



DISCERNING DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOSITY : A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Religiosity is not a homogeneous phenomenon. It functions multiple ways depending upon believer's emotional relationship with the object of faith (Divinity, Holy Spirit, Personal God etc.) The present research intends first, to investigate the nature of religiosity considering the role of emotion in the making of believers' subjectivity. The study categories different types of believers according to their aspirations for mundane and supra-mundane concerns. Second, it discerns the subjective and objective dimensions of believers' consciousness by phenomenologically exploring the interface of emotion and perception in life- world of believers. And third, the study further attempts to apprehend the perception of believers by examining axiological and aesthetical dimensions of believer's subjectivity.

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The phenomenon of religiosity is dynamic one since intentionality of believer's consciousness differs on account of emotions, their intensity and the nature of the object of faith. Believer's emotion is always directed towards an object of faith who is considered by him as the embodiment of the highest virtues. Emotions are manifested in various religious activities such as rituals, rites, prayers, customs, and religious ethics. These activities also differ according to cultural context. Due to the dynamic nature of religiosity, there are various types of believers. In Bhagwat Gita,¹ Sri Krishna has said about the four types of persons: 'Ārta', 'Jijnasu', 'Arthartha' and 'Jañani', who take refuge in him.

Types of Believers

On account of the value of emotion, they can be put into two border categories: first, includes those believers for whom faith is intrinsically valuable, second consists of those believers for whom faith is extrinsically valuable; it is a sort of means to achieve some other ends. Usually, believers have faith in God for they think that He will help them to attain certain desired goals.

Religiosity as Means

This category of believers contains within itself various kinds of believers, differing from each other concerning the nature of goals they aspire for. Further, this category (faith is extrinsically valuable) includes three groups of believers: the first group comprises of those believers who have lost all hope of getting out of his state of utter despair and are looking for divine help. Second is of believers who think that with His Grace god could fulfil their desires for mundane possessions like wealth, success in professional life etc. The third group includes believers aspiring for the meaning of life by attaining knowledge, doing service and welfare for society. Though the believers of non-theistic religions have no personal god from whom they

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can expect help in such situations, yet they believe that the pious path and the system of belief laid by the preceptor, will emancipate them by natural or supra-natural events and they will not be left to suffer forever.

Believers as Sufferer

Religiosity always has emotional content. It can be observed in the first group by investigating the physical and psychological state of believers that since they are in a state of utter despair and lost all hope from all worldly sources, faith in God is the only anchor for his hope. The psyche of a sufferer can be unravelled only by delineating the inner structure of the relationship between emotion and perception. In the state of crisis, a sufferer is in the state of utter despair for he does not perceive any ray of hope from this mundane world. Though, he makes many efforts and exercises every possible option yet he finds all his efforts are futile and no one comes to rescue him, the feeling of detachment evolves and he disengages himself from this mundane world for the time being. At this state of mind, he loses his rational ability. This is the state of mind where the consciousness of a sufferer shifts from this mundane to the supra-mundane level of reality. A sufferer withdraws his consciousness from its objective realm to the subjective realm and the image of the personal god becomes the object of his consciousness. This is the very important point in the expansion of consciousness from the ordinary level to the deeper level of perception in a sense that this state of mind results into either the state of complete hopelessness or goes beyond the rational level that is the state in which the sufferer has a deep emotional relationship with the object of faith. And the object of faith becomes the object of emotion.

Believers in Search of Worldly Possession

Usually, believers worship God to be get fulfilled their desires for worldly gains such as wealth, son, position, physical and psychological strength etc. Despite their prime concern of worldly possession, they still believe in the supra-mundane world for some heavenly help from god. Generally, since childhood people begin believing in God and learn to believe in the sacred realm as they were nurtured and trained through narratives, mythical stories, religious symbols, rituals and religious ethics available in their family, tradition and culture. Accordingly, because of this uprooted-ness and situated-ness, they have an emotional inclination towards the object of faith. Often death, unseen course of future etc. create occasions in which people get inclined to believe in the God. Since no rational explanation can give emotional satisfaction in such a situation, therefore, the person at this stage accepts the object of faith as real on the emotional grounds. Religiosity has a limited pragmatic value and while this value is achieved, people forget the importance of the object of religious faith and enjoy mundane affairs in their life. But at times it happens that some occasion in the life of a person brings about turning point where a transformation in the level of perception takes place and his personality would be transformed. The object of emotion, which gives him emotional stability in a practical situation, acquires a permanent place in his life. It raises a person from mundane level to supra-mundane level. The object of faith remains the same but that becomes emotionally so valuable that it outshines all the worldly possession. These believers cannot be dismissed on account of their worldly desired over and above spiritual quest. At times this state



