the pattern from the ideas and the ideas can not also create directly as they have no power of generation.

The Greek philosophers were always at first directed outward and at later stage it is directed inwards. That is why the approach from the standpoint of consciousness was never fully established in Greek Philosophy. On the other hand Indian philosophy from the beginning turned inwards. The highest reality was always conceived as Atman or Self. Therefore the interpretation of the universe was always from the standpoint of consciousness. The different grades of Reality were explained in terms of the different grades of consciousness. Sri

Aurobindo looks at the whole universe from the standpoint of Sachchidananda or highest consciousness. According to him, all reality is consciousness as well as the measure of reality of anything is determined by the nature of consciousness that is revealed in it. The higher the position of anything in the scale of reality, the deeper and more unified is the consciousness that is revealed in it. *Sachchidananda* is nothing but a common name for the triune principles of existence (*sat*), consciousness-force (*chit*) and bliss (*ananda*).

8.3 NOTION OF CREATION AND THE WORLD PROCESS

Regarding the question 'Why the Absolute is conceived as absolute and infinite?' or 'How the Absolute is conceived?'—the notion of creation will arise. Sri Aurobindo observes creation as a double process: First, it is a descent of the spirit into the worldly forms and second it is an ascent of the worldly forms to the spirit. So creation is a process of descent and ascent or evolution or involution. Just as we attain knowledge we ascend to it, but knowledge has descended down to us. Similarly spiritual transformation presupposes the descent of the spirit which is nothing but the origin of creation.

- Descent or involution

Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the involuntary aspect of creation follows to some extent the Vedantic description of creation. In the Vedanta, creation is described as a result of *avidya*. Due to ignorance we come to regard the world and the apparent self as the only realities. But according to Vedanta there is no creation in reality and this cosmic delusion is nothing but a joyous act or *Lila*.

According to Sri Aurobindo, creation is nothing but an expression of joy. Delight is the secret of creation which is also the cause of birth and death. Like Vedanta Aurobindo also said creation is nothing but a joyful game—a Lila. The world appears most casual and insight as a movement of Force which also appears to be consciously creative. It is

creating and giving expressions to newer and newer forms. But the moment we reflect upon the purpose of the creation of these forms we realize that the universe is an expression of delight. As a result we become one with it. This delight of world-process in relation to the *Saccidananda* is called Lila. That is why Sri Aurobindo says the whole of creation is a Lila-the child's joy, poet's joy, the actor's joy etc. The Absolute Himself the play, he is the player and he is playground. Lila is created out of Bliss, by Bliss and for Bliss. So Creation is pure Lila, which is an express of the spontaneous and sportive activity of Brahman.

Sri Aurobindo also describes creation as the plunge of the spirit into ignorance. Ignorance is the power of divine consciousness to withhold itself partially. Ignorance is part and parcel of Divine consciousness itself. Ignorance is in between the two realms. One extreme is the supreme Divine consciousness and other is the possibility of complete nescience. Ignorance stands in between two of them and this is the sphere of created world. Therefore the Absolute itself decides to descend into ignorance i.e. creation. Sri Aurobindo is aware of the issues that why should the Absolute choose to create out of ignorance? Why it is not out of knowledge? Is it not a limitation of its power? etc. Regarding these problems Aurobindo says the Absolute can create out of fullness of its self-knowledge. But it is only higher creation—a greater world that can only be seen by seers and the sages. But creation arises out of the lesser world in which humans' lives which is through ignorance. By distinguishing between two worlds Aurobindo had given a different standpoint from Advaita Vedanta. World has been given a status and reality by Aurobindo. But without the conception of Maya the world can not be understood properly.

The notion of Maya has understood in two different ways. In the first sense it is a power, constructive and creative and in the second sense it is a delusion producing mechanism. Sri Aurobindo accepts the first meaning of Maya as the power that creates the world. It is a power of *Saccidananda* which can comprehend, contain and measure out of forms of the world out of Infinite Existence. In another sense Aurobindo

can use the second meaning of Maya also. According to him, the world may also be called Maya as it is not the essential truth of infinite Existence.

As we have already known that creation is a plunge of the Spirit into ignorance. So it is necessary to try to establish the nature of ignorance.

8.4 NATURE AND KINDS OF IGNORANCE

According to Sri Aurobindo, ignorance is a form of knowledge though it is partial, fragmentary and distorted. Ignorance is conceived not as a sign of weakness, but as a power just like knowledge. It may be said as the power of partially withholding itself, but being a Divine power can not affect the Divine unity. Knowledge and ignorance are not essentially opposed each other. These are two different but the complementary aspects of the Reality. Ignorance proceeds towards the realm of knowledge and consequently knowledge becomes the natural culmination of ignorance. Thus ignorance is also potentially knowledge. It is a step towards knowledge.

