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## UNIT 2    ROLE OF REASON AND FAITH

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## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

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The main objective of this unit is shed light on the intricate problem regarding Faith and Reason in Gandhian philosophy of religion. Generally by 'reason' is meant the act or faculty of reflecting, thinking and making inferences by which we arrive at a judgment or solution. On the contrary, faith generally, means believing something to be true and being convinced of it not because one's own reason has arrived at it but because one relies upon the credibility of another. In other words, Reason one's attempt at arriving at the truth by one's own thinking, while in Faith the testimony of someone else is taken to be sufficient for being convinced of the truth of something.

Both Reason and Faith are considered to be valid sources of knowledge. But on what grounds? What is the relative merits of the two methods of arriving at truth? These are the questions of importance for epistemology. The same questions are raised much more in philosophy of religion. Gandhi also, in his philosophy of religion, validates both Reason and Faith as authentic sources of religious experiences.

To estimate Gandhi's validation of these sources, first it may be necessary for you to get at least fairly historical overview of the concepts as developed in the classical philosophical traditions. In the light of that background then it may be easy for you to take up Gandhi's views on Reason and Faith, each separately for consideration. Finally, we will discuss the relative merits of the two. So by the end of the Unit you will be able to

- Clearly define what reason is and faith is
- Understand what Gandhi has to say on the role of Reason and Faith in religious matters
- Determine the relative merits of Reason and Faith in the Gandhian perspective

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## 2.1    INTRODUCTION

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Even in our day-to-day experiences both Reason and Faith play a vital role. Not only do we reason out by ourselves in order to arrive at the correct truths in life

but we also heavily depend upon the trustworthiness of people and believe the truth of many things on their testimony. This is much more applicable in matters of religion. It has been a matter of interest among philosophers and theologians to discuss about the relative merits of each and explain the interrelationship of both. For, religious truths are usually said to be backed up by some kind of divine authority. They are usually presented in the literary forms of narrative, parable, or discourse, the truth of which people are supposed to just believe. But, rational beings as we are, normally it is not a blind faith that is expected of us. So most religions allow and even encourage some kind of rational examination of their beliefs.

The key philosophical issue regarding the problem of faith and reason is to work out how the authority of Faith and the authority of Reason interrelate in the process of justifying a religious belief, or establishing a matter of faith as a matter of truth. Gandhi, being a profound thinker and a religious man, he too has dealt with both Reason and Faith quite exhaustively. It is instructive to consider Gandhi's serious considerations of each separately and the relative roles played by them in human civilization.

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## 2.2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

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### Reason

The word 'reason', derived from the French word '*raison*', which itself from the Latin word '*ratio*' refers to the distinctive ability of human mind to predict effects as based upon presumed causes. It is this ability which makes human beings different from the other beings. According to the ancient Greek philosophy Reason was the unique power for the pride and glory of the human beings so they defined human being as a rational being.

In medieval period greater importance was given to Faith as a source of knowledge than the role of Reason. According to St. Anselm for instance, Reason is not to pass judgment on the content of Faith but to find its meaning and give an explanation of its content. But Francis Bacon, the father of modern scientific logic, considered reason as something supported by observation about the world outside.

Thus there grew a conflict between the approach of medieval philosophy and spirit of renaissance. Hence Rene Descartes emphasized the use of Reason as a distinct tool of philosophical enquiry to free philosophy from religious dogmatism on one hand and empirical arrogance on the other. As a culmination of this trend as it were, Emmanuel Kant replaced revelation by Reason as the primary authority. He also made the same Reason the prime source of ensuring one's own freedom.

To sum up,

Reason may be defined as the human capacity for knowledge, with a threefold aspects:

- 1) On the theoretical level there is the intellectual capacity to understand all that exists in some theoretical framework and in a holistic manner. It may be called **Pure Reason**

- 2) At the practical level, there is the capacity to grasp what one ought to do and what one ought not to do, thereby impelling the will to do the good and refrain from doing evil. This is identified as **Practical Reason** and is used in ethical and legal perspective.
- 3) Apart from these two, there is also the human capacity for empirical investigation, thereby acquiring scientific knowledge of the world outside, it may be called **Scientific Reason**.

