CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE; VIVEKANDA AND GANDHI

7.1 The present system of modern life indicates that the present is a transition time. The most striking features of our modern age are the slow dissolution of traditional norms of social customs, confusion in regard to social ethics, the application of the methods of science to the facts of religion and all these together have given rise to insensitivity of religious beliefs. While a handful of people are in sympathy with the traditional convictions, beliefs in personal God, personal immorality etc. in another side some educated men are also bidding good-bye to those religious beliefs. People who claimed to have seen the vision of God or heard voices from heaven are regarded now as highly suggestible folk of disordered brains and intemperate imaginative. To be precise it is an age where people seek positive proof and tangible evidence for traditional arguments.

The tremendous achievement of science by mastering over the natural sources has intoxicated the modern life with a sense of material success and intellectual conceit. A wide spread tendency has already in operation to account for the scheme of the universe without any reference to region of transcendent.
The world is regarded as a vast mechanism where natural forces automatically bring about changes. Bertrand Russell in his essay "Free man's Worship" describes the religion of mechanical scientists thus — "Life is an incident in the cooling of the Solar system. Man comes into being in the midst of unconscious forces which will eventually destroy them. Humanity on earth as inevitably battles as a drughill. The cosmic fate of all values is to perish without force. The end of it all is darkness, death.\(^1\) As a result the mechanical scientists instead of restricting it's activities to natural sciences, it is gaining upperhand in almost all the diverse disciplines of life even to philosophy and religion. "The application of the scientific method to the field of religion strikes at the very root, meaning and significance of religion. The commitment of science to the empirical world precludes it from accepting any trans-empirical reality of truth. The scientific conception of space-time world leaves no scope for any transempirical reality.\(^2\)

Human values particularly spiritual and moral are constantly being thrown into the dustbin. To them what can be explained in terms of scientific method of nature is neither acceptable to science nor in philosophy and religion. Being influenced by scientific laws of nature many thinkers particularly in the west trying to interpret Christianity detaching it from all
reference to super-natural principles and seeks to establish religion on purely scientific positivistic grounds. Hervey Cox in his book "The Secular City" remarks that 'we no longer think in terms of super-natural'. Even the idea of God which is the focal point of all religious stands threatened by scientific scrutiny to be meaningless. Dr. Hiroshi Motayama started an international association for religion in a scientific manner. Dr. Freud also treated God as a mental product to pacify man's restlessness. Ludwig Foerbeck claimed religion to a bye-product of human instinct longing for happiness. Even Bertrand Russel remarked - God is nothing but a childish fancy or a bye-product of emotional desire to satisfy the longing for security. The people who are anxious for religion confronted with such a cold view of religion started building for themselves different ways of escape. In this regard we can mention Fundamentalists who ask us to shut eyes to the facts of modern thought and enquiry.

Durkheim and his followers find in merely a social phenomena. According to them truth is a social utility. The hypothesis of God has value as it helps mankind to an adjustment of our desires. According to him - "Religion is a part of social mechanism. It has a social purpose, a social interest and a social hope. We can use God though we cannot know him. Religion has little to do with
It does not express the meaning of the universe or the deeper reality of the historical process, but yet fulfills man's innermost and deepest wants, his highest hopes and aspirations. They simply direct us to use religion as a means of social culture and social environment.

There are certain lazy sceptics who upheld that truth is unattainable. They are indifferent to religion and highest interest of life. On certain circumstances they are prone to give God the benefit of doubt. Again there are a few people who repudiate any spiritual reality in the world and anything might happen. To them the world itself is changing in an unknown direction and not even God knows what will come in subsequent time.

From what has been discussed above it is crystal to us that during the present century religion has become the main of vehement attack from different corners. These tendencies have been prompted by the desire for political advantage or racial prejudice or general ignorance. So it has become a matter of grave concern for serious thinkers really desire to save religion from it's dangerous catastrophe. Now the question is - Do the religious thinkers seek to rehabilitate religion making compromise?
with scientific criterion? Or will they seek beyond science with a view to securing religion it's rightful meaning and significance? What kind of religion do we want then? Is it religion of love and brotherhood for the upliftment of the entire human race or religion of power and hatred to allow the entire human race to meet it's inevitable end? Religion or no religion at all?