There are three different ways for the operation of knowledge. At the highest, it is Divine Self-knowledge—that is also Divine All knowledge. On the other extreme, there is a complete negation of knowledge, 'effective dynamic, creative nescience.' In between the two there is the state of ignorance. Ignorance is conceived as the power of Divine consciousness itself, as its power to withhold itself partially. It is a power just like knowledge. Thus knowledge is the natural culmination of the state of ignorance. He feels that the soul, in the state of ignorance itself, makes all the preparation required to attain the supramental state, only a divine veil is preventing it so far from attaining that state. Ignorance is called ignorance because in this state one is ignorant of the supramental vision of the mental, ignorance from the higher standpoint. Moreover it is also a step towards knowledge, a possibility always bubbling with the potency of knowledge, waiting for the supramental descent.

According to Sri Aurobindo, ignorance is not a power of the Absolute Reality. It does not dwell in Him. Again it is not an inherent characteristic of the multiplicity of souls. When the individual soul is in the superficial stage of consciousness, it is shut out from the deeper consciousness that shows its unity with other souls and with the Supreme Being. But it also opens the deeper levels of consciousness where the individual soul sees itself in fundamental unity with other souls and with the whole universe, and with the Supreme Being.

Sri Aurobindo is aware that any attempt to determine the nature of knowledge must first be able to explain the various aspects of ignorance. The reasons behind it are—ignorance is not absence of knowledge, but incomplete or partial knowledge. Moreover it is also from the state of ignorance that one has to grow into the state of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo talks about seven kinds of ignorance. In order to discover seven sides of ignorance he asserts seven fold ignorance. These are—the original, the cosmic, the Egoistic, the Temporal, the psychological, the Constitutional and the Practical. Let us discuss the nature of these various types of ignorance—

1. The Original Ignorance: By 'the original ignorance' Sri Aurobindo meant that beings are ignorant of that which is really real. Human beings are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all 'being and becoming'. This is called 'the original ignorance' as it is the most basic of all types of ignorance—others somehow arising from this primal ignorance.

2. The Cosmic Ignorance: It is the ignorance about the real nature of the cosmos. Generally it is believed that the world of space and time in which all beings are live, move and have being is the real world. So the changes that appear to take place in the world appear to beings as wholly real. According to Aurobindo, this is ignorance about the real nature of the universe itself and thus it is called cosmic ignorance.

3. The Egoistic Ignorance: This form of ignorance concerns the nature of the self itself. Sometimes one feels that the embodied individual presents the real self. One takes his I-sense—the ego as everything and

never realized that there is a basic unity underlying all forms of being and becoming. Consequently he takes his limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regards everything other than that as not self. So it is described the Egoistic Ignorance.

4. The Temporal Ignorance: Sri Aurobindo says that everyone is ignorant of their eternal nature also. That is why they believe that human life-span represents the essence of existence. They never realize that their true nature is somehow beyond these spatial or temporal dimensions. This ignorance which is rooted in temporal conditions has been called the Temporal Ignorance.

5. The Psychological Ignorance: There are deeper realms of human beings which are not open to superficial view but which constitute their true nature. Man in ignorance are so much occupied and almost overwhelmed by the surface activities of human life, that completely ignore 'the super-conscient, the sub-conscient, the intra-conscient and cicum-conscient. This ignorance has been called the psychological ignorance.

6. The Constitutional Ignorance: Generally human beings thought that either their body or their life-force or mind or any two of these or all the three would represent their true constitution. The most prevalent belief is that life, mind and body constitute the whole constitution of man. It indicates that human beings are ignorant of the fact that there are other—deeper aspects of human constitution as well. In fact men are ignorant of the fact that it is these deeper aspects of human being that nourish and sustain the bodily, the vital and the mental activities of self. This is called constitutional ignorance.

7. The Practical Ignorance: In the mental activities human beings are invariably chaotic and aimless as on account of the ignorance of the 'goals' and the 'ways' of being. Sri Aurobindo says, "as a result of all these ignorance (the above six) beings miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of life in the world". Beings are ignorant in thought, will, sensations, actions; return wrong or imperfect response at every point to the questioning of the world, wander in a maze of errors

and desires, pain and pleasure etc. This is the seventh practical ignorance.

The second process of creation is Ascent or Evolution. Let us discuss it—



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is the literal meaning of the word Sachidananda?

.....

.....

Q 2: What is creation, according to Sri Aurobindo?

.....

.....