### Faith

The word 'faith', derived from the Latin '*fides*', meant an active assent to the truth claims of another person, relying upon trustworthiness of that person. So faith is based not on the intrinsic evidence: mediate or immediate, but on the authority of another. In ordinary experience, Faith involves a kind of attitude of trust or assent, an act of will or a commitment on the part of the believer. Religious faith involves some kind of an implicit or explicit reference to a transcendent source. The basis for religious faith usually is understood to come from the authority of super-natural revelation.

However Faith is said to be rational if the one on whom one believes is already known to be competent and trustworthy. Faith has been considered as authentic and certain source of knowledge though it's not a compelling one. Faith is, therefore, the human capacity to believe in the truth of something which may not necessarily be rationally empirically verifiable by one's own reasoning capacity, but solely relying upon the trustworthiness of another witness. Every act of faith has two aspects: cognitive and volitional. It is cognitive in so far as it is affirmation of truth and it is volitional in as much as it is act of trust.

### The Relation between Faith and Reason

It has been a question of epistemological importance to discuss the relative merits of Faith and Reason. Both are inbuilt in the process of acquiring knowledge even in everyday life. It is true that human beings, in as much as self-conscious beings, are known to be distinct by their intellectual power of reasoning. However, Faith also plays an important role in acquiring ordinary knowledge, because every day-to-day truth is not acquired through objective personal verification, but is believed to be true.

Faith, as an act of the will, is indispensable for scientific knowledge too, because in every advance from sense data to perception, or from hypothesis to its observational verification or in inventing a machine, there must be not only an insight but also a sustained effort of the will to carry the process through to completion. In short then faith and reason are inter-twined sources of knowledge. Many philosophers and scientists like Karl R. Popper have acknowledged that faith as trust is fundamental to scientific knowledge.

The intertwining relationship of Faith and Reason can be seen much more in religious knowledge. In every theological reflection reason is playing an essential role because it applies an appropriate relational framework of thought to interpret the testimony of faith or revelation. Thus the early Fathers of the Church chose platonic philosophy and the scholastic philosophers of Medieval Age chose the Aristotelian philosophy. The contemporary Hermeneutics depends on the existential analysis of Heidegger as the rational framework in which God's word

would be theological understood. Especially when we deal with transcendent beliefs regarding human nature, its destiny, good and evil, God’s existence or non-existence, we are made aware of the limitation of reason and of the need to go beyond the empirical verification. These transcendent beliefs themselves are aides for human beings to attain transcendence. This trait of transcendence which is a defining human characteristic is a constituent part of human search for a reasonable vision that will make sense of human life, giving it the dignity that belongs to it.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How is faith different from reason as a source of knowledge?

2) How are Reason and Faith intertwined with each other in acquiring scientific knowledge?

2.3

ROLE OF REASON IN GANDHI’S THOUGHT

Gandhi, like Rousseau, thought that modern civilization with its inducement to ambition and rivalry has stifled the human self. It deploys reason in the service of deception so much that conscience either connives at collective crimes or is extinguished by external powers. It transmutes reason into cunningness and induces people to change the wants into needs and crave for material happiness only. Thus modern human being is perverted; human dignity is undermined and even depraved by many strategies of hypocrisy. All this is possible only because the faculty of reason is itself ambiguous in its nature.

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Gandhi establishes the ambiguity of reason by taking some concrete cases. Those who indulge in drink and free love put forward some reason or other to support their evil acts. Why? Because their reason is blurred. On such occasions, it actually follows instincts. In the midst of temptations, Gandhi says, reason is a poor criterion. It can clearly be said that it is immoral to drink liquors except as medicine. Similarly, it can be proved by cold reason that it is absolutely wrong to see any women lustfully other than one's wife. However counter arguments have been advanced to support alcoholism and adultery. By way of promoting eating, drinking, sexual immorality etc., one may argue that these functions are as natural as other functions of the body hence it is our duty to develop those animal faculties to fulfillment. So according to them virtue and vice are figment human imagination, rather than absolute need of morality.

