Faith, as we saw in the last chapter, is not a homogeneous concept. Although it is an evaluative notion, in practice it functions differently in the lives of different types of person. This dynamic nature of faith gives rise to a level-difference between the persons for whom faith has its own value and the persons for whom it is a sort of security measure or means to achieve some end.

Generally, People have faith in the God but for them it is not valuable for its own sake. It is not intrinsically valuable. They believe in God because they think that it will help them to attain certain desired goals. Their faith has only an extrinsic value. This category of believers contains within itself various sorts of people, differing from each other with respect to the nature of goals that they aspire for. At least three types of people can be included in this category.

First, some persons in crisis, who have lost all hope of getting out of his state of utter despair, look for a heavenly help. They believe in God with the burning desire that He will take him out of their crisis.

Second, some persons believe in God because they think that with His grace they could fulfill their desires for mundane possessions like wealth, success in professional life etc.

Third, some persons believe in God for not so crude material goals but for the sake of searching some meaning or purpose of their life such as to attain knowledge, peace, mental contentment etc.

As such these people fall in the category of believers for whom faith is valuable for something else and not for its own sake. Though the believers of a non-theistic religions have no personal God from whom they can expect help in such situations, yet they believe that the pious path and the system of belief shown/laid by the preceptor (Buddha or Mahavira), will definitely emancipate them by a natural or supra natural events and they will not be left to suffer for ever. The faith of a person in the state of utter despair functions almost in the similar manner. Indeed the function of faith is not solely determined by the nature of the object of faith, basically the intensity of the emotional element of
faith determines its function. Faith of the persons in the crisis (1st type) is directly related to the problem of survival. The emotional element of faith that provides the believer a sense of security can be observed clearly in this type of believers. Hence the study of the functions of faith in the life of such believers helps us understand clearly the nature of faith as a means (faith is valuable for something other than the faith itself). The functions of faith in the life of other types of persons (2 and 3 type) can be taken as an extension of its functioning in the life of sufferers (1st type). The aim of this chapter is to analyze the functions of faith in the life of these three types of believers.

4.1 Function of Faith in the State of Crisis of the Believer

Faith always has an emotional element in it. Its value for the believer is essentially an emotional value. Especially for a believer who is in a state of utter despair and lost all hope from all worldly sources, faith in God is the only anchor for his hope. The object of his faith (which is supra-mundane in nature) is the object of his last hope and he is solely dependent on Him. The nature of this dependence needs to be fully elaborated to understand the function of faith in the state of crisis of a believer. In order to understand the psyche of a sufferer, it is necessary to investigate the inner structure of the relationship between emotion and perception. That is to mean how within a state of emotion a sufferer perceives the object of faith.

In the state of crisis a sufferer is in the state of utter despair and dishearten as he does not perceive any object that helps him from this mundane world to get rid of suffering. Though he makes many efforts and exercises every possible option that may help in any way to overcome suffering. But when he finds that all his efforts are futile and no one comes to rescue him, the feeling of detachment evolves and he totally disengages himself from this mundane world for the time being. He becomes suspicious about all his worldly relationships and loses his belief in this mundane world. At this level of psyche he totally loses his rational ability. This is the state of mind where the consciousness of a sufferer shifts from this mundane to supra-mundane level of reality. This is the mid-point in the journey of the mundane to supra mundane world. A sufferer withdraws his consciousness from this outer world to inner world where the image of the personal god becomes object of his
consciousness. This is the very important point in the expansion of consciousness from ordinary level to the deeper level of perception in a sense that this state of mind results into either the state of complete hopelessness and mental disorder or goes beyond the psychological level that is the state in which the sufferer has deep emotional relation with the (image of) the object of faith. And the object of faith becomes the object of emotion.

In Bhagwat Gita, Sri Krishna has said about the four types of persons: ‘Ārta’, ‘Jijnasu’, ‘Artharthi’ and ‘Jahani’, who take refuse in him. Etymologically the word ‘ārta’ comes from a + r + kt implying one who is oppressed, sufferer, unhappy, distressed, desperate or one who is in peril or in crisis. But not every person who is in a state of utter despair is necessarily said to be an ‘Ārta’. A person has a certain desire (trsna) that is directly or indirectly related to the question of his survival or his identity. He wants to get fulfilled the desire at any cost and in the state of its un-fulfillment, he apprehends that he will not be able to survive or he will lose his identity. One may fall in a state of utter despair or may lose all his hopes and sees no way to come out of that state. This material state of affairs itself, cannot make a person ‘Ārta’ unless the person realizes that this state is going to finish him: physically or psychologically. A more sensitive person can envisage even the remote consequences of his present situation and becomes extremely upset at present. On the other hand a less sensitive person may not get perturbed by the crisis at hand.

This kind of sensitivity stated above needs to be distinguished from the temperamental nervousness. A person, who gets panicky with every small difficulty, may be over sensitive but he does not necessarily possess the kind of sensitivity that is required to make him an ‘Ārta’. Indeed a person having temperamental nervousness is not able to envisage the remote consequence of any situation but he would be disturbed with every small difficulties.