In answering these questions it is necessary to determine if there is any dichotomy between science and religion or is science opposed to religion? Truely speaking the dichotomy between science and religion may be traced back to the two dimensions of human nature. In intellectual persuit man makes an attempt to discover the mystery of nature and in doing this the logical dimension of human nature predominates. Apart from this human nature is so constituted that while man looks outward to see the external nature - he also looks 'within' - into his deeper subjectivity. He also tries to see more and more on some source of knowing which are non-intellectual or non-logical. Due to this capacity man profoundly nurses many aspirations which can not be explained by spatio-temporal extension alone. It is a fact that there are two dimensions of human nature - intellectual and a logical or personal. Commenting on the relation between
science and religion Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also observes —

"Rightly understood science is essentially spiritual in its temper and leadings, instead of abolishing the mysteries of the world, it has deepened them". Referring to the theory of evolution he also opines that the hypothesis of evolution substitutes for theory of development for that creation. But in regard to the question of ultimate causation this evolution theory is silent. Scientific theories or disciplines are limited to secondary causes. But such theories are sometimes mistaken for metaphysical speculations. In his own words —

"When rightly interpreted we shall see that the doctrine of evolution is not inconsistent with the highest idealism whatever be the value of the theory of evolution as a description of observed facts, it is thoroughly unsatisfactory as an interpretation of the ultimate nature of the universe. Evolution presupposes an interaction between the organism and the environment. Given the two, it can not account for their action and interaction, but the process of evolution can not create the conditions for its own possibility. It assumes something behind all evolution which is not the product of evolution, though it's ultimate ground and driving power. In this of evolution to be conceived as one or many blind or purposive, immanent or transcendent? .......The supreme reality is difficult to grasp and impossible to define.
We can see some of what God is not, but not what God is.\(^5\)

Hence, though in the 17th and 18th centuries a rational outlook started working owing to the impact of science, on the other hand, as a reaction against this the other aspect of human nature non-rational personal element gave rise to existentialism or Bergsonian Vitalism. Why a man resort to this personal or alogical approach can never be explained on logical grounds. It is this personal aspect of man which is responsible for immense creativity in man which allows human mind to move unbounded by logical constraints. This personal self which decides much of our choice is our active force in our life which can not be dismissed on the plea that it falls outside the realm of logical and rational aspect. Religion is not an compartmental affair which concerns only some aspects of human life. It reveals diversity which is perpetually manifested in a variety of attitudes and beliefs ..... human life demands all round satisfaction. This can be achieved by giving fair deal to all elements in human nature.\(^6\) When all these aspects of human nature are taken into consideration then it provides justification for religion. But we find in case of certain individual these two elements alternately asserts. Thomas Altizer, one of the advocates of American 'Death of God Movement' also asserted - "The contemporary Christian God beyond the God of Christian.\(^7\)
Hence, Religion is a total response by the total being of man. Scientific methods give us only information about the facts of our life. But when we relate those informations about the facts to our life, there it becomes inadequate. We need something more i.e. wisdom. Informations acquired through scientific methods are not irrelevant to our life but their proper usefulness depends upon appreciation and understanding of their purpose. The spirit of science leads to the refinement of religion. Religion is not certain outdated dogmas, incredible superstitions etc; It does not spoil simplicity of spiritual life. Intellectual authority should be treated with respect. Besides science requires us to adopt empirical data of perception and introspection. All religions are rooted in experience. But religious phenomena are not mere curiosity, it is spiritual adventure. Hence, practically there is no dichotomy between science and religion. Even some eminent scientists like Albert Eistein, Eddington, J.B. Haldane etc; stressed on the importance of spirituality. Prof. Sir Eddington says - "The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine". Einstein also said - "I believe in God ... who reveals himself in the ordinary harmony of the universe ... the basis of scientific work is the conviction that the world is an ordered and comprehensive entity and not a thing of choice ....". Dr. Radhakrishnan also observes - "The spirit of science does not
suggest that the ultimate beginning is matter, we may split the atom. The mind of man is superior to atom as witness to the spirit of man". 10

But breaking the barrier between science and religion will not help us in bringing about a mutual harmony among mankind. If the world is to endure we also need psychological unity and spiritual coherence. If mankind is to save itself it must also change it's attitude. All must put their heads together to find out the best possible means for the survival and betterment of the entire human race. Hence, Dr. Albert Schleietzer observes - "Western and Indian philosophers must not contend in the spirit that aims at the one proving itself right in opposition to the other. Both must be moving together towards a way thinking which shall eventually be shared in common by all mankind". 11

