UNIVERSALIST CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF RELIGION IN 20TH CENTURY INDIA

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAULĀNĀ ABU'L KALĀM ĀZĀD AND SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN
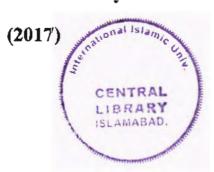

By

AMRINA KHAN

Department of Comparative Religion

Faculty of Usuluddin (Islamic Studies)

International Islamic University Islamabad

(2017)

Islam and other religions.

Islam — Hinduism.

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Student

Amrina Khan

Reg. no.553-FUMS/S13

Supervisor

Dr. Muhammad Akram

Assistant Professor

Department of Comparative Religion

Faculty of Usuluddin (Islamic Studies)

International Islamic University Islamabad

(2017)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

DEDICATED

TO

My Aunt

Whatever I am today, I owe her.

My Parents

Their trust and belief in me has encouraged me throughout my life.

My Husband

His consistent encouragement and support meant a lot for me.

My Daughter

She has been a source of emotional comfort whenever I felt discouraged during my thesis.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in the following thesis is my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged and that the thesis is my own composition. No part of the thesis has been previously presented for any other degree.

Date: 10-10-2017

Amrina Khan

(Amrina Khan)

Department of Comparative Religion

International Islamic University Islamabad

Date: 10-10-2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

In the subcontinent throughout the British rule, especially in the first half of the 20th century, religious pluralism remained a source of social disturbance in the society. Intolerance about different faiths was more perceptible. Against this background, this study has been devised to figure out theoretical endeavours on the part of Muslim and Hindu scholars to produce an atmosphere of inter-religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence. For this reason two personalities Maulānā Abu'l Kalām Āzād and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan representing the Muslim and Hindu communities respectively, have been chosen. They both had universalistic approaches towards religion and had explicated their religions in a unique way in order to deal with the issue of religious plurality. This research has analyzed the similarities and differences between the definitions of religion according to Maulānā Abu'l Kalām Āzād and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan as well as the possible causes of religious heterogeneity which they have indicated. Moreover, an attempt has been made to critically analyze their proposed models or solutions for the peaceful coexistence of thriving religions. Furthermore, this research has also delved into the ambit of these solutions which may determine whether these are acceptable on an inter-religious level or merely on an intra-religious level.

INTRODUCTION

Today, new and fast means of communication, the process of immigration, multinational businesses, and exchange of educational and cultural experiences have given birth to a phenomenon known as globalization, which has increased human awareness about diversity of religions more than ever before. However, it does not mean that in the past there were no contacts among believers of different religions. In fact, in the history of human culture and civilization multiplicity of religions has been a perpetual phenomenon. What is even more is the fact that all the major religions of the world developed and grew in the existence of other religions. The major religions of India are Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and after the colonial period and work of missionaries over here Christianity as well. Historically, vigorous endeavours can be mentioned with regard to creation of harmony and symmetry among religions like that of Mughal King Akbar and Prince Dārāshakoh. Moreover, there are examples of religious scholars like Shāh Walī Allah and Mirzā Mazhar Jān-i Jānān who attempted to create rapprochement among coexisting creeds.

Like many other regions of the world, religious heterogeneity has been the hallmark of subcontinent for centuries. However, this fact becomes even more manifest in the second half of 19th century and the first half of 20th century. This era marked the colonial period or British rule in the Indian Subcontinent. It was a time of British empowerment with respect to politics and economy. While multicultural and multi religious environment still was the characteristic of the Subcontinent, but there was a stark deterioration regarding coexistence of the inhabitants of this region in all walks of life, more specifically in religious, economic and political spheres. The overall environment of this landmass was now having a deep shade of social distrust, economic subjugation, animosity, religious intolerance, religious sectarianism, and mental slavery. Though there had been occasional quarrels among Hindus and Muslims and other minorities before British rule but the religious intolerance and hatred had increased by now. Religion had appeared as an essential point of conflict and social division among Muslims and Hindus in this aeon despite having a shared national and social historical background for nine centuries.

After failure of the War of Independence in 1857, three distinguished categories of religious mind-set emerged. In broad western terminology they were exclusivists, inclusivists and pluralists. Exclusivists were parochial in their attitude towards other thriving creeds and considered other faiths as erroneous. According to their philosophy only one religion can be valid at a time.   The other two attitudes might come under the category of universalistic approach, in general. Universalistic approach of religion is a theo-philosophical attitude, which engird all mankind in its religious framework. It considers religion as a universal human quality. Universalists do not believe in schismatic religions; however they focus upon common principles of all religions. Unlike exclusivists they do not acknowledge that truth is confined to any single religion alone. Thus, this universalistic approach involves two further strands which are inclusive and pluralistic approaches to religions. Pluralistic attitude entails that all religions are valid as they are multifarious paths towards the same destination. Regardless of their contradictory truth claims, essentially all are identical. In contrast, inclusive approach suggests that though only one religion is valid and enfolds complete version of truth, however truth is also present to an extent in other religions as well. Inclusive approach endorses the superiority of one religion over the others, yet it does not refute them altogether.

Against this background, several reform and revival movements surfaced across the religious traditions and a number of important figures stood out during this crucial part of the history of South Asia. Among such intellectual leaders of this aeon two personalities Maulānā Abu'l Kalām Āzād among Muslims and his contemporary Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan among Hindus appeared to have played a comparable role in their respective communities. Both of these scholars have their role in religious reform and political activism. And both of them have a distinguished approach towards religion and religious diversity which can catch the attention of any student of religious and historical studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Erstwhile enough penmanship is present upon Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan, in which their ideas about religion have been deliberated. Their own primary writings are also handy to gain acquaintance with their explications about phenomenon of religion and heterogeneity of creeds. Some critique also has been made by other scholars of religious sciences, thus different authors

have apprehended the notions of these twain in distinct facets. Hence, the sources selected for this dissertation comprise original writings of Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan, in addition to some secondary writings in the form of articles and books. This previously available material has helped in composing the descriptive portion of the present thesis.

In this regard *Umm al-Kitāb* by Maulānā Āzād[1] is essentially based on his exegesis of the Quran by the title of *Tarjumān al-Quran*. It is a primary source to get enlightenment with Maulānā Āzād's basic abstraction of religion. This short book divulges the elementary motives of religion, issues of existence of God and His attributes in relation with man and world. Furthermore, it throws light upon Maulānā Āzād's paradigm of unity of religion and his claim that schism in religion is created by humans. Issues such as religious diversity and its causation have also been discussed in this book.

Moreover, a brief but comprehensive article by the title "MAULANA ĀZĀD AND HIS CONCEPT OF WAHDAT-E-DIN" by Asghar Ali Engineer[2] assists the reader in acquiring knowledge about Maulānā Āzād's unique approach of dealing with diversity of religions.

Furthermore, *Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad: Aik Nādir Rozgār Shakhsiyat,*[3] a book edited by Muḥammad 'Ālim Mukhtār Ḥaq is also a good source which gives an insight about Maulānā Āzād's biography as well as his ideas about religions.

Concerning Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* is a primary source book, based upon Radhakrishnan's lectures that he delivered at Manchester College, Oxford.[4] In these lectures, he comes up with his peculiar views about nature and purpose of religion, and unity of all religions. He suggests variegated stratums for religions of the world. Then he talks about

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[1] Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad, *Umm-al-Kitāb*
(Karachi: Ḥikmat Quran Institute, 2008).
[2] Asghar Ali, "MAULANA AZAD AND HIS CONCEPT OF WAHDAT-E-DIN ", (2007), http://www.csss-isla.com/iis-archive30.htm., accessed January 12, 2016.
[3] Muḥammad 'Ālim Mukhtār Ḥaq, ed. *Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad: Aik Nādir Rozgār Shakhsiyat,* first ed. (Muslim Town Lahore: Mehar sons Private Limited, 1994).
[4] Sarvepalli Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (New york, London: The Macmillan Company, George Allen and Unwin LTD 1927).

discrepancies of religions and Hindu attitude towards these. He also mentions practical aspects of Hinduism in which he elaborates Dharma and cast system.

In addition to the above mentioned book there is a comprehensive secondary source, by the title *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan: comparative Study* by Nazeer Siddiqi[1] which throws light upon Radhakrishnan's notions of religion, politics and education. This book also deals with his biography.

By the same token, a valuable article on Radhakrishnan's understanding of religion, his methodology of defining multiples religions and his works is present by the title "Radhakrishnan, a Religious Biography" by Robert.R.Minor.[2] In which the author has examined Radhakrishnan's work and ideas as well as his biography as a historian of religion.

Modern Islām in India: A Social Analysis by Wilfred Cantwell Smith[3] provides this study with the socio-political background of British India. It has addressed the communal issues and the manipulation of religion for capitalist motives.

This brief survey shows that though enough literary work is available in which Maulānā Āzād's and Radhakrishnan's outlooks of religion and their stances about other religions of the world can be found separately. However, in the academic world, there always remains some space to view things from new facets. With that in mind, this study is designed to study them together in order to compare their notions of religion and models to deal with religious heterogeneity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present aeon is profuse with miscellaneous religious issues; one of them is religious heterogeneity. Both on the interreligious level and intra-religious level, controversies among religions exist. Maulānā Āzād and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan both had dealt with the issue of

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[1] Nazeer Siddiqi, ed. *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan: A comparative Study* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers(p) Limited, 1989).

[2] Robert.R.Minor, "Radhakrishnan, a Religious Biography By Robert.R.Minor," review of Donald.R. Tuck

The Journal of Asian Studies pp. 660-661 Vol. 48 (Aug, 1989).

[3] Wilfred cantwell Smith, Modern Islām in India (A Social analysis), (Anarkali Lahore: Minerva Bookshop, 1943). https://archive.org/details/ModernIslamInIndia.

religious pluralism in their own particular ways, so there is a need to figure out the affinities and disparities between Maulānā Āzād's and S.Radhakrishnan outlooks of religion to compare the causations of multiplicity of religions according to them and to analyze the ethos or models that they have proposed to deal with the religious diversity. There is also a need to deal with questions like: Are their proposed ethos promising universally or are their models limited in scope to the problems of the subcontinent? This entails further questions like: Are their models suitable for all religions of the world or is the ambit of these proposals limited to cross-cultural level? The present study addresses these questions.

METHODOLOGY

In order to deal with the above articulated questions the study explores available range of primary and secondary materials produced by the two scholars selected for this comparative study, as well as the works produced by other scholars on the issue of religious diversity in the context of Indian subcontinent. The historical materials which relate to either of the two scholars are also taken into account, as far as possible.

The available materials are studied and analysed in order to develop an understanding of the views of Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan about religion and religious diversity and to deconstruct their respective narratives. Then, comparative method is used to delineate similarities and dissimilarities of their views.

OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

This research comprises four chapters in total. The first chapter is introductory in nature, which encompasses the life sketches of both personalities Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan. Moreover, it recounts socio-political circumstances of the Subcontinent in which these figures grew up. These circumstances included British rule and its effects on social, economic and political scenario. The chapter also narrates the role of these two personalities in political activism and their political stances about the issues of their epoch.

The second chapter deals with Maulānā Āzād's conceptualization of religion and religious coexistence. In this chapter the argument has been made in a progressive manner by giving Maulānā Āzād's notion of religion which incorporates his division of religion into two

complementary halves which he names as *Dīn* and *Sharī'ah.* His idea of God and universality of Godhead is also discussed. Moreover, this chapter delineates the reasons of religious plurality as per Maulānā Āzād and his model to deal with it.

The third chapter follows the same pattern as adopted in the second one; but the personality here is Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. It means that this chapter deals with Radhakrishnan's conceptualization of religion which involves his perception of religion and his idea of God. Further, it elaborates the causes of religious plurality according to him and the framework which he has proposed to facilitate it.

The fourth chapter of this thesis compares the views of religion according to Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan. Further, the reasons of religious plurality suggested by them have also been compared as well as the framework they have presented to deal with the problem of religions diversity in the contemporary world. In addition to that, it involves a brief and careful analysis about the underlying assumptions behind their ideas, upon which they have built their standpoints. Moreover, the status they give to other religions is also discussed.

CHAPTER 1

LIFE SKETCH OF MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD AND RADHAKRISHNAN

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION OF MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD

Maulānā Āzād's original name was Abu'l Kalām Gulām Muḥayuddīn. He was born in Makkah on November 11, 1888. He was a renowned Islamic theologian, prolific writer and active journalist.[1] His forefathers came to India from Herat in Mughal emperor Ẓahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bāber's time (1483-1530), they first settled in Agra and later moved to Delhi. It was a scholarly family.[2] According to Maulānā Gulām Rasūl Meher, Maulānā Āzād was a descendant of two renowned, highly knowledgeable and respected families of Hijāz and Hindustān who were known as abodes of knowledge. Among them his paternal grandfather Maulānā Muḥammad Hādi belonged to the family, which was able to produce five knowledgeable and qualified scholars simultaneously, who excelled both in the fields of spirituality and jurisprudence. His mother was the niece of Sheikh Muḥammad bin Zāhir Watrī who was the jurist of Madīnah and was the mentor of most of the scholars of Hadith in Hijāz. Watrī was also the last and only scholar of Hadith from Makkah at that time. His great-grandfather was Maulānā Munawar-al-Dīn who was the student of shah 'Abdul Azīz Muḥaddis Dehlvī and was himself a teacher and Sufi.[3]

Maulānā Āzād's father name was Maulānā Khair-al-Dīn. Maulānā Khair-al-Dīn was quite young when his father died so he was brought up by his maternal grandfather. He got his education from his grandfather who later died in Mumbai. Afterwards Maulānā Khair-al-Dīn migrated to Makkah at the age of twenty-five and settled there.[4] He got married with the niece of a well-

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[1] Ḥaq, *Maulānā Abu 'l Kalam Azad: Aik Nādir Rozgār Shakhsiyat*. 109.
[2] Maulana Abul kalam Azad, *India wins Freedom* (Madraas: Orient Longman limited, 1988). 1.
[3] Ḥaq, *Maulānā Abu 'l Kalam Azad: Aik Nādir Rozgār Shakhsiyat*. 109.
[4] Azad, *India wins Freedom*. 1-2.

known scholar of Madīnah.[1] Maulānā Khair-al-Dīn also became popular throughout the Islamic world after his dense Arabic literary work that was published in Egypt. He also visited many Muslim countries including India. In India he came to Bombay and Calcutta and in both places he found his admirers and disciples.[2] But Maulānā Khair-al-Dīn returned back to Makkah.

When Maulānā Āzād was ten years old his parents migrated to Calcutta. Maulānā Āzād's mother died a year after their migration.[3] Maulānā Khair-al-Dīn, his father, believed in old system of education and never intended to give Maulānā Āzād western education as he considered it dangerous for his religious faith.[4] He followed the method of education of Shāh Walī Allah for his family and used to make him memorize short passages from every field of knowledge.[5] Then according to the tradition, Maulānā Āzād learned Persian, Arabic, philosophy, algebra, geometry, mathematics and Islamic theology. Maulānā Āzād was not sent to any *madrassa* (school) since he was taught by his father himself at home and was then taught by eminent teachers of each field who were hired to teach him at home. He completed his traditional education when he was sixteen. Afterwards, according to the custom he taught philosophy and mathematics to some appointed pupils in order to prove his proficiency in above mentioned subjects.[6]

From his early childhood Maulānā Āzād was fond of reading in solitude and when children of his age were engaged in sports activities, his family used to find him engrossed in reading in isolation. Religiously, he had an orthodox family background, where no one could question prevailing customs. As his father was a renowned scholar and pious man, there were always present numerous disciples of his father who would revere Maulānā Āzād too, as a son of their spiritual leader. But he did not feel comfortable in this environment.[7] As stated by Rāhīl Khān,

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[1] Mālik Rām, ed. *Tadhkirah* (Lahore: Maktabh-i-Jamāl Lahore, 2010). 25.
[2] Azad, *India wins Freedom*. 2.
[3] Haq, *Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad: Aik Nādir Rozgār Shakhsiyat*. 110.
[4] Azad, *India wins Freedom*. 2.
[5] Haq, *Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad: Aik Nādir Rozgār Shakhsiyat*. 110.
[6] Azad, *India wins Freedom*. 3.
[7] Mālik Rām, ed. *Gubār-i-Khātir*

Under the strict tutelage of his father, Āzād continued his Islamic studies, though the young prodigy resented the restrictive and authoritarian manner in which this syllabus was taught; therefore, on his own, Āzād secretly cultivated a taste for Urdu books and Persian poetry and even learnt to play the sitar. Around this time he also experienced a revulsion against the *Pīr*-worship of his father's disciples and a diminished desire to succeed his father as *Pīr*.[1]

It was later after the completion of his studies that he came across Sir Syed Ahmed Khan Bhadur's (1817-1878) writings and felt his views about modern education quite appealing. He found himself on the same table with Syed Ahmed Khan regarding attaining modern education so he decided to learn English. For that he requested Maulvī Muḥammad Yūsuf Jaʿfrī, who was the examiner of oriental courses, to teach him English alphabets. Then, he started to read the English newspaper with the help of dictionary and soon got enough knowledge of the language.[2]

He also did not feel comfortable with the traditional attitudes and beliefs present around and this was a time of great mental agitation for him. He could not reconcile himself with the narrow thought patterns present around in majority of the Muslim groups. According to this mind-set every religious group or school of thought considered itself an entire depository of all truth and thought about other schools as heretic, though all of them were referring back to the same sources to support their claims. Such narrow-mindedness was something that baffled him a lot. For three years his restlessness of mind continued as he moved from one phase to another. Finally the time came when all shadows of anxiety and confusion vanished and he felt free from all conventional bonds imposed on his mind by his family and decided to figure out what the

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2nd ed. (Hassan Market urdu Bazār Lahore: Maktabah-e-Jamāl, 2006). 105-6.
[1]Rahil Khan, "Abul Kalam Azad,"
https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/Independent/Azad_indepindia.html. 3. (Pīr means Sufi master), accessed March 10,2015.
[2] Azad, *India wins Freedom*. 3.

actual truth was. This was the time when he adopted his pen name "*Azād*" (the free)[1] to indicate that he was no longer bounded to his inherited beliefs.[2]

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION OF RADHAKRISHNAN

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was born on 5th the of September 1888, in Tiruttani that is a town in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. He belonged to a middle class Brahmin family. He spent his early days in both of the towns Teruttani and Terupati. His father was a nominal revenue officer and used to serve the local landlord. His father did not desire for him to learn English rather he wished that his son become a priest. Radhakrishnan attained his early education at Primary Board High school situated in his native city. In 1896 he got admission in Herman Burg Evangelical Lutheran Mission School at Terupati. He appeared as a brilliant student and continued his studies on the base of scholarship throughout his educational career. He joined the Voorhees College in Vellore but soon shifted to the Madras Christian College when he was seventeen. He got his master's degree in philosophy from Madras Christian College in 1906. He selected the topic "Ethics in Vedanta and its Metaphysical Presuppositions" as his master's thesis.[3] The reason behind choosing such a topic for his thesis was derived from the challenge he faced from Christian critics to the values of his religion. He says "The challenge of Christian critics impelled me to make a study of Hinduism and find out what is living and what is dead in it. I prepared a thesis on the Ethics of the Vedanta, which was intended to be a reply to the charge that the Vedanta system had no room for ethics."[4]

After the completion of his graduation, he could not find himself free to apply for scholarship in order to study in Britain, as he had to provide financial support to his family. Thus, he struggled to earn a job and soon he got a temporary teaching position in Christian college of Madras

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[1] Ibid. 4.

