CHAPTER II

2.1 CONCEPT OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE:

Every attempt to define religion will be as futile as an act of throwing a handful of sugar into the ocean with a view to making it sweet because the word 'religion' can be used in several senses. Religion is growing, dynamic and personal affair. Religion is something which is to be realised and experienced. From time immemorial religious thinkers have been trying to define religion. But there are few definitions of religion which throw light on all the important aspects of religion. To be precise "Religion is a growth which is perennial and it's evolution has gone on obeying the primary laws of human progress. As religion is still in the process of growing and until the growth is complete, an adequate definition can not be found". ¹

Etymologically the word 'religion' has come from the latin word 'Religionis', 'Re' means 'back' and 'ligere' means 'to bind'. So religion is a principle of unification and harmonisation.
Western minds are largely theistic in its approach to religion. They usually regard religion as some form of theism. In defining religion theologicians accepted the view of Flint according to whom anything more than theism is not possible and anything less than theism is no religion at all. Following the footprints of Flint William James also remarked — "Anything short of God is not rational, anything more than God is not possible." Galloway defined religion thus: "Man's faith in a power beyond itself wherein he seeks to satisfy the emotional needs and gains stability in life and which he expresses in acts of worship and service." Galloway's definition of religion is applicable to theism as it gives stress on faith in a power beyond man as the essential feature of religion. With the same spirit Schleiermacher also defined religion as feeling of absolute dependence.

Some theologians do not accept the view that religion involves an element of feeling. But by 'feeling' Galloway meant 'emotional satisfaction' and feeling of stability or security which was greatly emphasised by Freud. In Freud's own words — ".... a belief in God subserves the purpose of giving us a feeling of security in the face of helplessness caused by the pitiless and dark workings of fellow men .......". Jung
also maintained that "Religion gives us peace and pistis". The concept of 'Sthitaprajna' or 'Nirvāṇa' that we find in Indian philosophy is also a state of stability where a man remains unmoved by the vicissitudes of life. In this respect Y. Masiah remarks — ""... This is what Stoics, Epicureous and Spinoza emphasised as the ripened fruits of wisdom. In theism this state may assume the form of creatureliness or a state of being abased ....... before one's creator or simply that feeling of being an unclean before the sacredness of God. In current literature this state is being talked as pure subjectivity, inwardness or state of commitment.  

Galloway also regards religion as the response of the wholeman involving his intellect, feeling and will. Religion cannot be a matter of 'faith' or 'belief' for the concept of faith is difficult to clarify. Most theologicians will concede this definition for it does not imply some sort of cognition by adding the view that a fully understood God is not God at all. Man must be capable of realising this much that such a 'Being' is worthy of worship. This kind of knowledge might be insignificant and might be intermixed with other elements like feeling and will. A religious man requires only this much assurance that the power beyond man is an actual entity.
That religion involves conative element is testified by the observance of taboos, taking part in magico-religious dances etc. in the primitive forms of religion and in the form of hymn singing, fast, rituals etc. in more organised religion. With the deepening of ethical consciousness, social acts of charity, of alleviating human suffering, sympathy etc. are also religious provided they are taken as the divine commands. For this reason James Martineau, Mathew Arnold, Braithwaite etc. were of opinion that religion is a matter of morality. Religious acts are ethical in so far as these observations pertain to theistic religion exclusively. But it is a fact that there are certain religious acts which are mostly ritual without any moral principle involved in them. Here also we must agree with Galloway that religion does not consist in acts of worship and social services. Though it has been conceded by majority of thinkers of the West that religion is a matter of wholesman and this has been asserted by Galloway in his definition yet his definition would not suffice us.

In India there are certain systems like Hinayāna form of Buddhism, Orthodox kind of Jainism, Sankara's non-dualistic Vedanta where there is no room for a power beyond man or ever-living God. If Galloway's definition is accepted then these
systems can not be entered into the fold of religion. The western religions thinkers in defining religion exclude Buddhism or Jainism as the form of religion rather they are treated as form of ethical systems and Sankara's Vedanta either as super-religion or a philosophical speculation. This misconception arises owing to the fact that both Jainism and Buddhism do include much that is ethical. But it is to be noted that their ethics remain subordinate to their spiritual aim. As both of them emphasise the spiritual goal as the real end of life and it's activities, they must be regarded as religion because of their spiritual culture.

According to James Martineau - "Religion is the belief in an everlasting living God that is, in a divine mind and will ruling the universe and holding moral relation with mankind".7

Herbert Spencer defines religion thus - "Religion is the recognition that all things are manifestation of a power which transcends our knowledge".8

J. B. Frazer understands religion as - "A propiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life".9
For Bradley - "Religion is rather an attempt to express the complete Reality of goodness through aspect of our being". 10

According to Matthew Arnold - "Religion is ethics and heightened, enkindled lit up by feeling". 11

Reading between the lines of the above quoted definitions we find that not a single definition is sufficient enough to explain all the necessary elements of religion. They stress only on one aspect or another excluding the other aspect of religion. For example, Martineau has failed to recognise certain poly-theistic religions. Similarly Bradley and Arnold have identified religion with morality. They believe that moral consciousness has an autonomy of its own and religion springs out morality and in the nature of our moral consciousness there is direct evidence for the existence of super human personality. But this theory does not appear to be quite reasonable as it is not applicable in the case of primary societies where there was no real connection between the ritual system with its associated beliefs in super-natural beings and moral code.