Though self-perfection is the ultimate aim of religion yet so long as it's aim fails to take hold of society as a whole, the world is not safe for civilisation and humanity. The religions persons must seek for divine fulfilment not only in heaven above but on earth below. Each man should be spiritually sound enough to become a fit member of the kingdom of spirit. To
make the world the ideal destiny of mankind, it can not be reconciled with a gladitorial theory of human life. Man should cultivate the spirit that on earth one family is the rule of the righteousness. Every one should follow the noble idea as the Mahabharata says - "To you I declare this holy mystery, there is nothing nobler than humanity." Brotherhood of all men irrespective of race and nationality should be the ideal of man. The freuds and agitations which sow seeds of hatred among different nations should be eradicated civilization based on injustice can not exist for long. A religion which does not make social reform and international justice as the essential part of its teaching can not appeal to the modern mind. Religion should not be taken as simply state of the individual. It is the practice of divine rule among man. One who believes in God loves his fellowmen as he loves himself and seeks highest good of all by redemptive service and self-sacrifice. One should put justice above civilisation, truth above patriotism.

Vivekananda also correctly realised that science and technology have brought man much closer to each other and has made man interdependent. He was equally aware of the fact that science and technology may bring disaster to mankind if they are not properly used for human welfare. The root cause
that brings disaster is passions and bad temper. Hence, he emphasised time and again to practise love and abjure hate, restrain waywardness of senses and whims of the heart. Selfishness of the nations leads to conflicts. Hence, the narrow interests of the nations must be given up and all nations should develop consciousness of their own peculiarities and toleration towards others. Each nation must realise it is identity with humanity. Mutual recognition of general interest and growth of a common sentiment alone can ensure establishment of world unity. He believed in the ultimate unity of the whole mankind. But this kind of world unity can not be achieved by physical unification accomplished by science. This physical unification must be supplemented by spiritual unity of mankind. And for bringing this spiritual unity religion plays an important role. To Vivekananda religion has remained and continues to be a potent force in shaping the destiny of mankind. So it is the primary duty of the followers belonging to various religions to realise the true spirit of religion and to cultivate toleration realising the fact that all religions are true from the standpoint of Purusartha. Realisation of God is the primary purpose of all religions. Every religion may have it's own nomenclature and unique way of God realisation. The difference is only in language. Every religion has it's goal of transcending the limits of senses and to contact the Reality beyond. They are
all true from the standpoint of 'Tattva' or metaphysical ideal for ultimate Reality is one which expresses itself in various forms (or formless) and is known by various means. All religions are also equally true from the standpoint of 'Hita' or welfare of humanity as a whole. According to Vivekananda most of the human tragedies are due to people's disbelief in this great truth. Patriotism and love for one's own religion and culture are good but these noble sentiments should not be directed against others to develop hatred for others to breed conflict. False sense of superiority of a particular religion and culture, narrow love for one's own country, blind bigotry about the greater of one's religion bring about great disaster to humanity! It is only in ignorance and selfish blindness to truth that bad people to stand against others. Vivekananda pointed out that to avoid conflict of any type people will have to realise that their national life must contribute to and co-operate with the general welfare of mankind. People's view must be based on toleration and universal brotherhood. Vivekananda realised that the path to the universal peace and good will depend upon the realisation of the unity of existence and solidarity of mankind. He said - "One atom in the universe cannot move without dragging
the world with it*. Vivekananda mightly observed that at the close of the 19th century the world was standing at the cross-roads and was unable to judge correctly which path to follow. He also found the scent of ammunition of war which might result in untold miserable catastrophe to entire human race. Hence, he made an active effort to outlaw war once for all and hence preached the gospel of universal brotherhood and spiritual unity to abolish war and to establish peace in the world.

Vivekananda was perfectly correct in assessing the situation prevailing at that time both in the East and the West. The social life in the west was like a peal of laughter ending in a sob, while in India, it was a sad and melancholy on the surface but underlying it colousness and merriment. He wanted both in the West and the East to work hand in hand for the good of the world without destroying peculiarities of their own. He wanted to make future to be shaped by proper fusion of two ideals - Materialism of the West and spiritualism of the East. He wanted to remove the distinction between the East and the West and to make one humanity. In order to accomplish this he brought to the world the essence of unity of universal religion wherein the christian is not to become a Hindu, or a Buddhist to become Christian. But each must assimilate the
spirit of others preserving his own individuality and good in accordance with the law of growth. He developed a religious theory of nationalism which was prelude to internationalism. He wanted that each nation should make active effort to become perfect, i.e. to be one with Brahman. He advocated spiritual internationalism, an expression of spiritual unity of mankind. He believed it is not the material prosperity but spiritual awareness that generates real peace and happiness, love and unity in the world.

