CHAPTER VI

REASON, FAITH AND PASSION
Human existence according to Kierkegaard is a matter of deep personal passionate interest and problems concerning it are rationally insoluble. It has been shown in the previous chapters that Kierkegaard lays emphasis on the subjective side of human experience i.e., on feeling, emotion and passion in contrast to reason. It is necessary that in order to show the contrast between faith and passion on the one hand, and reason on the other, the meaning of these terms as Kierkegaard uses them, should be clarified.

It is clear throughout that Kierkegaard uses the term reason in the sense of objective, abstract, speculative thinking. Faith is in contrast to reason and goes beyond the rational, scientific and logical functions of thought. Kierkegaard distinguishes faith from reason in order to reveal the irrational character of faith; faith as an experience is over and against all forms of theoretical knowledge: "Faith begins

1"Faith does not result simply from a scientific inquiry; it does not come directly at all. On the contrary, in this objectivity one tends to lose that infinite personal interestedness in passion which is the condition of faith, the ubi quae et nusquam in which faith can come into being." (J. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 30).
precisely there where thinking leaves off." Faith is interpreted in terms of passion, in the sense of intense emotion which represents personal concern and involvement. Faith therefore is non-cognitive and cannot be analysed as an epistemological or metaphysical category; it creates intellectual resistance in the sense of resisting an intellectual analysis of its nature and content. Kierkegaard attempts to show in this context the limitations of reason and the priority of faith. Reason according to Kierkegaard is unable to solve the problems of individual reality because it is too abstract and objective whereas the human reality is dynamic and non-rational. In the previous chapter it has been shown that Kierkegaard explains faith in terms of "objective uncertainty" and "passionate inwardness": "Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty."

It may be said therefore that Kierkegaard's interest in the problem of truth and reality is not epistemological and objective, but existential i.e., it is not external or outside the individual, but lies

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2. Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling, p. 78.
in the subjective certainty, in the inwardness of the individual. The inwardness of the individual is turned into infinite passion which is beyond objective explanation. It has been stressed again and again that truth is subjective and cannot be realised through reason; it must be passionately affirmed in the objective certainty, which is 'appropriation to faith'.

In traditional theology faith is viewed as an objective category; it is considered as a sum of doctrinal propositions. It is understood dogmatically as a belief in established religious doctrines. It is interpreted as a concept belonging properly to the sphere of the intellect and an ascending scale of faith to knowledge is put forth, by traditional theologians.

4Ibid., p. 188: "When Socrates believed that there was a God, he held fast to the objective uncertainty with the whole passion of his inwardness, and it is precisely in this contradiction and in this risk, that faith is rooted. Now it is otherwise. Instead of the objective uncertainty, there is here a certainty, namely, that objectively it is absurd; and this absurdity, held fast in the passion of inwardness, is faith. The Socratic ignorance is as a witty zest in comparison with the earnestness of facing the absurd; and the Socratic existential inwardness is as Greek light-mindedness in comparison with the grave strenuousness of faith."

5Ibid., p. 193: "The objective faith, what does that mean? It means a sum of doctrinal propositions.... The objective faith — it is as if Christianity also had been promulgated as a little system, if not good quite so good as the Hegelian... it is as if Christ were a professor, and as if the Apostles had formed a little scientific society."
seems to score over traditional theologians in his emphasis over the subjective and inward nature of faith. The traditional theologians appear to treat the concepts of religion as descriptive. This does not do adequate justice to the religious experience, since it is essentially realisable through emotional means and not through reason. Because of its incapability of being objectified and empirically verified, faith cannot become an epistemological concept. Kierkegaard criticises this objective notion of faith and maintains all the time that faith does not belong to the realm of conceptual cognitivity as it is subjective and inward. For this reason, he holds that the object of faith is the existential reality of the teacher and not that of a teacher with a doctrine because in the latter case, the relation becomes intellectual. Thus faith is equated with passion and should not be confused with

