CHAPTER - III

Pragmatism of William James

In this chapter we can note the development of pragmatism following the works of William James. James who lived from 1842-1910 is one of the prominent philosophers of America of the 19-20th century. He made a great contribution into the development of a philosophical thought of his time. It was James who was mainly responsible for bringing the pragmatist movement into the foreground of philosophical scene. James was basically a man of science but he moved to psychology and then to philosophy in later years. It is worth mentioning that he widely uses his experience as a psychologist in his works of philosophy. In his psychological writings, James presents the facts of mental life as always intimately related to men’s biological needs and functions.

3.1. James as a person:

As a person James was a scientist. He qualified as a medical doctor and then turned to psychology which he taught as a Professor at Harvard from 1873 to 1898 --- a period during which experimental methods were rapidly being applied to psychological questions. But unlike Peirce, James was never greatly influenced by the spirit of the laboratory methods. He encouraged on the development of laboratory
psychology but him self contributed little to it. Besides possessing immense native intelligence, he has an unusual sensitivity to the predicaments whether be it moral, political, religious or philosophical. As a result he devoted the last fifteen years of his life in creating a new metaphysics by the name of radical empiricism.

From his undergraduate days, James was very much disturbed by the allegedly materialistic implications of certain recent scientific discoveries, in particular the laws of energy and Darwin's theory of natural selection. These doctrines seems to imply that the human mind is nothing but an impotent register of physical forces. This picture of mind as an automaton is a grim and ghastly framework: the conception of the universe as a single mechanical system throughout which entropy, the numerical expression of the non-availability of energy is constantly increasing.

James became convinced that this nightmarish world-picture was not necessitated by actual doctrines of the sciences. He was looking for a universe that is infinitely richer, warmer, more varied, in fact a place in which human thoughts, choices and aspirations count for something that makes a real difference and can have values and justification.

There are two aspects of James' philosophy: pragmatism and radical empiricism. While explaining pragmatism, James tries to present a kind of philosophy that preserves a cordial relation with facts. He utilized this philosophy for criticizing the concepts like monism, the block universe, the idealistic doctrine of internal
relations and all other views that present reality as a static whole. His belief was that philosophical theories were true in dealing with the facts of common human experience. This made purely logical arguments unsuited in applying to concrete facts according to James. His critical arguments regarding logic were associated with the logic of Hegel. It is against this background that we have to understand the whole of James' philosophy.

James' objections to Hegelianism were emotional and moral. What he finds morally shocking is that Hegelianism takes reality beyond the universe. For them, pain and evil are not real. According to Bradley, the Absolute is the richer for every discord and for all the diversity which it embraces. Keeping oneself aloof from the society and thinking that all suffering would be resolved in the higher synthesis is wrong. According to James reality persists in this universe and through constant struggle we have to adjust ourselves with the real facts of life.

The treatment of relation in the Hegelian method is not satisfactory to James. According to the Hegelian method every relation into which a thing enters makes a difference to its identity. To unite the existence of one thing with every other thing, there exists some higher idea. But according to James, relations other than those which are merely formal are to be taken at their face value, that is, as maintaining genuine factual connections between the terms in which they are related. And this belief in the power of related terms that
preserves their separate identities makes him declare himself as a pluralist.

James was also against intellectualism which the Hegelian system equates with abstract thinking. According to him, abstract thinking leads to discursive thought that cannot do justice to the continuity of our experience. He was led into a form of irrationalism which avowedly owed much to Bergson. Following Bergson he comes to believe that 'instead of being interpreters of reality, concepts negate the inwardness of reality altogether.' Thereby he concludes that philosophy should seek the kind of living understanding of the movement of reality which results from putting oneself in intuitive sympathy with things in the making, and not follow science in vainly patching together of its dead results.

Another phase of James' philosophy is that he was strongly preoccupied with the question of religious belief. His interest lies not only to understand religion as a phenomenon, but he was anxious to persuade himself of its truth. James' conception of God is typical. He believes that God being omniscient who still permits all pain and evil to exist in the world cannot be considered as a religious object. Only that God is worthy who 'works in an external environment, has limits and has enemies.' Such a God would be or possess a super-human consciousness but he would also be finite, 'either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once.' But he also did not deceive himself in believing that the existence of a Being of limited superiority could be proved by standard theistic arguments.
This point is of fundamental importance for understanding James' thought since his desire to make room for religious belief, without either relaxing his intellectual standards or manipulating the evidence is also one of the principal motives for his pragmatism. In particular, it has also strongly coloured his interpretation of the pragmatic theory of truth.

3.1.1. Major Works by William James:

Throughout his life James wrote many books and articles. His first great work, indeed his chief masterpiece is *The Principles of Psychology*, published in 1890. It is a large work, whose subject matter is the human mind. The work is an attack on the view of man as an automaton. Its originality is that it combines the attack with an approach which is strictly experimental, naturalistic and scientific. Thus, James in describing the workings of the mind, does full justice to its physiological conditions but he refuses to reduce its workings to those physiological conditions. For example, he generally begins his work with a detailed study of the brain and the nervous system and comes to the view that it would be fallacious to identify the mind with the brain.

During 1890's he also published a number of other works which indicate the pragmatic and psychological focus of his thought. James in his early manhood, through his struggle with nervous depression came to the view that one is entitled to believe
independently without reason. Some truths, says James, can be discovered only by those who have the faith to take them as such. *The Will to Believe* is his mature treatment of this particular theme. The title of the book seems to be unsatisfactory for James, he wished if he had entitled it as *The Right to Believe*. Will suggests choice but choice does not mean that one is suppose to believe whatever one wishes. What he means to say is that the conditions for knowing the truth are wider than simply rational and some of these conditions may on occasions take precedence over it. While writing this book he has two aims---- first, he wishes to show that inquiry has its affective as well as its intellectual conditions and second that in some circumstances the affective may take precedence over the intellectual. In *Will to Believe* the essay ‘Sentiment of Rationality’ conveys the psychological bent in James’ philosophy. In this essay James says that genuine options (that is, options that are living, forced and momentous) may be lawfully be settled by the way of our ‘passional nature’. That means, there are cases where faith creates its own verification. Faith, in short, is a condition for finding the truth. James extends the ideas taken from this essay to explain the truth of morality and religion. Another essay ‘The Dilemma of Determinism’ from the book *Will to Believe* shows his sensitivity to the moral and metaphysical aspects of the problem of freewill. In this essay James realizes that psychology cannot show the will to be free. James felt that it is philosophy that can provide us with a reasonable justification. But the kind of
philosophy that he is thinking about is a philosophy of action, a philosophy of concrete particular——in short, pragmatism.

James tries to relate pragmatism to living situations. He believed in its wide scale usefulness. After delivering his California lecture 'Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results' in 1898, he wrote his famous books Pragmatism in 1907 and The Meaning of Truth in 1909. In his book Pragmatism, James endeavours to apply Peirce's method to a number of philosophical questions, some metaphysical, some ethical: but the most interesting and least satisfactory chapters of his book are concerned with the meaning of the word truth with its cash-value when it is subjected to the test of Peirce's pragmatist maxim. James' broad answer to the question is that truth is what pays or what works. If the results of accepting any belief are good or satisfactory, that belief is to be accepted as the truth. Closely bound up with this account of truth, were James' contentions —firstly, most of our intellectual beliefs can be justified only on grounds of their social, moral and biological utility and secondly, that on issues in which purely intellectual considerations afford virtually the guidance to our beliefs, the claims of our passional and volitional nature should be allowed to decide what we shall believe. In 1901-02 he published another book titled The Varieties of Religious Experience which is a combination of psychological and philosophical study of religion. In 1909 he published his two famous books named Pluralistic Universe and Essays in Radical Empiricism. In these books he blended
his psychology with his philosophy on the more difficult subjects of epistemology and metaphysics.

3.2. Psychological background of James' Pragmatism:

James was basically a psychologist. The kind of psychology that James insists on is introspective psychology. For James, introspection is practically valuable. He expresses his conviction in the much important 1884 essay "On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology" that makes fragmented reappearances six years later in various chapters of *Principles of Psychology*. In this book James wrote on introspection as - 'Introspective Observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always. The word introspection need hardly be defined--- it means, of course, the looking into our own minds and reporting what we there discover. Everyone agrees that we there discover states of consciousness.'

Hence introspection is a kind of inner observation. While looking inside our minds we notice the presence of moods, feelings, impulses, thoughts, images and so on. To reject introspective infallibility James changes the meaning of introspection to a more complex kind of inferential process called retrospection.

As an example of introspective observation, we can consider a subjective state like anger. When we introspect such a state, firstly we have to feel that state and secondly we have to notice it. James query was that how can a subjective state be first felt without being noticed?
If this is the case, then such a subjective state should be observed because noticing is also a form of observation.

