

# Irrationality

Biggest threat to humanity, to its physical as well as abstract form, can be traced in fundamentalism, a byproduct of irrationality. It does not mean religious radicalism as per general perception, though religious radicalism is a part of it. There are some basic conceptions rooted very deep in our minds forming the basic prism through which we see the things. Mind of a child generally has a tendency to grasp and believe what is told to him by the parents, without much analysis and experimentation. These beliefs are very hard to root out at the later stages, especially from the uneducated minds. The belief may sometimes be rational, thus leading to scientific approach. But the belief which is not supported by any such rationality is faith. The childhood beliefs are very hard to root out. This is the reason why a child develops a feeling of faith in the religion of his parents. The society, later on, grouts this faith so firmly that a person can not even think of thinking differently, so much so that he starts living a dual life. Let me elaborate it. If we compare religion and science analytically we will find the two in opposite directions. But we find many people who will behave like scientists while discussing matters related to science and will become a totally different personality while dealing in religious matters. I have used the term analytical for comparison because only analytical comparison will point out the actual direction the two streams move in, which is opposite direction. A casual comparison will induce you to find scientific evidence in your faith, which would be cemented further by the fundamentalists having some scientific knowledge, finding various sayings in their religious books having proved true by the science. So, should religion be abandoned and let only

science take care of the life of future generations? Let us take a deeper look into this.

Basics of nearly all the religions is the belief in God, which is having slightly different shapes in different religions. Science does not believe in God since no proof has been found for His presence (though neither for his absence). The scientific explanation for existence of this material world is just a possibility of creation of matter and antimatter from nothing. And matter is also a form of energy, implying that equal positive and negative energy was formed from zero energy, great part of which was converted into matter and antimatter. We live in matter world and scientists believe that anti matter world is also in existence. But in stead of searching for the antimatter world we can also try to see the possibility that the matter itself contains these two opposite energies. Every atom is made of protons and electrons, having opposite charge, may be, positive and negative energies blended together. Religion sometimes explains God as energy and some religions claiming his presence in the tiniest particles of all the matter. This explanation prompts their followers to claim their religion having scientific bent.

Logic has its own boundaries. Faith starts creeping in where logic starts giving up. It is said that science is based on logic while religion is based on faith. But this statement is also not logical. Even logic is based on some faith. It was a good logic that reason for falling of the apple is the gravity of earth. But a thinking that there is gravitational force was in itself a faith. It is another matter that this faith was corroborated later on with several experiments. Religious explanations are also based on some faith. But that faith lacks the confirmation which the science provides through experimentation. So, can we say that whatsoever is explained by the religion is totally false? When the science explains one phenomenon it gives

rise to other questions. When falling of apple was explained due to gravitation it gave rise to question why there was gravity. It was explained as nature of matter to attract the other. But reason for this attraction is still not found. There are several theories with contradictions. Light is considered as made of corpuscles to explain some phenomena and as a wave to explain some others, with ridiculous assumption of presence of 'ether' to explain its travel through vacuum. (Can't it be corpuscles giving rise to waves when entering a medium and behaving like waves?) Diffusion of gases is explained by kinetic theory assuming that gas molecules behave perfectly elastic and gravity doesn't effect them. But this behaviour, if true, will prompt all the atmosphere of earth to fly away into space, which is not the case, meaning that theory lacks something.

Existence of the whole universe is based on a delicate equilibrium between gravitational and centrifugal forces. The sun attracts the earth and other planets towards it while the centrifugal force due to their revolving around it pulls them away. The sun, alongwith millions of other similar suns revolve around a black hole in the Milky Way galaxy. There are millions of such galaxies where millions of stars continue behaving in such manner. It is very difficult even for a master juggler to keep rotating a plate on a needle for a few minutes. The satellites established in this way to revolve around the earth after minute calculations are likely to fall down or go away after a few years, at the maximum after a few hundred or thousand years. But the satellites around the planets and planets around the sun are revolving for billions of years. Such phenomena are happening in billions of stars in billions of galaxies. Is there a supreme power behind it or it is merely a coincidence? In fact every thing we see is dependant on this delicate equilibrium. The tiniest particle of matter we know

as atom is made of protons and neutrons in the nucleus with electrons revolving around it. The question is why these don't fall into the nucleus. If it is due to the equilibrium of gravitational pull and centrifugal forces then why this equilibrium is not disturbed when different degrees of gravitational forces are applied while in space, on earth or on heavier bodies like sun? Is there some supreme power keeping this balance intact for such a long time since big bang? If there is such power then why it cannot keep this equilibrium intact when the same atoms confront with a black hole, where all the space between the constituents of atoms is minimized and atoms are compressed in a way that our earth would be compressed to a size of a small ball of 3 cm diameter with its mass intact. Believers of God will continue to consider it His wonderful creation and administration while nonbelievers would pass it off as sheer coincidence.