[2] Ibid. 4.

[3] Dillip Kumar Behura, "The Great Indian Philosopher : Dr. Radhakrishnan," *Oriss Reviews*(2010), http://odisha.gov.in/e-magazine/orissareview/2010/september/engpdf/1-4.pdf. 4, accessed January 16, 2016.

[4] Michael Hawley, "Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888—1975)," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy A Peer-Reviewed Academic Resourse*
(Mount Royal College Canada: IEP, 1995). accessed September 24, 2016.

named as Presidency College. He delivered many lectures on various topics of European philosophy and psychology and also got command over the Sanskrit language during that time period.[1]

As an educationist, he said: "The purpose of education is not to fit us to the social environment, but to help us to fight against evil things, to create a more perfect society".[2] Moreover, education represented a second birth to him. He also said: "Education, to be complete, must be human; it must include not only the training of intellect but the refinement of the heart and discipline of the spirit. No education can be regarded as complete if it neglects the heart and spirit."[3]

In 1904, he got married to Sivakamu, a far cousin. According to tradition it was an arranged marriage. The couple had five daughters and a son. His wife died in 1956.[4] In his autobiography he mentions his wife in an appreciating manner. By dint of this beautiful relation he became a fervent admirer of Indian women because of their sacrifices, self-denying attitude, love and support for family. In order to pay homage to women he dedicated a full-fledged book by the title *Religion and Society* in which he called women "mothers of spirit".[5]

In 1918, Radhakrishnan was given the position of Professor of Philosophy by the University of Mysore. In the same year he started writing a series of articles that were assembled later under the title *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*,[6] which gave him recognition in his

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study*.89.

[3] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study*.89,90.

[4] Behura, "The Great Indian Philosopher : Dr. Radhakrishnan".2.

[5] Mamta Anand, S. Radhakrishnan: His Life And Works
(New Dehli: Atlantic publishers and Distributors, 2006),
https://books.google.nl/books?id=y1JxAVvZkVsC&pg=PR7&dq=sarvepalli+radhakrishnan+his+life&hl=en&sa=X
&ved=0ahUKEwi41-
vc4aPKAhWCORQKHQ9CApoQ6AEIUTAJ#v=onepage&q=sarvepalli%20radhakrishnan%20his%20life&f=false.
3-4.

[6] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study*.38.

own country and the European world as an author on philosophy. Afterwards, he got the position of King George Professor of Mental and Moral Sciences at Calcutta University, which was one of the most important Chairs of Philosophy in India. This was the time when he the completed first volume of his enormous work *Indian Philosophy* which was selected for the Library of Philosophy Series.[1]

Subsequently, he represented the University of Calcutta at the Congress of the Universities of the British Empire in June 1926 and the International Congress of Philosophy at Havard.[2] He also delivered speeches at Manchester College, Oxford, which were later on compiled in a book by the name of *The Hindu View of Life*.[3] After three years he was requested to deliver the Hibbert Lectures at London University that are available in his book *An Idealist View of Life*.[4]

In 1929, Radhakrishnan got the opportunity of becoming Principal of Manchester College Oxford and this provided him with the chance of delivering lectures to the students of Oxford on Comparative Religion. He was given the title of "Sir" by British Government for his services to the academic world. But instead, he always used his scholastic title "Doctor" for himself. He remained the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936. In 1939 Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya (1861-1946) requested him to take the position of Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU). He continued as its Vice-Chancellor till January, 1948.[5]

In the acknowledgment of his scholarship he was invited to take charge of the chair of Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University which he held till 1952. His Book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* comprised the lectures which he had given during this period. He also had given lectures in China on the request of the Chinese Government in 1944 which were published by the name *India and China*. He led the Indian delegation to UNESCO

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[1] Ibid. 38.
[2] Behura, "The Great Indian Philosopher : Dr. Radhakrishnan". 2.
[3] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study*.38.
[4] Ibid.38
[5] Behura, "The Great Indian Philosopher : Dr. Radhakrishnan".3-4.

(United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1946 to 1954 and became its Chairperson in 1948.[1]

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SUBCONTINENT

The colonization of India was characterized by economic and socio-political exploitations of East India Company (1608-1857) and had created a shared feeling of rage and anger in all her habitants that resulted in the War of Independence in 1857. In different parts of the country uproars and commotions were happening against British presence and the aim was to get freedom from foreign occupation. In this war, Hindus and Muslims participated together. Although this war did not result in the favour of the Indian inhabitants, but it proved to be an unexpected jerk for British rule.[2]

Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000) in his book *Modern Islam in India*[3] has highlighted the social and political scenario of the Indian subcontinent and the reasons of all the prevailed air of animosity and hatred. He considers communalism as one of the essential reasons of the prevailing animosity and socio-political anarchy. He finds capitalist aims responsible for communalism in India and states that capitalist from British, Muslims, and Hindus created division and social and political anarchy in India for their own benefit. In this book, he expounds

> communalism in India may be defined as that Ideology which emphasizes the social, political and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion, and emphasizes the distinction and even the antagonism between such groups; the word 'adherent' and religion being taken in the most nominal sense. Muslim communalists for instance are highly conscious of the Muslims within India as a supposedly single, cohesive community, to which they devote their loyalty[4]- paying little attention to whether the individuals included are religiously ardent, tepid, or cold; orthodox,

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[1] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study*. 38.
[2] Tufail Ahmad Manglorī 'Ālīg, *Musolmānon kā Roushan Mustaqbil* (Lahore: Maktabah Mehmūdiyah

2001).72-8.
[3] Smith, *Modern Islām in India (A Social analysis)*.185,99.
[4] Ibid. 185,199.

liberal or atheist; righteous, or vicious; or to whether they are landlords or peasant, prince or proletarian; also paying little attention to Muslims outside of India. The attitude is identical in most of its aspects with European nationalism and racialism and has a close parallel in anti-Semitic 'Aryanism' of Hitlerian Germany[1]

He further establishes that communalism gives such an overwhelming thought pattern to its followers that results in the eradication of all other socio-political issues. In order to uplift and boost the communal subject, it entangles and confounds all other issues that include political, economic, social and even religious issues. The bourgeois among Hindus and Muslims were actually representing the British capitalist thought. For their personal economic benefits, they raised this issue of communalism.[2]

Wilfred Cantwell Smith views that the bad political and economic conditions of this time further deteriorated because of the capitalists' divide and rule policy and their manipulating the name of religion.[3] He does not consider religion as the basic cause of communal revolts but declares religious emotions have power to move masses such that religion was being manipulated in Colonial India to create communal tensions and revolts.[4] Further he describes that " it is observable all over the capitalist world that is capitalist economic system, particularly when it has reached(or as in India has had imposed upon it) the stage of not expanding rapidly, gives rise to fear, distrust, unbalanced emotionalism, aggressiveness and the like, on the part of its middle class participants."[5]

The situation produced by capitalism results in the shape of unemployment, unsympathetic competition and a society in which surety of one man's benefit is another man's loss. Such conditions gave birth to communalism. The capitalist in his business world feels dissatisfaction sentimentally as his mind is set to always acquire the better of his fellows. Thus, feeling

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[1] Ibid. 185,199.
[2] Ibid.185,200.
[3] Ibid. 208-10.
[4] Ibid.208-10.
[5] Ibid.208-10.

extremely alone, an individual on the other side of the divide tends to join any party or group that can provide him support. Hence with Smith it is maintained here that communal consciousness in colonial India was a result of the capitalists' use of one group against the other.[1]

After having briefly described the socio-political account of Colonial India, let us move towards the role and stances of Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan about the matter at hand. Before explicating the political careers of both these personalities, it is indispensable to describe here that the below mentioned narrative might give an impression of a hagiography, but in essence it is an attempt to portray their political accounts in an objective manner. However critical analysis has only been applied to those views which seem to contain some element of controversy.

MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD 'S POLITICO-RELIGIOUS CAREER

Maulānā Āzād was just ten years old when he had started to write poetry and prose which had been publishing in different magazines and journals. However Maulānā Āzād was not satisfied and he wanted to have his personal means of publishing. In 1899 when he was hardly eleven or twelve years old, he started his own magazine by the name *Nārang-ē- 'Ālam*, this periodical comprised of poems of contemporary poets. This was followed by the start of weekly *al- Miṣbāḥ* in 1900 that contained articles on current situations. Later on in 1903 he started the magazine *Lisān-al- Ṣidq*. This magazine got widespread popularity because of the significance of its subject. Besides a prolific writer he also was a skilled orator who had the ability to address according to the calibre of addressee.[2]

Maulānā Āzād was not unaware of the socio-political condition of Subcontinent, rather, he held that politics is a field like other fields of life and Muslims must play their part in it. They must take guidelines or directions from the Quran in this field like other fields of life. He declared to

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[1] Ibid. 208-209.
[2] Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad, *Khuṭbāt-i-Azad* (Lahore: Maktabh-i-Jamāl, 2010).9.

have acquired his political paradigm from the Quran and he also adheres that Muslims have their own way in politics.[1]

He was almost seventeen years old when his political ideas underwent a shift. George Nathaniel Curzon known as Lord Curzon (1859 – 1925) was the appointed viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905. His imperialist behaviour and unjust administrative measurements produced new tides of political anxiety in India. This political unrest was more vivid in Bengal as Lord Curzon gave more importance to Bengal. It was also the time when political awakening was seen in the Hindus of Bengal. Lord Curzon decided to divide Bengal in order to weaken the Hindus and to create a permanent division between Hindus and Muslims. This resulted in an outburst of public anger which was seen as a form of resistance against British government. Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872- 1950), an Indian nationalist went to Calcutta and made it the centre of his activities, his periodical *karmayogin* created national awakening and resistance. It was during this period when Maulānā Āzād came into contact with other revolutionaries including Sri Aurobindo Ghose.[2]

Sri Aurobindo Ghose's political life comprises of eight years, from 1902 to 1910. At the outset of this period he worked in the backdrop, but when tension arose in Bengal, he found a chance for public political activism. He came to Bengal in 1906 with this purpose and joined the New Party, which had been recently formed within the Congress.[3] The political philosophy of this party was direct action and achieving independence was its goal.[4]

Maulānā Āzād felt attracted towards revolutionary politics and joined one of the revolutionary groups. That group was exclusively consisted exclusively of middle class Hindus. Because of their bad experience with some Muslim officers and the admission of the British lieutenant governor of Bengal, of the Muslims as his second wife, the Hindus of Bengal had started

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[1] Maulānā Muḥammad Asghar Mugal, *Abu'l Kalam Azad ke Adabī Shehparē (Mākhoodh az al-Hilāl)* (Urdu Bazār M.A Jinnāḥ road Karachi: Dārul Ashā't, 2010). 25-6.
[2] Azad, *India wins Freedom*.4-5.
[3] Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, "A LIFE SKETCH,"
http://www.sriaurobindoashram.org/ashram/sriauro/life_sketch.php., accessed January 18, 2017.
[3] Ibid.

supposing the entire Muslim community as their enemy and obstacle in the way of their freedom,.[1] Maulānā Āzād further mentions that he debated with them and made them realize that all fingers were not same and that they should not generalize their judgment. And he also brought to their notice the arduous efforts of Muslims in Egypt, Turkey, and Iran for attaining democracy and freedom.[2] In 1908 he went to Egypt, Turkey, Syria, and France. In Egypt Maulānā Āzād met with Mustafa Kamal Pasha's(1881-1938) followers. In Turkey, he had a chance to meet with the leaders of Young Turks Movement.[3] This was a reactionary movement against the absolutist rule of Abdul-Hamid II (1876-1909). This movement was started by juvenile armed officers who were particularly disturbed by the continuing downfall of Ottoman power and associated the calamity to nonexistence of an atmosphere for change and development. This revolutionary movement was meant to found a democratic government.[4]

Maulānā Āzād also came in contact with Iranian revolutionaries. These contacts reinforced his belief that the Muslims of India must join their fellowmen in the struggle of freedom against British rule. He was of the view that the struggle for freedom in opposition to British imperialism was a mutual liability of all communities of India. In order to spread this message he started his revolutionary journal *al-Hilāl* in 1912. It had a status of milestone in the history of the Indian press. It preached the message of nationalism combined with religious zeal and got acclaim among the common people.[5]

While explaining the objective of *al-Hilāl* Maulānā Āzād says that Islam is a complete code of life and there is no sphere of life that is not addressed by Islam. Islam relates to moral and practical, political and social, religious and worldly, in short all spheres of life. Moreover, whether Muslims are in authority or are subjugated, Islam provides them with an inclusive

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[1] Azad, *India wins Freedom*.4-5.
[2] Ibid. 4-5.
[3] Ibid. 5.
[4] *Who Were The Young Turks*, (11th Jan,2014), Documentry., accessed September 9, 2016.
[5] Syed Muzamilludin, "Maulana Abul kalam Azad (1888-1958)A Revolutionary Journalist," (19th march 2005), http://www.boloji.com/index.cfm?md=Content&sd=Articles&ArticleID=936. 3,accessed January 9,2016.

pattern and system of life. The objective of *al-Hilāl* was merely to call all Muslims to take directions from the Quran and life of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in all walks of their lives including politics. He further emphasized that Muslims should awaken and should remind themselves that they have their own political path and system guided by the Quran and explained by the life of their Prophet (peace be upon him). They needed to bow down neither before the British government nor before moderate or extremist Hindus in order to take political guidance.[1] If they became true and practical Muslims they could lead all other human beings and they could become beneficial not only for themselves but for all other fellow beings including their neighbour nations and government. Islam teaches Muslims the lessons of peace and freedom and instructs them to help others to acquire them as well. The political path that is provided by Islam directs Muslims to become a strong, confident, fearless and truthful political party and to avoid agitation in the world. He viewed that Muslims should leave the conduct of negligence in the political path and plays a productive role in this field. According to him leading the nation is actually a prophetic trait so it is a big sacred responsibility Muslims are liable of.[2]

Soon after, in 1914, when the First World War broke out, *al Hilāl* got banned by the government due to its subjects dealing with the European First World War. In 1915, he launched *al-Balāgh* which was on same pattern of *al-Hilāl* except the name. Besides that, he founded an organization by the name *Dār-al- Irshād* which was built to teach the Quran to those adults who ceded their lives for serving Islam. The government of India took notice and exiled him for his publications from Bengal. Later he lived in detention for five months in Ranchi (Bihar). All of his written books and manuscripts were confiscated by the police and most of them were destroyed. During detention in Ranchi, he used to preach to Muslims there and launched a school which is now an intermediate college.[3] The government also prevented his entry in Calcutta, Bombay, United provinces and Punjab. However, Maulānā Āzād never lost his spirit and zeal and sustained to

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[1] Mugal, *Abu 'l Kalam Azad ke Adabī Shehparē (Mākhoodh az al-Hilāl)*20-30.
[2] Ibid. 20-30.
[3] Ḥaq, *Maulānā Abu 'l Kalam Azad: Aik Nādir Rozgār Shakhsiyat.* 111-2.

invoke masses through his writings for the cause of freedom and his role as a religious and spiritual leader.[1]

Maulānā Āzād died on February 22, 1958.[2] The government of India celebrates his birthday every year on November 11 as an education Day. In 1998 a university by the name Maulānā Āzād Urdu National University was established in Hyderabad. Besides politics, Maulānā Āzād also had contributed greatly to the academic world. He authored various books dealing with Religious and political issues, interfaith harmony, theology, and humanism *including Gubār-e-Khātir, India Wins Freedom, Insāniyyat Maut kay Darwāze pay, Tadhkirah, Masla-e-Khilāfat, Islam aur Masīhat* and so on. One of his best works is his exegesis on the Quran by the name *Tarjumān -al-Quran* which reflects his religious views in great detail.

Maulānā Āzād was a strong advocate of the idea of united nationalism. At the occasion of one of his addresses to Indian National Congress in 1940 as party president he propounded that the basic political question that is relevant to the freedom of India from British Empire was being confused with the issue of sectarianism or communalism. He maintained that the then government was trying to give impression to the world that this communal turmoil was a hindrance in transfer authority to Indian political parties as they were afraid for the rights of minorities. He admitted that India had the issue of communalism but he opposed its exploitation by the British government as a weapon against the freedom of India which was its national right. In his view, these issues of minorities existed in many part of the world, not only in India.[3]

Maulānā Āzād had also illustrated that the British Empire on one hand had created sects and division among Indians, while on the other hand the Indians had not been provided with the chance to settle down or solve this issue.

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[1] Muzamilludin, "Maulana Abul kalam Azad (1888-1958)A Revolutionary Journalist". 3.
[2] Ibid.5.
[3] Azad, *Khutbāt-i-Azad*.210-20.

The above-mentioned views of Maulānā Āzād about the British Government and their policies depict his paradigm of united nationalism. It is this paradigm which made him think that Muslims and Hindus should be politically united in order to get freedom from British Empire. Although we see a great massacre in the course of history when the British transferred authority to the indigenous political parties by making the decision of partition of the Indian subcontinent. The reasons of this massacre can be traced according to Maulānā Āzād's line of thinking in communal hatred and antagonism produced by the British. Though it is not right to say that before the advent of British rule, there never occurred communal problem among these two communities, but religion became the dominant reason of antagonism and mistrust between these two communities after British arrival. According to our study British used divide and rule policy in India as is asserted by social analyst W.C.Smith in his book *Modern Islam In India*.[1] Some historians like N. Jayaplan in his book *History of India (From National Movement To Present Day)*[2] and Ravindra Kumar in the book *Problem Of Communalism In India*[3] also have affirmed this policy. As a matter of fact, this time was full of mistrust and hatred between these two major communities of India, the Muslims and the Hindus, and it were the British rulers whose policies were among the central reasons for this discord, if not the only one.

Maulānā Āzād also made it clear in his speech that Muslims were not that type of minority in the Indian subcontinent who should dwell in doubt and fear about its future. This was merely a misunderstanding that politically Muslims as a minority were helpless. This doubt and fear basically was the result of the seed that had been sown by the British raj. He elaborated that in political language, when this term "minority" was used, it did not only entail that one group was numerically lesser than the other group, rather, it also maintained that one was lesser in numbers to the extent that one would not be able to protect one's rights. All minorities could not be considered as feeble only because of numbers rather other factors were also necessary to

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[1] Smith, *Modern Islām in India (A Social analysis)*.185,99.