This only shows how reason can be abused. In the same way counter arguments have been advanced against the very existence of God – the sum of all that **is**. This ambiguity of reason can be resolved only by faith. So faith according to Gandhi is that which transcends reason and it is this which has been the only Rock of Ages. "My faith has saved me and is still saving me from pitfall. It has never betrayed me. It has never known to betray anyone". Coming to their specific argument, Gandhi argues thus: If we were to put humans in the same category as the brutes, the above said functions may be considered natural. However, the human beings and the animals are two different species. Not everything that is natural to the brute can be natural to humans. Progress is characteristic of human alone not of the beasts. Reason, the power of discrimination, belongs to the human species alone; humans do not live by bread alone as the brute does. The humans use their reason to worship God and to know him and regard the attainment of that knowledge and the *summum bonum* (supreme good) of life. To those people whose end and aim is realization of God or knowledge of God, even the function of eating or drinking can be natural only within limits. They will be considered as necessary solely for sustaining the body and not for the sake of enjoyment. So restraint and renunciation have always been the watchwords in respect of these functions. Therefore, it is not the duty of humans to develop all the functions to perfection or fulfillment but their duty is to develop Godward faculties to perfection and to suppress those of contrary tendency. We have within us both good and bad desires our duty is to cultivate the good desires and to suppress the bad ones. If we fail therein we should remain brutes though born as human beings. All religions have declared human birth as a rare privilege – a state of probation if we are found wanting, according to Hinduism, we should have to be reborn as beasts.

Hence it is clear that one has to use the power of reason with great responsibility. And there is a necessity to train this faculty of reason. This faculty in the children is no doubt, asleep but we should gently coax it and awaken it and teach children habits of discipline so that their, reason being freed from the control of their senses, would become their guide right from childhood in this connection Gandhi advocates the five *Maha vratas* as a necessary equipment's to train the reason: *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), *Satya* (Truth), *Asteya* (Non-stealing), *Aparigraha* (Non-possession), *Bramacharya* (celibacy). For the reason to be proper guide to conduct the senses it has to be pure and obedient the senses must be brought to control and subjected to the severest discipline so that they will be willing instruments at the hands of reason instead of reason being their helpless slave

Such a trained reason, according to Gandhi is a supreme criterion for deciding even the value of scriptures. The *sastras* are there only to supplement reason and not to supplant it. They would never be pleaded to defend injustice or untruth “That which is opposed to the fundamental principles of morality, to trained reason, cannot be claimed as *sastras*, no matter how ancient it maybe. Elsewhere he said I would reject all scriptural authority if in conflict with sober reason or dictates of the heart” Gandhi would not regard as revelation the collection of versus under one cover as *smrtis*. He rejects as interpolation everything in *Smrtis* or other scriptures that is inconsistent with truth, non-violence, or other fundamental or universal principles of ethics ” I exercise my judgment about every scriptures, I cannot let a scriptural text supersede my reason they are inspired but suffer from a process of double distillation: 1) They come from a human prophet 2) through commentaries of interpreters. Nothing is directly from God, so cannot surrender my reason while I subscribe to revelation.

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## 2.4 ROLE OF FAITH IN GANDHI’S THOUGHT

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Gandhi was very concerned about the lack of faith among the educated youth of his time. In an address to the students’ community of Mysore, once, Gandhi confessed to a deep sense of sorrow that faith was gradually disappearing in the student world. “When I suggest to a Hindu boy to have recourse to Ramanama he stares at me and wonders who Rama may be. When I ask a Mussalman boy to read the Koran and fear God, he confesses his inability to read the Koran and Allah is a mere lip-profession”. As against such a situation, Gandhi upheld that the first step to a true education is a pure heart. If the education we get turned them away from God, he said “how it is going to help you and how you are going to help the world?”

