

10. God, Man and the Universe

Introduction

The human speculative genius revolves round the idea of God, human soul and the universe in its attempts to understand man's origin, nature and destiny and the unlimited environment around him. The study of these three ideas constitutes a separate discipline called metaphysics.

These three concepts, God, human soul and the universe, have been differently interpreted in the history of thought and they are therefore, variously related. We are concerned with their interpretation so far it relates to interrelation of them.

We will study these concepts as under :

- I. What is the relation of God and the universe?
- II. What is the relation of human soul or man to God?
- III. What is the relation of the universe to man?
- IV. What is the relation of man to the universe?

1. God & the Universe

With regards to the relation of God and the universe, there are two views. Some hold God to be transcendent reality, a being outside the He is the only reality in the strict sense of underived being. He alone is the uncreated. He, at some specific time, say four thousand years B.C. according to the Bible, created or made the world and its animals, and man. He created man in his own image.

There is a second view according to which it is silly to think that the

universe was ever made at some specific time. It is eternally existent. God and universe are not two separate existences, one above the other or one preceding the other. Both are one, two aspects of the same reality. The universe was never created or made at some specific time. It is eternal. But the character of events and things in the universe is such that it cannot exist by itself. The things and events in it are contingent. They do not exist in their own right. My parents do not exist by themselves. They depend on their parents for their birth. Things have happened as they have happened. But they need not have so happened. If my parents had been ultra modern, as is the case in the West with large number of parents, they may as well have decided not to raise children. There is thus no logical necessity in my existence. Again, every moment of my existence is depend on innumerable factors in the physical and social environment. This dependent character of things and events must dependent on something whose existence does not depend on any other thing. So the universe must be dependent on something which exists by itself, that is whose nature is such that it necessarily implies his existence and this being is named God. To say, 'God does not exist' is to say that a perfect being lacks the perfection of existence which is contradiction in terms. Just as internal angles of a triangle being equal to two right angles, follows from the nature of the triangle, so God's existence follows from his perfections. So, God necessarily exists. To this second view the universe is eternal, but it eternally depends on God for its continuation.

In both views God has independent existence, whereas the universe has dependent existence.

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(i) God as Creator of Universe - However, both these views suffer from unanswerable objections. Let us take the first view that God made the universe at some specified time, say four thousand years before Christ, as Christians hold. Let it be any date. The question is why did God make the universe at that specific date and not earlier? When a man does a thing, we

can significantly ask why he did it now and not earlier. Suppose, a man builds a house now. We can significantly ask why he did it now. He can tell us or we can guess that perhaps earlier it did not occur to him, or that it did occur to him but he did not have the money, or that he had the idea of building a house and also had money for it but he did not have time to attend to it. Now that he is retired, he has built it. But there could be no obstacles for God for not making the universe earlier. It could not be said that it did not occur to him earlier to make the universe. This is in contradiction with God's omniscience and hence it is false to say that the omniscient being lacked certain idea at a certain time. It could not be the case that the universe of innumerable galaxies required power which God did not possess earlier. He is by definition omnipotent. It could not be the case that he did not have the time. He could not be limited by time. Further, when there was nothing except himself, there could be no busyness to stand in his way to make the universe. It could not be said that he did not desire or propose earlier to make the universe and when he did desire or propose it, he made it. The concept of desire is concept of lack, to desire a thing is to want something which is not with us and it is something to be achieved in time. But God is eternal, outside the category of time. Nothing can lack in the perfect being of God. So it is inconsistent to speak of the presence of desire in God. A non-temporal eternal desire has no meaning. So no obstacles of unfavourable conditions or lack of thought and desire could stand in the way of God making the universe earlier than later. To think of God making the universe at a specific time is to reduce God to the status of a finite human being and thus deprive him of the status of the creator of the universe.

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There is still greater difficulty in the idea of God making the universe at a specific time. Events and time are correlated. Events occur in time. Every event begins in time, lasts for a time and disappears after some time. An event is a happening in time. There can be no event outside time. Timeless event is contradiction in terms. In the same way there can be no time

without events. Time implies before and after. How to distinguish two moments of time as before and after without my present experience of 'now'. One moment of time is indistinguishable from another moment of time, except in our experience of them and our experiences are a series of mental events. My experience in one moment is different from the one in another moment and therefore one moment of time is different from another moment of time. Events and time exist in correlation. To a retired man Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday appear indistinguishable, for his life is eventless. But for a busy man of the world, one second is distinguished from another second for he would miss his plane if he delays by a second.