The question arises here is whether introspection is an available human capability? If we admit observation that can occur with the subjective state, then introspection can be within the reach of human capability. Thus James' pragmatism and his introspective psychology are reciprocative in certain respects. He recognizes how introspection can help in finding the cash-value of terms such as 'I', 'will', consciousness sense, attention etc. Our experiences should be exploded introspectively for enjoying the experimental discoveries and also for revealing the pragmatic value of notions like, oneself. If we fail to appreciate this point then it seems to be futile in reading *The Principles of Psychology*. This book is a monumental attempt to connect introspectively philosophical and psychological concepts with relevant experience so that the experiential differences (cash-value) made by the distinctions contained in the concepts are disclosed.

The philosophy of pragmatism emerges from his introspective psychology as indicated by his claim in the above mentioned book. It goes as - "That theory will be most generally believed which besides offering us objects able to account satisfactorily for our sensible experience also affects those which are most interesting, those which appeal most urgently to our aesthetic, emotional and active needs."6 Thus introspection (both as observation and retrospection) is required for deciphering what really appeals to our aesthetic and emotional needs.
Introspection further suggests that one's beliefs are to be based only on what one believes to be true or what to appeal to one's ought need. Thus, introspection is a process of self-dialogue that seeks to establish sincerity, understanding of the purpose, motivation and honesty in knowledge-claims.

Thus, James' pragmatism as rooted in introspective psychology can be connected with the post-modern era. We speak about philosophy as a conversation but we hardly speak of philosophy as conversation to oneself. In an era, where skepticism, relativism, anti-foundationalism has clouded our philosophical horizon, his finest irony is that a new sense of oneself is needed for finding one's own way. Our way of thinking and behaving needs an ego to construct a foundation from which as well as by which intellectual, moral and aesthetic priorities can be nurtured.

In the later years, when James shifted his study area from psychology to philosophy, he explains mental life in two ways. Firstly, from the plausible thesis that certain biological interests underlie, or provide some of the necessary conditions of all our thinking, he express his view that the sole function of thought is to satisfy certain interests of the organism, and the truth which lies in such thinking ultimately satisfies these interests. Secondly, whenever these interests are conceived as personal and subjective, we are to face with issues that cannot be settled on strictly intellectual grounds or on the evidence of actual experience. Thereby other factors deriving from the
passional and volitional side of our nature should be allowed to
determine our opinions. The issues James was thinking of were those
in which traditional, moral and religious beliefs appear to be
irresolvable. What we have here is simply a biologically-minded
psychologist’s re-statement of the view that in certain areas where
proof is impossible, faith is the one sole alternative that is reasonable
to embrace. Thus his psychological background paves the way for
explaining what pragmatism meant for James.

3.3. James on Pragmatism:

Pragmatism is not a new philosophy. But James’ interpretation
is new. He defines it by using a sub-title in his book *Pragmatism* as a
new name for old ways of thinking. This title consists the entire
meaning of pragmatism as propagated by James.

Philosophy, no doubt, enriches and stimulates human
imagination. Although it broadens human vision, but many a times it
is seen that philosophy is divorced from the actual problems of life. As
William James puts it, philosophy is supposed to make some
important positive connections with our actual life and the world. The
basis of his view is that philosophy in the shape of a dominant
outlook on man and the universe reaches down into the most
immediate concerns and activities of life. James bemoaned in the final
paragraph of his book *A Pluralistic Universe* that philosophers behave
"as if the actual peculiarities of life are irrelevant to the content of
truth."7 However, according to James, our experiences, our practical
affairs, purposes and daily activities cannot be irrelevant, rather it should be taken into account by the philosophy of the future. In fact, James tries to find out a living alternative to traditional philosophies. This alternative view is what we call pragmatism - an approach to gather philosophic conclusions solely from the particulars of life.

The pragmatism of William James awaits recovery and development by each of us. He gives more emphasis on the way individuals interpret conditions for the purpose of successful action. In James' view regarding pragmatism special emphasis is been given on practice, purpose and pluralism. We have to study each of these aspects separately.

3.3.1. Practice:

In James' pragmatism 'practice' is important in three different ways. Firstly, James insisted that philosophical problems should have their origin in practical activities, actual events, concrete situations and real experiences. Any philosophical problem cannot be a genuine problem unless we can find out the practical beginnings of these problems. Secondly, not only philosophical problems have their origin in practical activities, philosophical theories also have practical consequences. By practical consequences James understood the meaning of any philosophical theory which it explains. For James, there cannot be any meaning except the practical meaning. James identifies the pragmatic method as the effort to determine the meaning of a philosophy by tracing its practical consequences. In
Pragmatism James explains the pragmatic method “as the method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many? ---- fated or free --- material or spiritual?... disputes over such notions are unending. The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is ideal. Whenever dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other’s being right."8

He further expresses that the pragmatic method forbids us to use the names like God, Matter, the Reason, the Absolute, or Energy rather, “you must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, see it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be changed."9 Thus the pragmatic method varies from the metaphysical quest. Metaphysics rests on abstract entities but the pragmatic method tries to find meaning in particular facts of daily experience.

Thirdly, practical origin provides test to philosophy’s truth. What is the difference---- the practical difference between an idea or belief or philosophy that is true and the one which is false! ----to ask
this question is simply to apply the pragmatic method to the notion of truth. The notion of truth will be discussed elaborately later on.

3.3.2. Purpose:

If philosophy's origin, meaning and test of truth is rooted in practical activities, then they must be also purposeful. Human organisms have interests, tries to establish goals and thereby strive to fulfill those purposes. But human purposes cannot be fulfilled at a glance. For that, "we must find theory that will work; and that means something extremely difficult; for our theory must mediate between all previous truths and certain new experiences."\(^{10}\)

Here we can say that James sets forth not only a practical or instrumental account of truth but also a practical and instrumental view of mind. He regard mind as teleological. Explaining mind he says, "I mean by this that the conceiving or theorizing faculty.... functions exclusively for the sake of ends that... are set by our emotional and practical subjectivity altogether."\(^{11}\) Mind according to James is selective and thereby pays attention to some portions of reality. "The human mind is essentially partial... man always wants his curiosity gratified for a particular purpose."\(^{12}\) Human activities including the activities of the mind are always purposeful. The success of our activities depends solely in relation to these purposes and the means to realize them. According to James, we do not philosophize simply to arrive at any truth or true ideas rather we
philosophize in order to fulfill practical purposes, apart from which there is no truth at all.

3.3.3. Pluralism:

Pragmatism no doubt is a philosophy of practice and purpose but according to James, pragmatism is a philosophy of plural practices and plural purposes. Unlike traditional philosophies that emphasizes on absolute, eternal, the common and the one, James is in favour of change, relativity, individuality, difference, plurality.

James' insistence on pluralism rests on two facts --- firstly, to some extent our hopes and beliefs, desires, values and meanings seems to work in the lives of other persons. Secondly, individual experiences vary from one another.

Philosophically speaking, James explains three points of special importance. Firstly, any adequate philosophy should welcome diversities, differences of opinion among individuals. We cannot ignore these differences nor can we declare them unreal. Secondly, philosophy must make room for possibilities as well as for actual differences among persons. It must be pluralistic about the present and the future. This means that philosophy must be open minded and fallibilistic. Thirdly, for pluralistic pragmatism, truth must be present within all our finite experiences.

While explaining pragmatism, we should also explain the notion of truth as envisaged by James. Although James uses the term pragmatism to denote a particular method but eventually it becomes
synonymous with a generic theory of truth. The problem of truth serves as the edifice of his philosophy. Thus C.E.M. Joad writes, “the problem of truth and error is the central problem of pragmatism, and it is upon the answer it gives to this problem that pragmatism must stand or fall.”

3.4. William James’ view on Truth:

James’ notion of truth is a pivotal part of his book entitled *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. His view appears as a reaction against the Absolutists’ conception of truth. He begins by saying that truth is relational i.e. between idea and object. By using the term idea, he refers to any opinion, belief or statement. James’ conception regarding truth is a property of certain of our ideas. It implies that if our ideas agree with reality it becomes true and conversely if it disagrees, it becomes false. Truth in terms of agreement is a general way of explaining it. But there may be some ideas that do not agree with their objects. In such a situation, James says, “Grant an idea or belief to be true, it says, what concrete difference will its being true make in any one’s actual life. What experiences (may) be different will it being true make in any one’s actual life. What experiences (may) be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false. How will the truth be realized? What, in short, is the truth’s cash-value in experiential terms?” That is, if an idea or belief can be brought down to its practical relevance then it can be regarded as true. James says truth can also be judged
in experimental terms. Thus truth is subjected to verification. In other words, the workable ideas in experimental terms should be verified. Thus James says, "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot." James asserts that not only we can verify our true ideas but all our ideas that we can verify are true. James uses the same criterion to assert that true ideas are useful. Therefore James says "true is the name for whatever idea starts the verification process, useful is the name for its completed function in experience." 