There are subjects where reason cannot take us far. We have to accept things on faith. Faith does not contradict reason but transcends it. It is a kind of sixth sense, which works in cases, which are not within the preview of reason, faith is like the Himalayas which cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove them from their foundation. So also, faith is something that is stable and is able to solve many problems, not suppressing the reason but sanctifying it.

Faith is necessary even in everyday life. It is a requirement also for the scientist though they claim that whatever they say can be verified, yet one must have a living faith to follow the ways which they prescribe for realizing those facts. On the basis of their experimental method they do think there is nothing apart from the body and the material. From this they even they conclude faith in God is unnecessary for the progress of humanity. For such people even the weightiest argument is of no avail. You cannot make a person listen to finest music and appreciate it if he has stuffed his ears. So also, you cannot convince about an existence of living God someone who is not ready to be convinced. However, I have a living faith in a living God even as I have a living faith in many things that scientist tell me. The scientists say that their truth can be verified if one follows the ways prescribed by them for realizing those facts. This is precisely what *rishis* and the prophets also speak. Anybody who follows the path they have trodden can realize God. Unfortunately, we don’t want to follow the paths nor do we take the testimony of eye-witnesses.



Fortunately, the vast majority of people do have living faith in a living God they cannot argue about it. And they will not. For them “God is”. Are all the scriptures of the world old women tales of superstitions? Is the testimony of the prophets or *rishis* simply to be rejected? Is the testimony Chaitanya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Tukaram, Dnyadeva, Ramdas, Nanak, kabir, Devendranath Tagore, Vivekanand, all modern men as well educated as the tallest among the living ones? This belief in God has to be based on faith which transcends reason

Human nature is distinguished only by the soul, the image of God. It is special creation only to the extent it is distinct from the rest of creature. Human nature is fully realized only when it ceases to be beastly or brutal. One may say human is first animal and human only afterwards the so called soul is figment of imagination but Gandhi’s retort is as follows “A species is differentiated from the rest from its special characteristic. A horse is not a first animal and horse after he shares something in common with other animal but he does not shed horsiness yet remain animal. If its special virtue is lost its general status is also lost similarly if a man lost his status as man and began to grow a tail and walk on all fours, and lost the use of his reason he would have lost the status of man and also as that of animal neither the other animals will claim him as theirs so man will be classed as animals so long as he retains his humanity.

To this some people may react by referring to the Australian savages. In their ancestors time they were just like animals they had no communication except through gestures. They had no art, no literature and no science. Even now animal passions are lurking in the so called civilized people. Our ethical code is a thin layer only. However Gandhi says that the Australian savage was fundamentally different from the brute because the brute will always remain brute while the savage had the capacity to develop the fullest height attainable. It is natural for the brute to be brutal but it will be resented by us if that adjective is applied to us, ethics requires the humans to our kingship with apes and other animals precisely because of it, it imposes a unilateral obligation upon us: Because we alone are made in the image of God. It is fact that some of us do not recognize this status. But it makes no difference except that they don’t get the benefit of the status just like a lion brought up in the company of the sheep may not know its status and so does not receive its benefit yet it belongs to it. The moment it recognizes it, it begins to exercise its power over the sheep in contrast no sheep masquerading as a lion can ever attain the status of a lion to prove that man is made in the image of God it is not necessary to show that all men admittedly exhibit that image in their own persons. The great religious teachers have exhibited the image of God in their person and that is good enough.

Worship of God in the sense of acknowledging a power above and beyond us is as natural as our possession of lungs or the fact of blood circulation. Ignorant people may not acknowledge it but it is a fact. So also some people may not accept the existence of God but that does not make it false some others may worship god in crude forms bowing before the stone but Gold is gold even in its crudest form it only needs refinement so also the worship of ordinary people

Any search is possible only with some workable solution if we grant nothing we will find nothing in the case of religious search also people, since the beginning of the world have proceeded upon the assumption that if we are the God is, and that if God is not there, we are not there thus the belief in God is co-existence

with the human kind such a faith in the existence of God is treated as a fact more definite than the sun is. This living faith has solved the largest number of puzzles of life it has alleviated our misery it sustains us in life it is our one solace in death. The very search for truth becomes interesting and worthwhile because of this faith. We embark upon the search because we believe that there is truth and that it can be found by diligence search and meticulous observance of the well-known and well-tried rules of the search there is no record in the history of the failure of such search even the atheist who have pretended to disbelieve in God have believed in truth the trick they have performed is that of giving God another, not a new name his name are the legion. Truth is the crown of them all.

