

Chapter- IV

Suffering and Freedom

4.1. Introduction

As we have seen in the previous chapter the highest subjective truth is possible in authentic existence. Only an authentic individual can realize the highest subjective truth that is suffering. But, the question is '*how to realize authentic existence?*'. Or, '*what do you mean by authentic existence?*'. Actually, authentic existence is to be realized in terms of decisions, choices and actions. Authentic means to choose oneself to be free. In other words, it means freedom to choose oneself to be free. Now, the question is '*what it means to choose oneself?*'. There are two sense of meaning related to choosing oneself. First, choosing oneself means unconditional choice of oneself as absolute. Second, it means taking responsibility for what one chooses. Actually, authenticity is sincerity of intention along with passion directed at 'one' object. According to Kierkegaard, the object or thing is Good or God, but especially one's own self. That means authenticity consists in acts of willing passionately and sincerely to become a genuinely authentic individual. So, becoming authentic requires perpetual movement without definite results. Moreover, it is the way which the truth is.

According to the philosophy of existentialism, man first of all exists in this world and afterwards she/he defines himself. It is to be noteworthy that man as a distinct individual being is free and autonomous and define her/his existence through choice. Søren Kierkegaard stated that ethics only in ethics the course of action in accordance with the unique situation in which the agents find her/him. It is dynamic and future- oriented. That means choice and action is in accordance with the new situations. The individual

rejects one situation and adopts a new situation which has to be viewed from its own perspective. It is the individual choice and freedom that gives meaning to the situation. The individual has infinite possibilities which are incapable of being even comprehended but much less rationally predicted. These possibilities imply a future and consequently there is a feeling of dread. Kierkegaard distinguishes dread from fear which is regarded by her/him as origin of sin or suffering. Actually, fear refers to a definite object but dread is indefinite. In dread, the individual's whole being is involved. Dread is a conscious awareness of one's historic state with the totality of one's being. It arouses the individual to authentic choice of action. Here, Kierkegaard maintains that the feeling of dread is closely related with freedom. According to him, where there is freedom, there is possibility and where there is possibility there is dread. So, to experience dread is to be anxious about the possibility of future. In this regard, Kierkegaard says,

The possible corresponds precisely to the future. For freedom the possible is the future, and for time the future is the possible. Corresponding to both of these in the individual life is dread. A precise and correct linguistic usage associates therefore dread and the future¹.

Thus, only a free individual can experience such possibilities. But the question of possibility does not arise if there is fatalism and everything already fixed. Because in that case, it is possible to predict the future and there is no dread for the unknown future. But dread, anxiety, despair, these are the essential mode of human existence which causes suffering. Every individual has to fight with suffering in her/his life and always try to overcome or free from it. But, it requires proper understanding of oneself or self realization. And self realization or subjectivity is possible only in authenticity.

Kierkegaard explains subjectivity in terms of authenticity. For him, suffering as a highest subjective truth can be realized by only an authentic individual. Hence, there must be a co-relation between suffering and freedom. Here in this chapter, an attempt has been made to explicate the concept of freedom as well as also try to analyze the relationship between freedom and suffering.

4.2. The Idea of Freedom

The word 'freedom' is related to human psychology. It is multidimensional concept. It is used in every sphere of human life. Generally, it is applied as a social and political model. Rather, it is also used as a moral concept. The concept of freedom has an important role in Philosophy also. Therefore, the concept of freedom is not an easily definable concept. It is defined diversely from different standpoints. However, the dictionary meaning of freedom is personal or civil liberty of actions. In this section, this study tries to highlight the idea of freedom by following broadly the western idea of relating consciousness with freedom and the concepts of freedom is discussed by P. F. Strawson and Harry Gordon Frankfurt.

Freedom is a phenomenon of consciousness². As we have known, only conscious agents have desires and volitions. Therefore, only conscious agents have freedom. Generally, the concept of freedom may be said to lie in a state of conscious feeling which is usually regarded as the feeling of freedom. Freedom is not significantly affirmed nor denied of a stone, presumably for the reason that it lacks consciousness. Human beings are the only being who have desires and volitions and freedom can be explained only in the context of individual beings. Man is a social being with social chains and restrictions.

Though she/ he obeys the customs and restrictions of the society, yet at the same time she/ he wants to get rid of these social ties. Sometimes she/he wants to do whatever she/he likes. Ordinarily, this tendency of man is called freedom.

Man is a spiritual being, is self-determined or free and determines her/his own activity. She/he is not determined by external forces. But, she/he is not absolutely free. Her/his freedom has limits. It is limited by her/his innate endowment, physical and mental, transmitted to her/him by her/his heredity and by her/his physical and social environment. But, she/he can transform even her/his limits into the means and materials of her/his self- development and self realization.

Actually, freedom exists where the individual acts with a full consciousness of everything relevant to her/his action. It is to be noteworthy that freedom of will is a humans' capacity of decision making. It can be regarded as, "the power of agents to be the ultimate creators and sustainers of their own ends or purposes"³. We are all able not only of performing actions but also of deciding for ourselves about which actions to perform. This capacity to make decisions or choices seems central to our capacity to control and take charge of our own actions. Commonly, freedom is to be declared as a power of choosing and also to be evidenced by the actuality of choice. It is to be stated that, "freedom of action may even depend on a freedom specifically of decision making- on a freedom of will"⁴. It may be depend on us how we act, it is because only we have the capacity for deciding how we shall act and it is up to us which such decisions we take.

The concept of freedom is closely associated with the concept of person. In this context, P. F. Strawson stated that the concept of person is a logically primitive concept.

According to Strawson, the concept of person can be ascribed through the predicates M-predicate and P-predicate. M-predicate means material predicate and P-predicate means person predicate. There is an essential difference between persons and other creatures, which is found in the structure of a person's will. Human beings are not alone in having desires and motives and making choices. Rather they share these things with other members. It is a peculiar characteristic of humans because of which they are able to form what can be expressed in Frankfurt's language as 'second order desires' or 'desires of the second order'.

Man may possibly desire to have certain wishes or desires and motive besides wanting and choosing and being moved to do this or that. They are capable of wanting to be different. Many animals have the capacity for what Frankfurt calls 'first order desires' or 'desires of the first order' which are simply desires to do or not to do one thing or another. A person has a desire of the second order when she/he wants a certain desire to be her/his will. In this situation Frankfurt also established one more concept that is 'second order volitions' or 'volitions of the second order'. It is only because a person has volitions of the second order that she/he is able to enjoying and of lacking freedom of will. The concept of person is not only the concept of type of entity that has both first order desire and volitions of the second order. Rather it is the concept of a type of entity who has freedom of will.

Now, it is to be noticed here what kind of freedom is the freedom of will. Some philosophers have pointed out that the concept of freedom of will is different from the concepts of other sorts of freedom. According to the familiar philosophical tradition, freedom basically means what one wants to do. Having the freedom to do what one wants

to do is not a sufficient condition of free will. It is not a basic stipulation either. For, to take away one of her/his freedom of action is not necessarily to undermine the freedom of her/his will. When an agent is aware that there are certain things that she/he is not free to do, this doubtless has an effect on her/his desires and restricts the variety of choices she/he can make. But suppose that someone, without being aware of it, has lost or been deprived of her/his freedom of action, her/his 'will' may remain as free as it was before even though she/he is no longer free to do what she/he wants to do. In spite of the fact that she/he is not free to translate her/his desires into actions according to the determinations of her/his will. Still he may form those desires and make those determinations as freely as if her/his freedom of action had not been impaired.

According to Frankfurt when we ask whether a person's will is free we are not soliciting whether she/he is in a place to translate her/his first order desires into actions. Actually, that is the question of whether she/he is free to do as she/he pleases. The question of the freedom of her/his 'wills' does not concern the relation between what she/he performs and what she/he wishes to do. Rather, it concerns her/his desires themselves. There are some philosophers who never support freedom of will. According to them, everything of this universe is causally determined. The grip of the law of causation is universal and 'human will' cannot be an exception. So, there is no freedom of will. Our feeling that there is freedom of will is the result of our failure to discover the factors operating in our actions.