of religiosity paves the way to take a believer from the mundane to the sacred realm of life. However, this specific situation in which the transformation takes place in the life of a person cannot be said to be a 'reason' for the transformation in the strict sense of the term. R. W. Hepburn² rightly pointed out that there is no passage from the world to the god. Though he is talking about the empirical proof of the existence of the God given by St. Thomas Aquinas yet by his argument he demonstrates that nothing can serve as the rational basis for claiming about the reality of the supramundane object. But we cannot completely ignore that something worldly happens in a person's life due to which transformation occurs in him is also the fact. The object of faith necessarily gives him tremendous support. This belief that his lord would help him against oddities enables him to think rationally and act accordingly. It is worth mentioning that in and through faith only a believer can realize the successful functioning of faith in his life. There is no other way to test the power and depth of faith. This does not mean that the believer's wishes are fulfilled in every situation but it means that he realizes clearly that even when his wishes are not fulfilled, he is not shatter broken or thrown completely helpless. He always feels an inner strength.

Believers in Search of Knowledge

Knowledge is aim-governed activity. All cognitive enterprises have a specific aim towards that a searcher works. But the result of the cognitive endeavour is not completely certain. A searcher has some basic hypothesis regarding any scientific inquiry and he/she tries to verify them based on certain factual evidence and arguments but in this process of the search, there is no the surety that a searcher achieves the desired result. The basic assumptions regarding the scientific endeavour may insufficient or false that may employ many revisions. This is the uncertainty regarding the content of scientific quest. Indeed, chance factors may contribute to and disturb the scientific enterprise. Given these factors, a person who is engaged in any cognitive quest finds it not only fruitful but also necessary to expect some favours from the object of his faith.

A searcher of knowledge hopes and expects that he will achieve his desired ends, how these ends will be achieved is mostly unknown to him and this makes him believe that with the grace of the god, he will also be able to achieve it. Despite a wholehearted effort a searcher sometimes fails to achieve his/her desired ends but at times a new solution flashes in his mind without any efforts which strength the believer's faith in the God.

The quest of knowledge requires a constant effort in a definite direction without any adequate reason to do so. In search of knowledge, a searcher proceeds in a direction with some vague idea about the truth for that he is not at all rationally sure at that time. One can never be sure at the beginning of a cognitive quest that vague idea on which he is going to make his/her effort will yield him desired results. Every cognitive search contains this feature. But new knowledge is achieved only by constantly working on such a vague idea. This search is not possible unless some non-rational inclination with the idea is not present in the heart of a searcher. In this sense, psychological support from the object of faith is a common factor in a search of knowledge. It enables a searcher to make efforts again and again in his pursuits. And a realization of the fact that new ideas can be caused to descend on one's mind is a common feature of every religion, which justified a searcher's prayer to the object of his faith to give



him knowledge. In Hindu mythology, we have the god and the goddess of knowledge (*vidya*) for example *Saraswati*, *Ganesh*, *Minerva* etc.

It is noteworthy that the state of mind of a searcher is non-rational in the sense that a searcher is deeply betrothed to the object of his search. It is non-rational since a searcher is not at all in the position to give any rational justification for his involvement to the object of the search. A searcher within an emotion perceives the given object and he involves with that object and sometimes this state of affair results into a kind of search, the discovery of new laws and innovative ideas. A clarification is needed in this regard to understand the phenomenological perception of a searcher. Everyone observed things falling towards the earth and accepted this perception as it is. But when Newton saw an apple falling towards the earth, his mind absorbed in the object of his inquiry, he perceived that event within the non-rational state of mind because at that time there is no rational justification for that perception so within the non-rational state of mind he raised the philosophical question why did things fall? Though he did not have any scientific explanation for this quest at that time yet he was having deep emotional inclination with this quest why did things fall and he stuck on this very question. Later, he discovered the universal law of gravitation and explained the event of falling things towards the earth. Hence when a searcher perceives any state of affair and raises questions there is no rational justification for his involvement with that perception. Though later he may himself discover new scientific law and may explain an event scientifically. Therefore, in any form of creativity or new search, there is a role of the non-rational state of mind. And for a clear understanding of this point, we must investigate the relationship of emotion and perception in the formation of new knowledge or new search. A searcher while engaged in any type of search he is within an emotional state of mind perceives a given object and visualizes certain thing that may at times turn out as a new knowledge which is otherwise not possible. That is to mean that it is not possible within an ordinary rational state of mind. Creativity, thus, can be understood as a manifestation of perception, which occurs within an emotional set of mind or non-rational state of mind. Thus, the seemingly non-rational, at times gives rise to or transmutes itself into the rational connoting the very permeability of the rational into the domain of the non-rational.