As no satisfactory definition of religion is possible we must remain satisfied with certain elementary definitions. A survey of the numerous definitions would be more informing
than any new one that might be proposed. Because these definitions themselves are valuable contribution to man's conceptions of what religion was, is or should be.

That there are many religions in the world is a fact. "In every religion there are certain precious grains and we must draw in every religion the broad distinctions between what is essential and what is not, between the eternal and the ephemeral, between human and divine and the non-essential fill the volumes, the essential can be comprehended in a very few words. Every religion has some mission to fulfill and nothing can thwart its aim and annihilate its purpose. In order that religion may be perennial living force, one should esteem all the different creeds, doctrines and theories and realise that they are like so many radii proceeding towards the same centre."

If the above view is accepted then surely we are in a position to describe (not define) religion by assimilating all the essential ideas of religion. Religion is individual's aspirations for the realisation of an ideal intuitively felt. An analysis of the intuitive feeling would reveal that this is just another name for numinous elements in our religious consciousness..... It can be further shown that this is non-
rational counterpart of our idea of the Infinite. This idea of the Infinite comprehends everything, thus creating in the individual as sense of his unity of oneness with all. It is this, that acts as a binding force among all and probably is as the basis of many of our higher social and political institutions.¹⁴

Man is a finite-infinite being. He is never satisfied with what he gets through ordinary experience in this mundane world. There is an 'innerary' which impels him to move onwards and to find out the means to achieve his goal i.e. realisation of God in himself. "Thus religious ideas and practices are consequences of this religious consciousness ...... religions consciousness is prior to religions ideas and practices".¹⁵

As a matter of fact all the religious ideas, moral ideas can be traced back to religious consciousness indicating the primacy of religions consciousness. The consciousness of the numinous which Otto has happily described as - 'Mysterious tremendum fascinorum'. To be precise - "the subject of religion involves the problems of personality and existence and deeper vicissitudes of life and thought".¹⁶

In defining religion it has been found that religion is perennial and dynamic in character. Religion is native to human
mind, integral to human nature. Every other thing may disappear but belief in God is ultimate faith of world religions. If religion is taken to be dynamic then it is bound to change with the change of world order and altitude of human beings towards their lives. It also can not be denied that religion plays an important part in different aspects of life like individual, social and cultural etc. As religion is a movement, a growth and in all true growth the new rests on the old. If we are not satisfied with the present form of religion we must expect a better one which might satisfy the perennial inner urge of man. The most impressive phenomenon of our time is the growing unification of the world. With the development of science and technology a natural tendency has grown up in the minds of the people that scientific application, economic alliances, political institutions are the means by which this unification can be accomplished. It can not be denied that these may bring the world outwardly. But for a subtle unity, the invisible but deeper bond of ideas, the ideals require to be strengthened. In the work of rebuilding the human house-hold the importance of religion is by no means less important than that of science. True religion, however, consists in affirming that life eternal
is to be realised on this earth itself. Love of man is fundamental to religion as worship of God. The human beings must search for revolution through the medium of life transforming it, changing it over. But how this is to be brought about in the face of the existence of divergent religions of the world, in a state of affairs where each religion claims its superiority over any other religion leading to fanaticism, begotism, communal violence etc. as are seen in the world. And here the importance of tolerance steps in. The best way to overcome disharmony and ensure peaceful co-existence is to be tolerant in religious matters. But mere recognition of the good points of other religious is not enough. Recognition must be followed by acceptance. A religious man must learn to integrate the good points of other religions into his own religious life. In other words he must be tolerant to other religions.

Ordinarily the meaning of tolerance is willingness to bear with others especially with those whose views differ from one's own; or the act of non-interference with the religions doctrine or practices not wholly approved. From the legal and doctrinal application it has limited signification. It connotes a refraining from prohibition and persecution.
Toleration suggests a latent disapproval and refers to a condition in which the freedom which it permits in both limited and conditional. Toleration, however, must not be equated with religious liberty and it falls far short of religious equality. It assumes the existence of an authority which must have been coercive; but which for reasons of its own is not pushed to extremes. Again, the word 'toleration' implies voluntary in action and polite leniency. There are various motives that impels a man to adopt the policy of toleration. A man may become tolerant owing to his weakness or when he fails to enforce prohibitory measure on others. Mere desire to secure pacification by concession also impels a man to be tolerant or when a man attains the wisdom to perceive the futility of force for remedy then also he may adopt the policy of toleration. The intellectual breadth, humility etc. also make a man tolerant. So these are the various meanings that the word tolerance connotes.

Henry Kamen defined toleration — as the concession of liberty to those who dissent in religion. It can be seen as part in history which has led to a gradual development of the principle of human freedom. But he is of opinion that this development has by no means regular. Lord Action, the great
English historian, also opined that toleration has pursued not a linear but a cyclic development suffering periodic and protracted reverses.