But regarding the problem of determinism, H. G. Frankfurt's conception of the freedom of will seems to be impartial. It is possible to state that it should be causally determined that a person is free to want what she/he wants to want. If this is possible,

then it might be causally dogged that a person enjoys a free will. It may be also pointed out that a person is responsible herself/himself for the fact that she/he enjoys or fails to enjoy freedom of the will. It is possible that a person should be morally responsible for what she/he does of her/his own free will and that some other person should also be morally responsible for her/his having done it.

4.2.1. The idea of freedom in western philosophy

The concept of freedom is described by different ancient Greek and medieval western thinkers as something positive. Like in Indian philosophy, freedom in Western Philosophy does not mean as 'freedom from', i.e., from this worldly sufferings. In western philosophy, it is studied as a social fact or an ethical model. This type of objective approach dominates ever the sweep of western philosophical speculation. In this section, the study again highlights, though minimally four major western thinkers, such as, Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel.

According to Spinoza, freedom can be achieved by a man of reason and intuition. It is achieved only by the elimination of the negative elements or passive elements of man's moral life and is nothing but a moment from bondage to freedom. Spinoza's moral philosophy is the conflict between two stages, the stage of passivity and the stage of activity. The passive is that in which the man is said to be dependent on the series of cause and effect. On the other hand, the state of activity is that in which the man is adequate cause of her/his action. In the passive stage or the stage of bondage, the individual is regarded only as part of nature and thus her/his freedom is illusory freedom. But, Spinoza also holds that moral perfection or freedom is defined for her/him who is

morally enlightened. So, through the stage of activity, she/he implies that the man is free and her/his life is according to reason.

According to Hegel, freedom is the underlying principle which unites the indeterminate will. When there is harmony, there is freedom. It is not the absence of constraint but is active self-determination. If there is no constraint from anything external, the will is free. According to Hegel, freedom which involves self-determination, a free will and which is nothing but the manifestation of reason in history. It is conformity with the law and custom as interpreted by ethicality of the peculiar society to which the individual belongs.

In Kant's philosophy, the concept of freedom is related to duty. According to him, freedom is an ethical problem. Freedom is the right to will as self imposed imperative to duty. According to Kant's moral philosophy, the will is free or autonomous and morally obligated man is subject to a categorical imperative. To Kant, the things that we perceive are appearances which are connected by casual laws. We are under the laws of casual determination because we are the parts of nature. But according to him, behind the appearance there is a world which is the things in itself. Like that behind the appearance of man there is the basis which is nothing but her/his ego as it is in itself. The ego is known as reason free from casual determination. As a sensuous being man is under the mechanism of nature, but as a rational being man enjoys her/his freedom in the intelligible and moral world. Thus, from the point of view of reason man has got full freedom.

According to Rousseau, self-determination is the essence of freedom. One must do what one's real self ordains. He says that the unwavering will of all the members of the society is the general will. By this, she/he indicates the universal aspect of the individual rational will. By obeying law man acts in accordance of moral freedom.

4.2.2. The idea of freedom in moral philosophy

The concept of freedom is an important concept in moral philosophy. Freedom of will is the postulate of morality. If freedom of will is not assumed then passing moral judgments on our actions becomes meaningless. In willing we are always conscious of willing freely, or determining the course of actions from within ourselves and for our own good. The consciousness freedom is especially distinct in the process deliberation and resolution. We are immediately aware of our freedom of the will in our moral effort to an action against the strangest desire.

Morality implies freedom of will. It is the fundamental basis of morality. Kant says that freedom of will is a postulate of morality. In moral judgment there is always present a sense of 'oughtness'. This 'oughtness' signifies that there is freedom of will. It can be stated that, "*Thou oughtest therefore thou canst*"⁵. If you ought to perform what is right you are free to do it. If you ought not to do what is wrong, you are not free to do it. Man is free to do what is right or wrong.

The idea of being a free agent or of being in control of how we act seems to lie at the heart of our moral thinking. Morality presents us with standards that are mandatory for which we are accountable for keeping to and that we can rightly and fairly be blamed for not meeting. And all these standards apply to action are also responsible for the result

of our actions. Some philosophers would still accept that we are morally responsible for our actions and for our actions alone. But, they would deny the accountability that depends on our actions being free. There is some other feature of action, something that is nothing to do with our having control over it, that builds us accountable for how we take action. Or, possibly they take our peculiar responsibility for our actions as something that does not require clarification. However, other philosophers have been more radical in this regard. The 18th century Scottish philosopher David Hume stated that morality was not at all about being responsible for what we do.

In moral philosophy it is to be pointed out that we are free because of our permanent self. Man's actions are determined by self from within not by other circumstances. Its voluntary actions are self-determined. If they are determined by circumstances they lose their moral value and should be treated as non-moral physical events. Rashdell said that it is the presumption of all Morality that the self is the cause of its own action.

Usually, freedom is discussed within the context of theoretical concerns about the nature of moral responsibility. It is because of the basic assumption that some kind of freedom, such as 'moral freedom' is a necessary prerequisite for our being responsible for our actions. Moreover, according to moral nihilism, no one is always morally responsible for anything and argue that we require moral freedom. As a result, the idea of freedom plays a crucial role in our beliefs about the correctness of moral praise and blame. Generally, human beings regard themselves as free and autonomous beings that are responsible for their actions that they perform. But, this idea comes to conflict with a variety of attitudes that are found in the inevitable workings of the world around us. But instance, some people believe that strict universal laws of nature govern the world. On

the other hand, some other people think that there is omnipotent God who is the ultimate cause of all things. These moral worldwide observations recommended that each particular occurrence together with each human action is causally necessitated and so they suggest a conflict with the claim that we are free.

Here, it is to be notified that causal determination stated that everything that occurs as well as our own actions has already been causally determined to occur. Everything that happens is the result of earlier causes and these causes determine their effects by ensuring that these effects must occur. Otherwise, there is no chance for things to happen. If it is true then it can be say that what will happen in our future is already fixed and determined by the past. As a result we naturally think that the truth of casual determination would definitely remove our freedom. But, our natural assumption is that our having control of how we act depends on our actions rather than being causally determined in advance by outside factors, such as the environment that we were born into or desires and feelings that come over us outside our power of control. This kind of assumption that we naturally make is known as *incompatibilism*. According to *incompatibilism*, freedom is incompatible with the causal predetermination of how we act by factors outside our control. It claims that human beings are natural *incompatibilists*.

On the other hand, *libertarianism* claimed that freedom of action combines *incompatibilism* with the future belief that we do actually possess control over how we act. *Libertarianists* are *compatibilists* for those in the sense that who really believe that we are free. And that is exactly what we naturally suppose. Though, we think that the predetermination of actions would remove our control over whether we perform them or not, however we still powerfully predispose to assume that we do possess that control and

believe that it is we who are in charge of how we act. So because past causes are not imposing our actions on us.

It is to be stated that freedom is a property of will. We can say that, “a conscious organism is free in the degree to which it fulfills its desires and volitions...it is free in the degree to which its acts fulfill what it wills”⁶. Actually, ‘human will’ can be regarded as both free and determined. If we look at it as a natural effect of prior causes then it is wholly un-free and determined. On the other hand, again if we look at as a causal agent who has natural effects and if this will be desired or willed then it is both determined and free. It is to be notified that always to have determinate effects does not mean that it is free. If it is so then freedom would be same as determinism. In this regard, it can be stated that, “those wills are free that have just those determinate effects that are desired and willed”⁷.

We have stated that human beings as a conscious agent are free. After all, freedom is a phenomenon of consciousness. Unconscious things are un-free, for example, a stone. While every things and events are dogged but individuals’ will is atleast at times and places free than unconscious things. Although, all human desires and volitions are rigidly determined but they have both determinate causes and effects. That’s why some of them are free. Actually, there is no issue between freedom and determinism. Rather, the issue is between freedom and un-freedom or between determinism and indeterminism. But, as we all know that indeterminism is impossible, so there seems to stay only the query as to whether volitions or desires are free or un-free. We have already mentioned that freedom is a matter of degree. One agent is freer than other and the same person is freer at one

time than at another time. Similarly, volitions or desires are also free in the same agent at one time than at another time.