Religiosity as End

By becoming aware of this process, which is possible in and through the process of having faith only, one realizes the intrinsic value of faith and strives to achieve a higher level of faith. The person in a crisis due to the pressure of existing mundane situation wants to transcend that situation and he easily gets attracted by the image of the god in which he finds the assurance of help emancipation. A temporary relief by the shifting of awareness is a sort of help that faith provides to the person in the crisis but this realization gives him some facet of illumination regarding the intrinsic value of faith. This is another sense of the function of faith as a means. This process functions to reach the end of the level of consciousness in which the faith is intrinsically important.

Ordinarily, it is believed that faith brings about miraculous changes in the factual circumstances. However, in religious practice, it is given enough importance but philosophically it is not much important. The belief in the power of faith is not to be



considered within the scope of rationality. The only importance may be added to this sort of belief is that it helps strengthen the believer's faith through which he gets respite from the situation of the crisis. And it also gives him illumination to attain the state awareness where faith in the god becomes important for its own sake. It also places him permanently beyond the physical and psychic where he enjoys the blissful state eternally.

Actual material change through the power of faith is a sort of belief, which can be used in either way for the sake of the world or the emancipation from the compulsion of the world. Incidents of miraculous help by the god are described in the mythology of all religion all over the world. If it is understood as only serving the physical ends then it is somewhere mistaken because there are counterexamples of such incidents and they are also underlined by religious tradition (that is a grand example of martyrdoms). So a close understanding of theistic belief gives an indication that belief in the miraculous power of faith is essentially formed preparing the mindset of a person to withdraw himself from the worldly affairs and get merged in the object of his faith.

Phenomenological Experience of Believer

The state of mind of the believer has two dimensions subjective and objective since they within a state of deep emotion perceive the object of faith and for him, his perception is real but non-rational since it is not only an object of logical belief. Although he rationally accepts the attributes that are ascribed to God and entertain no rational doubts about Him. A complete rationale certainty about God is not at all possible because of His transcendent nature. As Kant rightly³ observed, the existence of God can't be established by pure reason: it leads to antinomies. So, in the physical and psychic pressure of the crisis, a rational belief in God is of no use at all. Only through complete surrender to God, the state of communion with Him can be attained. And the strong emotional relationship with God can withdraw the awareness of the person from all sides and can focus it exclusively on Him. The acute physical and psychic pressure that the believer in crisis faces can be balanced and diluted only by a very strong emotion. Its emotionality is very often witnessed by many of the alleged irrational behaviours of the believers. When its emotionality reaches to a certain height then the believer's awareness gets exclusively absorbed in the object of faith. Especially in a state of crisis, the emotional force of faith is stimulated, it touches its peak; the believer's awareness is shifted to the level where the physical and psychic pressures lose their hold over him. It is not to be oblivious of the actual situation; it is to *rise above* that.

A believer, in the state of crisis, takes refuge in his object of faith. He doesn't become completely insensitive to his initial physical state but loses his psychic participation in the situation. Emotional magnetism towards his object of faith (that results in complete absorption of awareness in the object of faith) enables and facilitates the believer for psychic non-participation and gives him an actual feeling of emancipation. The absorption of the believer's awareness in the object of faith is not a feeling of temporary forgetfulness of the present crisis. The believer's absorption in the object of his faith is specifically different from the absorption of a person's awareness in some external means such as a melody of music. In such occasion of absorption of awareness, which frequently occurs in every common man's life, a person gets



only a temporary respite from the pressing situations of suffering. His psychic participation in the initial situation is lost only temporarily. He must suffer the pain of the situation after falling back from the state of the absorption. On the contrary, when the believer's awareness gets absorbed in the object of faith, it permanently breaks his psychic participation in the state of crisis. The factual conditions that constitute a situation of crisis become psychologically ineffective for him forever. This so happens as the object of awareness, in this case, is not out there; it is within the believer himself. In the complete absorption of his awareness in the object of faith, the believer gets settled within himself. To explain this psychic event more clearly it is necessary to explain the nature of the believer's object of faith.