4.11 Analysis of the Mind-Set of Draupadi as an ‘Ārta’

In one of the episodes of the Mahabharata, Draupadi, the brave and intelligent princess of the king Drupada and the highly respected wife of the great Pandavas, was brought to the court of Dhritrastra in the most humiliating way and was going to be denuded by the order of Duryodhana. She was quite furious in the beginning but eventually fell in the state of utter despair and
became the ‘Arta’ when she could not get help from anyone. The change in the psychic state from anger to despair needs to be explored to understand the actual state of the mind of the ‘Arta’. But before that it is necessary to understand the role of sensitivity in the process of becoming a person an ‘Arta’. Draupadi always enjoyed love and respect from all her relatives and common folk. She had very high self-esteem. No one ever dared to insult her. For such a respected lady facing extreme insult and humiliation in public was more than the death for her. It was just impossible to accept for her to be denuded in the public. However, for any woman it will be an extreme form of persecution but we can at least imagine that less-sensitive women may surpass that state of suffering with the feeling of utter helplessness. This does not mean that she somehow accepts the situation but her attitude is definitely different from the attitude of one not being in the situation at all. The difference lies in the fact that the latter is the state of utter despair in which any help from any source is explicit but the possibility of facing the consequence unwillingly cannot be overruled. But this is not the case with the state of ‘Arta’. For the ‘Arta’ this is the question of losing his whole existence. The question before ‘Arta’ is: how can she abstain herself from facing people? How could she be able to forget it? But the question before a less sensitive woman would be - when will the humiliating situation come to an end? Her primary intention is to overcome the situation of facing disgrace. She is not visualizing and accepting consequence of that situation as sensitively as the ‘Arta’. Draupadi was a very sensitive woman. In the royal court of Dhratrastra, she became ‘Arta’ on hearing the irrevocable order of Duryodhana that she would be publicly insulted, because she could imagine herself to be in that situation. The only desire that engulfed her whole being was that she should not face the situation.

4.111 The Mind-Set that results into ‘Arta’

‘Arta’ is a state of mind in which one probably falls from other mental states like rage, overconfidence, etc. These mental states create appropriate backdrop against which the state ‘Arta’ emerges.

When Draupadi was being dragged by Duhshasan to the royal court, she was very angry. Even after reaching the court when she was informed that her husband- ‘Yudhister’ (Pandavs) had lost her in the gambling, she could not
visualize what was going to happen to her. Only when all the prominent elders had expressed their helplessness in providing protection to her against the order of Duryodhan, she became disillusioned with all mundane relationships. She suddenly realized the crisis that was to fall upon her. She realized that she would be denuded before the youngers, elders, courtiers and servants. Now it was so alarming for her that it was just impossible to think of being in that situation. This state of utter hopelessness occurs only if a person has some minimal reason to hope. In case such a minimal basis of hope collapses, the person is rendered almost lifeless. But it turns into the state of 'Arta' only if the intense desire to be saved from the inevitable is left in the person's mind. This is a necessary condition for falling into the state of 'Arta'. But the typical 'Arta' who takes refuse in the God is different from other sorts of ārta because of his qualitative different mental state. At least three possibilities can be enumerated:

(1) A person whose only desire is to be saved from inevitable crisis may implicitly but vaguely think of a help from persons or sources again with whom he initially has become disappointed. He may think that out of the sudden change of his mind, the person may come forward to rescue him or he may think that sudden change in the factual condition could help him miraculously. In fact he hopes to be rescued by any such occurrence. It is not necessary that the divine being be behind that. It can be thought of happening just by chance. In this case the person's hope is still directed to the world of his knowledge and his relations.

(2) A person's mind may oscillate between the mundane and the supra-mundane sources for help. The desire to be saved from the crisis can take shape as a desire of getting help from any source. It may not be clearly directed this and only this source. He is just looking for help from either this or that source.

(3) A person may, in the state of utter despair, lose all hope from personal or non-personal sources of the world completely. He has somehow come to realize that from these sources he cannot be saved. Only a supernatural power can save him. This implicit belief gets hold of his entire being. This state of mind is very special in the sense that for the time being, he gets completely out from the spatio-temporal world. The awareness of the world is
lost for the time being. His consciousness is pointed completely towards the supra-mundane source as the only object of hope.

It is not necessary that a person in the crisis must have a clear idea of the supra-mundane power. In the course of cultural upbringing, he may have got only a vague idea that there is such a being that possesses extra ordinary powers and helps people who surrender himself for help. If no such idea has been implanted in the person’s psyche through cultural upbringing then the person would hope from this world. But if such a belief in any form has been in the person’s psyche through cultural upbringing then the person would hope from supra-mundane world. Indeed the rest of the world ceases to exist for him. It is also noteworthy that every person, if he is a God-believer (believes in the existence of supra-mundane power), gets cut off from the world and switches completely to the God. Having such a belief as part of his cultural upbringing is also a necessary condition for switching of his consciousness to the personal God (supra-mundane power). Unless another necessary condition - losing hope from all the source of the world is fulfilled, a God believer may either be in a state (1) or in (2). In either case such a person’s consciousness remains tied to this familiar world only. The crisis tends to throw consciousness of the person away from the object of the world in the form of complete loss of hope of help from them. But due to inertia of the whole life a person may fall back to them indirectly either in state (1) or (2). It is worth mentioning that if the hope from the world is lost, consciousness is withdrawn from the world. If the object of faith becomes an anchor to hold the attention of the person then the person’s consciousness is raised to the realm that is not influenced at all by the forces of the world. Without having a belief in God, consciousness of a person cannot remain withdrawn from the world for a considerable period of time. It may almost instantaneously fall back to the objects of the world. The God of person’s belief (about whom we can talk at present as a purely psychological entity) due to its overpowering attribute becomes a positive object in which the person’s attention gets fixed sufficiently for long period of time. God is described as a benevolent, omnipotent and omniscient person that always protects the persons who take refuse in him. He forgives the greatest sins of the persons who having lost all hopes, come to surrender at his feet. These attributes of God that become the content of the belief of the person in misery become appropriate
anchor for holding his attention. The complete loss of hope from this world makes the emotional stage setting for a person’s attention to focus towards the object of faith. Now the attention of the person is absorbed in the object of faith and he is absorbed in that.