Actually, freedom is not something like that which can be found in denial of desire or will or in the attainment of *Nirvāna*. Rather, this leads only to un-freedom. Because, when we think that our desires are unattainable and volitions are impotent and trying to avoid them then this negation of desire and will leads not to freedom but to un-freedom. So, desires and volitions are the very important source of both freedom and determinism.

4.3. Existential Idea of Freedom and Authenticity

The concept of freedom is one of the most important concepts that emerge from the existential tradition in philosophy. This tradition in philosophy explains the concept of freedom from different standpoints. Their freedom is not 'freedom for' or 'freedom from', except 'freedom to'. They elucidate that man has got infinite power to choose and to make her/his existence according to her/his willpower. Even in forming her/his world she/he has absolute freedom. So, man has freedom to make choices, decisions and act according to her/his will. But sometimes our freedom is limited by some circumstances because of which we cannot act freely. When an individual choose oneself to be free then she/he comes to the authentic state. Only an authentic being can realize her/his inner freedom and can act according to her/his will.

The concept of authenticity is also one of the important ideas that emerge from the existential tradition in philosophy. According to this philosophy of tradition, authenticity consists in somehow being true to oneself. To be true to oneself is to be honest with oneself. In other words, it can be said that true to oneself means to be sincere

to oneself inwardly or to be present oneself sincerely. That self- presentation must appear spontaneous and natural.

It is already stated that freedom means choosing oneself to be free. Choosing oneself means unconditioned choice of oneself as absolute and also taking responsibility for this choice. According to Kierkegaard, choosing oneself means individual's relationship which relates herself/himself to her/his own self. So, for him

Man is spirit....but what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self?

The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self. Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal⁸.

By the term spirit, Kierkegaard does not mean the permanent essential substance or rationally conceived self. Rather, he regarded self or spirit as dynamic. Human being as spirit is characterized by transcending act. Transcendence is rooted in temporality, it is not static. According to Kierkegaard, the temporal and eternal dimensions of the self are synthesized only in the moment of instant decision. Regarding this Kierkegaard's standpoint of temporality, M. C. Taylor says,

To be in time is to be faced with the either- or of decision. The present, the moment of decision, differentiates past and future. Thus selves are 'tensed' - they live in memory, anticipation and decision. The modalities of time are directly related to the different dimensions of the self. The past is the self's actuality, the future is its possibility and the present is the moment in which freedom can be exercised by actualizing possibilities⁹.

Actually, in Kierkegaard's philosophy, self is to be understood in terms of existing transcendence. The relation between self and its own self is freedom. The truth of a relation always lies in the subject, which is self-constituting act. In other words, it can be said that to relate oneself to oneself is to choose oneself to be free. Kierkegaard holds that freedom is the absolute choice of myself. Here the question is, '*why does Kierkegaard call it absolute?*'. For him, absolute choice is the choice of myself in my eternal validity. Kierkegaard regarded it as an absolute because it is wholly individual. By choose absolutely, he means the absoluteness of choice which is expressed precisely by the fact that I have not chosen to choose this or that. Instead of this, it means choosing the absolute. But the question is, '*what is absolute?*'. Kierkegaard answered that it is I myself in my eternal validity. For him, except own self nothing can choose as the absolute. If someone chooses something then she/he chooses it as a finite thing and so do not choose it absolutely. Kierkegaard says,

What is it I choose? Is it this thing or that? No.....I choose the absolute.
And what is absolute? It is I myself in my eternal validity. Anything else but myself I can never choose as the absolute. But what, then, is this self of mine? It is the most abstract of all things, and yet at the same time it is the most concrete – it is freedom¹⁰.

For Kierkegaard, only an authentic being can make absolute choice or can choose her/his own self. In other words, we can say that only in authentic existence, man can realize her/his inner self.

According to Kierkegaard, the individual through her/his freedom can transcend her/his everyday existence. For this, the individual sidesteps both subjective and objective determination on one hand and naturalistic objective order on the other hand. For Kierkegaard, a free action is always chosen by the individual deliberately, it is not measured by the external criteria. He argued that the truly existent individual always has made free choice. It is the decisiveness of the inward choice. Here, the question of inward choice is raised. An inward choice or decision is that in which the individual puts an end to mere possibility and recognizing herself/himself by means of the content of her/his thought in order to exist in it. Kierkegaard regarded it as real action. According to him, real action is the outcome of individual's internal decision. Actually, the rightness of action is measured in terms of intrinsic worth and not by consequences. Moreover, for Kierkegaard, to be free is to realize oneself or have an inward passionate feeling. Only a subjective individual can realize her/his freedom and can make real choice. Kierkegaard is always concerned with our subjective inward life and intentions. He does not question our beliefs and feeling that we have freedom of choice and never consider the traditional philosophical problem of whether one actually is free. Actually, he brackets the external world. Kierkegaard's existential version of dialectic is individual and passionate. According to him, man is a living passion, not abstract reason.

According to Heidegger, freedom is bound up with our being in the world in such a way that what is present to us might very well not be. Therefore, human beings are confronted by alternative possibilities. Actually, freedom is being in a position to try. It is not a matter of having the strength or intensity to accomplish some task successfully. Rather, it is a position to choose either this or that whether or not one succeeds. For

Heidegger, being in that position defines the way we are in the world and it is that way that constitutes us as free beings. He also stated that there are two modes of existing of human beings, namely, authenticity and inauthenticity. These modes refer to man's relationship to himself. An authentic man is she/he who has an adequate understanding of herself/himself, i.e. who she/he is. But an inauthentic man is she/he who refuses to see herself/himself and acts blindly. But, both authenticity and inauthenticity are the possibilities of *Dasien*. It is to be stated that,

Dasien is always its possibility...it can choose itself in its being...these two kinds of being of authenticity and inauthenticity-these expressions are terminologically chosen in the strictest sense of the word...¹¹.

These are the ontological basis of *Dasien*. These two existential modes are aroused when an individual makes her/his choice and try to do something. According to Heidegger, "authenticity and inauthenticity are not exhaustive categories, but lie at the ends of a spectrum...."¹².

Generally, the word 'authentic' means own, proper or peculiar. Literally it means what is most my own or what is essentially most proper or peculiar to me. According to Heidegger, authenticity implies the unique first person structure of existence what she/he calls 'mineness'. For him, authenticity means 'mineness'. For example, anxiety is authentic because it has no external object, but it relates to one's own individualized being in the world. On the other hand, fear is inauthentic because it is an inner state directed at things outside oneself intentionally. Fear is always of something or for someone.

Heidegger says that *Dasein* is always it can be and the way in which it is, its possibility. In its very being *Dasein* can choose itself and win itself. Freedom is the essence of truth for Heidegger. By freedom he means 'let be'. On the other hand, Sartre has given the absolute freedom to man. He protests against every form of determinism and maintains that every act is absolutely original. Man is law unto herself/himself. She/he is fated to be free. According to Kierkegaard, man does not exist first in order to be free afterward. There is no distinction between the being of man and her/his freedom. Human reality can deny all. It can carry nothingness within itself. Sartre says that individual's freedom is perpetually in question in her/his being; it is not a quality added on or a property of her/his nature. It is very exactly the stuff of her/his being. And as in her/his being, her/his being is in question; she/he must necessarily possess a certain understanding of freedom. It is this understanding which we intend at present to make explicit.

Sartre states that human beings are radically free. For him, freedom is the freedom of consciousness. Here the question is, '*what does he mean by freedom of consciousness?*'. Freedom of consciousness can be understood in two senses consists of two qualities of consciousness. Firstly, consciousness is intentional. That means consciousness is always consciousness of something. It always points to an object. This implies that consciousness look after from its object a negation. Sartre calls it as nothingness. Secondly, consciousness is temporal, so it is a perpetual flux and constant activity. Human existence is a projection of the self through time. Such projection amounts to freedom in the sense that consciousness is never identical to its own past. Rather, it frequently exceeds itself in anticipation of the future. Human consciousness is

essentially future oriented. Sartre says, “Consciousness is free because it is perpetually wrenched away from itself and because it has been separated by nothingness from what it is and from what it will be”¹³.