When James says truth can be verified or it is useful, he at the same time also asserts that the truth is only the expedient in the way of our thinking. The truth is the expedient that is, all expedient thinking is true. Or, "an idea is true so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives." That means, all useful thinking or ideas are true. Thus, from James' illustration we can assert the following four propositions----

1. That we can verify all those of our ideas which are true.
2. That all those among our ideas which we can verify are true.
3. That all our true ideas are useful.
4. That all those of our ideas which are useful are true.
When James asserts that all truths are to be verified he actually means something different. He gives an anecdote to explain the point. Suppose, there is an object on the wall. We consider it to be a clock although none of us have seen the hidden works that makes it a clock. We regard it to be true without verifying it. If truth means verification process, how can this unverified truth be true? James here says that direct or indirect verification both are possible. Where circumstantial evidence is sufficient, we can go by eye witnessing. Thus if something works successfully without verifying then we can consider it to be true.

James also brings out the eternal character of truth. He says that we can form relation among the mental ideas where our beliefs may be true or false. Mental ideas do not require sense verification. According to James when we relate mental ideas, truth appears to be an affair of leading. He says we relate one abstract idea with another forming one principle which holds good to sensible facts of experience. He thereby says, ".... the truth of a state of mind means this function of leading, that is, worthwhile." He is of the opinion that the moment we experience something inspires our thought. The thought that springs out of the moment in our experience seems to be also advantageous. Thus, thought's guidance into the particulars of experience leading to the advantageous connection is also an indicative of truth.
“James also says that truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Rather it has dynamism inherent in it. Any idea is true or is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its verification.”19 But if truth is to be made, then truth is mutable. By truth's mutability he means that an idea might be true at one time, and also might be false at some other time.

James while dealing with the notion of truth, introduces a new concept, that is, human will. If we have belief in our will, then definitely human effort sooner or later will bear its fruits. Thus his pragmatic philosophy has its beginning in the epistemological background. It serves as a touchstone in other aspects of James' pragmatism like ethics, religion etc.

3.5. James' view on humanism:

Whatever we were discussing on James, it seems that we were moving away from real life concerns. But the pragmatic outlook with which he tries to explain his philosophy cannot avoid those questions pertaining to man and his concern of the world. So let us first admit that James philosophy is humanistic in nature. Next to that, we should also try to delineate the various facets of his humanistic approach.

Philosophy can but be an expression of the human way of being; "a philosophy is the expression of a man's intimate character, and all definitions of the universe are but the deliberately adopted
reactions of human characters upon it.\textsuperscript{20} James argues that since human contribution intrudes into all our thinking therefore the search for a disinterested, objective view is futile and impossible. All that we can hope to attain in a philosophy is the most adequate human perspective. The concerned perspective will be the one which exhibits true rationality —- i.e. satisfies all the demands (practical, intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and religious) and will constitute the sentiment of rationality. He maintains that monism's view of the world only satisfies the intellectual demand for unity. The other demands of rationality are neglected by monism, for it is forced to relegate man's practical and moral experience to the level of appearance. His philosophy, he argues, is truly a human philosophy because it finds rationality without resorting to extra-experiential sources:

Humanism is willing to let finite experiences be self-supporting.... The essential service of humanism ... is to have seen that the one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and hangs on nothing.

Besides letting human experiences be self-supporting, James melioristic philosophy constitutes the most adequate human philosophy, for it puts man in a truly central position.\textsuperscript{21} 

James argues that his melioristic pluralistic philosophy dignifies man. Man is responsible for his actions. He maintains that not only his melioristic view of the world is consonant with man's
moral and religious experiences, but it is, in fact, the world we experience:

In our cognitive as well as in our active life we are creative. We add, both to the subject and to the predicate parts of reality. The world stands really malleable waiting to receive its final touches at our hands. In such a world both man's philosophy and his activities are momentous parts of reality.

Man's philosophy, argues James, "is itself an intimate part of the universe and it may be a part momentous enough to give a different turn to what the other parts signify." That is, the world we experience is unfinished and in order to regard man's philosophy as central, we are to admit that men are free. James argues that the use of that freedom should be such that it change the shape of reality.

Thus James concludes by arguing that not only is an 'objective, total view of reality impossible, but it would be an inadequate view of reality for it would omit the human contribution.' He argues that not only men and his activities are the parts of reality, but because of the presence of man ' some of the realities that he declares true are created by his being there.' Thus the view of the world which did not give an account of man and the difference he makes would omit part of the real ---- to James' mind the most important part of the real.

Thus, the central concern of James' thought is man. He began his career with a psychological study of man. He then turns to an analysis of the ethical and the religious experiences of the whole man. In the first of his mature works, he applies the term humanism to his
pragmatism. There he argues that ideas can be pragmatically defined in terms of concrete human experiences, whether they are practical, ethical or religious. To an unascertainable extent James argues that truths are man-made products. James asserts that our truths are made in the way in which our beliefs come into existence. But sometimes false beliefs are seen to be true ones. James also illustrates the point that a man's belief often depends upon the previous experiences or interests or volitions of some other men. The existence of a true belief does depend in some way or other upon something that has previously existed in some man's mind.

James proposes that the human factor is so pervasive that we never encounter reality in itself. He says that it is not possible to notice a feature completely alien to us. We must be first told what it looks like before we can see it. Humanism holds that truths are human products made within the tissue of human experiences. Since the function of ideas is to lead us from the more familiar, more fixed parts of experiences to the novel, less fixed parts of experiences, the ideas which successfully lead to are deemed as true. James' theory of truth holds that successful leading can only be defined in concrete terms and that success is measured only when it satisfies the human interest which prompts enquiry.

Reality tolerates the human addition, says James. "We add, both to the subject and to the predicate part of reality. The world stands really malleable, waiting to receive its final touches at our hands."26 In other words, James' notion of truth involves a definite
view of the world. His view also proposes that ideas and reality are equal parts of experiences. He argues that no reference outside human experience is needed:

The one part of experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several respects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing.... humanism is willing to let finite experiences be self supporting.27

Thus, if the postulate of humanism is that the real and the human cannot be separated, then not only do science and the pursuit of truth posses a human significance, but humanity's concern with morality and religion must be in touch with reality.

3.6. James' view on Morality:

James' pragmatism is profoundly ethical and humanistic-oriented. In *Pragmatism* James made his moral conception of philosophy unmistakably evident in saying that "the whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me at definite instance of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one."28

James' moral focus is evident in his book *The Will to Believe* particularly in two of his essays namely, 'The Dilemma of Determinism' and 'The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life'. The most interesting part of James' work is his views on freewill and the role of chance in our life. In his famous essay 'The Dilemma of
Determinism' James rejects determinism on the ground that people do not have any free choices in one's life. So James appealed to experience to provide enough evidence for the existence of free choice. He estimates that feelings such as regret or sorrow do not make any sense unless there is some freewill. James believes that people experience regret or sorrow only because they could have done otherwise. He thinks that if determinism were true, then people could never have done otherwise.

In the same essay William James questions the following about determinism: What does determinism profess? It profess that those parts of the universe already laid down absolutely appoint and decree what the other parts shall be. The future has no ambiguous possibilities hidden in its womb: the part we call the present is compatible with only one totality. Any other future complement than the one fixed from eternity is impossible. The whole is in each and every part, and welds it with the rest into an absolute unity, an iron block, in which there can be no equivocation or shadow of turning. From these words we can judge about his views on the role of chance. This quotation makes obvious the fact that we and everything around us are predetermined. Consequently, people do not have any independent choice in their life. James expresses that: "The only deterministic escape from pessimism is everywhere to abandon the judgment of regret.... But does not this immediately bring us into a curious logical predicament? Our determinism leads us to call our judgments of regret wrong, because they are pessimistic in implying
that what is impossible yet ought to be. But how then about the judgments of regret themselves? If they are wrong, other judgments, judgments of approval presumably ought to be in their place. But as they are necessitated, nothing else can be in their place; and the universe is just what it was before, namely a place in which what ought to be appears impossible. We have got one foot out of the pessimistic bog, but the other one sinks all the deeper. We have rescued our actions from the bonds of evil, but our judgments are now held fast. When murders and treacheries cease to be sins, regrets are theoretic absurdities and errors. The theoretic and the active life thus plays a kind of see-saw with each other on the ground of evil. The rise of either sends the other down. Murder and treachery cannot be good without treachery and murder being bad. Both, however, are supposed to have been foredoomed; so something must be fatally unreasonable, absurd and wrong in the world."30

Although determinism stands as an obstacle for postulating freedom of the will, James still discusses his ideas on freedom in his famous book *The Will to Believe*. His explanation of freedom will be incomplete without discussing on the general theory of volition. According to James, volition is a psychological theory; its aim is to describe exactly what goes on in the mind of the thinker when one performs a voluntary act. James insists that we have to learn by experience and specify the movements which have to be undertaken if we are to succeed in acting. He set it down as certain that 'whether or no there be anything else in the mind at the moment when we
consciously will a certain act, a mental conception made up of memory images of these sensations, defining which special act it is, must be there. This means that every voluntary act has to be followed by a rehearsal. But this is not so. If the action is voluntary, there is indeed a sense in which one is bound to know what one is doing. According to James, there is no feeling of innervations between the idea of action and the actual performance of it. Movement seems to be the natural and the immediate effect of feeling and it is so found in reflex action, in emotional expression and also in voluntary life.