Faith in God if it is of any worth implies the believer to resign oneself to God's will, and not be anxious about the future. If we have faith in God, we simply would not come to know beforehand how He may dispose of us. It is enough for us to hold ourselves perfectly in readiness for whatever happens. We are not allowed to know what tomorrow has in store for us and our best conceived plans have a knack very often of going awry. The highest wisdom, therefore, is never to worry about the future; but to resign ourselves entirely to His will. In this quotation it is clear that Gandhi gives an emphasis on faith and considers it as more important than the ordinary reason, which is in fact limited, and therefore calls for the role of faith. If we have faith in God we simply would not care to know beforehand how He may dispose of us. It is enough for us to hold ourselves perfectly in readiness for whatever happens. We are not allowed to know what tomorrow has in store for us and our best conceived plans have a knack very often of going awry. The highest wisdom, therefore, is never to worry about the future but to resign ourselves entirely to His Will.

Especially for a *Satyagrahi*, Gandhi made living faith as crucial. "There is no other strength for a *satyagrahi* but that of his unflinching faith in God. He has no other stay but God. One who has other stay or depends on other help cannot offer *satyagrahi*. He may be a passive resister, non-cooperator and so on but not a *satyagrahi*. That faith is of little value which can flourish only in fair weather in order to be of any value it has to survive the severest trials. The month before the inauguration of Civil Disobedience campaign the Satyagraha Ashram was put into severe trial. The test came in the form of epidemic of small pox. It carried away three promising children of the Ashram. Gandhi of all persons had to go through heart searching: whether to vaccinate the inmates, which he had been against it because he had considered it as harmful in the end, little short of taking beef. He had instead tried only hydropathy and earth treatment with success in numerous cases. But that month seemed to fail. Does this mean that I must therefore lose faith in the treatment and faith in God? Or will I preserve in my faith? Finally, Gandhi said openly in the prayer meeting: I want you to understand that this epidemic is not a scourge, but a trial and preparation to chain us more strongly and firmly to faith in God. It is as clear to me as daylight that life and death are but phases of the same thing, the reverse and obverse of the same coin. What is life worth without trials which are salt of life? What is Ramayana but a record of trials a, privations and penances of Rama and Sita. I want you all to treasure death and suffering more than life and to appreciate their cleansing and purifying character.

Here again Gandhi relies upon the faith of great people who had stood the trial. The greatest men of the world have always stood alone. Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus,



Mohammed. In his flight Prophet Mohammed was accompanied by his faithful companion Abu Bakr. As they were chased by numerous enemies, at one point Abu Bekr exclaimed to the Prophet: “I am trembling to think of our fate. Look at the number of the enemies. What shall we two do against these heavy odds?” Without a moment’s reflection the Prophet rebuked him “No Abu Bakr, We are three, for God is with us”. Citing the invincible faith of Vibhisan and Prahlad, Gandhi to student community of Rhastriya Vidyapith at Banara: “I want you to have that same living faith in yourselves and God”