[2] N.Jayaplan, *History Of India (From National Movement To Present Day)*, vol. IV (New Delhi-27: Atlantic Publishers and Distributor, 2001).14.

[3] Ravindra Kumar, *Problem Of Communalism In India* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1990).9.

Among these various caravans, one was the caravan of Islam. Muslims came and settled here and made this soil their abode. This was the union of two different civilizations of the world which in the start used to flow like the different tides of the rivers *Ganga* and *Yamuna* but according to the law of nature unite with each other at one junction. He further says, that the Muslims gave this land the treasure of Islam with the message of democracy and equality of human beings. In return this land opened the door of its treasures on the Muslims. Muslims had been here for one thousand years and Hindus had been here for more than one thousand years, so this common history had its common impressions on their languages, poetry, literature, society, taste, dress and traditions as per Maulānā Āzād. Therefore, he claims that this shared history of one thousand years forged a pattern of unity and nationalism.[1]

Apart from Maulānā Āzād views, we find that historically the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity and untied nationalism could not attract the attention of the masses and Muslim religious scholars except of few, India got divided into Muslim Pakistan and India with Hindu majority. After the division Maulānā Āzād however opted to live in India. He was appointed as Minister of Education of the independent India. During his tenure as a minister he put adequate efforts to promote primary and secondary education and scientific education. Many universities were established and new dimensions were introduced for research and higher studies.[2]

ROLE OF RADHAKRISHNAN
Radhakrishnan was not merely a student of speculative politics rather he was a practical politician. He believed that "Religion includes faith in human brotherhood and politics is the most effective means of rendering it into visible form. Politics is but applied religion."[3] Another

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[1] Ibid. 210-20.
[2] Muzamilludin, "Maulana Abul kalam Azad (1888-1958)A Revolutionary Journalist".5.
[3] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study*.78.

quotation of Radhakrishnan which can explain his views about politics is: "The state exists for the individual not the individual for the state."[1]

He was an advocate of the idea of internationalism or world community[2] that implies creating an international community sharing the universal moral order. He further maintained that this world community or world government could be built upon the principles of Justice and freedom. For him internationalism should be in all three directions: political, economic and moral.[3] In asserting world unity and global citizenship he was following the then prevalent tendency in India. It is said that in the Chicago World Religious Congress he won the hearts of people by calling them his siblings because he was well aware that inter-faith harmony is the key to making a better world.[4]

He was the proponent of the idea of democracy which he explained as "Democracy asserts that not only man must not be exploited by man, also that nation must not be allowed to exploit nation."[5] In his political views socialism, which he elucidated as a governmental structure that creates a bridge between the high and low, between powerful and feeble and secularism which helps the government to respect all faiths, were crucial and necessary ideas.[6] Radhakrishnan explicated that only through proper education could Indian solidarity and lucidity of national vision can be created. He developed the vision of an autonomous India that is led by educated persons who can commit themselves to promote national spirit.[7] He even said that authors and thinkers are the guardians of the moral values of a society so they must criticize the politicians

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[1] Ibid. 78.
[2] Ibid.80-1.
[3] Ibid. 80-1.
[4] Anand, *S. Radhakrishnan: His Life And Works.* 5,7.
[5] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan: A comparative Study.*80-1,85.
[6] Ibid. 80,81,85.
[7] Hawley, "Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888—1975)."

for their acts and must analyze their political deeds. It is their obligation to impede politicians from spiritual insensitivity and mental rudeness.[1]

It was a time when the British Government was trying to crush the religious and cultural individuality of Indians. They discarded Hinduism as a "worn out garment."[2] According to Mamta Anand "Radhakrishnan could see that the British were shrewd to understand, that a humiliated and morally deprived people were weak to stand and fight for themselves."[3] She further added that through his speeches and writings he uplifted his nation. He did not share the British mind regarding Hindu-Muslim issue as an irresolvable matter rather he tried to make them realize that diversity of India was its strength and India never desired for uniformity. He did not see diversity of India as a challenge for its unity rather he believed in it as a hidden strength. According to him the Muslims and Christians of India were Indian citizens just as Hindus were. He felt that British were purposefully trying to create tension between Hindus and Muslims. He was of the view that Indians are basically one people and one nation.[4]

In his book, *Eastern Religions Western Thought*, he expresses that the British man shows more concern in legislative, economics and political matters than life and thought, which is the only source of uniting people. Furthermore, he says that it would be considered as the biggest accomplishment of history if, Britain and India agree to live in a political structure which is established on equality and alliance instead of dominance and subjugation.[5]

The above-mentioned narrative shows that Radhakrishnan was convinced that all Indians are one nation and like other nations they should enjoy national independence that pertains to the exit of the British Government and he was in favour of establishing a democratic state.

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[1] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study.* 88.
[2] Anand, *S. Radhakrishnan: His Life And Works.*7-8.
[3] Ibid.7-8.
[4] Ibid.7-8.
[5] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (New York: Oxford University press, 1959).58.

Radhakrishnan's multifarious vocations included research, teaching, and administration. He occupied comparable chairs for many years at the universities of Calcutta, Oxford, and Banaras Hindu University. All through his residence at Banaras, regardless of his failing health, Radhakrishnan started out administrative changes for the university. By dint of his scholarly publication, he established himself as a conciliator between Eastern and Western thinkers, a reforming critic of western interpretations of Hinduism, and an advocate and protector of India's spirituality.[1] He had an outstanding way of conveying lectures which was his strength. After partition, he was selected as an Ambassador of India to Moscow.[2] His visit to Moscow as an ambassador gave him the chance to remove misunderstandings about Hinduism as well as to create an atmosphere of collaboration between the two countries in the area of politics and economics. This collaboration resulted in the form of "Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Cooperation" which was signed in 1971. Moreover, in 1952, he served as the Vice-President of India.[3]

Afterwards, in 1962, he was elected as the second President of India and regarding this, Bertrand Russell said, "it is an honour to philosophy that Dr. Radhakrishnan should be President of India and I, as a philosopher, take special pleasure in this. Plato aspired for philosophers to become kings and it is a tribute to India that she should make a Philosopher President."[4]

Radhakrishnan ended his professional life in 1967. In his life span he was awarded the *Bharat Ratna* Award which was the highest award in India in 1964. He was also honoured with *Golden*

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[1] Robert.R.Minor, "Radhakrishnan, a Religious Biography By Robert.R.Minor.", accessed September 24,2014.

[2] Behura, "The Great Indian Philosopher : Dr. Radhakrishnan". 6.

[3] Dr. Dinabandhu Dehury, " Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan as Statesman," *Orissa Reviews*(September 2010), Odisha.gov.in/e-magazine/Orissareview/2010/September/engpdf/5-9.pdf. 7, accessed January 16, 2016.
[4] Behura, "The Great Indian Philosopher : Dr. Radhakrishnan". 3.

Spur, the highest Vatican award in the same year. He was also awarded with the *Templeton Foundation Prize for progress in Religion* in 1975.[1]

As undoubtedly the teaching profession was his first love, when after becoming the President some of his pupils and fellows requested him to allow them to celebrate his birthday he replied that he would consider it an honour for him if this day would be celebrated as Teacher's Day. From then, his birthday 5th September is celebrated as Teacher's Day every year in India.[2] Radhakrishnan died on April 17, 1975.[3]

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[1] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study.*39.
[2] Behura, "The Great Indian Philosopher : Dr. Radhakrishnan". 4.

[3].Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study.*1.

CHAPTER 2

MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD 'S APPROACH TO RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD 'S NOTION OF RELIGION

Maulānā Āzād delineates religion as an essential part of one's life. For him in order for a person to bear and understand the hardships of life religion provides help and shows the dark and bright sides of the reality. He has compared religion with some other sources of knowledge like philosophy and science. He holds that philosophy can open the door of doubt but then cannot close it; science can give proofs but cannot give faith; whereas religion can give faith although it cannot give proofs. However, in life we cannot be confine to only proven things, faith has its due place as well. Maulānā Āzād has described five different sorts of religion, which are as follows:

1: Hereditary religion: Hereditary religion implies believing in whatever one's ancestors used to believe.

2: Geographical religion: It is to follow the thoroughfare of a particular piece of land as others are following.

3: Census religion: Another form of religion is in the papers of census, one can enter for example Islam as one's religion.

4: Traditional religion: It is a pattern of traditions which has been forged, which one must follow without questioning.

After stating these classifications he established that, there is present another type of religion, in order to differentiate, it can be named as "true religion", and this precisely is the religion which usually is missing or is lost or forgotten.[1]

Maulānā Āzād has had a universalistic approach to religion which encompasses all religions and their teachings. His outlook about religion and religious heterogeneity is based upon the Quranic

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[1] Rām, *Gubār-i-Khātir* 66,9.

teachings. He has divided religion into two complementary halves, one he calls as *al-Dīn* and the other as *al-Sharī'ah*. He has suggested that *Dīn* is the essence, which is a shared and common factor of all religions in their original and undistorted form. Like a nucleus with multiple electrons around it, *Dīn* is the central point around which different *Sharī'ahs* revolve in harmony. The differences in *Sharī'ah* refer to time, geography and temperament of people.

MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD 'S CONCEPT OF GOD

In religion the main element is the concept of God. Other concepts like revelation, life hereafter and moral values come afterwards and are the reflections of the concept of God. For further elucidation of the previous statement, Maulānā Āzād explains that it is actually the concept of God that defines the need and nature of revelation and life after death. For instance, one might have a universal or particularistic belief about God. Now, it is the nature of one's concept of God, which defines one's outlook towards the nature of God's relation to humanity. A universal God is a God of all, thus he blesses all equally, whereas a particularistic outlook demonstrates a concept which entails God's mercy to a particular community or nation. Furthermore, the type of belief in God also fashions one's outlook about mutual-relations of human beings ranging from unity of mankind to division among humanity. The issue of religious diversity and its solution also hinge on the concept of God, for Maulānā Āzād. So it can be said that Maulānā Āzād has taken the concept of God in an intensive and extensive way because it decides a person's world view and the direction of one's life.

In the philosophy of Maulānā Āzād, the belief in God is a natural and instinctive demand of human nature. He explains that in the course of history, from the time when the verses of Rig-Veda were composed till today, and from the period of savage tribes of Australia till the era of the civilized human beings, belief in God always existed. After leaving behind the animalistic stages of evolution human nature has acquired the calibre which distinguishes him from other creatures. Now, he needs an infinite high objective for his further progress, which can lead him

towards higher stages constantly. This high objective can be nothing else except the Being of God If this high objective is removed, human beings would fall down to the pits.[1]

In the past, believers had different interpretations of their concepts of God. For instance, the Jewish concept of God was of an awful king or of a modest husband who could not bear his wife's disloyalty. From the aspect of anthropomorphism and transcendentalism their concept was in the middle of these two extremes. But in the verses of Torah God often appears in different forms and his address to the Jews was shaded with human emotions. Later from Isaiah a new concept started developing which resulted in the Christian concept of God. In the start the Jewish concept of God was a mere racial concept which changed after Isaiah. Christianity saw God as a father instead of a modest husband, as a father is altogether an amalgam of kindness and love for his children. Regarding the aspect of anthropomorphism and transcendentalism, the Christian concept was like the Jewish concept. Later after Jesus when Christianity came in contact with Roman's idolatry, their belief was adulterated by Romans ideas which resulted in the creation of Trinity, Redemption and Jesus worship. It was a blend of polytheistic monotheism. Another line of development in the concept of God was taking place in Greco-Roman world. The polytheistic concept in the times of Olympus later progressed into henotheistic and finally before five hundred B.C matured into monotheism with proponents like Socrates. Similar, developments took place along the line of monotheism, polytheism, henotheism in other cultural settings as well.[2]

After the brief description of these previous concepts of God, Maulānā Āzād then throws light upon the Quranic concept of God. For him, the Quranic concept of God encircles two main aspects: transcendentalism and anthropomorphism. Maulānā Āzād observes that belief in the existence of God as a transcendental Being is engrossed in human intuition. However, it is not

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[1] Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad, Falsafah Usūl o Mubādī kī Roshnī men
(Delhi: Shāheen Book Centre, 1985),
https://ia802704.us.archive.org/12/items/FalsafaUsoolOMabaadiKiRoshniMein-
MaulanaAbulKalamAzad/Binder1.pdf.45-7,49.
[2] Ibid. 18, 19, 53.

possible for human intellect to conceptualize the transcendental Being as it is beyond his cognitive reach. According to him the only way to approach the Being of God is through His attributes. He further maintains that the function of a true religion is to provide guidance regarding the right concept of the attributes of God, as human beings always stumble in conceptualizing the attributes of God.

According to his point of view whatever is close to the truth, is close to the human heart. Nature in itself is simple and disentangled. All entanglements in nature are due to artificial sophistication and distance from truth. Whenever any idea closer to nature comes before human being, it is already familiar and the human mind does not feel any strangeness about it. That is why in general revelation has not claimed to teach human beings anything new about God. Instead revelation has always tried to awaken what is latent in human intuition and guide it to the right interpretation of doctrines. Thus, the Quranic concept of God rests upon the intrinsic human nature, which is to have faith in a transcendental and ultimate Being who is the Creator and Lord of all that exists. Though in the history of mankind the concept of nature worship and idolatry exist but the concept of transcendental Being always existed, as it pertains to the human nature.[1]

While dealing with the concept of God, Maulānā Āzād focuses upon the three main attributes of God which he has taken from the very first Surah of the Quran, namely *al-Fatiḥa*. Two of the attributes are directly related to his Universalist understanding of religion, for this reason we shall merely focus upon them. These attributes are mentioned below:

1. *Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn* (The Omni-Sustainer)

2. *Al-Reḥmān, Al-Raḥīm* (The All- Compassionate or All-Gracious).[2]

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[1] Azad, *Umm-al-Kitāb*13-5,20,189.
[2] Ibid.16

1. *RABB-AL-ʿĀLAMĪN* (THE OMNI-SUSTAINER)

Maulānā Āzād starts his notion of God by giving a prelude on *Rubūbiyat*. He elucidates that this term is derived from the Arabic word *Rabb* that is a common root for various words in the Semitic languages. In Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic languages *Rabb* means the nourisher. This term is also used for 'teacher' as they are nourisher in one way or another. But God is Omni-Sustainer in his nature which means, He provides sustenance and provision to all kind of creatures in all their phases and stages of nourishment one after the other until they reach their possible complete developed stage. For example to feed a hungry person or give him money is a kind act but it cannot be considered as *Rubūbiyat*, as *Rubūbiyat* is a continuous process of nourishment to a creature unless it acquires its fully developed shape. And this action must be done out of love and kindness because in the absence of these two characteristics, it would not be considered as *Rubūbiyat*.[1]

Maulānā Āzād has also explained that the function of Divine *Rubūbiyat* follows a definite plan. Everything in the universe is supplied with all that its precise nature requires for its existence in every altering situation. Ants creep on the earth, worms in mud and dirt, fish swim in water and stars rotate in the heavens. However every one of these is in the protecting eye of Divine Providence and no one is deprived of His blessings. In fact there are innumerable varieties of creations; some are so small that a naked eye cannot even perceive them. Even for them the *Rubūbiyat* of God has made the required provision for sustenance and growth with as much care as is conferred upon the massive elephant.[2]

Afterwards Maulānā Āzād indicates, that the strangest and the most unique thing regarding *Rubūbiyat* is its systematic uniformity and harmony, to the extent that the stone may appear different from the fragrant flower, the human child and the plant may seem to belong to different categories, but the way they grow and develop share the uniform underlying law and system of

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[1] Ibid.23-4.
[2] Ibid.25.

sustenance which binds them together. Either it is the stone or flower, plant or human child or egg of an ant, each one of them have a time of their emergence and birth and stages of their development. And the means of providence for all of them are supplied in advance before their appearance in the world.[1]

Moreover Maulānā Āzād has brought under consideration another strange aspect of the scheme of Providence which is the "virtual or inner aspect". He has propounded that, no matter whatsoever luggage of sustenance is provided to the creature, it is of no use, unless they are not bestowed with the "inward skill" that guides them to rightly utilize the outward available material or provisions. With respect to this relation, Maulānā Āzād has thrown light upon the two essential factors of life, namely, *Taqdīr* and *Hidāyat*. *Taqdīr* or destiny implies, a predetermined measurement or to assign a specific function to everything either quantitatively or qualitatively. For that reason everything is bound in both of its outward and virtual or inward aspects by the conditions fixed by its very nature, and that these conditions or circumstances are in perfect harmony with the multifarious demands of its growth and development. It is because of this law of *Taqdīr* that every creature finds around itself the environment for its sustenance and growth. Birds fly in the air, fish live in water, both cannot survive in alternate environments as the alternate environment is not suitable for their lives. It would be in conflict with this law of *Taqdīr*, in this case either their life would cease or even if they continue to exist at all, they would gradually develop the traits and dispositions that will be in accord with their new environment.[2] As Quran says: "He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to it due measurements."(25:2)[3]

The other factor of the inward aspect of Divine Providence is of *Hidāyat*, which means guidance or to give directions. There are several stages of *Hidāyat*. But the fundamental form of *Hidāyat* is

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[1] Ibid..30.
[2] Ibid.34-5
[3] Dr.Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Dr.Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran, (Riadh: Dar-us-Salam, 1999), http://www.noblequran.com/translation/.

given to all creatures, which opens for them the path of nourishment and growth and which activates their wants and guides them to the means of their contentment. This *Hidāyat* actually is the inward aspect of the scheme of provision or *Rubūbiyat* and is named as *Hidāyat* of *wajdān* or *ilhām* or "guidance of intuition". This force is the intrinsic urge of nature or the talent built in sense perception. This is intuition that tells a new born to draw him to mother's breast and to suck in order to attain his sustenance, likewise is the example of the kitten. The next form or stage in this scheme of *Hidāyat* is of senses and of reasoning faculty. Even the lowest animal which has not been given talent of the reasoning can use its sense perception to acquire its needs including food, reproduction and security. Reasoning which is the talent of contemplation is also a mean of *Hidāyat*.[1]

Maulānā Āzād asserts that this attribute of God which is *Rubūbiyat* or the system of universal provision is a proof of the unity of God or *Tawḥīd*, as it can be noticed that the system of providence is working everywhere in a systemized and harmonized way, and this without any agent behind is not possible. Human nature cannot accept that there is an action without an actor, building without a builder and so on. Similarly this is proof for the need of *Waḥī* or revelation. For how is it possible that the Divine Providence which arranges such a unique system of sustenance for man's physical needs leaves or ignores his spiritual or virtual needs. *Rubūbiyat* is also a proof for the life hereafter. It is irrational to think that a man has been created just to live for a few years and then is annihilated altogether. An entity that has been created with such great care and for whose development and growth such a vast and unique scheme of *Rubūbiyat* has been activated cannot be without purpose. This present life vanishes only to assume a still higher form.[2]