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6 Ibid., p. 290: "The object of faith is not a doctrine, for then the relationship would be intellectual, and it would be of importance not to botch it, but to realise the maximum intellectual relationship. The object of faith is not a teacher with a doctrine; for when a teacher has a doctrine, the doctrine is eo ipso more important than the teacher, and the relationship is again intellectual, and it again become important not to botch it, but to realise the maximum intellectual relationship. The object of faith is the reality of the teacher, that the teacher really exists. The answer of faith is therefore unconditionally yes or no. For it does not concern a doctrine, as to whether the doctrine is true or not; it is the answer to a question concerning
Further faith does not require any proof. A fact: 'Do you or do you not suppose that he has really existed?' And the answer, it must be noted, is with infinite passion... If the object of faith is a human being, therefore, the whole proposal is the vagary of a stupid person, who has not even understood the spirit of the intellectual and the aesthetic...."

Cf. "Now if we assume that it is as we have supposed (and without this assumption we return to the Socratic order of things), that the Teacher himself constitutes the condition to the learner, it will follow that the object of faith is not the teaching but the Teacher...." (S. Kierkegaard: Philosophical Fragments, p. 50).

"Has anyone who previously had faith gained anything with respect to its strength and power? No, not in the least. Rather is it the case that in this voluminous knowledge, this certainty that lurks at the door of faith and threaten to devour it, he is in so dangerous a situation that he will need to put forth much effort in great fear and trembling, lest he fall a victim to the temptation to confuse knowledge with faith. While faith has hitherto had a profitable schoolmaster in the existing uncertainty, it would have in the new certainty its most dangerous enemy. For if passion is eliminated, faith no longer exists, and certainty and passion do not go together," (S. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 50).

And Ibid., p. 540: "Passion and reflection are generally exclusive of one another. Becoming objective in this way is always retrogression, for passion is man's perdition, but it is his exaltation as well. In case dialectic and reflection are not use to intensify passion, it is retrogression to become objective; and even he who is lost through passion has not lost so much as he who lost passion, for the former had the possibility."

Ibid., p. 31, Kierkegaard says: "Here is the crux of the matter, and I come back to the case of the learned theology. For whose sake is it that the proof is sought? Faith does not need it; aye, it must even regard the proof as its enemy."
Just as a lover does not justify his love by reason, so also the man who has faith says simply 'I believe' and as such, no reasons are necessary to justify his faith. Kierkegaard maintains, "Faith is the highest passion in the sphere of human subjectivity" and does not need anything else in order to justify. He presents faith as a major human passion, which affects the entire life of a man; and it may even be regarded as the highest good of life. It is inherent in every individual i.e., it is potentially and equally available to all. It is a quality shared by everyone.

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9 Ibid., p. 118.

10 Talking about faith, David F. Swenson holds: "It is here depicted as a major human passion, affecting daily life at every point, its content being the entire essential reality of the individual's existence." (Introduction to Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling, p. xxi).

11 "About Faith a different kind of speech is heard. It is said to be the highest good, the most beautiful, the most precious, the richest of all blessings, not to be compared with anything else, not replaceable by anything else. Is it then so different from the other goods, because it is the highest good, but, for the rest, of the same kind as those, transient, unstable, conferred only upon the chosen few, seldom for the whole life? If this were so, then it would be inexplicable that in these sacred places there is always one thing, and only one, said about faith, and it is again and again eulogized and commended." (S. Kierkegaard: Edifying Discourses, p. 23).

12 Ibid., p. 24: "... faith has a different quality; it is not only the highest good, but it is a good in
Kierkegaard identifies faith with passion; but it is not the same as aesthetic emotion. Nor is it 'an immediate instinct of the heart'. It belongs to the realm of religion. It is not an aesthetic emotion because it has resignation as its presupposition. The man of faith involves himself into two movements: first that of infinite resignation and secondly that of faith itself. Infinite resignation before God is the last which all can share; and he who rejoices in his possession of it, rejoices also on behalf of countless generations of men; 'for what I possess', he says, 'everyone man possesses or may possess'. He who wishes it for another man, wishes it for himself; he who wishes it for himself, wishes it for every man; for that quality by virtue of which a man has faith is not one in which he is different from another man, but that wherein he is identical with him; that whereby he possesses it is not something in which he differs from others, but something in which he is absolutely identical with everyone else."