According to James, it is the essence of one's consciousness that instigates movement of some sort. This view will take him away from the supposition that pleasure and pain are the only spurs to action. Most of our daily activities we do are without any mental reference to pleasure and pain.

James refers will as a relation between the mind and its ideas. It is because we pay attention to our ideas or thought, that they compel us to carry out actions. He did not suggest that ideas are the only products of our will. On the contrary, he takes the view that our thoughts and feelings are supplied to us by external stimuli, and that the only role which thoughts can play is to pay more or less attention to them. Although James did not give importance in assuming 'will' to be a psychological process, but the view that he cannot avoid it is that the emotions that forces us to act are psychologically determined.
If our emotions are determined, what place will freedom have? Where lies our freedom? James would say that it may exist in the degree of attention that we pay to our ideas. Since we have no intellectual ground for concluding either that the will is free or it is not possible for us to suspend judgment, we are required to make an emotional choice. He opts for alternative of freedom mainly on ethical grounds. According to James, to the extent that an event is not governed by law, it must occur by chance. But this does not mean that in the sphere of human conduct, a man's actions may be entirely unrelated to his motives or his character: freewill operates only on the possibilities which really tempt human beings. But among these possibilities it may be a matter of chance that he will undertake one rather than the other.

Thus the ethical advantage of maintaining a belief in freewill is not so important. It is not clear that his rejection of determinism is mainly ethical. His emotional dislike is for the universe in which everything is previsible. In his ‘Dilemma of Determinism’ he associates indeterminism with pluralism. He makes no attempt to justify his belief in chance by any theoretical argument. He assumes that if its operation cannot be proved in the domain of human action, there is no hope of proving that it operates elsewhere.

According to James, there is no such thing possible as an ethical philosophy which can be dogmatically made in advance. In his another essay namely, ‘The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life’ James contention was that we ourselves have to determine the
content of ethical philosophy. In other words, there can be no final truth in ethics. In this said essay James investigates the origin and nature of moral ideals and finally he turns to the resolution of moral conflicts. Our discussion of James’ ethical thought will consist of three questions namely, the psychological, the metaphysical and the casuistic questions of ethics.

The psychological question asks for the historical origin of our moral ideals and judgements. According to the psychological background, James argues that the interests which control consciousness selection are structures given in human nature. Here, he tries to refine this claim by giving an account of the nature and origin of the structures which control moral choices.

James begins with an appraisal of two accounts—evolution and intuition to discover the origin of moral ideals. The evolutionist contends that ‘good’, ‘bad’ are simply remote associations with beneficial pleasurable experiences or harmful painful experiences. But James argues that all our ideals cannot be simply functions of association with sense impressions nor mere feelings of utility.

While the intuitionists hold that our ideals are apriori structures in human nature. Intuitionists are of the opinion that our ideas are sentiments of felt fitness which have nothing to do with habit or utility.

James explanation of the origin of the ethical ideals is a combination of the two positions. He begins by distinguishing the two kinds of experiences — front door and back door. Front door
experiences are experiences of adaptation and by association and habit we learn how to respond to the environment. While in the backdoor experience, the reaction of the mind is not adaptive response to environment rather in this case it is perception that leads to another mental attitude. For instance, our perception of fire may not wake any response associated with survival or comfort; instead we may struck by its beauty. This type of experience cannot be explained by simply association or habit --- rather it is a 'brain-born' experience.

Thus, James contends that many of the moral ideals are derived by back-door experiences that is, moral ideals are apriori structure in nature. But we cannot avoid 'front-door' experiences for they affect our moral ideals and our moral ideals cannot be divorced from the world in which we live in --- ideals might be 'brain-born' but they must be acted upon if they are to be meaningful.

James argues that moral ideals arise from the effect of front-door and back-door on an apriori elementary mental structure:

The moral principles which our mental structure engenders are quite as little explicable in toto by habitual experiences having bred inner cohesions. Rightness is not mere usualness, wrongness not mere oddity, however numerous the facts which might be invoked to prove such identity. Nor are the moral judgments those most invariably and emphatically impressed on us by public opinion. The most characteristically and peculiarly moral judgments that a man is ever called on to make are in unprecedented cases and lonely emergencies, where no popular rhetorical maxims can avail and the
hidden oracle alone can speak; and it speaks often in favour of conduct quite unusual, and suicidical as far as giving popular approbation goes.\textsuperscript{32}

Thus his account of moral ideals are an outcome of the critique of both the habitual association and the a priori\textsuperscript{2} structural accounts. James opts for the combination of both the accounts---- although ideals are derived from back-door experiences working on the apriori structures of the mind, they must feel the corrective pressure of front-door experiences, else they will not guide our behaviour.

Although James' account of the origin and nature of moral ideals proves unsatisfactory, he expresses his own dissatisfaction in his book *Principles of Psychology*, mainly for that the desires and interests which control consciousness selection are simply given structures in man's nature. If moral ideals were given structures, one would expect unanimity in moral matters. The fact is that he attempts to account for the individual differences and conduct in terms of each man's unique experience moulding the given structures of his nature. Obviously, if moral decisions are uniquely individual and are made in terms of one's moral ideals, then it would likely to conflict with the moral ideals of his neighbour or the moral code of the society. James attempts a resolution of these conflicting moral hierarchies in his discussion of the third question of moral philosophy that is, the casuistic question.
The metaphysical question asks about the meaning of the words good, ill and obligation. The meaning of such moral terms cannot arise in a world without sentient beings. So let us suppose that the universe is composed of solitary sentient being. But the consciousness of 'good', 'right', 'will', be one-sided if our universe is composed of single being ---- what is good is good as he is the sole arbiter of such values. In such a universe with a sole possessor of values, there can be no question of truth or falsity of moral judgments. " In such a universe, it would be absurd to raise the question of whether the solitary thinker's judgments of good and ill are true or not. Truth supposes a standard outside of the thinker to which he must conform; but here the thinker is a sort of divinity, subject to no higher judge."33 But when our universe will consist of plural sentient beings, the ethical situation becomes complex and several possibilities seems to obtain. The thinkers may agree or disagree with each other's attitude about good and evil. Therefore, the question of truth or falsity of moral judgments holds meaningful in a pluralistic world. At the same time James is of the opinion that there must be some which have the more truth or authority and to which others ought to yield. Here, the word ought, the notion of obligation needs justification. Thereby James states, "we see not only that without a claim actually made by some concrete person there can be no obligation, but that there is some obligation wherever there is a claim. Claim and obligation are, in fact, co extensive terms; they cover each other exactly."34 Thus, the metaphysical question concerns with
the view that the words 'good', 'right', 'obligation', have no absolute natures and are independent of sentient beings who can feel the difference between various moral terms.

The casuistic question deals with the measure of the various goods and ills that men recognize to bring out the true order of human obligation. James examines that our moral ideals differ from one another. Our society has to adjust with individuals of varying temperaments. If each individual acts according to his moral ideal, there may be moral chaos. Our society is already ordered by moral codes. Thus there are moral conflicts that cannot be settled by adjusting individual's moral code with society's moral code because the individual's uniqueness cannot be fully expressed. According to James, an impartial test of competing ideals is difficult to find because there appears always some conflict among the impartial tests. Therefore, the real ethical ideal is inclusiveness — attempting to satisfy as many demands as possible. However, if moral conflicts were always resolved by an alignment of the individual's moral sense with society's existing moral code, the moral judgments which James considers paradigmatic (i.e., an individual in response to his unique sensibilities rising to challenge the status quo) would never be operative. At this point James turns to religious experience in order to offer the two following suggestions. First, having belief in God gives an individual the courage to adopt the strenuous mood (that mood which strains to lift the real to the ideal) than the genial mood (that lowers ideals to fit the real). Second, religious experience produces a
distinctive kind of ethical excellence. With this reference to religion in the context of ethics we can turn to James' religious philosophy explaining how closely religion and ethics are interrelated in James' mind—- religion promotes ethical action and conversely, ethical actions are used to evaluate religious experience.

