

Chapter – I

Introduction

Man's life travels mainly through three episodes which are definite truths- birth, living period and, yes of course, the inevitable death. The mysterious phase of the life is the living period which needs to be solved by every human being. Is his life only to get birth, live, act and die or there is something more to be gained? Before man, the universal problem, which needs to be investigated, is the goal and purpose of his life. Man always seeks answer for the questions like what he lives for and what his purpose in this life is, and these questions haunt man beyond his routine life. Persistently, man makes every effort to attain the purpose and goal of his existence by the means of multiple experiences of his life's voyage. However, "it is not a question of embodied life, but it the nature of the soul to be always active. Without the presence of the spirit soul, the material body cannot move. The body is only a dead vehicle to be worked by the spirit soul, which is active and cannot stop for a moment" (Prabhupada 205). Hence, it is not about this visible and fleshly body but about the immortal and perpetual rider which is called Truth, the ultimate Reality, and Atman, Soul or Self. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "the unreal is the body and the real is the soul" (Bhagavad-Gita 119). In the Bhagavad-Gita, Lord Krishna says to Aurjuna about the undying nature of Atman or Soul, "He is never born, nor does he die at any time, nor having (once) come to be will he again cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain" (Radhakrishnan, Bhagavad-Gita 121). Hence the knowledge of the self or soul or atman is considered as the highest kind of knowledge.

“The *Upanisads* asks us to know the self: *atmanam viddhi*. *The Bhagavadgita* says that of all types of knowledge the knowledge of the self is most important. We must achieve a profound understanding of what is meant to be a human” (Radhakrishnan, Religion 90). Yognanda in his book *Journey to Self- realization* defines Self- Realization as, “the knowing- in body, mind and soul- that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it comes to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God’s omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing” (Yognanda, Wikipedia).

Radhakrishnan remarks that Atman or Self is “uncleavable, he cannot be burnt, he can neither wetted nor dried; he is eternal, all pervading, unchanging, immovable; he is the same forever” (Radhakrishnan, Religion 101). The body and the mind are not the true identification of Self. For when any part of body gets injured, the Self remains as it was, unharmed. Thus, the explorers of Truth avoid the sensible and visible fugitive body as an illusion. Man makes immense efforts for his bodily comfort and the more importance is given to sensory instinct instead of Self. That’s why, when a man experiences hardship or joyousness he either grumbles that his body parts are in pain or charged with happiness but not his Soul or Self. Consequently, the body and the Self are considered two different units. Since, the Self is dressed up into the body, it stays uninfluenced. A huge part of manpower is used to get worldly pleasures and man runs after materialistic things to gratify his senses. But as it is said that no one can get gratification forever, man’s quest for constant happiness always left unfulfilled. Radhakrishnan comments,

The individual is, in a sense, created by God after his own image and in His own likeness, but he has his creaturely form, we do not know our own possibilities. The individual ego

is subject to *avidya* or ignorance when it believes itself to be separate and different from all other egos. The result of this separatist ego- sense, *ahamkara*, is failure to enter into harmony and unity with the universe. This failure expresses itself in physical suffering and mental discord. Selfish desire is the badge of subjection or bondage. When the individual shakes of this *avidya*, he becomes free from all selfishness, possesses all, and enjoys all (Radhakrishnan, Basic 151).

Everyman carries the eternal bliss or happiness within him, but he remains unaware of this very truth. But when a man is in deep sleep, neither is he dreaming nor he is conscious about his body, then he is in relationship with infinite state. As mentioned in Wordsworth's poem

Tintern Abbey,

. . ., that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affection gently leads us on, -
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul (42-47)

In this state of meditation, man enjoys the ultimate peace and when man realizes the peace, he secures immortal happiness.

The individual's mind is like the storm in the thoughtful ocean which restrains him from realizing his true self. But when the storm sets down and the water is still, it displays the heavenly stars of one's self. According to Aurobindo, "Man is a mind imprisoned, obscured and circumscribed in a precarious and imperfect living but imperfectly conscious body" (Aurobindo, Hour 81). "He has a body and a mind which belongs to him, but his self is not derived from any

of these, though it is at the root of them all” (Radhakrishnan, Basic 149). Aurobindo also precisely remarks,

The self that thou hast to become, is the self that thou are within behind the veil of mind and life and matter. It is to be the spiritual, the divine, the supreme, the real *Purusha*. For that which is above the mental being is superman. It is to be the master of thy mind, thy life and thy body; it is to be a king over Nature of whom thou art now the tool, lifted above her who now has thee under her feet. It is to be free and not a slave, to be one and not divided, to be immortal and not obscured by death, to be full of light and not darkened, to be full of bliss and not the sport of grief and suffering, to be uplifted into power and not cast down into weakness. It is to live in the Infinite and possess the finite” (Aurobindo, Hour 7).

