CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

It is a truism that Religion is broad based on faith and Philosophy is broad based on reason. Philosophy of religion is a second order activity. Its purpose is to analyze concepts such as God, faith, belief etc. The scope of philosophy of religion is elucidated by F. Mora as;

... philosophy of religion, is not, in my opinion, theology ... . It is not to be confounded with a philosophic religion or with a religious philosophy. It is, or rather should be, a purely philosophic affair using philosophic methods and aiming at philosophic targets. It must survey the entire field of religious thinking, outline its main characteristics, and inquire why and how it is related to other fields.¹

Logical analysis purports chiefly to scrutinise concepts, meanings, contexts, uses, implications, significance of expressions and arguments. Philosophy is.

defined as conceptual analysis because whenever one thinks, one thinks only in terms of concepts. In other words conceptualising or meaning is the very core of philosophy. Meaning in the sense of concept forms the spirit of semantics and as such constitutes the logic of language. Contrary to traditional interpretations, logic is understood as meaning from the standpoint of semantics:

Language bears on every thing we do. Whether in religion, art, science, literature, or any other human activity, language is in the forefront. And for this reason a discussion of religious language quickly leads into the more general problems of the nature and function of language.²

For all purposes, language is one although there are many languages in respect of places, communities, interests and purposes. When it is used for a typical interest, or by a particular community or covers a particular region or area, it is named differently. "Language becomes religious language in being used religiously, being used, that is to say, in the pursuit of the various goals, and the

expressions of the various beliefs, which we find in religions.3

There is no language of religion apart from the human language. The conceptual framework in which religion is expressed and communicated is the religio-theological conceptual system within the main human language-system. Religious concepts are ordinary everyday concepts on the surface before use in religion. They belong to the grand system of language and when they are used religion religious purposes. They acquire different meaning due to variance of discourse and context. Now what strikes important to note here is that in this respect logic (or, meaning) of faith fosters to afford not only inquiry into nature of meaning but also devotes itself to meta-inquiry into standards, principles, criteria, models, paradigms, presuppositions etc. This is the dominant approach that the philosophers have been making so strenuously in order to achieve what is logically justifiable. It is the logic of reason or rationality, contrary to logic of the tradition. "Rational thinking" demands to see things in their real make-up - what things are as such, unbiased, unprejudiced. Philosophy, science and superstition cannot co-exist. To see things as they are is the real and rare insight.

The Logic of faith is the topic of inquiry in both the senses-inquiry and meta-inquiry. Although the very title of the present work suggests this clearly, one may feel embarrassed when a lot of work has been done on this. But a sympathetic critic might find it useful.

Many of the problems of philosophy are of such broad relevance to human concerns, and so complex in their ramifications, that they are, in one form or another, perennially present. Though in the course of time they yield in part to philosophical inquiry, they may need to be rethought by each age in the light of its broader scientific knowledge and deepened ethical and religious experience. Better solutions are found by more refined and rigorous methods. Thus, one who approaches the study of philosophy in the hope of understanding the best of what it affords will look for both fundamental issues and contemporary achievements.4

4. Elizabeth Beardsley/Monroe Beardsley/Tom L. Beardsley, "Foundations of Philosophy" appearing as the frontis flap, Philosophy of Religion, John Hick, Fourth Edn,
The analysts deal with the peculiar issues and problems which have fundamental import for any believer whosoever. Again, these issues and problems not being merely academic have profound implications for the religious life and they do bring into focus the deepest perplexities of the age in which we live. Thus the analytic philosophers have no antithetical attitude to the religious and theological activities.

The Problem:

Philosophy has been treated as an intellectual exercise, *par excellence*, or an activity rather than a theory or a series of theories. In this, philosophy, unlike other discourses, affords to explicate the meaning rather than discover or invest or make out any new fact. It has been rightly remarked that "philosophy is said to leave everything as it is ...". "Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday". ⁵ "Confusions arise when the engine is idle and not working". "Philosophy issues reminders for a purpose"—rid the confusions, enigmas and is thus "a battle against bewitchment". So a philosophical problem is characteristically conceptual and at the core concerned with the meaning of the tools or concepts, judgements, arguments and consequences.