"Faith therefore is not an aesthetic emotion but something far higher, precisely because it has resignation as its presupposition; it is not an immediate instinct of the heart, but is the paradox of life and existence." (S. Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling, p. 67).

And Ibid., p. 125: "For faith is not the first immediately but a subsequent immediacy. The first immediacy is the aesthetical, and about this the Hegelian philosophy may be in the right. But faith is not aesthetical...."

Ibid., pp. 68-69.
stage before faith, the latter includes the former. It also includes the trust in the face of the absurd. It is thus resignation with a divinely inspired trust added to it. Besides, the man of faith believes that he would regain all that he has sacrificed. The 'Knight of Faith' therefore is also a 'Knight of Resignation'. The man of faith believes that God compensates for the sacrifice of all earthly pleasures: "By faith Abraham did not renounce his claim upon Isaac, but by faith he got Isaac."\(^{15}\) Infinite resignation consists therefore in severing all the ties which bind the individual to the temporal world. In religious terms, Kierkegaard expresses this idea as 'dying to the world', signifying a negative relationship to life and the world. In the second movement i.e., of faith, the individual is restored to his former position in the temporal world\(^{16}\) (as in the Biblical story Abraham regains Isaac after sacrificing him). But, now the individual is the temporal or the finite world only by virtue of his relationship to God. Both resignation and faith are movements of passion. They require a 'leap into existence'; in the sense that in such a situation one passes from objective rational sphere or empirical evidence to the existential.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 70.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 70: "By faith I make renunciation of nothing, on the contrary by faith I acquire everything...."
The notion of faith involves necessarily a thrust in the direction of the personal, the concrete, the specific, the particular; any movement in the direction of abstraction and generality is inauthentic. (The meaning of faith as objective uncertainty implies also that faith is highly personal; universal norms are not prior to personal choice but are to be defined afterwards in terms of personal choice. Thus Kierkegaard draws in his work *Fear and Trembling*, a sharp distinction between the universal demands of ethics and individual decisions based on religious faith. At the religious stage, Abraham experiences anguish — 'fear and trembling' as a result of constant tension within himself. At the level of religious faith the individual becomes higher than the universal and at this stage follows what Kierkegaard calls the 'teleological suspension of the ethical'. 17 For at the ethical level Abraham's killing of his son would properly be called murder, but at the level of faith it becomes a holy act. Here Abraham rises

17 *Ibid.*, p. 119: "The hero does the deed and finds repose in the universal, the knight of faith is kept in constant tension."

And *Ibid.*, p. 119: "The tragic hero also concentrated in one factor. The ethical which he teleologically surpassed, but in this respect he had support in the universal. The knight of faith has only himself alone, and this constitutes the dreadfulness of the situation."
above the universal ethical norms by virtue of his authentic choice.

Kierkegaard regards the ethical stage as universal and the religious stage as individual. The latter signifies a particular exception to the ethical rule. Abraham turns from duty to faith because of the particular requirement which God has imposed upon him. Faith therefore is specifically viewed as a unique relationship to God. Abraham is not a 'hero' (in the sense that he is universally acclaimed as such); instead he is a man of faith trusting and obeying God, in spite of his being rationally absurd and offensive to universal sentiment. Here morality protests against human sacrifice but faith transcends moral norms by a trust in God although it violates these very rational and moral principles. Trust relates to the hope of Abraham to receive Isaac back.

The 'teleological suspension of the ethical' means here that faith is contrary to accepted rational moral principles. The Knight of Faith understands of course

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18 Ibid., p. 32: "Faith is precisely the paradox, that the individual as the particular is higher than the universal... for the faith that the individual as the particular stands in an absolute relation to the absolute (God)."
19 Ibid., p. 115: "The knight of faith... knows that it is refreshing to become intelligible to oneself in the universal so that he understands it and so that every individual who understands him understands through him in turn the universal, and both rejoice in the security of the universal. He knows that it is beautiful to be born as the individual who has the universal as his home, his friendly abiding-place, which at once welcomes him with open arms when he would tarry in it. But he knows also that higher than this there winds a solitary path, narrow and steep, he knows that it is terrible to be born outside the universal, to walk without meeting a single traveller."