3.7. James' view on religion:

James' religious discussion is also bound up with his pragmatic method. Religious discussion consist of questions like - Does God exist? or What is the relation between God and man? He considers these questions to be irrelevant. As a pragmatist James' concern is to show how religion affects mankind. In fact, religion is humanistic in nature. According to James, religion offers peace and tranquility to man and unites them with the supernatural power. The truth or falsity of religion is a secondary matter for him. The primary thing about religion is that it appears useful to man. It is better to accept it than to be deprived of its benefits. On this account James said, "We cannot escape the issue by remaining skeptical.... because, although we do avail error in that way if religion be untrue, we loose the good, if it be true, just as certainly as if we positively choose to disbelieve."35 He further says, "on pragmatic principles if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the world, it is true."36

Pragmatism does not offer us with a philosophy of religion. It gives only a description of the effects of religion on human beings. James analyses the religious experiences of seers though he himself
have no vision of them. Just as a physician understands the cause of fever and drunkenness without himself being in those conditions, similarly James has no ecstasy and experience of God. His sole effort is to show by analysis the emotive and pragmatic motive of man in religion.

In 1901-02 James gave the Gifford lectures on Natural Religion (at Edinburg) and these lectures were published in 1902 in his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The first half of this book which have twenty lectures deals with the description of religious experiences and the other half is concerned with the metaphysical analysis of the same. Accordingly, the volume was subtitled as *A Study of Human Nature*. This subtitle is of immense importance in our study of James' thought on religion.

At the outset of his Gifford lectures William James makes it clear that his approach to religion was like a psychologist. Thereby his treatment of religious experiences will be psychological. However, the kind of psychology with which he wants to identify his approach is not clear. It needs to be mention here that he makes slight modifications in his own view on psychology. In *Principles of Psychology* he defines the term psychology as the science of mental life; while in his other book entitled *Briefer Course* he defines psychology as 'the description and the explanation of states of consciousness as such.' As a 'Science of Mental Life', psychology will include within itself among other things, the theories of the knowing relations of consciousness to objects independent of consciousness or the relation of minds to other
objects. On the other hand when it is defined as the description and explanation of states of consciousness psychology is more restricted and excludes issues of metaphysics, axiology and the theory of knowledge. Indeed, in *Briefer Course* he tries to present psychology as an empirical 'natural science'. The most plausible hypothesis is that in *Varieties* James will proceed along the lines of psychology as a 'natural science' of consciousness.

Next to this, we need to attend to the line of demarcation that James makes between existential and spiritual or value judgments. Notably, in third paragraph of lecture I of his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James as a psychologist provides us with "a descriptive survey of human religious propensities, of religious feelings and religious impulse drawn from those more developed subjective phenomena recorded in literature produced by articulate and fully self-conscious men, in works of piety and autobiography."37 He also explains that we should not only answer the question such as what are the religious propensities? but also should give importance to question like what is their philosophical significance? The first question is an existential question concerning facts. The second question is a value or spiritual question. So far as the first question is concerned James bases his description of religious propensities, feelings and impulses in large measures on the utterances of 'religious geniuses' or 'pattern setters' rather than on those who bases their religion at 'second-hand'. At the same time James also asserts that the value of religious attitudes, beliefs and way of life “can only be
ascertained by spiritual judgments --- judgments based on our own immediate feeling and secondarily on what we can ascertain of their experiential relations to our moral needs and to the rest of what we hold to be true."38

In any case James believes that the criterion he adduces is pragmatic which is similar to that of the empiricists’ in general that is, by their fruits you shall know them, not by their roots. Thus, James employs both the existential or descriptive method and the philosophical method to explain religion. The philosophical method involves the examination of judgments upon the moral usefulness of religious experience. It also involves the description of the relation of such experience to the rest of what we believe or hold to be true. For example, at a point where he expresses the implication of the “gospel of healthy mindedness” with the life experiences of the “sick-soul”, he draws references from the philosophical theology as professed by the advocates of the ‘mind-cure’ religion, whose utterances tends to be monistic, but their attitude towards disease implies that it can be overcome by union with higher presence. The higher presence need not be the absolute whole of things, it needs to be simply a part, if only it is the most ideal one.

In general, when religion is taken as a matter of discussion, it embraces the reality of the Unseen or God. James in his book Varieties of Religious Experience (lecture III) entitled “The Reality of the Unseen” discusses at length on this issue. From this lecture our concern is to analyse whether James is here engaged in a solely
descriptive enterprise, a description of consciousness or is venturing into territory having possible philosophical significance.

James first tries to explain the Reality of the Unseen through psychological interpretation. According to James, human beings are endowed with certain psychological peculiarities of 'belief' in an object which we cannot see. He says, "all our attitudes moral, practical or emotional as well as religious are due to the object of our consciousness, the things we believe to exist, whether ideally along with ourselves. Such objects may be present only to our thought. In either case they elicit from us a reaction; and the reaction due to things of thought is notoriously in many cases as strong as that due to sensible presence." Keeping aside beliefs founded upon rationalistic arguments such as the proof of God's existence drawn from the order of nature he concentrates upon "the existence in our mental machinery of a sense of present reality more diffused and general than that which our special senses yield." James' point is that in addition to the ideas of the more concrete religious objects, religion is full of abstract objects which prove to have an equal power. Abstract objects such as transcendental ideas of the soul, God and immortality, which despite their lacking sense-content do have a definite meaning for our practice in the sense "quasi-sensible" realities directly apprehended.

According to James, along with the descriptive study involved in the psychological peculiarities of beliefs in the Unseen, we may be wrong if we neglect its metaphysical significance. James associates
the dumb intuitions of the reality of the Unseen with mysticism, a form of religious experience he takes seriously in his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*. James refers to the distinction between knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge about to explain the whole discussion mentioned above. "All the elementary nature of the world .... must either not be known at all or known in this dumb way of acquaintance without knowledge about." Whatever we know by knowledge of acquaintance, we cannot impart to others. They must make the acquaintance for themselves. On the contrary, anything which is acquainted or known to us regarding the Unseen is present in our minds and we have a clear idea of it. And that idea or presence of the Unseen provides us with joy which results from absolute self-surrender to God.

With this introduction let us penetrate into the basic characteristics of religion as envisaged in the *Varieties of Religious Experience*— As a starting point James states his well known formulation, "Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine." Thus, religion lies in the inner lives of the individual. It appears to be private and personal in nature. Following on this flexible definition James moves back and forth between specifications of feelings, acts and experiences on one hand and specifications of what may be considered as the divine — that is, between the subjective and the objective poles of
religious experience. On the other hand, we shall enumerate these subjective and objective features as stated in his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*:

1. 'Divine' denotes not a deity in concrete, nor a superhuman person, but the immanent divinity in things, the essentially spiritual structure of the universe is the object of the transcendental cult.

2. The divine is 'active'. From the experiential point of view divine may be any object that is god like. Whatever is more primal and enveloping and deeply true can be treated as Godlike. Man's religion therefore can be identified with his attitude towards what he felt to be the primal truth.

3. Religious experiences are solemn, serious. James says, "The divine shall mean for us only such a primal reality as the individual feels impelled to respond to solemnly and gravely, and neither by a curse nor a jest."44

4. Moreover, religious response is energetic; Energy and associate terms such as 'hot' and 'cold' are words James favours throughout.

5. Religious response exceeds the moral frame of mind. Morality involves volitional effort, an athletic attitude, while in the religious state of mind "the will to assert ourselves and hold our own has been displaced by a
willingness to close our mouths and be as nothing in the floods and waterspouts of God."45

6. Finally religious state is one of happiness. But any form of happiness is not religious. The common sign of happiness are 'reliefs' occasioned by our momentary escapes from evils. But religious happiness is no mere feeling of escape. "It consents to the evil outwardly as a form of sacrifice ---- inwardly it knows it to be permanently overcome."46 It is "a higher happiness [that] holds a lower unhappiness in check."47

Thus James concludes with the following words: "Religion thus makes easy and felicitous what in any case is necessary; and if it be the only agency that can accomplish this result, its vital importance as a human faculty stands vindicated beyond dispute."48 So we find that in the lecture 'Circumscription of the Topic' James proceeds from simple to increasingly complex 'states' or 'fields' of consciousness. James refers these as predicates of individual men in their solitude. It depends on how we construe the individual's relation to the more or the divine.