Aurobindo also explains the seven suns of supermind/ superman which leads man towards his true self. The greatest satisfaction of man’s life lies in knowing the purpose of his life and fulfilling it. Worldly knowledge and True knowledge- are the two types of knowledge in front of man and knowing about the right one is the first step towards the satisfaction. Worldly knowledge is all about the corporal and temporal knowledge, but the science behind True knowledge is to recognize the spiritual reality. True knowledge is to know about one’s own self or spirit. To realize the goal of his life man must maintain the distance from this materialistic world. “Man is turned outward by his senses and so loses contact with his own deepest self. His soul has become immersed in outer things in power and possessions. It must turn round to find its right direction and to find the meanings and realities it has missed. To hear the melodies of spirit we must shut off the noise of the world” (Radhakrishnan, Religion 24-25).

As it has been already mentioned that the frequent question of man is: what should be perceived as man's ultimate goal? "Heidegger asks us to pass from unauthentic existence to authentic existence, from *samsara* to *moksha* or *nirvana*. For Marcel the goal is self-knowledge. It is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be entered upon reverently" (Radhakrishnan, Religion 41). Vedanta also asserts that Self- Realization is the supreme goal of human's life and the one who perceives this goal he need not to know or achieve anything else. According to Hinduism, there are four major goals of human's life- Kama, Artha, Dharma and Moksha. Kama is simply considered as pleasure. Kama is man's urge for passion, especially bodily, and emotions. It leads man to the next goal which is Artha. Artha is about money and power, according to Hinduism. Artha allows man to have wealth for the fulfillment of one's destiny. The third goal is Dharma which is commonly taken as duty. Man is meant to follow the righteous path and he must have sound moral and ethical values. As it is presented in *Bhagavad-Gita*, man should do his dharma without expecting the result. The fourth and the ultimate goal of Hindu's life is Moksha or liberation which can be defined in many ways- freedom from birth cycle, self-realization, illumination, spiritual knowledge etc. and it is considered as the highest goal of a Hindu's life. The whole game of life is played for Moksha.

Buddhism, a religion which took its earlier form in the shadow of Hindu religion, shares many basic principles with Hinduism. The final goal of man's life is to get enlightenment, according to Buddhism. But,

The means of attaining the goal participates in the nature of the goal itself. The ethical means and spiritual end cannot be separated. The end of enlightenment enters into the means. It is possible for the people who despise the world to produce the art and culture

which enrich our world. Buddhism does not cause men to turn from the pursuits and endeavours of human life” (Radhakrishnan, Religion 31).

Christianity, a western religion, which is based on Jesus Christ life journey, considers the glorification of God as the purpose of a Christian’s life. Man must glorify God through prayers, studying holy books, family, sacrifices, loving other people.

But now what the questions arise here are- Is it possible for a human being to awaken his soul or true self? And if it is possible then how to attain this goal of Self- Realization? Yogananda seems to give answers of these questions when he says that,

The inner fulfillment we seek does exist and can be attained. In truth, all the knowledge, creativity, love, joy and peace we are looking for are right within us, the very essence of our beings. To fully realize this- not just as an intellectual philosophy but as an actual experience that brings strength and understanding into every area of our daily lives- is what Self- realization is all about (Yogananda , Undreamed 3).

Man thinks rationally. He is probably the only creature who is attributed with the logical thinking through his intellect. His mental capacity and brainpower puts him above all in the hierarchy. Radhakrishnan illustrates that, “The hierarchy of existence and value correspond. The order of phenomena which has the largest degree of reality in the essential scale has the lowest degree of value in the ethical or spiritual scale. The human individual is higher than the animal, plant, or mineral” (Radhakrishnan, Basic 150). R.W. Emerson also advocates the same notion in his essay *Self- Reliance* when he comments, “This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as an every topic, the resolution of all into the ever blessed ONE. Self- existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it

enters into all lower forms” (18). Hence, man achieves Self- Realization faster than any other species.