Asghar Ali in his article "MAULANA ĀZĀD AND HIS CONCEPT OF WAHDAT-E-DIN" remarks that

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[1] Azad, *Umm-al-Kitāb*36-7.
[2] Ibid.51-2,55

Maulana Āzād is devoted to these two concepts - rububiyyah and wahdat-i-din and both these concepts are based on universal aspects of religions. Maulana finds the concept of rububiyyah in the first chapter of the Qur'an i.e. Surah Fatihah in which Qur'an describes Allah as Rabb-al-Alamin i.e. sustainer of this universe and universe includes everything and everyone. Maulana's tafsir is most suitable for modern times and his concept of rububiyyah is no less. This concept also forges unity between followers of different religions and is most suitable for our post-modern society.[1]

2. AL-RAḤMĀN, AL-RAḤĪM (THE COMPASSIONATE)

Maulānā Āzād then comes to the second attribute of God which is compassion or graciousness. The Arabic terms *al-Raḥmān* and *al-Raḥīm* is derived from *Raḥm*. In Arabic *Raḥmah* is that type of kindness which encompasses in its connotation all aspects of love, benevolence and generosity. These two terms denote two different aspects of *Raḥmah*; *al-Reḥmān* signifies the Being who possesses *Raḥmah* while *al-Raḥīm* means the Being who not only possesses *Raḥmah* but also, He is emancipating *Raḥmah* or goodness to every object in the universe in every second. Whatever perfection and beauty persists in the universe is nothing but the emergence of *Raḥmah* or graciousness of God. Maulānā Āzād has further expounded that a man comes in contact with nature on the first hand through the system of *Rubūbiyat* but when he takes a few steps more in contemplation or reflection, he sees that there is another constant and all-encompassing reality which exists, upon which the system of *Rubūbiyat* depends as well, this is the attribute of *Raḥmah* or graciousness which provides magnificence and perfection to every object of creation.[2] He then puts forward the verse of Quran: "Say (O Muhammad S.A.W): "To whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth?" Say: "To Allah. He has prescribed Mercy for Himself." (6:12)[3]

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[1] Ali, "MAULANA AZAD AND HIS CONCEPT OF WAHDAT-E-DIN ".
[2] Azad, *Umm-al-Kitāb*59-60.
[3] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*

The attribute of *Rahmat* of God is so general that it is serving all creatures, big or small, even the man in the mansion feels like the entire creation is for his service likewise the ant feels itself facilitated, and this is true, like in the form of the sun, it provides its warmness and light to man and an ant equally without any discrimination.[1]

Moreover this attribute of *Rahmat* not only facilitates the physical universe rather it has its benevolence effect on the spiritual universe as well. That is why God did not leave man astray in the world but rather, sent Prophets for their spiritual guidance.[2]

So the above mentioned two attributes of God which according to Maulānā Āzād *Rubūbiyat and Rahmat* illustrate very clearly his Concept of God, which provides him the opportunity to figure out the reasons of religious heterogeneity and to formulate a universal model to accommodate it. Moreover his explication of the attributes of God, depicts that God does not divide human beings rather he facilitate all of his men through his attributes of *Rubūbiyat and Rahmat* uniformly.

THE ISSUE OF DIVERSITY AND MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD'S MODEL FOR RELIGIOUS CO-EXISTENCE

Maulānā Āzād has a strong belief in the notion of *Wahdat-i- Dīn* or unity of religion. He claims that this notion of *Wahdat-i-Dīn* is the essence of Quranic teachings. However, the greater the emphasis Quran has laid upon this core concept, the stronger has been the inclination of people to relegate this reality, to the extent that no reality is as hidden from the mind of people as the unity of religion is. Because of ignorance people have confined Quranic teachings to a particular sect and community. Hence, if one can free one's mind from external impressions and contemplates in the Quran, he would be able to realize this fact. For the sake of explanation and clarification of the notion of unity of religion Maulānā Āzād feels it indispensable to elucidate the invitation of the Quran and the direction to which it leads mankind through revelation and prophethood.

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[1] Azad, *Umm-al-Kitāb*.67-70.
[2] Ibid. 67-70.

Maulānā Āzād elaborates that in the beginning, human beings used to lead a natural life. There was no conflict among them. All of them used to share same pattern of life and were content upon that. Later on, because of the abundance of mankind in numbers and rise in their economic needs, there started various differences which later turned into group divisions and unkind quarrels. Every group started hating the other and every powerful started subjugating the feeble. When this chaotic situation happened, there appeared a need for revelation to provide guidance and establish the system of justice and truth. However, revelation appeared in the form of a chain of prophets who came successively to preach mankind. The Quran used the term of 'messenger' for all the guides because all of them were the forbearers of the message of truth.[1] The Quran mentions this scenario in the following words: "Mankind was but one community (i.e. on one religion), then they differed (later)."(10:19)[2]

Maulānā Āzād highlights that this guidance was not confined to a specific nation, country and time period, instead it was for all humankind. In essence, this message appeared in every country and in every course of time uniformly. The Quran also claims that there was no place on earth where human beings existed but a prophet was not sent to them. It was considered against justice that a group of people would be accountable for their deeds without sending a guide to them.[3] The Nature of God (*Fiṭrat-e-Ilāhī*) is one and the same in every corner of the universe. So it was mandatory that Divine guidance should also be essentially same from day one and should address all human beings in a uniform way. Thereupon, the Quran claims that all the messengers and prophets came with the same message and path of Divine guidance, and were the preachers of the same principle of success. And this universal principle of success was nothing else but the path of *Īmān* or faith and '*Amal-e-Ṣāliḥ* or righteous deeds, culminating in the worship of One God and spending a moral and noble life. Whatever else is said in the name of religion is not real

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[1] Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran* (Urdu Bazār Lahore: Islāmī Academy, 1931).221.
[2] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[3] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran.*220-1.

Dīn in fact.[1] The Quran puts this doctrine in the following words: "And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from)*Taghut*"(16:36)[2]

Maulānā Āzād views that according to the Quran all of the prophets and messengers had propagated the same principle of avoiding schism and to be united on the same *Dīn* (religion). All prophets were the proponents of *Dīn* or religion of God, with the objective to unite the dispersed human beings rather than to divide them. God has given all the people in the universe the same essence of humanity but with various names, colours, and races, which implies unity in diversity of humanity. However, people have made various races, countries, nations, languages and complexions a cause of contention and conflict. Furthermore, men have created division among themselves based on power and weakness, wealth and poverty, status and prestige. All this disparity invokes in the human hate towards the other.[3] Therefore all the prophets of God called mankind to follow the real version of the universal religion (*al- Dīn*). In this regard, the Quran states:

> He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islam) which He ordained for Nuh (Noah), and that which We have inspired in you (O Muhammad S.A.W and that which We ordained for Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and 'Iesa (Jesus) saying you should establish religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically), and make no divisions in it (religion) (i.e. various sects in religion) (42:13)[4]

Syyid Sulaimān Nadwī (1884-1953) an imminent Indian Muslim scholar also holds the philosophy of *Waḥdat-i-Dīn* or unity of religion. In his book *Rasūl-i-Waḥdat* he adheres that Islam considers all religions as one because the fountain head of all these religions is the same God. Moreover all prophets of God came with the same objective and with the same teachings. All

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[1] Ibid.222.
[2] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[3] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran.*223.
[4] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*

scriptures which were revealed to theses prophets contain the same basic message. This is what the Quran has mentioned at many places. And that is why Syyid Sulaimān Nadwī asserts that Islam is the same religion which has been revealed to all prophets from Adam peace be upon him to Muhammad peace be upon him. He further explains that religion has two halves one is called *Dīn* and the other half is called *Shar 'or Nask or Minhāj.*[1] Thus, we find that both Muslim scholars Syyid Sulaimān Nadwī and Maulānā Āzād share the philosophy of unity of religion.

Maulānā Āzād also highlights the Quranic challenge that neither the revealed scripture of any religion in its original form nor the tradition or text of any book of wisdom has guided towards any path of success and guidance other than *al- Dīn.*[2] The Quran states

> Say (O Muhammad S.A.W to these pagans): "Think! All that you invoke besides Allah show me! What have they created of the earth? Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens? Bring me a Book (revealed before this), or some trace of knowledge (in support of your claims), if you are truthful. (46:4)[3]

Maulānā Āzād also holds that every religious scripture testifies to the teachings of its previous revealed book and does not nullify it, which showed that there must be the same underlying truth in the teachings of these books. Hence, despite the fact that all scriptures were revealed in different times, to different nations, and in various languages but still they had always emphasized upon the same message.[4] The Quran narrates: "It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you (Muhammad S.A.W) with truth, confirming what came before it. And he sent down the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)." (3:3)[5]

Then, Maulānā Āzād directs his attention towards the other half of the issue of diversity. He maintains that although *al-Dīn* has remained the same for all mankind, still one observes differences in the religious commandments, actions and manifestation of rituals in various

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[1] Syyid Sulaimān Nadwī, *Rasūl-i-Waḥdat* (Karachi: Begum 'Āisha Bāvānī Vaqf, 1408 hijrī).15-7.
[2] Azad. *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.224.
[3] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[4] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.224-5.
[5] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*

religious traditions of the world. According to Maulānā Āzād difference in creeds is of two types. One is created by the followers themselves, which is the result of their deviation from the truth while the other is originally present in the religion which is *Shar'* or *Nask or Minhāj*. Literally, *Shara'* and *Minhāj* imply the way or path, whilst *Nask* means way of worship. Then terminologically *Shar'* was used in the meaning of law and system, and *Nask* in the meaning of worship. Maulānā Āzād points out that all the differences which are present in religions are merely of *Shar'* and *Minhāj*, not of *Dīn*. This indicates that the difference is of forms and manifestations instead of spirit or reality. Maulānā Āzād maintains that such differences were indispensable as these would always emerge because of the difference of circumstances and conditions of human society and variation in time and space. The purpose of religion is to provide apt guidance according to the needs of every time and space. For instance the social and economic needs and problems would be different from one era to the other. So the *Shar'* and *Minhāj* carry commandments and forms which are suitable for a particular historical and cultural context.[1] The Quran declares:

> For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies [e.g. slaughtering of the beast of cattle during the three days of stay at Mina (Makkah) during the Hajj (pilgrimage)] which they must follow; so let them (pagans) not dispute with you on the matter (i.e. to eat of the cattle which you slaughter, and not to eat of cattle which Allah kills by its natural death), but invite them to your Lord. Verily! You (O Muhammad S.A.W) indeed are on the (true) straight guidance. (i.e. the true religion of Islamic Monotheism) (22:67)[2]

Maulānā Āzād illustrates his point with the example of changing of the direction during prayer in Islam. God ordered Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), to change his direction from Jerusalem to *kāba* in Mecca. The Jewish and Christian community felt very bad about it, because for them religion depends on such forms and manifestations of rituals. The Quran, however, had a different outlook on this matter. It declared that these forms are neither the essence of religion

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[1] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.226.
[2] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran*.

nor the scale to analyse truth and falsehood. It is just like, every religion adopted a particular way of worship according to its circumstances and requirements but the objective of all was the same which was to worship God and follow the righteous path. So the parameter to judge truth or reality is the essence of religion not the forms and manifestations.[1] The Quran repeatedly maintains that *al-Dīn* pertains to the universal principles.[2] The Quran holds:

> It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness, and each and every act of obedience to Allah, etc.) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-Birr is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to Al-Masakin (the poor), and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, performs As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and gives the Zakat, and who fulfill their covenant when they make it, and who are As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.) in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are Al-Muttaqun (2:177)[3]

Maulānā Āzād affirms that the differences of *Shara* are according to the will of God and in the benefit of mankind that emerged. He adds that when the Quran was revealed it was common for followers of various religions to think that the others were deprived of guidance and truth because they followed different forms of rituals and worships. However, the Quran says that these rituals and forms of worships are neither the spirit of *al-Dīn* nor a scale to judge the truth. Real *al-Dīn* is nothing but two things: God's worship and righteous path.[4] Asghar Ali says that Maulānā Āzād has a distinguished vision about societies regarding their traditions and distinct laws. A few theologians have this perception, his proposal of differentiating between *al-Dīn* and *Shara* has potential to eliminate differences among believers of various religions.[5]

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[1] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.227.

[2] Ibid.228.

[3] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran*.

[4] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.229-30. See also. *Falsafa usool-o-mubadi ki roshni men* by Maulana Azad.10-11.

[5] Ali, "MAULANA AZAD AND HIS CONCEPT OF WAHDAT-E-DIN ".

Muḥammad 'Ināyat Allah Khān al-Mashriqī (1888-1963) another prominent Muslim scholar, elucidates in his book *Tadhkirah* the same fact which Maulānā Āzād has indicated that none of the prophets came with the new *Dīn* rather all of them came to remind human beings of the forgotten message. He says the real *Dīn* is one but the followers intermingled the essence of religion (which is belief in God and good deeds) with its manifestation (that is the rituals and way of worship). They started believing in the manifestation and offshoots of religion as the essence of religion. He further elaborates that instead of believing in God and becoming Muslim the one who accepts) they confined themselves to sects namely Jews, Christians, Buddhists and Mohammaden. So, the essence and immutable law of God is forgotten and religion is merely limited to the performance of some rituals.[1]

Maulānā Āzād also indicates that it is the very nature of human beings that they are not same regarding tastes, temperaments, skills and talents. The presence of differences is a natural phenomenon, which is why the Quran respects these differences and accommodates these differences in religious and mundane spheres of life. The Quran does not support compulsion in this regard and wants to leave it upon the will and capability of each person to choose what they want to choose.[2] Maulānā Āzād authenticates his point with the following verse of the Quran: "And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So, will you (O Muhammad S.A.W) then compel mankind, until they become believers?" (10:99)[3]

It is in fact the very nature of man that he considers his way better than others, he is mostly unable to criticize his own way, so the only tool is to be patient and tolerant before others. According to Maulānā Āzād, although all religions are based upon truth and all have the same objective but the followers of all religions got deviated from the path of Truth, and adopted wickedness and have gone astray from true faith and righteous practice. Particularly their main fault was that they were divided into different sects and groups and had distorted the unity of

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[1] Muḥammad 'Ināyat Allah Khân al-Mashriqī, *Tadhkirah*, vol. 1 (Amritsar Punjab: Idārah-al-Asha't 1924).6-9.
[2] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.229-30.
[3] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*

mankind as well as lost the true concept of *al-Dīn.*[1] Quran says about it "Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects (all kinds of religious sects), you (O Muhammad S.A.W) have no concern in them in the least. Their affair is only with Allah, Who then will tell them what they used to do" (6:159)[2]

While further throwing light over the issue of schism of believers of other religions, Maulānā Āzād indicates that the goal of *al-Dīn* is to guide the followers and to invite them towards the worship of God and towards righteous deeds. *Al-Dīn* implies that like every material and physical thing human actions also have their effects and results. Good deeds and notions beget good results while bad deeds and notions produce bad results. But the followers of all religions have forgotten this reality and made groups and sects based upon nations, countries and traditions. As a result, there has occurred a shift in the perceptions, and people consider these formal appearances the source of success and salvation. If someone is associated with one's group then he or she to be considered on the right path, otherwise astray and deviant. Therefore, the followers of each religion used to preach hatred and prejudice against other religions. Thus, the path of truth and worship of God has become a cause of vindictiveness, hostility and bigotry. Maulānā Āzād articulates that to deal with this particularistic or exclusivist approach to religion, the Quran has emphasized upon three salient factors which are mentioned below:

1: The success and salvation of man primarily depends upon his faith in God and righteous deeds instead of association with any particular group.

2: *Al-Dīn* is only one for all human beings and its teachings have been given to all mankind uniformly. Thus, the act of making groups and creating schism is clearly wrongdoing.

