CHAPTER -II

THE IMAGE OF MAN IN KIERKEGAARD'S PHILOSOPHY

(i) MAN AS AN EXISTENT INDIVIDUAL

In Kierkegaard's philosophy, Man as the Existent Individual occupies the central position. Throughout his philosophical career, his main concern had been with Man as a concrete existent individual, quite contrary to the Hegelian concept of Man within the purview of his Absolute or Objective Idealism, according to which, Thought and Reality are identical, and Universal Mind or Absolute Spirit is the Absolute Reality. Kierkegaard was a practical philosopher of life concerned with the actual problems of the living human beings, and he considered a philosophy of human existence alone to be a philosophy worth its name. No philosophy unconcerned with human life can be regarded as a philosophy proper. Like the sages of ancient India, Kierkegaard developed his existentialist thought on the basis of his own life and experience, and that is why, there is to be found a purity and spirituality in his thought, that is absent in the western systems of abstract philosophical thought.

Kierkegaard was deadly opposed to the Hegelian system of Abstract Idealism, in which no room was left for wisdom or ethics. One thing has always escaped Hegel, and that is how to live. He might have achieved absolute knowledge of reality, but not that of ethical reality. As Kierkegaard says, "The only reality that exists for an existing individual is his own ethical
reality. What would be the use of discovering so-called objective truth, of working through all the systems of philosophy to construct a world in which I do not live but only hold up for the view of others."(1) Hegel had completely ignored the living human being, who lives in a world in which history is not yet completed. He gives us a system of 'absolute knowledge' only at the cost of practical wisdom, the ethical part of philosophy, which consists in knowing how to live and what to do. According to Kierkegaard, philosophy must provide us with those edifying truths which Hegel explicitly denies. Hegel's failure, like the failure of all traditional rationalists, was his avoidance of the subjective point of view—the existence of the individual. The reason behind it is perhaps his exclusive concern with the concept of man, the concept of the individual rather than the existing individual man. A concept is a mere possibility, while existence or the existing individual is an actuality. Subjectivity or individuality can never be reduced to objectivity or a concept merely. A concept of the individual rather than the existence or the existing individual is an actuality. Subjectivity or individuality can never be reduced to objectivity or a concept merely. A concept is a priori or non-empirical, while an existing individual is a posteriori or empirical. Logic cannot capture the peculiarities of an individual person—his feelings, particular thoughts, emotions and dispositions, that is, all the non-universal aspects of a person, which constitute personality. Every existing individual is unique, not just an instance of the concept of man. Thus for Kierkegaard, philosophy is concerned primarily with the individual man and his way of life—not with concepts and conceptual knowledge.

According to Kierkegaard, existence consists not in being a knowing subject, but in being a moral agent. The knower is only a cognitive reality, while the moral agent has an ethical reality. Only a moral agent can have wisdom as the practical
guide for living, which is not a property of a group or a society. Wisdom manifests itself in wise reaction to the group.

Kierkegaard's real objection to Hegel is his failure to appreciate the seriousness of ethical dilemmas facing the individual, that is to say, to appreciate that the concept of individual existence involves the notions of choice, individual freedom, responsibility, commitment, despair and guilt. Existence is something to be striven for, something to be achieved, it is the authentic being, which an individual man attains after a despairing struggle to separate himself from the collective idea. The meaning of existence is the significance which one provides for one's own life, through the realization of one's personal freedom and through passionate commitment, through responsibility and the feeling accompanying freedom and responsibility.