The fact that an aesthetic experience draws the person’s attention and puts him above the influence of material forces temporally enables it intelligible that God’s emotionally overwhelming attributes may also put a person’s psyche beyond material influence. The object of emotion then makes the person aware of the unknown dimension of his being in which he gets overjoyed with the immediate awareness or freedom from the afflicts of the world. The God of his belief now remains not merely psychological entity but it acquires an experiential significance. After this experience the person falls back to the mundane level generally. This experience is generally explained by others as some kind of abnormal experience, which is not commonly available to most people, or it can be explained by some postulation of metaphysical entity. But it is noteworthy and remarkable that a person who has undergone these experiences cannot accept these explanations. An Ārta would not admit that he was hallucinating or was talking about a metaphysical postulate. The constraint is of psychological importance. The person in the above state of ‘Ārta’ finds himself in the protection of the supreme power. The presence of the object of his faith is so overwhelming that the afflictions of the mundane world are forgotten completely for the time being. The ‘Ārta’ who has undergone this experience feels the joy and cannot doubt the presence of such a power. But he cannot prove to other empirically that there is really such a power. For others it is just like his dream or some kind of hallucination. The ordinary sense experience and extra-ordinary experience of protection by a supra-mundane force can be seen as mutually different levels of experience. It is because of this feature that the ‘Ārta’ gets relief from the suffering of the mundane world when he is switched to the supra mundane level. Therefore the experience of the ‘Ārta’ cannot be reduced to the ordinary sense experience. So for others, it has at the best a non-cognitive significance.

In the case of ‘Ārta’ the experience is a kind of divine reward. A person cannot attain that experience by his will. There is no method or technique available for that. Even if a person is a firm God-believer by his cultural
upbringing and the external conditions make him lose all hopes, it does not necessarily result into the experience of protection by supra mundane power. The experience of 'Arta' is given in the form of- 'God saved me' and it is never in the form of- 'I got the help of the God'. Expressions such as- 'I got the help of police, of court etc' are meaningful where as 'I took the help of the God' is somewhat uncommon. In the former use of expression the person is active and gets a contact with the helping agency through his active approach to them. But in the case of God's help almost complete passivity is a necessary condition for the experience. The awareness towards some special feature of God is necessary and to this extent some sort of internal alertness is also needed. But it is significant that in the case of 'Arta' the person happens to be aware, almost accidentally. He is just switched to the experience of a supra-mundane savior. He cannot claim that next time he can willingly take the help from God. Hence such a person is in a double difficulty to make any truth claims regarding the experience.

Firstly, the experience is essentially and primarily of a non-cognitive significance having the nature similar to aesthetic experience because it is joyful. But it is something more than that, since it liberates him from despair and gives courage and forbearance. It has an essential moral element in it.

Secondly, the person finds himself unable to reproduce this experience by any method. But there is a relevant question of truth of 'Arta's experience'. Although we do not make truth claims regarding aesthetic experience but the fact that an aesthetic experience is there to withdraw the person’s attention from materiality and makes him forget himself in it, does not prove that it is an illusory experience or a dream. It is very much an awake experience. It is true that if a person undergoes an aesthetic experience, the person's psyche is liberated from this material force (however by other means also, it can be possible (so we can not formulate it either ‘if and only if’ or ‘only if’ type statements). Given this formulation it can also be said that if the person has undergone the experience of God as the savior then he is liberated from material inflictions.

Since forgetting of material influence can take place by other means also this cannot be a sure sign of the reality the person's experience. Only the person's report is the proof that he has undergone such experience.
If the visible behavior shows that the person is not perturbed with material infliction and he has undergone such experience then even if it happens to be a dream or whatever, makes no difference because it is a fact that he is actually overjoyed. Whether it happens with closed eyes or open makes no actual difference. It is a fact that it happens to him and it is of great importance that a person is not telling lie. One may argue that there is possibility that the person has fallen unconscious or he is deliberately telling lie about that. He experienced some thing extraordinary. But even in the unconscious state a person somehow gets rid of physical suffering and mental anxieties. A person who actually passes through the overwhelming experience of the protection by God seems to be outwardly unconscious in behavior so the question of the person’s report gains relevance in understanding the state of mind of ‘Ārta’.

Whether the person’s report about his experience is true or not, can be decided by all those means by which the truth of any experience is ascertained to the some extent by others. But philosophically that is not important. The availability of common method of test of truth claims regarding person’s experience is also applicable to this experience that makes it the report of person meaningful in a common public discussion. The fact that all other reports regarding person’s experience is equally open to test and doubts and yet we meaningfully talk about them also, makes room for ‘Ārta’s report’ of his experience of protection by God-- being meaningfully talk in public space. The question here is not –Does God really exist? But the relevant question is – Does the person really pass through the experience what he claimed? This is the question that can be discussed meaningfully by the person with others in almost similar way as other questions regarding the report of person’s experience is discussed.

4.12 Non-rational inclination towards the Object of faith

From the above analysis we find that within this state of mind a sufferer totally surrenders himself towards the object of faith. A sufferer within a state of deep emotion perceives his Lord and for him his perception is real. Now his whole personality is transformed, he looks to be a totally different man. Here it is worth mentioning that as soon as a sufferer surrenders to his lord he is saved from his suffering. However, an ordinary man may perceive that the situation of
the sufferer remains the same and he is still suffering but he may also observe that the behavior of a sufferer has been totally transformed, and now he does not complain to any one for his suffering. One can clearly observe that a sufferer overcomes the fear of suffering.