There are no auspicious moments in life. It is we who make them auspicious moments by the history of our life events. Time is neutral in character. The moment a great man is born is the moment when evil geniuses are also born and so the moment is neither auspicious nor inauspicious. We give importance to the date of birth of a great person for we have love or reverence for him. We transfer his importance to the date. To believe in auspicious time is to believe in astrology in the age of astronomy.

Time and events cannot exist separate from each other. There can be no events if there is no time. There is no time when there are no events. Time and events are eternal. There can be no beginning of time. Time is eternal. So change or events are also eternal. Now, when there was nothing, as theists believe, there was no time. To say that God made the universe at a specific time when there was no time, is to talk contradiction. It is therefore, held by some theists, to avoid the difficulties of how there could be time before there were events, that God made the universe along with time, not in time.

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(ii) God as maker of Universe - Again, the idea of a creator creating the universe out of nothing is not intelligible, for we have no experience of making something out of nothing. Thus, "God created the world out of

nothing" is a string of words. without meaning. The view that God made the universe is still unintelligible even if God made it out of some material. We have experience of making things. A mason makes a wall, a carpenter makes a table or an artist makes a painting and a scout makes fire. In every activity of making bodily activity is involved. It is inseparable from it. It enters into its very definition. We cannot think of an activity of making without including in it physical activity. Now, God is without body. How can the activity of making be possible for him. Augustine is the first, and one of the two greatest philosophers of Christianity. He read in the Bible that God made heaven and earth.' As a philosopher his logical mind questioned the whole idea of God 'making the universe. He expresses his puzzlement thus: "But how didst Thou make the heaven and the earth and what was the instrument of Thy so mighty work? For it was not as human worker fashioning body according to the fancy of his mind, in some wise able to assign a form which it perceives in itself by its inner eyes. How, oh God, didst Thou make heaven and earth?" Augustine knows as a philosopher that the Biblical sentence 'God made the heaven and earth' makes no sense. But he was one of the greatest devotees, too. He accepted this meaningless sentence as a mystery.

The philosophic mind is different from a devotee's mind. The attitudes of the two are entirely different and when one has both attitudes a tension is set up, decided in favour of the attitude more in accord to the total character of the person. We can read the tension in Augustine's mind in the above quotation and he silences his questioning mind as a case of his intellectual pride! Copernicus' views on astronomy ushered in the modern scientific period in human history. As an astronomer, he came to the conclusion, through mathematical calculations, that it is the earth that goes round the sun. But besides being a scientist, he was a Catholic priest, a devotee. He believed in the Bible as word of God. As a devotee it was a torture for him to hold a view contrary to his theological belief. So he did not propagate his scientific view. He himself suppressed the scientist in him in the interest of the devotee in him. He wrote in his book that his

views are just 'a story," the biblical view is the truth. After a hundred years, his closed book was opened and his story was found to be truth about the physical universe.

If one starts questioning or examining the beliefs of one's worshipful being, he ceases to be bhakta or devotee. A bhakta does not set up his intellect superior to the understanding of his worshipful being. A devotee holds, as Catholic religion holds, that once we start dismantling the religious edifice nothing will remain.

In philosophy we have some philosophers who philosophize within the limit of their religious beliefs. Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, did not draw such conclusions of his philosophy which went against his Catholic faith. But Spinoza who came after him, allowed his logic to carry him where it did, little caring what beliefs survived his logic.

However, Copernicus' acceptance of Biblical view that sun goes round the earth was a belief in what was a meaningful statement though false but Augustine's acceptance of the Biblical view that God made heaven and earth was not false but "meaning less", as meaningless as to believe that triangles run races and circles eat vegetables or that triangles are moral and circles are immoral or that two was born on Monday and three was born on Tuesday. We know that the predicate or activity of running or eating or moral or immoral conduct does not apply to triangles and circles and it is absurd to think of concepts, like two or three as things as we say Ramesh was born on Monday and his cousin Kamlesh was born on Tuesday. Since God is bodyless it is meaningless to think of his doing the bodily acts of making earth, air or water. Hence to believe that God made the world is to believe not in something false but meaningless, it is to believe in a string of words like triangles are sweet.

Finally, it is thought that God as maker of the universe is outside the universe, as we know in human experience that the maker is outside the object made. But to consider God outside the universe is to consider the universe as somewhat completed and limited totality. In everyday life we do

speak of 'outside', 'beyond', 'above'. We say that a particular land is outside the municipal limits, or he can practise outside working hours. When we say that a particular land is beyond the municipal limits, we mean that what is outside the limit is still another piece of land or what is outside working hours are still hours. But we say God is transcendent, outside and beyond the universe, all specifiable dimensions are ruled out in advance. Thus we cannot meaningfully speak of God as transcendent, as beyond the universe.