From these two senses of freedom of consciousness, it can be understood that it is ontological. Consciousness is free because it is intentional as well as temporal. It is to be noteworthy that intentionality and temporality are necessary and universal features of consciousness and it never fails to embody these features. Thus, consciousness is necessarily free. It is free means it negates the brute matter (not subject to cause and effect) because consciousness is perpetual flux and wholly under- determined by its own past.

According to Sartre, past decisions do not limit a person’s freedom or cause a person’s current actions. Actually, individuals are essentially active and perpetually projecting themselves into the future. It is true that their projects take place on the basis of their past. But, the importance and meaning of one’s past appears on the basis of one’s current projects. Sartre stated that brute nature does not limit a person’s freedom¹⁴. For him, humans are limited by brute nature only in relative sense. There is no obstacle in my freedom if I want to do it whole heartedly. It depends on the individual’s determination of mind. And other people do not limit my freedom. According to Sartre, other people are free having consciousness, but they are like brute nature because of their power to objectify me. Only by imposing meaning, definition and assumptions on me, other people can bring a factual limit to my freedom. For Sartre, my freedom consists in giving meaning and the encounter with others entails receiving meaning. He says, “I myself see a meaning conferred upon me... the new dimension of being that the other brings upon

me is a dimension of alienation because it comes from outside my project”¹⁵. The other people can limit one’s freedom only to the extent that he/ she allow them to limit. And the limit that is imposed comes from the individual’s own choice. Sartre illustrates that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself¹⁶.

Actually, freedom of choice concerns the ethical stage which has to do with the question of ‘either/or’ as it is described by Kierkegaard in his book ‘Either/ Or’. According to Kierkegaard, the ‘ethicist’ is still in the universal and makes choice in conformity to the universal. For him, real struggle is done by only religious man who by choosing inwardly makes a leap from the finite to the infinite. So, freedom of choice is linked with the consciousness of God that the individual in front of Him realizes all her/his possibilities. But, Sartre by rejecting this view of Kierkegaard states that freedom acquires its meaning only by denying the existence of God. Only then the individual becomes wholly responsible for her/his action. For Sartre, the existence of God is irreconcilable with human freedom. Man’s freedom is absolute. There is no priori essence; man first of all exists as a free being and creates her/his essence afterwards. Sartre says,

Human freedom is not a part of human existence; it precedes human existence and makes it possible. The freedom cannot be separated from the being of man. It is the being of man’s consciousness. It is not a human attribute but it is the raw material of my being. I owe my being to freedom.¹⁷

According to Kierkegaard, all authentic actions are intentional and consciously and deliberately done. There is no a priori moral value to guide the individual; similarly there is no any supernatural power to guide her/his action. The individual has absolute freedom and always responsible for her/his action.

So, we have seen that according to Existentialist philosophers, freedom implies possibilities. Existentialists observe that freedom is not super-added to man, but it is the essence, the inmost character of human beings. Since, freedom is her/his being, she/he is her/his own possibilities. According to Existentialism, man is so free that she/he can conceive of Reality in her/his own way. For Marcel, freedom is the link to transcendence. He declares that a man cannot be free or remain free except in the degree to which she/he remains linked with what transcends her/him. According to Jaspers, the question of freedom originates in the self who will its existence. One can be aware of freedom only because potentially, at least, she/he is always free. Jaspers said that it is from the potentiality of freedom that we can raise the question of freedom. Thus, for Jaspers, man is a being of infinite possibilities and at the same time, she/he is a finite existence having limitations inseparable from her/his finitude. According to Kierkegaard, freedom is fundamentally and essentially the power of 'being able'. It is not choice, resignation, repentance or faith. He agrees with Heidegger that freedom adds nothing new to man, but only in the sense that for Kierkegaard the self is freedom. For him, freedom and possibility are not identical. Freedom swings between necessity and possibility. He states that choice is the only expression of freedom. It is not necessary. If someone identifies freedom with choice as Sartre does, then freedom is necessary.

4.4. Freedom, Authenticity and Suffering: Kierkegaard

Human beings as a free and autonomous being have defined their existence through choice. It is to be stated that freedom means possibility. The individual has infinite possibilities which cannot be rationally predictable. These possibilities imply a future which brings the feeling of dread in individual's life. This feeling of dread causes suffering. Here the question is '*what is dread?*' and '*how does it cause suffering?*'. Dread is conscious awareness of one's future possibility and it arises from the desire for individuals' authentic choices and actions. That possibility of future brings suffering to individuals' life. Freedom means possibility of future which brings the individual into the experience of dread. The experience of dread causes suffering. We can overcome from all sufferings only in when we understand or realize ourselves or our inner self. It is possible only in authentic existence. Only an authentic being can realize her/his inner self and can choose the real one as well as can get rid of all sufferings. But choosing oneself or own self as free is not an easy task. For this, people do suffer a lot. It can be said that, "When one is painfully conscious of the danger of abandoning one's self, a cry for authenticity is heard"¹⁸. The individual can become aware of her/his authentic existence only when she/he has deeply experienced the conflict between authentic and inauthentic pattern of life and has struggled to make decision between the two. Only then an individual is become to recognize the vital significance of authentic identity and also is able to give value in her/his life. So, an authentic individual can only realize or understand suffering or the highest subjective truth and can overcome from it. The process of realizing the highest subjective truth makes it clear that there must be an internal link between freedom, authenticity and suffering.

The most important point is that only a free individual can experience the possibility of future. Everything in this world is momentary and changing time to time. There is nothing which is fixed and final. If everything is already fixed then the question of possibility does not arise. Fixed system implies the possibility of predicting future. If it is so, there is no dread for the unknown future. And there is no future of dread means there is no suffering in this world. But suffering is a universal phenomenon and an inalienable part of our life. Everything is momentary in this world and there is only possibility. That possibility of future and the anxiety for the unknown future causes suffering.

Moreover, it is claimed by many philosophers that human beings are free to do what she/he wants and also responsible for her/his action. Interestingly, responsible actions are always distinguished from causal effects. No one is responsible for the action which is causally determined. So, there is a distinction between a causal effect and a responsible action. A cause is a simple operation which is neither responsible nor irresponsible. It is not answerable to itself or anyone. It simply produces an effect. But, a responsible action implies becoming responsible or having an answer for own action. From this, it becomes clear that one is only responsible for that action in which one is free to choose. A responsible action is not only a reaction to the object; rather it is a meaningful action. This takes us to a noetic aspect of accountability that provides us the ability to give a subjective and creative response to the situation. It is to be noteworthy that giving a subjective and creative response to the situation is the essence of human freedom and responsibility which is called subjectivity of human freedom. Suffering as a

subjective truth can be realized only by a free individual or in authentic existence. So, there must be a co- relation between freedom and suffering.

The co- relation that connects suffering and freedom can be analyzed with reference to the three modes of existence, namely, aesthetic, ethical and religious. Kierkegaard has divided the life of an individual into three stages on the basis of the capacity of experiencing suffering which are the steps towards consciousness of freedom. In other words, these three stages of life can be said as alternative ways of ordering one's life.

Firstly, the aesthetic stage is marked as stage of momentary and immediacy of pleasure. They avoid suffering in terms of pleasure. Here, the question of freedom does not arise. The aesthete is only concerned with isolated moments and is fascinated by the object of beauty which persists only so long as the object persists. When the object disappears, the fascination vanishes. That means the aesthete is living only in such type of fleeting momentary pleasure.

In aesthetic stage, the individual's choice is not definite because of which she/he cannot take any decision. Their desires are unlimited. At the time when a desire is attained or fulfilled, then that has moved on the other. An aesthete's only aim is to achieve what she/he wants. But, if desiring object is the principle of one's action then the present is always unfulfilled. Because of this temporary satisfaction of desire they cannot understand suffering.

Secondly, the ethical stage is concerned with freedom of choice. Here, the individual has to face with the question of 'either/or'. The ethicist plays an important role

in the shaping of her/his self and living manner. Søren Kierkegaard describes this stage as a choosing oneself. Unlike aesthetic stage, here an individual gives importance to the inner world than this outer existence of world. The individual tries to understand her/his inner self and tries to become an ideal self. She/he takes the responsibility of all her/his actions and by performing it she/he possesses an autonomous will and freedom of choice.