The logic of faith is not monolithic, rather multi-form. Different religious facts, activities, practices, norms, theories etc. are found in their peculiar forms of expressions. Religious expressions concerning faith, reason and knowledge are philosophically hazardous and philosophers hazard themselves in order to get rid of such state. There seems to be no full-stop to philosophical exercise; there is no clear-cut formula or any single decisive test or decision-procedure for all time to come. That is far-fetched and perhaps impossible.

The logic of faith is *ipso facto* meaningful and it enjoys an *idio-syncratic* status in its conceptual framework which is semiologically complex, comprehensive and multifaceted. Peculiarly it is governed by plural standards or multiple *criteria of logic*.

The main problem that the present investigation pursues is whether, and how far, is the logic of faith meaningful. Religious language is the coverage of many activities, interpretations, presuppositions, arguments and consequences. Are they meaningful? If so, or— not, or, meaningful or meaningless; in what sense? This inquiry has undergone a long strenuous career in development. The most glaring contention that could be held is the idio-syncrasy in meaning of tools and concepts. Every concept
has its peculiar meaning, use, function, role in the context and the discourse as a whole. The maxim that "Every word has its logic" is the *sine qua non* of the semantic approach. To think with Blackstone, "The slogan- 'Every statement has its own logic' has left philosophers and theologians free to look for and discover the logic peculiar to the religious mode of discourse".6

If philosophical theology is philosophy (and not theology but philosophy) of religion where one is apt to agree, or differ even, with what is meant by "Philosophy leaves everything as it is"; agree because it does not distort the reality, the way of living, style of thinking; but differ because it changes the ways by rethinking for refinement and revision through deepening our insight. It changes our pattern of meaning. Concepts do undergo change in meaning. Importance is assigned to such agreement or difference. It makes way to newer perspectives. So, such rethinking is generated by the spirit of rationality ingrained in human composition. It is doubtlessly a human *trait* as a commitment. But as commitment the problem of meaning is still hanging heavy on it from the philosophical point of view. So, anything held by faith of any form, as long as it is held or even lost or revised does not become

---

meaningless or senseless. Trigg observes quite prudently:

Religion may not mean anything any longer to such people, in the sense that they no longer see any point in it. This is very different from finding it meaningless in the sense of not understanding it.\(^7\)

People abandoning one faith or commitment or set of beliefs or such religious expressions as unacceptable to them do understand what they give up or abstain from etc.

"Seeing no point in a way of life or a system of belief is different from finding a string of words to be nonsense (for instance, red grins the dogs over)."\(^8\)

Taking this glaring fact of meaningfulness into consideration, philosophical pursuit is to be undertake. There point of initiation or starting point to commence an inquiry in philosophy; no hard and fast pre formula as there is none also for the endpoint or conclusion. In fact, one may start with anything and end anywhere provided one


\(^8\) ibid., p.52.
walks all along with the logic of concepts. For example, as we have placed enormous emphasis on faith, one may do so on some other concepts, belief, concern, explanation, or any other paradigms, myths, metaphors etc. It is also possible that different approaches could yield different results. However, faith is the focal point of the present inquiry. It is basic to all religious commitments. One may be totally right or wrong, justified or unjustified, in accepting or denying any faith as basic, it does not leave room for doubt. In any case, however, it is faith that matters.

Religion has to do with faith because it involves some kind of commitment. You can commit yourself to all kinds of things and in all kinds of ways; to a belief or a statement, to a way of life. Some of these commitments may seem to be more reasonable than others. It seems reasonable to commit oneself to the captain of a ship of a reputable shipping corporation, but less so to commit oneself to a journey with only a remote chance to find diamond. To many people religious commitment appears more like the second than the first, and hence arises the notion that faith and reason are somehow necessarily opposed to each other. So it is held that one can make faith-commitment or reason-

commitment, but that one cannot at the same time have both faith and reason in the same commitment. There may be good reasons for committing ourselves even if we cannot articulate those reasons. The problem is, how is it that religious commitment and religious faith seem to be opposed or irrelevant to reason? Religious believers have taken critical view of reason and have used the word 'reason' in a narrow sense and the non-believers have dismissed religious faith as unreasonable. Our choices of commitments should not be arbitrary. They should be reasonable and justifiable. But these words have only meaning in relation to the process of rational considerations, weighing evidence, assessing grounds for belief and so on.