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(iii) God as Immanent in the Universe - The second view of the relation of God and the universe is free from all the objections to the first view. The objections on the basis of "time", 'making' and 'transcendent' are not applicable to it. This view holds the first view to be too anthropomorphic, reducing God to the status of man, only a bigger one.

This second view holds that the universe is eternal. It was never created. However, it is not self-existent. It is dependent on God. Universe and God are not two distinct and separate existences. They are two aspects of the same reality. God, man and Nature are one, for the same soul pervades them all. The immanence of God in Nature and man is the Pantheists' view according to which there is indwelling of the divine in all things, big and small, humble and superior. There is the presence of the divine in all existences. This thinking is the delight of the mystics and the romantic poets. The father of romanticism, Wordsworth, thus describes how God indwells in Nature and man.

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting sun,
And the round Ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:

A motion and a spirit that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,

And rolls through all things.'

(Tintern Abbey)

Since Nature is interfused with divinity, it is, says Wordsworth

The anchor of my purest thought, the nurse The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul Of all my moral being." (Ibid)

This view evokes the feeling of unity of all things. It engages us in the experience of oneness with the infinite. It hushes all the discordant notes of division, and disharmony. It inspires us with feeling of universal love. It brings peace within and without us. It is intellectually more satisfying than all forms of dualisms.

However, this immanent view of the relation between God and universe is faced with its own difficulties. The universe is in time, in ceaseless change. There is change, not only from moment to moment but within each moment there is change, for time is continuous, a part of a moment is itself moment. The universe is a world of becoming, a ceaseless flow of events, God is outside time, and hence outside change. He is eternal, unchanging and perfect in his character. Now, the question is how to make intelligible the relation of the beings in time and the being in timelessness, i.e. temporality and eternity. They must be intelligibly related to constitute two aspects of one reality.

Philosophers confess their failure to make this relation intelligible. Plato is the first Western philosopher to accept inability to make intelligible the relation of the timeless being and the temporal beings when he says in his Dialogue, Parmenides: "I can see no way out at the present moment." The

situation remains the same today after twenty five centuries. Bradley makes statement of failure of modern philosophy to make the relation intelligible, when he says, "Why there are appearances (the world of changing things and events) and why appearances of such various kinds, are questions not to be answered. We do not know why and how the Absolute (God) divides itself into centres or the way in which so divided it still remains one. The relation of the many experiences (world) to single experience (God) and so one another, is in the end beyond us." The Indian philosopher, Sankara asserts that it is impossible to explain through logical categories the relation of the Brahman and the world. We cannot understand how the ultimate reality is related to the world of plurality, since the two are heterogeneous and every attempt at explanation is found to fail.

So whether God is thought of as transcendent, creator or maker of the universe, or God is thought of as immanent as one of the two aspects of the universe, logic finds both views unacceptable. We have to choose. As Shankara put it, we cannot deny the world of perception, the world of change and becoming. If so, we must reject the interpretation of God or Brahman as unchanging, eternal being. We must seek explanation of the universe in the ceaseless process of change.

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(iv) God as the Process of Evolution - It was when human thought took change as the very stuff of the universe, that science was born. The simplest form of change is motion. Physics discovered for us the laws of motion which are mathematical in character. Galileo thus clearly puts how physical science goes about its work: "Philosophy is written in that vast book which stands ever open before our eyes, I mean the universe, but it cannot be read until we have learnt the language and become familiar with the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language and the letters are triangles and other geometrical figures without which it is humanly impossible to comprehend a single word?" Galileo reduces

universe or Nature to mechanics of motion. What is real in Nature is that which is measurable and thus quantitative.

Though science rejected some of the cosmological beliefs of the Bible, it was not in disharmony with Christian theism. The science philosophers declared that Nature and not Bible is the book of God and to understand nature was to understand God's created world. Science discovered the order and laws in Nature and this was all to the glory of God. Science reduced Nature to machine and machine needs God as its mover. The human body, instead of being considered a living organism was considered a machine and soul was its director. The first sciences, i.e. astronomy and physics, strengthened the theistic medieval culture in which science started its career. God and soul were safe in a materialistic universe.

With the rise and development of biology in the nineteenth century, a new picture of the universe emerged.

The mechanistic interpretation of the universe recognised existence of novelty but not of rise of new unique qualities in the universe. In $2+2=4$, four is a novelty, it is something of a discovery for a nursery child or the first man of mathematics. But inspite of its novelty, it is identical with that of which it is the result. Nothing has come out which was not already there.

The philosophers of this period of science, when science interpreted Nature as mechanics of motion, reduced life to chemistry and chemistry to physics. A living organism, inspite of its novelty of behaviour, was thought reducible to an automata, explicable by the laws of physics. Gassendi, as leader of materialism held that mind was a peculiar kind of structure of material elements. It came to be believed that brain secretes thoughts as gall-bladder secretes gall.