According to Katherine Moore: "Tolerance is the spirit of respect for personality, the social value of values". He, however, used the word 'respect' in a different sense. To him respect does not mean to be an act of admiring or fearing duty, obeying or regarding as good or recognizing as superior character or intellect or station. Respect also does not consist in assimilating sum of all these attitudes combined in various proportions. And personality also does not mean certain selected personalities. He also says that - "When we say that we respect personality we mean that we recognize in every human being, and to a certain extent in everything something special, particular concrete individual uniqueness. Respect for personality recognizes the essential spiritual quality of all human beings including ourselves and perhaps every living being". According to him the real test of respect is our attitude towards people whom we do not like or respect and to all of whom we think of as enemies or criminals or sinners. In replying to the question why we should respect personality as such he answers that - one of the obvious reasons is 'pantheism' and the other owing to various systems of the Eastern wisdom and Western philosophy.
These two answers though appear to be mutually exclusive to the people trained in European tradition but really they are not. These two may ordinarily be called the religions and the non-religious.

That God created all men in His own image, that God is the Father of all men and that all men are therefore brothers, these three interrelated religious thought demand respect for a personality. A non-religious man answers differently when asked why he respects personality. He recognises it with a sense of necessity or inevitability independent of logical process, his own uniqueness, his own being in his own right. He recognises in him an inner citadel that must be forever inviolated. And because he recognises that he understands by imaginative sympathy that what is true of him is true to others, that every human being is unique and has a citadel which is sacred and that he must imperatively respect in others. What he knows from the nature of his own being must be respected by him.

In this connection it is to be noted that according to Kamen liberation in religion is not the same thing as tolerance. But from historical perspective it was a pre-requisite and has a immense importance in helping us to arrive at a idea of the
often vague concept of tolerance.

Pester King regards toleration as a problem of human relation. According to him - "to tolerate generally means to endure, to suffer or put up with a person activity, idea or organisation of which or whom one does not really approve." Generally toleration involves some kind of 'acceptance' of an item to which we aim at because of the reason that it pre-conceives a power to act out of objectives. In this respect toleration is a particular kind of liberty.

Liberty is a general concept socially protected to perform or not to perform in certain ways. A right is primarily a moral claim (it may be legally certified) and the aim of it is positive good which should not or must not be secured. To him - "Tolerance is a liberty wherein one is empowered to act or forbear and the object of liberty is viewed negatively, although not acted against. Tolerance by the same token, is not itself a right taken as such prove an object of tolerance. Not all liberties whether we label them rights are tolerances, any moral claim to continue in being. Liberty is a general capacity to act or forbear. Tolerance pre-supposes such a capacity and is thus a liberty, but it only specifically obtains where a negative act genuinely indicated by a negative motive.
(the object) is for some reasons voluntarily suspended.

Having discussed a few definition on tolerance given by certain western thinkers it is clear that while certain thinkers attach morality or spiritual element in it, others regard tolerance to be entirely social and political phenomenon. But tolerance in whatever forms it may be, plays an important role for the happiness and well-being of the human race. And in this connection the view of Richard Living stone is worth quoting - "Tolerance has always been need for the happiness and well-being of the human race. To-day it is needed for survival ...... the forces of intolerance varies from age to age. Today racial bitterness has largely replaced religious tolerance, but the spirit of tolerance remains the same and in that sense nothing here is out of date". 23

If we take into account a few phases of historical development it is found that a few centuries ago there was no such thing as religious tolerance in the West. Religious tolerance was unthinkable to them and as a result various Crusades took place. For example, the Muslims believed the Christians to be heretic, similarly Christians did the same in return. And consequently both the Christians and the Muslims
decided to put to others to the sword resulting in the death of thousands of people. Hence, although there was no religious tolerance two or three centuries ago, there is to-day religious tolerance. Apart from liberation various means have been adopted to make progress in this respect. Modernisation of Roman Catholic countries, spreading of Christian charity and culture, knowledge of history, scientific method of criticism, study of comparative religion, softening of manners by scepticism and by religious indifferences - all these are practised now to cool down the odour of the persecuting spirit and so to establish toleration.

Coming to Indian perspective it may be said that toleration is a religious concept, not political or social phenomenon. Y. Masiah holds - "Toleration means restraining from persecuting the followers of religion, other than it's own". The spirit of toleration is integral to Indian life. This is because of the fact that the tradition of India is intensely spiritual in character. Toleration in India, is not an ideal, but a reality. The spirit of tolerance has been practised right from the time of Vedas to the present. The detail discussion on it, is however, kept reserved for subsequent discussion.
2.2 "HINDU VIEW OF RELIGION"

In the previous paragraphs we have given a rough idea of the general nature of religion and the meaning of tolerance. We are now in a position to examine the Hindu view of religion.