20 Ibid., p. 100: "The story of Abraham contains therefore a teleological suspension of the ethical. As the individual he becomes higher than the universal. This is the paradox which does not permit of mediation. It is just as inexplicable how he remained initial... to him who follows the narrow way of faith no one can give counsel, him no one can understand. Faith is a miracle, and yet no man is excluded from it; for that in which all human life is unified is passion, and faith is a passion."

And Ibid., p. 82: "Faith is precisely this paradox, that the individual as the particular is higher than the universal... for the fact that the individual as the particular stands in an absolute relation to the absolute. This position cannot be mediated, for all mediation comes about precisely by virtue of the universal, it is and remains to all eternity a paradox, inaccessible to thought."

And Ibid., p. 83.

And Ibid., p. 78 The paradox of faith says Kierkegaard, "... is capable of transforming a murder into a holy act well-pleasing to God, a paradox which gives Isaac back to Abraham, which no thought can master, because faith begins precisely there where thinking leaves off."
personal, subjective is highly incommunicable, because
the man of faith rises above all outward worldly connec-
tions and overcomes the temptations of earthly life.  
It is an individual response to the eternal, it may
be described as venturing out of the temptation to
universalise the irregular and the irrational. It is
a unique personal existential relationship between man
and God which is beyond the grasp of intellectual
cognition. From the point of view of faith therefore
the traditional rationalistic proofs are irrelevant
and redundant.  

21Ibid., p. 121: "The knight of faith, ... is the
paradox, is the individual, absolutely nothing but the
individual, without connections and pretensions."

And Ibid., p. 107: "Faith is this paradox, and
the individual absolutely cannot make himself intelligible
to anybody, ... The one knight of faith can render no
aid to the other. Either the individual becomes a
knight of faith by assuming the burden of the paradox,
or he never becomes one. In these regions partnership
is unthinkable."

And Ibid., p. 119.

22"But to 'prove' is to demonstrate something
to be the rational reality it is. Can one demonstrate
that to be a rational reality which is at variance with
reason? Surely not, unless one would contradict oneself.
One can 'prove' only that it is at variance with reason.
The proofs which scripture presents for Christ's
divinity — His miracles, His Resurrection from the
death, His ascension into heaven — are therefore only
for faith that is, they are not 'proofs', they have no
intention of proving that all this agrees perfectly
with reason; on the contrary they would prove that it
conflicts with reason and therefore is an object of
Karl Jaspers' idea of philosophical faith (which he distinguishes from religious faith) resembles that of Kierkegaard. It cannot be categorised and systematised. Philosophical faith according to Jaspers, holds a position between dogmatic religious faith on the one hand, and certainty of science on the other. Philosophical faith is related to a transcendent reality (which religions would prefer to call as God) but unlike religion this relationship between 'Existenz and Transcendence' does not involve a surrender to authority and dogma; it is a purely individual, personal relationship. "Like religion it is 'wrestling with God'. But it is distinguished from religious faith in that it cannot surrender its own will of Existenz to the will of God, or dismiss personal reasoning in favor of a dogma."23 Faith again is not irrational or chaotic; but it is different from scientific beliefs in that it does not accept "the universal validity of scientific knowledge as an absolute",24 which Jaspers calls 'scientific faith.' (S. Kierkegaard: Training in Christianity, p. 29).

And Ibid., p. 28.


24 Ibid., p. 740.
totalitarianism' (Wissenschaftstotalitarismus). Faith is 'historical', 'unrepeatable' and therefore it cannot be put into a fixed doctrine.

Jaspers explains this notion of philosophical faith in the context of his other notion — of 'Encompassing' (das Ungreifende) or the 'comprehensive': "Faith is life out of the Comprehensive, it is guidance...