According to Kierkegaard, the philosophy of the west, after Socrates, has ignored the existence of the individual. The subject that has been the starting-point of philosophy from Descartes through Kant and Fichte has not been the subject from which philosophy should begin. For Descartes, as well as, Kant, the subject of philosophical investigation is the cognitive subject having a cognitive reality ('I think'). According to Descartes, the subject is a thinking substance that has thoughts; and according to Kant, a thinking subject (not a thinking substance) is the real subject that is opposite to the empirical subject. But Kierkegaard says, "The real subject is not the cognitive subject......the real subject is the ethically existing subject." (2) The Cartesian Cogito and the Kantian 'I think', as well as, the Hegelian 'Spirit' give us only the idea of a subject, only a concept. But according to Kierkegaard, the individual subject is not merely an idea. As he says, "A particularly existing human being is surely not an idea, and his existence is surely something quite different from the conceptual existence of the Idea. An existence as a particular
human being is doubtless an imperfection in comparison with the eternal life of the Idea, but it is a perfection in comparison with not existing at all." (3) The *Cogito* does not prove one's existence, but only presupposes it. It (the *Cogito*) has been wrongly taken to be a piece of *a priori* knowledge; but as a matter of fact, we do not simply *know* that we exist. As Kierkegaard says, "The only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation that is more than cognitive is his own reality, the fact that he exists: this reality constitutes his absolute interest. Abstract thought requires him to become disinterested in order to acquire knowledge; the ethical demand is that he become infinitely interested in existing". (4) He makes a sharp distinction between the theoretical and the practical, and says that there is no theoretical or transcendental self, but only a practical, living or existing self. According to him, a purely conceptual existence is no existence at all, the abstract thinker (the *cogito*) has no existence, it is 'thought without a thinker'. (5) One's ethical reality alone is real.

For Kierkegaard, "Subjectivity is truth, Subjectivity is reality." (6) It means that the choice of a way of life can be made only by and on the basis of the person who has to live it. Authentic individual existence can be achieved only by committing oneself, deliberately and passionately, to a way of life, by choosing a 'mode of existence' within which all particular choices may be determined. Once the style of life is known, the particular choices follow from certain rules concerning what is needed within that life.

However, according to Kierkegaard, one simply has to choose, without appeal to further standards, without reasons, without justification; one simply has to decide 'irrationally', i.e., without reason. One must choose, must 'leap to' a way of life, if one is to exist, because the only alternative, apart from suicide, or a total retreat to inactivity is to refuse to acknowledge the absence of ultimate justification or to abstain
from choice of existence all together and simply follow the 'crowd'. The burden of choice lies entirely on one's own shoulders, on nothing else. In the words of R.C. Solomon, "The incredible responsibility of having no one and no value to which to turn leads Kierkegaard to cite despair as an essential ingredient in freedom of choice, to cite guilt as an essential component of responsibility, and to identify dread, the dread of an indefinitely large range of possibilities which it is one's own responsibility to choose between, as the defining passions of human existence."(7)

However, Kierkegaard does not deny the place of reason in human thought, he denies only its relevance to the specific problems of existence, i.e., to the choice of values. It is through reason that he comes to the conclusion that ultimate objective standards or values are unavailable. According to him, man's choices are ultimately unjustifiable; it is his own responsibility. There is no justification for a single way of life for all men. Herein subjectivity plays its most important role in Kierkegaard's philosophy, because it is on subjective consideration that one way of life instead of another is chosen by a particular man. These considerations are the personal desires, hopes, fears, eccentricities and habits of the individual concerned. There is no ultimate justification for leading a moral life; but the fact is that some people are morally inclined, though not everyone. Some are inclined to the life of pleasure; some, to the life of art; and some, to the life of religious passion. It all depends upon the person who has to live it.

True to his own point of view, Kierkegaard had his own choice of Christianity as a way of life rather than as a set of doctrines or body of knowledge, as believed by the traditional Christians. He re-interpreted Christianity from his own existentialist point of view as a life of faith and passion, as existing in the presence of God, who is beyond the grasp of reason.
TRUTH AS SUBJECTIVE

In modern philosophy since the time of Descartes, man has been represented almost exclusively as an epistemological subject, as an intellectual being that registers sense-data, makes judgments, and seeks the certainty of intellectual knowledge; but not as the man who is born, suffers and dies. According to Kierkegaard, a mere rational or epistemological fragment of the whole being of an individual cannot represent the whole man or the integral man who is the subject proper. The epistemological knower knows himself as an object; unlike him, he is immediately aware of himself as a subject. "This kind of truth is not a truth of the intellect, but of the whole man. Strictly speaking, subjective truth is not a truth that I have, but truth that I am." (8)