This reductionalistic interpretation of life and consciousness was a failure. A living organism could not be assimilated to a machine. A machine is essentially a finished product or closed system. Until it is finished or completely made, it does not function. It is only when it is complete in all its

parts that it functions. When it functions, it does not have to do with development which means having new function. But a kitten while functioning as a young one grows, adding new functions, and it goes on growing till it is a full cat.

Biology went further when it took to the study of varieties of animals, past and present. In our ordinary limited experience we find generative process of species to be repetitive. The calf of the cow has similar character to its parents' organism, kitten is like the parents of which it is off-spring. Within our limited experience organic species reproduce their fixed specific forms of life. Due to relative stable process of reproduction, the generative process was considered no different from the mechanical process. However, progress of biology brought to focus the fact that the universe is evolutionary in character. The study of fossils by the geologists gave evidence that in the past ages animals and plants were very different in their qualities as compared with the present species of animals and plants. It showed that the generative process is not merely repetitive. A species of animals is found to give rise to another species different from it in marked characters as man is different from the mammals through whose generative process he came into being. A machine cannot improve itself. The only kind of change which a machine can produce, is to wear out or break down.

Thus biology focused the fact that life is evolutionary and thus shattered the view of the universe as machine and encouraged the vision of the universe as evolutionary. The philosopher Spencer speculated that the whole universe is in the process of evolution. He visualized that life has emerged from non-living bodies. The living cells have evolved into plants and animals. From one of the branches of mammals man has evolved. This speculation about the evolutionary character of the universe became scientific truth through Darwin's study of the animal species. His studies were limited to the world of the living. His genius was to interpret the rise of complex forms of life from simple forms of life through the process of chance variation and natural selection. It is today that experiments are

being conducted to reproduce in microscopic form the physio-chemical conditions before the rise of life and thus produce life from physio-chemical conditions. The breakthrough in the decodification of sex cells demonstrates that new forms of life can be multiplied. What was once left to slow creative process in Nature can be accelerated by man.

Darwin provided such incontrovertible evidence for the facts of evolution that evolutionary perspective became a part of the understanding of man. Every thinker, whatever be his field of study, whether it is science, art, literature, social institutions, or political structures, brought evolutionary perspective to its study. Even philosophers of religion took to the interpretation of God in evolutionary perspective.

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Sri Aurobindo is a religious philosopher of India. He gave an evolutionary interpretation to ancient Vedantic philosophy of Brahmanvada. According to him, life has emerged from matter. But this could be possible because matter had potentiality of life in it, i.e. life was present in it, for the effect cannot contain what is absent in the cause. There cannot be more in the effect than what is in the cause. If there is more in the effect, than what is contained in the cause, it means part of the effect has no cause, which is absurd. This is the mathematical interpretation of cause-effect relationship. Two plus two is equal to four, Three is contained in $2+2$, 4 is contained in $2+2$. But 5 is not contained in $2+2$. What is not contained in the cause cannot appear in the effect. On this mathematical interpretation of cause effect relationship, since man has evolved in the gradual evolution from matter, matter must have self-consciousness implicit in it, for man possesses self-consciousness. According to Sri Aurobindo what we call matter is Brahman gone unconscious. It is the ascent or evolutionary process of the insentient Brahman which has evolved itself in living cells in plants, animals and human species. Man's consciousness is incomplete. It is ego-centric. So evolution of Brahman has still more steps to take. It has a long journey to cover to evolve species of cosmic consciousness. Let us

hear Sri Aurobindo himself: "An original creative or evolutionary power there must be; but although matter is the first substance, the original and ultimate Power is not an inconscient material Energy, for then life and consciousness would be absent since inconscience cannot evolve consciousness nor an inanimate force evolve life. There must be, therefore since mind and life are not that, a secret consciousness or Mind consciousness, an Energy more essential than the material Energy. Since it is greater than mind, it must be a supermental consciousness force; since it is a power of essential substance other than matter, it must be the power of that which is the supreme essence and substance of all things, a power of the Spirit. There is a creative energy of mind and a creative Life-force, but they are instrumental and partial, not original and decisive... if there is to be an entire transformation, it can only be by the full emergence of the law of the spirit, its power of supermind or gnosis must have entered into Matter and it must evolve in Matter."

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Teilhard de Chardin, though a Catholic priest, spent his life in the study of vanished species of animals. His study as a palaeontologist led him to give an evolutionary interpretation to Christian theology.