The role of a philosopher is to examine the adequacy of evidence for a particular belief. We do not need a philosopher if we are arguing about whether Mars is inhabited. We know how to decide this question well enough. It is simply a matter of collecting sufficient evidence. There are some questions where a philosopher has a part to play in answering them. There are some beliefs or articles of faith about whose reasonableness we are in doubt. The problem is not because of lack of evidence but because we are not sure what is to count as evidence. The evidence that is offered for such beliefs is ambiguous. Religious commitments are of such type. What counts as evidence for
the believer does not count as evidence for the non-believer. The reasons which the sceptic puts forward for dismissing religion do not seem to be reasons at all for the believer.

In order to understand the concept of faith we have to examine various ways in which the concept is used. An understanding of the concept of faith requires analysis of certain allied concepts like belief, trust, commitment etc. Traditional use of 'faith' admits different interpretations by different philosophers. Aquinas used 'faith' to mean truth and positive knowledge; Herbert meant by 'faith', a belief. Locke advanced a definition of faith and maintained "degrees of faith". Hume defined faith in terms of miracle. Cook Wilson was of the view that faith in a sense is a mysterious faculty. Tennant associated 'faith' with the problem of evil. For Kierkegaard 'faith' is a 'subjective truth'. Faith also connotes an expression of an attitude - Belief is the principal means to forming an attitude. We may say that faith is a "willed commitment to some type of behaviour."

To expound the concept of faith, belief and commitment an analysis of assertions in which these concepts occur require to be analysed. Different philosophers have interpreted the logical nature and status of religious
beliefs. Some opine that they act as stories or myths designed to give psychological reinforcement to our ways of living without any necessary reference to external reality. Others again hold that what seem to be religious assertions are hardly assertions at all, but are more like types of poetry, giving us an insight into reality. To others, they appear merely as a closed system of assertions, the terms of which are comprehensible only in relation to each other, but which does not necessarily have meaning in respect of their experiences. In making such interpretations, philosophers are trying to answer the question, "How is religious language used?" Or "What is the logic of religious assertions?" Answers to these questions are highly illuminating as they throw light on the logical status of the concept faith and knowledge. As Hick says:

> It is important to distinguish between the assertions of facts of faith and subsequent development of theological theories to explain them, for these fulfil distinct functions and have a different epistemological status.¹⁰

Paul Helm points out correctly that words such as 'faith', 'belief' and 'knowledge' are not used univocally.

---

in English. Ordinary usages do not embody accurate reflection of their different meanings. There is a considerable amount of difference between these notions as they are used. The function of a philosopher is to point out subtle differences that are usually overlooked by an ordinary man. Knowledge and belief can have same objects. Belief, however, generally means the propositional belief (belief-that) where as faith is taken as belief without sufficient evidence. A question usually asked:

Why does the treatment of religious assertions by means of some other type of knowledge seem, to religious people, to fail to do justice to these statements.11

The viable answer to this question may be that the concepts 'faith', 'knowledge', 'belief' and many others which are used in language, are also used in their religious form. Religious use of these ordinary language concepts gradually gather religious make up and retain religious meaning. To ascribe meaning to these concepts and to fix up criteria for examining the issues concerning them by the help of any outside conceptual equipment may amount

to doing logical injustice, to the use of religious language.\textsuperscript{12} A host of philosophers have approached the problem of the relationship between faith and knowledge. Some maintain that they are exclusive and others point out them to be complementary. We may examine the problem in the subsequent chapters with the suggestion of Schmidt;

In saying that I have certain faith in something, I do not assert a statement that is to be understood as true or false in some sense, as is the case with the statement of belief-that. Faith in knowledge creates an attitude towards knowledge, a disposition to seem it, treasure it, use it and communicate it.\textsuperscript{13}

Mitchell rightly characterises religious statements as "articles of faith"\textsuperscript{14} which is taken up for scrutiny. Logical analysis of 'faith', cannot, however, be done in isolation. Meaning emerges when concepts are related in a system.


\textsuperscript{13} P.M.Schmidt, \textit{op. cit.}, p.84.