25 "Philosophical faith... cannot become a credo. Its thought does not become dogma. (Philosophical faith is not firmly grounded in anything objective and finite in the world, because it merely uses its propositions, concepts, and methods, and does not subordinate itself to them.... Accordingly philosophical faith must continually draw upon the primal source within each historical situation.... It remains a venture of radical openness. It cannot invoke itself as ultimate authority, but must manifest itself by thought and reasoning,... we can only ascertain it historically by following the movement of time." (K. Jaspers: The Perennial Scope of Philosophy translated by Ralph Manheim, London, 1950, pp. 15-16).

Brunner's view may be contrasted with Jaspers. For the former faith is an activity of the spirit and it is not linked to history. He differentiates the realm of the spirit from the realm of history. Spirit for him bears a negative relation to time whereas history is in time: "Faith is oriented to meaning rather than to history. Faith is then opposed to history." (Ref. Cornelius van Til: The New Modernism: An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner, London, 1946, p. 170 f. for a more comprehensive account).

and fulfilment through the Comprehensive". Faith therefore flows out of the 'Encompassing' or the 'Comprehensive' as the limitless horizon, it cannot be viewed from any particular standpoint, the open horizon remains 'a venture of radical openness' in the words of Karl Jaspers. Faith is free, it cannot be fixed to any finite thing.

Faith has a two-fold character of being both subjective and objective. As Jaspers puts it;

"... the content of faith, which I comprehend — the act of faith, and the faith that I acquire by this act — fides qua creditur and fides quae creditur — are inseparable. The subjective

27The "Comprehensive" here refers to the "Encompassing". And Ibid., pp. 14-15: "Faith, it would appear is immediate, in contrast to everything that is mediated by the understanding. Faith would then be an experience, an experience of the Comprehensive..." (K. Jaspers: The Perennial Scope of Philosophy, p. 22).

28Ibid., p. 16.

29Ibid., p. 22: "Faith that springs from the Comprehensive is free.... It has a character of indetermination (i.e., in reference to what can be stated — I do not know whether and what I believe) and also of the absolute (in practice, in the activity and repose that grow out of the decision)."

Cf. "We can neither compel faith by arguments nor prove it by factuality. All we can do is to think on its basis, or in its direction." (K. Jaspers: Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 255).
and the objective sides of faith are a whole. If only the subjective side is taken into account, then faith is just "a believing statement of mind" without any object, faith must be faith in something. On the other hand, if only the objective side is taken into consideration, then faith is "as object, as proposition, as dogma, as inventory, a dead something".

Jaspers holds that though faith does not consist in conceptual categories, yet it is not irrational in the sense of being chaotic:

"The irrational is at bottom mere negation; our faith cannot be a plunge into the darkness of anti-reason and chaos.... It wants to know what is knowable, and to be conscious of its premises."

For Jaspers, reason is an essential element of faith. One notes here that reason in Jaspers has a somewhat wider connotation than Kierkegaard's own explanation of it (with reference to the rationalism of the German idealists). Jaspers distinguishes Reason (Verstand) from understanding (Verstand) — both of which refer to the ways and means of dealing with objective reality.

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31 Ibid., p. 13.
32 Ibid., p. 12.
Understanding is the means of dealing scientifically with the physical world. Reason on the other hand, as Kant had already termed it, is the "faculty of ideas", it is a way out of the particular to the general. Following the German tradition of defining reason in a very wide sense, Jaspers regards it as the limitless metaphysical power that controls and directs thinking. It is a bond which unites all the modes of the 'Encompassing'. Jaspers calls it the 'encompassing' of the 'encompassing'. It guides the movement of faith without being prior to, or identical with it. Faith is conscious and through it, one is completely aware of one's acts. It is a conscious individual belief in God. To quote Jaspers:

"Philosophical faith must also elucidate itself... it should become clearly present to me by self-conviction. It should become unceasingly clearer and more conscious, and by becoming conscious unfold more and more of its meaning."^34

^33Ibid., p. 45: "Reason is an indispensable element of philosophical faith. All other truth - meanings become clearly visible only when they are decanted in the movement of reason.... Reason relates all the various meanings of truth to one another, by asserting each one. It prevents any truth from being confined to itself. It understands that any faith which isolates and hypostatizes one mode of the Comprehensive, is false."