The high positive correlation between the complexity of brain with consciousness in man became focal to Teilhard's thinking on evolution. As brain gets more and more complex in animals, there is development of higher consciousness. Man has the most complex brain and he has the highest developed consciousness. These facts gave Teilhard foothold to assert that all constituents of cosmos from elementary particles to human beings have an inner conscious life. Everything has a bodily and psychological aspect. In his *The Phenomenon of Man*, (pp.71-72), Teilhard says:

"When I speak of the 'within' of the earth, I donot of course mean those material depths in which only a few miles beneath our feet-lurks one of the most vexatious mysteries of science and the chemical nature and the exact

physical conditions of the internal regions of the globe. The 'within' is used here to denote the psychic face of that portion of the stuff of the cosmos enclosed from the beginning of time within narrow scope of the earth. In that fragment of sidereal matter which has just been isolated, as in every other part of the universe, the exterior world must inevitably be lined at every point with an interior one." This within of things constitutes already a pre-life: a pre biosphere, as Teilhard calls it.

According to Teilhard there is two-fold development in evolution - the physical organism becomes more and more complex and group life grows larger and larger. There is the twin process of differentiation and integration. Teilhard describes at length the evolution of man, from the earlier type to the birth of civilization and history. Man shows the greatest capacity for group life. When there is a stable group there is group consciousness which influences the thinking and behaviour of individuals. Individuals in a group think and behave in similar way as if they constituted a hyper-person. Today due to communication, different cultures are coming into contact. There are regular festivals of other cultures in different countries. This augurs well for the emergence of world culture of world consciousness. Parallel to unification of culture there will emerge a hyper-personal consciousness at a point which Teilhard calls Omega, a point of convergent integration. Omega is not identical. with God, but rather is God in so far as he determines the direction and goal of cosmic evolution.

Prof. S. Alexander is a secular philosopher distinct from Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard who are theological thinkers. He questions the assertion of Sri Aurobindo that the inanimate matter is Brahman gone unconscious or Teilhard's assertion that there is psychical face of every constituent of the cosmos. These assertions rest on mistaken presupposition about how to explain the emergence of consciousness in man. We can put Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard's point of view in the words of the biologist turned philosopher C.H. Weldington. In his book *The Nature of Life* he asserts that something must go on in the same language as we would describe our self-awareness because it is inconceivable that self-

consciousness originated from anything which did not show something in common with it. The self awareness cannot be constructed out of non-mental terms.

The conclusion of these three thinkers can be shown to be false in this way. There are two ways in which a thing is explained. We explain a thing when we give the parts of a thing and how these parts function. We offer this form of explanation when we explain a car, a clock, a human eye.

But we also explain a phenomenon when we give its cause. It is true that self-awareness cannot be analysed into material parts and explained mechanically. This only means that self awareness is not a physical phenomenon. It does not mean that it cannot be explained physically, i.e. it is not caused by physical conditions. Some injuries or damages to the brain cause certain psychological states and we do not for that reason refuse them as explanation of them.

Prof. Alexander points out that new qualities do emerge as a matter of fact through combination of elements which do not possess them. When oxygen and hydrogen are unified through electric spark, water is formed. Now, water has properties which oxygen and hydrogen do not possess. So life can emerge from physical conditions which do not possess life or characteristics of life. Hence it is not logically necessary to pre-suppose the existence of life and mentality, implicit in matter, to explain the rise of life and consciousness through evolution from inanimate objects.

"Nature is neither permeated by mind nor is it a mechanism in the hands of its mechanic, it is a self transforming system, essentially temporal, whose development is best understood through the analogies of biological evolution or human history."

Prof. Alexander related evolution to space-time. Space consists of points and time consists of instants. Infinite plurality of points-instants are the ultimate constituents of all that exists. The first emergence of points-instants is matter inherently possessed of motion. Matter is followed by life.

Life took the form of vegetation and animals. From a branch of mammals, man has emerged. Each emergent level of beings is qualitatively different from which it has emerged. Just as life is qualitatively different from any activity belonging to the material of the organic body, so mind is qualitatively different from any activity belonging to life as such.

This evolutionary process is theoretically infinite. The evolutionary process is engaged in transcending the mind level of mankind. It is striving for next higher level of quality as yet unrealized and this unrealized state is what is God or deity. God or deity is always in the making, never made. Perfection and evolution are logically incompatible. Alexander interprets God both as the initial impulse and ever-receding destiny of evolutionary process.

It is clear from the view points of Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard and Alexander that the concept of God has undergone change. It is being interpreted in evolutionary terms like other phenomena of the universe. God is the evolutionary process, ever in the making and never made.