\textsuperscript{14} Basil Mitchell, \textit{NEPT. op.cit.} and \textit{The Philosophy of Religion, op.cit.}. 
Conceptual location, relation and validity are most strikingly important as Patrick Sherry demonstrates it through painstaking analysis. To locate and relate a concept is really important as there is very intimate connection between language and the activities or contexts. Religious language is no exception. The location of background facts, the concept formation and the religious way of living or activities are indispensable elements of religious discourse.

It is worth-noting that in the twentieth century-philosophical analysis it is coined as *philosophical theology*\(^5\) especially initiated by the Oxford pioneers Flew-Hare and Mitchell. In the famous Oxford debate University symposia-Mitchell's orientation of the new programme of philosophical analysis attains an appreciable height and acquires an attractive stature as a positive headway. His deepening insight in the appropriate understanding of the character of philosophy has been deemed to be a cross-road where the critic finds it easy to avail directions towards new dimensions of reflective thinking.

---

Mitchell’s treatment has lasting value. Critics like D.R. Duff-Forbes\textsuperscript{16} and W.T. Blackstone\textsuperscript{17} have devoted considerable space in their critical analysis of Mitchell’s findings. Y. Masih deals with the facts of inquiry in his way:

If the statements are made convictionally, as significant articles of faith, then they can be regarded factual in the public language of Flew? Hence his view falls into an easy refutation by D.R. Duff-Forbes.\textsuperscript{18}

While Duff-Forbes raises question concerning the factual content of theological statement, Mitchell might conceder yet to supplement empirical application in order to qualify statements that are open to verification, if not falsification. However. Mitchell has for himself quite another different direction, i.e. as he sees the point: “Belief in the grace of God cannot be established by empirical evidence but once accepted, it can be seen to

\begin{enumerate}
\item W.T. Blackstone, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 123-124.
\end{enumerate}
have empirical application*19.

I.M.Crombie and John Hick20 seem to have given quite sound weightage to Mitchell's innovations on faith, vis-a-vis, religious language. A glance through the vast area may not be sufficient for any purpose but it is well nigh impossible to ensure exhaustive or quite elaborate treatment. Hence only way out to this problem would be to look into certain aspects that strike important. The focal point being 'faith' needs to be looked into in some depth, in the religio-conceptual framework. In any discourse, 'faith' appears to be the backdrop without exception. In all the spheres, for example, concern, attitude, commitment, belief, revelation, prayer, worship, sin and suffering, the sacred and the profane, virtues and vices, existential, metaphysical as well as hermeneutical and ecumenical, beginning from micro to macrocosm - the man, the Church, the scripture, culture and civilisation figure as the seminal concepts. In all matters of religious interest, 'faith' is the most vital element without which


no religion is thinkable. Religion has been defined "as the conscious desiring of whatever (if anything) is considered to be both inclusive in its bearing on one's life and primary in its importance ... religion is one's way of valuing" most comprehensively and intensively.

Férré examines the contemporary issues of meta-religious thought and the sceptical thrust which ultimately resulted in "the scientific stalemate" but soon attempted to recover through "the linguistic key."

Religious beliefs were hammered and forged and consequently had to face conflicts from which probably it has not been possible to recover fully. The challenge consisted of pure flames of intellectual intuition of rationalism and matter of fact demand by empiricism. The root of religious enterprise had to survive the sceptical challenge. The climax is however the revolutionary swing from theoretical reason towards critical inquiry. The turning point from theoretical reasoning to practical reasoning more suited to religious beliefs.

22. ibid., p. 301.
23. ibid., p. 335.
The entire climatic shift in outlook exercised enormous influence on practical reason with critical inquiry breathing new air into religious matters of life. Revival of old values, emergence of new directions were in experimental ferment. The twentieth century philosopher is an inheritor of all this. Until the advent of the new awakening in positivism as a philosophical movement on the one hand and Wittgensteinian revolution on the other, the traditional conflicts pertaining to religious belief could not make a definite headway. Wittgenstein opened new vista of vision in philosophical analysis in general and religious problems were re-thought by applying the analytical technique. Wittgenstein shared different modes of critical assessment on the basis of his reflections on "forms of life", "language-games", and other contentions.

 Appropriately, therefore, religious language is language of faith. For a believer there cannot be a situation of no-faith. Faith ends, nothing reigns. Anything that crops up is 'faith' or 'hope' that alone lurks.