Man’s life is mixture of pleasures and pains; these are the part and parcel of his life. But man confronts with these pleasures and pains as a result of his former activities. This is the law of Karma which engages him in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth in conformity with his earlier deeds. “Every action has its equal and opposite reaction” as per Newton third Law of Motion, in the same way man’s every deed leaps reverse on him in an equal and opposite amount. Each and every motion in the cosmic is pre- determined. “The law of *karma* is not external to the individual. The judge is not without but within. The law by which virtue brings its triumph and ill- doing its retribution is the unfolding of the law of our being. . . . The working of *karma* is wholly dispassionate, just, neither cruel nor merciful” (Radhakrishnan, Basic 169). “As you sow, so shall you reap” is the basic principle of this. So, if a person wants love, peace, happiness and healthy relationships than he himself must love, peaceful, happy and good by nature.

The supreme composer or the creator survives in the every single bit of this universe. The Absolute does exist in every human and non- human, every earthly and non- earthly being. Therefore, He is considered as Omnipresent. As Radhakrishnan confirms, “The Supreme is the Personal Lord who controls the many- sided action of nature and dwells in the heart of every creature” (Bhagavad-Gita 310). “The Supreme is at once transcendental, the cosmic and the individual reality. In its transcendental aspect, it is the pure self unaffected by any action or experience, detached, unconcerned. In its dynamic cosmic aspect, It not only supports but governs the whole cosmic action and this very Self which is one in all and above all is present in

the individual” (Bhagavad-Gita 18). Hence, Brahma is the Supreme Self that is homogenous.

Brahma, a poem by R.W. Emerson, presents the idea

that, The Strong Gods pine for my abode

And pine in vain the sacred seven

But thou, meek lover of the good!

Find me, the turn thy back on heaven (13- 16)

This poem has universal themes of- Brahma, Atman and Maya. According to Emerson, the one who wants to achieve salvation or *Moksha* must control his desires (Maya) and merged himself with Brahma. The seeker of Truth who does this surely perceives Self- Realization and is blessed with heavenly bliss.

The individual Soul or Self is considered as ‘Atman’. God resides in every atom, in every individual’s body. “The individual self is the portion of the Lord, a real, not an imaginary form of the Supreme, a limited manifestation of the God” (Bhagavad-Gita 44). But man’s ignorance keeps him unaware of this very truth and consequently is always away from the universal truth.

When man starts interrogating his life and seeks answers for his quest, he is introduced to two kind of realizations- Self- Realization and God- Realization. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary gives the definition of Self- Realization as “the fact of using your skills and abilities and achieving as much as you can possibly achieve” (1378) for the growth of Self. The last longing joy which we hunt for is nowhere but right within us. Therefore, Emerson begins his essay *Self- Reliance* quoting the words of Persius, “Ne te quaesiveris extra” that means do not look outward of you. And as Radhakrishnan also quotes the words of a Sufi mystic Ayn at- qudat al Hamadhni, “He who is born from the womb sees only this world, only he who is born out of himself sees the other world” (Religion 53).

God- Realization is yet another kind of realization that man aims for. In fact, Self- Realization itself is authentic God- Realization or vice- versa. It is like “beauty is truth, truth is beauty”. Self is Atman, Atman is Brahma or God. Hence, God is the ultimate reality. Thus, the primary goal of man is to know this ultimate reality.

Knowing that creation is an accident and that it has a deeper meaning than is apparent to the eye, the seers of all ages have time and again drawn the attention of the world to the fact that, although for a certain period of his life on this planet man may identify himself exclusively with the life of the senses, his transcendental destiny is God- Realization” (Maher, God 41).

The two novels which I have chosen for study are- Hermann Hesse’s *Siddhartha* and Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*. Hermann Hesse was a German born Swiss novelist, poet and painter. He was born on 2nd July 1877 in Calw at Wuttenberg, Germany in a missionary family. His father Johannes Hesse, a doctor’s son, served as Baltic missionary to India. His mother Marie Hesse, also a Baltic missionary and born in India, was a daughter of Hermann Gundert who was famously known as “Indian Expert”. From his early childhood, Hesse was very aggressive and had a rebellion kind of nature, so he was hard to handle for his family as well as for outsiders. He studied in Calw from 1880-1891. Hesse had a great influence of his maternal grandfather who was a speaker of several languages and a doctor of philosophy. He started to work in his publishing house and he got the access of his grandfather’s library where he read widely. In the early day of his career he was very much passionate about music and poetry but he decided to be a writer. In 1895, Hesse started to work in a bookshop where he read many philosophical and theological books including the writers Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche etc. and various works of German mythology and German Romantics. In 1896, his first poem *Madonna* was published in a