The biggest mystery in this universe is life. Religion considers it as creation of God while science has its own observations and reservations. I am a scholar of neither any religion nor any medical science. I am using the small general knowledge of both these fields in an attempt to build an opinion as to which explanation out of the two thoughts is more trustworthy. Religion believes that existence of man lies in soul. Science does not confirm any such soul. But explanation given by science is also not very convincing yet. As per science life started just by chance; about 4000 million years ago, when our atmosphere contained nitrogen, methane, carbon dioxide, ammonia, water vapors and other gases, but no oxygen. Chemical reaction of these gases at the then temperature, which was higher than now, synthesized amino acids, which formed proteins and other life building blocks. These abiotically synthesized polymers formed coacervates which had a tendency to absorb molecules from the

atmosphere. This tendency of absorbing molecules from surroundings gave rise to chemical reactions like decomposing of glucose, which resulted in their growth and division. These coacervates evolved to form cyanobacteria, which was able to grow and divide through photosynthesis. This photosynthesis produced oxygen as its byproduct, which was responsible for evolution of oxygen friendly organism. Further evolution gave birth to multi cell creatures which grow due to mitosis and use meiosis for reproduction. Where, then, in the human body exists actual person? Religion says that the person is the soul living in the body, which never dies, but just leaves the body to be considered as dead. Science considers that existence of the person in his body is in his brain. I have used my own imagination about life based on this scientific explanation and imagined a model of life on this basis.

The explanation that a person exists in his brain prompts me to analyze this statement. It infers the manner in which a portion of brain processes the information received from sensory organs and then converts it into feelings and emotions is the making of a person. Our brain does majority of body activities without our involvement. Does it mean that a person is only a portion of his brain? We are made of trillions of living cells related with one another in a way that their functions are to help and be beneficial to the other cells of the body. We can say that our body is a large colony of the cells. The brain itself is made of the same living cells with only difference that these are accumulated to develop a controlling system for the other cells in the colony. We are unable to control many functions of the body, but are bound to obey the orders of brain for fulfilling the needs of the body. Can we say, then, that the a large cluster of living cells has developed a system of living in a colony in the shape of our body for availing the benefits of living in a cluster and becoming strong rather than living

alone and weak? And in order to keep them more secure and administrative they have developed a system of communication between various cells/group of cells? We know that information flows from all parts of the body to the brain at very high speed through sensory cells, which processes it at lightening speed and issues appropriate instructions, which are obeyed by the other clusters. The cells in the body have the ability to recognize outsider hostile cells, for which an army of fighter cells is ready to protect the colony. But for maintaining such a large colony some energy source is necessary. The plants developed a system of gathering this energy from their surroundings by developing the ability of photosynthesis in some of its cells.

The cells of animals found it easier to plunder the energy stores of plants and other animals. For this purpose they had to develop a system of movement, initially by the single cell organism and then by multi cell creatures. Movement of large cluster of cells in multi cell beings involved a great degree of coordination in them. To facilitate this coordination a system involving a control centre, communication to this centre and reverse communication after processing of information was evolved in the shape of brain and sensory organs and nerves. The brain cells evolved a further control system of feelings and emotions for better coordination. These feelings and emotions created another life within life in the shape of a creature dependant on this large colony of cells who would also serve as an assistant in the movement of the whole colony for fulfilling its needs. The cells of body function like the insects living in colonies, the brain acting like queen and other cells like worker insects. The difference lies in presence of a personality in the case of body cells, a life within that life, a totally different entity, but the two dependent on each other.

This explanation of life raises further questions. If life is based on the behaviour of cells, which are preprogrammed through the genes to multiply to form a body, maintain it by dumping the dead cells and creating the new ones to replace them, then why the body grows old? Is aging also programmed in the first cell of the body? If the cells can create life within life for securing the safety of the colony then why can't they produce the cells in a way that aging is prevented? If they are not programmed to create cells for keeping the body young then how they create reproductive cells capable of initializing the life afresh? Is this all really controlled by some power, named as God by the religion, in order to protect life from its destruction through overcrowding? If there is no such power then how some of the skills the man learns after birth are pre-programmed in animals? How the offspring of a deer know to hide from a nearby lion right at the time of birth? How do some birds migrate to the places visited by their parents before their birth without any help from them? The science has found presence of electrical impulses in the brain and sensory system for communicating and developing feelings and emotions. Can these impulses be equated with the theory of soul by the religion, and science and religion be seen as reciprocating each other? Can these small impulses be considered as a small portion of the vast energy in the form of universe in line with the concept of soul being a small portion of that vast power, called God, which merge in that vast power when the body is dead? Some religions state that after death the soul leaves the body and remains alive in minute form. Is that minute form present in the first cell of the embryo, or even in pre embryo state, entering in body through food and settling in the mother's ovum or in fathers sperms for finding a womb? Has that soul programmed the cell to multiply and form the body; or otherwise how the cell is programmed to form bones?

