conservation. It has to satisfy the spiritual aspiration of the whole of humanity.

viii) All modern Indian philosophers have given great importance to the performance of Niskāmakarma or selfless services as prescribed by Gita. For the modern Indian philosophers, liberation does not mean simply attainment of freedom from rebirths and merging one self into the depths of eternity. According to them, the liberated souls take their higher births to guide the rest humanity on the way to spiritual perfection. In this respect their attitude differs from that of the philosophers of the Vedanta and other classical systems who seem to be more concerned with seeking freedom from the cycle of birth and death by attaining liberation of soul, rather than engaging themselves in the activities of the world.

From the above discussions it appears that though Gandhi was not an academic philosopher he was truly a contemporary thinker. Because he discussed each and every ideas of the contemporary philosophy in his discussions. Contemporary Indian thought cannot be complete without Mahatma Gandhi's ideas and views about religious and social problems. Gandhiji was essentially a man who would be counted in the ages to come with Buddha and Christ. He was a unique combination of ancient Indian ideals of sainthood and contemporary statesmanship. Gandhiji was a practical idealist and wanted to attend to the immediate problems of life and society without sacrificing the basic principles of religion and ethics.
In this chapter Gandhi's religion is compared with the following contemporary Indian philosophers. They are:

1. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920)
2. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)
3. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)
4. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)

It is already mentioned in the introduction chapter that Mahatma Gandhi was born on 1869 and died on 1948. So, this shows that B.G. Tilak, Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda are predecessors of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan is post Mahatma Gandhi. Let us compare the above philosophers ideas on religion with Gandhi one by one briefly.

VI.2 Gandhi and B.G. Tilak

Tilak was the first nationalist leader who sought to close contact with the masses and in this respect Tilak was a fore-runner of Gandhiji. B.G. Tilak was popularly called Lokmanya (respected by the people). From his teacher father he inherited his love of Sanskrit, which gave him deep respect for the ancient religion and traditions of the country and its people. Gandhiji said that B.G. Tilak was the most important nationalist leader. Tilak always talked about India and not of international matters like Gandhi. To freedom from British rule Tilak devoted all his abilities and thoughts. By his supreme dedication he laid the
foundation of India's freedom without which Gandhi could not have raised the edifice. While Mahatma Gandhi is the father of the nation, Lokamanya Tilak is the father of Indian nationalism. Tilak felt more strongly that for the strength of any nation and the success of any nationalist movement the people of the country must have a strong activist outlook. That is why Tilak wrote his secret of the Bhagavad Gita (Gitarahasya) in which he wanted to prove that without the path of action, no salvation was possible. Tilak had moulded his entire life on the basis of the teaching of the Gita. According to the Bhagavad Gita, karma comprises all types of action which a man performs, no matter whether these actions are bodily (Kayika) or vocal (vacika) or mental (manasika). Tilak has put emphasis on the Gita's concept of karmayoga and tried to apply the same for the upliftment of humanity as a whole. To Tilak there is no exposition which is so scientific as the karmayoga of the Gita. In this case Gandhi was very much influenced by the Bhagavad Gita. That is why Gandhiji said that the Gita was his mother.

Tilak taught that whether it is violence or non-violence, one should follow the law of action. But Gandhiji said that one should follow the law of action without violence. According to Gandhi and Tilak, obedience to the law of action should be without any personal consideration (Niskānakarma). Tilak was using Karma as an instrument for the attainment of swarajya. Tilak as a political philosopher has given us a theory of nationalism. His theory of nationalism was a
synthesis of the teaching of both eastern and western thinkers. His philosophy of nationalism was a synthesis of the vedantic ideal of the spirit as supreme freedom and the western concept of Mazzini, Burke, Mill and later on Wilson. In the famous trial speech of 1908 he quoted with approval John Stuart Mill's definition of nationality. In 1919 and 1920, he accepted the Wilsonian concept of self determination and pleaded for its application to India. Tilak held that the attainment of Swarajya would be a great victory for Indian nationalism. Tilak regarded Swarajya as not only a right, but a dharma. He gave a moral and spiritual meaning also to the concept of Swarajya although he did it only a few occasions. Tilak encouraged two festivals of Sivaji and Ganapati. Sivaji is the symbol the boldness and greatness and Ganapati is the symbol of wisdom. Tilak tried to establish unity among the men through these festivals. Like Tilak, Gandhiji also tried to understand politics in terms of religion. Gandhi also wanted to establish Ramrajya where there is no exploitation. But in comparison to Tilak, Gandhi discussed the above concept in a larger and comprehensive sense. Gandhi's country men were under political subjugation and were suffering under tyranny. Politics had become a sphere of immorality, injustice, tyranny and all such evils. He therefore wanted to introduce religion into politics. He wanted purification of politics. He wanted liberation of his people. Politics without religion according to him is like a corpse fit to be burnt.

Tilak emphasised the economic dimension of the Swadeshi
movement which indicate his awareness of the economic roots of Indian nationalism. The swadeshi movement in India assumed a spiritual and political character. Tilak's concept of swadeshi was different from Gandhi's concept of swadeshi. Tilak adhered to the concept of the economic emancipation of all section of Indian from the exploitative measures of an alien imperialism. On the other hand Gandhiji said that people should buy anything from every part of the world what is needed for our growth but not to buy anything from outside which interfere with our growth however nice or beautiful. This shows that Tilak was more rigid than Gandhi. For Tilak boycott is the right weapon if we act with unity to improve the nation's political and economic condition. To him, "Boycott" is a means of exercising pressure on British in order to get Indian's legitimate rights. Here Gandhiji also agreed with Tilak in this respect.