Q 3: What are the two ways of understanding 'Maya' given by Aurobindo?

.....

.....

Q 4: "Knowledge and ignorance are not essentially opposed to each other, but complementary……." Is this statement true?

.....

.....

Q 5: What are the seven kinds of ignorance mentioned by Sri Aurobindo?

.....

.....

8.5 THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Evolution is the soul of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. His theory of evolution is the pivot round which the entire philosophy of Sri Aurobindo moves. Evolution is the movement which is the reverse of the movement of involution or creation. Because of the descent of the Spirit into matter, life and mind that these can ascend to the higher regions of the Spirit.

The Spirit in creation has involved itself in matter, life and mind. As a result matter, life and mind feel an impulse to rise to their source. So it seems to say that evolution 'is a sort of home-sickness of the Spirit'. The Spirit has descended into the lowest particle of matter and that is why matter seeks to evolve into something higher than itself—mind. In the same way there is a descent of the Spirit into mind and accordingly mind must ascend to something higher than itself i.e. Supermind. But evolution can not stop with mind for mind is not its last word. It must move further up. This is the most optimistic scheme of evolution in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo.

According to Sri Aurobindo, evolution is nothing other than a heightening of the force of consciousness. It has a distinctive character of its own which comprehends all other forms of evolution. The nature of evolution has been conceived as repetitive or emergent or as mechanical or teleological. Repetitive theories of evolution suggest that evolution is a process in time that gives out, more or less, the same kinds of forms. Evolution goes on bringing out the same kinds of entities—repeating the same kinds of beings of existence. Again the theory of emergent evolution believes that at every stage of evolution something new emerges or comes out. Mechanical theories of evolution seek to explain everything in terms of antecedent conditions whereas teleological theories relate everything to some goal or purpose which the evolutionary process seeks to realize. And Sri Aurobindo's Integral Theory of Evolution comprehends all the relevant features.

In the philosophy of Aurobindo, the theory of evolution is a triple process which involves process of widening, heightening and integration. These are—

1. The first factor is widening. The process of widening refers providing scope for the operation of every new element or principle as it emerges.
2. The process of heightening means a process of ascent. It is ascent from grade to grade, from level to level. In the process of

evolution, there is a movement from the lower grades to the higher grades.

3. The third important ingredient is the process of integration. Integration means taking up within itself as soon as a higher grade is reached all the previous grades and transforming them. In the process of evolution, the attainment of a higher grade does not mean the cancellation of lower grade. Instead of cancel the lower grade they are retained. So integration implies a descent of the higher principle into the lower principles. Integration is an ascent through descent.

The entire chain of evolution is divided into two hemispheres. The higher is constituted of Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss (Delight) and Supermind. The lower is constituted of Mind, Life and Matter. Sri Aurobindo conceives these seven poises of Reality. These may be regarded as an ascending series of evolutionary steps of the descending of the Absolute to matter. Sri Aurobindo calls these the seven chord of Being.

Human beings contain explicitly the first three Matter, Life and Mind. But every being have also an inner and abiding psychic entity which is called soul. So adding this to seven, we have eight aspects of Reality. These are conveniently arranged in two columns.

Existence	Matter	
	Consciousness-Force	Life
	Bliss	Psyche
	Supermind	Mind

The left hand column represents Spirit's descent into the world and the right hand column represents the individual's ascent towards the Spirit. The first principle of the evolutionary process is Matter. Mind and Life evolve in matter. The liberation of Spirit into its true consciousness can not be attained by the emergence of the principles of mind and life. These two principles change the nature and working of matter. But these two are also changed and modified by matter. The original creative power is neither material nor vital nor mental, but is supernatural in nature. It is

the power of spirit. So in order to have an integral and total transformation of matter, there must emerge the supramental principle.

The evolution of nature from matter to mind is an evolution in and through Ignorance. Evolution must proceed upwards to attain the supramental status. It can be attained only when the 'Supermind' descends into earth-consciousness.

The process of evolution has not merely to be scientifically described as we are ourselves involved in it and also because the next stage of evolution is going to take us into the spiritual realm. We can expedite this process of impending spiritual transformation by our efforts also. We have reached the mental stage by our own efforts and strive to transform the mental into the higher form—the supramental. Therefore Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution is a description of cosmic evolution as well as the evolution of individual. In fact he recognizes that the individual is the medium through which spirit reveals and discloses its being. So it seems to say that the integral theory of evolution attempts to describe the basic features of individual's evolution also.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What is evolution, according to Sri Aurobindo? Write Briefly

.....

.....

Q 7: In the philosophy of Aurobindo, the theory of evolution is a triple Process- What are the triple process- Mention

.....