It is not clear whether James himself was a religious person or not. On the contrary, in his book *Varieties of Religious Experience* he discusses various types of religious experiences starting from healthy-mindedness, with his distinction between an involuntary and a voluntary or systematic healthy-mindedness, to sick soul and divided self, to conversion, saintliness and mysticism. The sequence James
adopts conforms to the ideal progression of evangelical religious experience. This sequence provides the bulk of the concrete data upon which his own conclusions are based.

At the outset, James proceeds to distinguish between different types of religious temperament, the 'once-born' and the twice-born'. The 'once-born' also called the healthy-minded are those who find it natural to adopt a religious attitude. For them, faith is easier than doubt, the good of the world more obvious than the evil. James cites Walt Whitman as an example of healthy-mind.

On the other hand, for the 'twice-born' or for the 'sick-soul', it is the evil of the world which is more obviously impressive. For them, faith emerges out of the struggle with doubt and takes something of its tone from that struggle. James cites quotations from Leo Tolstoy to illustrate the sick-soul —

"I felt", says Tolstoy, "that something had broken within me on which my life had always rested, that I had nothing left to hold on to, and that morally my life had stopped. An invincible force impelled me to get rid of my existence, in one way or another. It cannot be said exactly that I wished to kill myself, for the force which drew me away from life was fuller, more powerful, more general than any mere desire. It was a force like my old aspiration to live, only it impelled me in the opposite direction. It was an aspiration of my whole being to get out of life."
It is quite evident from the above discussion that life has many meanings. The world that we perceive looks strange, remote, unreal etc. We notice that Tolstoy has nothing but a feeling of dread that makes him to feel as if he is alone in the world. This feeling of dread can be mitigated or overcome by the hope of finding the assistance of some one, that is, God.

The reason for his distinguishing between different types of religious temperament is that it enables James to illustrate one of his main themes, namely, that variety is a permanent feature of religion. Religion needs to be various because human nature has lots of variety. Thus, in comparing the 'once-born' with the 'twice-born', James' sympathies are more strong with the latter; it is the experience of the 'twice-born' that is more profound and takes in the greatest range of significant fact.

James point is that persons having sick-souls have to be 'twice-born' in order to be happy. Further works on psychology of character shows that some persons are born with inner constitution which is harmonious and well-balanced from the outset. Their impulses are consistent with one another and their will follow solely the guidance of their intellect. On the other hand some persons are oppositely constituted and their will power and intellect do not go hand in hand. James refers such persons as having a 'divided self'. The divided self can be transformed through conversion.
Thus for the sick soul to attain happiness the natural man has to die so that a new spiritual man may be born. A sick soul possesses a divided self composed of the natural (consciousness of the evil) and the spiritual (awareness of good) man. The process of conversion starts with the struggle between the two selves and comes to rest in a reunification characterized by peace, happiness and insight into religious truth. Here it is important to note that the converted sick-soul does not become a healthy-minded individual.

James summarizes his description of conversion as “the process... by which a self hitherto divided and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities.”

James recognizes two types of general conversion, namely, voluntary (a process of struggling away from sin) or self-surrender (a positive striving towards righteousness). In the volitional type the regenerative change is usually gradual and consists in the building up of a new set of moral and spiritual habits. On the contrary, in the latter (the self-surrender type), the sub-conscious effects are more abundant and often startling. There are two things in the mind of the candidate for conversion: first the present incompleteness or wrongness of the sin which he is eager to escape from and second the positive ideal which he longs to compass. The present wrongness is a far more distinct piece of our consciousness than the imagination which we aim at to achieve of any positive ideal. In most cases, we
are so engrossed in committing sin that conversion is just 'a process of struggling away from sin rather than of striving towards righteousness.' The religious ideals and desires which were previously peripheral of consciousness, begins to develop and unify when they are ripened, they suddenly burst upon consciousness replacing the old system of ideas with a new centre of life. In both types of conversion, the moment of rebirth occurs when the person give up the struggle and surrender himself to the mercy of the divine.

James also explains the instance of sudden conversion. The instances of sudden conversion seem to be neither active struggle nor an unconscious incubation. Sudden conversion seems to be miraculous and thereby a natural explanation is quite impossible. Rejecting this point, James says that conversion (either gradual or sudden) belong to a general class of phenomena called automatisms in which memories, feelings and thoughts though unconscious, definitely influence our conscious thought and behaviour. According to James, a personality is composed of both conscious and subconscious elements. Hence the eruptions of the subconscious are not miraculous incursions; rather they are manifestations of the subject's wider personality.

Unlike gradual conversion, sudden conversion does not require a long period of struggle for he possesses more active and well developed sub conscious self. His explanation of sudden conversion utilizes the framework of a shift in ideas and interests plus the existence of an active well-developed subconscious self. James
concludes with Starbuck’s definition that the effect of conversion is to bring with it ‘a changed attitude towards life, which is fairly constant and permanent, although the feelings fluctuate.... In other words, the person who has passed through conversion, having once taken a stand for the religious life, tends to feel themselves identified with it, no matter how much their religious enthusiasm declines.’

The above discussion deals with the human consciousness regarding religious impulse. The most important task left is to attain a spiritual judgment as to the total value and positive meaning of all the religious trouble and happiness. Thereby, our first task is to describe the fruits of religious life and then to judge them accordingly.

Explaining fruits of religious life James discusses saintliness, and the value of saintliness follow naturally from his inquiry into conversion. The saintly character is the character for which spiritual emotions are the habitual centre of the personal energy. The practical consequences of this affective state (that is saintliness) are a total surrender of self to God and to neighbour. Saintliness manifests itself in devotion, charity, strength of soul, purity, obedience, poverty and humility. All these phenomena in James’ view are not valuable. In this world, for example, evil is as often encouraged as thwarted by charity. Moreover, fanaticism is often exhibited by the saintly character in the pursuit of austerity and purity.

James is severe on ascetic qualities. He suggests that in an inverted form they place too much importance on the life of the body. He is of the view that anyone who is genuinely emancipated from the
flesh will look on pleasures and pains, abundance and privation as alike, irrelevant and indifferent. He can engage in actions and experience enjoyments without fear of corruption or enslavement. As mentioned in the Bhagavad-Gita, the one who need renunciation are those whose worldly actions are still unworldly attached thereto. The argument is somewhat curious. We may consider that anyone who involves in a worldly life is genuinely emancipated from worldly attachment. The question which James does not explain is how one becomes genuinely emancipated from worldly attachment whilst leading a worldly life? James' strategy is to distinguish between the saintly qualities in terms of social utility. The effect is to turn religion into a branch of social service. The fault lies in the indiscriminate use of utility as a criterion for truth. It is important to know about the social consequences of religion in order to show those who stand outside from it will loose something which is valuable. It is quite true to suggest that the value of religion lies wholly in the social consequences. Religion offers itself not as a supplement to ordinary life but as a transformation of the character. It could not be true unless and until in some respect it appears to the ordinary person not simply as strange but even as repugnant.

James tries to evaluate sainthood in terms of the present society. Our society contains both the aggressive (hard) virtues and the non violent (soft) virtues --- the fruits of sainthood would be valuable if they were to exhibit a mix of the soft and hard virtues. But the question is --- can sainthood be an ideal to present human society?
James here follows the same task as he did while treating the impact of morality. According to him, the real impact of religion urges improvement and upgradation in society. Our society has various multi-facet natures of individuals. Therefore adaptation of religion for all is a critical question. James’ point is that if we wish to retain environmental adaption as our evaluating criterion, we must have to decide whether “the seen world or the unseen world be our chief sphere of adaptation.” If we take the adaptation of the world as the criterion for judging the fruits of sainthood, we should examine the religious vision of that world --- that is, mysticism.

James begins his account of mysticism by giving four distinguishing characteristics: firstly, ineffability: “the subject of it immediately says that it defies expression that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words.” Mystical states must be experienced, that is, like feelings, they must be known by acquaintance; knowledge about them will not suffice. Secondly, although mystical states are akin to feelings, they have definite noetic quality. Although cognitive content cannot be articulated, a deep lasting personally authoritative insight into religious mysteries is conveyed. Thirdly, transience; these states are brief, rarely lasting even half an hour and lastly, mystical states are marked by passivity: “The mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power.”
Although the mystical state seems to be authoritative for the mystic, but the question arises as to what justification of the unseen world does it furnish for the rest of the mankind? James offers to answer in a three-fold way. Firstly, mystical states are authoritative: “If the mystical truth that comes to a man proves to be a force that he can live by, what mandate have we the majority to order him to live in another way?” Secondly, although a non-mystic person has no warrant to accept the mystic’s revelation, yet the mystical deliverances ought to constitute a presumption in behalf of the unseen world. Since it is only a presumption, thereby it must be tested along with our other presumptions that is, by experience. Thirdly, “the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe.” James suggests that reality cannot be grasped by ordinary process of sense perception. Although mystical states appears as superior to access the wider world, the mystical deliverances are so various, the non-mystic is forced to use the only test at his disposal, that is, experience.