Regarding dharma, Tilak has not supported the view of certain ancient Sanskrit treatises which bifurcate the same into niti dharma meaning legal-jurisprudence and good conduct respectively. To him, niti, kartavya or dharma are all synonymous. We have seen that religion meant for Gandhi the all pervasive Dharma or Rta and because truth was taken to constitute the essence of Dharma or Rta, naturally truth constitute the highest religion for him. Like Tilak Gandhiji also described God as the law or the dharma under the influence of Buddhism. That is why Gandhi never thought that Buddhism was atheistic. For Gandhi, the law and the law giver become one in Buddhism.
Tilak was not in favour of asceticism. He rejects the idea of renunciation of the worldly life after the attainment of the ultimate goal. According to Tilak there is an underlying unity between God, man and the world. The world is in existence, because God will it so. Man strives to achieve union with God. He must also seek unity with the world and act for it. Otherwise unity will not be perfect. Though for Gandhi religion was the basis of his life, his religion is nothing but to serve the poor people. For him to serve the poor is to serve God and through the service of the poor he wanted to become one with God. So in this cases there is very much similarity between Gandhi and Tilak.

Tilak was not prepared to discard the traditional structure of the Hindu society, Tilak has proposed the following social reforms - a) girls should not be married before sixteen years and boys before twenty years b) after forty years men should not marry or marry only widows c) The custom of dowry should be abolished d) widows should not be tortured and e) every man should contribute 1/10 of his income for the promotion of these social reforms. Tilak exhorts the youth of India to sacrifice even their lives for the cause of prohibition of liquor. Like Tilak Gandhiji also tried to reform the traditional structure of Hindu Society. Gandhiji was essentially a religious man. So he tried to solve social problems in terms of religion. Tilak agreed with Sankara in making a distinction between Nirguna Brahma and Saguna Brahma, the absolute without attributes and God as endowed with attributes. He
was also in agreement with Sankara when he said that the endowment with attributes was the result of the illusory maya. But Saguna Brahma and Nirguna Brahma are equally valuable for Gandhi, though he regards God only for himself as Nirākāra and Nirguna.

Tilak was sometimes not consistent in his teaching. At some places he said that Jnāna, the path of knowledge was the only way for realising the identity of Atman and Brahman. But at other places he considered means to consist of a combination of Jnāna and Karma. But this combination is not possible in the view of advaita. The reason is that the content and the fruit are different. Jnāna is different from Karma. The self which is the content of Jnāna is one, independent and eternal where as actions are many and are dependent on causal correlates and are transient. The fruit of knowledge is release while the enjoyments of that actions that yield fruits bound the soul all the more in samsara. The non-dual self is ever existent and it doesnot depend on human activity. It cannot be the object of doing, not doing or doing otherwise. It is unmodifiable. Though karma cannot be combined with Jnāna but karma yoga becomes an auxiliary of the path of knowledge. Disinterested and dedicated action (Niskāmakarma) serves to purify the mind. Like Tilak Gandhiji also gave importance on karma to reach God and not the path of Jnāna. Gandhiji laid more emphasis on bhakti and karma to realise God.
VI.3 Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was the most powerful leader of Indian renaissance in art, music, dance and literature. He was the famous poet of India. Poetry was his life breath. He calls his religion the religion of a poet. Tagore was greatly influenced by his father Devendranath Tagore and the verse of the Upanisads. The family as a whole opposed all forms of superstition and fanatical belief and rituals of orthodox Hinduism. In his family the texts of the Upanisads were used in daily worship. The first mantra of Isa upanisads was the guiding principle and perennial source of inspiration in his life. He owed the concept of divine immanence directly to the Upanisad. Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dr. S.N. Gupta called him an absolutists thinker where as Dr. D.M Dutta took him to be a theist. Dr. Dutta observed "Rabindranath was temperamentally opposed to puritanism, asceticism and impersonal absolutism. He rather chose to emphasize like the vaisnava those aspects of the Upanisads which taught that the finites were created by the infinite out of its own endless joy of love, and they are, therefore, not illusory but real". Rabindranath assimilated both theism and absolutism in his exalted Philosophy. Though Tagore synthesised theism with absolutism, he was more concerned with God and took the absolute as his secondary aspect. It is to be noted that Tagore didnot mention the word "Absolute" in the "Religion of Man" even once. Tagore denounced the empty absolute of the Advaitins who reduced the world to nothingness. For him, God is greater than the impersonal absolute.
He conceived God to be the supreme person who was absolutely perfect, absolutely omniscient, absolutely omnipresent, absolutely kind and absolute in all his powers, qualities and existence. He pointed out that God is the absolute in an absolutely absolute way. On the other hand for Gandhi none of the two forms in God was to be regarded as inferior or superior to the other and both are equally valuable. Gandhi openly said that God was a personal God to those who needed personal presence and only for himself he preferred taking God as formless truth, as Nirākāra and Nirguna. Like Tagore, Gandhi was also not a puritan, because Gandhi never ignored the animal aspect of man. Unlike Tagore Gandhi was an ascetic, but not in the strict sense. For Gandhi religion was the basis of his life. In this sense he was an ascetic. His religion is nothing but to serve the poor people. For Gandhi to serve the poor people is to serve God so it appears that Gandhi can be regarded as a practical thinker than an ascetic.

Rabindranath Tagore initially was a follower of Brahmasamaj. Later on he developed a religion which combined some elements of Brahmasamaj with some elements of orthodox Hinduism. Finally he came to believe in what he called 'The Religion of Man'. Tagore explicitly believed that religion could not be confined to any group or sect or tribe or nation. He said that man picked up that particular from of religion that suited him, but in the final analysis religion transcends all such particular forms. The aim of true religion is the realisation of one's kinship with everything. Religion according
to Tagore was a sort of home sickness. Tagore insisted that true religion must not be confused with what is called 'Institutional religion'. Tagore sincerely believed that religious organisations have almost debauched religion. For him they took away from religion their life-spirit and instead emphasized only the superficialities of religions and true religions preached freedom, where as religious organisations made religions a slave of their own institution. The institutional religions according to Tagore were dogmatic and false and the true religions must have the qualities of spontaneity and naturality in it. He pointed out that there cannot be any compulsion about it. Like Tagore, Gandhi's religion was also not confined to temples, books, churches, rituals and other outer forms. According to Gandhi, religion does not mean a set of dogmas, nor does it mean conformity to rites and rituals. Gandhiji tried to give equal status to all religion. He was also strictly opposed to forcible conversion. There was no compulsion in Gandhi's religion also.