God, for a believer, is not only an object of rational belief. Although he rationally accepts the attributes that are ascribed to God and entertains no rational doubts about Him (that are commonly raised by agnostics) but that is not enough for a complete withdrawal of his consciousness from all other directions and exclusive concentration on Him. In a normal situation one can comfortably think about God with exclusive concentration. In a state of crisis it is not possible. A complete rational certainty about God is not at all possible because of His transcendent nature. As Kant rightly observed, existence of God can’t be established by pure reason: it leads to antinomies. So in the physical and psychic pressure of the crisis, a rational belief in God is of no use at all. Only through a complete surrender to God, the state of communion with Him can be attained. And strong emotional relationship with God can withdraw the awareness of the person from all sides and can focus it exclusively on Him. The acute physical and psychic pressure that the believer in crisis faces can be balanced and diluted only by a very strong emotion. The believer’s faith is essentially emotional. Its emotionality is very often witnessed by many of the alleged irrational behaviors of the believers. If its emotionality reaches to a certain height then the believer’s awareness gets exclusively absorbed in the object of faith. Especially in a state of crisis, emotional force of faith is stimulated, it touches its peak; the believer’s awareness is shifted to the level where the physical and psychic pressures lose their hold over him. It is not to be oblivious of the actual situation; it is to rise above that.

A believer, in the state of crisis, takes refuge in his object of faith. He doesn’t become completely insensitive to his initial physical state but loses his psychic participation in the situation. Emotional magnetism towards his object of faith (that results into complete absorption of awareness in the object of faith) enables and facilitates the believer for psychic non-participation and gives him an actual feeling of emancipation. The absorption of the believer’s awareness in the object of faith is not a feeling of temporary forgetfulness of the present crisis. The believer’s absorption in the object of his faith is specifically different
from absorption of a person’s awareness in some external means such as a melody of music. In such occasion of absorption of awareness, which frequently occurs in every common man’s life, a person gets only a temporary respite from the pressing situations of suffering. His psychic participation in the initial situation is lost only temporarily. He has to suffer the pain of the situation after falling back from the state of the absorption. On contrary when the believer’s awareness gets absorbed in the object of faith, it permanently breaks his psychic participation in the state of crisis. The factual conditions that constitute a situation of crisis become psychologically ineffective for him forever. This so happens as the object of awareness in this case is not out there; it is within the believer himself. In the complete absorption of his awareness in the object of faith the believer gets settled within himself. To explain this psychic event more clearly it is necessary to explain the nature of the believer’s object of faith.

A believer is a person who has got an image of God with some specific emotional relation with it, such as a master-servant, father-child, mother-child, friends, lover-beloved etc. This image as an object of a specific sort of relation is ordinarily grafted in his mind in and through the tradition in which he is brought up. Due to the attributes such as omnipotence, omnipresent, omniscience etc., the image of God is formed in the psyche of the believer as someone who can give him miraculous security in the crisis, unimagined success in his chosen aims, reveal secrets of this world and what not. All these make the image of the object of faith as one that can completely absorb the awareness of a believer. The emotional relation with image of God doesn’t generally develop beyond an ordinary level and this emotional relationship is expressed through believer’s ritualistic worships and prayers. It doesn’t influence the other more important aspects of his personal and social life. But if somehow the intensity and the magnitude of emotional relation with this image grow and find important place in his life then it doesn’t remain an image for him but becomes a sort of living reality. However the believer may not have logical and rational answers to many questions regarding epistemic status of this image, but he under the influence of the emotion doesn’t give importance to the epistemic questions but enjoys the bliss of his relation with the image of the object of faith that is not an imaginary entity but a real person for him.
It is worth mentioning that the believer doesn’t necessarily fail to understand the philosophical importance of these epistemic questions. He doesn’t give much importance to the questions regarding epistemic status of the image of the object of faith because he knows that their answer would be unintelligible to others and would be misunderstood. A believer’s claim that the object of his faith is not an object of his imagination but an independent autonomous person remains unintelligible to the non-believers. Although some thinkers like John Hick have tried to understand the intention of the believers as a sort of truth claim but that captures only a remote aspect of it. It is centrally important a task of this investigation to understand how the image of God is not an image for him but a living reality.

Generally philosophers ignore this issue and concentrate exclusively as to why the believer believes that the image of God is a real person. Most philosophers explicitly or implicitly think and state that the believer’s words can’t be accepted on its face value. It is true that the believer’s claim can’t be taken as a truth-claim in the sense of statements about spatio-temporal events even the believers themselves don’t intend to do so. But their truth-claims are about a very specific type of emotional experience that is its object with its content too. In a more precise way it can be said that their truth-claim is about the content of an emotional experience that takes place only in having a very specific type of object as an object of immediate awareness.

4.13 The Object of Emotion is not the Object of Imagination

For a person in the state of utter despair the object of emotion is not his imagination but rather living reality. He within a state deep emotion perceives the object of faith as the protector. Indeed he cannot arouse emotion and creates the object of emotion. Because one cannot arouse emotion by merely one’s sweet will. We see in our ordinary life for the manifestation of any emotion a proper environment (surroundings) is required. Even in the expected environment an emotion cannot be necessary aroused. One can imagine any thing at sweet will but one cannot have any emotion by merely desiring or thinking about it. However human beings have in-built capacity to have emotion but in order to manifest it he requires certain state of affairs. It implies that a man does not create emotion. In this sense emotions have some objective
import. Though one can control emotion and expression of emotion by certain practices or will-power but it is clear from above stated argument that no one necessary arouse emotion by his sweet will. Now on the backdrop of objectivity of emotion we try to understand the nature of the object of emotion that is the object of faith.

The object of emotion is not an imaginary object opposed to the real. Actually a sufferer does not produce or create the god; he cannot impose desirable attributes to the object of emotion. If we closely observed the life of a person in utter despair we would find that the object embodied with the highest virtues is manifested in the life of sufferer. It is worth mentioning here that the object of faith is not at all an instrument for him to whom he is seeking help but rather he himself becomes an instrument by surrendering towards it.