local periodical and in 1898, came his first poetry collection. His first novel *Schweinigel* came in 1899 which was written in German. He was noticed by publishers through his articles and reviews and also gained popularity outside Germany. During this period he moved to Switzerland. In 1901, he got published *Posthumous Writings and Poems of Hermann Lausrche*. His mother died in 1902 and he got engaged with Maria Bernouill in the same year.

Hesse came up with his first of English *Peter Camenzind* which was pre- published in 1903 and the final publication came in 1904. It is a story of a young boy who leaves his village to fulfill his intellectual curiosities and to find a better future for himself as a poet. Hesse has presented various powerful themes like man and nature, search for identity, self- knowledge, individuals and society. This novel was an instant success and he was awarded by Bavernfeld Pricze for this.

With this literary success he married Maria Bernouill in 1904 and shifted in Gaienhofen on the Lake Constance with her. Here, in 1906, he published his second novel *Beneath the Wheel* that deals with the tragic story of an intellectual boy Hans Giebenrath. Hans was a topper student of his school until he met with Hermann Heilner who was a rebellious romantic. In this novel, Hesse attacks on present education system which was more focused on student's academic performance than on all- around development. During 1906- 07, he composed pems and short stories. *Gertrude*, his next novel, was published in 1910, the story revolves around Kuhn, a renowned music composer and Gertrude, an opera singer and Kuhn's friend Heinrich Mnoth, also an opera singer. Kuhn loves Gertrude but she is in love with Heinrich and marries him. But this marriage was proved unsuccessful and ruins their life. But this tragic incident motivates him to compose his career's best opera music.

As the differences were increased between Hesse and Maria, he took a long trip to East countries. This journey proved an inspiration for his upcoming literary pieces but could not get stability in his marital life. In 1914, he wrote *Rosshalde*. This novel has some autobiographical patches in it. The protagonist Johann Veraguth is a successful artist who is unhappy with his marriage or his wife Rosshalde and wants to leave his home for spiritual fulfillment. Finally, he overcomes his fear and quit the family and fly towards India to explore his true identity. During the First World War in 1914, Hesse joined Imperial Army as a volunteer. He wrote essays and edited newspapers for war prisoners. Due to his aggressive and radical writings he had to face political disputes also. Hesse was still entangled in the controversies when he lost his father, his son sickens and his wife was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Because of his wife's disease, he came into contacts with psychoanalysis and started reading Carl Jung theories which effect can be seen in his latter works. In 1919, he moved to Montagnola where his next novel, *Demian*, appeared. He wrote this novel under the pseudonym Emil Sinclair who is also the protagonist of this novel. It narrates the story of a young boy Sinclair who is on the journey of self- realization. Except novels, his short stories and essays were published. In 1919, his essay Zarathustra's Return was published and in 1920, a series of stories came including- *Klingsor's Last Summer*, *A Child's Heart* and *Klein and Wager*.

In 1922, his novella *Siddhartha* published, which was influenced with Indian culture and philosophy. It tells the life journey of a young Brahmin boy named Siddhartha who is in search of ultimate truth and finally attains it. In 1923, Hesse was given Swiss citizenship. By this time he has divorced with his wife Maria and married with Ruth Wengen in 1924. But this marriage also proved a failure and ended up in 1927. His next major novel was appeared in 1927, *Steppenwolf*. This novel brought him worldwide acknowledgement. It shows the inner conflict of

a man's divided selves. Hesse friend Hugo Ball wrote his biography on his 50th birthday in 1929. In 1930, he married Ninon Doblin who was an art historian. They shifted to their new house in Montagnola. *Journey to the East* was published in 1932. And his last and one of the finest work *The Glass Bead Game* came in 1943. It shows a unique blend of Eastern and Western philosophy.

Throughout his literary career, Hesse was awarded by several awards but the most precious was Nobel Prize which he got in 1946. In the same year he got Goethe Prize was Germany's important literary prize. He died on August 9, 1962.