Tagore had a very sound human reason for believing in personal God. Tagore felt that man could not take an active and living interest in unapproachable Brahman, because that was merely an abstract principle, so he thought that God has to brought nearer to man. For him, man could take interest in the absolute only when it was humanised. In Tagore's philosophy God and man go together. He said that man was called the spark of the divine and the supreme was conceived as the ideal which man has to realise and this ideal consequently could not be an impersonal and indifferent Absolute. Tagore was not prepared
Rabindranath conceived of the ultimate reality as the personal God, the infinite being, who included all finite souls and the world of matter. The poet even said that the infinite becomes the finite without losing its infinity. He observed that there was one infinite centre, the supreme person, to whom all the personalities and therefore all the world of relativity are related. God according to Tagore, is the superperson who is in the innermost shrine of our own heart and the goal of the individual soul is to get united with the infinite person or God. On the other hand, God for Gandhi was nothing but truth. He said that his religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth was his God and non-violence was the means of realising God.

Like Gandhi, Tagore did not feel the necessary of offering regular proofs for God's existence. For Tagore, God is the postulate existence, therefore proofs are not necessary. Like Gandhi, Tagore also observed that rational proofs will not be able to comprehend the Divine unity. But Tagore was also aware that in ordinary discourse of day-to-day...
life rational proofs and logical demonstrations do play a part. In awareness of this Tagore offered some arguments which may be treated as proofs. Some of them have similarities with the traditional proofs for God's existence, and same bear the mark of Tagore's own insight. One of his most favourite proofs has similarities with what is traditionally known as the Teleological proofs or the Argument from Design. The poet was himself a lover of beauty and naturally an argument based on evidence of order and harmony appeared to him as fascinating. Tagore conceived that such proofs are not at all necessary. God according to him could only be realised. On the other hand Gandhi gave much importance on faith than reason for God's existence, because there was no God for them who have no faith in God. Tagore introduced the concept of Mâyā also in his philosophy of God and the world. Mâyā according to Tagore was ignorance. On the universal scale, it was the principal of the cosmic error. Truth according to Tagore stood for unity and Mâyā stood for separateness. For Tagore, evil denoted the fleeting character of our finite existence. Tagore did not hesitate in accepting evil as facts of life. For him evil was an impermanent aspect of our finite existence and its nature was like that of error, which we always come across in our intellectual life and yet which is always impermanent. He pointed out that evils were many, but they were aids in the process of the attainment of good. For Gandhi the world was not a mere appearance. His main aim was the upliftment of the fellow being so in this sense the world was real for him.
Moreover he defined evil as good or truth misplaced and he said that it had no separate existence at all. Again Gandhiji pointed out that the distinction between good and evil was our creation and this distinction was imaginary.

Tagore was greatly influenced by the humanist tradition of the Buddha and the Buddhist way of life appealed to him most. He said that to live in perfect goodness is to realise one's life in the infinite. Under the influence of Buddha, Tagore also stressed that man must come out of the shell of his individual self in order to enter into the larger self in humanity and so long as he remained confined within the wall of his individuality, his selfishness, his own material longings, joys and sorrows, he could not realise the universal man, neither could he get relief from the misery of the world. Hence Tagore wanted the exaltation of the spirit of man. Tagore had also propounded a humanist conception of truth. Like Tagore Gandhiji was also very much influenced by Buddhism as a religion.

Tagore was a poet of universal harmony. He preached harmony throughout. He felt that there was harmony between God and man. He also stood for harmony between nature and man because the immanence of God had to be realised in external nature and human recesses. According to Tagore, truth consisted not in fact, but in the harmony of facts and beauty and love were the expressions of harmony. Like Kabir, Tagore considered the universe as the manifestation of God.
Tagore was influenced by the Gita like all contemporary philosophers. Tagore accepted the idea of Karmayogin as advocated by the Gita. In sadhana he said, "There is no freedom from action, there is only freedom in action". Like Tagore, Gandhi was also very much influenced by the Gita especially by the concept of Niskāmākarma.

Tagore’s spiritualism was humanistic. He stressed the role of national humanistic religion. Like Gandhi, Tagore was also pained at the division of the Hindu society on the basis of caste, religious beliefs and sex. Tagore said," In my language the word religion has a profound meaning. The wateriness of water is essentially its religion; in the spark of the flame lies the religion of fire. Likewise man’s religion is in his inner most truth. Thus for him, religion consists in the endeavour of man to cultivate and express these qualities which are inherent in the nature of man, the eternal and to have faith in them. According to Tagore, religion of man is the realisation of unity of individual soul with the supreme soul.

Tagore may be described as an unique humanist, because unlike any other, he tried to raise humanity to the level of the ultimate Reality. Tagore’s view of God and man reconciles the extremes of immanence and transcendence. He regards human personality as the principle of Unity. It is no individuality but universality. According to Tagore the personality is self conscious principle of a living unity. So like Tagore, at times Gandhi’s religion seems to take the colour of a humanistic religion. For Gandhi, God is everywhere in everything.
but he resided specially in the poor and the helpless. Therefore serving the poor was the greatest form of religion according to Gandhi. For Gandhi, religion was not something which concerned a man in his isolation from his fellowbeings. He pointed out that true religion consisted in helping the helpless and the poor and working for the welfare of humanity or rather of the entire creation. His concept of man was based on the advaitic faith. For him all are basically one, because the same Brahman resides in all of them, they are all equal.

Tagore's humanistic attitude pervades all aspects of his thought. Tagore humanises not only nature and objects, but also God. The outer world according to Tagore, is nothing but a cradle for the human spirit. That is why in Tagore's thought the notion of life, rhythm, beauty, harmony, order, love, delight, music etc. have become important. All these are human concepts. They become meaningful when they are related to human values.