Vivekananda said that religion or cultural diversity and variety of individual temperaments are so much that no single religion can satisfy the spiritual and cultural needs of all people of the world. All religions are nothing but different expressions of universal Religion. This Universal Religion is the sum total of all religions and not a single religion. It is the co-existence in a spirit of give and take. He said - "Universal Religion about which the philosophers have dreamt in every country already exists. It is here. As the universal brotherhood of man is already existing, so also the universal religion only there are numbers of the persons who fail to see this and only upset it by crying for new brotherhood. He also said - "The reformation of the world
must start with the reformation of individuals of your own, to begin with what the modern world needs to-day is more and more individuals who are able to derive their substance directly from eternal transcendental Religion without remaining bound within the narrow particular religion that is their 'own' because they were born into it. A proper understanding of the relation between the Eternal Religion and its expression is the crying need of the modern world.

But owing to certain political reasons intolerance, communal feeling have existed in the world and religious social and racial differences have been brought out in order to expedite communal differences threatening the very peaceful and harmonious co-existence of humanity. Hence, the followers of various religions should try to promote brotherhood among men of different religions faiths by sympathetic attitude and appreciation not of the external form of religion but of one another's deepest spiritual experiences and convictions. And it is on this spiritualism on which Vivekananda put much emphasis. He himself embraced all paths of spiritual progress and thus became the personification of harmony of religions.

Similar to Vivekananda Gandhiji also opined that man singing the glory of the scientific and technological achievements,
has neglected the inner stability and has lost his soul. And consequently it has resulted in collected fear, fanaticism, susceptibility to crude and cunning artificiality. Gandhiji always tried to assert the supremacy of moral values and spiritual truths. And he did this not by his arguments or sermons, but especially by his existence and his acts in flesh and blood. He himself said - 'My life is my message'. He never turned a deaf ear to the social agonies of the age. Hence, he tried heart and soul to ensure equality of opportunities for all by means of non-violence. He also sought to achieve the political and economic goal in an ethical setting with a religious faith. He wanted that religion must be a creative faith and must not be inconsistent with the spirit of science or reason. Religion should satisfy the demands of the intellect and the needs of humanity and should be the active force for social regeneration. It creates the ideal of world unity provided the spirit of true religion is realised by human beings. Man should perceive the common good in all and tolerate in a positive sense the good in other religions. Genuine religion is not opposed to rationalism. Religion is primarily spiritual experience that results in personal signification and in the feeling of humanity. It liberates human heart from all sorts of monstrous catastrophe and develop in man the capacity for
humanity, charity and tolerance. He highlighted the central essence of religion by disclosing the power of love and suffering for others. According to him to be a satyagrahi he must cultivate the spirit of renunciation and sacrifice. What has brought religion into a disruption and made it suspect is the hypocritical profession of religious faiths and this is at complete variance with life. Our words are not in conformity with our deeds. A truly religious man always develops the spirit of toleration for divergent religious faiths of the world and sacrifice his life for the welfare of the human race realizing the owners of humanity. Thus Gandhiji put much emphasis on the spiritual unity of mankind only which can ensure peaceful harmonious co-existence of human race avoiding religious rivalry among the followers of diverse religions of the world. To sum up it may be said that both Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi advocated human religion, the main object of which is to be good and to do good. This must be the maxim of all human beings irrespective of any religion they may be and this must be carefully engraved on the door way of the temple of heart of all well-wishers. Universal love accompanied by mutual good will and active cooperation is the aim of all religious principles and philosophy of religion.
7.2 ATTITUDE TO OTHER RELIGIONS - SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAHATMA GANDHI:

The religio-philosophical tradition of India being spiritualistic in nature, hence it sets before mankind that the goal of life is communion with the Supreme. It is a life of realisation, an inner intuitive vision of God. This goal can not be attained by merely improving human conduct and character, it can only be attained by transforming human consciousness. From the time immemorial it has been insisting that man should develop a spirit of comprehension with a view to breaking down all understanding on religions matters and bind all human beings together as varied expressions of single truth. Hinduism is such a rich and varied mass of beliefs and practices that we can easily find in it the nucleons of the basic ideas of other religions. The spirit of assimilative genius of the Hindu mind is to welcome the basic ideas of other faiths and to appreciate them in it's own way. Hinduism has been developing a feeling which permits equal right to other religious followers to follow their respective religions. Tolerance, sense of synthesis, universal outlook etc. are the most outstanding characteristics of Hindu traditions. And this tradition of Hinduism has been practised by all Hindu followers.
Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were being the torch bearer of this age-old tradition of India tried to keep it intact and this becomes clear to us when we come across with their teachings and activities. In this regard we can quote the opinion of Dodwell - "What peculiarly distinguished India from the rest of the world is the strong survival of direct inheritance of the remote past".16

By religion Vivekananda did not mean it's external form, he meant internal soul of every religion. He said - "Every religion has a soul behind it, and that soul may differ from the soul of another religion. But they are not contradictory to each other. Each religion is a part of the great universal truth and spends it's whole force in embodying the part of that truth. It is, therefore, addition, not exclusion".17 According to him the march of humanity is from truth to truth, not from error to truth. He said - "Man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth - from lesser truth to higher truth - but never from error to truth".18 All religions are looking at truth from different stand points which may of course vary according to our birth, education, surroundings and so on. His idea was that all religions are different forces in the economy of God, each religion is working for the good of mankind. Universal religion for which philosophers
are looking for, is already exists in every country like universal brotherhood. For him the heart of every form of religion is sound - it is a throbbing beating every heart. Every religion has a great mission to fulfill. Referring to Muhammadanism he said that Islam makes it's followers all equal. It stands to preach to the world the practical brotherhood of all belonging to their faith. In Hinduism, he said, we find one national idea spirituality. Hinduism tries to define the idea of the soul so that no earthly touch can destroy it. Renunciation and spirituality were the great ideals of India is still clining to these ideas. According to Vivekananda the central idea of christianity is to preach - 'Watch and pray, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand'. - it means that man should purify his heart and should be ready to that spirit never dies.

Swami Vivekananda was in favour of acceptance and not in exclusion in regard to religious faith. He said - "Our watch word then, will be acceptance and not exclusion. The so-called toleration is often blasphemy and he did not believe in it. According to him toleration means - "that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing to live. Is it not a blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live?"
So Swami Vivekananda was ready to accept all religions of the past and hence he said - "I worship God with every one of them in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Muhammedan, I shall enter the Christian church and kneel before the crucifix, I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge to Buddha and in His law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu who is trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of everyone." He was ready not only to accept all the existing religions and to keep his heart open to accept any religion that may come into existence in future also. According to him the book of God never finishes. Revelation is never ending. He said - "It is a marvelous book - these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and in infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave my heart open for all of them." Vivekananda paid equal respect to all prophets already appeared and yet to be appeared in any religion of the world. He said - "Salutations to all the prophets of the past, to all great one's of the present and to all that are yet to come in the future." Vivekananda took delight in multiplicity of religions and religious ideas. He saw life in variation. He regarded
difference as the first sign of thought. And hence he said - "I do not want to live in a grave like land. I want to be a man in a world of men .... variation is the sign of life.... Difference is the first sign of thought .... I pray that they (sects) may multiply so that at last there will be as many sects as human beings ...."  

Vivekananda was never the man to trouble with religious matters. He uttered the great truth - "It is well to be born into a church, but it is terrible to die there."  

Being a lover of humanity Vivekananda was naturally drawn to the compassionate Buddha as a person than to Sankara. He described the Buddha as "beyond compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul power ever manifested." In spite of conflict that existed between Hinduism and Buddhism Vivekananda accepted the value of Buddhism in its own right. He said - "The relation between Hinduism and what is called Buddhism .... is merely the same as that between judaism and Christianity .... the Buddha came to preach nothing new. He also like Jesus came to fulfil and not to destroy."  