Kierkegaard defines 'Truth' thus: 'An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual '. (9) Truth as defined here may be taken as equivalent to faith. In faith there is involved a risk, no faith is possible without some risk. Faith is the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty. When subjectivity or inwardness is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox. The paradoxical character of truth is its objective uncertainty, which is an expression for the passionate inwardness, and this passion is the truth. When Socrates believed that there was a God, he held fast to the objective uncertainty with the whole passion of his inwardness. It is precisely in this contradiction and in this risk, that faith is rooted. But with Kierkegaard, it is otherwise. The objective uncertainty gives place to a certainty, and it is the objectivity of the absurd. This absurdity held fast in the passion of inwardness is faith. The absurd is that the eternal truth has come into being in time, that God has come into being, has been born, has grown up, and so forth, just

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like any other individual human being. Faith is traditionally characterized as believing any way what we have insufficient evidence to know. Faith, so conceived, is cognitive. But Kierkegaard relates faith to what is absurd, to what cannot be known, not simply because of lack of warrant, but because it is unintelligible. For him, 'faith' is 'passion' and thus he is using the notion of faith in a very special sense.

Kierkegaard reacts to the traditional view of Christianity as a system of knowledge and principles, as held by the speculative philosophers like Hegel, in which the objective takes the place of the subjective; and he reinterprets Christianity as a way of life, from his own existentialist point of view. According to him, speculative philosophy is objective, and objectively there is no truth for existing individuals, but only approximations. On the contrary, Christianity is inwardness. Faith and understanding are opposed to each other; and therefore, Christianity being a matter of faith cannot be understood. One can understand Christianity only at the cost of losing one's faith. Subjectivity is truth and subjectivity culminates in passion. The task of faith is two-fold: to take care at every moment for discovering the improbable, the paradox; and then to hold it fast with the passion of inwardness. What is absurd to understanding is not so to faith as passionate subjective inwardness.

(iii) HUMAN FREEDOM

The concept of freedom is the most important in Kierkegaard's philosophy of existence; and herein Kierkegaard's view is entirely opposed to that of Hegel. Hegel is absolutely a determinist, and an absolute disbeliever in man's freedom of the will; while Kierkegaard gives freedom the most important place in his philosophy. According to Hegel, the concept is more important than the individual. While Hegel glorifies reason in his system; Kierkegaard glorifies freedom of choice and irrationality.
According to Kierkegaard, it is the 'existential value' of freedom which determines the worth of one's actions, that is to say, an action has 'existential value', it is the result of a freely chosen commitment. Free choice is the mark of the 'truly existent individual', which sets him off from the 'crowd'. Freedom is not a measure of the value of one course of action as opposed to another, but it is a measure of the value of a person in choosing some course of action.

Kierkegaard identifies freedom with the self as existing spirit. According to him, freedom is fundamentally and essentially the power of 'being able', it is that fundamental power by which all concrete movements of the self in its various stages are made possible. Freedom and necessity are not identical. Freedom is something that swings between necessity and possibility. Moreover, it is not necessary that freedom must be exercised; it is possible for one to remain unconscious, i.e., unaware of oneself.

This interpretation of freedom is defended by Kierkegaard by a logical analysis of the categories of possibility, necessity and actuality which are central to the concept of freedom. According to him, Hegelian logic rests upon the negative and if everything comes to pass on that, then nothing comes to pass. For him, change comes about by a transcendence having reference to a cause in the sense of a subjective, passionate, decision. As he says, 'Nothing can come into existence by virtue of a logical ground, but only by a cause.' Secondly, transition to logic is mute, because the change which comes in actual life is actuality, that is to say, a changing actual life, not thought only. It is with freedom that transition takes place; it is freedom that brings about becoming or existential freedom. The requirements of freedom cannot be placed within the sphere of the systematic, because human existence and action require real freedom and thought as well. In the movement of freedom the actual emerges from the possible in a transcendent way, it is
not immanently present in the possible. Thus, thirdly, the transition from possibility to actuality appears as transcendence. If freedom is a transcendent cause, then its product is also transcendent, i.e., it can not be grasped and defined by thought. The existential content of the moment of passion in which the possible becomes actualized, defies conceptualization. The self can be established, but it can not be given a specific concrete possibility or a specific destiny; it can only become itself according to its "power of possibilities". The self does not have any specific possibility as necessarily its own, it is simply initially identical with the power of being able. As found in a reflexive analysis of existence the self is simply a synthesis of finitude and infinitude—it is spirit as freedom that is responsible for actualization in existence. It is the attempt of spirit to reconstruct this synthesis in existence as an actuality rather than allowing it to continue as a mere human possibility that constitutes the different modes of human existence. In all its modes, existence grows out of the life of spirit as consciousness of freedom.

