

**ESSENCE OF
EASTERN SPIRITUALITY
AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY**

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A Sufi World Initiative

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A Sufi World Initiative

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Preface

The speciality of this spiritual-philosophical book is that the subjects are ancient; taking us to the past when Rishis, Saints, Prophets and Philosophers blessed humans with their knowledge and insights, their lifelong experiences, golden ideas and advice which have since the olden times been discussed, elucidated and spoken of by many learned scholars, philosophers and others of different ages from spiritual and religious points of view, from materialistic angles or judged otherwise.

Authors of this book are most modern in their thoughts and ideas in spite of the fact that most of them are very senior among contemporary writers. They have discussed the age-old knowledge refined in their multilingual, multidimensional modern cauldron of culture and understanding. All of them are more or less free from bigotry and narrowness. Four of the seven authors are poets first before any other type of composer, scholar, writer or artist. In professional life one was a member of the Indian Administrative Service, one was a member of the Indian Police Service, one was a member of Indian Revenue Service and another a legal expert; of them two were members of the Judicial Tribunal. One is a Professor and Academician and the other is a University Professor Emeritus. One was a banker (a Bank Executive). So the book is a meeting place of various professionals who merged into the vast field of poetry and literature which include all professions and go beyond to embrace life and whatever is or is not there beyond life. The works of poets and litterateurs embrace all and goes beyond.

I have spoken of the contributors' occupations, *n'importe quel*, in fact those are the almost otiose parts of a poet or writer's life. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Chattopadhyay) the Pioneering Indian Novelist, who composed and sang the immortal song *Vande Mataram*, is hardly remembered as a Deputy Magistrate. Think of the famous French poets Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rainbaud, who squandered their lives together; Rainbow becoming a trader and merchant in foreign lands forgetting his poems. No part of their lives has any importance other than that they were one of the pillars of modern poetry. Let us remember Paul the tentmaker, Boehme the cobbler, Bunyan the tinker, Tersteegen the ribbon-maker; poets and writers, along with the great Sant Kabir, the mystic poet; a simple weaver in occupation.

We contemporaries, none of us claim to be the greatest in the fields we have covered but each of us has enjoyed the subjects while writing on them, tasting them with poetic tongue, novelist's curiosity, scholar's thirst and spiritual aspiration, working for the love of literature neither with the motive of a power monger nor of the money hunter. Those who make money in the book business are the others. Though I cannot identify the eighth unknown author, a *Lover of Ancient Wisdom*. I certainly revere his or her erudition, wisdom and love for the ancient creators and their works which are really old gold. I hope on the whole that the total creation as it is presented to the readers in this book, will be judged as an invaluable treasure trove. I introduce below the seven authors of this book.

Aju Mukhopadhyay, a bilingual award winning poet, author and critic, formerly a banker, has written on Tantra, one of the ancient paths of the Hindu religion. A comparative study of Sufi and Bhakti Literature, on the great mystic poet and leader of the Kabir Cult, Sant Kabir and a Spiritual Narrative which consists of the actual meeting of a mendicant traveller travelling in the Himalayas, with the real yogis hiding in caves and such places; living far from the crowd, never wishing to appear before the public. The rare meetings and the result of their revealing yogic power and Bibhuti not only overwhelmed the traveller but he himself witnessed such apparently miraculous powers and capacities in himself. Though miraculous they are truths based on another occult science which is no less truth than modern science, ruling the mind and lives of the moderns. They do not depend on someone or the others' belief; they exist in their own world with certitude; ever dazzling truth. The poet has also contributed his selected poems which are in harmony with the spirit of this book.

Ajay Kumar Singh, an IPS (retired), former Director General of Police, dedicated himself to the life and work of Sant Kabir, achieving a doctorate on him. He has contributed his learned work on him; an illuminative and comprehensive work.

Born in Nainital, Suresh Chandra Pande was a veteran University Professor A Professor emeritus. He had a brilliant career as a teacher. He is a poet, author and critic, contributing to many contemporary magazines and journals. He as a serious Professor always carries the idea of teaching through his writings. He has discussed at length the tenets of Indian philosophy, talking about the six major divisions of ancient Indian thought and philosophy, including Sankhya and Yoga, Vedanta or Upanishads. He has focused on the issue of Karma, an important aspect of Indian religion and philosophy. He has tried to seek the cultural roots of Indian religions. Finally, he has discussed different aspects of prayer and its efficacy. Beginning with the prayers of the British poet Lord Tennyson he has referred to various prayers rooted in many religions and cultures.

PCK Prem (PC Katoch), a former college teacher, a civil servant (from the Indian Administrative Services) and a member of the Himachal Pradesh Public

Service Commission, is a versatile bilingual author of more than sixty books in Hindi and English. Here he has contributed on the Vedas and some aspects of Hinduism, especially the aspect of Karma, more talked about and discussed than anything else of the Hindu religious philosophy and faith. Many writers from other countries whose religions do not share the faith on rebirth often refer to this Karma aspect of Hinduism. I hope that this will be one of the very interesting subjects discussed in this book as some others too have written on it.