It is time to drop the word "God altogether in the interest of clear thinking. When we retain a word and give it a new meaning there is always the risk to return to its old meaning and get into confusion. Even though Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard interpret Brahman and God in evolutionary terms, they slip back into old thinking too. The Brahman of Sri Aurobindo is in time in the form of insentient matter, and is in the process of evolution, taking the form of life in plant and animal and human consciousness, yet he is held to be sat chit anand. He is at once eternal and perfect and in process of evolving higher and higher consciousness. To consider a being both eternal and in time is a case of magical thinking and not logical thinking. In the same way Teilhard's view point cannot escape from being pantheistic.

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(v) Evolution and Universe-We reach the position that universe is ever in the making. To understand it is to understand the evolutionary process. Instead of considering the relation between God and Universe we need to

consider the relation between evolution and universe. The process of evolution was misinterpreted in the concept of God. There are processes in Nature which make for creation and protection of beings. The processes leading to the cooling of the earth, the composition of gases which make life possible, the emergence of different species leading to man and the emergence of social life, the institutions of education and welfare, the rise of international organisations for development of world services in health and education, are multifarious processes of evolution which are collectively called evolution today, which were earlier hypothesized as God. A theist goes into praise of God for providing man with sun, fresh air, food, beauties of Nature, and providing him with understanding to know the laws of the universe, build social life, language, and culture. In his appreciation of conditions of protection and progress he went lyrical, hypothesized them earlier in terms of gods and later as God, eternal and perfect being of love and compassion. If we demythologize God, and reject him as perfect and eternal supernatural being, we see the truth that God is unfortunate construction for evolutionary process.

So our first question as to what is the relation of God and universe can be reshaped as what is the relation between the evolutionary process and universe. We hold that the relation of evolution and universe is best understood on the pattern of Alexander's emergent evolutionism.

II. God and Man

Similarly, the second question we raised: What is the relation between God and man can now take the form: What is the relation of the evolutionary process and man. We now know that man is product of evolutionary process and hence his origin and nature is manifestation of the evolutionary process so that his destiny is to adjust himself to the evolutionary process of the universe. This position takes us to the study of man in relation to the universe.

Universe and Man

To start with, man thought of himself as of one piece with the natural world of air, fire etc. The primitive man saw that a man is dead when he ceases to breath. That whose absence causes death must be the principle of life or soul. So he defined his principle of life or soul as breath. Etymologically soul means breath. In some religions soul is defined as the breath of God. A modern religious sect says that God made clay models of man and woman and breathed into their nostrils and they became alive and that is how human species came into being. Soul has also been defined as fire. We know how when body goes too cold, it ceases to exist. This shows how man, to start with, identified himself with the natural world.

Gradually, man came to handle situations in his environment. He constructed tools from the materials around him. We speak of the stone age, the iron age and today we speak of the steel age. Similarly, man no more depended on hunting for his food. He grew food. He domesticated animals and used them for his needs. These practical controls of environment to meet demands of life gave rise to the reflection in man that he is distinct from his environment. His principle of life or soul is not breath. He can think but breath cannot think. The essence of his soul is not breath but thought. Soul is not body, because 'body cannot think and I can think.' 'I' and body have nothing in common. Body has length, breadth and depth but cannot think. Soul has no length, breadth and width, but can think. From the point of view of qualities, body and soul are world apart. Thus man's reflection created unbridgeable gulf between his soul and his body. He distanced his soul from his body. He alienated himself from body.

Man's reflection advanced further. Our mental life is made up of perceptions, affection and conduct. We see things, hear sounds, touch hard and soft surfaces, taste things as sweet and bitter. All these perceptual experiences of seeing colours, of hearing melodies or harsh sounds, tasting sweet, sour and bitter things etc. are ever-changing. Similarly, we sometimes feel hungry, sometimes desire sex satisfaction. Our desires

change as we see new and new articles advertised on T.V.

