Religiosity entails an element of faith with some kind of emotional adherence to the object of faith, which results into a kind of religious ethics. Religiosity of people can be studied and investigated from various approaches such as historical, sociological, psychological, and philosophical etc. But these approaches and their methodologies are different from one another. A sociologist tries to locate the element of faith within social behavior of a group and for him community-life of a religious group is very important. A psychologist investigates the behavior and personality of a religious person and intends to trace psychic roots of religiosity in his childhood experiences and cultural settings. But the task of a philosopher is quite different from both. It is quite comprehensive in nature. It consists in delineating the structure and foundation of faith in the background of what religious persons say and do in their lives and how they respond to many crucial questions concerning life and the world.

Religiosity is not a purely theoretical endeavor. It manifests in personal and social behaviors of people and group. The typical dimension of human psyche in which, religiosity grows requires some specific social and historical conditions. Though the social settings and historical conditions are very important for the understanding the nature of religiosity, yet philosophical study of religion is very different from and independent of study of psychology and sociology of the religious persons and groups on two reasons:

First, the primary concern of philosophy is the content of religious faith whereas (individual and social) psyche and social condition stand in its background only.

Second, at the deeper level of philosophical investigation, one finds it necessary to question the legitimacy of some of the basic assumptions of psychology and social sciences.
1.1 Problem Stated

A philosophical study of religious faith begins with enquiring about some of the tacit assumption involved in the very idea of religion as it is discussed in philosophical circle. Various definitions and descriptions of religion are available but all of them are either directly or indirectly conditioned by philosopher’s presuppositions. Generally philosophers and researchers of religion are occupied with some idea of religion obtained by one or another religious tradition to which they belong or with which they are familiar. Every religion has a particular aspect that dominates in that religion. A philosopher, who belongs to that religion identifies himself with it, tends to define every religion in that very light. The preoccupation of a philosopher implicitly creeps into the definition of religion that he provides. Though all the three elements: faith, emotion and action are present in every religion yet the typical blend of the three, which gives a particular religion its uniqueness, is lost by the imposition of any stereotype definition of religion. The attempt to give a universally acceptable definition of religion capturing all the distinctive features of living religion, therefore, fails in achieving its objective.

Because of certain preoccupations with one or the other religion, philosophers, ordinarily, discuss religious faith without admitting any levels in it. This kind of philosophical discussion idealizes the notion of faith which deprives it of all its dynamism. In order to capture this dynamic role of religious faith, we need to investigate faith in such a way that different philosophical assumptions are taken into account. Even within single religious tradition, faith is not to be taken as a homogeneous concept. It has certain external and internal differences, which can be understood, as levels.

1.11 Levels of Faith

Sporadic attempts made within every religious tradition clearly indicate the levels of faith. In *Srimad Bhagwad Gita*, Lord Sri Krishna has classified various categories of his devotees. There are different types of religious people within every religious tradition. Broadly at least two levels of faith can be seen within every religious tradition. These are the higher and lower levels of faith. Even in our ordinary usage some people are regarded as deeply religious, highly religious or enlightened souls, and others are considered as superficially
religious or overtly religious only. Since faith is necessary laden with emotion towards the object of faith, it is intelligible to make this difference even from outside the religious tradition. A person, who does not desire anything except the joy and peace of an emotional relation with the object of faith, can be placed at the higher level of faith. On the other hand a person who is devoted to the object of faith not only for the sake of joy of devotion but for some other concerns also, is placed at the lower level of religiosity. The intelligibility of the above stated difference in levels of faith makes it necessary to study religious faith on its various levels. A person placed at the lower level of faith is at times looked at with pity and very often the attitude of this category of people is deplored but it is clearly admitted that somehow they could raise themselves above and reach the state of the higher level of faith. The hierarchy of the lower and the higher level is common in almost every religion.