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[1] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran.*230.
[2] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*

3: The true religion, *al-Dīn*, is monotheism or *al-Tawḥīd* which implies to worship only one God directly and this has been the teaching of all messengers and prophets. Whatever has been adopted against this notion is the result of deviation from the truth and reality.[1]

Maulānā Āzād then has fortified his perception through the following verses of *sūrah-al-Baqarah*:

> And they say, "None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian." These are their own desires. Say (O Muhammad Peace be upon him), "Produce your proof if you are truthful". Yes, but whoever submits his face (himself) to Allah and he is a good-doer then his reward is with his Lord (Allah), on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve- (2:111-112)[2]

These verses have illuminated that anyone from any race, any nation and with whichever name one is called upon, if one has firm faith in one God and his deeds are also virtuous, then he or she is on the right path and would find salvation. But the People of the Book have made a narrow and confined law of racial and religious grouping. Jews drew a restricted circle and named it Judaism. Likewise Christians made a restricted circle and named it Christianity. And according to both, whosoever has entered their circle is on the right path and can achieve salvation; otherwise he or she is on the invalid path and cannot achieve salvation. Good deeds do not matter much in this mindset. This obviously is a wrong paradigm. The Quran has refuted such a paradigm and maintains that the Divine guidance is universal which cannot be confined to such man-made confinements or groupings.[3]

Maulānā Āzād views that this sectarian approach has been extended to the level of each group having made different places of worship for their particular group where no member of another group is allowed to enter. Every group considers only the worship place of his or her tradition as sacred. . And due to this schism, no group has any feeling of respect for others' place of worship,

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[1] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran.*232-3. See also. *Taṣuvvrāt-e-Quran* by Maulānā Azad edited by Syyed 'Abd-al-Latīf.161-3.
[2] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[3] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran.*234,235.

so much so that sometime, religious fanatics demolish the other's places of worship. Such grouping or sectarian approach is so destructive that it can deteriorate the human mind. For instance, Jews think that all the commandments relating to integrity and honesty are to be practiced just by Jews in relation to other Jews, not in relation to all human beings. They consider it legitimate for them to be dishonest with the followers of other religions in financial matters. In fact, the religion of God encourages honesty and kindness to be provided to all mankind rather than to facilitate a particular group.[1] The Quran quotes their attitude in the following verse "because they say: There is no blame on us to betray and take the properties of the illiterates (Arabs)." But they tell a lie against Allah while they know it." (3:75)[2]

Maulānā Āzād illuminates that true guidance is the guidance of God who does not bestow His benevolence upon a particular group; rather His mercy is for all human beings. So whoever follows His guidance will be guided, no matter even if the one is Jew or Christian or belongs to any other religion.[3]

That is why, as stated by Maulānā Āzād, the primary element of the invitation of the Quran is based upon the principle of accepting all the founders of religions and to believe that all of them have been on the right path. At various places, the Quran forbids ardently from differentiating among prophets regarding their basic status of bearers of God's message. He says in his commentary that it is the obligation of every righteous and honest person to have faith in all messengers, all scriptures and in all religious messages without any discrimination.[4] "They say, "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" - and they say, "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your Forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all)." (2:285)[5]

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[1] Ibid.238.
[2] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[3] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran.*235-6.
[4] Ibid.243-4.
[5] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*

God is one , truth is one but the message of truth has been delivered by various prophets, if one believes in one prophet and denies the other, it will be like one is accepting the reality at one place and rejecting it on another place. Definitely, this cannot be considered as acceptance at all. In reality there are only two paths: one is to believe in all messengers, and the other is to refute all of them.[1]

Maulānā Āzād again emphasizes that the purpose of revelation of the Quran is nothing other than to call the people who have lost their true path of God's worship and righteous deeds, and both of these elements are universally present in the messages of all prophets and also in all revealed scriptures. He elaborates the Quranic term *Ma'rūf* which indicates virtuous deeds and *Munkar* which indicates bad deeds. *Ma'rūf* is derived from the Arabic word *'urf* which means to be familiar with, so *Ma'rūf* is that thing which is recognized and familiar to people. *Munkar* means to deny which implies something which is usually denied by people or society. So the Quran has used these two terms for good and bad deeds. It says despite of having various differences upon notions and creeds, there is always something which is considered as good by all and something which is considered as bad by all. Maulānā Āzād then infers that those deeds with which people are usually familiar as good are the required deeds of *al-Dīn*. Likewise those deeds which are normally considered as bad by human beings and by all religions are the forbidden deeds of *al-Dīn*. And because these righteous deeds are the essence of *al-Dīn*, so no one can ever reject them. The unity of all eras, all religions and all nations on the goodness and badness of these deeds, is a proof that these are in the nature of mankind. The Quran calls man to follow nothing new but his nature and abstain from what is bad in the view of his very instinct.[2]

Maulānā Āzād states that this path which is *al-Dīn* concords with human nature, and is sent by God. The law of nature can never be changed. It is also called as *al-Dīn-al-Qayyim* and *al-Dīn al-Hanīf* by the Quran. It is the same path towards which the prophet Ibrāhīm called. This is the

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[1] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.243.
[2] Ibid.248.

same *al-Dīn* which the Quran named as Islam meaning to submit oneself to follow the principles of God.[1] The Quran says:

> So set you (O Muhammad S.A.W) your face towards the religion of pure Islamic Monotheism Hanifa (worship none but Allah Alone) Allah's Fitrah (i.e. Allah's Islamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illah (i.e. the Religion of Allah Islamic Monotheism), that is the straight religion, but most of men know not. (30:30-32)[2]

Maulānā Āzād maintains that when the Quran says that the only acceptable *Dīn* before Allah is Islam, it actually means that, except the true and real *Dīn*, (which is essentially one and is collective message of all prophets), no other man-made sectarian religion is acceptable.[3] So the Quran states in one of its verses, "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." (3:85)[4]

Where there are many scholars who endorse the philosophy of unity of religion, there are others who criticize it thoroughly. Among them are Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz and Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf-al-Binorī. Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf-al-Binorī in his book *Mushkilāt-al-Quran*[5] and Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz in his article" Are All religions Alike?"[6] evaluate the notion of unity of religion and criticize Maulānā Āzād more or less in the same manner. The gist of the critique of Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz is that faith in God and good deeds are not enough, faith in prophethood of Muhammad Peace be upon him and faith in Quran as the final revelation is also the requirement of the Quran. Moreover he explains that faith does not mean the verbal belief only rather it requires one to follow the *Sharī'ah* or way of the last prophet and teachings of the last book. This implies that if any believer of any other religion just verbally believes in Muhammad

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[1] Ibid.249.
[2] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[3] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran.*250.
[4] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[5] Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf-al-Binorī, *Mushkilāt-al-Quran* (Multan: Idārāh Tālīfāt-i-Ashrafīyah, 1414 hijrī).35-9.
[6] Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz, "Are All Religions Alike?," *Tulū'-i- Islam* 1987.

peace be upon him as prophet and in the Quran as final revelation but does not follow them, then it would not be considered as conviction or belief.

He further claims that Maulānā Āzād is wrong in saying that all religions are equal and same. In contrast to his idea, he proposes that Islam has superiority over previous religions as it is the most evolved and final form. In addition to that, he criticizes Maulānā Āzād's idea that if all other followers have faith in God and do righteous deeds or in other words they follow their own religions in their actual form then the purpose of Quran is achieved and this would lead them to success and radiance. Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz denies Maulānā Āzād's view and elaborates that if we accept this notion then what is the stature of the way of Muhammad peace be upon him and teachings of the Quran? Because according to him after the arrival of the last prophet and final revelation it is not permitted to follow the previous scriptures and teachings of previous prophets. He also disagrees with Maulānā Āzād's notion that Islam means *Dīn* which is the same in all religions and maintains that Islam means system of life and like every system of life it has its own unique demands and constraints. This makes it different from other religions furthermore as a final form of system of life revealed by God, it is most encompassing and comprehensive, which makes it superior to other religions.

According to our study of Maulānā Āzād's notion of the unity of religion, the roots of this notion and its practical implementation through law and system produce a different scenario than Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz's notion of supremacy of Islam. Let's talk about the first half, Maulānā Āzād is concluding his idea of unity of religion from the Quran and he has in his mind the circumstances of the subcontinent .Where religion has become the bone of contention among dwellers of this land. And he, through his writings seems to be trying to create harmony and unity among mankind, which, according to him, is a purpose of the Quran. Moreover, if we read his book *Rasūl-i-Reḥmat* which contains his discourses on the life of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, we shall understand very well that he is not compromising the supremacy of Islam and he believes in the *Sharī'ah* of Muhammad, peace be upon him, as final and most

comprehensive to follow. The only thing that Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz has misunderstood about him is this that he has compromised the supremacy of Islam. In Maulānā Āzād's point of view the objective of the Quran is to guide human beings towards a single Omni-sustainer who is their one God and to provide them radiance from the system of *Ṭāghūt* (a system conflicts with the laws of God). Regarding *Sharī'ah* or way of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, Maulānā Āzād seems to view it in the category of "And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So, will you (O Muhammad S.A.W) then compel mankind, until they become believers?" (10:99)[1]. And according to the verse of *Sūrah Al-Baqarah* "There is no compulsion in religion"(2:256)[2] . So to follow the path or *Sharī'ah* of Muhammad, peace be upon him, is a matter of choice for People of the Book and non-believers. There is no compulsion in it. This is something which cannot be forced. And this is what Muhammad, peace be upon him, himself and later his Caliphs acted upon. We cannot find any example in prophet Muhammad's life, in which he enforced his *Sharī'ah* upon non-believers and even upon the people of the book. But the Muslims who have chosen this path for themselves are bound to act upon on it, the way of worship it introduces and the other forms of rituals which it advises. Maulānā Āzād seems to follow the strategy which is introduced in the verse of the Quran, where it says "Say (Oh Muhammad): Oh people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say bear witness that we are Muslims." (3:64)[3]. So he seems to be highlighting those mutual teachings which the Quran calls as *Dīn*, in order to disseminate unity and peace. This does not mean that he is compromising the final revelation that is Islam.

The other half of the critique of Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz is that Maulānā Āzād holds that for salvation and success only belief in God and righteous deeds are enough and in this verse "And

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[1] Khan, *Interpretation of the meanings of the The Noble Quran.*
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." (3:85)[1], here Islam means *Dīn*. Regarding the first part of his critique, we shall analyze the context in which Maulānā Āzād has proposed this notion. We find that he is quoting from the Quran, and it is a reactionary answer of the Quran that the parameter of success and salvation does not depend upon the group or sect which one belongs (we have discussed it in a great detail before, so in short) Maulānā Āzād is making it clear for sectarian mind-set or the communal mind-set that the parameter of salvation is faith in God and good deeds. Now the question arises that if the believers of other religions have faith in God and they do righteous deeds, would it be enough for their salvation? We shall say that this is the matter, which none of our main-stream scholars or Maulānā Āzād has taken in their hands and they believe that the reward of such peoples is with their God and only He knows how He will reward them.

As far as the second part of Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz's disagreement is concerned, which is centered upon the aforementioned verse where Islam means *Dīn* as per Maulānā Āzād and Islam means *Sharī'ah* as per Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz. The reason of this disagreement lies in the difference of paradigms of these both scholars. As Maulānā Āzād is viewing Islam with the universal approach and that is why he is interpreting this verse in universal way. He is not alone; there are other Muslim scholars like Muhammad 'Ināyat Allah Khān al-Mashriqī who in his Commentary of the Quran *Aḥsan Tafsīr* has interpreted this verse in the same manner.[2] Whereas Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz seems to view Islam as a sectarian religion which entails in considering Muslims as a sect in comparison with other sects like the Jews and Christians and so on. Herein lies the difference in perceptions. Further Gulām Aḥmad Parvaiz deals with Islam as a unique system of life with its particular laws. He is very right in his perception here, because Islam is a final system of law or final Sharī'ah but this not only what Islam is. And when one interprets the

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[1] Ibid.
[2] 'Alāmah 'Ināyat Allah al-Mashriqī and Maulānā Fatiḥ Muḥammad Jālandahrī, *Aḥsan Tafsīr* (Lahore: Alḥāj Muḥammad Sarfrāz Khān, 2007).108.

above verse as 'only the Sharī'ah of Muhammad peace be upon him is acceptable before Allah', then it seems to be a communal or sectarian tinted interpretation. As has been mentioned before Muhammad peace be upon him and later his righteous caliphs never intended to enforce *Sharī'ah* upon non-believers and people of the book and they were free to go into their places of worship and worship in their own ways. But they never compromised over Dīn, for that, they fought with the non believers of Makkah and demolished their system of injustice and their system of exploitation of weak people on social, political and economic levels.

Now coming towards the model which Maulānā Āzād proposes, he says that in the worse situation that we are faced with, only one relation can reunite the human beings and that is faith in God. Because no matter in how many groups and divisions human beings have been divided, all of them are creatures of one and the same Creator. Despite various internal conflicts, humankind is tied up together to servitude of one and the same God. No matter from which country, race, and nation one belongs to, when he or she prostrates before one God, then this divine relation eclipses all the worldly conflicts among human beings. At this state, man would start feeling all the world his country, the human race his family and humankind the family of one Omni-Provider.[1]

He further explains that the Quran did not nullify any religion and revealed book, rather it verified all religions and prophets and invited the entire mankind to revert to the original message of their respective religions. The Quran gives three basic principles which are the points of divergence between those who accept the Quranic message and who reject it:

> 1 Quran is against the spirit of communalism or sectarianism and advocates the unity of religion.
>
> 2: The salvation and spiritual success entirely depend upon creed and deeds instead of race, nation, traditions and rituals.

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[1] Azad, *Tarjumān-al-Quran*.223.

3: The Quran claimed that the true and real *Dīn* is to directly worship one God, but the followers of religions had devised various forms of idolatry.

Hence, Maulānā Āzād mentions that the issue of religious diversity could not remain as a mere difference among the followers of different religions, rather it had taken the shape of mutual hatred and conflict. Thus, there are only three possibilities to remove this hatred and conflict. The first is to accept that all religions are right in their claims but it is not promising, as they all do not only claim that they possess the truth, they also falsify the others' claims of having truth. To accept this position would mean that mutually contradictory claims are true and false simultaneously. This is irrational. The second option is to falsify all, and this is not correct as well, because if all are fake then where is the reality of religion? The third and last option is that all religions are true in essence but the followers of various religions have deviated from the path of truth as they have distorted the essential *al-Dīn*. This is the Quranic view. However, if people could abscond from deviation and follow the real message of their own religions, then every one of them could be able to see that the real message is the same. The Quran says that this common message is in fact *al-Dīn* which is called Islam.[1]

Maulānā Āzād allegorizes Islam with the sun and says that when the sun rises it gives light and warmth to all without any discrimination, similarly Islam which can be considered as the sun of spiritual world spreads its message for all. The major mistake of human beings is that they have forgotten and ignored the basic bond of unity of mankind, which is based upon the unity of creation by one Creator. People have succumbed to geographical and tribal divisions. This earth which was made for mutual love and unity among mankind became a place of quarrel and hatred. Islam encourages the prevalence of peace and unity among mankind and reminds about the bond that is present between mankind and God.[2] Islam does not appreciate the approach of

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[1] Ibid.252-6.
[2] Azad, *Khuṭbāt-i-Azad*.12-3.

arrogance and superiority over other fellow beings on the basis of national, racial or colour. Rather Islam supports equality of mankind.[1]

The afore-stated account of Maulānā Āzād's outlook about religion, reasons of religious heterogeneity and his proposal to deal with religious diversity demonstrates his great concern about the peaceful coexistence of thriving religions of the world. He appears to be a proponent of unity of religions and oneness of mankind. Moreover, he presents a universalistic notion of religion which was the dire need of his time. In addition to that, he adheres to the main-stream Muslims scholars' account of religion and religious heterogeneity. However his practical endeavor which is based upon this philosophy of unity of religion and unity of mankind across the socio-political background of subcontinent is unique in its nature. As far as his model is concerned which he proposes for peaceful coexistence of religions in a society has its pros and cons. On one hand this model assists in producing a positive and universal mind set among Muslims about other religions. But on the other hand for other believers it is not an acceptable idea that they are deviated from right path and their scriptures are distorted by time. They might consider it as blame on their religion from Muslim's side.

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[1] Maulānā Abu'l Kalam Azad, *Quran ka Qānūn-i-'Arūj-v-Zavāl* (Lahore: Maktabh-i-Jamāl, 2007).86.

Chapter 3
SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN'S APPROACH TO RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

RADHAKRISHNAN'S CONCEPT OF RELIGION

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has dealt with the subject of religion in great detail. The religion in which he used to believe was not his hereditary religion. Although he had not left his ancestral religion, his notion of religion was quite a bold departure from the traditional understanding of religion. He belonged to a Brahmin family who had a staunch belief in the caste system and had never accepted oneness of humanity. But Radhakrishnan came to profess the exact opposite: his faith in the unity of humanity.[1] He suggested various definitions and gave different accounts of religion. He expounds that religion is comprised of serving justice, showing kindness and distributing happiness among fellow beings. He also expresses that religion is not about dogmatic consistency and traditional piousness; it is more than that, a matter of self-evolution and growth. While taking into account the social aspect of religion he says: "Religion is not an escape from social struggle. Spiritual wisdom and social affairs must be brought into intimate relationship."[2] In his book *Religion and Society* he maintains that

> religion as its very name connotes should be a binding force which deepens the solidarity of human society in spite of the obvious shortcomings of historical forms. In its essence, religion is a summons to spiritual adventures. It is not theology but practice and discipline. It is the only remedy for the pride of spirit which has divorced itself from the eternal. To restore the lost relationship between the individual and eternal is the purpose of religion.[3]

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[1] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan: A comparative Study*. 58.
[2] Ibid. 6-6.
[3] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society* (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD., 1947).42-3.

He says that the spirit of religion exists neither in doctrines or faiths nor in rituals and ceremonies, rather it exists in the "deepest wisdom of ages"[1], which are the only guide through the baffling thought of modern turmoil.[2]

He also has delineated that the foundation of religion lies in the finding of essential value and respect of humankind and its relation with the higher world of reality. He has mentioned religion as a discipline which helps human beings struggle against evil and has an effect on their conscience; secures them from lust and greed, blesses them with moral strength and assists them in saving the world. It also contain the keys and ways in order to deal with the evil which jeopardizes the civilized world. It involves the surrendering of man's thoughts and behaviours to the truths of spirit. Radhakrishnan has also recognized that "religion is the aspiration to grow into the likeness of Divine."[3]

In his book *Recovery of Faith*, Radhakrishnan has mentioned that religion is mystified with unconscious participation in ceremonies and silent submission to doctrines whereas religion at their best emphasizes more upon behaviour than doctrines.[4] If religion is not lively and all-encompassing and does not affect every sphere of human activity then it is not real. He also has described religion as "social cement" a mean through which one manifests one's ambitions and find comfort in one's discontentment.[5]

Radhakrishnan further adds that "religion must express itself in a reasonable thought, fruitful action and right social institutions."[6] He also delineates that religion is an independent form of experience which cannot be mixed even with ethics; however, it is bound to manifest itself through ethics. For him, religion is fundamentally a concern of spiritual life. Its objective is to

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[1] Ibid.42-3.
[2] Ibid. 42-3.
[3] Ibid.42-3.
[4] Sarvepalli radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith* (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD., 1956). 21-2,24.
[5] Ibid. 21-2,24.
[6] Vergilius Ferm, ed. *Religion in Transition* (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD., 1937).20.

protect spiritual surety which elevates life from worthless existence; it is not a creed but an "insight into reality."[1]

In his book *The Reign of Religion in contemporary philosophy,* he compares religion with philosophy and science. He elaborates that salvation of the soul is the objective of religion whereas inquiry of truth is the goal of philosophy. Philosophy answers by logic and religion by faith. Religion emphasizes upon mere authority. This is how Radhakrishnan has defined religion at various places; in short, his main concern about religion was that it must be defined rationally and spiritually and it must not be confined merely to dogmatism.[2]

According to Radhakrishnan the goal of religion is not ecstasy; it is to acquire understanding about life and to play a role in its improvement and development. In the same context, he adds that "religion is a dynamic process, a renewed effort of the creative impulse working through exceptional individuals, and seeking to uplift mankind to a new level."[3] Also, a strong political, economic and social life is required to help individual not only to live but to grow towards a collective perfection.[4]

Regarding the classification of religions, he categorizes them into two types: those which emphasize upon the object and those which enjoin upon the experience. For the first category, religion is a matter of faith and conduct, and for the second, religion is a matter of experience to which one associates supreme value. Then, he states that Hindu and Buddhist religions are of the second type as for them religion is dominantly a transforming experience than a mere conception of God.[5] Moreover, he explains that in Hinduism, religion is defined as "direct experience of divine" and the "oneness of the inward self and transcendental being."[6] It is re-borness of man

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[1] Ibid.20.
[2] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (London: Maccmillan and Co.,Limited., 1920).5-6.
[3] Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society.*78.
[4] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought.*   20,21,76,325.
[5] Ibid.21.
[6] radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith.*110.

which actually is inward rebirth or spiritual rebirth.[1] According to him the germinal conception of Hindu religion is present in Vedanta system which comprises of three courses: the Upanishad, the *Brahma sūtra* and the Bhagavad-Gita. Upanishad carries the experience of the sages. Logic and discipline are there but not as major characteristics of religion. The second is *Brahma sūtra* which is a logical interpretation of the conclusion of Upanishad and the third is Bhagavad-Gita which is the yogic manual or book and discusses the main ways to get the true religious life. The philosophy and views of Radhakrishnan are based upon the Vedanta system.[2]