.....

Q 8: What are hemispheres into which Aurobindo divided the chain of evolution? Mention briefly.

.....

.....



8.6 LET US SUM UP

- Aurobindo's theory of evolution is part and parcel of contemporary Indian thought.
- The theory of evolution also found in the writings of Plato. But Plato's view is differ from Aurobindo.
- Greek Concept of evolution has also spiritual standpoint but not individualistic and static. Moreover the approach from the standpoint of consciousness is not also established here.
- On the other hand in Aurobindo's philosophy the highest reality Atman or Self were discussed from different grades of consciousness.
- The highest consciousness in his philosophy is Sachidananda. It is the combination of sat (existence), chit (consciousness force) and ananda (bliss).
- In Aurobindo's philosophy this highest reality is conceived when the notion of creation arise. Creation is a process of evolution and involution. Creation is nothing but a process of delight. And when this delight is related to Sachidananda it is known as Lila.
- According to Aurobindo the whole creation is the play of the Aurobindo.
- Creation is the stab of spirit into ignorance. So here concept of ignorance may occupy an important place. It is not opposed to knowledge. They are two different harmonizing aspects of reality. There are seven types of ignorance are found in Aurobindo's philosophy.
- The process of evolution in Aurobindo's philosophy is nothing but the heightening of the force of consciousness. It is descendent of the spirit into matter. It is discussed through two hemisphere—higher hemisphere and lower hemisphere. Both of these two contain seven poises of Reality which is called by Aurobindo as

Seven cords of Being. Thus in his philosophy the theory of evolution is understood as a narrative of both cosmic evolution and individual evolution.



8.7 FURTHER READING

1. Aurobindo, Sri (1949). *The Human Cycle*, Pondichery
2. Aurobindo, Sri (1953) *Foundation of Indian Culture*, The Sri Aurobindo Library, New York,
3. Choudhury, Haridas.,(1960) (ed) The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London
4. Das, Adhar Chandra.(1934). *Sri Aurobindo and the Future of Mankind*, Calcutta University
5. Das, Jutika (2010) *Karl Jaspers and Neo-Advaitism*, Anwesha Publication, Panbazar. Assam
6. Dutta, D. M. (1972) *The chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy* (Of Europe, America, India and Japan)
7. Lal, B.K. (1973) *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarasidass Delhi,
8. Langlay. G.H. (1949) *Sri Aurobindo, Indian Poet, Philosopher and Mystic*, David Marlow Ltd
9. Naravane, V.S. (1964) *Modern Indian Thought—A Philosophical Survey*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay
10. Purani, A.B. (1966) *Sri Aurobindo, Some Aspects of his Vision*. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay
11. Reddy, V. Madhusudan. (1973) *SRI AUROBINDO—AN INTERPRETATION*, Ed. by V.C. Joshi, Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd Delhi

8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The literal meaning of the word 'sachidananda' is 'sat' (existence), 'chit' (consciousness) and 'Ananda' (bliss)

Ans to Q No 2: According to Sri Aurobindo, creation is expression of joy. Delight is the secret of creation, which is also the cause of birth and death.

Ans to Q No 3: 1) It is a power, constructive and creative, 2) A delusion producing mechanism

Ans to Q No 4: True

Ans to Q No 5: 1) Original ignorance, 2) Cosmic ignorance, 3) egoistic ignorance, 4) temporal ignorance, 5) psychological ignorance 6) Constitutional ignorance, 7) Practical ignorance

Ans to Q No 6: According to Aurobindo, evolution is nothing other than a heightening of the force of consciousness. It is the movement of which is the reverse of the movement of involution or creation. In creation the spirit has involved itself in matter, life, and mind.

Ans to Q No 7: 1) Process of widening, 2) Process of heightening. 3) Process of integration

Ans to Q No 8: 1) Lower hemisphere, 2) Higher hemisphere

8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions:

Q.1. what is the aim of Aurobindo's philosophy?

Q.2. Is Aurobindo's philosophy an integral idealism?

Q.3. Are Greek philosophers associated with the theory of Evolution?

Q.4. what do you mean by Lila?

Q.5. Is Sachidananda a combination of triune principle?

Q.6. What are two hemispheres of evolution?

Q.7. What are the two meanings of Maya?

B. Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q.1. Write short note on

a) Theory of Creation

b) Theory of involution.

Q.2. Explain the seven stages of ignorance.

Q.3. Write a note on Maya.

Q.4. What are the seven cords of Being.

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500)

Q.1. Explain the relation between Maya and Sachidananda.

Q.2. Elaborate the theory of Evolution.

** ***** **