Our life passes from childhood through boyhood to reach manhood. In each stage of life we have different experiences. In spite of changes of experiences we recognise ourselves as the same person. I think I am the same person who was once in school, then went to college and then became a university teacher. There is something which remains self-identical through all changes of experiences from childhood to manhood. This something self-identical is 'me' or 'I', or soul. It does not change. It is thus not in time. So I am a soul outside time, eternal in my being. 'I am' is entirely other than my changing experiences of perceptions, instincts, and desires and the external world. As a soul outside time, I am no more part of the natural world of ceaseless changes. My origin is not in the natural world. My origin can be a being who is himself eternal and perfect. My origin is God. I am not citizen of this earth. I am citizen of the world of God. I am in an alien world when I am in the natural world. My destiny is to develop vairgya (detachment) from the natural world and my bodily desires to make possible my journey to the city of God. By considering his principle of life or soul as transcendent in character, man developed the ethics of detachments. He felt his bodily pleasures to be sinful, for they attached him to what was not his essence. As Plato put it every pleasure nails the soul to the body and makes it bodily. Man's detachment took the form of taking distasteful food, putting ashes in his food, like St. Francis. He denies himself the pleasures of married life, for they bind him to the social and natural world. He even suspected his aesthetic pleasure in seeing enchanting beauties of Nature. Every attraction of the changing world is felt as fatal for soul's destiny to have communication with God and attainment of salvation. The scientific knowledge is ultimately based on sense experiences. Sense experiences mislead us about the ultimate truth of existence in the supernatural being of God and one's soul. The man of religion therefore closes his eyes to the light of scientific knowledge and meditates that Brahma satyam, Jagat mithiya, Jiv Brahmiva naparah (Brahman alone is real, the universe is unreal and the individual soul is no

other than the Brahman). This view of human essence and destiny was pre-evolutionary based on the pre-supposition that what is real is eternal, outside time and change. Change was condemned as moving image of eternity. It is this pre-supposition that is responsible for the transcendental view of God or Plato's world of ideas.

We have already seen in the case of relation between God and the universe how it is found impossible by philosophers to make intelligible the relation between eternal and non-temporal God and the changing universe, that is, how eternal God could act in the temporal world. We found how modern philosophers of religion and philosophy interpret God as evolutionary process.

The same logical unintelligibility haunts us when we consider human soul as eternal and unchanging reality. If human soul is eternal and perfect, how could it get entangled in body of ceaseless change. There is no explanation by the philosophers who hold soul to be eternal and non-temporal. Their explanation is that the relation between soul and body is beyond human thought. The expression 'beyond human thought' gives a certain respectability to the unintelligibility because the expression satisfies man's sense of mystery and thus conceals the failure of the view held. In fact, the expression 'beyond human thought' has no content and hence it has no meaning.

Further, we have seen how this mistaken view of soul being eternal makes for a shrivelled personality. To deny body its rightful satisfaction is to starve, distort, disfigure and mutilate it. All pleasures are not sinful the pleasures of eating nutritive food are innocent; the pleasures of sex give depth to companionship and love to the married partners; the pleasure of aesthetic appreciation of beauty in Nature, art, and literature, verges on divinity; the pleasures of scientific investigations of the natural world are supreme. Is it worth sacrificing all these satisfactions or excluding them from life for the sake of union with the undifferentiated one or Nirguni Brahman? Or who would consider it a better ideal to exclude the biological,

aesthetic and scientific pleasures from the religious pleasure of union with God, if he exists? A single value, however excellent, cannot be higher ideal than a gestalt of values which also includes it. An ideal state of life is a complex of values in an aesthetic order of satisfaction and achievement.

Secondly, mankind had fallen into the mistaken view about its person and destiny by the false view that man's definition was his differentia. Man's differentia is his capacity for thought. But his total person is not just thought. His total person includes his biological urges and psychological desires. Again, his total person is not just his sense of self-identity, for self-identity is meaningless without being accompanied by diversity of experiences. "I am the same 'T' " is incomplete unless I add "who was once a child, a boy, and now an adult or who was once in school, then in a college and now a lecturer." "I" has no meaning apart from the history of events in my life.

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IV. Man and the Universe

Once we understand ourselves in terms of our total person as psychophysical unit, and interpret our psyche or soul as product of evolution, we are rehabilitated in the natural world.

Body is as much part of 'T' as soul. The bodily urges are as much mine as the urge to know things. The bodily urges have as well moral claims on me as my urge to think and know truth. I need to own and respect my bodily urges as I need to own and respect my urges to investigate and understand. My body and soul are in complete inter-dependence, and co-partners in the adventure of life. There is no ideal of life for man in which the two do not share to enrich each other. Both are parts of the ideal or sadhana of life.

When we take this true and total perspective about our person, we develop fellowship with the denizens of the universe. We see our fellowship with the animal world in our common instincts with them. We enjoy food. So do our cats, our dogs, our cows, buffaloes, horses. We raise children,

love them, protect them and nurture them to independence, so do animals raise young ones, love them, protect them and nurture them to independence. We love conditions which help us in life and hate adverse conditions that threaten our life, place, position and status in life. So do animals love those who feed them, hate those who tease them. Fellowship and friendship are based on common interests in life. If we own and respect and love our instincts and emotions connected with them in ourselves, then alone we can respect and love the animal life, otherwise our love is patronage which is another name for superiority complex and ego satisfaction.