In ethical stage, the individual's choices are like that which is different from what she/he chooses in aesthetic stage. Choice is the most important and strictest expression of the ethical life. But, the ethicist unable to make real choice because of which she/he remains unable to understand the highest subjective truth (suffering). It is true that an ethicist is an autonomous person and has freedom to choose what she/he wants. But, she/he is failed to choose the real one. Generally, we have known that choice is something where one should act one way or another because of which the individual has to face a disturbing situation. But, in real choice, the individual determined to do form inner self and cut off from everything. Actually, in real choice, choice always demands from the individual the complete devotion. But, the ethicists cannot devote herself/himself or failed to completely isolate herself/himself which create tension in ethical existence. This tension creates obstacles for realizing one's actual existence and an ethicist failed to understand what suffering is.

Thirdly, in religious stage, the individual chooses inwardly and has a leap of faith from the finite to the infinite whereas the ethicist makes a choice in conformity to the universal. Thus, in this stage freedom of choice is inextricably related with the consciousness of God. That means freedom of choice acquires meaning only in front of the consciousness of God. But, Sartre in this regard has opposed the view of Kierkegaard.

According to him, individual's freedom has its true meaning only by denying the existence of God. Only by denying God, the individual can become wholly responsible for her/his action. The existence of God is irreconcilable with human freedom. Sartre regarded man's freedom as absolute. According to him, there is no prior essence. Man first of all exists as a free being in this world and defines her/his essence afterwards. Actually, freedom precedes human existence and makes it possible. Freedom is an inseparable part of human existence. It can be said that "it is not a human attribute but it is the raw material of my being. I own my being to freedom"¹⁹.

Sartre stated that the human being is absolutely free to choose what to do and also responsible for her/his action. He denies the existence of any supernatural power or God to justify or guide our actions. Therefore, responsibility of actions is always on the individual. According to Sartre, it is the individual's own existential choice and commitment which embodies human freedom. For him, freedom lies in saying 'no' to the situation. Sartre regarded freedom as negative. This negativism is creative because freedom is always towards a project²⁰. But Kierkegaard holds that the choice of individual is always in accordance with God's demand. Freedom gets its significance in front of God. In the religious stage, Kierkegaard says that the individual attains her/his true individuality or freedom in her/his interface with God. Like Sartre, Kierkegaard also agrees with the view that God does not exist independently of human experience. For him, only in this stage, an individual can realize God's existence and can commit herself/himself before God. Here, the individual can make the real choice and can cut off herself/himself from all other worldly things. The religious person has understood that relative values of our finite worldly existence should never become our life's goal. The

individual has become an authentic being who can choose her/his inner self and act according to her/his will. In this stage, suffering has transformed into an occasion for joy. The human being can understand the significance of suffering. Here, she/he can choose the real one because of which all sufferings are eliminated and attain eternal happiness. One can attain eternal happiness only when she/he could realize or understood the meaning of suffering. So, Kierkegaard regarded religious stage as the highest stage where individual can realize the highest subjective truth (suffering).

4.5. Freedom in Suffering

Man is a free autonomous being that can freely make choice what she/he wants. It is already stated that freedom is a phenomenon of consciousness. It depends on the individual how she/he uses her/his freedom and how far she/he can go with her/his freedom. Freedom is the essence of human existence through which she/he can give meaning to her/his existence. Freedom means free to choose what she/he wants. Human beings are free to choose what she/he wants and also responsible for her/his action whether the result of action is good or bad. So, the problem always belongs to the individuals' choice, not with freedom. Here, a question arises, 'does choice take into a consideration between a priori good and bad?'. But, Kierkegaard is not interested to lay down the criteria or a set of criteria of good and bad. Actually, he is always viewing the moral issues from the first perspective and is not interested in giving from third person perspective. Kierkegaard is not interested in giving third person analysis of the moral discourse. He has not given any prescription of norms for evaluating and guiding human conduct. For him, the ultimate justification of choice cannot be provided by a priori

framework of values. The rightness of a specific act must not be judged in terms of general laws.

According to Kierkegaard, the significance of freedom lies in the 'how' and not in the 'what' of choice. Freedom of choice is an inward act and it is not depend on the objective reality of the chosen but upon the energy, earnestness and pathos of the act of choice. This process of existential morality can be compared with the artistic process of creation. Just as an artist ignores the given values and in the act of creation she/he creates a value. Similarly, existential values are also to be found or discovered and given independently of human subjectivity. They are not transcendent. Rather, they are created, lived and experienced. They arise from the core and depth of human interiority. Actually, values (whether it is existential value or artistic value) are not exist before human beings. Values or morality is the part of human being as her/his own creation. Values are not superimposed on the individual. Therefore, there is no a priori ought or obligatoriness in Kierkegaard's ethics. This view of Kierkegaard's ethics imparts a good deal of responsibility to the individual who is to act in accordance with the honest and inner urge that impels her/him to act. It leads us to choosing oneself.

The choosing oneself implies the inwardness or subjective element in the individuals which is the essence of human freedom and responsibility. The individual deliberately chooses one course of action and at the time of choice she/he is aware of her/his choice and action. According to Kierkegaard, aesthetic choice is arbitrary where ethical choice is meaningful and authentic. Ethical choice implies commitment and responsibility by the individual. He stated that becoming ethical is not identical with choosing to be a good person. Rather, it is the commitment to being a person. It is to be

observed that, “ethical life must be focused on the process of commitment- not on evaluation of the publicly ascertainable effects of one’s actions”²¹. For a person, the first task is to give oneself a defined identity. According to him, people who do not perform this act are not fully persons. To confront ‘either/or’ which separates the aesthetic from the ethical is to bring into existence of a self whose essential characteristic can be fixed by a decision²². The confrontation itself is an ethical act.

In ethical stage, freedom acquires meaning in taking decision by confronting ‘either/or’. We have known that freedom of choice is a very conflicting situation where the individual has to take decision. The ethical individual is able to make choice by confronting ‘either/or’ and also take responsible for that. Kierkegaard believes that ethical existence is a necessary stage in the development of authentic subjectivity. However, subjectivity cannot rest in ethical life. Like that of the aesthetic life, the ethicist’s life is subject to internal contradictions. The ethicists are free individual and have freedom of choice. But they are very confusing at the time of choice. By passing that confusing situation they have taken decisions. Because of that confusing situation or ‘either/or’ situation which create inner contradictions they are remain unable to make real choice and decisions. As a result, the individual has to suffer a lot in ethical existence of life. For Kierkegaard, these contradictions will reveal to us the necessity of moving beyond the strictly ethical life in the direction of religion. In other words, we can say that the desire for understanding the depth of suffering leads the ethical life to the religious life.

Now, here a question can be raised, ‘what are these contradictions because of which the ethicists being freedom of choice is unable to understand or have freedom in

suffering?'. According to Kierkegaard, the first contradiction is concerned with anxiety. He frequently asserts that, "anxiety is the possibility of freedom"²³. Freedom only remains as a potential or possibility till the individual is unaware of her/his existence. But at the time when she/he recognizes her/his possibility of own freedom then this possibility is transformed into a fact. Since, the transformation is instant, then what the individual actually recognizes is not the possibility, but the fact of their own freedom. Kierkegaard also asserts that, "anxiety is entangled with freedom, where freedom is not free in itself but entangled, not by necessity, but in itself"²⁴. That means in the grasp of anxiety, our freedom of choice is being used to choose non- freedom. As a result, the individual is free but does not yet use her/his freedom.