RADHAKRISHNAN'S NOTION OF GOD

In the area of religion the most important and primary content to be considered is the notion of God. As a religiously oriented person, Radhakrishnan has dealt with the idea of God in a significant manner and does not favour any godless religion, which implies those religions or isms whose centre is not God. As for him, a religion whose centre is not God is not a strong religion. According to him many substitutes of religion have been introduced in the history of mankind, for example, 'Humanism' whose slogan was that this world is their chief interest and perfection of humanity is their ideal. It was man centred, and the "ultimate harmonious interrelation of individuals with one another is the aim of humanism."[3] He maintains that there is no conflict between religion and a reasonable humanism. Perhaps Radhakrishnan means by 'reasonable humanism' a philosophy with the aim of perfection of humanity while not eliminating the concept of God.   Another example which illustrates these ideas is 'Pragmatism' which "rejects absolute truth as a myth, and holds that all truths are human made and relative. A truth is tested by the value of its consequences."[4] But because of man-oriented programs these

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[1] Ibid.110.
[2] Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life*.22-3.
[3] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life* (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD., 1937).62,72-3.
[4] Ibid.62,72-3.

were soulless and weak as per Radhakrishnan, thus cannot satisfy the spiritual thirst of human beings.[1]

Radhakrishnan contemplates that without the vision of Supreme in life, life is incomplete as soul does have eyes like the body has. Through these eyes it is able to know the sovereign truth or perfection which is God.[2] While talking about knowledge of God he states:

> We cannot say that we know matter, life and mind and not God or ultimate spirit. As a matter of fact, we do not know precisely what matter or life is. We know that they are objects of experience though their real nature is hidden from us. So also we may not know the ultimate meaning of God, though we may know something about God or what answers to God in reality through religious experience.[3]

He also has clarified that the idea of God is actually an explanation of experience. Like a Physicist interprets a physical phenomenon by coming up with the theory about electrons, he feels like his mental image of it is like the real thing. In actuality it is impossible to make an ultimate picture of the physical world. The hypothesis is symbolic and is acknowledged just because it is working, likewise the experiences of religious persons which they relate with the assumption of God; the God of their imagination might be as real as the electron but it is not essentially the reality what they apprehend instantly.[4]

According to Radhakrishnan God is "the primordial mind, the loving redeemer and the holy judge of the universe."[5] He further adds that the notion of God as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva manifests the triple character:

1. Brahma: Brahma is the primeval nature of God; He is the house of all states of possibilities of the universe. The balanced order of the world depicts the mind of God which is prior to the world. However, the thoughts of the Brahma or the "primordial

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[1] Ibid.62,72-3.
[2] Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*.45.
[3] Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*.86.
[4] Ibid.86.
[5] Ibid.334.

mind" should turn into the things of universe. This process of conversion of ideas or thoughts into a sphere of space and time is a gradual process which God supports by His power of production or creation. In this universe of development, everything craves towards its ideal form by throwing its imperfection and reflects the pattern in the divine mind. As immanent in the process of development, God becomes the guide and sharer in the difficult and painful experiences of the world.[1]

2. Vishnu: Vishnu is the savior of the world. He is constantly working in the opposition of each and every concrete force which has an affinity towards making evil and creates distortion in the world. God out of His love for human beings takes the burden of assisting them against evil, error and ugliness, turning them into truth, beauty and goodness. Here Radhakrishnan mentions some verses from *Rig-Veda* (Hindu Scripture) which says: "All that is bare he covers; all that is sick he cures; By his grace the blind man sees and the lame walks." It also says "God is the refuge and friend of all." Moreover, it maintains that "Thou art ours and we are thine." According to Hindu mythology God is more in seeking of man than man is in seeking of God. God loves the world to the extent that he has given it Himself. He wants from man to recognize his call, respond to him and cooperate with him. His love is his essential quality, not a transitory one, he is ever there to save the world.

3. Shiva: In order to make sure that God's love prevailed in the world and the struggle for that does not go in vain, God is not only truth and love but He is also just. He is the perfection which rejects all evil. His sovereignty is manifested in the character of Shiva. God acts according to fixed laws, his laws are immutable. "God cannot forgive the

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[1] Ibid.334.

criminal, even when he repents, for the moral order which is conceived in love and not in hatred requires that wrongdoing should have its natural consequences."[1]

So Radhakrishnan maintains that the one God creates as Brahma, redeems as Vishnu, and judges as Shiva. These indicate the three phases of the process and perfection. He elaborates that, "The source from which all things come, the spring by which they are sustained and the good into which they enter are one. God loves us, creates us, and rules us. Creation, redemption and judgment are different names for the fact of God."[2] He further clarifies that the pure Being which is absolute Being can only be pointed out however it cannot be described. God is called a Supreme Person, He is higher and superior from everything He has created. He is person but not in the sense in which human mind defines personality. He has all the good attributes which men have but in a different sense. He is good and wise but not in the sense in which human beings are.[3]

In his book *A Hindu View of Life*, he has described the idea of God from Upanishads (which is the core of Hindu Philosophy) and mentions that the Upanishads are silent upon the nature of God. All sages affirmed that more is hidden about God than what is known. In this matter, silence is more significant than speech. Radhakrishnan expresses that the altars which were raised to the unknown gods in Greco-Roman world were the symbols of man's failure in the pursuit of the unseen and were the expression of man's ignorance about the divine reality. He puts forward that the Hindu thinkers mostly consider God as completely different from His creatures and that is why they use negative expressions like He is beyond the sight of man, He is ineffable, that the human mind cannot grasp Him, and it is impossible to describe Him. But according to Radhakrishnan, it is very hard for the human mind to choose the state of absolute silence and negative depiction in the matter of God as human beings are talking creature. So they persist in interpreting the religious enigma in expressions of their own understanding and

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[1] Ibid.333-4.
[2] Ibid.334.
[3] radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith*.91.

experiences. The mental faculty of human beings longs for something specific and limited so they use their abilities to understand God or the Divine Being. Here, human imagination plays a significant role, as one cannot perceive God without using one's imagination. So a religious person uses his imagination to explain his vision about God and the highest expression one can use is of "self conscious personality"[1] as human beings are personalities and God is the perfect personality. And as the concept of personality incorporates in it cognition, emotion and will, so is God observed as the "supreme knower, great lover and perfect will"[2] which is in Hindu doctrine Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively. Radhakrishnan upholds that these are not independent gods as popular theology represents, rather these are three aspects of the same complex personality. [3]

He further advocates that Hindu thought gives place to the notion of personal God but does not miss the non-personal aspect of the Ultimate Reality. Even the believers of personal conception of God accept that there are heights and depth in the Being of God that are beyond their perceptions. So when a Hindu is trying to enjoin upon nature of God in himself, he finds *Brahman* and when he is emphasizing upon God in relation to man he gets personal *Bhagavān*.[4]

He further affirms that God is not a logical idea or ethical law, but the inmost cognition by dint of which all notions and moral laws emerge. Furthermore, He is not a mental construction but the existing reality which provides us existence.[5] He also illustrates that God is not an illusion or fabrication of our mind rather, He is an actual symbol of absolute reality. He further says that "When there is complete identity between God and the world that is when God's purpose is fulfilled, when all individual spirits are perfected, God himself will relapse into Absolute."[6]

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[1] Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life*. 26-7.
[2] Ibid. 26-7.
[3] Ibid.26-7.
[4] Ibid.31.
[5] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.24.
[6] Ferm, *Religion in Transition*.41.

The ISSUE OF DIVERSITY AND RADHAKRISHNAN'S MODEL FOR RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE

Radhakrishnan has stated various reasons behind the existence of religious diversity. He elaborates that prophets or the founders of religion gave the lesson of unity among human beings; they didn't declare any discrimination between Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians. But there are traders in religion who declare that one's own creed and group is superior which gives birth to cruelty and violence. They develop group fidelity at the cost of world fidelity. By compulsion and deception, by politics and un-genuine religions, diplomats and religious men take advantage of the basic sentiments of man which are fear and greed and impose upon him the devastating restrictions of blood, race and nation and make division in man's soul. Political autocracy and religious dogmatism has no comprehension of profound identity of human beings, their passions and reactions, their principles and ambitions in all periods and all places. Thus, by propagating delusions such as fear of hell, damnation and superior suppositions of sacred authority and exclusive monopolies of the divine word and politics by intoxicating people by their messianic goals, by developing in them obsession of power, such religious orientations destroyed the oneness of mankind and dichotomized them into narrow groups or sects which are useless and fanatical. By getting mixed up with politics, religion is corrupted and turned into species of materialism.[1]

He suggests that true freedom from fear can only be acquired through wisdom, so long as religion itself is manifestation of fear the security and protection it provides to its followers are at the high cost of destruction of human life. Dogmas by requiring fidelity to military creeds make men stand against one another. Radhakrishnan also claims that the ideal elements of religion which demand universalism and the present beliefs and institutional practices which create narrow groupings are not the same.[2]

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[1] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.39-40.
[2] Ibid.45.

According to Radhakrishnan, another cause of religious heterogeneity is use of miscellaneous symbols by people of various faiths in order to describe God. Whether one attaches one's faith to stones or abstract thoughts, they employ concrete symbols. Symbols are picture of Divine reality which is far greater than man's conception. So this transitory and finite forms of symbolism when are claimed to be an absolute and ultimate system, create conflict and plurality.[1] He further elaborates that though human thought about Supreme Being is dependent upon symbols and images, there are rare people who seek God without taking help from symbols and images. People who are not capable to receive the true wisdom, for them popular symbols have been used. It is like a teacher who is eager to make a crowd understand a philosophical truth, so he would take assistance from intelligible symbols which a receiver can comprehend. Symbolism is the visualization of the infinite in finite. But a symbol cannot expose the infinite in the finite; it just makes the finite transparent and allows one to see the infinite through it, as images are just symbols and not the divine reality. He then proclaims that though all imagery about Supreme necessarily contains error in it, yet there are degrees of such errors.[2]

In addition to the above mentioned causes, Radhakrishnan also presents another cause which is dogmatism. He defines that system of dogma is narrow in scope and is limited in nature because of the confined mental capacity of its creator. And prejudice and dogmatism either in religion or in politics are the most significant causes of division in humanity. He illustrates his point of view by giving an example from Christian attitude. He mentions that Christian religion is innate with the Semitic doctrine of "Jealous God" in the form of Jesus as only begotten son of God and could not tolerate any rival doctrine. This belief in finality of one's dogma or conviction degenerates into the spirit of fanaticism, extremism, autocracy, and blood thirstiness. It is hindrance in the way of free thinking and this attitude inclines to diminish all diversity and make a uniform orthodoxy. Whatever is in clash with the closed belief is taken as unscriptural and ultimately bogus. Ancient unawareness is taken as sacred whereas evolution as an error. That is why

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[1] Ibid.57,317.
[2] Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*.120-1.

Radhakrishnan upholds that dogmatism both in politics and religion is unfavourable for human progress and freedom. The non-communists in Russia, the Jews and socialists in Germany have been treated with the same spirit, with which orthodox Churches treated the nonconformist. If fanaticism and persecution is allowed in the name of highest truth or religion then there cannot be any rational objection to persecution of religions in the interest of atheism.[1]

In reality, every person has some creeds and dogmas in life; it would be incorrect to say that there is a person who does not hold any dogma or creed in life. Even Radhakrishnan possesses dogmas, like incarnation of God, God as creator, redeemer and just. The actual matter to be considered is what one's dogma is and how it effects one's life and the life of one's fellow beings? It is the nature or contents of a dogma which make it destructive or constructive. And because usually dogmatism brought such examples (as quoted by Radhakrishnan in the above-mentioned paragraph) it has proved harmful for human beings in general. Perhaps this is why he asserts that dogmatism is unfavourable for human progress. However on the other side, we may have examples of dogmas like 'all religions are the same in their essence' or 'God is the provisioner of all of his creatures' and so on; such dogmas have different affects altogether.

Moreover, as is delineated by Radhakrishnan, among the various reasons of religious differences, one is the influence of history and geography which affects man's natural and spiritual existence. As ideas do not come into existence out of vacuum rather, their development is affected by the type of mind which thinks of them and the conditions in which these are contemplated. And as ones' responsibilities to religion or nation are not usually matter of one's choice and will, but the matter of blind destiny. For instance, the Hindu recites the Vedas on the banks of Ganges, the Japanese worships the image of Buddha, the European has faith in Jesus mediator-ship and the Arab recites Quran, all of them possess the same reason for their particular confidence. Each of

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[1] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.318,.324-5.

them feels same appeal, inner certitude and satisfaction in their faith. For each one of them their religion is their deepest comprehension of God and God's complete revelation to them.[1]

While discussing about fanaticism, he professed that fanaticism is the outcome of a deep secret pride which makes man consider his views as ultimate and superior. It is the result of fanaticism that one considers that one's revelation contains all the truth that God ever has revealed in the past, plus there is no possibility of revealing any further truth in the future. Likewise, the conviction of infallibility among different sects within the same religion as well as among various religions leads to the creation of clash among religions.[2] He also expresses that the claim of absoluteness and exclusive approach about one's religion is the cause of war/conflict among religions because when one religion claims that only it possesses the whole truth and salvation, the arise of conflict is indispensable.[3] He further elaborates that each religion claiming finality of its notion tries to enforce its own stances upon the remaining world. When more than one religion do the same practice then emergence of confliction is obvious.[4]

Radhakrishnan also opines that the contradictions of theological thoughts are the result of rationalism, when one tries to apply to the spiritual world the conceptions which are apt for the material world. He says: "To identify the truth with the intellectual form is the sin of rationalism, which is insensitive to the meaning of creative mystery and to the primary spiritual experience in the existential subject in which truth and revelation is one."[5]

He also mentions that the idea of being the chosen people, which is not only particular to Jews, gives birth to actions and attitudes which lead towards the ideas of superiority complex and

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[1] Ibid.326.
[2] radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith*.195.
[3] Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life*.58.
[4] Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*.55.
[5] radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith*.190.

exclusiveness. This attitude does not produce an empathetic attitude towards other religious traditions rather fosters feelings of isolation and hostility.[1]

Here a question arises, that what are his views about his own religion, as Hinduism also holds Brahmins as chosen class. Radhakrishnan as he appears from his writings does not buy in, that Brahmin is a chosen class by God. This implies that for him, class or caste system is actually a social system which has multi-purposes; moreover, it is determined by temperaments, talents, characters and inclinations of people rather than by mere inheritance. Brahmins class according to him is a higher level of spiritual development, but if Brahmins consider themselves as chosen ones or pure ones besides, supposing the other classes as the polluted ones then Radhakrishnan does criticize it. Furthermore, we can also notice that he himself belongs to a Brahmin family, but he appears as a renowned philosopher as well as a statesman. His vocations also show that for him, it is the talent, temperament and inclination of a person which chooses for him the suitable class. He advocates caste system but explains it with a different paradigm. He asserts that the caste/class system in its initial form was based upon the disposition and character of a person not on birth. He also asserts that only this notion of class by temperament is practicable in modern time.[2]

Radhakrishnan also brings into light that narrow-minded and sectarian approaches which love their sects more than the truth ultimately end up loving themselves more than loving their sects which give birth to hostile division in human beings. For example, one starts by declaring that Christianity is the only true religion, and then assures that Protestantism is the only true sect of Christianity, Then Episcopalians is the only true Protestantism, the High Church as the only true

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[1] Ibid.32.
[2] Robert N. Minor, "Radhakrishnan as Advocate of the Class/Caste System as a Universal Religio-Social System," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 1(1997).

Episcopal Protestant Christian religion and one's particular stand point is the only true representation of the High Church point of view.[1]

Radhakrishnan cogitates that the truth or superiority of religion does not lie merely upon what is particular and concealed to it, but it depends on that element of it which is proficient to be shared by all humanity. According to him mankind's definitive realization of itself and the universe is based upon the ever-increasing freedom of the values which are universal and humanistic. Humankind is still in making or progress. The present human life is just a raw material for what human life might be.[2]

Radhakrishnan also describes that when man enters the world of ideals the dissimilarity or conflicts among religions become insignificant. There is only one ideal or model for man which is to transform himself into a perfect human being. "The whole man, the complete man, is the ideal man, the divine man."[3] It is in the very nature of man that he feels association with the whole universe, especially with living beings and human beings. The sense of community is dormant in man's nature. Even in this sophisticated world where intellect has enforced on humans the constraints of tribe, race and nation, the fundamental of humanity persists. He fortifies his point by giving example that when there is earthquake in Japan or famine in India or any catastrophe faced by man in any place of world; the hearts of others go out with them. Likewise, when there is an action of bravery or a genius discovery or accomplishment in science by a person, that person will not be asked to which religion or race that he or she belonged. The feeling of association or kinship is in the nature of human beings. They are the members of "world community."[4]

He elaborates that this is the intellectual consciousness which gives the feeling of separate individuality to humans, and instead of encouraging the invisible bond - that is the feeling of

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[1] Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life*.51.
[2] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.33,34.
[3] Ibid.35.
[4] Ibid.39,40.

oneness of humanity- which fastens or connects all human beings together, efforts are made to divide men in communal groups and make them hostile to each other. Human beings are being educated into the mystic worship of race and nation. So he proposes that humanity needs a religion of freedom which kindles in them faith instead of fear, naturalness instead of formalism, plentiful life in the replacement of mechanical life which is automation of mind that is dogmatism, mechanization of ends which is conventionality or orthodoxy.[1] When one turns out to be truly religious person one begins to comprehend the reality of other souls or humans. He fortifies his stance by quoting from Upanishads which implies that one who realizes the universal self, sees all human beings as belonging to a kingdom of ends.[2]

He further declares: "For those who are opposed to us are our brothers, from whom we happened to be estranged, and they can be won over by love and understanding."[3] He emphasizes that a man should prove himself to be true religious person than to be so-called religious person who declares that to kill one's fellow beings is sometimes one's religious duty. As this can be the message of a politician but not of a religious person. He elucidates that in this imperfect world it might be sometimes one's urgent political obligation to make one's defence secure against attack, however it cannot be the religious obligation to kill one's fellow beings.[4]

He encourages human beings to not lose hope as they are not violent and savage by nature; they should recover their natural instincts and characteristics, so they can retain the sense of kinship with the world and the fundamental unity or harmony of human race. This is what is meant, according to him, when Hindu thinkers ask to get rid of Maya or illusion they actually invites to shake off the constraints of the unreal values. They do not invite people to treat life as a delusion or to be unconcerned to the welfare of the world.[5]

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[1] Ibid.40,45.
[2] Ibid. 40,45.
[3] Ibid.39-40.
[4] Ibid.45,46,47.
[5] Ibid.47.