Without entering into any religious tradition one as an objective spectator may admit that faith can be put into two broad categories: First, faith for worldly concerns and second faith without any worldly concerns, in which emotion towards the object alone is valuable. If we understand the role of emotion\(^2\) (bhāvā) in the formation of religious discourse then for any rational discussion of it, it would be necessary to admit these two levels of religious faith. In this regard it is necessary to mention that emotion does not mean any special kind of emotion which is not intelligible to non-believer or which is beyond the limits of language. This point needs further elaborations:

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his ‘Use Theory of Meaning’ clearly shows that to understand the meaning of a word is to understand how it is used in ordinary language. Using language is like playing game\(^3\). To understand the emotion means to understand specific rules of language which govern the usage of particular word which expresses the emotion in proper manner. To know the rules is to know which behavior (linguistic or non-linguistic) is expected to follow. Wittgenstein in his lectures on ‘Religion’ emphasizes that religious assertions are very different from scientific hypotheses; they in fact manifest what the religious believer does and what he does not do, what he chooses and what he abandons\(^4\). When a believer expresses his emotion towards the object of faith, he gives importance to it either for some worldly gains or for its own sake.
Therefore, the expression of emotion can be put into two categories: First, the expression such as ‘I worship my lord because he provides me some worldly possession’ and second, expressions such as ‘I worship my lord because I get happiness in so doing’.

1.12 Truth Claims of Believers made against the backdrop of Emotion

When a believer makes statements either about the world or about the object of faith, the kind of claim he makes, is necessarily laden with emotions towards the object of faith. Therefore in order to understand the validity of these claims, it is necessary to look at them through the emotional set-up of the person. To neglect the emotional set-up of the believer leaves her claim in a peculiar situation where it is neither properly intelligible nor the question of its validity can appropriately be answered. Sociological and psychological studies of religion do not take into account the claims of believers primarily. Even a philosophical study of such claims usually tries to judge them in only rigid epistemic condition, which is applicable for judging the scientific and perceptual cognitive claims. In this attitude the claim of a believer is somehow deformed (knowingly or unknowingly) and as a result we get a perverted picture of religious faith. The emotional setup of a believer is generally deemed as hindrance to know the truth of religion by most philosophers. It is believed that emotions of a believer blind him towards the truth. This is something questionable but it is generally quite irrationally overlooked in philosophical discussion.

Ordinarily in a philosophical discussion, we do not concede that what a believer perceives can be perceived only in the emotional setup. It is worthy to note that certain perceptions are closely related to the person’s emotional setup. We must also note that no one can generate emotions either in oneself or in others merely by exercising one’s sweet will. Proper surrounding or context is very important to generate emotions. Since emotions have some objective import, therefore, there is a genuine problem of a validity of the claims made by believers. Though such claims, in contrast to the cognitive claims of our sense experience, can be called non-cognitive claims and cognitive importance of it can be denied completely yet it would be only a bias to do so. What a person does and says under the influence of such emotions can be perfectly intelligible.
As there is an objective import in religious claims made under the emotional set up and there is a grammar of emotion, which enables us to understand not only the meaning but also validity of such truth claims.

1.2 Approaches and Scope of this Study

In this thesis we intended to examine the epistemological conditions and the basis of religiosity. This investigation has been conducted in a very specific manner in view of the fact that certain presuppositions regarding ordinary epistemological quest which are unquestionably accepted, are also to be examined.

As it is evident from the above discussion, there is a difference of levels in religious faith. Therefore, the problem of judging the validity of religious claims is to be investigated at different levels to fully capture the structure and function of faith.

The lower (or superficial) level of religious faith, which is normally ignored in philosophical discussion, needs to be examined. It is also to emphasize that higher level of faith emerges out of less deeper level of faith in view of the fact that persons on the religious path, raise (gradually or suddenly) themselves above a lower level to reach the higher level of faith. Moreover, with these two broad categories of faith there may be a degree of depth in faith which is required to be investigated.

The conditions under which a person placed at the lower level of faith makes assertions about the world and the object of his faith would be different from that of a person placed at the higher level of faith. It would be a complex emotion directed towards and object of faith through which some kind of external gross and refined satisfaction is to be derived. These conditions are to be examined.