Kierkegaard holds that the spirit is under no necessity—ontological, moral or religious, to make any choice, including the choice of the Divine 'Other'. In the development of the spirit, the appearance of God is made possible, because of the freedom of the spirit. However, this does not imply that God is necessary, a part of the ontological structure of self. Religious experience can become a real human possibility, just because the self is what it is. In this sense, the spirit may relate itself to a Divine 'Other', thus making it the existential ground of self.

So says Dr. M. K. Bhadra, "...in the true sense of the term, 'freedom' in Kierkegaard means the power to realize one's authentic self. For this, the existing human individual can make choices. But there is nothing imposed upon him except certain factual elements due to his finite nature. But man has an urge
towards the infinite. He wants to experience the pathos of the finite-infinite relationship. He chooses that man be raised to the infinite to realize the identity with the infinite, even though the finiteness wants to drag man down to earth. This choice of the infinite as the ultimate finite and the infinite, along with immense suffering, constitutes man's authenticity. Thus, authenticity can come into existence by man's freedom and this... is the development of the self to its true nature." (10)

(iv) THE EXISTENTIAL DIALECTIC AND THE SPHERES OF EXISTENCE

Kierkegaard, in his existential dialectic, gives the formulation of various opposed conceptions, as has been given by Hegel in his historical dialectic. The various stages of human life or modes of existence in Kierkegaard's dialectic are, in many ways, identical with the 'forms of consciousness' as found in Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit. According to Hegel, the most primitive forms of consciousness are mere consciousness, and the consciousness of oneself as an individual is opposed to other individuals. At the stage of reason, one identifies oneself with others, first through ethics and ultimately through religion and philosophy, as these are the highest conceptions of spirit, the Absolute Truth, that is the rational goal of human existence. Side by side, in Kierkegaard, we first come across the aesthetic stage, at which man is already self-conscious and opposed to or independent of other men; next there is the ethical stage, at which a socio-moral way of life is constituted; and ultimately there is the religious or spiritual stage at which there is absolute self-surrender to God, where there is no either-or, no question of moral choices.

In fact, the two dialectics differ not as to their content, but rather as the relations between one stage and another stage of life. According to both Kierkegaard and Hegel, the aesthetic life is unsatisfactory and Christianity is the most adequate
conception of life. In the Hegelian dialectic, the stages are ordered according to the movement of reason, and gradually the inadequacies of concepts are rectified through a reflective mediation of the opposition between them. Thus inadequacies that are developed in the conception of oneself as an individual are corrected and a conception of oneself as a rational and moral being, as a member of the society, is reached; and the inadequacies of the ethical stage are corrected at the religious stage and as a result thereof, the conception of oneself as part of the Absolute becomes explicit. At the completion of the stage, one's conception of oneself becomes absolute, i.e., free from all inadequacies, because it does not oppose oneself to anything at all.

But Kierkegaard thinks that the Hegelian system of concept with the mediation of paradoxes has no application to life, it is applicable only to logic,—beyond which it has no use to the ethically existing individual, to whom the most important thing is to know how to live. The individual faces paradoxes in this sense that he encounters opposite ways of life or courses of action which cannot be mediated by reason and as such, either of them has to be chosen by the individual. According to Kierkegaard, choice of an individual is guided not by any rational principle, but by a 'leap of faith'. Reason only shows that one has a choice, but does not say what to choose. It is passion or subjective truth that provides the only possible solution of a paradox. Thus Kierkegaard's dialectic is the dialectic of actual existence rather than the concept of existence.

In the existential dialectic, one comes across three alternative ways of life, which may be otherwise called three fundamental commitments, sometimes called by Kierkegaard, 'views of life', 'existential categories', 'spheres of existence', 'modes of existing' and 'stages on life's way'. The different spheres of existence are treated to be equally valid possibilities.
for choice, or equally invalid, each sphere being neutral to other spheres, but sometimes Kierkegaard seems to have presented the stages as actual development from the aesthetic to the moral, and then to the spiritual or religious. For him, the movement of the dialectic always requires a leap from one sphere to another sphere without consideration of the inadequacy of one sphere in relation to another.