By this Gandhi did not mean that all should believe in the God that he believed in. He readily granted to others thus: “May be your definition of God is different from mine, but your belief in that God might be your ultimate mainstay. It may be some Supreme Power or some Being even indefinable, but belief in it is indispensable. To bear all kinds of tortures without a murmur of resentment is impossible for a human being without the strength that comes from God. Only in his strength we are strong. And only those who can cast their cares and their fears on that Immeasurable Power have faith in God.” Taking the allegory of the elephant king, Gajendra and the alligator Graha as an example, Gandhi said: The moral of the story is that God never fails his devotees in the hour of trail. The condition is that there must be a living faith in and the uttermost reliance on Him. The test of faith is that having done our duty we must be prepared to welcome whatever He may send—joy as well as sorrow, good luck as well as bad.... If mishaps do come he will not bewail his fate but bear it with an undisturbed peace of mind and joyous resignation to His will. It was only when the tip of his trunk left above water, he invoked God. And God too heard his prayers and helped him. So Gandhi could powerfully say: “When I am weak, then I am strong”

**Check Your Progress II**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Why does Gandhi think that reason is ambiguous and how can it be trained?

2) Why does Gandhi say reason is supreme authority in judging the shastras?

3) How does Gandhi establish faith as a sure means of knowledge?

4) What are the ways by which one can test faith ?

2.5 RELATIVE MERITS OF EACH

Some have held that Faith and Reason are two separate sources in conflict with each other over certain propositions or methodologies. In this conflict which is to prevail over the other? Regarding this there has been disagreement among philosophers. John Locke held that though faith and reason have “strict” distinct provinces, faith must be in accord with reason. Faith cannot convince us of something which contradicts our knowledge. But propositions of faith are, nonetheless, understood to be “above reason.”

But others like Kierkegaard would prioritize faith even to the point of making it irrational. While dealing with ‘leap of faith’ (the act of believing in or accepting something intangible or unprovable, or without empirical evidence), Kierkegaard stressed that the core part of the leap of faith, is the leap. Using the famous story of Adam and Eve, he says, Adam’s leap signifies a change from one quality to another, mainly the quality of possessing no sin to the quality of possessing sin. Kierkegaard maintains that the transition from one quality to another can take place only by a “leap”. This leap is thus associated with “blind faith”. Nevertheless, given the conception of a God who unconditionally accepts humans and that faith itself is a gift from God, one reaches the highest moral position when a person realizes this and, no longer depends upon oneself, but takes the leap of faith into the arms of a loving God.

The second of philosophers have maintained Faith and Reason are two distinct sources, having no conflict at all between the two. Neither will produce contradictory or contrary claims which are competing over those of the other. If at all there arises a conflict between their claims then, then they say that that conflict is only apparent, and it should be resolved on the side of faith if the claim in question is a religious or theological. It should be resolved on the side of reason when the disputed claim is with regard to empirical or logical matters.

There are still other philosophers, most notably the logical positivists, who have denied the very existence of a separate area of thought or human existence rightly governed by faith. According to them, only those ideas and statements that are accessible to thorough verification by reason are meaningful. This position of the contemporary philosophers has presented a challenge to religious thinkers to explain how the admittedly non-rational or trans-rational matters of religion can be said to hold meaningful cognitive content.

One significant reaction against logical positivism stemmed from Ludwig Wittgenstein. He argued that there is something unique about the linguistic framework of religious believers. Their language makes little sense to outsiders. So they need to share in their form of life in order to understand the way the various concepts function in their language games. The various language games form a kind of “family resemblance.”

So according to Wittgenstein those who demand an impartial way of assessing the truth value of a religious claim are asking for something impossible. Science and religion are just two different types of language games. This demand to take on an internal perspective in order to assess religious beliefs commits Wittgenstein to a form of incompatibilism between Faith and Reason. Though this entails that religious beliefs are essentially groundless, one can point out that in everyday life too there are such countless beliefs as the belief in the permanence of our objects of perception, in the uniformity of nature, and even in our knowledge of our own intentions. Wittgenstein claimed that proofs for God’s existence have little to do with actual belief in God. They neither show us God in the way a sense impression shows us an object, nor do they give rise to conjectures about him. Experiences, thoughts—life can force this concept on us. He did think that life itself could “educate” us about God’s existence.