Yann Martel is a Spain born Canadian writer. He was born in Salamanca, Spain on June 25, 1963 to French- Canadian parents Emile and Nicole Martel. Though, Martel was born in Spain but he grew up travelling in different countries all around the world including France, Spain, Costa Rica, Mexico, Iran, India, Turkey and United States. Currently he is settled in Montreal, Canada. He completed his high school education from Ontario and studied philosophy at Trent University from 1981- 1984 and at Concordia University from 1984-85. During his graduation, he did several menial jobs including dishwashing, security guard and tree planting. By the time he was 27, he started making income from his writing only.

Martel's first book appeared in 1993 that was a short story collection entitled *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamation* and this very first book brought him the Journey Prize. The stories in this collection have autobiographical notes in which Martel has described his existential crisis during his studies in universities. In the same year an another book *Seven Stories* published but it could not get much attention. In 1996, Martel came with his debut novel *Self*. This novel was published internationally. It is a book which takes the theme of identity on another level. It is a fictional autobiography. It tells the story of a young writer who finds himself

as a woman on one morning. Love, sex and gender enigma are its main themes. Martel's aim of this novel is to put several questions before man: who are you really? What is your true identity? Does your gender make much difference? Although this book got people's attention only after the publication of *Life of Pi* but it was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award for Best First Novel in Canada.

Martel did an immense research for his next novel *Life of Pi*. He visited India and lived here for thirteen months and visited many religious places and zoo. This book brought him international recognition when it was published in 2001. It was a great success and won Britain's most prestigious Man's Booker Prize. It was published in about 50 countries and sold about 12 million copies worldwide. It held the record of Best-selling book for more than one year. Later in 2011, it was adapted into movie and there too it won four Oscar Prizes. It narrates the story of an Indian boy Pi Patel who lives in dilemma regarding his religious faith and jump from one religion to another. It deals with the issues of identity and spirituality. It is an unbelievable journey of Pi in ocean for 227 days which make its reader believe in God. Except Man's Booker Prize, in 2001, this novel won Canada's Hugh MacLennan Prize for fiction.

After the success of his novel *Life of Pi* he started teaching in Berlin Free University. In 2004, he published his next story collection *We Ate the Children Last: Stories. Betrice and Virgil*, next novel, was appeared in 2010. It tells the story of two central characters after whom the book is entitled. Mixing too many genres into one makes this novel complex. From 2007 to 2011, Martel worked on a project where he sent a book in every two weeks to the P.M. of Canada Stephen Harper including various genres' books. Each book was tagged along with a letter describing the value of the book. Martel's fourth and latest novel *The High Mountains of*

Portugal recently published on 2nd February, 2016. And within one month it came in the list of Best- seller.

The reason behind selecting these two novels- Hesse's *Siddhartha* and Martel's *Life of Pi*-is that both the novels share the themes of identity, spirituality and self- realization and their own attitude towards life. *Siddhartha* is an autobiographical novel whereas *Life of Pi* is a biographical novel. Both the novels are about different personalities who are eager to explore the same truth. Finding their own identity and inner peace are the goal of both Siddhartha and Pi. *Siddhartha* emphasizes on the journey of a man towards Self- Realization. Siddhartha has strong desire for true knowledge from his childhood which leads him to various paths of life. But it is only after his realization of his vices he attains the ultimate goal which he received from Vasudeva. *Life of Pi* deals with the story of Piscine Moliter Patel whose childhood is spent in India. While shifting to Canada with his family and animal , their ship wrecked in the Pacific Ocean and sinks. He is left on a life boat with a Bangli tiger, Richard Parker. He achieves emotional and spiritual growth in the adverse circumstances.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction which deals with the different aspects of life and its goal through self- realization and God- realization. It follows the growth of man's emotional and spiritual self. The second chapter "Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*" deals with the novel *Siddhartha*. It describes Siddhartha's thirst for knowledge, inner voice, and journey of life and role of karma in human life. The third chapter "Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*" discusses the novel *Life of Pi*, which shows man's faith in God. It also deals with man's positive outlook toward life, identity, spirituality, man and nature relationship, man and animal relationship. The last and fourth chapter is "Conclusion" which depicts the similar and dissimilar finding of both the novels on the aspect of life. Thus both the novels interpret the

life journey of human to perceive the ultimate truth of life. The research methodology which is traced in the 7th edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* has been followed.

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