CHAPTER - 10

World

As soon as the human mind becomes aware of the world around it, it becomes also seized with the curiosity as to what is the world and its mystery that so surrounds it. What is this world which impringes on us all the time - this world of our everyday experience. In answer to this are two views -- one which purports that this world is a transformation of nature, of some primordial energy constituting nature, and this view the Upanīṣads treat as a preliminary answer which is given from a purely limited point of view and which is external. There is yet the other answer which comes from the deeper depth and involves what is known as the internal. Teilhard de Chardin says, "It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an 'interior' appears at the heart of beings. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree or another, this 'interior' should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself, there is necessarily a double aspect to its structure, that is to say in every region of space and time - in the same way, for instance as it is granular; co-extensive with their without, there is a within to things."

The knowledge of the 'without' and the 'within' of things will give one in the truest sense, the view of the universe in

its totality. The Upaniṣhads deal not only with this 'within' of things but have also synthesized the knowledge of the 'within' with the knowledge of the 'without', in total comprehension of reality. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā: "The unified knowledge of the 'without' and the within of things is true knowledge according to me". Therefore, the 'within' and 'without' of things merge in the totality of Reality which is Saccidānanda, the unity of absolute existence, absolute awareness and absolute bliss.

Although the Absolute Itself beyond all distinctions of time and space, is yet manifests itself through all such distinctions. Śvāmi Viśvākārananda on these lines taught that Reality in its true sense knows no distinctions, it knows neither 'outside' nor 'inside' which are mere relative concepts depending upon a certain centre, where they move within the frame work of relativity. Reality he exhorted is ever full. "That fullness of the true Me, says Kṛṣṇa, is beyond all these limited categories, such as space and time, cause and effect, and substance and attribute.

It is a well acknowledged fact that both Indian thought as well as modern scientific thought accept a fundamental unity which lies behind the world of variety and it is that basic

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1. Śvāmi Ranganāthananda - Op. Cit., p.66
2. Ibid, p.68.
unitary reality which evolves into every thing that we see and experience around us. All the entities and events of the world are nothing but the modifications or manifestations of one primordial basic Reality, which is none less than Brahman itself - the ultimate Reality which is the cause, the ground and the very goal of the whole world and very universe at large. Hence the reality of Brahman is the fullness of pure being. "From the Fullness of Brahman has come the Fullness of the universe leaving Fullness alone as the remainder."

Swāmi Vivēkānanda preached the reality underlying the world of change. He held to view that Brahman neither creates the world nor is he transformed into the world of change. Brahman is an impartite or akḥaṇḍa entity. He is not actually transformed into anything, for he is aparināmi (unchanging) and Kūṭastha Brahman cannot be the efficient cause of the world because there is nothing beside it which it could be moulded into, and again Brahman being the unchanging principle cannot undergo actual transformation, yet Brahman is the cause and the reality of the world. This is best explained by declaring Brahman or the cause as independent of the effect or world but the effect or world is dependent on the cause and cannot have any existence apart from Brahman. It is merely the cause which appears as the effect - the Absolute Brahman appears as the empirical world of matter and souls. The main fact that is to be understood in its right perspective is, that by asserting non difference between the

1. Ibid. P.67

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world and Brahman, Swami Vivekananda does not mean identity, but on the other hand what he only negates is the concept of the otherness. He emphasizes the denial of the absolute reality to the world apart from its cause or Brahman.

Again, when the world of objects is described as mithyā, it does not mean that it is an illusion and should be on par with dreams. It is not so for it is objective, it is in no way the simple creation of the fanciful imagination of an individual for it's experience is public and it has above all a common objective reference. We do not live in a world which is an unreal hallucination and so it would be totally wrong to view this world as non-existent and having no worth in it. All qualities and actions belong to this very realm, where alone the law of causation and karma hold good. It is aptly said, "casual rigidity in the empirical world is consistent with its denial in the transcendental realm." Hence, Swami Vivekananda believed that this world is not to be taken as the result of meaningless chance, for there is a divine purpose working itself out through the ages and this modern science also confirms. The long record of the development of the human race and the coming into existence the great spiritual men like Buddha, Jesus and so on, make out that man has to be transcended by God-man. The universe has behind it a divine purpose. The eternal is the origin of the actual and its nysus to improvement. We cannot miss the primordiality of the Supreme. "Verily in the beginning this

"World was Brahman." There is perpetual activity of the Supreme in the world. It is in this world that man lives and undertakes his spiritual quest. Samsāra is not a barren place. As Dr. Radhakrishnan also says, "it gives us a succession of spiritual opportunities to realise the best in us. Unreal the world is, illusory it is not."

According to the views of Swāmi Vivēkānanda the sum total of the intelligence displayed in the Universe must be the involved Universal intelligence unfolding itself - and this Universal intelligence is the Supreme Lord. All the various forms of cosmic energy, like matter, thought, force, intelligence, forms, etc. are but the manifestations of that cosmic intelligence or Brahman. Everything that one senses and experiences around in this world is His projection or to be more precise, is the Lord Himself. It is He who comes down, becomes the lowest atom, and slowly unfolding His nature, rejoins Himself. "Thou art the man, Thou art the woman, Thou art the strong man walking in the pride of youth, Thou art the old man tottering on crutches, Thou art in everything, Thou art everything 0 Lord." Knowing this as the truth of the mystery of the Universe, with its so called diversities, Swāmi Vivēkānanda urges mankind to work themselves towards the unity that underlies the Universe - that is Brahman, for we are born of Him, we live in Him and unto Him we return.

1. Bṛhadāranyaka Upanīshad. I 4.10-11
3. Swāmi Vivēkānanda - Complete works, Vol. II, P-211