Taking the clue from this, Hick argues for the importance of rational certainty in faith. He posits that there are as many types of grounds for rational certainty as there are kinds of objects of knowledge. He claims that religious beliefs share several crucial features with any empirical claim: they are propositional; they are objects of assent; an agent can have dispositions to act upon them; and we feel convictions for them when they are challenged. Nonetheless, Hick realizes that there are important ways in which sense beliefs and religious beliefs are distinct: sense perception is coercive, while religious perception is not; sense perception is universal, while religious is not; and sense perception is highly coherent within space and time, while religious awareness among different individuals is not. In fact, it may in fact be rational for a person who has not had experiences that compel belief to withhold belief in God.

From these similarities and differences between faith-claims and claims of reason, Hick concludes that religious faith is the non-inferential and improvable basic interpretation either of a moral or religious “situational significance” in human experience. Faith is not the result of logical reasoning, but rather a profession that God “as a living being” has entered into the believer’s experience. This act of faith situates itself in the person’s material and social environment. Religious faith interprets reality in terms of the divine presence within the believer’s human experience. Although the person of faith may be unable to prove or explain this divine presence, his or her religious belief still acquire the status of knowledge similar to that of scientific and moral claims. Thus even if one could prove God’s

existence, this fact alone would be a form of knowledge neither necessary nor sufficient for one's faith. It would at best only force a notional assent. Believers live by not by confirmed hypotheses, but by an intense, coercive, indubitable experience of the divine.

Now, Gandhi speaks of faith as flowing from the transcendental trait that is essential part of human nature. It is constituent dimension of human nature. Unless we exercise it and bring to completion, the so-called human has the danger of degrading to a level far below the level of animal passions. However, Gandhi assigns Reason its due role. He even gives a supreme authority to Reason as far as it has a role in assessing the moral dimension of the religion, and even in deciding the truth-value of what went in the name of Revelation. At the same time, Gandhi accepted the ambiguous character of human reason, as it is caught between the animal instincts and the image of God. As such reason cannot be relied upon as a defining characteristic of being human. So he emphasized the need for reason to go beyond itself and give room for transcending to the realm of faith. He also equally stressed the need of training Reason and controlling it. In bringing out the transcendental dimension to fulfillment, only Faith has a role to play and reason has to play a role that is subservient to faith and supportive of faith. In this, Gandhi has made room for faith to realize the human transcendence.

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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Both Faith and Reason are two authentic sources of human knowledge. With the emergence of self-consciousness in the human species, the faculty of Reason begins to operate especially in determining the choices. However, we cannot reason out all things on earth, nor wait to start to act until we have reasoned securely for the choice of a particular action. There is another faculty called Faith. It is the precondition of all systematic knowing, purposive doing and transcendent living. Gandhi accepted validity of both each in its respective fields and each penetrating into each other's, and complementing each other.

Gandhi set great value upon reason's drive to attain goals, which render people's lives ever more worthy. Even in the realm of religion, Gandhi sees Reason as very helpful to purify mythological notions of God and the superstitious elements of religions and reject interpolations of scriptures. In this, he sees that Reason could contribute to the understanding of divine Revelation. Religion therefore need not entertain any fear of Reason, but should seek out Reason and have trust in it.

But at the same time Gandhi equally emphasized that Faith could build upon the Reason and brings it to fulfillment, by shedding light on the possible abuses from Reason and could free it from its fragility and limitations. But he was clear about the patent inadequacy of perspectives in which the ephemeral is affirmed as a value and the possibility of discovering the real meaning of life is cast into doubt. That is why, the modern civilization, according to Gandhi, stumbles through life to the very edge of the abyss without knowing where it is going. It is satisfied with preferring quick success to the toil of patient enquiry into what makes life worth living, no longer looking to transcendent dimensions of human existence. It is there Gandhi to openly and boldly points out the misdirection of the modern civilization and corrects it by giving due importance to Faith, without at the same time ignoring the importance due to Reason.

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## 2.7 KEY WORDS

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Reason, the three kinds of Reason, Faith, Ambiguous role of Reason, Training of Reason, Vratas, Living faith, Rshis and Prophets, leap of faith, Logical positivism, the language games, transcendence,

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