Anxiety is characterized by a desire for what one fears and a dread of what one desires. Here, the possibility of one's freedom is experienced or attractive and desirable. But, also at the same time, it becomes undesirable and terrifying. The individual in anxiety has felt these contradicting situations with a similar intensity for example, the story of Abraham. Here, Abraham realizes that he can disobey God and in his anxiety he feels the desire to do this. But at the same time he is also hold off by the realization that his freedom means there is nothing to stop him. Kierkegaard states that the individual wants to do both or loves to do both, but also fears to do that. Actually, anxiety for Kierkegaard is a desire for what the individual fears. It is an alien power which grasps the individual and one cannot rip herself/himself free from it. As a result, the situation becomes like the individual wants to do what she/he desires but fear to do that and what she/he fears, she/he desires. Kierkegaard states that, "anxiety makes the individual powerless"²⁵. Because of this powerlessness, the individual has become helpless in front

of her/him and has to suffer for that. Therefore, in ethical stage however the individual has freedom to do what she/he wants but fears to use her/his freedom. That type of conflicting situation makes the individual internally helpless or powerless. At that time the individual wants the help from outside. For Kierkegaard, only by taking the help of God one can come out from that type of conflicting situation. This type of situation leads the individual into the religious life. The act of faith in God may bring us into relation with a power other than ourselves which can sustain us. So, people need help from God. Kierkegaard says, "When I despair, I use myself to despair, and therefore I cannot be myself come back. In this moment of decision it is that the individual needs divine assistance"²⁶. So, in ethical stage of life the individual cannot use her/his freedom to overcome suffering. Here, the individual faces suffering and also has freedom to struggling with it. But, here her/his freedom is limited by the question of 'either/or'.

The second contradiction of not understanding suffering or not getting freedom in suffering in ethical stage is that we do not deserve God's help. As we have to face the future with anxiety so we must have to confront our own past with guiltiness. The cohesive personality that comes out from the choice of ethical existence is defined partly by continuity in time and thus must suffer for its past actions. That guilt could be overcome if we could ever know that we had received or deserved to receive God's forgiveness and help. But, for Kierkegaard, such type of knowledge is impossible. Therefore, our guilt remains a permanent feature of our religious consciousness, such as anxiety. Requiring God's help but never knowing whether that help is deserved or has been received, the religious person must devote herself/himself to a continual self-searching concerning the sincerity of her/his religious commitment. Therefore, God's

help for overcoming suffering which seems as undeserved in ethical stage must see as something which we in fact deserve. Kierkegaard argues that “As against God, we are always wrong”²⁷. This can be realized only in religious stage. Until we understand this truth, suffering remains as suffering. This understanding breakdown the ethical life and leads the individual towards religion.

The third contradiction that limits freedom of an ethical individual in understanding suffering is that if we take the help of God to overcome from the conflict of ‘either/or’ then this can violate our ethical obligations. Kierkegaard in his book ‘Fear and Trembling’ has described this problem clearly through the story of Abraham. He asserted that Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son cannot be thought of as ethical. Rather, it can be thought of as either murder or an act of religious faith. Here, Kierkegaard suggesting the possibility of a purely individual obligation. This obligation is different from the ethical obligations. First, the act in question is whether Abraham has to sacrifice his son or not cannot be justified by appeal to universal principles. Only the person is obligated to do it and she/he is obligated only by virtue of being the particular person she/he is, not by virtue of being as a citizen or father or friend. Secondly, the act in question is not directed to that good of the human community. Rather, it is performed only for the benefit of the particular individual’s relation with God. Kierkegaard writes,

Abraham’s whole action stands in no relation to the universal, is a purely private undertaking....Abraham is great by reason of a purely personal virtue....why then did Abraham do it? For God’s sake and (in complete identity with this) for his own sake²⁸.

The realization that such an act may be required for the individual is part of the transcendence from the ethical to the religious. For Kierkegaard, only religion can provide solutions to the dilemmas of ethical life. In religious stage only, freedom acquires true meaning. It is possible only in the consciousness of God. With the help of God or complete devotion to God, the individual can realize his freedom and become absolutely free and can overcome suffering. Here, all the conflict situations create contradictions are erased and suffering becomes eternal happiness. The question of 'either/or' does not arise here because the individual can choose the real one (God).

4.6. Freedom, Authenticity, Suffering and Self- Realization

We have already mentioned above that the individual have freedom in suffering which is different in each stage of life. But freedom acquires meaning only when we can freely choose our true self and realize it and also act accordingly. This stage can be regarded as authentic stage. It is the stage of pure subjectivity. For freedom from suffering or to overcome suffering, self realization is essential and necessary. But, the question is what self realization is. Generally, self realization means fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one's nature or individuality. Moreover, it can be defined as freedom from external coercion, such as political freedom, economic freedom and freedom from worldly attachments and desires. Philosophically, it can be defined as the knowing, in mind, body and soul that we are one with the omnipresence of God. It also means perfect existence, consciousness or bliss. There is good as well as evil in this world. Knowledge is to be regarded as good and ignorance as evil. Ignorance leads to suffering and knowledge leads to happiness and liberation. The highest state is to be

regarded as self realization which is perfect, pure and eternal. It is the state where the individual can achieve the highest goal.

But, the actual question is *what self realization means*. Or, *who is realizing what*. Or, *'which 'self' is being realized or understood?'*, or *'what does the word 'self' really signify?'*. Actually, understanding of the term 'self- realization' is related to the level of our evolution of existence. In other words, it refers to our subjective existence. Here, one is not object for another. Rather, she/he is subject to herself/himself. So, the word 'self' whilst used in various contexts, it basically refers to our sense of uniqueness or identity. Everything that exists has self. It is the self that makes anything be what it is. But, to truly take hold of who that self is, we need to be self-realized. There are some levels of self-realization. When one exists in a poor relationship with one's identity and lacks reflective consciousness or is simply unconscious then one is too underdeveloped to realize oneself. At the time, when that self goes in a process of development then it leads towards higher levels of the knowing of its pure subjectivity.

The realm of self realization has been understood due to our inability to properly grasp the intricacies of the various dimensions of self that we are realizing. Without revealing this subject with thoughtful understanding, the individual on the path to the promised land of self- realization is bound to stay as puzzled as they always were. It is the essence that we bring a deeper level of insight into our observation of the subtle dimensions of that very self that we aspire to realize. That confusing state can be regarded to be similar with Kierkegaard's ethical state where the individual is confused with the question of 'either/or'.

It is to be stated that subjective understanding of reality is very essential for self-realization. It is necessary for reaching an authentic understanding of the very truth (suffering). Subjective truth is the living truth or fruits of awareness that exist only in the burning fire of subjective experience. When the fire goes out, the truth becomes lifeless. Actually, subjective truth requires an indirect transmission that creates in the individual's mind what Kierkegaard calls 'double reflection'. Double reflection refers to the dual process of first understanding a truth intellectually and then relating to it to one's life situation in a manner that gives rise to the subjective understanding of the truth through direct personal experience.

Søren Kierkegaard regarded suffering as highest subjective truth which can be understood only through self-realization. Through self-realization suffering will be overcome. According to him, only in religious stage, the individual can choose the true self. In aesthetic stage, the question of self realization does not arise. In ethical stage, the individual has realized, but she/he has to face a very confusing situation of 'either/ or' because of which she/he cannot make real choice. For realizing the true self or for self realization, the individual has to be free. For Kierkegaard, only a religious person can have the freedom of choice and by choosing her/his true self in the faith of God, she/he can overcome suffering. Only through faith, the individual can take a step towards religion. Faith is to be regarded as essential and necessary for overcome suffering. Because, faith gives the individual to accept what she/he suffers, and also gives the strength to overcome it. Kierkegaard says, "Faith in God does require a sense of acceptance and trust in the mystery that is God"²⁹.

Kierkegaard has regarded faith also as the highest subjective truth. Because it is a state of consciousness of the infinite in which one is no longer confined to the perception of the reality imposed by intellectual reality. Actually, faith is a state of passionate surrender to what is rationally doubtful. It is only through 'leap of faith' the human being can commit herself/himself totally to God whose existence is logically and rationally uncertain. According to Kierkegaard, faith requires a leap on the part of the individual. But, Kierkegaard is not talking about any type of blind leap. Rather, by leap he means the acknowledgement of the fact that faith is discontinuous with what came before. It is not a development of any sort of potential skill or characteristic that is already present in the individual. But, it is a transition to a completely different dimension of consciousness. It is the coming into being of something new. It is to be stated that, "making a 'leap of faith' requires, not objectivity and rationality, but passion. And passion is something essentially non- rational and subjective"³⁰.