It is not possible in this work to give an exhaustive account of the thought of various contemporary philosophers of religion on the nature of faith and its relation to reason. But similarities between Kierkegaard and other thinkers can be shown with a view to clarify Kierkegaard's own views.

It may be worthwhile to consider in this connection the views of Paul Tillich also regarding faith. Paul Tillich holds that faith is an act of personality as a whole and participates in the dynamics of personal life; it is a "centred act of the personality". He develops a dynamic theory of faith as the most "personal of all personal acts". He says, "The certitude of faith is 'existential', meaning that the whole existence of man is involved". Like Kierkegaard and Jaspers, Tillich

35"Faith... happens in the centre of the personal life and includes all its dimensions.... It is not a movement of a special section or a special function of man's total being. They are all united in the act of faith." (Paul Tillich: Dynamics of Faith, London, 1957, p. 4).

36Ibid., p. 4.

37Ibid., p. 34.

Martin Buber also holds this view. For him also, the entire being of the individual is involved in faith: "The relationship of trust depends upon a state of contact, a contact of my entire being with the one in whom I trust, the relationship of acknowledging depends upon an act of acceptance, an acceptance of my entire being of that which I acknowledge to be true". (Two Types of Faith, translated by Norman P. GoldhawK, London, 1951, p. 8).
also maintains that faith is conscious and free; it is not a belief in any authority:

"... if unconscious forces determine the mental status without a centred act, faith does not occur, and compulsions take its place. For faith is a matter of freedom. Freedom is nothing more than the possibility of centred personal acts... faith is a free, namely, centred act of the personality. In this respect freedom and faith are identical."  

Faith therefore is neither the act of rational functions nor that of the unconscious, it transcends both without destroying them.  

Faith is described by Paul Tillich as the state of being ultimately concerned. The ultimate concern is the concern of the infinite of the unconditioned (God). Faith as the ultimate concern involves the

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38 Paul Tillich: *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 5.

39 Ibid., p. 5.

40 Ibid., p. 6.

41 Ibid., p. 1: "... the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern."

42 Ibid., p. 12: "He who enters the sphere of faith enter the sanctuary of life. Where there is faith there is an awareness of holiness."

And Ibid., p. 45: "The fundamental symbol of our ultimate concern is God. It is always present in any act of faith..."
following basic elements: (1) 'An unconditional surrender to something' (x), 'the willingness to recognise x to hold absolute authority over one's life', (2) 'An expectation that one will somehow receive a supreme fulfilment through one's encounter and commerce with 'x', (3) 'Finding in x a centre of meaningfulness. That is, everything in one's life and one's world gets significance as it is related to some way to x', (4) 'Experiencing x as holy'.

Thus the significance of faith is turned from the subjective to the objective and faith is directed towards something. The term ultimate concern states Tillich, invites the subjective (the fides qua creditur -- the faith through which one believes) and the objective (the fides quae creditur -- the faith which is believed) sides of the act of faith: "The first is the classical term for the centred act of the personality, the ultimate concern. The second is the classical term


44 "There is no faith without a content toward which it is directed. There is always something meant in the act of faith." (Paul Tillich: Dynamics of Faith, p. 10).
for that toward which this act is directed, the ultimate itself, expressed in symbols of the divine.\textsuperscript{45}

Like Kierkegaard, Tillich also criticises the objectification of God by traditional supernaturalism. Speculation about God from the detached standpoint is impossible. But like Kierkegaard, he has not gone so far as denying the 'religious relevance of rational investigation'. Tillich does think that ontology gives some support to religion; but he agrees with Kierkegaard in opposing metaphysical proofs for specific religious doctrines.\textsuperscript{46} He holds with Kierkegaard that religious questions are to be raised in the context of the human situation.

In the discussion over faith by these two thinkers it has been seen that both of them agree with Kierkegaard in holding that faith does not consist in rationally accepting a set of propositions; it is rather conscious and free. Faith for both of them defies rational justification,

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 10.


The contrast between the existentialists' standpoint and Schweitzer's views have been already noted in the previous chapter. The influence of Kierkegaard on contemporary theology and philosophy of religion is striking though not universal. But the existential analysis of religious experience itself cuts some new ground and develops a new approach to the nature of faith.