4.14 Nature of the Object of Faith

The object of faith (supra mundane) is an object with which the believer has a very strong emotional relation. However this emotional relation can be partly described in terms of some human relation but can’t be fully captured in any of them. Master, father, mother, lover etc are the forms of human relations in which a believer generally receives the image of God. These relations represent the type of emotional relation that a believer has with that image. Because of this emotional relation, the image of God remains not an image: it becomes a living reality – a real person. This happens with any other earthly image also. Spectators of a powerful play or readers of a captivating novel usually develop an emotional attachment with some characters and begin to live with them at the psychic plane. Like those images the image of God also becomes a living person for the believers. But the image of God is very different from all other images. No other images become objects of faith. The image of God alone becomes the object of the believer’s faith. It can also be said that the image that becomes the object of faith is God’s image. It is possible to develop an emotional attachment with any image. Even an inanimate object can become an object of someone’s emotional attachment. A tree, a mountain, a river or anything of that sort can be someone’s friend, philosopher and guide if he develops an emotional intimacy with it. But not all such objects that are
enlivened by the person's emotional attachment can become an image of God for him unless they acquire the status of an object of his faith.

4.141 Object of Faith: Embodiment of Highest Virtues

An object of faith is essentially the object that embodies certain or all the virtues in it that are deemed as cardinal or the highest. Without embodying higher virtues no object can become an object of any one's respect either. Only that object can become the object of faith for a believer to whom he thinks some or all those virtues are enshrined that he regards highest.

Although the object of faith is essentially seen as embodying highest virtues, it can't be universally determined which virtues are the highest. It is a complex issue and involves the cultural factors, which vary from one community to another community. There are certain attributes of the object of faith that are regarded as the highest (or one of the highest) in one culture and can not be regarded so in another. Celibacy (Brahmacarya) is such a value that is regarded as one of the highest virtues in Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism but not regarded to be so in Christianity, Islam and even in a dominant religion of India: Sikhism. Since the object of faith of a believer is an embodiment of those virtues, which he regards the highest, the image of the object of faith is always culture specific and cult specific. An image of God having all those qualities that reason can approve as universally acceptable may be of great interest for the metaphysical thinkers but it may not necessary be interesting for a believer. On the contrary, a believer may accept more easily that image of God as an object of his faith, which embodies those virtues that his culture and cult of religion accepts as the highest. Some of them may be rationally unimportant (e.g. being attractive) but a person may find it of very great importance due to his cultural upbringing and initiation into a particular cult.

It is a fact that the image of God as an object of faith is culture-specific but it doesn't mean that the image is merely an imaginary creation or deliberate invention of the collective psyche to achieve some earthly goals as it is explained by Durkheim. Why some qualities of human character become acceptable to human beings in general and to a specific cultural group in particular, is a question of historical importance and many new facts regarding the development of human civilization can be discovered in researching about
it. However, it is philosophically more important to note that there is no fixed rationality of accepting one set of virtues as cardinal instead of some other. Rather it is the pre-rational acceptance of them that delineates the specific traits of rational choice of human species. An attempt to link this choice to certain physical events may be historically interesting but philosophically it is question begging. In above discussion the acceptance of the fact that the choice of cardinal virtues in any human community is culture-specific is only to show its non-rationality or pre-rationality.

4.142 The Believer’s Emotional Relation with The Object of Faith

The object of faith need not be satisfactory to the standards of reason. An object of faith for a religious believer is not an object of his thought primarily; it is an object of his emotional relation. Hence an object becomes an object of faith only if its embodying of the highest virtues becomes the reason for emotional attachment to it. An embodiment of virtues and an object of emotional attachment are very different sort of objects: conceptually and practically. An object of emotional attachment for a person may be merely an object of sensuous attraction as such it may not be an embodiment of virtues. Even if there are certain virtues in that object they are not the reason for the person’s emotional attachment to it. On the other hand an embodiment of high virtues may be an object of a person’s formal respect but may not arouse any emotional attraction in him. In fact, in a formalistic framework of morality, emotional attachment is deemed as a demerit and the separation of the two is emphasized there. But for a religious believer a pure rational embodiment of virtues is of no worth unless he feels some emotional attraction to it. Faith in God, as we saw in last chapter, cannot be a purely factual belief. It is necessarily an evaluative belief. For the believer, his relation to his object of faith is of highest importance for him. An object of faith, for a believer, is essentially an object of great emotional attachment but this attachment is only for the virtues that the object embodies and not for any thing else. This is the difference between an ordinary object of emotional attachment and the object of faith. God, for a theistic believer, is an object of a deep emotional relation such as Father, Mother or Master and also as Friend, Lover or even Husband. But in every case the believer has a sense of deep respect for it that places it above and beyond all mundane relations. Devotees (Bhaktas), especially in Vaiśṇava
cult, describes the charm of the Lord Kriṣṇa and Ram's form with great adoration. But this is also regarded as a great virtue because meditating on them set a person free from the sensual infatuation of all mundane charms10.

Not only in Hinduism but in Semitic religions also God as an object of faith stands in some sort of emotional relation to the believer. In Sufism God is out and out an object of love. In orthodox Islam also Allah is regarded as the supreme master of entire creation and human beings are asked to become his most loyal servants. The very the very opening of (AL-fatiha) Holy Koran states:

"In the name of God the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy, praise belongs to God, Lord of worlds, the Lord of Mercy the Giver of Mercy, Master of the Day of Judgment. It is You, we worship; it is You we ask for help. Guide us to the Straight path: the path of those you have blessed those incur no anger and who have gone astray."11

These and many other statements depict a clear relation that every human being is supposed to have with Allah. A complete loyalty to God is not possible without a deep sense of surrender before Him. This is certainly a special form of emotional relation.

In Judaism Jehovah is a not a God of love but of power who inspires awe in human beings. This also is an emotional relation with the object of faith; it is not a mere factual belief that such a powerful being exists. Emotional relation may be of any sort. It is not necessarily a relation of love. Some sort of emotional relation connects the believer with God in such a way that not merely his mind but his entire being is involved. This is essential to make God an object of faith. Without this sort of personal involvement God may be an object of thought and may interest a metaphysician but can't be of any interest for the believer.