A believer is a person who has got an image of God with some specific emotional relationship with it, such as a master-servant, father-child, mother-child, friends, lover-beloved etc. This image as an object of a specific sort of relation is ordinarily grafted in his mind in and through the tradition in which he is brought up. Due to the attributes such as omnipotence, omnipresent, omniscience etc., the image of God is formed in the psyche of the believer as someone who can give him miraculous security in the crisis, unimagined success in his chosen aims, reveal secrets of this world and whatnot. All these make the image of the object of faith as one that can completely absorb the awareness of a believer. The emotional relationship with the image of God doesn't generally develop beyond an ordinary level and this emotional relationship is expressed through believer's ritualistic worships and prayers. It doesn't influence the other more important aspects of his personal and social life. But if somehow the intensity and the magnitude of emotional relationship with this image grow and find an important place in his life then it doesn't remain an image for him but becomes a sort of living reality. However the believer may not have logical and rational answers to many questions regarding the epistemic status of this image, but he under the influence of the emotion doesn't give importance to the epistemic questions but enjoys the bliss of his relation with the image of the object of faith that is not an imaginary entity but a real person for him.

It is worth mentioning that the believer doesn't necessarily fail to understand the philosophical importance of these epistemic questions. He doesn't give much importance to the questions regarding the epistemic status of the image⁴ of the object of faith because he knows that their answer would be unintelligible to others and would be misunderstood. A believer's claim that the object of his faith is not an object of his imagination but an independent autonomous person remains unintelligible to the non-believers.

Generally, philosophers ignore this issue and concentrate exclusively as to why the believer believes that the image of God is a real person. Most philosophers explicitly or implicitly think and state that the believer's words can't be accepted on its face value. Indeed, the believer's claim can't be taken as a truth-claim in the sense of statements about Spatio-temporal events even the believers themselves don't intend to do so. But their truth-claims are about a very specific type of emotional experience that is its object with its content too. In a more precise way, it can be said that their truth-claim is about the content of an emotional experience that takes place only in having a very specific type of object as an object of immediate awareness.

The Interface of Emotion and Perception



For a believer, the object of emotion is not their imagination but rather living reality. They within a state deep emotion perceive the object of faith as the protector. A believer cannot arouse emotion and create the object of emotion. Because one cannot arouse emotion by merely one's sweet will. For the manifestation of any emotion, a proper environment (surroundings) is required. Even in the expected environment, an emotion cannot be necessarily aroused. One can imagine anything at sweet will but one cannot have any emotion by merely thinking about it. However human beings have the in-built capacity to have emotion but to manifest it he requires a state appropriate surroundings. Though one can control emotion and expression of emotion by certain practices or will-power, no one necessary arouses emotion by his sweet will. The object of emotion is not an imaginary object opposed to the real. A sufferer does not produce or create the god; he cannot impose desirable attributes to the object of emotion.

The object of faith need not be satisfactory to the standards of reason. An object of faith for a religious believer is not an object of his thought primarily; it is an object of his emotional relation. Hence an object becomes an object of faith only if it is embodying of the highest virtues becomes the reason for emotional attachment to it. An embodiment of virtues and an object of emotional attachment are very different sort of objects. An object of emotional attachment for a person may be merely an object of sensuous attraction as such it may not be an embodiment of virtues. But for a religious believer, a pure rational embodiment of virtues is of no worth unless he feels some emotional attraction to it. Faith in God cannot be a purely factual belief. It is necessarily an evaluative belief. For the believer, his relation to his object of faith is of highest importance for him. An object of faith, for a believer, is essentially an object of great emotional attachment but this attachment is only for the virtues that the object embodies and not for anything else⁵. This is the difference between an ordinary object of emotional attachment and the object of faith. God, for a believer, is an object of a deep emotional relation such as Father, Mother or Master and as Friend, Lover or even Husband. But in every case, the believer has a sense of deep respect for it that places it above and beyond all mundane relations. Devotees (*Bhaktas*), especially in *Vaiṣṇava* cult, describes the charm of the Lord Kriṣṇa and Ram's form with great adoration. But this is also regarded as a great virtue because meditating on them set a person free from the sensual infatuation of all mundane charms⁶.