So according to Vivekananda when a man says - 'My prophet is the only true prophet' - he is not correct in saying so - truly speaking he does not know the three R's of religion. To
Vivekananda religion is neither talk nor theory nor intellectual consent. Vivekananda also says - "Religion is the realisation in the heart of our hearts. It is touching God. It is feeling, realising that I am a spirit in relation to the universal spirit and all it's great manifestations". Vivekananda holds the opinion that - "There is no one system, no real religion which does not hold the idea that the human soul ...... is essentially pure and perfect. Whether expressed in language or mythology or allegory or philosophy. It's real nature is blessedness and power, not weakness or misery". The mission of life of Vivekananda was to apply this truth for the development of man's life - physical, mental, aesthetic and spiritual. Apparently Vivekananda taught a particular religion called Hinduism, but really he delivered a message of universal truth. He said - ...... Religion is to the highest motive power and therefore ought to be studied from that standpoint. All narrow limited fighting ideas of religion have to go. All sect ideas and tribal or national ideas of religion must be given up. That each nation and tribe should its own particular God and think that everyone is wrong is a superstition that should belong to the past. All such ideas must be abandoned.

Vivekananda was the personification of his messages. He spoke from his realization of the oneness of all multiplicity.
To him this oneness is the common ground of all metaphysical ideas of all religions doctrines, of all ethical principles, of all scientific truths. This is where ancient and modern and also the East and the West meet. In his view there should be one humanity, neither eastern nor western.

The mission of Vivekananda was the reconstruction of humanity on a spiritual foundation which consists of universal truths that underlie not only in all religions but all phases of life. And in accomplishing his mission not only he studied all great religions of the world but also realised them, assimilated them and put them into practice to ensure peace of the world for all time to come. Vivekananda preached the philosophy of unity and solidarity of all existence ensuring happiness and welfare of all beings. He himself embraced all paths of spiritual progress and thereby became personification of harmony of religions.

Mahatma Gandhi in his own sense claimed himself a Santanani Hindu. He had a great respect for his own religion Hinduism and wrote - "I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my wife ..... even so I feel for Hinduism with all its faults and limitations....... I know the false that is going to day in all Hindu shires. I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal takes me of any of the
essential things in Hinduism. Gandhi was not blind to evil practices and superstitions prevailing in the then Hinduism during the course of its development through a long period of time under diverse influences. Still he believed that it was sound at its source and in its essentials which preached highest ethical principles. According to Gandhiji — Hinduism is like the Ganges pure unsullied at its course, but taking in its course the impurities in the way. Even like the Ganges it is beneficial in its total effect. As Hinduism is free from dogmas and gives the votary the immense scope for self-expression so he was much impressed by Hinduism. What attracted Gandhiji was that Hinduism helps its followers to pay respect to other religions and as well as inspires to assimilate whatever is good in other religions. He said — Hinduism tends to regard all religions as containing the elements of truth in them and enjoins the attitude of respect and reverence towards all. Gandhiji felt that Hindu religion offered him opportunity to foster with him the horizon of rational, spiritual and moral outlook. He was charmed by the dynamic attitude of Hinduism. He writes — Hinduism could be reformed and has been reformed in all ages according to the best lights of the time. ....Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay. He boasted himself of being a Hindu owing to its humanitarian and universalistic outlook.
This is because of his firm belief in Hinduism that helped him to intensify his respect for other religious of the world. After a long study and experience he was of opinion that - "(a) all religions are true, (b) all religions have some error in them, (c) all religions are almost dear to me as my own Hinduism". In conformity with the great spiritual tradition he declared - "The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of Christian and Iswara of the Hindus".

Gandhiji's attitude to other religions is crowned with positive appreciation and not merely negative toleration. By religion he did not mean sectorial religion but Religion which transcends all other religions, a religion which changes the nature of man and bind all indissolubly to the truth. The manifold religions of the world are one one the fundamental teaching that no man or woman with an impure heart can possibly appear before the 'Great White Throne'. According to Gandhiji man is responsible for the appearance of different religions but they are all one in regard to fundamental principles. He said - "Man whatever religion they belong care only for the external aspects of religion and gave good-bye to all it's fundamental principles".