Evaluative belief is different from thought. Thought doesn't necessarily manifest in the behavior of the person who thinks. Evaluative belief does manifest in the behavior of believer (not only religious believer). One may be rationally convinced about the non-existence of entities like ghost but if one believes in ghosts then it will be expressed in some tangible aspects of his behavior. His rationally accepted thought that 'ghosts don't exist', doesn't manifest in his behavior. How one behaves discloses what one believes. No such internal connection is there between thought and behavior. To put a
thought in to action one has to exercise one’s will. What one believes gets translated in to one’s behavior without one’s exercise of will. By closely watching one’s behaviors we can understand what one believes. The fact is that a person’s behavior shows what he believes; it shows that his way of one’s behaving involves his being and not merely his thoughts. The relation between the object of belief and the believer is, therefore, not rational. It is a non-rational relation. It is clear that in case of belief in God (i.e. belief in a particular image) this relation takes the form of emotional relation. Faith in God (being a variety of belief) also gets translated into the behavior of believer because he has an emotional relation with Him. He does certain things that a non-believer finds irrational or useless. He abstains from certain things in which a non-believer finds no reason. So it is clear that the image of God—the object of faith—is an object that involves the believer’s being and not only his thought.

Having faith, the believer gets involved rationally and non-rationally in the object of faith. His attention is shifted to that level of consciousness in which the image of the god is entertained. This shift takes away the attention of believer from the level of the matter of fact, which constitutes the crisis. Factual state remains the same but a believer’s perception regarding it has been changed, as he is not giving much attention to it. He perceives the matter of fact in the light of his object of faith (God), which wilts the intensity of the suffering. This shift of his attention brings relief for him and it is possible only within deep emotion towards the object of faith.

A believer does not lead a religious life in the sense that he drops worldly activities and concentrate only in the object of faith rather in and through his worldly activities he seeks the help from object of faith. This kind of aspiration could be characterized broadly into two categories: in search of worldly possession and in search of knowledge. In either of these two categories a believer has faith in the supra mundane object not for his own sake but to attain certain worldly goals.

4.2 Function of Faith in Search of Worldly Possession

Some people worship god to attain certain worldly possession like wealth, son etc. They cannot be dismissed as fake or non-religious just on the ground of desired goals. The large segment of religious community comprises only
these people. And indeed this only paves way to take a believer from the most mundane realm of the world to the most sacred realm of life. Therefore for philosophical consideration, it is important to understand how faith functions in the life of such believer.

At this level of religious faith the believer accepts the object of faith on the ground of some religious authority's statements. His belief and experience is based on what he has learnt from his family, tradition and culture. Through cultural upbringing he forms certain beliefs and with these believes he is emotionally attached. Indeed tradition and culture play important role in making up of his personality. Whatever he has been taught and learnt by his cultural is meaningful in his life. And because of this uprooted-ness and situated-ness, he has emotional inclination towards the object of faith given by his tradition. Death, unseen course of future etc. creates occasions in which people get inclined to believe in the reality of God. They believe that having faith in the God and worshiping him would help them achieving their worldly desires. Since no rational explanation can give emotional satisfaction in such situation therefore the person at this stage accepts the object of faith as real on the emotional grounds. Naturally person's emotional satisfaction cannot provide any proof or even weak evidence for what he believes. Here faith has limited pragmatic value. When this value is achieved people usually forget the importance of the object of religious faith and enjoy the life as they were doing earlier without faith. But we should not ignore the value of the faith at this level of perception because it happens at times that some occasion in the life of person brings about turning point where a transformation in the level of perception takes place and his personality would be totally transformed. The object of emotion, which gives him emotional stability in a practical situation, acquires permanent place in his life. It raises a person from mundane level to supra-mundane level. The object of faith remains the same but that becomes emotionally so valuable that it outshines all the worldly possession. However this specific situation in which the transformation takes place in the life of person cannot be said to be a 'reason' for the transformation in strict sense of the term. R. W. Hepburn rightly pointed out that there is no passage from the world to the god. Though he is talking about the empirical proof of the existence of the god given by St. Thomas Aquinas yet by his argument he clearly demonstrates that nothing can
serve as rational basis for claiming about the reality of supra mundane object. Even in weak sense it cannot serve as a basis for rationally believing in some supra mundane objects. And one argument is that the similar event that happens to be an occasion for the transformation in one’s life does not brings about any change in thousands of other people’s life. But we cannot completely ignore that some thing worldly happens in person’s life due to which transformation occurs in him is also the fact.

As we have already seen in the above discussion that in the crisis having a complex involvement in one's image of the object of faith sets one beyond the pressures of the worldly state of affairs. Since these pressures are so heavy and so enormous that ordinarily a person succumbs before them. His tiny will alone cannot bring us him desired success if the external factors do not become favorable. This feeling of common men can only put him in a state of fatalism and passivity. If he has no support, which can make the situation favorable for him or which can dilute the negative pressure and facilitate his progress, he cannot proceed further. The object of faith necessarily gives him tremendous support. To have faith in the supra mundane object means to have support from infinite power before that no worldly power can stand or harm him. This belief that his lord would help him against oddities enables him to think rationally and act accordingly. The power of faith changes the state of affairs that believer experience in course of attaining his worldly goals. In the absence of this belief he will not able to see the power of faith in his life. It is worth mentioning that in and through faith only a believer can realize the successful functioning of faith in his life. There is no other way to test the power and depth of faith. This does not mean that the believer’s wishes are fulfilled in every situation but it means that he realizes clearly that even when his wishes are not fulfilled he is not shatter broken or thrown completely helpless. He always feels an inner strength. If he has faith, appalling situation does not necessarily change its course but if he has faith then he definitely does not get the shock. This is how faith helps him preceding in the journey to achieve his goal and the belief in the power of faith is realized.
4.3 Function of Faith in Search of Knowledge

Knowledge is aim-governed activity. All cognitive enterprises have certain aim towards that a searcher works. But the result of the cognitive endeavor is not completely predictable. A searcher has certain basic assumptions or hypothesis regarding any scientific search and he tries to prove them on the basis of certain factual reasons and arguments but in this process of search there is no guarantee that a searcher definitely achieves certain desirable result. The basic assumptions regarding the scientific endeavor may totally insufficient or false that may employee many revisions. This is the uncertainty regarding the content of scientific quest. Another uncertainty in the search of knowledge is that cognitive endeavor in itself is practically undetermined and the possibility of achieving its aim is not based on any logical-deduction.