The word Hindu is most likely of Persian origin and is not found in any of the religions books. The trace of the origin of the word 'Hindu' carries us back both to the invasion of the peninsula by the Aryan tribes from the North to the North-East. The Aryans used the word 'Smohu' in order to name the great river 'Indus' of the west. Of course, the Vedic literature used the term 'Sindhu' as appalative noun for river in general through out Indian history. So it is quite possible that the word 'Indus' or 'Sindhu'. A common term for the Aryans settlements in the Punjab was "the seven rivers (Sapta-Sandhava) the name Hindu appears in the form of 'Hindus' in the inscriptions of the monuments of Darins Hystopas near Perseopolis (486 B.C.)".25

Again, under the title Hinduism is included diverse classes, views, beliefs, rituals, modes of life. There was no religion called Hinduism just as there were no Indians belonging to the same race or nationality regardless of their being inhabitants of America, the East-Indies, West-Indies
Hence, it is difficult to define Hinduism. Some recent writers have defined 'Hindu' as — "All natives of India who do not belong to Islam, Jaina, Buddhist, Christian, Persi, Jew and other known religions of the world and whose form of worship extends from monotheism to fetishism and whose theology is written in Sanskrit language". But this definition is not satisfactory for, it ignores the fact that Hinduism is not a religion in the sense of the word as understood by western thinkers. An Indian thinker observes Hinduism thus — "Hinduism is that a Hindu does, in other words, it is a question of ritualistic and social observance". Hinduism is an everchanging society which may expand and take in races and peoples irrespective of their religious beliefs. What societies it will absorb depends entirely on the circumstances.

From the above it becomes clear that the word 'Hindu' had only a territorial significance. It only implied residence in a particular geographical area. Naturally all the people like aboriginal tribes, savages, half-civilised people, the cultured Dravidians and the vedic Aryans were all Hindus as
they were the sons of the same mother. Hinduism came into existence due to subtle unification of the different masses by a bond of spiritual thought and realisation. It is a collocation of name for a variety of beliefs born in India inclusive of Buddhism and Jainism.

Some Western thinkers, however, used the word 'religion' and 'Dharma' synonymously, but it is not true. In India the word 'Dharma' is pregnant with deep rooted significance connecting several senses. This concept is unique to Indian culture and philosophy.

Etymologically the word 'Dharma' is derived from the sanskrit root 'Dhr' (means to support). It is the all supporting principle making for integrity and harmony in every context. It is also described as established order, usage, institution, custom, rules, dignity, virtue, moral spirit, right, justice, law etc. According to Manu - "The whole Veda is (first) source of sacred laws, next the traditions and the virtues, conduct of those who know (veda-further) as the customs of holy men and finally self-satisfaction". Dharma as duty as duty is the obligation on the part of every individual towards other members of the society in which he is placed without any attachment to it's fruits. Dharma as virtue is universal and
eternal. It means individual's will to cultivate a number of virtues such as Ahimsa, Kshama etc; as prescribed by the Indian thinkers.

Thus there is a difference between Hindu conception of Dharma and European conception of religion. Hindu is a definite body and Hindu-dharma is an indefinite thing which the Hindus consider as their Dharma. Indian commentators have explained it as - "denoting an act which produces the quality of the soul called 'Apurva', the cause of heavenly bliss and final liberation". 30

Monier Williams, on the other hand, defines 'Dharma' as — "a particular body of traditional doctrines handed down through succession of teachers and also designated 'Darshana' or 'Mata'— that is particular views or opinions on religion or philosophy". 36 But careful study of the Hindu religion reveals that the word 'Mata' for religion cannot be used. Mata means opinions, doctrines, theories, views etc; Monier Williams committed mistake in identifying 'Mata' for religion. The Indians regard 'Dharma' as a theory of Reality guiding our life according to that theory. They make a clear cut distinction between the two. If this distinction is not made people may think that Indian philosophy grew out of dogmas.
formulated by some ancient religious teachers. Keeping in view this distinction it will help us to understand why Indian philosophy still keeps religious bias, a bias towards spirituality. Indian philosophy is a reflective way of life.

Dharma is, therefore, the law of life, the way of life that keeps running union with the foundation of our being. In Indian tradition religion and philosophy are not divided into two water tight compartments. They are regarded as the two states of the same human activity. The aim of both religion and philosophy is to uplift man and society to higher and nobler level and to seek unity through diversity.

On development of Indian religion P.T. Raju observes that - "the elements of Indian religion can be traced back to the pre-Aryan Mohenjodaro civilisation in the Indian valley to about 300 B.C. or even earlier times which had a script but that has not been deciphered. Excavation reveals that people of the time had a meditative religion and worshipped some mother Goddess. This view has been confirmed by Ernest Mackay - "The worship of another Goddess is a very nearly Indian cult and probably existed in the country long before the arrival of the Indus valley people. It is probably true also of the tree worship..... Animal worship is also inherent in most primitive
communities and has existed in India or elsewhere for so long that its origin is untraceable. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also writes - "There is hardly any height of spiritual insight or rational philosophy attained in this world that has its parallel to the vast stretch that lies between the early Vedic seers and modern Naiyayikas. From all these we may come to the conclusion that Indian religion is the oldest religion of the world.