Not only in Hinduism but in Semitic religions also God as an object of faith stands in some sort of emotional relation to the believer. In Sufism God is out and out an object of love. In orthodox Islam also *Allah* is regarded as the supreme master of the entire creation and human beings are asked to become his most loyal servants. The very opening of (*Al-Fatiha*) Holy Koran states:

“In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy, praise belongs to God, Lord of worlds, the Lord of Mercy the Giver of Mercy, Master of the Day of Judgment. It is You; we worship; it is You we ask for help. Guide us to the Straight path: the path of those you have blessed those incur no anger and who have gone astray.”⁷



These and many other statements depict a clear relation that every human being is supposed to have with *Allāh*. Complete loyalty to God is not possible without a deep sense of surrender before Him. This is certainly a special form of emotional relation.

In Judaism, *Jehovāh* is not a God of love but of power who inspires awe in human beings. This also is an emotional relationship with the object of faith; it is not a mere factual belief that such a powerful existing. Emotional relation may be of any sort. It is not necessarily a relation of love. Some sort of emotional relation connects the believer with God in such a way that not merely his mind but his entire being is involved. This is essential to make God an object of faith. Without this sort of personal involvement, God may be an object of thought and may interest a metaphysician but can't be of any interest for the believer.

Evaluative belief is different from thought. Thought doesn't necessarily manifest in the behaviour of the person who thinks. Evaluative belief does manifest in the behaviour of believer (not only religious believer). One may be rationally convinced about the non-existence of entities like a ghost but if one believes in ghosts then it will be expressed in some tangible aspects of his behaviour. His rationally accepted thought that 'ghosts don't exist', doesn't manifest in his behaviour. How one behaves discloses what one believes. No such internal connection is there between thought and behaviour. To put thought into action one has to exercise one's will. What one believes gets translated into one's behaviour without one's exercise of will. By closely watching one's behaviours we can understand what one believes. The fact is that a person's behaviour shows what he believes; it shows that his way of one's behaving involves his being and not merely his thoughts⁸ The relation between the object of belief and the believer is, therefore, not rational. It is a non-rational relation. In case of belief in God (i.e. belief in an image) this relation takes the form of emotional relation. Faith in God (being a variety of belief) also gets translated into the behaviour of a believer because he has an emotional relation with Him. He does certain things that a non-believer finds irrational or useless. He abstains from certain things in which a non-believer finds no reason. So, the image of God –the object of faith, is an object that involves the believer's being and not only his thought.

Realm of Religious Experience and Transcendence

In the course of cultural upbringing, a person may have got only a vague idea that there is such a being that possesses extraordinary powers and helps people who surrender himself for help. Having such a belief as part of believer's cultural upbringing is also a necessary condition for switching of his consciousness to transcendence. The crisis tends to mould the consciousness of believer away from the objective world and If the belief in God becomes an anchor to hold the attention of the person then the person's consciousness is raised to the realm of transcendence. Without having a belief in divinity, the consciousness of a person cannot remain withdrawn from this world for a considerable period. The God of person's belief (about whom we can talk at present as a purely psychological entity) due to its overpowering attribute becomes a positive object in which the person's attention gets fixed sufficiently for a long period. God is described as a benevolent, omnipotent and omniscient person that always protects the persons who take refuge in him. He forgives the greatest sins of the persons who have lost all hopes, comes to surrender at his feet. These attributes of God that become the



content of the belief of the person in misery become an appropriate anchor for holding his attention. The complete loss of hope from this world makes the emotional stage setting for a person's attention to focus on the object of faith.

The fact that an aesthetic experience draws the person's attention and puts him above the influence of material forces temporally enables it intelligible that God's emotionally overwhelming attributes may also put a person's psyche beyond material influence. The object of emotion then makes the person aware of the unknown dimension of his being in which he gets overjoyed with the immediate awareness or freedom from the afflicts of the world. The God of his belief now remains not merely a psychological entity but it acquires an experiential significance. After this experience, the person falls back to the mundane level generally. This experience is generally explained by others as abnormal experience, which is not commonly available to most people, or it can be explained by some postulation of the metaphysical entity.