Radhakrishnan believes that when religion makes humans spiritual their conflicts and differences vanish and they can find themselves in familiarity with all human beings. No human being will be stranger anymore to such spiritually awakened persons. They would have respect for diversity which is natural to the formation of things and they would be able to recognize the unity underlying the existence of such discrepancies. The feeling of oneness with all fellow beings would be recognized. And the unity of all life, which is the rational theory of science, will be the strong belief of such sages. The spiritual person "can no more help loving humanity than a sunflower cannot help pointing to the sun."[1] Harmony of social order is the fundamental objective of the spiritual men. The spiritual men who are inspired in their thought by the divine knowledge, and are moved in their will by the divine purpose, and their sentiments are in conformity with the divine bliss, and have raised their whole life to the divine status. They are not the members of limited groups, which are based upon race and geography or blood and soil but are the members of the world hitherto unborn. They are universal in their approach. When the incarnation of God is realized, it will unite human beings mentally, morally and spiritually in a world fellowship.[2] Religions must develop the mutual spirit of comprehension in order to break down narrow-mindedness and discrimination and to make all religions close to each other as different expressions of same truth.[3] He illustrates that various gods are the symbol of incomprehensive One, such as the light of absolute reality gets deflected when it passes through the deformed nature of man.4

Paul Arthur Schilpp, the editor of *The Library of Living Philosophers: The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan,* narrates, that Radhakrishnan's universalism stemmed from his

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[1] Ibid.52.
[2] Ibid.57.
[3] Ibid.306.
[4] Ibid.308.

staunch belief in the primary function of love. He was a great mystic who consciously asserts that one can surely associates one's self with Reality when one shows sympathy with others.[1]

Radhakrishnan suggests Hinduism as a prototype, which has become a depository of almost all other types and stages of religious aspirations and endeavours due to its open-mindedness and tolerant attitude. It has adjusted itself with the elegance of every type of human need and has not hesitated to encompass every aspect of God envisioned by men, and however preserved its unity by interpreting or explaining the various historical forms as approaches, emanations or aspects of the Supreme. He claims that no religion and no country have adopted this outlook of understanding and appreciation of other faiths and religions so persistently as Hinduism and its offshoot Buddhism did.[2] This is his version of Hinduism, how he interprets it and the religious position which he takes for his religion. He considers Hinduism as an example of open-mindedness and tolerance. Here a question may come in the reader's mind that can a system which divides human beings such as in the caste system and considers million of human beings as untouchable and impure be called tolerant? The answer might be that Radhakrishnan is here interpreting his religion on a theoretical level in the light of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy, which is the right religious position of Hinduism according to him. But he seems to be using language which is not judgemental about the practical aspects of Hinduism and is ignoring other interpretations of caste system which entail that it is through heredity and birth that one's class or caste is selected. Moreover, he considers the caste system as an organic social system where each organ is important and indispensable for a complete organism. So it is his theory or ideal of Hinduism. His universal approach towards religion is also the cause of his interpretation of Hinduism. His interpretation of Hinduism is at odds with the popular interpretation at various standpoints. Robert N. Minor in his article "Radhakrishnan: A Religious Biography" criticizes

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[1] Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed. *THE LIBRARY OF LIVING PHILOSOPHERS:THE PHILOSOPHY OF SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN* (NEW YORK: TUDOR PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1952).370.

[2] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.313.

Radhakrishnan for narrowly confining and interpreting Hinduism according to the philosophy of Samkara's Advaita Vedanta.[1]

Radhakrishnan also holds that, in Hinduism the intellect is second to intuition, dogma to experience, and outer expression to inward realization. It does not take religion as academic abstractions or ceremonial activities but a type of life or experience. Any religious experience which claims to reveal reality should be able to give the intellectual explanation of the experience in order to provide logical certainty. The Hindu notion of religion emerges from and returns to the idea of experience and this idea is as broad as the nature of man himself. Hindu attitude easily acknowledges other's point of view and regards them worthy of attention. It scrutinizes all human beings as children of God and as bestowed with the knowledge and experience of Supreme according to their tastes and power. Thus, it bequeaths them all equal worth and place in the course of history. That is why Hinduism is not a religion of Vedas only rather it grants worth and place to all other scriptures and traditions like Puranas, Yogas and so on, given that some communities consider one and some consider the others spiritually beneficial for them, according to their preferences.[2]

The above-mentioned paragraph is the interpretation of Radhakrishnan, how he has perceived his religion. But this view is not supported by popular interpretations of Hinduism. Radhakrishnan was a twentieth century Hindu philosopher and theologian; this era was profuse with communal hatred and anarchy. He was not the only person who came up with such a universalist interpretation of Hindu religion; there were other examples like Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) who had a universalist approach to religion. Radhakrishnan was more concerned about making reformations in the popular interpretation of his religion, the reason he has mentioned in his essay "Religion In A Changing World" which is present in the book *Essays On Religion, Science And Culture*. He writes "So long as any religious system is capable of responding

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[1] Robert.R.Minor, "Radhakrishnan, a Religious Biography By Robert.R.Minor."660-1.
[2] Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life*.15,19.

creatively to any fresh challenge, whether it comes by the way of outer events or of ideas, it is healthy and progressive. When it fails to do so it is on the decline." He further adds that "Religions which are insensitive to human ills and social crimes do not appeal to the modem man. Religions which make for division, discord and disintegration and do not foster unity, understanding and coherence, play in the hands of the opponents of religion."[1] This quotation manifests adequately the reason of his distinct or eclectic interpretation of Hinduism. It is his universalist approach to religion which inclines him to see all humans as children of God. Moreover, according to him, it is the necessity of modem age and only such religions can thrive which can encounter modem challenges of humanity. Radhakrishnan's curiosity about Hinduism seems to stem from the fact that he was enrolled in a Christian college and was constantly on the receiving end of questions about the legitimacy of Hinduism which resulted in his reformative approach.

Radhakrishnan thus expounds that the religious and cultured Hindu or Buddhist considers other faiths and other forms of adoration with respect and sympathy. Faith for the Hindu does not imply dogmatism; he therefore does not criticize those who do not share his mindset and views. Radhakrishnan observes that it is not dedication or devotion but narrow-mindedness which leads to hardness and stubbornness. The Hindu stance and outlook regarding religion is that it is the matter of personal realization. Creeds, dogmas, words and symbols are just tools and means, not the end. Their role is to grant aid for spiritual growth which is strictly personal. The task of the spirit is to free itself from conventions and absorb itself into the true being. The one who sees the real will be elevated from all narrowness, relativities and contingencies.[2]

Radhakrishnan also views that there are various paths to God and man has to choose one of them. The growth and development in religion is an essential process. If one continues to pursue one's chosen path with faith, one will reach infinite reality, anyway. The dogma and the

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[1] S.RadhaKrishnan, Essays on Religion, Science and Culture, (New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 2008).
[2] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.314,317.

philosophy will not matter anymore than the language and the clothes human beings dress up in. For him, no formula no matter how comprehensive it is bears absolute value for itself alone. It has to be acknowledged as long as it produces spiritual fruits for those who use it. . The worth of such a formula exists in their suggestive quality, power to appeal and to express the mysterious. Hindu recognizes even the most childish creations of man because he perceives in them the endeavour of man to respond to the unseen spirit. The pattern and way of Hinduism is to emphasize the objective of spiritual growth and connect and bind worshippers of various religions together and withhold Hinduism from spiritual snobbery.[1]

He ascribes that Hinduism can be considered as first missionary religion but its missionary nature was different from proselytizing faith. It did not attempt to convert others on one notion because what counts more for it is conduct not creed. Hindu method of religious reform is basically democratic, as it allows each group to reach at truth by its own ways. Each group has its own historic tradition which is indispensable for its spiritual growth. For them their notions are lively forces though they may seem to others as childish. To smash their beliefs is to deteriorate their moral code, social law and contentment of their mind. These notions may have a history of hundred years, and are conditioned by the social structure; history has made them as they are, so they cannot be changed all of sudden. The only right method to refine the crude notions of any group is to alter the prejudice of mind. As a man can understand God according to his capacity and can view God as a kind of man he himself is, affected by his temperament, training and influence of environment. In this context, Radhakrishnan believes that the duty of a reformer is to cure the defect not to criticize the idea. He propounds to adopt the method of persuasion and suggestion instead of force and compulsion.[2]

Once again presenting Hinduism as an archetype, he elucidates that Hindu method of religious reform brings transformation in content not in name. Yahweh of Jews and Jesus of Christians is

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[1] Ibid.318,320.
[2] Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life*.37-8,42-4.

the same thing in the process of development. A Hindu will not ask one to drop ones loyalty to Jesus; it permits him to keep the name but reform the content. Hinduism accepted every god even animism and attempted to lead it to a higher state. Its modification method facilitates everyone to retain their past association, it is like students proud of their college, so Hindu does not believe in changing one's college rather it believes in raising the standards of every college and refining its ideals such that as a result, all colleges would be able to take its students towards the same goal. But, Hinduism does not confuse tolerance with indifference. Although it affirms that all revelations indicate to same Truth but it does not affirm that all of them are equally true to it. It only requires tolerating the lesser forms in the interest of those who are not able to transcend themselves at once. It believes to help these people to open their spiritual eyes and without interfering their natural way of thinking, provides them with sympathetic and helping hand to elevate their spiritual growth. Hindu faith does not believe in bringing a mechanical uniformity of all religions and believing in that one particular group or race is chosen people of God and their way or religion is central or superior so others should borrow from them or suffer in the hell, as it is inconsistent with the all-loving universal God. In the end what counts is conduct not the dogmas as religion is not correct belief but righteous living. He gives the example of Jesus that he never said his people to become Christian and quit to be Jew but just did his best to remove the impurities of Jewish religion. Because a true reformer expands the legacy of mankind not belittles it.[1]

Here, if we compare Radhakrishnan's way of dealing with the crude forms of beliefs like animism and ancestor worship and Maulānā Āzād's way of dealing with it, we shall find a stark difference of approaches. As according to the approach of Radhakrishnan, these are acceptable forms of belief in Hinduism as these are human efforts to know God. Whereas in the point of view of Maulānā Āzād, this types of belief would come under the category of deviation from the path of truth.

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[1] Ibid.44-6,47,49,50.

Radhakrishnan also explicates that it is very much true that there are defects and deformations in every society including, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist societies, none can be regarded as satisfactory. But it is wrong to look at others' defects as central to their religions while defects of one's own society as unimportant and peripheral, and that the former can be set right only by discarding their central principles whereas later would be set right by only a strict adherence to their central principles.[1] In the same manner he explicates that that diverse creeds are actually the chronological formulation of formless truth. He further expresses that

> The treasure is one and inviolable, the earthen vessel that contains it takes the shape and colour of its time and environment. Every historical view is a possible, perfect expression of the divine, capable, not in spite of but because of its peculiarity, of leading us to the highest.[2]

He allegorically describes religion as the thread of a violin, if is removed from its body, it will give a wrong tone. Moreover, to take apart man's religion from his life is like to separate "a vein of gold from the rock in which it is embedded."[3]

On the authority of Bhagavad-Gita, he maintains that to disturb the faiths of other people is like to take away their psychological or mental contentment. It is not appreciable that by suppression and compulsion, one paints all souls with one's own religious colour or doctrine; it would be a great loss to humanity. The repression of various religious traditions would turn this world into a poor place. Besides, he affirms that no one has right to criticize what one has not learnt or understood. Moreover, one is also not allowed to bury what is precious to some souls. He

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[1] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.323.
[2] Ibid.320.
[3] Ibid.320.

fortifies his standpoint by quoting Jesus who said: "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."[1]

He also views each religion is a living movement, so none of the form or stage can be taken as absolute or definite. None of the historical religions can be considered as absolute or immutable. He again presents Hinduism as an example and proclaims that according to Hinduism, the idea of chosen people incorporates all mankind. The Hindu sage thinks that the path to reality which he has chosen for himself might be too sharp, complicated and difficult for other people, many of whom would not be able to follow it. Such people should be guided to the same objective but through paths that suit their spiritual and intellectual capacities. He considers that every religion is tightly bound to its culture and can develop organically and that not every religion has attained the same level of truth and goodness. Besides, he insists that all have a right to articulate themselves. He also proposes that new religious interpretations are the need of the time in order to make adjustments among various religions. He claims that the Hindu way does not bring change by altering the label rather it believes in changing the life while keeping the labels.[2]

He affirms the fact that it is a natural trait of humans that they are prejudiced towards the words and symbols through which they clarify and express their experience, those who are strangers to one particular notion are naturally sceptical about it. Hinduism respects this emotion and produces the change in basics. He emphasizes that it is not possible to remake man overnight but through practical profoundness of experience, the ideas of a person can undergo a change. Beliefs which are irrational would adapt to the new environment in which they are brought. Falsehood carries in itself the seed of its decay, but it needs time. The Hindu teacher admits the crude beliefs of primitive peoples because he knows that their limited mind can only perceive truth in a narrow sense , but they keep on insisting to raise themselves to the comprehension of

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[1] Ibid.320,327-8..
[2] Ibid.330-1,356.

the highest Being, by making them realize not to prostrate before any being other than whom they are able to envisage higher.

Radhakrishnan proposes the idea of world community and says that to maintain a world community unanimity and not evenness among spiritual notions is required. He criticizes that although the purpose of religion is to be a binding force but as can be seen throughout history, religions have been used to keep people divided. He believes in the transcendental unity of all religions, as he elaborates that the devotee of any religion would ask humanity to rise to the conception of God above gods, who is above and beyond any image and concept, who can be experienced but not identified; who is essential for everything and holds the ultimate meaning of all existence. He emphasizes that this goal proves the transcendental unity of all religions which is beyond their practical diversity.

He further claims that the differences among religions are due to the ignorance of religious people about their own religions. All religious experiences share a common element and also share a foundation upon which the building of faith and worship is built. The form and shape of building although differs with each person but the experience of every individual is unique in its nature and adds in the spiritual richness of the world. He further elucidates that the unity of various religions cannot be achieved on the external level but it is to be realized on the inward level or in a spiritual way. The Hindu manner of accommodating the diversity lies in the attitude of seeing other religions as an aid to their knowledge of God or as various paths to divine revelation. Furthermore, he asserts that, "God does not refuse his truth, his love and his grace to any who in sincerity seek him, wherever they may be or whatever creeds they may profess."[1] His view of religions does not believe in a dead level of uniformity of religions, as Hindu scriptures confirm that men use words to get beyond words, to reach the pure wordless essence, so there

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[1] radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith*. 30,188-9.

cannot be uniformity among expressions of all experiences of God neither is it required as per Hindu belief.[1]

He prefers the secular approach towards all religions. He has used this word in a different sense.[2] He elucidates that "secular" does not mean to reject the existence of God or to deny the relevance of religion to life affairs; in actual it means that "no one religion should be given preferential status, or unique distinction at the cost of other religions. He believes in building up an environment of fellowship of believers by bringing them into solidarity with each other and this dynamic fellowship is founded on the principle of unity in diversity.[3]

Malcolm S. Adiseshiah in his article "Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: His Internationalism and Universalism" states that Radhakrishnan does not believe in division of human beings in narrow national, linguistic and religious groupings because for him, the reality is the unity of mankind. He further says that Radhakrishnan also holds, that war between men is against the destiny or nature of mankind, thus man should return towards his destiny which is universality. Furthermore, Malcolm S. Adiseshiah claims that Radhakrishnan's universalism is based upon a deep sense of humanity and reflective scholarship which stems from his wisdom.[4]

Radhakrishnan mentions that the study of different religions shows that there is a philosophical depth and elements of spirituality in all of them. There are minorities in every religion who think beyond the borders of their faiths, who believe in religious fellowship and knows that this is attainable through "an all-inclusive recognition that we are all the searchers for truth, pilgrims on the road that we all aim at the same ethical and spiritual standards."[5] In this context, he suggests

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[1] Ibid.30,188-9.
[2] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan:A comparative Study*.76.
[3] radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith*.202.
[4] Sudarshan Agarwal, ed. *Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*
A Commemorative Volume
1888-1988 (New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India private Limited, 1988).44,46.
[5] radhakrishnan, *Recovery of faith*.202,-3.

that "though cows are of different colours, their milk is of one colour; the truth is one, like the milk, while the forms used are many, like the cows."[1]

Radhakrishnan assigns that nature has created various races as possessing distinctive languages, religions and social traditions and has given man the obligation to maintain order in the human world and to figure out the pattern of life by which different groups can live peacefully together, tolerating the differences among them. The world is not a battlefield of warring nations but a common-wealth for various groups to help each other in finding peace and prosperity for all mankind. Although the world has been divided into many races, nations and religions, all are unable to come to terms with each other and to empathize with each other, because the expectation or desire that all human beings should believe and act in the same way, is the actual reason of conflict.

He elaborates that the shared goal of all religions is spiritual life. They share the same aim but differ only in making progress with the help of their various lights. In the depths behind the dogmas all religions are getting their strength from the same eternal source. Now through the effect of science and trade, the world culture is reshaping itself. All religions are endeavouring to interpret themselves in new expressions and are coming close to each other, whereas the universal factors on which all religions are agreed upon are emphasized. He is convinced that mankind is meant to be united. He explains that, "men are not separate like so many grains of sand. They are organically bound into a living unity, which only the spirit of love can energise."[2] He takes differences of dispositions or traditions as a source of increment in the richness of a whole. He also maintains that it is the degradation of humanity itself to become ignorant about the perception of unity of humankind and insight about the oneness of moral law.[3]

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[1] Siddiqi, *Iqbal and Radhakrishnan: A comparative Study*.74.
[2] Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*.54,55,81.
[3] Ibid.54,55,81,108.

Radhakrishnan also adds that Upanishads, Hebrew prophets, Catholics and other seers have different descriptions of God and to recognize diverse descriptions of God is not to fall into polytheism as these different descriptions do not describe what God is in Himself but simply how one sees Him. He maintains:

> The worshippers of Absolute are highest in rank; second to them are the worshippers of the personal God; then come the worshippers of the incarnations like Rāma, Krishna, Buddha; below them are those who worship ancestors, deities and sages; and lowest of all are the worshippers of the petty forces and spirits. [1]

The scholarly illustrations of religious mystery are symbolic and relative. Radhakrishnan explains it with an example. He said human beings are like children on the beach of an ocean, attempting to fill their pods with water of ocean; however they cannot drain the water of the ocean through their pods. Each drop that they get in their pods is a portion of actual water. Likewise human intellectual manifestations vary because they depict multiple angles of the same basic reality. [2]In other words he does not believe in a single religious metaphysics which is exclusively responsible for salvation.