The conditions under which a deeply religious person makes assertions regarding the world and the object of his faith must be studied with the view of the fact that the emotion directed towards the object of faith has an intrinsic value for him. The emotional involvement of a person in religious life supplies some kind of rationale for his claims. This kind of justification is not totally cut off from the normal conditions of cognitive claim. The so-called objective cognitive
claims also require some kind of emotional background which reflects in the non-rational assumptions of the unquestionable reality of the external world.

Given the fact that some kind of non-rational background is required to make cognitive claim, it will be further shown that within the higher level of faith, there are at least two levels. At the first level, the emotional involvement with the object of faith, which serves as a kind of justification and it, is intelligible by the ordinary level of epistemological inquiry. But there is still a higher level of religious faith in which emotional involvement with the object of faith and the content do not remain separate from each other and this situation gives rise to certain problems of understanding from an ordinary level. This is shown in the thesis that although the content of the believer’s awareness at the deeper level cannot be exactly captured at the ordinary level, yet it cannot be declared to be unintelligible. Even at the ordinary level one can understand broadly what the believer asserts about their content of faith at the higher level.

The question of intelligibility (not only internal but external) will show the path of understanding the religious discourse in a very specific way. The analogical attempts fall short to accomplish this difficult task because they are made from non-religious surface to religious surface. The intelligibility conditions in order to be epistemologically adequate will have to address some of the questions regarding the relevance of intelligibility conditions in the entire structure of an emotional living being itself. This may beg an answer of the question of Life science. The life preserving instincts are to be reformulated in terms of some kind of emotional fulfillment but this would go beyond the scope of our inquiry. We may only delineate a possibility in which a satisfactory answer regarding the intelligibility of the higher level of religiosity can be obtained.

The religious faith in its higher level is regarded as the source of all virtues in all religions. Persons who achieve this state necessarily lead a kind of life which could be called virtuous life. They also tend to guide and help people adopt the same virtuous life. In this attempt the epistemological barrier between them and an ordinary person is to be broken. Persons placed at the highest level of religiosity make various attempts to do this. All these attempts are significant from the point of view extending the scope of intelligibility beyond the
rigid epistemological limits, so finally our investigation will throw some light on
the possibility of communication between various levels of faith.

1.3 Central Themes and Issues of Chapters

The first chapter is an introduction of thesis.

The second chapter ‘Intelligibility of Religious Discourse’ is an attempt to make intelligible the formation of the domain of religious discourse. This chapter explains how the domain of religious discourse is formed against the backdrop of emotions and without understanding the role of emotion, one cannot understand religious discourse. It explains that the term ‘reality’ is discourse dependent and nothing is real out of the discourse. It also further analyzes that the object of faith is not fictitious or imaginary but living reality for the religious persons. Religion is not at all an artificially formed domain. It comes into existence with someone’s individual experience and in the process of its sharing with others it becomes religious identity for a particular community of human beings. Certain objects play an important role in the formation of the domain of discourse. The object of religious discourse is the object of faith for religious and non-religious persons in different senses. For the religious person, it becomes an object of faith in the sense that he/she gives it supreme value which manifests in the responses of reverence or dedication to it. For the non-religious persons, it is an object of faith in the sense that it is a matter of belief and not a matter of sense-experience. But it is clear that understanding of a non-religious person depends on the understanding of a religious person because non-religious person understands religious discourse either by placing himself as the religious person or imagining the conditions of the religious person.

The third chapter ‘Non-Homogeneity of Faith’ questions and enquires the fundamental assumptions: faith is merely a theistic concept (faith in personal God) and faith is homogeneous in its nature. Non-theistic religions like Buddhism and Jainism have also given much importance to faith, though the nature of faith as an evaluative belief may differ according to the nature of the object of faith. The words and teachings of Buddha and Mahavir are not merely