Axiological Aspect of Religiosity

Religiosity indeed has an axiological dimension since the object of faith is an embodiment of highest virtues who always inspires believers to acquire moral virtues. Believers have a very strong emotional relation which can be partly described in terms of some human relationships such as Master, father, mother, lover etc. An object of faith is essentially the object that embodies certain or all the virtues in it that are deemed as the cardinal. Without embodying higher virtues no object can become an object of any one's respect either. Only that object can become the object of faith for a believer to whom he thinks some or all those virtues are enshrined but It becomes a complex issue and involves the cultural factors, which vary from one community to another community. There are certain attributes of the object of faith that are regarded as the highest in one culture and cannot be regarded so in another. Celibacy (*Brahmacarya*) is such a value that is regarded as one of the highest virtues in Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism but not regarded to be so in Christianity, Islam. The image of the object of faith is always culture-specific and cult specific. On the contrary, a believer may accept more easily that image of God as an object of his faith, which embodies those virtues that his culture and cult of religion accept as the highest. Some of them may be rationally unimportant (e.g. being attractive) but a person may find it of very great importance due to his cultural upbringing and initiation into a cult.

It is a fact that the image of God as an object of faith is culture-specific but it doesn't mean that the image is merely an imaginary creation of deliberate invention of the collective psyche to achieve some earthly goals as it is explained by Durkheim⁹. Why some qualities of the human character become acceptable to human beings in general and a specific cultural group, is a question of historical importance and many new facts regarding the development of human civilization can be discovered in researching about it. However, it is philosophically more important to note that there is no fixed rationality of accepting one set of virtues as cardinal instead of some other. Rather it is the pre-rational acceptance of them that delineates the specific traits of rational choice of human species.

Aesthetical Aspect of Religiosity



Phenomenologically when faith becomes valuable intrinsically, it is not merely psychological support that helps in bringing some sort of stability in human life. It is somewhat like an aesthetic experience. An aesthete enjoys looking at nuances. He distances himself from the overt effect of the artwork and tries to see its inner construction. Looking at an art-work from a distance is not an imagination of the aesthete, it is an experience for him that can veritably be called a cognitive experience. He comes to *know* certain things about a piece of art with some sort of quantitative details that could be known only in this experience. The experience of the content of faith is somewhat like an aesthete's experience and is valuable unto itself. Emotive and cognitive aspects of the content of faith are not separable from each other but a believer takes interest in it primarily due to its emotive aspect however others, who have not undergone this experience try to understand the believer's experience due to its cognitive and practical aspects. For an aesthete looking at the work of art from a distance is not a dry monotonous job. An aesthete enjoys understanding an art-work. He gets great joy in his work and primarily it is the motivation for his work. He can't ignore the cognitive aspect of his work but ordinarily the typical joy of understanding and evaluating an art-work motivates and keeps him engaged in his work which is generally a monotonous job for the common folk. But others, who understand the importance of art-appreciation, give importance to it due to the truths that it reveals about and the practical effects that it leaves for the creation and appreciation of art. The cognitive and dynamic aspect of the experience of the art-appreciation is given more importance by others. Similarly, people who understand the intrinsic importance of faith give more importance to it due to its cognitive and practical aspect. Hence the intrinsic importance of faith is not a matter of subjective speculation of the believer.

Conclusion

The study shows that religiosity is not a homogenous but dynamic phenomenon. Its nature varies according to the intensity of emotion towards the object of faith. It is observed that there are two broad categories of religious believers. First includes those believers for whom faith functions as a means to achieve some other mundane goals. The second category consists of believers for whom faith functions as the end. Further, the research analyzes the mindset of different believers and explores how faith functions as means in the life of sufferers, persons who have mundane desires, and persons who have inner quests for knowledge. At times faith functions as end where a believer perceives within deep emotion the object of faith not as an image but living reality and his or her consciousness shifts from mundane affairs to the sacred realm. The study discusses the nature of the phenomenal experience of believers and finds that the consciousness of a believer has two dimensions: subjective and objective. Because a believer perceives within deep emotion the object of faith but at the same time the object of faith is not at all his or her imagination since one cannot arouse emotion by his or her sweet will. Further, the object of faith is supposed to be the embodiment of the highest virtues. Accordingly, religiosity has its axiological and aesthetical dimensions. Since the object of faith is the embodiment of the highest virtues who always inspires believers to inculcate these virtues in his or her character that is why different religious traditions have their religious ethics. The religiosity also has an aesthetical dimension in the