Because of these two above stated uncertainties, cognitive enterprise can never be taken as a kind of casual-mechanism. Indeed chance factors may contribute and disturb the scientific enterprise. In view of these factors a person who is engaged in any cognitive quest finds it not only fruitful but also necessary to expect some favors from the object of his faith.

4.31 Non-Rational Mind-Set in Formation of Knowledge or Creativity

If we closely examine the state of the mind of a searcher, we would find that this is not an ordinary state of mind (rational mind) but rather the mind that is deeply betrothed to the object of his search. It is definitely non-rational in its nature because a searcher is not at all in the position to give any rational justification for his involvement to the object of the search. A searcher within a deep emotion perceives the given state of affairs and he totally involves with that object and some times this state of affair results into a kind of search, discovery of new laws and innovative ideas. A little clarification is needed to understand this point. Everyone observed things falling towards earth and accepted this perception as it is. But when Newton saw apple falling down towards the earth, his mind totally absorbed in that state of perception he perceived that event within non-rational state of mind because at that time there is no rational justification for that perception so within non rational state of mind he raised philosophical question why did things fall down? Though he did not have any scientific explanation for this quest yet he was having deep emotional
inclination with this quest why did things fall and he stuck on this very question. Later on he discovered universal law of gravitation and explained the event of falling things towards the earth. So when a searcher perceives any state of affair and raises questions there is no any rational justification for his involvement with that perception. Though latter on he may himself discover new scientific law and may explain a particular event scientifically. We all are familiar with the scientist Archimedes who discovered the law known as ‘Law of Archimedes’. When he was in the bathroom taking bath and all of sudden he discovered the new laws, he came outside without any clothes on his body shouting ‘Yooreka Yooreka’. This is definitely a non-rational state of mind. Hence in any form of creativity or new search there is role of non rational state of mind. And for a clear understanding of this point we have to investigate the relationship of emotion and perception in the formation of new knowledge or new search. A searcher while engaged in any type of search he is within a deep emotional state of mind perceives a given state of affair and visualizes certain thing that may at times turnout as a new knowledge which is other wise not possible. That is to mean that it is not possible within an ordinary rational state of mind. Creativity, thus, can be understood as manifestation of perception, which occurs within an emotional set of mind or non-rational state of mind. Thus the seemingly non-rational, at times gives rise to or transmutes itself into the rational connoting the very permeability of the rational into the domain of the non-rational.

4.3.2 Psychological Support from The Object of Faith

A searcher of knowledge (not only in spiritual sense) hopes and expects that he will achieve his desired ends, how these ends will be achieved is mostly unknown to him and this makes him to believe that with the grace of the god, he will be able to achieve it. It is worthy to notice that despite a hole hearted effort a searcher some times fails to achieve his desired ends but at times a new solution flashes in his mind without any efforts which strength the believer’s faith in the god.

The quest of the knowledge requires a constant effort in a definite direction without any adequate reason to do so. In search of knowledge a searcher proceeds in a direction with some vague idea about the truth for that
he is not at all rationally sure at that time. It is like digging the ground to find water in its depth but from the surface there is no certainty of this hope and belief as it happens that in a moist ground also a hard rock comes out after some digging. One can never be sure in the beginning of cognitive quest that vague and inadequate idea on which he is going to make his effort will yield him desired results. Every cognitive search contains this feature and new discovery is made. But a new knowledge is achieved only by constantly working on such a vague idea. This search is not possible unless some non-rational inclination with the idea is not present in the heart of a searcher. A sort of emotional attachment with some vague idea alone provides a searcher to work on it persistently. An evaluative belief in certain idea principle or theory, which we discussed earlier, is needed for any new search. So faith becomes means in this sense also.

In this sense a psychological support from the object of faith is a common factor in a search of knowledge. And it enables a searcher to make efforts again and again in his pursuits. And a realization of the fact that new ideas can be caused to descend on one’s mind is common feature of every religion, which justified a searcher’s prayer to the object of his faith to give him knowledge. In Hindu mythology we have the god and the goddess of knowledge (vidya) for example Saraswati, Ganesh, Minerva etc.

Finally this endeavor of knowledge in which faith functions as means it self becomes step to make us aware of the higher value of faith. The fact that the object of faith illumines our mind with knowledge brings it to our notice that faith in itself is of very great intrinsic importance.

4.4 Function of Faith to achieve the Higher level of Consciousness

By becoming aware of this process, which is possible in and through the process of having faith only, one realizes the intrinsic value of faith and strives to achieve the higher level of faith. The person in a crisis due to the pressure of existing mundane situation wants to transcend that situation and he easily get attracted by the image of the god in which he finds the assurance of emancipation. A temporary relief by shifting of awareness is a sort of help that faith provide to the person in the crisis but this realization gives him some facet
of illumination regarding the intrinsic value of faith. This is another sense of function of faith as a means. This process functions to reach end of the level of consciousness in which the faith is intrinsically important.