Radhakrishnan suggests that one should understand that this world is large enough to hold a variety of people whose natures are distinct. For religious harmony, mankind must shift their paradigm, there would be no fraternity and solidarity as long as men consider themselves bearers of light and others as dwellers of darkness. "God wills a rich harmony and not a colourless uniformity."[3]For him, the Hindu solution for dealing with religious conflicts seems to be acceptable for the future as its spirit of democracy allows everyone to choose ones end. Religions are learning slowly to hold out hands of friendship to other religions around the world. He also shows his contentment about the parliaments of religious conferences of liberal thinkers of all creeds which are being held in order to promote mutual understanding and harmony. He

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[1] Radhakridhnan, *The Hindu View of Life*. 31-2.
[2] Ibid.31-2,36.
[3] Ibid.52,59,60.

mentions that by dint of comparative religion, people of different faiths learn to think about interrelations of different faiths. He repudiates the belief resulting from a dualistic attitude that the vegetation in one's garden are of God, while those in one's neighbours are weeds grown by the devil which one should destroy at any cost. He believes in the Hindu stance of acknowledging all religions as true and elevates them to the highest level.[1]

The aforementioned study about Radhakrishnan's reflection of religion depicts his views about the phenomenon of religious heterogeneity and the predicaments associated with this phenomenon. Moreover, this study also reveals his endeavour to traverse the division of mankind on behalf of multifarious religious creeds and his attempt to provide a possible scheme to create harmony among coexisting and thriving religions of the world. We shall analyze his views in great   detail   in   chapter   four   of   this   treatise.

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[1] Ibid.52,59,60,125.

Chapter 4

COMPARISON OF MAULĀNĀ ĀZĀD AND RADHAKRISHNAN

In this chapter an attempt has been made to focus on the similarities and differences between the descriptions of religion proposed by Maulānā Āzād and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Moreover, a comparison has been made about their world views regarding the causes of religious diversity and the way the two scholars have developed their models for peaceful coexistence. The ambit/scope of their proposals to accommodate religious heterogeneity in the contemporary world has also been addressed. A final discussion would entail, whether their models are limited in scope to their respective religious communities, or if they are acceptable on a universal level.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Prior to addressing the aforementioned issues, it is significant to mention that Maulānā Āzād and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan were contemporaries and were brought up in the same cultural milieu, the British India. It was the time of communal violence and religious disharmony. Against this background the prevalent thought pattern among the scholars and laymen of both thriving religions of subcontinent - Islam and Hinduism- was teeming with the idea of incompatibility of these two religions. And it had given rise to the environment of social distrust, bigotry and violence. Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan, belonged to religiously oriented families and had inherited an intense love of their respective religions, thus they tried to reinterpret their respective religions in order to avoid the social disharmony. The two were keenly interested in the field of religion; hence both got knowledge about their own religions as well as about other religions. Likewise they were well aware with the subject of philosophy.

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF RELIGION

Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan both have anticipated the social need of their time and emphasized unity of religion without ignoring the practical differences among various religions, and had mentioned them in their own distinctive styles. Both were cautious about the religious anarchy prevailing in their society and in the world. Thus, the two were convinced that as

religion is a vital element of human society, so by religious harmony societal chaos and turmoil can be avoided to a great extent. Maulānā Āzād has taken his outlook of religion from the Quranic text, which comprises of two complementary halves: *al-Dīn* and *al-Sharī'ah*. The former is comprised of those axioms or principles which are immutable essence, shared by all religions, and enjoy worldwide acceptance. These principles pertain to belief in one God and doing righteous deeds. If we analyze, the concept of one supreme God is present in all religions except the atheist philosophy, although the expressions and forms vary. This implies that, the concept of one God in Islam and Judaism is different from the concept of one God in Christianity and Hinduism. But the concept of one Supreme Being is commonly shared by them. In contrast, the *al-Sharī'ah* is the manifestation of *al-Dīn*.and pertains to ways of worships, traditions, and customs, which differ with the variation of time and space. Maulānā Āzād further elucidates his stance by defining *al-Dīn* as *Ma'rūf* which is recognized and agreed upon by all people. For instance, all human beings are agreed upon the fact that creator is one, that to speak truth is good and falsehood is evil. Similarly, all religions consider honesty as a noble attribute and dishonesty as bad one.

In above mentioned context, it is concluded that, Maulānā Āzād's notion of unity of religion incorporates both the philosophical and practical facets. The other slant of his view is the conceptualization of universal God supported by the Quranic verses. He is *Rabb-al-'Ālamīn* or Omni-Sustainer, *al-Rahmān, al-Rahīm* or all- Compassionate and *Mālik-i-yawm-al-Dīn* or all-Just. In other words, his God is characterized with the attributes of *Rubūbiyat, Rahmat* and *Adālat*. These attributes have been discussed in great detail in the second chapter of this thesis. Based upon his conceptualizations of *al-Dīn, al-Sharī'ah* and universality of Godhead, Maulānā Āzād establishes his notion of unity of religion and unity of mankind. He asserts that as vicegerent of universal God man must manifest in himself his Creator's attributes. For example, he should provide provision for all humankind by developing a balanced economical structure irrespective of race, colour, religion and nation.

In comparison with Maulānā Āzād, Radhakrishnan also appears to have an inclination and firm belief in the unity of mankind and unity of religion, however, his way of explaining religion is different from Maulānā Āzād's. The common idea in their models is the affirmation of the unity

of God. In addition, none of them has fallen prey to reductionism in defining religion. The two have dealt with religion as *sui generis* phenomenon which means it is unique and of its own kind. However the essential difference is that, Radhakrishnan's description of religion revolves primarily around the notion of religious experience which leads to self-evolution, social justice, kindness, and love. He says that the spirit of religion is neither in the doctrines or faiths nor in rituals and ceremonies rather it lies in the "deepest wisdom of ages which is the only guide through the baffling thought of modern turmoil."[1] For him religion is a desire to manifest in one's self the attributes of the divine. In the same context he adds that "religion is a dynamic process, a renewed effort of the creative impulse working through exceptional individuals, and seeking to uplift mankind to a new level."[2]

Unlike Maulānā Āzād, he prefers spiritual experience and wisdom of sages than creeds and scriptures as sources of religion. He does not take scriptures as something revealed by God, but as an interpretation of the divine experience of sage or prophet. Contrary to Maulānā Āzād, for him every religion has a founder, which entails, that religions are just perceptions of spiritual experiences of their founders or prophets instead of God's revelation. He also does not favour mechanical participations in religious ceremonies and does not give more importance to creeds and dogmas as for him creeds and dogmas vary according to taste and capacity of human beings. For him religion is not to have faith in creeds or doctrines, rather it is to live a spiritual life.

His concept of God which incorporates Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as three aspects of God implies that God is creator of all; He is the saviour of all and is all Just respectively. Here we can notice that although Radhakrishnan is not in favour of having religious creeds but he himself has proclaimed a religious creed as is mentioned in previous lines. This entails that it is not possible to have a religion without any creed. Radhakrishnan's idea of God is universalistic, not particularistic in nature. Although, he feels comfortable in having an encompassing view of acknowledging all types of descriptions of God, (including monotheism, henotheism, polytheism and agnosticism), he considers them endeavours of mankind in order to know God, and he is fully convinced about the oneness of God, which is proved from his classification of higher and

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[1] Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*.42.
[2] Ibid.78.

lower religions. In that classification, belief in one God is the highest level of spiritual experience. The major difference between Maulānā Āzād's and Radhakrishnan's notion of God is that Maulānā Āzād advocates an absolute notion which has no space for henotheism, polytheism, and agnosticism and he on the behalf of the Quran is convinced that these concepts are the result of deviation of men from the right path. On the other hand, Radhakrishnan explains the idea of God on relative basis. Furthermore Maulānā Āzād looks at the Quranic notion of God as words of God, not as mere perception or experience of Muhammad peace be upon him, whereas for Radhakrishnan all explanations about God are conceptualizations of human minds.

Maulānā Āzād's and Radhakrishnan's concept of religion though are universal in character but culminate into two distinct approaches. Maulānā Āzād's has inclusive approach to religion. This approach pertains to the superiority and finality of one religion but acknowledges the presence of some form of truth in other religions as well. Whereas Radhakrishnan's universalistic outlook is pluralistic towards religion. This implies that all mutually contradictory notions are valid and different religions are valid paths to the same goal. Maulānā Āzād's assertion of unity of religion implies that all revealed religions in their original form have the same essence which is *al-Dīn* or the path of faith and righteous deeds. The difference occurs only in its manifestation which is *al-Sharī'ah*, which includes rituals, ceremonies, form of worships and else. Maulānā Āzād establishes his views on the basis of Quran as has been mentioned earlier, because he believes in it as revealed, undistorted and final Word of God. He is convinced with the validity of Islam as final and all-encompassing religion. Maulānā Āzād advocates that all messengers came with the same basic teachings which were meant to unite human beings and create an environment of love and peace. Furthermore, these fundamental principles have been given to all nations through chain of prophets which were sent by God against distinct spacio-temporal demands. That is why according to him all religions hold partial truth. Nevertheless, many divine teachings of these religions have been distorted by their followers. Hence, Islam is the final and all-encompassing version of all revealed *al-Sharī'ah.* –The present study has also suggested that his inclusive approach deals with religious diversity on the level of faith. He has little to say about inclusive salvafic program. In addition, his inclusive approach has not compromised the distinct identity and validity of Islam.

In comparison with Maulānā Āzād, Radhakrishnan's account of religion endorses pluralistic approach, which accepts the validity of all religions and religious interpretations in spite of advocating contradictory truth claims. Radhakrishnan believes that there is more than one path to truth and all are equally valid. Unlike Maulānā Āzād, he has relative attitude instead of an absolute attitude in defining religion, which indicates that each manifestation of religion is according to one's taste and capacity and is valid for him. All human beings are distinct from each other, regarding their capabilities, tastes, temperaments and talents, which is the reason why their understanding of God varies. He prefers to incorporate and accept all descriptions. Likewise he does not share the inclusive view of Maulānā Āzād in finality of one religion, as his stance is that religion is still in making and it will be in making till the end.

This difference of standpoints in the previous statement, is mainly due to variation in their underlying ideas about religion as man-founded object and religion as revealed object. This difference is working behind their whole description of religion. Radhakrishnan advocates that all religions in their discrete forms are actually men's attempts in the course of history, to know God, thus none of them can be suggested as invalid as human beings are different in their tastes, mental capacities and their tendencies. Maulānā Āzād advocates the reinterpretation of religion according to the changing times, while keeping Islamic principles in mind. On the other hand, Radhakrishnan has totally left the matter of interpretation of religion upon sages' experience of Divine. However, he also proposes different stratum for various interpretations and consigns highest level to the divine experience of sages or prophets than lay man's experience. Although he affirms that all revelations indicate to same Truth but he does not affirm that all of them are equally true to it. His idea has a contradiction over here, which is if all notions are equally valid then what does it mean that all are not equally true? As the idea of validity of all religions on one hand depicts the pluralistic approach while his idea that they are not equally true to religion is inclusive approach. It seems that he is attempting to merge two paradoxical approaches. His claim that in the process of development of religion, one reaches the highest level of spiritual perfection where one can experience the God as one raises a question, that who will decide which level is the highest one, if all religions are founded by human beings or sages.

CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Concerning the causes of religious plurality, Maulānā Āzād mentions two types of differences among the followers: one is created by themselves which is the result of their deviation from the right path, while the other is truly present in commandments which he calls as *al-Sharī'ah*. He affirms that all religions essentially had the same fundamental principles but with the passage of time their followers have distorted most segments of their scriptures, so despite being revealed by the same God, they are no more valid to be followed in their present forms.

Though Maulānā Āzād is taking his notion from the Quran which is a final and undistorted book according to Muslim faith, but of course, it is not acknowledged as a final and revealed scripture by followers of other faiths. So the claim, that the followers of other religions have deviated from the right path and have distorted their scriptures might be a plausible reason of religious diversity for Muslim community but not for the believers of other faiths. However, his vision of dividing religion into *al-Dīn* and *al-Sharī'ah* seems acceptable cross-culturally.

In comparison with Maulānā Āzād's view, Radhakrishnan also discusses numerous reasons of religious diversity. He mentions that prophets who were the originators of religions came with message of unity of mankind. But traders of religion distort religion for their own motives. Then, he suggests other causes of diversity which includes; difference of symbolism and conceptions, prejudice and idea of chosen one, dogmatism and fanaticism, influence of history and geography, and claim of absoluteness and exclusiveness of one's faith. Here, though we can notice similarity among the causes mentioned by both Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan, there can also be noticed a certain subtle difference. This entails, that the underlying difference behind the whole idea of Radhakrishnan and Maulānā Āzād is, that according to the former the religions are mere human conceptualizations, whereas according to later religions are revealed objects. That is why Radhakrishnan courteously expresses that symbols and descriptions vary according to one's taste and capacity of mind. In conclusion, the difference between Maulānā Āzād's and Radhakrishnan's apprehensions of religion is relying upon their concept of religion as divinely revealed or manmade object.

MODELS FOR RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE

Subsequent is the comparison between proposals of Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan for harmony among religions. They both have attempted to present a universal model with the hope of its universal application to synchronize the multi-religious societies.

There are two levels to Maulānā Āzād's model. Philosophically or metaphysically, humankind must think of itself as creations of the same Creator. While practically, the performance of righteous deeds, which, according to the Quranic terminology is *al-Dīn,* can be understood as the voice of all religions. Maulānā Āzād has presented Islam as an inclusive model to deal with religious plurality while not compromising the validity of Islam as the final and true religion. However, it is to be noticed here that he does not elaborate Islam as a sectarian religion or the Quran as a book of the followers of Muhammad peace be upon him. Instead, he proposes a universalistic outlook of Islam and suggests that Islam has not come with new teachings as nothing new can be told about *al-Dīn,* rather it has come to remind mankind of the essence of all true religions. He elucidates that Islam means to abide by the principles of God. It represents the same *al-Dīn* or teachings which were sent by chain of prophets to all nations, which got distorted. That is why if followers of any religion deny any one of the messengers of God, this would imply a contradiction of claims. This obviously would count as rejection of the truth. Maulānā Āzād cogitates that all religious scriptures are God's revelations and were valid in their original form. However, he condemns the attitudes of religious elites, scholastic class and followers who went astray and altered their revealed books. Maulānā Āzād affirms the uniformity of religion in the sense of *al-Dīn* as it is one and same. However, *al-Sharī'ah* is the manifestation of the same *al-Dīn* and varies according to time, geography, and nations. This unity can only be based upon the notion of uniformity of *al-Dīn* as per his views. Every man is a product of his space and time, so in order to understand his model we must know the context in which he was presenting his model. The requirement of his time period was to create harmony among coexisting religions and to reject the sectarian or communal manner of interpreting religion. This perhaps is the reason of such an interpretation of religion by him. Furthermore his theoretical model for religious coexistence and inclusive approach do not compromise the

validity of religion. He also affirms the concept of oneness of God and has not validated polytheism, henotheism, and idolatry.

It is observed here that the above-mentioned model of Maulānā Āzād is limited in scope. As far as his concept of *al-Dīn* is concerned it can have worldwide acknowledgement, but the next part concerning distortion of scriptures cannot be appreciated by followers of other faiths, as all believe in their religion as valid and undistorted. Thus, such model seems less likely to create harmony in a religiously diverse society. But his concept of God seems more promising to create peaceful religious coexistence as his notion of God is universal in nature. And his manifestation of *Rubūbiyat* and *Raḥmat* of God can play a productive role in peaceful coexistence of religious communities.

Moreover, it is possible for the proponents of other religions to use Maulānā Āzād's framework to prove their own religions as an all-encompassing and final creed. However because Islam is chronologically the last revealed religion in comparison with other thriving religions of the world, Maulānā Āzād's frame of reference seems more pertinent to use for Islam.

In contrast with the aforementioned proposal of Maulānā Āzād , the framework proposed by Radhakrishnan for coexistence of religions is dominantly pluralistic in nature. For religiously diverse societies it can be a promising approach on a practical basis but it is not rationally or logically correct because in this approach the factor of validity of religion is compromised by asserting all contradictory truth claims as valid and man-produced. . All claims which are contradictory in nature cannot be logically accepted as equally true. Thus, he conceals this defect of pluralistic approach by improvising that all paths are equally valid; as all are human endeavors in the course of history to know the truth, but are not equally true to know God. For the sake of argument, the assertion that conflicting truth claims are equally valid seems illogical. It does not satisfy one's mind.

Moreover, a pluralistic approach to religion seems to consider all truth claims relative, whereas in life human beings cannot make everything and every principle relative. Absolute parameters are needed for the establishment of a system. Absence of absolute principles or parameters would result in space allowing for questions on the validity of revealed religion. If all revealed

religions are from the same source then why do they all have contradictory claims, because one source cannot reveal contradictory creeds? So Radhakrishnan has proposed an upside down explanation of religion in his model of accommodating religious diversity, which entails that all religions are founded by humans or are based upon human experiences. This line of argument destroys the credibility of religion as a category by asserting that all religions are human construction. This claim is flawed because if all religions are based on human experiences then who will decide that which experience is authentic and which one is unauthentic? Radhakrishnan himself admits that oneness of God is the highest description of reality. What parameters will define it if all are manmade? He also mentioned that religion is still in making and every religion is a live movement which means they are all under progress and hence none can be considered final. This idea would not receive universal acceptance as Muslims believe that Islam is the last version of the chain of revealed religions. Further, although Radhakrishnan has used the pluralistic approach but he and Maulānā Āzād both have construed their respective religious tradition in a universal manner and presented them as a model for religious coexistence and thus both are subjective in their approach. If a pluralistic approach demands mere acceptance of otherness then it is both logically and practically beneficial but Radhakrishnan uses the pluralistic approach by considering all contradictory claims as valid. This approach may seem promising on practical basis but cannot be acceptable cross-culturally as for Muslims and Jewish community monotheism is a core concept which they cannot compromise by accepting all notions about God as valid.

As a consequence, it can be inferred from this analysis that Maulānā Āzād and Radhakrishnan both have some commonalities in their notion of religion in regards to their ideas of God and reasons of religious diversity. However their approaches towards religious plurality are quite far apart from each other as both of them have established their model on different basis. Moreover, their different religious background and their respective schooling have had a marked influence on their thought patterns. Nonetheless, their proposals share the same goal which was the creation of peaceful religious coexistence for their society and the world.

In conclusion, the theoretical endeavours of both intellectuals for the elevation of religious harmony including their approaches seem promising for a religiously plural society. Hence, their

models –if not meant to proselytize others- can persuade the respective believers of their own religion to live in harmony with followers of opposite creeds, but not the believers of other faiths. Furthermore religious diversity is a sort of perpetual issue and for this any final accumulated proposal cannot be devised. Yet such attempts of universal interpretations of one's religious notions may help in transforming the attitudes of believers of one's own community.

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