In Tagore's religion man is necessary to God as God is necessary to man. Tagore's humanistic interpretation of religion finds expression in his statement, "My religion is the religion of man in which the infinite is defined in humanity". He said at another place", Humanity is necessary factor in the perfecting of the Divine truth". Tagore gave humanity a variety of roles; sometimes man is considered as the art work of God, sometimes co-worker with God; and sometimes as friend and playmate. In the evolution of the religion of man Tagore was deeply influenced by the medieval Indian saint like Kabir. The main
idea was to reject abstract notions of Reality and Truth. Tagore wanted 
to exalt humanity's status in the scheme of things. That is why he 
did not hesitate to call God as Man-God and supreme man. The 
religious person, according to Tagore, must dwell in the world, must 
work-sincerely in making it a fit place for the habitation of God. 
Worship of God means loyalty and service of the mankind. Tagore's 
advice was to serve mankind for being true to God. Through his 
religion of man Tagore wanted to help man of all religions and sects 
in coming closer to one another. He made use of his poetry in 
communicating the highest truth of religion to humanity. According to 
Tagore all our problems are due to the wrong attitude to life and lack 
of respect for the divine in man. For Tagore materialistic attitude and 
too much importance to physical consideration could not bring peace 
and happiness and for solving all individual and social problems, our 
attitude must be rational and humane. Like Tagore, to Gandhi also there 
can be no religion without morality and any spiritual ideal can be 
realised through the moral and social service.

Tagore assimilated western humanism and appreciated the grand 
quest of man for knowledge and progress of science. But he was also 
conscious of the complexity of man-machine relationship. Material 
prosperity of the western civilisation has created problems of distance 
between rich and poor nations. For overcoming this situation spiritual 
oneness of all human being must be recognised. Although Tagore was 
not a metaphysician and never tried to build a system of philosophy.
he tried to reconcile metaphysical doctrine of Indian philosophy with the need to respect the dignity of human individual through love. He said that when our self is illumined with the light of love, then the negative aspect of its separateness with other loses its finality. His message of love and universal brotherhood, his ideal of universal man and one world will always inspire man in future to work for greater co-operation in all fields of life. Like Tagore, Gandhiji also took religion primarily as consisting of love, kindness and sympathy towards others. Gandhi also had faith that people could conquer the whole world by truth and love. Gandhi's non-violence was synonymous with love in the purest and widest sense of term.

VI.4 Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda

After the death of Sri Ramakrishna in 1886, Vivekananda made a extensive tour of India. He came to feel that India, inspite of its rich spiritual heritage and very strong cultural history could not remove poverty, weakness and social evils. So he took a decision that he must work for the improvement of the Indian people in all spheres. Especially he strongly felt the need of bringing about a spiritual revolution.

Swami Vivekananda propounded the open religion based on the spiritual texts of the Vedas and the Upanisads. For him, religion was a matter of experience and not a system of dogmas. He wanted to break all barriers between religions and remove all conflicts and oppositions. He pointed out that religion must be limitless and Infinite like God.
He said that it was the same Brahman that manifested in different forms and powers. He observed, "May he who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jesus, the Father in heaven of the Christians, give strength to you. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth." Swami Vivekananda vehemently criticized fanaticism, priest-craft and exclusive tendencies in religions. For him all religions are true and they all lead to God. He did not want that a religion should grow by defeating other religions. He wanted diversity in religions which reveal spiritual awakening and evolution in humanity. Like Vivekananda, Gandhiji also pointed out that religions were not separating man from one another, they meant to bind them. According to Gandhi, we must help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Mussalman to become a better Mussalman and a Christian to become a better Christian and we should not think that our religion is more true and that another's is less true. So for him, our attitude towards all other religions must be absolutely clear and sincere.

For Swami Vivekananda, religion has to be scientific. For him, science and religions are not opposed to each other, the former purifies the later.

Humanism was the dominant note in Vivekananda's Philosophy.
Vivekananda demonstrated a number of ways how religion could be regarded as a necessary aspect of life. Religion according to Vivekananda, is a growth from within, it is inherent in the very constitution of man, and therefore, the nature of religion can be known by analysing the religious sense. Vivekananda described this sense more or less in the manner of psychologist. Firstly, he said that this is universally present - even the atheist has it and secondly like all other mental aspects, it has all the three elements in it, the cognitive elements, the feeling element, and the conative elements. He pointed out that these elements are never present in equal proportion or degree but the nature of religion is determined by preponderance of this element or that.

A very important characteristic of religion according to Vivekananda is that it invariably has a super natural content. For him, super natural may be anything - a personal God or the absolute or a super natural law or anything of this kind. He said that this element was the object of religious aspiration and hence represented the core of religion. Vivekananda further said that religion transcends not only the limitations of the senses but also the power of reasoning.

Another important characteristic of religion according to Vivekananda is that religion does have a value and significance for the individual but it has a social content also. In this case, Gandhiji also agreed with Vivekananda. Gandhiji discussed the concept of religion not only in individual life but in social life also. He did not much
approve of the individualistic and private character of religion. According to Gandhi religion was not something which concerned a man in his isolation from his fellow beings. Gandhiji always worked hard for the social upliftment of the down trodden like the shudras or the untouchables and the women. His whole social life as a matter of fact was devoted to upliftment and welfare of these two classes which were most neglected and suppressed. His social philosophy is important because he wanted to bring about total social transformation without creating ill will, violence and injustice to any section of the society. Caste and class division only impeded social progress hence the socialist ideal of classless society must be accepted. The ideal of Sarvodaya - upliftment of all was given by Gandhi to Indians and to the world as a means of complete social change. Gandhiji's non-violent approach towards social reconstruction made him a distinct and unique kind of social reformer and ushered in a new era of humanism. Gandhiji was a great socialist of this century. His socialism implied state control over means of production and elimination of all forms of exploitation from the society. But this was to be achieved by the force of love and in non-violent way. Gandhi did not approve socialism of the western type which gives no importance to the reformation of the individual. For Gandhi society cannot be reformed without reforming the individuals. Gandhi believed, as Ruskin has put in his book 'Unto this last that "good of the individual is contained in the good of all". The only real and dignified human doctrine is the greatest good of all and this can be
achieved by utmost self sacrifice. Gandhiji was opposed to the exploitation in any form. He directed all his energy towards removing the economic inequality and social injustice he saw around him. According to Gandhi, economic equality meant the levelling down of the rich people on the one hand and levelling up of the poor people on the other. Gandhiji said that Sarvodaya was the highest end of man's life. He also said that self-realisation or the realization of God was our highest end. Self-realization according to Gandhi does not mean finding out some such unique reality within oneself which so separate from all else in the universe. To realise other in oneself and oneself in others is the first lesson of Sarvodaya. Again working for Sarvodaya and working for self-realization are also one and the same. Both can be attained according to Gandhi, by adopting the path of complete ahimsa, universal love and brotherhood and selfless social service and not through any tapasya in the jungle.