Now we may sum up our discussion on Hindu view of religion thus - Indian religion is neither based on certain dogmas or principles nor an intellectual gymnastic. It is inward realisation of Reality or experience of Reality. By experience it does not mean emotional thrills or mere subjectivity; it is the response of the whole personality, an integrated self to the central Reality. Dr. Radhakrishnan also observes - "While fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself not limits. Intellect is subordinate to institution, dogmas to experience, outer expression to inward realisation. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstraction or celebration of ceremonies but a kind of life and experience. It is insight into the nature of Reality (Darsana) or experience of Reality (Anubhava). This experience is not our emotional thrills or a subjective fancy; but is the
response of the whole personality, the integrated self to
the central Reality. Religion is a specific attitude of
the self itself and no other, though it is mixed up generally
with intellectual views, aesthetic norms and moral valuation. 35

From the different views on religion both Western and
Indian, it may be noted that religion is a binding force which
deepens the solidarity of human society. Its very aim is to
convert the people belonging to divergent religions into a world
community. And in order to accomplish this objective of religion
we require to cultivate good will and understanding of the basic
principles underlying in various religions of the world. The
followers of different religions must work together with a
spirit of co-operation and mutual respect. And in order to
promote this spirit of co-operation and mutual respect for one
another the study of comparative religion plays an important
role. Hence, a brief study has been undertaken to explain the
meaning of comparative religion and how it helps in promoting
the spirit of tolerance among the people of divergent religions.

The development of the science of comparative religion
came into existence primarily owing to two reasons -
(1) publication and the study of the sacred books of the East
and (ii) the growth of Anthropology. Federick Max Muller gave
an inspiration to the study of comparative religion by his deviation to the subject of comparative religion as well as by the publication of 50 volumes of the sacred books of the East.

Comparative religion is not a special kind of religion, it is only a particular method of treating religion. "By comparative religion is meant the comparative study of the beliefs, values, symbols, cults and institutions of the religions of the world". 36

The aim of comparative religion is not to prove that this or that religion is of supreme manifestation of the religions spirit. It is really difficult to maintain the absoluteness of any religion while analogous phenomena are directly discovered among people of other faiths. One has to realise that every form of religion is relative and as such it can not claim the sole monopoly of religious insight. The study of comparative religion is to be undertaken with the spirit of treating all religions to be relative in achieving the supreme ideal. Max Muller opines - "I hold that there is divine element in every one of the great religions of the world". Similarly Dr. Erslie Carpenter maintains that - "The different religions are like partners in the quest for the same object". 37 Hence, only if the relativity of all religions
of the world is accepted then it becomes easy to discuss the aims and objectives of the study of comparative religion.

Religion is such that it includes all the areas of human life - cultural, social and individual. Without entering into the debate whether religion is the product of culture or culture has it's origination in religion, it has been accepted by most of the religions thinkers that more than half of our experiences, values and symbols of culture are religions by nature. Culture is the sum total of experiences, values and symbols of a society transmitted from generation to generation. It elevates man above animals no doubt, but it also conditions human mind and create divisions among them. The same fact is applicable in religion also. Every religion is pregnant with some merits and demerits. The study of comparative religion helps people to study multiferious religions and understand the weakness of their own religion. As a result this sort of self-correction and integration of foreign elements have already taken place whenever religions have interacted. Study of comparative religion also helps in discovering the hidden treasure of one's own religion. For example - Contact with Hinduism Buddhism led to the discovery of the rich mystical tradition of Christianity which the people of the West had neglected during the 18th. and 19th. century. Comparative religion helps the
scholars to study the relation of religion with other aspects of culture. It clears the path for universal religions atmosphere to the people world over. Comparative religion also increases our confidence in universality of God and respect for human race. It includes not a mere attitude of tolerance which implies conscious sympathy, not patronising pity, but genuine respect and appreciation.38

Coming to social aspect it can be stated that the development of science and technology has led to both positive and negative consequences upon the people. While in its positive aspect science and technology encourage co-operation and mutual help at national and international level, in its negative aspect it also fosters communal disharmony, unrest, violence etc; Comparative religion can help a lot in developing the spirit of harmony and universal brotherhood among various religious communities. If properly studied comparative religion helps to prepare a common ground to fight against immorality, exploitation and other social evils.

As religion plays an important role in personal life of individual in whatever religion he may be. Comparative religion provides several alternative spiritual paths and techniques other than it's own. Swami Shajananda remarks - "Comparative religion enables us to have better understanding of the phenomena of
religion in all its dimensions and place one's own religious life in a cosmic perspective, understanding other religious enlarges one's own religious consciousness*. In this connection it is to be noted that in the task of studying comparative religion must be accomplished as Dr. Bonquet observes - "The only tolerable way of engaging in the work is to let oneself be enthralled by man's ceaseless quest for something supernatural and eternal which the ordinary life of this world will never give him, and to try to put one's self into the place of those who are obviously enthusiasts for a religion which is not one's own". 39