Modern psychology helps us to greater fellowship with the animal world for it reveals to us how much our psychology is animal psychology, and how much what passes for civilization and virtuous conduct, is mere coating over instinctive satisfactions. Again, if we realize how much time and energies of the best of us are spent in the service of our physiological, and biological satisfactions, we will feel how much common life we have with the animal world and how much we need to befriend the animals and consider them as fellow citizens of the earth.

We are fortunate we experience pain and pleasure for this characteristic gives us feeling of fellowship with the plant world. Earlier, men of greater sensitivity, say the poets, expressed in literature, their fellowship with the plant world. But today it is experimentally shown how plants have feeling of pleasure and pain. Plants show even appreciation of music. It has been experimented that when music is regularly played in a field of crops, they grow faster than they do when the music is not played. Such experiments are at par with the experiments in a bank in England. When soft music was played in the bank, the speed and efficiency of work by the bank clerks was found to improve.

If we disown and disdain our sensitivity to pleasure and pain, we cannot feel fellowship with the plant world, for fellowship is based on common values of life.

Our fellowship with the physical universe is crystal clear. The breath in me is identical with the atmospheric air. The water in my body is the same which is in the rivers and oceans and clouds in the sky. In comparison to saying 'Brahman and I are one' it is more true to say that I and the physical universe are one', for the same elements are in both of us. I and the animal world are one, for we show common life of instincts and emotions. I and the plant world are one for we both share sensitivity to pleasure and pain.

The evidence of fellowship with the animal, the plants and the inanimate world is further supported by the fact that we enjoy association and companionship with them. A clear morn is a boon enough to be born' rejoices a poet. It is not our body which enjoys swimming in a river or sea, but our total being is steeped in satisfaction.

Amongst a wild forest or in an orchard of fruits or an exhibition of flowers, we share and touch the stillness of their beauty. Our community of life with animals is so large that they can be substitute for human companionship.

Why do we enjoy our companionship with the animals, the plants and the physical environment? Evolution explains it. Evolution tells us how the inanimate world is the ground floor or cause for the emergence of plant, animal and human species. The inanimate world is the mother and constantly maintains the life of the plant, the animal and the human worlds. Therefore all the four orders of existence in the universe, the human, the animal, the plant and the physical worlds, are members of the same family. No wonder we enjoy each other's fellowship.

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Evolution enlightens us to the truth that our species exists because plant and animal species have contributed to its emergence. But for the physical, the plant and the animal worlds, our species could have never seen the light of the day. We as a species are under obligation to all the three orders of existence for our emergence and continued existence. Our existence depends from moment to moment on them. The response of our moral

consciousness ought to be that we must exert to the maximum to serve them, further their progress and evolution. Since we are conscious of the process of evolution and know our relation to the past history of evolution and the future perspective of evolution, we carry the responsibility to escalate evolution. We have the genius for it, wherewithal for it. We only need our heart to be in the right place. We want to stay away from doing harm to the three orders of existence. We want to keep the physical environment free from pollution and maintain physical contours of lands and mountains as beautiful as they are. We want to preserve fauna and flora. We want to build society of justice and benevolence. But our selfishness, our greeds, our lusts, our ego loves which would not let us keep our hand from harming them or doing good to the three orders of existence and even to our own kind. Our consumerism has led us to pollute air and water, destroy fauna and flora. Our destruction of our environment has reached a point where the existence of our own species is in danger.

How can man be saved from the brink of disaster on which he is unstably poised? We have seen how Sri Aurobindo, Father Teilhard, Prof. S. Alexander hold to the view that man's consciousness lacks cosmic vision. At present he is too egoistic and passion-ridden to bring about harmony in the four orders of existences. Evolutionary process by its own logic is egged on to the next stage of development.

Huxley points out that the further evolution is to be in terms of individuals and not species. It is men of genius who will deliver humanity of ignorance and evil in it. We know how through scientists our understanding is being illuminated about the nature of the four orders of existences. We are being fashioned into a new species through them.

In the field of religion the man of genius has come in the person of Devatma. In him, evolution has developed a character which can help man to be delivered of his egocentricity and greeds. He is himself above low-loves and low-hates. Over and above it, he has love for truth and goodness. His love of truth gives him complete impartiality to develop understanding

of the soul life. His love of goodness commits him to help man to be delivered of his evils in him in the form of selfishness and greeds and to evolve altruistic feeling for all the four orders of existences. In rapport with him man gets light and strength to give up his low-loves and low-hates and cultivate altruistic feelings of protection and service of the four orders of existences and thus becomes capable to serve the four orders with his knowledge and nobility.

If the reasoning presented is accepted, it can be seen that in the world of religion it is better to study inter-relation of Devatma, man and universe, for evolution runs through all three of them.