Ordinarily it is believed that faith brings about miraculous changes in the factual circumstances. However in religious practice it is given enough importance but philosophically it is not much important. The belief in the power of faith is not to be considered within the scope of rationality. The only importance may be added to this sort of belief is that it helps strengthen the believer’s faith through which he gets respite from the situation of the crisis. And it also gives him illumination to attain the state awareness where faith in the god becomes important for its own sake. It also places him permanently beyond the physical and psychic where he enjoys the blissful state eternally.

Actual material change through the power of faith is a sort of belief, which can be used in either ways for the sake of the world or the emancipation from the compulsion of the world. Incidents of the miraculous help by the god are described in the mythology of all religion all over the world. If it is understood as only serving the physical ends then it is somewhere mistaken because there are counter examples of such incidents and they are also underlined by religious tradition (that is grand example of martyrdoms). So a close understanding of theistic belief clearly gives indication that belief in miraculous power of faith is essentially formed preparing the mindset of person to withdraw himself from the worldly affairs and get merged in the object of his faith.
References and Notes:

1 Srimad Bhagwad Gita, Ch.7.16
‘catur-vidhā bhajante mām janah dukrtino rjuna,
arto jīhastur arthārthi jnani ca bharatarsabha’

2 V. S Apte, Sanskrit Hindi Kosh, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1997, p-158


4 This diagnosis of metaphysical error makes good sense of Kant’s procedure in the ‘Antinomy of Pure Reason’, where he presents a series of conflicts between the form and limits of sensibility as structured by the understanding, on the one hand, and the pretensions of unconditioned reason, on the other. In early sketches of the Dialectic (Reflections 4756-60, 1775-7, 17: 698-713), Kant diagnosed all of the illusions of traditional metaphysics in this form. In the Critique, however, Kant singled out some metaphysical beliefs about the self and about God for separate treatment in the ‘Paralogisms of Pure Reason’ and ‘Ideal of Pure Reason’. These sections offer powerful criticisms of traditional metaphysical doctrines, but require a more complex explanation of metaphysical illusion than the single idea of reason’s search for the unconditioned. (See- Rutledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edward Craig, Routledge, New York, 1998, p 188)

5 The devotees who worship idols of God don’t take it as a material object but see it as a form of God Himself. Idol is not regarded as a symbol that stands for God who is somewhere else. In the eyes of the devotees God Himself is present before them in His idol.

6 Hick, John, Philosophy of Religion, Prentice Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi p 103-104

7 In The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life Durkheim demonstrated the centrality of religion in providing the cognitive, intellectual and moral foundations of social life. He argued that since religious phenomena were the earliest expression of social life they were also the source of our rules of logic and of our system of thought. The categories of time and space, of class and number, and of genus and species must have originated in the early experience of the collectivity, manifested through religious life. Thus, for example, the idea of time and of its division of years and seasons emerged, in Durkheim’s view, from the religious distribution of ceremonies, rituals and holidays in primitive societies. By demonstrating that cognitive and moral phenomena found their roots in primitive religious life Durkheim sought to prove that everything is social in its origins. This was, in the end, Durkheim’s master thesis, that society is the source of everything that makes us human - moral rules, altruism, rules of logic, cognitive categories, and ultimate beliefs and values. Accordingly, he constantly downplayed the role of psychology, of economics, of history, and constantly emphasized the role of collective representations in shaping the life of society and of its members Perhaps Durkheim’s philosophy was exceedingly sociocentric; it was certainly unambiguous and forceful in making the case for sociology as the science of moral life. (See- Rutledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edward Craig, Routledge, New York, 1998)

8 In the formal framework of morality such as that of Kant, emotions are denounced completely. For Kant, God is an object of faith and it is a necessary postulate for moral life. A rational postulate for moral life—divorced from emotions, can’t be an object of emotion. So God -- the object of faith, in Kantian understanding, is the basis of moral life but not an object of emotional attachment.

9 In Ethica Spinoza clearly makes a distinction between active emotion of joy and passive emotion (or passion). Active emotion of joy is attained by rational understanding of the world. The greatest active joy is obtained only by ‘Scientia Intuitiva’ i.e.- intuitive knowledge in which every thing is seen in necessary relation with God. This results in the rational love of God (Amor intellectuaeis Dei). A believer’s faith in God necessarily involves an emotion but a higher sort of
emotion which can be called rational love in Spinoza’s terminology or can be referred to by any adjective for it that places it a level higher than mundane love.

10 Tulsidas, Surdas and other sufi poets have described the charm of God in great poetic style and clearly have stated that meditating on the form of the lord complete liberates human beings from the control of ‘Kama’ – the mythological representation of sensual infatuation of bodily charm.

"madhav aasi tumhari ye maya
tulsidas harikripa mitayee bram yeh baros man mahee
kamhi nari piyaari jimi lobhi priy jimi daam
tmi raghunath nirantar priya lageho mohi ram"

- ‘Uttar kand’ 130, Ram Charit Manas

“tulsı tav teer teer sumirat raghuvansaveer
vicharat mati dehi moh mahiṣa kalika.”

- Vinay Patrika 2

“jnana kahe ajāna binu tam binu kahe prākash
nirgun kahe jo sagun binu so guru tuslidās”.

- Tusli Dhohavali 251

“kari gopal kee sab hoyee
jo aapni purushārath manāta ati jutho hai soyee
sahān mantra , jap udham, bal ye sab daro dhoyee
jo kuchu likhi rakhi nand nandan morte sake na koyee
dukh sukh ṭābh alaabh samujhi tum kathi marat ho royee
sūrdūs swami karunāmaya syam charan man poyee.”

- Sursagar sabha, pad 262

“Rānjā rānjā kardi nee mai apai Rānjā hoyee,
Sado nee mainu dheedo ranja heer na aakho koyee”.

- Bulleshah

- Bullashah vivechan Te Rachana, p 256,
published by Jagjivan Punjabi Prakshan
Sarvar pura, Amritsar

11 The Qur’an, translated by MAS Abdel Haleem, Oxford University Press New York 2004, p 3