Some intellectuals equate God with nature. We know nature is a vast power with certain rules, breaking of which may result in imbalance of equilibrium and subsequent perils, which, they say, is true for God. There may be some consideration in accepting this view. But is that vast power really like a person as is presented by the religion? In fact this logic is forwarded by the people who are ardent believers and remain in search of something to prove their faith. Otherwise, if this view that God is not a person but only a power, like that of nature, then what is the need to worship him? True, we should respect the nature and avoid acting against it. But that is different from worshipping God, which is done for achieving something or for getting pardoned, while respecting is not for this purpose. Worshipping nature can avoid no untoward incident unless there is a person or power to control it and deviate its course owing to the effect of our prayers. So, the view that He is a power and not a person has no ground. The religion, it can be concluded, treats Him like a person or living thing though some religions believe Him free from any shape.

We cannot negate His presence just because we have no proof of His existence, I mean, scientific or conclusive proof. Let us, for the sake of discussion, accept His existence and agree that the entire universe is his creation, as is the belief of almost all the religions. There is certainly a weight behind this faith, as otherwise, how could all the material, so vast like that of the whole universe, be formed from nothing? The scientific explanation that all it happened by emerging of energy and anti energy in equal amounts from nil does not look very convincing. If it actually happened, then why is it not happening now? The argument of science is certainly weak and it has not yet been able to find the exact process of formation of matter. Then shall we have to accept the explanation given by religion? Okay, we accept it for a while

and agree that all was made by God. Then question arises how He came into existence. Religion explains that he is omnipresent and is above birth and death. He, they say, has always been there from the eternity. This statement is more hollow than the one put by science about creation of matter. Infinity of time is a vague term, as the question arises what was before that infinity? And how was He created at the time of his coming into existence and who created Him? From this discussion I am prompted to reach a conclusion that this discussion ends without any conclusion about creation of the universe or life. But it is a fact that while religion prompts us to stop any investigations the science has kept its doors open for exploration.

If we follow the views of some scientists who negate His presence totally then we may be following another fundamentalism similar to religious radicalism, i.e. scientific fundamentalism. There are many takers for His existence and many against this view. In stead of shouting the religion a fallacy let us examine what course this belief takes further. Our debates on God are generally restricted to prove His existence or against it. We seldom look beyond it. The people who are satisfied with the views on his existence continue worshipping Him and those who are not satisfied take their own course. But even if His existence is a reality, does that existence call for His worship automatically? What is worship? It generally is his praise, true or false, accompanied with prayers for His mercy on the worshipper. God is considered the perfect administrator for running the show of universe. A good manager of even a small organization keeps the flatterers at an arms length. Can, then, a perfect entity like God be befooled with the sycophancy named worship? If yes then does He deserve the respect or reverence the religious people shower upon Him? And is it not cowardice that we ask

for His pardon rather than accepting our wrongdoings and be prepared for any punishment deemed fit by Him? The worship is sheer embarrassment for Him if He exists and ridicule for the worshipper if He doesn't. How funny would it look to the nonbelievers when one is begging mercy from a non entity, can be anybody's imagination. Please do go to a place of worship, preferably of your own religion, with a mindset of His nonexistence and watch the people worshipping him. Now it will be up to you to feel the scene as funny, ridiculous or disgusting.

Some people argue that religion is necessary to reduce crime from the society. The fear of God watching your all deeds will refrain you from committing any wrong doings, which will result in clean public life. The argument, undoubtedly, holds water, but only to some degree. We Indians are, perhaps, the most religious people in the world. According to the above logic we should be least corrupt on this earth; are we? This might have had some truth in old times when knowledge had not spread. But now, with development of mind, people have some doubts about the preaching of religion, though in subconscious mind. That seems the reason that when committing a sin the fear of God in our mind is blinded by the benefits from that sin. When we are in a position to realize it we go for prayer for absolution rather than for acceptance of any punishment. And we consider as absolved and ready for another sin as we are confident that that can also be got absolved with prayer.

