PREFACE

The Western tradition in philosophy, started by Thales, culminated in the works of Plato-Aristotle. Man, as Plato says, is like an inverted tree whose root lies in a transcendent realm. This root is reason, an immortal element in man. It is the same reason in man that creates a direction for his life on earth. Aristotle reaffirms man's reason. He follows the principle of “per genus et differentiam” and defines man as a rational animal. Rationality, according to him, is the essence of man. In his terminology, it is the differentiam, and as such, it distinguishes man from any other species. On the other hand, animality is an attribute which one shares with other men and animals. Thus, in the philosophical tradition, created by the Greeks, the concept of rationality receives a wide meaning.

More than two millennia have elapsed since the time of Plato-Aristotle. We have kept foothold in a new one. During this period our contribution in any human enterprise is really amazing. We have made tremendous development in both natural and social sciences. Natural science has proved to be an ever greater instrument of mankind. It has secured our life and made it easy and comfortable in the hostile environment. To-day's man is the proud lord of land, water and air. Besides, surprising are our
entreaties in philosophy, literature and music. Undoubtedly, it is man who is the claimant of successful contribution in any field of knowledge. Of course, man is a creature of flesh and blood. But it is not his physical power by virtue of which he has proved himself superior to that of ferocious animals. Man’s power lies elsewhere. But what is this power? We, modern men, are in a glorious state of civilization and culture. Modernity demands rational mode of living – rational conduct, rational outlook, rational investigation and so on, i.e., an all-round triumph of reason. Modern men, modern geniuses working in any field of knowledge and culture speak of rational investigation into the heart of religion. We can not but proclaim that Kant’s is a philosophy of religion par excellence. Accordingly, our main concern in this work will be Kant’s philosophy of religion. An attempt will also be made to show how his theory can be treated as a solution to religious strives at the present day world.

We like to divide the entire work into five chapters. In the first chapter of this work we shall explain Kant’s systematic approach to philosophy and the very logical geography of his theory of religion in his philosophical system. Kant’s proposed religion is authorized by reason. What type of religion is it? In fact, Kant makes a distinction between theoretical and practical reason. Reason underlying his proposed religion is practical reason.
Anyway, human reason, according to Kant, is a limited capacity. This is why his proposed religion is religion within the limits of human reason. In this connection, we like also to explain several senses of 'reason' and its different functions as well.

In the history of civilization and culture religion plays an important role. Innumerable types of religious sects have been introduced and they are all prevalent now-a-days. Even one religious sect has its many divisions and sub-divisions. Anyway, there is a background behind the emergence of any religion. Kant is not an exception to this. He was born and brought up in Pietistic surroundings. He studied in Pietistic institutions. Naturally, he was influenced by Pietism. On the other hand, the Enlightenment caught up his mind also. Kant took the best out of the two influences, left out their oddities, and arrived at his own theory. All these things constitute the main discourse of the second chapter of this work.

There are many scholars who hold that Kant's theory of religion is limited to his famous book *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. We do not agree with them. In our consideration his entire system of philosophy contributes either directly or indirectly to his theory of religion. Kant's proposed religion is out and out moral religion. A kind of moral faith is at its root. In his
Critique of Pure Reason he prepares the ground of this faith. The Critique of Practical Reason provides moral content of Kant's proposed religion. Even the third Critique, i.e., the Critique of Judgement leads to moral religion. Thus the three Critiques together constitute the main issues regarding moral religion. His Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone concerns his spurious criticisms against natural religion. We may speak of the two aspects of Kant's theory of moral religion – the positive aspect and the negative one. In the third chapter of this work we are concerned with this positive aspect, and the fourth chapter deals with the negative aspect of Kant's moral religion.

The fifth chapter of this work is an evaluation of Kant's theory of moral religion. This concerns with how we are to face opponents' criticisms against Kant and how his theory paves the way of solving religious strives of the globe.

In 2000 I submitted a dissertation entitled Kanter Dharmamat to The University of Burdwan and I was duly admitted to the M. Phil. Degree in Philosophy. The present work is an enlarged version of that M. Phil. Dissertation.

My paper entitled 'Moral Religion – A Study in Kant's Philosophy of Religion' which forms part of this work was

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