Vivekananda said that a simple insight in the nature of different religions will show that they were not actually contradictory to each other, they were in fact supplementary to each other. For him, the truth of religion was so comprehensive that different religions concentrated only one aspect or on a few aspects of religion. Again he said that there may be contradictory points of view of the same thing, but they were basically views of the same reality and so all the same and hence supplementary to each other. That is why Vivekananda pointed out that the universal religion already exists. By universal religion he did not
mean a religion that will have one universal philosophy, or one universal mythology or one universal ritual. He said that they may differ from sect to sect, or even from individual to individual and yet universal religion is there. The one watch word for universal religion, according to Vivekananda was acceptance. He recommended positive acceptance. That is why he said that he could worship in any form with any individual or sect. He said that he could enter and offer his prayers anywhere in a temple or a church or mosque or any other place. For Vivekananda the believer in the universal religion should be broad minded and open hearted, and he would be prepared to believe in the scriptures of all religions and keep his heart open for what may come in the future. Such an attitude led Vivekananda to discover at least one such element which could be said to be common to all religions in a general way, and which consequently may represent the essence of universal religion. That common point for Vivekananda was God. He pointed out that man and women were different but as human beings they were alike. He said that all living beings men, animals and plants were all one and in that way all different religions talked of different aspects of the truth, as aspects of the same truth, they were all one. According to Vivekananda that truth is God. In Him we are all one. Vivekananda used the word God in its most comprehensive sense, it may be personal omnipotent and good God or it may be described as the universal existence or the ultimate unity of the universe. He observed that every religion consciously or unconsciously is struggling towards the realisation of this unity or God and therefore this may
be said to represent the ideal of universal religion.

For Vivekananda another important characteristic of universal religion is that it should be acceptable to all minds. He said, "What I want to propagate is a religion that will be acceptable to all minds; it must be equally mystic and equally conducive to action". From the foregoing discussions we find that like Vivekananda, Gandhiji also tries to give equal status to all religions. But like Vivekananda he did not talk about universal religion. Gandhi said that all religions have imperfections, because all of them revealed only partial and relative truths, but again all were equally holy, because all were the creations of the same God. He took the essential and good elements of all the religions especially, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism and Islam and then he tried to assimilate it in his way. Again Gandhi openly rejected the mistaken elements of religions, such as he was very much critical of the Christian missionaries which were engaged in converting the poor Hindus to Christianity by means of material inducements. So it is this fundamental religion which Gandhiji designated as the religion with capital 'R'. On the practical side, there are many religions giving vent to the different ways of life, but fundamentally religion is one. Moreover for Gandhi, toleration is one of the most salient features of Gandhiji's religion. For Gandhi, different religion were different interpretations of the same truth and it was not possible to decide conclusively which interpretation was correct and hence the necessity of religious tolerance. This shows that Vivekananda's acceptance is not
just tolerance. Tolerance indicates something which is allowed inspite of its being wrong where as Vivekananda recommended positive acceptance. Like Vivekananda Gandhi did not refer to religion either as an institution or as an association, he refered to the spirit of religion.

Vivekananda did not consciously enter into the controversy regarding personal and impersonal nature of God. In fact he described God on both ways and he was convinced that this distinction between a personal God and an impersonal God do not effect Gods nature in any way. He observed that God is what He is and the distinction between personal and impersonal was the result of our attempts to apprehend God. Vivekananda pointed out that God cannot be described and our language is inadequate to represent Him accurately. For him to call God father, or brother, or our dearest friend were attempted to objectify God which could not be done. Vivekananda observed that God was the eternal subject of everything. On the other hand in Gandhi’s conception of God he had commited no logical error. Under the influence of Jainism, Gandhi was an anekāntavādin and syādavādin and therefore he had no difficulty in moving from impersonal to personal description of God. Though Gandhi said that the two stand points were equally important and valuable for him, but he only for himself preferred to take God as Nirākāra and Nirguna. The greatest contribution of Vivekananda to Indian Philosophy consisted in a new interpretation of the Advaita vedanta. This new interpretation of vedanta was known as Neo-vedantism of Swami Vivekananda as distinguished
from the traditional vedanta propunded by Sankaracharya. A remarkable feature of Vivekananda's philosophy was the formulation of what he called the practical vedanta. It is true that Vivekananda borrowed the doctrine of Māyā from Advaita vedanta, but his conception of Māyā was not exactly similar to that of Sankara. In Advaita vedanta, Māyā is the power that creates illusion, it is that Divine sakti which has the capacity of deluding man into believing that the world is real. But Vivekananda did not accept this position. According to him Māyā did not necessarily mean being illusory or unreal, māyā is conceived just as a fact about the nature of the world, it seeks to express the essential characters of the world as it exists. For Vivekananda another name for Māyā was contradiction. He said that our whole life was a contradiction, a mixture of being and non-being. He tried to explain the concept of Māyā with the help of the analogy of 'Ocean and waves. Vivekananda said that waves even as waves are nothing but water and yet they have a name and form. He observed that so long as the waves are rising and falling they have reality of their own and when the waves subside, nothing remains but the ocean, because the ocean is never separate from the waves, Vivekananda applied this analogy in Māyā also. He said that like wise when Māyā gives way, it gives way only to find that all the time it was lying within the bosom of the Brahman itself. This shows that Vivekananda somehow gave to the world also a reality. But it cannot be denied that the metaphysics and disciplines of Vivekananda did not deviate an inch from the stand point
of Advaita Vedanta of Sankara. We observed that Gandhi, Tagore discarded the traditional concept of Māyāvada (world as illusion). But Vivekananda accepted the old position without deviation or slightest hesitation. Vivekananda taught the people that service of man was essentially the same as service to God. Hence Vivekananda preached his famous doctrine of daridranarayana seva the doctrine of worshipping Narayana in the poor. Thus it was not mere social service but service of man as worship of God. He introduced social service as a part of the monistic discipline though the monk was only to practise meditation and teach spiritual truths. Like Vivekananda Gandhi was always thinking about the upliftment of the poor and helpless people and through the service of these people he wanted to realise God. Gandhi's concern for the poor and the downtrodden and his exhortation for the betterment of their physical and mental condition was entitled as Daridranarayana. He said "I claim to know my millions. All the 24 hours of the day I am with them. They are my first care and last because I recognize no God except that God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They donot recognise his presence, I do and worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God through the service of these millions". Gandhi's ideal was that wealth should be equitably distributed among those who have produced it. No person or labourer should be denied the essentials of living, food, clothing and a roof to live under. For Gandhi some one has more than what is needed he should act as its trustee and make room for the have nots. Gandhi believed that limitation of wants could only promote real happiness. Gandhi was not
a monk. He was a practical thinker, a religious man as well as a social reformer.