(a) THE AESTHETIC SPHERE

It is the life of pure immediacy. It is not, as mistakenly thought sometimes, a life without principles; it is rather a life without rational and moral principles; a life of the romantic, as exemplified by Don Juan in his endless quest for sensual love without faith, only for the moment. Don Juan seduces women one after another only to have enjoyment for the moment; in this he follows no principle, but quite arbitrarily chooses this or that woman for the moment for sensuous pleasure. The principle of the aesthetic is satisfaction with whatever is chosen arbitrarily as an object of immediate concern. In Kierkegaard's own words, "The whole secret lies in arbitrariness."

The aesthetic life is not necessarily confined to the enjoyment of a woman; one can enjoy also good health or beauty, in himself or others, or wealth, honour or artistic talent. Such a life is unreflective, not necessarily unintelligent, in so far as it may consist in the enjoyment of music, poetry or philosophy or even in the creation thereof.

However, in the aesthetic life, there is not only pleasure, but constant threat of pain and suffering; not only satisfaction, but frustration and boredom. This negative aspect of the aesthetic life drives the individual concerned to become sceptical about the stereotyped gratification of sensuous desires and to deny, like Faust, those desires themselves. "So it appears

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that every aesthetic view of life is in despair, and that everyone who lives aesthetically is in despair, whether he knows it or not. "(11)

(b) THE ETHICAL SPHERE

While the aesthetic sphere degenerates to a life of meaningless despair, the ethical sphere tries to provide a meaning to the life of the individual. The ethical life is the societal life, the life of a man who considers himself to be a part of a community of men and lives according to principles which regard every man as an end in himself having self-interest in moral duty. It consists in living for the good of the community of people, subsuming personal interests under the interests of morality. "The ethical as such is the universal; and as the universal, it applies to everyone, which may be expressed from another point of view by saying that it applies every instant." (12) However, for Kierkegaard, the ethical life with its value on community is not equivalent to morality of the crowd, and social concern does not mean anti-individuality for blind obedience to society. Like Kant, he considered morality to be autonomous and rational. According to him, every man as a moral being, must uphold the moral principles produced by himself even against the opposition of society. However, unlike Kant, he holds that reason cannot give us justification of ultimate moral principles, and no such principles can be autonomously derived by every rational creature. What is central to the ethical life is the requirement of universality, not the claim to the justifiability of the universal moral principle. In the ethical life of an individual, self-interest is made subservient to the demands of the universal principles, but not the origins or justifications thereof.

According to Kierkegaard, the model for the ethical life is not the formality of Kantian ethics, but the historical example of the life of Socrates, in whom we find a clear representation
of the values, as well as, living adherence to the moral values. Socrates not only taught the principles, but lived them. It is the self-reflection and the life of principle which made Socrates the paragon of ethical existence.

The ethical life is a life of reflection and self-appraisal, which provides meaningfulness to life. Not whimsical action, but deliberate and principled choice is the essential characteristic of the ethical life, and as such, actions in accordance with moral principles alone have significance. Thus coherence to moral principles makes ethical life meaningful by bestowing existential value to it.

The relation between the aesthetic and the ethical sphere is best illustrated by Kierkegaard in 'Either-Or', where Judge Williams argues that marriage as the culmination of psychic love is totally different from mere sensual love or infatuation which is for the moment only, and aims at personal gratification, whereas marriage is a commitment for the future, which looks to the interests of others and requires a decision to commit oneself. The aesthetic life is based purely on personal satisfaction, while the ethical life is based on the moral principle that is good for society and other people. An individual facing the problem whether to marry or not his beloved, after much reflection, comes to the decision of marriage in order to get rid of the feeling of despair at the pointlessness of the reported love affairs for the gratification of his sensuous desires for the moment at the aesthetic stage. However, according to Kierkegaard, there is no logical necessity for the movement from the aesthetic to the ethical stage; one may remain indefinitely in the aesthetic sphere in spite of one's despair throughout life.