This is an age of science and hence there is likelihood that a modern man is not ready to accept the incredible dogmas or exclusive revelations. He wants to scrutinise any religious view through the spectacle of reason and anything unreasonable is not acceptable to him. In addition to this, this is an age of humanitarianism as such the religion which does not pay heed to the human ills, social and political problems can not penetrate into human minds. Religion which gives rise to discord, division, disintegration, fanaticism etc; fails to bring unity among the people and these are so dangerous that it threatens the very existence of human race. Hence, the present day world needs a
religion which is capable of bringing together the divine revelations of life and this kind of religion only can serve as the basis of world orders. To put in the words of Bernard Shaw - "Civilization needs a religion which will appeal the educated men and women, should be living and dynamic religion and not a static and frozen religion full of beliefs and superstitions, orthodox dogmas and soulless tradition". 40

Hence, religion must create the spirit of unity and synthesis at the highest level - the triple unity of faith and reason, faith and faith and faith with life. The forceful influence of this kind of spirit of the various creeds and sects will lead to an ever-increasing importance of their spiritual elements resulting in the liberation of values, universal and human embedded in them. This kind of religion will be able to work as a force of human unity, fellowship and service.

It is, however, heartening that this spirit of unity and tolerance has been there in India since the time of Vedas down to the present age. Commenting on religious tradition Toynbee remarks - "This catholic minded Indian religious
spirit is the way of salvation for human beings of all religions in an age in which we have to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves. The mission of India's religious tradition is that - "it does not want any religion to compromise or capitulate, it wishes to treat all religious as friendly partners in the supreme task of formulating the spiritual life of man."

The Upanishads which are the earliest philosophical foundation of India also taught to practice toleration among the people searching their way the same God. The most ancient utterance which influenced Indian culture and religion down to the present age occurs in the Rg Veda - "Ekam Sat Vipra bahudha vadante". - the Truth is one, sages call it various names. The Bhagavad Gita, the Magnacarya of world religion declares - "Through whatever paths men may come to Me, I receive them". This is a proclamation of absolute freedom of each religion to strive and develop in its own way and to lead its votary to the highest realisation. The Bhagavad Gita also says - "It is the one and the same mental consciousness that is spoken of as Brahman by the philosophers, as Paramatman by the mystics and as Bhagavana by the devotees."
Thus tolerance and acceptance are the principles which have been practised in India. Commenting on tolerance in Indian religious thought Swami Ranganathananda remarks - "India has a long tradition which was created early history by our philosophy and fostered by our religion and our political states in subsequent periods. Great world moving spiritual leaders like Krishna, Sankara and Ashoka in the past powerfully influenced millions of people resorting entirely to the democratic method of peaceful persuasion backed by rational appeal and sterling character. In our time, we see the reinforcing to this tradition and method of Swami Vivekananda. We had benefit of it's successful application in the socio-political field by Gandhiji. K.V. Reddy also remarks - 'Hinduism is perhaps the most tolerant of all religious of the world - I mean no offence to other religions. Hence, in this country you will find philosophers of greatest differences including philosophers who deny or at least do not think about God in Hinduism taking all these there in, I see the tolerance of which this faith is capable. Freedom of thought has been allowed resulting in what you find today in our country. And this is a fact that various opposing religious co-existed in India without any conflict. In this case we can refer to the Ashoka's inscriptions such an early hour in the history of the human
civilisation where Ashoke declared - "The King Piyadsi honours all sects, monks and house-holds, he honours them by gifts and various kinds of favours ..... for he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment of his own with intent to enhance the splendor of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect". 47

Much earlier to this example of toleration is, in the days of Buddha when various sects like Padaka, Ladaka, Nigartha etc; existed without any mutual persecution. In the medieval age the emperor Akbar set an example of cultural fellowship in the sphere of religion. He built Fatehpur sikri, the house of worship (Ibādād Khāna) where all adherents belonging to various religious like Hindu, Muslim, Jaina, Zoroastrian met together and discussed the problems of metaphysics and religion. He even promulgated a new creed 'D in-Elahi' which was synthesis of the truths of the various religions known to him. Dara-sukhoh, son of king Sahjahan being attracted to sufism hold the opinion that there are as many roads to God as there are seekers of Him. He wrote a book on the mingling of the two oceans, 'Majinaul-Baharam' - the two oceans being Hinduism and Islam. In the mediaval times fellowship in the field of religion gave birth to a galaxy of sacred souls like Nanak, Ramananda, Kabir
Tulsidas, Jaydeva Mirabai, etc. in both Hindu and Musalman. Hence Dr. S. Radhakrishan writes - "The richness, tolerance and profundity of the Indian religion and its enduring roots among Indian people made it difficult for Christians to spread in India.".