sense that as an aesthetician a believer within deep emotion perceives the object of faith (image) as reality but at the same time, he/she also distances himself from the image and experience the content and structure of emotion. The believer's experience of the emotional content of faith is almost like a person's fully conscious experience of the taste of an eatable. A person comes to know the taste of food more vividly if he becomes conscious of the experience of the taste. A believer, by becoming aware of the emotional content of faith, begins to enjoy the emotional content more sharply and with very high intensity. An ordinary believer gets some joy in the emotional attachment with the image of God. The believer, who becomes aware of his emotional attachment with God's image, is overwhelmed by it. After all the conscious experience of taste is not an imagination of the person. He knows the taste of the food that is there on his tongue. The cognitive nature of this experience can't be denied and the claim made by him on this ground can be inter-subjectively judged. The believer's experience of the emotional content of faith also has a genuine cognitive aspect and others, who have not undergone such an experience but understand it, can judge his claim objectively. Persons, who are said to have undergone the mystical experience, the ave faith of this level. But in most religious traditions (especially theistic religions) it is seen not only as of the special feature of a few persons' biographies but also desired from every person to achieve it. In every religion, those persons are revered who have been given the boon of this level of faith. It shows that it is regarded to be a desirable state for all the people despite acknowledging that it can't be achieved by human effort only.

References and Notes:

¹ *Srimad Bhagwad Gita*, Ch.7.16

'*catur-vidhā bhajante mām janāh dukrtino rjuna,*
arto jijñasur arthārthi jnani ca bharatarsabha'

² R. W Hepborn, a paper '*From Word to God*' in *Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford University Press, 1976 p 169-178.

³ This diagnosis of metaphysical error makes good sense of Kant's procedure in the 'Antinomy of Pure Reason', where he presents a series of conflicts between the form and limits of sensibility as structured by the understanding, on the one hand, and the pretensions of unconditioned reason, on the other. In early sketches of the Dialectic (Reflections 4756-60, 1775-7, 17: 698-713), Kant diagnosed all of the illusions of traditional metaphysics in this form. In the Critique, however, Kant singled out some metaphysical beliefs about the self and about God for separate treatment in the 'Paralogisms of Pure Reason' and 'Ideal of Pure Reason'. These sections offer powerful criticisms of traditional metaphysical doctrines, but require a more complex explanation of metaphysical illusion than the single idea of reason's search for the unconditioned. (Rutledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edward Craig, Routledge, New York, 1998, p 188)

⁴ The devotees who worship idols of God don't take it as a material object but see it as a form of God Himself. Idol is not regarded as a symbol that stands for God who is somewhere else. In the eyes of the devotees God Himself is present before them in His idol.

⁵ In *Ethica* Spinoza clearly makes a distinction between active emotion of joy and passive emotion (or passion). Active emotion of joy is attained by rational understanding of the world. The greatest active joy is obtained only by '*Scientia Intutiva*' i.e. - intuitive knowledge in which every thing is seen in necessary relation with God. This



results in the rational love of God (*Amor Intellectuaeis Dei*). A believer's faith in God necessarily involves an emotion but a higher sort of emotion which can be called rational love in Spinoza's terminology or can be referred to by any adjective for it that place it a level higher than mundane love.

⁶ Tulsidās, Surdās and other sufi poets have described the charm of God in great poetic style and clearly have stated that meditating on the form of the lord completely liberates human beings from the control of 'Kāma' – the mythological representation of sensual infatuation of bodily charm.

⁷ The Qur'an, translated by MAS Abdel Haleem, Oxford University Press New York 2004, p 3

⁸ Braithwaite, R. B, a paper 'An Empiricist's View of The Nature of Religious Belief' in *Philosophy of Religion*, edit. Basil Mitchell, Oxford University Press, 1976 p 72-79

⁹ In *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* by demonstrating that cognitive and moral phenomena found their roots in primitive religious life Durkheim sought to prove that everything is social in its origins. This was, in the end, Durkheim's master thesis, that society is the source of everything that makes us human - moral rules, altruism, rules of logic, cognitive categories, and ultimate beliefs and values. Accordingly, he constantly downplayed the role of psychology, of economics, of history, and constantly emphasized the role of collective representations in shaping the life of society and of its members. Perhaps Durkheim's philosophy was exceedingly sociocentric; it was certainly unambiguous and forceful in making the case for sociology as the science of moral life. (See- *Rutledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Edited by Edward Craig, Routledge, New York, 1998)