Through Yoga Vivekananda tried to build a universal religion. Yoga has two meanings. It may mean union or it may stand for path, method, means and discipline. Vivekananda used the term Yoga in a very comprehensive manner and therefore incorporates both these meanings in his sense of the word 'Yoga'. So Yoga for him means the process as well as the realisation. Thus the path leading to the realisation in the path of discipline and union. The aim of Yoga is union, realisation of oneness. He proclaimed all paths of God-realisation as equally sacred. The Hindu scriptures, the Upanisads and the Gita have outlined four Yogas for God-realisation. He has given systematic account of all of them. Jñāna Yoga is the path for self realisation through discriminative knowledge. It is a form of spiritual discipline based mainly on philosophical discrimination between the real, the unreal and the renunciation of the unreal. Vivekananda said in agreement with the Advaita vedanta that in Yogic consciousness idols, temples, God's images, mind, life, body, and cosmos disappeared as dream or illusions, there was no trace of them in the experience of the mystic vision, all disappeared into nothingness, so he pointed out that the Absolute alone existed and that everything else was false or unreal. The path of Jñānayoga advocated by Sankara according to traditional interpreters insist on the giving up all activities (Sarvakarma Samnyāsa) as the method of spiritual realisation. The concept of sannyāsa was a negative ideal, it stressed renunciation.
But Vivekananda made the ideal of sannyasa practical and positive by adding service to renunciation.

Karmayoga is the path of ethical actions which leads to the identity of one's self with God. It is system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and by good works. Vivekananda seems to very impressed by the Gita ideal of Niskānakarma and the life of Lord Buddha. He said "He works best who works without any motive, neither for money, not for fame, nor for anything else, and when a man can do that he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. This man represent the very highest ideal of Karma-Yoga." In Vivekananda's Philosophy individuals are architects of their own destiny, if an individual does realise salvation, it is entirely his own effort. For him, man's activity is not determined by God's will. So Vivekananda's Karmayoga has the philosophical bias. The path of devotion to God for salvation is called Bhaktiyoga. According to Vivekananda devotion or love is natural to man and the Bhaktiyoga is the path of pure love in which the object of love or devotion is not the finite or limited but the supreme. For him this love will be universal love, love for all, because this will be based on the realisation of oneness and everything. He made moral life indispensible to God's bhakti like Gandhi.

Rajayoga is the path for the realisation of salvation through the control of the mind and the body. Rajayoga is the path of physical
and mental disciplines leading to concentration and samādhi. Vivekananda is aware that this method is not for the weak as it requires an immense faith in oneself and also physical and mental strength. He said that it gradually enables the yogi to acquire certain excellences and power and finally the yogi is able to practise complete concentration leading to the realisation of unity with the Divine.

Thus Vivekananda described the above four different ways to the realisation of the same goal. He felt that one can choose the path he lives and if one followes anyone of these paths with sincerity and earnestness, he will be able to reach the goal. Again he said that these paths are not completely exclusive of each other, in fact in certain respects they overlap. On the other hand Gandhi gave more importance on Bhakti and Karma for the realisation of oneness. According to Gandhi the aim of religion was to lead man face to face with God in other words face to face with truth. Gandhi believed that God is everywhere and in everything, but he resided specially in the poor and the helpless. Therefore serving the poor was the greatest form of religion according to Gandhi. Again for Gandhi, a person become one with God through prayer also. He pointed out that prayer is not to be performed with lips, but with hearts. Again he pointed out that prayer is a form of meditation which has its aim self purification and knowledge of the truth.
VI.5 Gandhi and S. Radhakrishnan

Dr. Radhakrishnan is universally accepted as one of the greatest religious philosophers of the world. He was a thinker and an idealist of the 20th century. He could be regarded as a Neo-Vedantin. He had given a new orientation to classical Upanisadic thought. He restated the advaitic vedanta of Sankaracarya. Dr. Radhakrishnan was not recapitualating nor endorsing the views of the Upanisads. He was interpreting them as a scholar, thinker and an idealist of the 20th century. Therefore his vedanta is not ideantical with that of Sankara and the Upanisads.

Radhakrishnan's salient features comprised universal outlook, synthesis of the east and the west in religion and philosophy, the spiritualism and humanism and openness to the influence of science, art and values. The interaction of the eastern spiritualism and the western humanism, fusion of cultures, ancient, modern medieval and the interchange of thoughts and values gave rise to a new system of Radhakrishnan's philosophy.

Radhakrishnan was profoundly influenced by western education. It helped him to have a closer views of western, culture, thought and civilization. The influence of them enabled him to evaluate Indian classical thought from a new perspective.

Radhakrishnan had been influenced by modern science, modern industrialisation and technology. He accepted the biological theory of
evolution. He was aware of good and bad effects of modern industrialisation and technology. He observed that humanity was facing spiritual crisis as it appeared from an analysis of merits and demerits of modern technology. Here like Radhakrishnan, Gandhiji was also aware of the good and bad effects of modern industrialisation and technology. He saw the problems created by industrialisation and machine in human society. He tried to show that colonial economy was essentially based upon exploitation, exploitation of villages by cities, large scale over small scale industry, one region by another, the rich over poor and the educated over the ignorant. He suggested an alternative economy which he found in self-reliant economy. He used the symbol of Charkha. When he talked of Charkha, it was not charkha alone, it included many other industries under it. Gandhi was repeatedly saying that mere playing of the wheel would lead the country nowhere. He wanted everybody to understand the philosophy behind it. The All India village Industries Association was a by product of charkha. Similarly basic education and eradication of untouchability were also the by product of charkha which stood for a new lifestyle, a non-exploitation economy and a technology which could be controlled by human beings. The competitive economy are based on exploitation. Gandhian economy is based on economy of Swaraj. Under Gandhian economy each unit of economy is judged by its self-reliance. His aim was to creat a new civilisation where all people would have an equal role to play.