According to Kierkegaard, self- realization is the man's highest form of selfhood. He had complete faith in that which is a religious existence defined by passionate self commitment to the personal Absolute through the sustaining standpoint of faith. In religious stage, the individual can make real choice in the faith of God. Here, the question may rise about the possibility for a finite individual to make faith in God who is infinite. Kierkegaard stated that human existence is the synthesis of finite and infinite. According to him, "A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short a synthesis"³¹. But '*how does man can be both finite and infinite?*'. As we have known that God or the universe is finite whereas man belongs to the finite world. In other words, man was created by God; therefore

she/he is also a child of infinity. Just as the children inherit their parents' genetics, so it can be concluded that mankind may have inherited the genetics of infinity and thus partly infinite. Therefore, it is only because of the infinite component of her/his being that man possesses the capacity to achieve a sense of oneness or unity with the infinite God through faith. But because of the finite component she/he cannot make a permanent transition to this state of being in which his consciousness is attained to God. In other words, it can be said that our finite nature makes it impossible for us to remain in this highest form of religious existence without constant striving. So, this way of existence shows a path for a total self-commitment to God which requires a continuous effort of self-commitment through faith that never ends throughout one's entire life. Kierkegaard writes, "Existence is the child of the infinite and finite, the eternal and the temporal, and is therefore a constant striving"³². He regarded faith as a highest level of our thinking that permits us to standardize ourselves to and realize both the infinite, formless realm and the finite realm of existence.

Kierkegaard stated that when an individual with full passion of inwardness and total commitment wants to discover the truth of her/his own being, then she/he gradually enters a state of deep connection or oneness with the process of her/his existing. In other words, passionate commitment for the searching truth of own being leads to self-realization through which she/he can attain or understand the truth. Suffering can be understood through self-realization that leads us to take a leap to faith through which suffering can be overcome. It signifies the power of the infinite creative force that man's faith mind opens the door to the realm of infinite possibility. Kierkegaard claimed that no rational truth can guide us towards an understanding of the meaning of human existence.

Existence means possibility and only the possibility of salvation that we have is the path for divine enlightenment. To overcome suffering or to attain enlightenment, the individual has two choices. First, the individual has to remain forever in a life of complete ignorance and uncertainty about what she/he ought to believe or how she/he should live. Second, the individual can choose to take the leap of faith in which she/he adopts the utterly irrational belief in God who can enlighten us if the individual passionately commit herself/himself to Him. Here, the individual has to make choice either the first one or the second one. This situation can be regarded as similar an ethicist' situation that she/he has faced in ethical stage. This is a very confusing situation which can be overcome only through self –realization in religious stage. Kierkegaard considers faith to be the most important of all human potentials because only through faith the individual can reach complete selfhood (self- realization).

Kierkegaard repeatedly asserted that for self-realization or to be one's true self, it is necessary to become what he termed 'single individual'. And only an authentic being can become 'single individual'. The single individual is central to all areas of his thoughts. At this highest level, the single individual stands alone before God. To be a 'single individual' requires passionate self- commitment to a single purpose in life. To become single individual, it is necessary to realized own self. As a single individual, the individual creates and chooses her/his own values and way of life irrespective of whether or not it harmonizes with the society in which she/he lives. The individual through total commitment can freely choose the fundamental path (faith) in life. This is the key feature of this state of consciousness which gives a sense of consciousness and integrity to her/his existence. As a result, her/his actions become a genuine expression of what she/he

really wants to be doing with her/his existence. Kierkegaard had stated that an essential feature of true selfhood or self- realization is to be clear in mind what one wants to do.

He says,

To be clear in mind what I am to do, not what I am to know, except in so far as a certain understanding must precede every action. The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die³³.

Thus, we have noticed that there must be a co-relation between freedom, authenticity, suffering and self- realization. Freedom means possibility and possibility of future brings the individual to dread and anxiety which causes suffering. Kierkegaard stated that suffering exist in all three stages of life, aesthetic, ethical and religious. But, in aesthetic and ethical stage, the individual is unable to choose the real one and failed to realize her/his true self. For Kierkegaard, only in religious stage, an individual can become fully an authentic being and can realize her/his true self through leap of faith in God. It is to be noteworthy that an individual can be fully free or authentic only in the consciousness of God. Through self realization with the faith in God, the individual can overcome suffering.

4.7. Suffering as Freedom and Authenticity

Human beings have the freedom to make themselves whichever they want. But because of that desire, most of the humanity is suffering this freedom. We have known that freedom is the man's greatest desire and all causes of suffering can be regarded as

the manifestation of freedom. The existence of human being implies the possibility of freedom. The possibility of freedom means possibility of future which brings anxiety to the life of individual. Freedom implies possibility that the individual has to be actualized. When the individual starts to actualize her/his freedom then arise problems which causes suffering. In other words, suffering comes to the individual's life because of their freedom to choice. From that point of view, suffering can be regarded as freedom. But, when the individual comes to know that she/he has been suffering because of incapability of choosing the real one then starts to search her/his real self. By choosing her/his own self or real one, she/he can become authentic where she/he can understand or realize suffering. So, from this point of view, it can be stated that suffering arise from our freedom of choice and also can be eliminated through our authentic choice.

There is no doubt that we are experiencing suffering because of our complete freedom to choose. There is nothing to stop from using one's freedom. Only the individual herself/himself can stop. So, whatever happens in life of an individual, she/he is responsible for it. Similarly, suffering occurs only because of her/his freedom of choice. To understand suffering as freedom, first we have to go to the core of suffering. It is already stated that freedom means possibility and the possibility of future creates anxiety which leads to suffering. The anxiety of freedom cannot be ignored. In the Biblical story of Adam, we can see that Adam is warned by God not to eat fruit from the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. Here, first Adam's anxiety had been related to an outside 'nothing'. But, after God's prohibition awakens in him the realization that he is free, his anxiety becomes internalized and intensified and is now experienced as an anxiety relating to an inside 'nothing' - his inner freedom. In other words, we can say,

God's prohibition 'you may not eat' inspires Adam the realization that he can eat and first time he sees his inner freedom. Thus, anxiety can be regarded as freedom's disclosure to itself in possibility. Although, he realizes that he is free and he has the freedom to act, but he does not yet has any idea what he can do. If once the person realizes that she/he has the possibility of freedom then she/he is able to understand own freedom and can actualize it.

According to Kierkegaard, anxiety is a psychological state that proceeds the basic human fall into sin. Commonly, sin is a consequence of anxiety that the individual does not create. But, it is a part of human condition. As a result of this sin, the human beings have to suffer. Anxiety is a part of human condition for the presence of which they are not responsible. But, they have the freedom to choose not to allow the magnetic pull of anxiety to engulf and control them. Kierkegaard suggested that to be anxious about freedom's possibilities is to be anxious about what one will do with one's freedom. As a part of this anxiety, it is also a fear of committing sin. Kierkegaard claimed that just as fear of illness can produce illness, so can anxiety about sin can lead to sin. He also claimed that anxiety often conceals a desire to sin. Therefore, those people who are frightened or anxious about anxiety are often also attracted to sin which frequently leads them to sin. Anxiety enables us to do wrong which in turn intensifies our anxiety that predispose us to further wrong-doing and so it continues in an endless circle. As a result, it makes the individual powerless and that powerlessness leads to sin which is in fact self created weakness. In this process of endless anxiety, nothing can stop the individual except her/him. In this running process, she/he has freedom to choose whether she/he

wants to stop it or not. The individual has freedom in anxiety also, but she/he is unable to use it because she/he does not know what to do.

The individual has chosen each time with the knowledge that she/he can never know whether the choices that she/he makes are right or wrong. This makes the individual realize the utter uncertainty that lie at the heart of existence (nothingness). One can escape from her/his freedom, but all attempts to escape her/his freedom are mere illusion. Because, Kierkegaard points out that freedom is the unavoidable destiny of human beings. The expression of not to choose freedom is itself an expression of our freedom of choice. Similarly, suffering is also an unavoidable universal phenomenon that nobody can escape from. Since, suffering arises with the awareness of our freedom of choice.