* He/She does not connote any gender bias.
speculative presuppositions for the follower of Buddhism and Jainism but these are components of faith which govern their (followers of Buddhism and Jainism) whole life. A Buddhist believes in the state of nirvana. He not only believes in the existence of such a state of consciousness called ‘nirvana’ but he has a deep aspiration to attain that state of consciousness as it is intrinsically valuable for him. The idea of such a state of consciousness inspires and absorbs him completely. In fact, his identity as a Buddhist depends on his involvement with this inspiration. Even in theistic religions, faith as an evaluative belief manifests in various ways which gives uniqueness to that particular religion. The object of faith as supreme master is different from the object of faith as father or mother and if the object of faith becomes friend or beloved then it adds further attributes to evaluative belief. All these variations and differences make it clear that the concept of faith, which appears to be a homogeneous concept due to its evaluative nature, is not so. It needs a comprehensive investigation and evaluation about its various types. This chapter is an attempt to present the conceptual distinctions among various forms of evaluative beliefs.

The forth chapter ‘Faith as Means’ explores how faith functions in the life of common believers to whom faith is valuable to achieve some worldly possessions. Their faith is not intrinsically valuable for them. Theses people believe in some supra-natural power because they think that it will help in achieving some worldly gains. This category of common believer contains at least three types of believers: First, ‘Sufferers’, who believe in God with burning desire to overcome his suffering. Second, those people who believe in God to achieve some worldly possessions like wealth, success in professional life etc. Third, the people who believe in God not for achieving so crude goals as the second type people do but for the sake of attaining higher meaning in life. This chapter investigates the mind-set of these believers and examines how within the state of emotions these believers perceive the object of faith. It also emphasizes the importance of the lower level of religious faith in the sense that higher level of religious faith emerges out of this. Thus it is necessary to pay sincere attention towards the lower level of religiosity. However, within this lower level itself there are different degrees of depth of faith which need to be examined.
The fifth chapter ‘Faith as End’ examines the state of a person placed at the higher level of religiosity where believing in God is valuable in itself. It explains how the object of faith becomes the centre of believers’ all activities and his whole life. It investigates and explains how faith (for a person placed at the higher level of religiosity) gains importance and supreme value in two senses: experiential and moral sense. This chapter also analyzes how the nature of faith varies according to the nature of the object of faith. In the life of a believer (placed at the higher level of religiosity) faith manifests in various emotional relationships such as master-servant, father-child, mother-son, friends and lover-beloved etc. On account of these different relationships faith takes different forms and different shapes in the life of a believer. The chapter explains different sorts of relationship of believer and the object of faith in the light of some dominant religions of the world like Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Sufism.

The sixth chapter ‘Possibility of Communication in Religious Discourse’ explains how a person placed at the higher level of religiosity makes many attempts to help other Person to understand his level of perception regarding the reality. It also explains various forms of communication like external communication and internal communication. External communication occurs between two persons while internal communication takes place within the different stages of consciousness of the same person. Every communication presupposes a shared life-world. Unless one shares some of his activities with other person, communication with other persons will not be possible. Hence a person placed at the higher level of religiosity tries to share his life with others by prescribing them some religious ethics. In the light of the various dominant religions of the world, this chapter analyzes how religious ethics transforms the perception of a person and makes communication possible between persons placed at different level of consciousness.

The seventh chapter (last) is conclusion of thesis.
References and Notes

1 Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Ch. 16. 7

2 The English word ‘emotion’ is somewhat problematic and needs some clarification and elaboration in this context. Emotion as explained in the psychological studies in fact does not fully bear the meaning, which is to be conveyed in this discussion. The Sanskrit term ‘bhava’ is the most appropriate to convey the desirable meaning in this regard. Etymologically this term ‘bhava’ is derived from the root ‘bhu’, which has two meanings: being (bhavati) and becoming (bhāvayati). Emotion does not necessarily refer to disturb state of mind as generally psychologists define it. I am using a term emotion in border sense that it is psychological feeling with clear content and motive of person to do certain thing. It definitely affects person’s behavior and it is difficult for him to hide it. Emotion naturally manifests in the person’s behaviors. It is not difficult to discern that one is in a state of emotion or other word passing through as emotional experience. A person who is not in the state of emotion is very different from the person who is in it. In my discussion of emotion I mean a psychic force that the person consciously feel and that he is under the influence of that force what is called emotion.