James concludes that although mysticism tries to provide us with the religious vision of the unseen world, its testimony is too private to establish an objective warrant for the existence of the unseen world. Although mystical states fails to prove the existence of the unseen, but it expands the existence of mystical states of consciousness. James says at least mystical states constitutes a presumption in favour of the existence of the unseen world and its effects on men’s
lives. James then next turns to philosophy in order to establish a warrant for the existence of the unseen world.

James treatment of philosophical attempts to establish a warrant for religious belief is an extended claim that theological formulations and arguments are secondary products of religious primary source --- private religious sentiment. "These speculations must, it seems to me, be classed as over-beliefs, building out performed by the intellect into directions of which feelings originally supplied the hint."58 Though religious philosophy have its first expression in feeling, but feeling is private and dumb. Feeling provide an account of itself. Philosophy's attitude of looking into religion is opposite --- to find an escape from unwholesome privacy, to give public status and universal right of way to its deliverances, philosophy takes intellect as the ideal to prove the existence of the 'divine' objectively. We are thinking beings and therefore cannot exclude intellect from participating in any of our functions. Our personal ideals, religious and mystical experiences must be interpreted intellectually. "Conceptions and constructions are thus a necessary part of our religion."59

According to James, religious feeling is primary and prior to reason. Regarding the existence of God there are two camps: theist and atheist. The theist' premise is a non-rational feeling or intuition that the whole world is created and hence demands God as a creator. On the contrary, this view is not shared by atheist. Our attempt to delineate and specify faith with reason are valuable so far as they secure to enliven and solidify belief. For example, the attempts to
delineate the attributes of God. James submits that the delineation of the metaphysical attributes of God (aseity, oneness, simplicity, immutability etc) arise from a mistaken conception of thinking. If the metaphysical attributes of God do not make a difference in our conduct they are devoid of intellectual significance. Since these attributes: Call for no distinctive adaptations of our conduct, what vital difference can it possibly make to a man's religion whether they be true or false?60

According to James, religion should make a difference in human way of living. If the attributes of God do not bring about a change in our conduct, they are meaningless. James realizes that the moral attributes of God defines our conduct and thereby adds a meaning to faith. If we believe in God to be holy, omniscient, just or loving, such belief can determine positively our fears, hopes and expectations. Thus believe in the moral attributes of God guides our conduct towards God and our neighbour.

In order to establish religion through 'belief' or 'reason', James presents two claims: firstly, since religion is a matter of belief therefore reason cannot endanger belief by establishing a warrant for religious experience. Secondly, reason is valid until and unless it can contribute to serve the believer by making a practical difference in his actions. So James argues that religious experiences occur within a belief state and since the factors which govern this belief are pre rational, therefore reason cannot engender belief. Thus, philosophy in
this sphere is a secondary function that unable to warrant faith's veracity through reason.

The spontaneous intellect of man defines the Divine which it feels in different ways that harmonizes with its temporary intellectual prepossessions. Philosophy can eliminate the doctrines that are scientifically absurd or incongruous.

After discussing the fruits of religion, James again comes back to the original query, that is, the utility of religion, its uses to the individual who has it and the uses of the individual himself to the world. A preview of the conclusions that he finally arrives finds its reflection on prayer from his lecture entitled 'Other Characteristics' of his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*. According to James, "prayer is the very soul and essence of religion."61 Religion, says Liberal French theologian "is an intercourse, a conscious and voluntary relation entered into by a soul in distress with the mysterious power upon which it feels itself to depend and upon which its fate is contingent. This intercourse with God is realized by prayer. Prayer is religion in act, that is, prayer is real religion. It is prayer that distinguishes the religious phenomena from such similar or neighboring phenomena as purely moral or aesthetic sentiment."62

If the prayerful consciousness is deceitful, then religion is genuine. In his further reflection, James adds that we find in the prayerful life the "persuasion that in the process of communion energy from on high flows into meet demand, and becomes operative within the phenomenal world. So long as this operativeness is
admitted to be real, it makes no essential difference whether its immediate effects be subjective or objective. The fundamental religious point is that in prayer, spiritual energy becomes active and spiritual work of some kind is effected really.  

Let us summarize James' conclusions regarding religious experiences. At first James gives the following beliefs which are embodied in religious experience ----

1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance.

2. That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end.

3. That prayer or inner communication with the spirit thereof ----- be that spirit, God or law ---- is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world.

According to James, religion also includes the following psychological characteristics ---

4. A new zest which adds itself like a gift to life and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism.
5. An assurance of safety and a temper of peace
and in relation to others, a preponderance of
loving affections.64

The feeling engendered by religious belief is a stenic affection
"an excitement of the cheerful, expansive, dynamo genetic order,"65
since religion provides men a force by which they can live ----
therefore from the point of 'subjective utility' religious feelings need
valuable judgements. Beyond the subjective utility there is also an
objective thought content in religion.

James holds that the common core of religious noetic consists
of an account of two experiences: uneasiness and a solution.

i. The uneasiness reduced to its simplest
terms, is a sense that there is something
wrong about us as we naturally stand.

ii. The solution is a sense that we are saved
from this wrongness by making proper
connection with the higher power.66

The essence of religious experience enables us to make a
contact with the higher being. This contact is possible when a person
dies to his old self and is born again to his real self. James submits
that this real self can connect with the higher power because the real
self is 'conterminous and continuous with more of the same quality
which is operative in the universe.'67 The question of the objective
truth of the common noetic core of religious belief centres on the
‘more’ of the same quality with which the higher real self make
contacts. The question arises as to what does this more signify?
James says “that the ‘more’ with which in religious experience we feel
ourselves connected is on its hither side the subconscious
continuation of our conscious life.”68 In other words, James says that
in religious experience our real self communicates whereas in
mystical state the real self becomes one with the divine who is a
continuation of our subconscious feeling. James states that
psychologically it is possible to show the existence and reality of a
wider subconscious self ----- “ the fact that our conscious power is
continuous with a wider self through which saving experience comes,
it seems to me is literally and objectively true as far as it goes.”69 The
questions that are to be answered here are whether the ‘more’ which
our subconscious contacts exists? and Does God exist and is he the
extension of our subconscious? For the mystic, James says that there
is a sufficient warrant for the belief, but those who are not in favour
with a vision of God and the unseen world, belief in God must be
termed as over belief ---- a belief without sufficient evidence. However,
for the non- mystic there is still a warrant for belief in God ---- he has
the right to believe in God.

James’ pragmatic conclusion is that if a belief satisfies our
needs and is aligned with our other beliefs; we are justified in
believing that such belief produces certain real effects in us.
That which produces effects within another reality must be termed as a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal ... God is real for he produces real effects.\textsuperscript{70}

The real effects are of several types. We have already considered the real effects of sainthood. For instance, our belief in a just and loving God who guarantees an ideal moral order and produces an increase in moral energy. It also gives assurance that we are saved and the world is a right place and thereby produces a distinct feeling of joy and peace in the believer.

The views or the essence of religion may be various, but the feelings and conduct are almost always the same for every religion. So if one is eager to learn the inner core of religion, he has to peep into the feelings and conduct as they are the constant elements of religion.

So far we were discussing some aspects of James' pragmatism that includes epistemology, ethics and also the religious philosophy. The most crucial aspect is yet to be discussed---- that is pragmatic metaphysics. It is this metaphysical query that makes him distinct from Peirce.

3.8. James' pragmatic metaphysics:

Pragmatism is an empirical method and therefore James thought that philosophy requires a metaphysics that can do justice to empiricism. Empiricism as commonly understood is limited to sense-experience. James uses this word in a more technical sense. He first
uses sense-experience to explain facts. Later he modified his empiricism by including within it not only sensation but all the higher mental activities classified under conception. In the later phase his empiricism becomes an all-inclusive term in which not only perception and conception but our feelings of activity, for instance, sustaining, preserving, fearing, doubting, all moral, aesthetic and religious feeling were included. In short, anything that we can directly feel and has practical consequences are included. This unique view of experience is referred by James as radical empiricism.

The essence of radical empiricism is that nothing can transcend human experience. James frames this view by means of three postulates. The first being the empirical method; i.e. issues are to be debated in terms drawn from experience. The second deals with nominalism which considers not only objects but also their relations which are matters of direct particular experience. The third is that the parts of experience hold together by relations that are themselves parts of experience. This last postulate is in the nature of a general conclusion which expresses a metaphysic, its essence being that it excludes "the hypothesis of trans-empirical reality."\(^7\)

The postulate behind his radical empiricism is an integral part of his concept of humanism. According to James man can debate certain questions in a meaningful way if these questions bear upon his experiences. The 'statement of fact' is a result of James' psychology according to which the connections and relations between
things are integral part of our experience just as are the things themselves.