Every individual being has their potential freedom to shape that she/he is and what she/he wants to become. It is to be observed that, “to be a human being is to exist in a state of becoming, and I have free will to choose what I become”³⁴. It is to be noteworthy that an individual becomes truly aware of their potentialities only through the experience of suffering or sin. Anxiety is the precondition of sin. According to Kierkegaard, anxiety makes a person to realize their identity, their spiritual self and also inspires an individual to devote their finite worldly existence through a constant striving towards the eternal (the divine). Kierkegaard asserted that the most important task of existence is to learn how to be anxious in the right way. It is true that being anxious means being suffered. Anxiety of the possibility of future implies the existence of suffering which is unavoidable and an inalienable part of our life. In suffering also, the individual has freedom to choose how she/he wants to suffer or to make the right choice

or way of suffering. In the right way of suffering, the individual has learned to look at her/his past finite sins and this makes her/him realize that she/he is also infinitely guilty. At that time, she/he needs to make the leap to faith. According to Kierkegaard, if an individual without faith in the infinite or God realizes her/his guilt and suffered for it in full depth then this can bring her/him to self destruction. For realizing her/his guilt and overcome from suffering, she/he must have to make a leap to faith in God. Only then the individual can realized her/his true self and freely choose what she/he want. According to Kierkegaard, “In order that an individual may thus be educated absolutely and infinitely by the possibility, he must be honest toward possibility and have faith”³⁵. So from that point of view, we can regard suffering as freedom because only in suffering the individual can realize her/his potential freedom and can actualize her/his freedom in a right way through which she/he can overcome suffering.

Kierkegaard repeatedly asserted that anxiety is the predisposition to sin because of which suffering arises. Suffering can be regarded to be man’s potential to achieve perfection. For Kierkegaard, people are suffered because of their continued attempt for existence. The attempt to make the future possibility of existence signifies the freedom of the individuals’ through which she/he can change her/his existence or future. According to Kierkegaard, when the individual denies their opportunity to be free, her/his whole existence is changed. But, when she/he comes to face with her/his potential freedom again then she/he realizes that she/he has been guilty of denying herself/himself this freedom. There is only one way to fill up the gap between the state of guilt and freedom and that is the leap to faith. Kierkegaard says that, “anxiety is freedom’s possibility and only such anxiety is through faith educative...”³⁶.

Kierkegaard stated that the nothingness which is the heart of our existence revealed by anxiety is so disturbing. But when the individual tries to remove this nothingness in our existence then he fall into a state of despair. In other words, the removal of anxiety is a manifestation of despair because it removes the individual's potential for reaching true selfhood. Here, freedom as potential feature of human being tries to stop her/him to become the true self. But at the same time, she/he also wants to become the true self and has freedom to do this. In this process of becoming, when the individual becomes fully aware of her/his pain and suffering underlying despair, then she/he wants an inspiration or help to embark on the path to genuine selfhood. Actually, despair is a sickness for which the individual continually responsible because it is freely chosen by her/him. The experience of despair leads the individual for finding salvation from suffering. If we try to avoid despair then we cannot overcome suffering. To overcome suffering, the individual has to conscious about her/his existential despair. Although she/he has freedom to either unconscious or avoid of it, but unconsciousness of her/his existential despair means there is no hope for overcome suffering.

Despair can be defined as a failure to live as a single individual. This failure comes from a lack of awareness that one has the potential to live as a free individual. It is true that it is known by the individual that she/he has freedom to choose the true self but she/he is not in a position to take the responsibility of the result of her/his choice of action. Despair arises from the possibility or to attempt to utilize one's freedom of choice for finite purposes. Kierkegaard claimed that freedom in itself is good if it is correctly used. It is freedom that brings suffering in our life and also can forward a path for overcome it. According to him, "the supreme challenge of existence is to realize true

freedom”³⁷. When we realize our true freedom then we can make true or genuine choice. But for getting or becoming true self requires personal commitment. Freedom acquires meaning only when we can make full passionate commitment to the infinite. The first step towards personal freedom or for passionate commitment, it is necessary to establish oneself as ‘single individual’. It is possible only when an individual can fully devote herself/himself to God. In other words, for genuine selfhood, one needs the divine help or God’s grace.

So, we have seen that suffering arises because of our potential character of freedom to becoming. Moreover, suffering is our freedom to frighten or struggle with ourselves. Suffering as freedom of the individual is always present in every sphere of life. But, it depends on the individual how to use or actualize her/his freedom. We are suffering means we have freedom to make our existence genuine or authentic. It is because of suffering that we can realize our inner freedom to become true self. Through realizing the inner self or inner freedom, we can make our existence authentic.

4.8. Conclusion

From above we have seen that there must be a co- relation between suffering and freedom. In other way we can say that suffering arise because of our freedom of will. Freedom exists when desire and will forces us to achieve their own goals. Humans’ desires are unlimited. When desire comes then choice is also come. They have freedom to choose whatever they want. But choosing something is a difficult task. It confused the individual what to do what not to do. At that time, the individual has to use her/his freedom and has to choose anyone. But, the individuals must have to know what should

be the real choice. In this process, suffering enters into the individuals' life and it exists until she/he makes the real choice.

Moreover, choosing the real one or real self, the individual must have to be authentic. But, being authentic does not mean the realization or fulfillment of one's self. Rather, it means about its spontaneous formation. The self is something that should be created and formed, not something possessing an intrinsic essence to be further developed. Actually, authentic selves do not exist; it is the individual who carry out authentic acts and live authentic modes of life. The people who live inauthentic mode of life have escaped the responsibility and dizziness of freedom. Most important thing is that authenticity cannot stipulate degrees or level of its realization. An act may or may not be authentic, but there are no stages of authenticity and it is applicable only through expression of enticement. According to Kierkegaard, there is only one sense, in which the idea of stages is relevant to the notion of authenticity. That one is found in the realm of faith where the 'how' and the 'what' overlap. He says,

Johannes Climacus being purely subjective..... shows that there is a 'how' which has this quality, that if it is truly given, then the 'what' is also given; and that it is the 'how' of 'faith'. Here quite certainly, we have inwardness at its maximum³⁸.

According to Kierkegaard, only an authentic individual can understand what suffering is. Only an authentic being can make the real choice. An individual can become authentic only in religious stage of life because it is the highest stage where the individual is able to understand the highest subjective truth. Kierkegaard holds that, "authenticity is a

correlation between the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of commitment”³⁹. To understand suffering as the highest subjective truth, the individual has to make commitment in front of God. Freedom of choice implies the possibility of future. The possibility of future brings the individual into a state of despair. In this state of despair, the individual becomes totally powerless or helpless to struggle with herself/himself what she/he suffers. Here, she/he needs some help from outside. According to Kierkegaard, at that time, only God can help her/him to overcome from this situation of despair. At the moment of helplessness or powerlessness, only faith can provide the strength of the individual. It is to be stated that, “faith involves not just belief but also the implication of a trusting attachment to God”⁴⁰.

It is to be notified that in the state of faith in God or in religious stage also suffering exists. It is not like that by having faith in God, suffering will be erased. Actually, by having faith in God, the individual can have the power of acceptance of her/his sufferings. So, it can be said that

One cannot try to change temporal affairs for the better by his own efforts; but if one cannot change matters, such people seem to accept what is and to abandon themselves to trust in God⁴¹.

Hence, it is to be stated that we have freedom to choose what we want and it is up to us how we use it. As we have seen in Kierkegaard’s three stages of life, the individual has enjoyed freedom in all the stages, but it acquires meaning only in religious stage. Actually, the spheres of existence can be said to contain ‘stages’ in terms of the intensity of the passion involved. Aesthetic objects annual passion and thereby destroying authenticity. Because of its reflective and abstract nature, the ethicist, though preserving

the sincerity and intent cannot enlist the optional intensity of passion required for authentic acts. Hence, Kierkegaard asserts that it is only in the religious stage where the 'what' does not destroy the 'how'. It involves a certain manner of willing and intending absolute and unconditional passion that presents the 'what' of faith. However, it is true that these internal stages of intensity of passion do not result in overall stages of developing authenticity. It is possible in the sphere of faith alone. Faith is possible only in religious stage through which the individual can transform her/his suffering to eternal happiness.

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