As man can not grasp the very spirit of religion so it leads to the appearance of different religions. He said - "Even as
a tree has a single trunk with many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect religion, but it becomes many as it passes through human medium.\(^7\) Hence, it is absolutely necessary for us the human beings to grasp the rock bottom unity of all religions and have a glimpse of universal and Absolute truth. According to Gandhiji the fundamental truth of all religions are God given and as such these are necessary for the people to whom they are revealed. He said - "I believe in the fundamental truth of all religions of the world, I believe they are all God given....".\(^8\) So every human being should cultivate the spirit of toleration. Man should learn to respect each others religion with the strong belief that - "Different religions like different roads leading to the same point".\(^9\) True knowledge of religion breaks down the barrier between different faiths. Gandhi was not happy in using the word tolerance but he had used this word for he could not find a better for substituting it. He once said - "I do not like the word 'Tolerance' whence but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to One's own whereas Ahimsa teaches us to entertain the same respect for religious faiths of others as we accord to our own .... This admission will readily be made by a seeker of truth who follow the laws of love".\(^{40}\)
In keeping with the spirit of Hinduism Gandhi was averse to proselyzation of any kind. This he opposed because he regarded religion to be a personal matter which teaches the very heart of man. He wanted that—“we must help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, Mussalman to become a better Mussalman..... we must eradicate from our midst the sacred pride that our religion is more true and that others less. Our attitude to other religions must be clear and sincere.”

Gandhiji never believed that there would be one Religion on earth. All religions believe in one God, but in reality no two persons held identical conception of God. On the otherhand, there are certain religions who do not believe in the existence of God. Hence, different religions will continue to exist fulfilling the diverse religious aspirations of mankind. He wrote—“I do not foresee a time when there would be only one religion on earth in practice..... therefore, there will perhaps be different religions answering to the different tempaments and climatic conditions.” He, ofcourse, expected that people of various religions to have mutual understanding for peaceful co-existence. He only hoped unity in diversity.

The heart of Gandhi was touched by almost all religions of the world. He said—“Jesus occupies my heart the place of
the greatest teachers who have made me considerable influence on my life." He found no difference in regard to the essential teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and the Sermon of the Mount. To quote in his own words - "I have not been able to see any difference between the 'Sermon on the Mount' and the Bhagavad Gita. What the Sermon describes in a graphic manner, the Bhagavad Gita reduces it to a scientific formulae. It may not be a book in the accepted sense of the term. But it has argued about the law of love, the law of abandon as I call it in a scientific manner." He looked upon Jesus as an embodiment of self-sacrifice and self-suffering. He regarded Jesus as divine as Ram, Krishna, Muhammad and Zoroaster. On Bible he said - "The Bible is as much a book of religion with me as the Gita or the Koran." To him Jesus belongs to all races of the world not simply to Christian alone. The cross is the symbol of self-sacrifice. This spirit of self-sacrifice of Jesus influenced Gandhi in strengthening his faith in non-violence. S.K. George hence remarked on Gandhi - "... that it was Gandhi who carried on the principle of self-sacrifice to prove it to be principle of universal application."

Thus we find that both the thinkers Vivekananda and Gandhi are the champions of such religion which binds all
followers of diverse religions into a world community instead of separating them in the name of religion. What they preached is not this or that theoretical religion but human religion that concerns only man and can satisfy the various aspirations of humanity as a whole in marching towards the state of spiritual unity. While science has been progressing in the physical unification of the world and it is the task of religion to establish a spiritual unity in man. Both these kinds of unity must work together hand in hand to ensure peace and harmony among the people of the world. This spirit of dynamism must be injected to religion with scientific outlook. Both of them were interested in such a religion that can solve the crisis of civilization looming at large in the world. It is the religion of love that they preached. For them love is the another name for religion. Religion of love is the keynote of their teachings. But in order to bring about this kind of religion the followers of diverse religions must come out from their narrow area of institutional religion and cultivate the spirit of tolerance for other religions and ready for sacrificing everything at the altar of truth for the welfare of the human race as a whole. People must have heroic spirit as Gandhiji declared - "I would sacrifice India herself not at the altar of freedom but of truth". Human unity can be achieved only by strong religious souls whose patriotism knows
no limits of geography and History, but only those of justice and truth. The present day world is in dreadful need of this heroic spirit. Both Vivekananda and Gandhi tried to infuse this heroic spirit into the minds of the people of the world so that the world might survive peacefully against all sorts of ills practised in the name of religion. Though both of them tried to preach religion centring round God but their primary concern was man and its well-being. Toleration gains its meaning only when religion is treated purely as a human concern. They taught to treat man as living Gods and whom we are to worship as Nara-Narayana or 'Daridra-Narayana' as they called. Spiritual regeneration is the key note of their religions teachings.
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