(c) THE SPIRITUAL SPHERE

According to Kierkegaard, the ethical life of an individual does not give him any guarantee of permanent escape from
the feeling of despair at the aesthetic stage, and so at some time or other, he has to move to the spiritual or religious stage. At the ethical stage, he pulls himself from the life of depression, gives up the hedonic life for the life of duty and responsibility, gets ahead in his career, makes friends, acquires a wife in family, and social status in his community. But then, the old forgotten depression comes back 'more dreadful than ever'. Although he has made something of himself, he is a stranger to himself, and he does not know that the way to overcome despair is to choose despair, to sink so deep into despair that leads to giving up all the satisfaction and comfort of life, losing all commitment to family, friends, community, and surrendering reason and all belief in the truth of science and philosophy, and all moral principles. When all these are lost, with nothing left, he will be in total crisis, at the edge of the abyss, and he will be prepared for faith in God, he will choose God, and make the leap of faith to God. According to Kierkegaard, absolute faith and the leap to God alone can overcome the meaninglessness of one's existence; the restoration of orthodox Christianity, and the surrender of reason alone, can overcome the feeling of anxiety and hopeless despair for the solitary individuals of the modern world.

(v) **MAN AND GOD**

According to Kierkegaard, man is interested in himself alone; but he can not think of the world and God as unrelated to his personal interests. He was a Christian mystic and believed in God, who remains an Absolute Other. While characterizing the spiritual stage of life, he says that at this stage, the individual does not subordinate himself simply to an impersonal universal law, but stands in an immediate relation, affirmed by faith, to the supreme subject, the personal Absolute God. He realizes what he is—a finite individual, a creature, and affirms himself before God. Thus he can be said to choose himself in the deepest sense. In the affirmation of
his relationship to God, man transcends the universal. He refers to the scriptural account of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac as an illustration. The action which Abraham was willing to perform was against the universal, that is to say, it was contrary to the moral law; but in faith, he recognized that the absolute relationship of individual to God transcends the universal. It is through the affirmation, in faith, of his relationship to God that the human being becomes the individual in the highest possible degree; because the relationship of the finite person to the infinite absolute person transcends the universal and is appropriated in pure inwardness with passionate interest.

Kierkegaard did not believe in history as an objective process revealing God. It is impossible with any certainty to infer from Nature, the God of Nature. Hence, to hold fast to this objective uncertainty and yet to stick to his existence in belief is the only way to choose the infinite with an absolute choice, and to affirm the infinite in oneself. The tonality of existential choice is *dread* or *anxiety* as distinguished from 'fear' ; which is fear of something definite and can be got rid of by appropriate action. Dread is a 'sympathy' and its nature may be seen most clearly in the case of the man faced with the choice for or against God. God is transcendent, invisible and unprovable. To choose oneself before God, to commit oneself, to throwing oneself into the abyss; and so man recoils from it. On the other hand, if a man risks all and leaps, he finds himself; he chooses his true self, that is both finite and infinite, a finite being related to the Infinite. He who has no God is alienated from himself, he is 'in despair'. But he who makes the leap of faith, 'recovers' himself, his true self. Faced with the leap, therefore, man is simultaneously attracted and repelled like a man standing on the edge of a precipice and simultaneously attracted and repelled by the yawning chasm below him, he experiences a 'sympathetic antipathy and
antipathetic sympathy'. "The dread of possibility holds him as its prey, until it can deliver him saved into the hands of faith. In no other place does he find response..." (13). This means that dread is overcome by the leap.

According to Kierkegaard, as realized by his personal experience, aesthetic despair can be cured only by marching forward into a deeper level of despair for the time being. A man must abandon the spectator's attitude and become honest enough to acknowledge his guilt. He must stop pretending that life is a terrifying game, and thus alone he can discover that true freedom comes with spiritual dependence. Freedom means that we have a hand making ourselves what we are to become, but it also means that we can negate, as well as, affirm, we can destroy, as well as, construct. Freedom means that a man can have kinship with Nothingness, as well as, with God. In the long process of ethical religious development, Kierkegaard distinguished three broad stages of the gradually deepening existential transformation. First, there is the absolute direction (respect) towards the absolute telos—initial expression of the existential pathos. Then there is the essential expression—the eternal recollection of guilt. The dialectic of existence turns inward from the objective, aesthetic sphere of enjoyment, to the subjective, ethical sphere of ideal, by the shocking effect of perishability and uncertainty of all objects. Then there is a leap from the ethical to the religious, from subjective self-assertion to self-surrender, by the shock of despair. Man's absolute subjectivity becomes absolute objectivity in his total self-displacement before God.