Kierkegaard has taken great pains to elaborate upon the nature of religious experience. This unique experience is highlighted through his extensive references to the myth of Abraham. However, this entire elaboration of the religious stage has to be comprehended symbolically, for this is not the realm of discursive reasoning. It is here that one feels the inadequacy of linguistic

47 Martin Buber also holds this view of faith. For him faith is beyond the grasp of reason. He discusses faith having two basic forms — the first is that I trust someone without being able to give sufficient reasons for my trust in it; the second is that I acknowledge a thing to be true without being able to give sufficient reasons. The inability to give sufficient reasons is not because of my defectiveness in my thinking; on the other hand it is because of the 'peculiarity' of the relationship of faith with something which I acknowledge to be true: "It is a a relationship which by its nature does not rest upon 'reasons', just as it does not grow from such; reasons of course can be urged for it, but they are never sufficient to account for my faith" (Ref. Martin Buber: Two Types of Faith, p. 7).
categories. Thus acknowledging the inadequacy of language, Kierkegaard says:

"Abraham is silent - but he *cannot* speak; and therein lies his anxiety and dread. For when, if I speak, I cannot make myself understood, I do not speak, even though I speak without interruption, all day and all night. This is the case of Abraham. He can say everything; but one thing he cannot say, and yet if he cannot say it in such a way that another will understand it, he does not speak. Speech is a consolation which translates me into the universal. Abraham can say the most beautiful things of which language is capable in order to describe his love for Isaac. But it is not this which lies in his heart: his heart is concerned with something more profound, it is concerned with his thought to sacrifice Isaac, because it is a trial."  

The 'ethical' demands that Abraham should speak, so that others can understand him. Abraham knows that he cannot make others understand through language. There is a great clash between the ethical and the religious. Abraham experiences anguish and dread because of constant struggle. Talking about Abraham, Kierkegaard maintains, "He suffers the pain of being unable to make himself comprehensible to others..."  

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49 Ibid., p. 106.  
	Contd.
The tragic hero does not experience anguish because he fulfils the universal demands of ethics. On the other hand, Abraham's action is transgression of the universal. Thus it is at the religious stage that man realises the essential anguish of the human situation. For it is here one feels completely alienated from others because others look upon him from the universal standards of ethics. It is at this point the religious existentialism of Kierkegaard and atheistic philosophy of Sartre come very strangely near to each other. Kierkegaard believes in the ultimate transcendence of moral laws through the uniqueness of religious experience. Sartre too negates the universals of morals, not through coming face to face with God; but through a denial of a priori religious or moral principles. Ultimately both of them are propounders of authenticity.

This vivid description of the religious experience by Kierkegaard is certainly very fascinating. However,

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And *Ibid.*, p. 126: "Far from rejoicing over himself in his silence, he would be suffering in agony; although in this very agony he would discover the certainty that he was justified. His silence would not be rooted in a desire to enter as the Individual into an absolute relation with the universal, but in the fact that as the Individual he was placed in an absolute relation with the absolute... but all the time his magnanimous silence would be troubled by the demands of ethics."

its ultimate incommunicability creates some problems, Kierkegaard's entire attention is directed towards the peculiar subjectivity of the religious stage; thus treating the religious man as a solitary individual, having no connection with others. But the problem arises because Kierkegaard leaves no avenue open for the evaluation of another's action. For not only does he think it a blasphemy to evaluate the actions for others but he also believes in the fundamental impossibility of such attempts. But this quest for uniqueness and subjectivity through the transcendence of the moral universals can also be a pretence and thus can have dangerous consequences. For even if one may be at the religious stage, it is difficult to visualise the existence of man purely for himself and divorced from any concern for the others. And if there would be others, we will have to have some paradigm of authenticity. It is through this denial of any possible paradigm that Kierkegaard's analysis becomes difficult to comprehend. For how can one know that an individual is acting out of an authentic religious experience or merely out of an excess of uncontrollable passion? Here it seems that there can be a possibility of an overlapping of the aesthetic and the religious stage and it may be difficult to distinguish between the two.