Religion is presented as enlightenment by almost all the religions. With enlightenment a person should be able to broaden the mind, so as to enable him think more logically. But is a religious mind more logical? Every religion is filled with fables with slightest of logic to accept them as true. But we keep on believing despite having logical bent for all other

matters. Is this the enlightenment which religion claims? Several mythical tales claimed as history by the religions have been proved as false. Is that not enough for rejecting other claims of the holy scriptures? Religion does not let a person think beyond what has been explained to him by his religious gurus. Science does not boast of all its findings to be absolutely true and offers an opportunity to continue experimenting for finding the ultimate truth while the religion binds the mind by considering the ideas given by their particular religion to be absolutely true, leaving no scope for further application of mind. The religious people do apply mind, not for analyzing what is true but for proving that what their religion states is true.

Another misconception forwarded by the religious people is that it preaches humility and compassion. Had that really been the case then we would have been a tolerant society. But we are so orthodox and stubborn to our religious thinking that we consider the views of other religions as false, though we avoid this confession and pretend to be respecting them. Had religion been tolerant the word 'kafir' (nonbeliever) would not have attached disdain to it. Had it been tolerant and a source of enlightening the minds there would have no litigation over Ayodhya. We are being befooled by the politicians because we let them do so. We continue treating Ram a historical person. But even if that is true what good a temple at his birthplace would do for us? Why it can't be away by a few yards? There is an old tradition in northern India that first child is born at his maternal house. Then how we believe that he was born in his paternal house? And what big loss are Muslims to suffer if there is a temple in place of the Mosque? The mosque does not have any relevance to Mohammad or any of Khalifas. Babur was not any religious leader or saint. What if the mosque is made at a nearby place and the place attached to

the emotions of a billion people is handed over to them with pleasure? Would that not enhance the image of Islam as a tolerant religion? But the leaders would not let that happen so as to garner respect for their religion, which is being considered having the largest percentage of the radicals, because of the narrowness of mind.

Other illusion about religion is that it is a binding force for making a society. Had this been the case the world would have only a few countries. Religion may be one of the binding forces in some societies but India has witnessed it more as a dividing force, as was the case of division of otherwise integral Indian society in 1947, on religious lines. All the religions are further divided in sects and sub sects, having slight respect for one another. Had the religion really been a uniting force there would have been no further divisions of Pakistan. And for making of a strong nation there is a need of adopting nationalism in stead of religion, the weakening force for patriotism. Use of religious matters in politics does no good for any nation but serves as a tool for exploiting the religious sentiments for vested interests. It is the duty of any present day government to endeavour for freedom of its subjects, not only of personal freedom but also of personality freedom, by freeing them from centuries old clutches of false faith, by imparting the education of truth or, at least, of reality.

Most of modern day democracies, including India, boast of secularism in their approach. The term for them means respect for all religions. This term needs to include respect for nonbelievers also, in the right spirit of the word. Dictionary meaning of the word secularism is 'lack of religion in society' or 'not religious'. So, actual secularism, in true sense of the word, would be not to recognize or respect any religion. But this would result in resentment in religious people. So right approach would be to leave the same to be a personal matter

of the individual. There should, however, be continuous efforts to make the people literate enough to analyze and compare the religious teachings with scientific approach so as to enable them build their own rational opinion. The individuals may be free to follow any religion, or no religion.

Now the question is whether there should be freedom to expand one's religion freely. Here also a balance needs to be maintained. There should, no doubt, be freedom. But that freedom must not endanger the freedom of others, including that of nonbelievers. At present we see a lot of religious places shouting at full volumes the views of their religion on public address systems. At some places we hear such noise from more than one religious places which lead to hostility in their followers. There is an urgent need to stop it. The sound amplifying system should be allowed to be heard in the premises of that religious place only. Is it justifiable to put their words in the ears of all living in the surroundings, willing or not, compulsorily? The one who wishes to hear it all is free to go to that religious place and get 'benefited'. Why the benefits are thrust upon others? Is there any freedom for the nonbelievers to express their views against any religions on public address system? I think they are wise enough to avoid its use even if there is such freedom. There should also be some restrictions on nagar kirtans and shobha yatras. These are becoming sheer nuisance with every passing day. But people are bound to hear shrills in the name of music and face inconveniences of traffic jams with no one having the guts to stop it. These should, at least be regularized if can't be banned. But if compulsions of democracy would not let it happen then results would be drastic. The example of Pakistan is there for all to see. Can we afford to make whole of the society so radical? Any great person or messiah doesn't bother what his adversaries think of him; nor are they

perturbed with criticism. Then why his followers make a hue and cry if someone utters a word against him? If refusal to accept the view point of a religion is blasphemy then every religion is blaspheme for all the others. The government needs to build an atmosphere where one may stick to his or his mentor's views but should have respect for the freedom of others to express their views, even against his faith. Blasphemy laws make the society intolerant, initially for other religions and subsequently within their own religions, because, with passage of time the explanations of own religion would be different by different 'scholars' with followers of each sect being intolerant of the others.