To Gandhi, some economic and technological development is
essential for mental and spiritual growth, but only upto a point, beyond which it becomes an obstacle in the path of development. Gandhi wanted an economy in which people mattered. Moreover Gandhi welcomed the use of modern machines provided it helped the labourer to lighten their burdens but does not create unemployment. He said that such mechanical power must be available to every villages who wanted to use it. He wanted that science and technology should be applied for purposes that would bring about greater production carried on in peace and harmony.

Radhakrishnan showed the necessity of political consciousness and freedom in his various works. He analysed the merits and demerits of contemporary politics. He emphasised the revival of spiritualism to meet political demand. Like him, Gandhi's aim was also to spiritualise politics, economics and social aspects.

19th century thinkers revolted against the evils of Hinduism. Radhakrishnan was enabled by the 19th century to become aware philosophically of these evils. On the other hand Gandhi was not a philosopher in the academic sense. He was born a Hindu. His Hinduism was his own. His Hinduism grew and developed in the light of his contact with other religions, especially Christianity, Buddhism and Jainism. The removal of untouchability was one of the most important features of Gandhi's life. He refused to enter temples to which Harijans were not allowed to enter. Radhakrishan had deep study of the classical literature of Hinduism at the start of his professional carrier and as
a teacher in philosophy. The study of the Upanisads, Bhagavad Gita, commentaries of Brahmasutras by Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbarka and other the dialogue of the Buddha, and the Buddha and Jain scriptures broadened his thought. Plato, Platonus, Kant, Bradley, Bergson and Whitehead also had been absorbed in him in his inner most recesses of thought. Among the contemporary thinkers of India, Tagore and Gandhi influenced him by their association and lived in his unconscious mind. Radhakrishnan's religious experiences served as data to his Philosophy. He was depending more on his experienced inspiration than on his study. Though he was widely reading all the ancient medieval and contemporary philosophical systems, the real sources and materials of his philosophy were based on his own spiritual experiences. Similarly Gandhiji was also not acquiring his ideas and knowledge merely from books. He was a man of the masses. He addressed them not about what he had read and studied in books but what he had seen, sensed experienced and thought about. In Gandhi's philosophy the emphasis is not on idealism but on practical idealism. Radhakrishnan described some of the characteristics of religious experience. They are-

i) It is that experience which is not anything extraordinary or supernatural and that every man is capable of it and also that it involves an awareness of our objective kind.

ii) It is an integral and undivided consciousness which is different from
ordinary experience In ordinary experience the duality of the subject and the object is always maintained, whereas in this experience there is no subject-object differentiation.

iii) It is not in anyway determined by the extraneous factors. It is autonomus in character in so far as it is an independent factor of the mind.

iv) It is essentially inner and personal.

v) It constantly aims at the attainment of perfection.

vi) Religious experience as he says is the total reaction of mere knowing or mere feeling. It is a total reaction of the total man including the intellectual moral and aesthetic aspects of the whole man.

vii) Radhakrishnan uses the word 'saint' for this and defines it as a positive feeling of calm and confidence, joy and strength in the midst of outward pain and defeat, loss and frustration.

viii) The religious experience enables the individual to throw the burden off and to have a feeling of relief and release. In this way this experience creates a feeling of freedom.

ix) This experience is the most certain and the most ineffable possessions of man's life, doubt and disbelief are no more possible.

x) This ineffability can neither be demonstrated nor proved. Radhakrishnan uses the expression 'self-established', self-evidencing, 'self-luminous' etc.
to describe the nature of such an experience.

xi) Radhakrishnan is aware of the inadequacies and limitations of language and he is aware that it is not possible for our modes of expressions to comprehend fully the nature of this experience.

Radhakrishnan defined religion as the insight into the nature of Reality or experience of Reality. For him, this experience was the response of whole personality, the integrated self to the central Reality. He defined religion also as a strenuous edeavour to apprehend truth.

Dr. Radhakrishnan pointed out that the purpose of life was not the enjoyment of the world, but the education of the soul. Radhakrishnan stated that sravana, manana and nididhyāsana (hearing, reflection and disciplined meditation respectively) are the three stages of religious life, and one has to rise from one stage to another.

To Radhakrishnan no religion is perfect, because religion is a movement or growth in which the new rested on the old. To Gandhi also religion is not fixed. It is an experience which is ever growing, ever developing and religion is a dynamic process. Gandhiji did not think that religion was to be practised in a cave or on a mountain top. He commanded that it must manifest itself in all the actions of man in society. For him, religion is not merely a belief, it is a way of life also. The way of life which constituted religion must be rooted according to him in a faith or conviction in God or truth. By God Gandhi did not mean personal God, it rather meant a way of life based
on the spiritual conviction that the world was sustained by truth, by Dharma and that there was an ordered moral and spiritual basis behind it. Gandhiji regarded all the different religions as different roads leading to the same goal and this goal is the goal of truth which the different religions conceive or apprehend in their own relative ways. On the other hand the different religions Radhakrishnan felt were like comrades in a joint enterprise for facing the common problems of peaceful coexistence, international welfare and justice, social equality and political independence, Radhakrishnan used these as the basis for the development of human culture. Like Radhakrishnan Gandhi also agreed that no religion is perfect. For Gandhi each particular religion contains some element of true religion and that the true primordial religion finds concrete expression only in and through these particular religions.

Dr. Radhakrishnan also asserted that a religion which has not given importance to social reforms and international justice has no appeal to the modern mind like Gandhi.