During British era the influence of Christianity and western English education brought about a religious awakening and gave birth to a number of renaissance Hindu thinkers like Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and many others. Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian who brought about fundamental unity of spirit in Hindu, Muslim and Christian religion. In 1928 he founded Brahma-Samaj, a society believing God, open to all men irrespective of a caste, creed and religion. Ramakrishna was in the direct line of rishis of the Upanishads. He declared - "in all religious the human mind is revealed in it's search for truth." Following Ramakrishna Swami Vivekananda in conformity with the age old tradition of India presented the sweeping ideas of 'Sanatani Dharma' and carried the message of unity and universal brotherhood even to the west. In Swami Vivekananda's words - "I accept all religious that were in the past and worship them all in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Muhammedan ...... Kneel before
Christ ....... I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindus who is trying to see the light which lightens the heart of every one. Through his message and service in both the hemispheres he united humanity through the divinity running through all existence. The spirit of India being the assimilation of various elements that came to this country so Mahatma Gandhi also appealed to all of us "to open our doors to all the winds that blow but not to get swept off our foot". He dedicated his life for Hindu-Muslim unity and said - "the true beauty of Hindu-Muslim lies in it's remaining true to his own religion and yet being true to each other". In modern times there are records of Hindu-Muslim unity and fellowship. Dr. Taylor remarks - "Religions quarrels between the Hindu and the Mahomedan are of rare occurrence. These two classes live in perfect peace and concord and majority of the individuals belonging to them have been overcome their prejudices so far as to smoke from the same hookah."

From the above discussion it is evident that India sought for throughout her history for the freedom of the spirit and union of hearts. "It does not destroy differences but discovers their underlying affinities....... when new ideas old traditions are not discarded but are treated with respect introduced by way of interpretation."
Even after independence India to keep it's age-old tradition of tolerance, it has followed the principle of secularism. Originally though the constitution makers of India did not incorporate the word 'Secularism' in Indian constitution it has been inserted in 42nd. amendment of the constitution in 1976. But the principle of secularism as practised in India in accordance with constitutional provision is different in respect of it's meaning of secularism as understood in the West.

Generally secularism is a term which can be viewed from two aspects - Positive and negative. Secularism has been described as a movement intensely ethical and negatively religious with political and philosophical antecedents, founded with the express intention of providing a certain theory of life and conduct, it follows that "in it's positive aspect it is ethical, since it undertook to this without reference to deity or a future life and this proposed to fulfil a religious aspect apart from religious institutions, it may be regarded as negatively religious. It's origin, however, was primarily due to the certain political and philosophical influences". Though the philosophical roots of secularism can be traced back to James, Mill and Bentham etc. with an anti-theistic forceful attention inherited from Thomas Paine and Richard
Carlyle, yet socialism owes its name and in large measure its existence to the life and writings of Holyoake and Bradlaugh. Actually secularism developed at a period when the relation between science and religion were beginning to be treated as those of sharp opposition and proclaimed independence of secular truth. Secular knowledge is founded upon the experience of this life and can be maintained and tested by reason at work in experience. It conceived that just as mathematics, Physics, Chemistry were secular sciences, so it would be possible on the same line to establish a secular theory of the conduct and welfare of life. The basic principle of secularism is to look for human improvements by material means alone because these means are more proximate and that independently and in themselves they are adequate to secure the directed end. To be precise secularism in West as Y. Masiah says - "... the cultivation of the secular attitude of life and especially towards religions claims in the light of a scientific world view. Hence it means the full exploitation of the resources of one's country with the help of science and technology in utter disregard to supermaterialism. Therefore, secularism is this worldly. In this sense secularism is not anti-religions but quite indifferent to religion. Religion is kept apart from all public activities - social, economic and
But this meaning has not been adopted in India. From the common supposition and the convention developed in our country, Secularism means that India is not a theocratic state and there is no preference for any one religion existing in India. All religions have equal rights and all religions are equal before the law of the secular state. It means the co-existence of all religions or equal respect for all religions - 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava'. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also observes - "It may strange that our government should be secular one while our culture is rooted in spiritual values. Secularism here does not mean irreligion or atheism or even stress on material comforts. It proclaims that it lays stress on the universality of spiritual values". Thus in India secularism is a religious concept and not a social or political concept. Secularism, in the preamble of Indian constitution means - co-existence of all religions. This is what Gandhiji maintained - "I believe in the Bible as I believe in the Gita. I regard all the great faiths of the world as equally true with my own. It haunts me to see anyone of them caricatured as they are to-day by their own followers". As India has regard for spiritual values so the principle of secularism
in India must be based on two supreme principles of morality as Kant maintained. They are - (i) Man is sacred to man, (ii) Man must be on that maxim thus while he can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. The law, order, principles, rules etc. of the state or of any religion must be in accordance with these supreme principles. Insisted on the recognition of potential divinity in man as taught by Advaita Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda also directed his religious preachings and activities for the welfare of the human race for in India religion is the prime motive force of all activities. And in this connection it is to be remembered that Mahatma Gandhi also regarded his political activities to be religious in character

2.3 BACKGROUND OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAHATMA GANDHI'S IDEA OF RELIGION:

Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were the apostles of tolerance. Both of them dedicated their lives through their activities and teachings in continuing the age-old religious tradition of tolerance through out the world. Hence, it is necessary to discuss their religious, social and political background that made these two thinkers religiously tolerant.
It is well known that technological revolution brought about by modern science and technology in the 17th. century helped to make prominent the mundane values and to increase man's worldly appetite for the two and a half century. The heavy impact of science and technology was felt more or less dimension in the rest of the world including India. The whole world was in the grip of forces physical, mental and social reinforced by the scientific revolution. This scientific revolution of the West carried with it both benevolent as well as malvolent elements. The benevolent elements constituted an attractive feature of modern civilization, destruction of distance, physical unification of the world, theory and practice of democracy based on the dignity of individual and various plans and measures all-round social welfare throughout the world, the increase of religious tolerance and feudal emergence of International outlook.