In his celebrated essay 'Does Consciousness Exist' from *Essays in Radical Empiricism* James applies his doctrine of radical empiricism. James is against the usual distinction between mind and matter. According to him, mental and physical are the same. The only fact is that they 'function' differently in our experiences. He considers consciousness as a flow or a stream. In order to explain it philosophically, he postulates a notion of pure experience that means undifferentiated raw experience. Pure experience is simply our field of awareness which eventually receives either an objective or subjective interpretation.

With the help of an illustration, James explains the point that consciousness means the same when we analyze mentally or physically, that is, if we are conscious of a wall, the wall as an object fall within our experience, as such we can touch and see it. We being conscious of the wall is distinct from the wall that we are conscious of and both falls within our experience but this experience is private. James concludes that consciousness (mind) is not a different kind of substance or stuff from material things.

From the above discussion we can conclude that the whole pragmatic philosophy is metaphysically explained by James. In fact, metaphysics is the corner-stone of James' pragmatism. It is interesting to notice how he tries to delineate the richness inherent within the bosom of experience. The unique combination of
psychology and philosophy can be seen in his radical empiricism. Feelings as well as emotions are the materials of a psychologist which James brought to the level of experience and tries to explain them pragmatically in his ethical and especially in his religious philosophy.

3.9. Assessment:

While assessing the pragmatic philosophy of William James we have to look into both its merits and pitfalls. James does not provide any justification while explaining pragmatism. To explain pragmatism as a radical alternative to traditional thought he incorporates the philosophy of practice, purpose and pluralism but he lacks in providing reasonable justification. For instance, in his use of practical bearings James has failed to make distinction between the effects of a proposition and the effects of believing it. The two statements are different. Thus, whether it is satisfactory to believe that 'it is raining' is evidently distinct from what effects have to be satisfied in order to affirm that 'it is raining'. The pragmatic maxim as framed by Peirce was exclusively concerned with the latter --- it was intended to elucidate what effects were involved in the meaning of a proposition, not what effects would follow from believing it. Once this distinction is made clear, James seems to involve in a contradiction. He says that religious and metaphysical beliefs have no content until one takes into account the effects of believing them. For example, he says of Vivekananda's use of the Atman, that its significance is entirely emotional and spiritual; taken in itself it has no empirical
consequences. If these beliefs when taken in themselves have no empirical consequences, they fail the pragmatic test. In short, they are meaningless. The question arises that if they are meaningless, how can they be believed? How, except through delusion can one believe spiritual and emotional from what is meaningless?

James can be extricated from this dilemma by referring to the views from his book *Will to Believe*. He there argues that one sometimes has the right to put one's faith in beliefs that cannot be conclusively established on the theoretical level. R.B Perry calls this as the principle of fideism. It seems clear that it is this principle that James needs in his lectures on *Pragmatism*. Instead of saying that religious and metaphysical beliefs have no empirical content, he should have said that in terms of their empirical content, they cannot be conclusively established on theoretical ground. It would then have been open to him to argue that we may nevertheless put our faith in them. As we shall see, there is something to be said for the principle of fideism. It derives no support from Peirce's pragmatic maxim. Perry explains pragmatism as 'the application of practical principles to the theoretic process itself; fideism is the justification on practical ground, of over belief ---- that is, of belief which lacks conclusive theoretic support.'

James' pragmatic method seems to be synonymous with a generic theory of truth. His pragmatism is an appeal to action. According to his pragmatic theory of truth, 'ideas work' but he does not judge working of an action in terms of immediate working in the
physical environment that is, enabling us to make money or gain some practical advantage. James' contention is that ideas do work immediately or remotely but they work indefinitely inside our mental world. As such it would be meaningful if we judge pragmatism with respect to present society. Our present society demand utility in terms of immediate need. As James said, ideas have a pragmatic value but how many are there to understand that ideas work within our mental world? Only a psychologist can assume such a conclusion. For the rest, ideas working inside the mental world does not hold meaningful.

Another point of disagreement is that James judge's truth in terms of human satisfaction. Satisfaction is a subjective condition, so the conclusion can be drawn that truth lies wholly inside the subject who can manufacture it at his pleasure. True beliefs become wayward affections severed from all responsibility to other parts of experience. It seems that James' notion of truth lacks from objective standard.

Critics also raised questions on the view that truth or reality are to be made plastic or modifiable. For instance, William Caldwell points out that pragmatism replaces belief in the stability of truth through a elastic kind of truth which can change with the time and makes it possible that we need not have to trouble ourselves about inconsistencies, for what is true to one need no longer be true to others. The truth of today may be real now and yet it may become the error of tomorrow, thus according to William Caldwell there arises a confusion between truth and verification.
G.E. Moore states that there is something wrong in James' view of asserting that we should not only believe something as true but must also try to make them true. It seems to mean that our belief that 'it is raining' is true although in reality it is not raining.

James' discussions on morality are also questionable. On one hand he criticizes determinism by saying that if everything is determined, there appears no room for our freedom. On the other hand he explains freedom by stating that the emotions which allow us to act are psychologically determined. Thus, whether he was supporting determinism or rejecting it is not clear. Although James' pragmatic philosophy insists on action, purpose and plurality but while explaining the freedom of the will he takes his stand on consciousness and thereby explains freedom from psychological standpoint. If freedom is explained from the subjective point of view, then there will be hardly any room for human action. Freedom, therefore, should be judged objectively. So it is equally true that one should not have unlimited freedom to do as one wishes. Our freedom should be such that it benefits the individual together with the society.

James' moral and intellectual earnestness helped him to be strongly preoccupied with the question of religious belief. He understands religion not only as a phenomenon, but also he was anxious to persuade himself of its truth. The appreciating point in James' pragmatic religion is that the God whom he believes to be omniscient and yet permits all the pains and evils to exist in the world
would not be a religious object — the only sort of God whom he could regard as worthy of the name would be one who 'works in an external environment has limits and has enemies.' Such a God would be, or possess a super-human consciousness but he would also be finite; 'either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once.'

James' evaluation of religious feeling amounts to a judgement since religious feeling responds to human needs and produces real effects in the conduct of men's lives, therefore religion seems to be valuable. He thereby concludes that belief in the reality of God was an over belief except that this belief produces in the believer certain real effects. It appears that James has reduced both the religious feeling and noetic content of belief to subjective utility or personal value. Thus, the point of objection is that if belief in God amounts to only subjective utility, this belief is only an adhoc hypothesis for it does not cover any new facts. It only accounts for a single set of facts i.e, the religious needs and desires of the believer which generates these beliefs.

Although this is the case, it seems that belief in God and prayerful communion with him raises the believer's moral energy and thereby encourages him to produce new moral facts. Persons and their states of consciousness are as valuable and objective as any objective fact. Another appreciating point is that our belief in God postulates personal immortality. The believer's impulse to increase the amount of good in the world is strengthen by his belief that God is not only friendly to our purposes and concerns at the present time
but his care and concern will be continued eternally. Although James emphasizes the point that God is finite though omniscient, but he is our superior with whom we co operate in creating a novel, ongoing world.

Lastly, the pragmatic metaphysics forms the corner stone of James' pragmatism. The whole of James' pragmatism is explained from the psychological point of view, although in general, pragmatism undertakes an empirical approach to view the whole world. Within this empirical approach, James includes not only human experiences to have pragmatic value, but the connections and relations between things also are experienced relations. Truth and falsity like the other values and dis values which we attribute to different parts of our thought and conduct essentially belong within experience. Thus by introducing a new metaphysics by the name of radical empiricism, James has the merit of re-stating his pragmatism with great vigour in applying to the traditional concepts of mind-body problem. The nature of mind and body and the relation between the two are familiar and at the same time a complex problem. In the world we live in, nothing is so familiar to us as our mind and the world including our physical organism, for it is these two fundamental entities that we are involved in all our life's transactions. Although the problem of mind-body can be viewed from different standpoints, yet the fundamental question remains—whether these two entities have any pragmatic value? With regard to James' pragmatic metaphysics, we can at least show as to
how in our perceptions, ideas, volitions and even in our emotions 
mind and body enter into the most intimate relations.

The appreciating point is that metaphysics or metaphysical 
discussions no longer appears as something abstract in James’ 
pragmatism. Being an empiricist, he tries to relate metaphysical 
realities like (the idea of Absolute, his ideas on religion, morality) with 
our facts of experience. In a way, he tries to impart a message that 
metaphysics is not impossible or unimportant, rather the value of 
metaphysics can be judged through pragmatic outlook. Last, but not 
the least, we can say that such an unique attempt to connect 
metaphysics with empiricism is hardly found in the philosophical 
discussions of any other philosopher.

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