To quote Radhakrishnan "The believer in God loves his fellow-men as he loved himself seeking their highest good as he seeks his own by redemptive service and self-sacrifice. He will put justice above civilization, truth above patriotism". For Radhakrishnan, religion may be many on account of the divergence and the same like Gandhi Radhakrishnan says, "Religion is not a creed or a code but an insight into reality". For him this insight will reveal that man is always confronted with something greater than himself which is somehow
immanent in the human soul and this is the eternal or the Absolute.
Reality which is present in the soul of man as its secret ground and
forms a bridge between the finite and the infinite. Insight into this
truth is the essence of religion.

The Absolute or the Brahman is designated by Radhakrishnan
both in the Indian way and in the western manner. He at times called
it the Brahman, and at other times the Absolute. His absolute contained
in it the element of both- the Advaita vedanta and the Hegelian
tradition. Like the advaita vedantist Radhakrishnan also believed
the Absolute did not have any internal differentiation. For him, the
differentiations that appeared to us is so only from the point of view
of creation. The Absolute is conceived by Radhakrishnan as pure
consciousness and pure freedom and infinite possibility. The first two
characters are described more or less in the vedantic manner. The third
character is explained in the manner of Hegel's Absolute Idealism. The
Absolute according to Radhakrishnan has to be spiritual in nature, he
called the Absolute the whole of perfection. For him, everything else
is imperfect. There may be degrees of perfection, but the wholly perfect
is the Absolute. On the other hand Gandhi was using the word advaita
and dvaitism and similarly anekāntavādi and Syādvādi without much
technical or philosophical discussion. He was using these words in his
own sense. He brought the philosophy of advaita on a very practical
level and interpreted its metaphysics in some what a practical and
ethical manner. For Gandhi the basic truth was only one and the entire
creation was the expression of the same truth and hence all were basically one.

Over and above the principles of the Absolute or Brahman, Radhakrishnan also told about the principle of God. Radhakrishnan also distinguished between the Absolute and God although he did not reduce their distinction to the empirical and transcendental point of view as it had done in the Vedanta. The supreme conceived as revealing itself in two ways—Absolute and Isvara. The Absolute is the object of metaphysical aspiration, God of the religious aspiration. Radhakrishnan was not prepared to reduce God to unreality by making it a product of Maya and ignorance. For him, God is real in so far as creation is real and God is an aspect of the Absolute. Following Gandhiji Radhakrishnan said that God is truth. Like Tagore he maintained that God is love but he added that God is not mere truth and love, but also justice. For him, God is the perfect as well as the highest moral being, free from all evils and God performs his act according to his own laws.

For Radhakrishnan, the world is the actualisation of one of the infinite possibilities. This means that it is not a necessity for the creator. It is a result of a free act. The world therefore is an accident of the Absolute. Like Sankara, Radhakrishnan also believed that the world is not necessary to Brahman. Radhakrishnan borrowed this element from ancient Indian thought. Again he added another aspect from the Absolute Idealism of the west. For him also creation is lila and this
lila is real. Here Radhakrishnan was facing a logical difficulty. If creation is real lila than it follows that creation is a necessary to the Absolute and in that case, the free character of the reality is affected. But according to Radhakrishnan the distinction between 'accident' and necessity is unwarranted in the content of reality. Therefore Radhakrishnan said that it is in the nature of the Absolute to grow into the world - the world is the affirmation of the Absolute. In that sense creation is necessary for him, but it is not necessary for the Absolute to have this very creation and in that sense creation is an accident. On the other hand for Gandhi, the world is not a mere appearance. As a Vaisnava he accepted the world as real and his main aim was to upliftment of the poor, suffering fellow beings who belonged to this world.

For Radhakrishnan, prayer, modes of worship, rituals, the various religious rites and ceremonies even ideal-worship all these may have a significance, all these may have different meanings for individuals in different ways, but the basic thing is silent meditation. Radhakrishnan used the terms 'yoga', 'realisation', 'dhyāna', 'intuitive' apprehension etc. to denote this state. On the other hand Gandhiji gave much more importance on fasting and prayer. He said that his devotion got strength from fasting, prayer and recital of God's name vize, Rāmanām. For him, a person must become one with Divine through prayer and therefore prayer is the very soul and essence of religion. Moreover
Gandhi had given more importance on Bhakti and Karma as the ways for God realization.

VI.6 Conclusion

From the foregoing discussions we find that contemporary Indian thinkers took great pains to advocate the idea of a casteless and classless society. The twentieth century thinkers have given great attention to the social upliftment of humanity. They stood for the emergence of a society where nobody suffered from discrimination, inequality, fear, want and other evils and which was altogether free from the prejudices pertaining to colour, community, race, religions and so on. In this respect we can mention the name of Mahatma Gandhi who endeavoured through out his life for the upliftment of the poor and the downtrodden. Tilak, Tagore, Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan have also made substantial contribution in these cases, but in comparison to them, Gandhiji discussed this factor in a much wider sense.

Gandhiji observed that truth and non-violence were the supreme ideals for mankind. His view of religion was based on truth and non-violence. Gandhi’s most significant contribution is that he gave a positive interpretation of non-violence. He said that non-violence and love are identical. He considered love as the greatest force which can be used in solving all our problems. Most of the contemporary Indian thinkers held Ahimsa as an individual virtue. But the special contribution of Gandhi widened its application to the national and international
spheres of action. He made it a universal moral principle. We cannot
deny the contribution of the above mentioned contemporary Indian
philosophers. Because if the contemporary Indian thinkers did not have
their contribution to the people of India, India would have been backward
in every aspect. But Gandhi appears to be the greatest among the above
mentioned contemporary Indian philosophers, because it can be said that
no man in twentieth century had a greater impact on the thinking and
action of men than Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi said that he would feel
at home everywhere and that he could live even in a village or in
any part of the world engaged in improving its condition. This is
because he loved all humanity. His love was neither intellectual nor
sentimental. It was based upon the fact that in his eyes there could
be no bad men in the world who must be liquidated and all were
the creatures of the same God. His synthesis of the ideal and the
practical made him greatest among the contemporary Indian thinkers.
The above mentioned contemporary thinkers were also great. But Gandhi's
contribution and ideas are getting more applause throughout the world.

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