But unfortunately with the advent of 20th. century the malvolent elements of the scientific revolution started importantly forwarding in the form of selfishness, violence, war etc. Describing the situation Swami Ranganathanda remarks — "17th. century Europe had banished religion as a centre of human royalty as a reaction against 30 years religious wars
of that century and substituted sense values in its place. But in this banishing religion Western man had a keen feeling he was banishing a thing of deep value of life but he could not help it, as that value had been presented to him enclosed in elements irrational and anti-social and alien to his newly formulated scientific and rational temper, aims and methods. And in this critical juncture when there arose a sharp opposition between science and religion and reached its highest altitude, some eminent religious thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi born in India.

India was under the British regime by the time Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were born. In 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny, the first Indian struggle for independence against British colonisation took place only to suffer defeat. Being defeated Indian people felt humiliated and a suppressed feeling of dissatisfaction was prevailing, on the other hand under the British regime modern civilisation with all its accessories, manners, customs, railways, telegraph etc. were advancing all over India while its thoughts and news were encroaching the mind of the people owing to introduction of English education. Christian missionaries started looking down upon
Hindu social customs, religions beliefs and practices. They started asserting supremacy over Hindu religion and culture. Influenced by the English education some Indians were attracted to Western civilization doubting on the Indian traditional ideals and ways of life. Even some educated Indians lost faith in their social culture and religion and wanted to adopt Western ideals for salvation of their country. A few brilliant intellectuals threw off their time honoured faith and turned atheist or accepted Christianity, commenting on the Indian scholars of that time Lord Macaulay, the architect of Indian education wrote in 1831 - "I have never found one among them who would deny that a single self of a good European Library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". Inspired by the increasing Europeanisation of the Hindus again wrote in 1836 - "Our English schools are flourishing wonderfully. If our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator (Hindu) among the respected class in 50 years hence". Commenting on Indian social, political and religious situation of that time Swami Jitmananda also writes - "Never before such a sweeping influence of western culture could be seen among the educated intellectuals of India. Calcutta had witnessed unprecedented scenes when nearly half of the 400 bright and
cultured students of Calcutta Presidency College left Hinduism under the modernizing influence of Derezio. These young Bengalees paraded through the streets of Calcutta with brandy bottles and beef baskets shouting slogans against Hinduism which was considered only a religion of superstition and idolatory. The ship of Hinduism was passing through one of its most critical periods. But fortunately by this time some sacred souls of India started reacting against the western culture and civilization. Some religious and social movements like Brahmo-Samaj by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal, Arya-Samaj in Punjab by Dayananda Saraswati etc. came into existence to cope with the Western religious and cultural aggression. "But none of these organisations were capable of calling forth of national genius of India or to pointing the India's children the true import of their voluminous scriptures, the universal character of their religion, the inner harmony of their multiform beliefs, the fundamental unity of their national life despite divergence of sect, creed, caste, colour customs and language none could restore their faith in their ancient heritage and how to accept the new on the basis of the old and apply the eternal religious principle to modern condition." To quote Swami Jitatmananda - "One one side there was charidies of new reformers and intellectuals full of hatred
and criticism against superstition, caste-bound and priest-ridden Hinduism as practiced by the caste Hindus on those days. On the other hand, there was the scylla of orthodoxy were as Swami Vivekananda says - 'a grown up men by hundreds have been discussing for years whether we should drink a glass of water with the right or the left'.

Though it was period of Indian Renaissance but like European Renaissance it was not artistic and literary movement. Indian Renaissance was primarily cultural and spiritual, not simply a religious movement. Though Indian Renaissance started long before the birth of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi yet, it bore a little faith for the spiritual regeneration of the Indian people. They could see very clearly that the ship of Hinduism was passing through most difficult periods. Swami Vivekananda feared - "if it goes for an another century, all of us will be in a lunatic asylum. The religious practices of Hinduism were like as Swamiji himself described - "A petty village custom now the real authority and not the teachings of the Upanishads". Hence Swami Vivekananda was in search of a dynamic and modern Hinduism which would save India from the all-round degradations - like religious, political and cultural. Practically it was Swami Vivekananda who gave
message of Renaissance into a concrete shape and Mahatma Gandhi put it into practice.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi travelled throughout India and found most of the Indian people were illiterate and poverty stricken. The economic policy adopted by the Britishers was only to fulfill their vested interests. Hence, the socio-economic conditions of the Indian people were deplorable. Both these sacred souls were, therefore, searching the way out to save the nation as a whole and found that religion had to be the principal and leading force in implementing the political and social change in India. According to both of them only the dynamic and modern Hinduism was capable of raising the Indian people to a honourable position. Swami Vivekananda believed - "The Hindu man drinks religiously, sleeps religiously, walks religiously, marries religiously robs religiously". He also believed - "If you want to speak of politics in India you must speak through the language of religion". Both the thinkers believed that spiritual regeneration is to be brought about in India as a whole. Religion is the key to the solution of all problems.
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