Kierkegaard believes that human destiny reaches its perfect crystalization in God. There are two modes of being, viz., God and the existing individual. While God's being is infinite, eternal and absolutely free, the being of the existing individual is finite, temporal, subject to changing situations. So says Kierkegaard, "The absolute difference between God and man consists
precisely in this that man is a particular existing being (which is just as much true of the most gifted human being as it is of the most stupid) whose essential task can not be to think sub specie aeterni, since as long as he exists, he is though eternal, essentially an existing individual, whose essential task is to concentrate upon inwardness in existing; while God is infinite and eternal." (14) God's being is an abstract-notion: it is not only non-existent in time, but also non-realizable in its fullness by the living individuals. However, the culminating point of an abstraction is the place where Eternity and Instant merge into one pure experience. In the world of temporality, the highest pitch attainable by the inwardness of the human individual is Christian faith, because it is there that God himself endured the being of the infinite.

According to Kierkegaard, freedom can never be conceived without a reference to man's inner relationship to the individuality of God. What constitutes existential freedom is man's appropriation of the inwardness of his existence. When existential freedom is understood as the opposite of necessity, it is wrongly construed under the intellectual category. As Kierkegaard says, "the opposite of freedom is guilt and it is the supreme glory of freedom that it has only with itself to do ......") (15) His understanding of human existence is not only morally oriented as religious, but also, on the other hand, widely influenced by the intuitionism of the Christian world. The foundation of historicity of faith entails an ontological experience of the Divine personality. As he says, "the object of faith is not a teacher with a doctrine.....The object of faith is the reality of the teacher, that the teacher really exists.......The object of faith is hence the reality of the God-man in the sense of his existence". (16)
(vi) **Man and Man : Inter-Personal Relationship**

In Kierkegaard's Philosophy, the man-to-man relationship proper is found in the moral sphere of human existence. In the aesthetic sphere, there is no proper inter-personal relationship, because, the aesthetic life is mostly the life of whim, of immediate sensuous satisfaction, not being guided by any moral principle. At the aesthetic stage, there is no good and no evil, there is satisfaction and dissatisfaction, fulfilment and frustration, pleasure and pain. Kierkegaard calls it the Don Juan Stage, where one's only objective is the unending quest for 'sensual faithless love', which is selfish without any consideration for the happiness of others. Don Juan has no anxiety for developing an abiding lasting relationship. He seduces woman one after another and enjoys each of them for the moment. The women as well as the moments of enjoyment, are indistinguishable. But in the moral sphere of existence, man follows some moral principle, and has consideration for others; therefore, his choices are not arbitrary, but rational. Here Kierkegaard follows the ideal of Socrates who not only taught, but also lived the principle that man is of the highest value, that the good is in every man, and that love of man is the ultimate good. The virtues of the ethical life are social virtues, as for instance, friendship and psychic love. It is a moral necessity to find one's proper place in the social order, and for this purpose, courage, temperance, kindness and generosity are necessary. In the moral sphere of existence marriage is of central importance, because, it contains within it all the primary demands of morality—commitment to others, acceptance of duty and obligation, submission of personal interest to community (family) interest etc. Deliberate and principled choice, as opposed to whimsical action is the characteristic of the ethical stage. At this stage, marriage is considered to be preferable to the unbriddled sensuous momentary love of the aesthetic stage. Kierkegaard himself
thought repeatedly, on rational and moral considerations, whether to marry or not to marry his beloved Regina Olsen, and at last decided not to marry her, in a spirit of self-sacrifice for the better happiness of Regina.

Thus, according to Kierkegaard, the inter-personal human relationship in the moral sphere of existence is based on the ideal of self-sacrifice, on the rational principle of authentic choice and committed actions, on the principle of moral rights and duties without interference. Such ethically oriented inter-personal relationship is most likely to lead to a well-ordered social life of love and friendship, of peace and happiness, devoid of frustration and anguish.

However, Kierkegaard does not speak of any inter-personal relationship of man and man beyond the moral sphere of existence. In the spiritual sphere, man's only and ultimate concern is to realize God within himself, by absolute self-surrender to Him.

Thus, according to Kierkegaard, the moral sphere of existence is actually the proper arena of inter-personal human relationship, and the nature of such relationship is morally edifying, psychologically inspiring, rationally justifying and socially upgrading.

(vii) MAN AND THE WORLD

Kierkegaard makes a distinction between 'being-in-the-world' and 'being-in-the-midst-of-the-world'. According to him, a truly existing individual is one who exists authentically by his free authentic choice, and is, therefore, a being-in-the-world; while an individual who does not so live is simply a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. To exist as a human being means realizing oneself through free choice and self-commitment, it does not mean merging oneself in the group and identifying one's will with the ends of the group. Kierkegaard gives the
illustration of a drunken peasant who is asleep in his cart and lets the horse proceed on their accustomed way. In as much as he is there with the reins in his hands, he is in some sense, a driver; but it can also be said that he does not drive. Similarly, there are many who exist simply, but do not exist truly; they only drift along following custom and convention, without ever becoming individuals except in an ontological sense. 'To exist' means choosing one's true self, 'existence' is something to be won by authentic choice. It is a process of becoming and striving. 'Existence' for Kierkegaard does not also mean understanding reality and the historical process. Man does not realize his true self by thinking, but rather by authentic choice and self-commitment. Self-commitment being something personal it can be said that 'authentic choice' means becoming more and more the individual, instead of becoming more and more a member of the group.

Says Kierkegaard, 'A crowd—not this crowd or that, the crowd now living or the crowd long deceased, a crowd of humble people or of superior people, of rich or of poor, etc.—a crowd in its very concept is the untruth, by reason of the fact that it renders the individual completely impenitent and irresponsible, or at least weakens his sense of responsibility by reducing it to a fraction .'(17) Of course, Kierkegaard is not concerned simply with the dangers of allowing oneself to become a member of a crowd in the sense of a mob. His real point is that it is a false theory that man realizes his true essence in proportion as he rises above what is contemptuously regarded as his mere particularity and becomes a moment in the life of the universal, whether the universal is considered to be the state or the economic or social class or Humanity or Absolute Thought. As he says, 'I have endeavoured to express the thought that to employ the category "race" to indicate what it is to be a man, and especially as an indication of the highest attainment is a misunderstanding and mere paganism, because
the race, mankind, differs from an animal race not merely by
its general superiority as a race, but by the human charac­
teristic that every single individual within the race (not
merely distinguished individuals but every individual) is more
than the race. For to relate oneself to God is a far higher thing
than to be related to the race and through the race to God.'
(18) Here we find an indication of the general direction of
Kierkegaard's thought. According to him, the highest self­
realization of the individual is the relating of oneself to God,
not as the universal, absolute 'thought', but as the absolute
'Thou'. 'Becoming the individual' means the opposite of self­
dispersal in 'the One' or self-submerging in the Universal, in
whatever way it may be conceived.

Kierkegaard outlines several possibilities of human
existence, on the aesthetic, moral and religious planes ; but he
emphasizes the fact that the transition from one level to
another is a matter of choice, of a leap. According to him, the
truly existing individual is like the actor rather than like the
spectator. The spectator can understand everything and be
nothing, but a man becomes something, makes himself, gives
form and direction to his life, only through self-commitment.
The truth in which he is interested, when he is considered
precisely the self-making individual, is not the impersonal
objective truth of mathematics or science, but his truth, the
truth by which he can live.

Thus in Kierkegaard's existentialism, man as a truly
existing individual in the world of things and beings, occupies
a prominent place, as distinguished from other things and
beings. He becomes what he himself makes of him by his own
free authentic choice, without following blindly the group or
the crowd. He is in the world but he is not under the dictates
of the world. The world does not rule over him, he rules over
himself. In the world of human beings he is a unique individual
in so far as he shapes his own destiny by his own free choice

(44)
without following the beaten track of the group. Man is the architect of his own fate, none else is.

Johannes Hohlenberg beautifully summarises Kierkegaard's message to us; "What is at stake is the choice between the individual and the collective, between the human person and the crowd, between freedom and slavery, between Christ and Anti-Christ. Either, the life of the individual person, a microcosm as the image of God, capable of free, responsible action, and therefore, ..... a life of toil and much suffering and many dangers ; or the life of an impersonal, unfree member of collective, without the possibility of independent knowledge and responsible action, a life in the service of unknown forces and compensation for the loss of freedom at best of false, illusory dream of material welfare in an earthly paradise which can never become a reality ."(19)
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