S L Peeran, an ex-Member of Customs Excise Service Tax, Appellate Tribunal, is the editor of the *Sufi World*, a journal of Sufi culture, philosophy and literature (Islamic Spirituality Tasawwuf) and Trustee of the International Sufi Centre, Bengaluru. He is a poet and author of volumes of poetry collections. He is a renowned Sufi scholar having Sufi ancestry. A scholar of Islamic history and religion, he has authored a number of scholarly books like, *Contemporary Indian English Poetry*, *Sufi Wisdom and Spiritual Consciousness*, *A Journey of a Sufi*, *Sufism and Poetry*, *Fundamentals of Islam and Sufism and Sufism*, *Vedanta*, *Hinduism*, *Theosophy and Western Philosophy*. Here he has contributed his comprehensive works on Islam, the Holy Quran, Sufism; various aspects of Sufism and spiritualism and poetry. He has also contributed his poems influenced by Sufi ideas and relevant thoughts. Sufism has engaged him more than anything else recently.

Jayshree Singh is an Associate Professor of English, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Bhopal Nobles' University, Udaipur, Rajasthan. She has published here a comparative study of Indian and Western philosophers and their respective thought processes. She has written on the legendary Krishna devotee, ardent lover of Krishna, Mirabai. She has also written on Sufism and the Sufi world in the perspective of historicity and contemporary socio cultural prevailing trend in philosophical thought, that led to the radical spurt in emerging notions with regard to faith, divinity, infinity and spirituality to spiritualise human concerns.

T. K. Jayaraman, IRS (retired) was a member of the Customs Excise Service Tax Appellate Tribunal, Bangalore, a colleague of S.L. Peeran. He was his co-author for two books; *Sufism*, *Vedanta*, *Hinduism*, *Theosophy and Western Philosophy* and *Discovery of Self Who Am I?* Mr. Jayaraman is qualified to teach French and Western philosophy. He teaches French and lectures on Western philosophy at the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bengaluru.

He has contributed a long chapter titled “A Popular Introduction to Western Philosophy from Descartes to Sartre”, beginning and ending with two French philosophers, according to his love for French, Jayaraman has discussed 20 Western philosophers from Rene Descartes of the seventeenth century to Jean Paul Sartre of the twentieth century; sufficient to introduce European philosophers though the older Greek philosophers are not in the list.

Besides the seven writers, Notes by a Lover of Ancient Wisdom by an anonymous writer claims special mention as it has introduced some abstract subjects,

applicable to all religions like True Religion, True Worship, Love, Purification of the Soul, Natural Law and Evolution. It has made some special mention like Swami Vivekananda on Islam and Muhammad, a comparative study between the Quran and the Gita, Islamic philosophical cosmology compared to Theosophy and some special aspects of Hinduism like the Symbol of Linga and Gotra, besides discussion on Hindu philosophy and devotion; Bhagavata Purana. This chapter has work on Buddha.

Coming to the end, I would like to mention with gratitude that the International Sufi Centre, Bengaluru and poet S. L. Peeran at its head, have taken the initiative to publish such scholarly spiritual-philosophic books. Among them, I mention the recently published two: *Discovery of Self Who Am I?* And the voluminous and rare species of *Golden Anthology of Poetry 2020*. This is the third of the series of such books, well published by the Authorspress.

Aju Mukhopadhyay,
Pondicherry

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AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

Glimpses of Tantra

The Hindu Views of Life

Hinduism is a way of life, it is said. There is no one book or scripture as the guiding principle of Hindu Dharma or religion. It is a sea of religions. In the strict sense none founded the Hindu Religion. It is Adi and Ananta; the Sanatana Dharma; ever existing. There are many religions within the Hindu religion divided into many cults, sects, faiths and paths. Sri Ramakrishna said, as many paths as are the ideas. Yet all the paths lead man to the ultimate goal of meeting with or melting in God or Divine, as one or the other is accustomed to call it. In the Hindu Ways of Religion all the paths meet; there is no great difference or conflict as all agree that all the deities are different yet from one immanent God. “Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti”, that which exists is One: sages call it by various names. Tantra is one of the oldest paths; used and misused variously by many great and weak practitioners; variously interpreted and misunderstood, especially in the Western World.

Tantra a way of Life

Sir John Woodroffe, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, became deeply interested in Tantra, one of the very old ritualistic paths of the Hindu religion at the beginning of the twentieth century. He became famous as an indologist with his pseudonym, Arthur Avalon. He wrote some books on the subject. Among them, *The Serpent Power*, a discussion about the Kundalini Shakti or the Kundalini Yoga made him a legendary person specially among the English people. It was widely circulated in the Western world. It is said in one of the introductory part of a biography on him that he turned the despised, orgiastic cult into a refined philosophy, enhancing the prestige of the religion itself.

True that he, almost immersing himself into the world of Tantra wrote the book using the source materials supplied by his friends like A.B. Ghose and other Indians present there. He certainly did a great and praiseworthy job in reviving an obscure but outstanding occult science hidden in ritualistic practices, not well known to the public in all corners, specially the Western public. Tantra is part of pan Hinduism. But the original wonder of the occult science is Tantra itself of which there were great practitioners then but unknown to the Western world as the masters and

practitioners weren't much interested to let the others know of their religion. Such religious practices are for their own spiritual growth. It is still in vogue, practised by some though greatly reduced in numbers. The inherent philosophy; lofty ideas and spiritual aim of it remained from the beginning. If someone else wrote about its philosophy, he might have explained it only. Enough of its literature is available in Sanskrit and traditions galore to explore. The book helped the modern English speaking world more than the indigenous practitioners of it.¹

The word "Tantra" is derived from the combination of two words "tattva" and "mantra". "Tattva" means the science of cosmic principles, while "mantra" refers to the science of mystic sound and vibrations. There are essentially two schools; Agama and Nigama. Agamas are those which are revelations while Nigama are the traditions. As Agama it follows the Vedic tradition. The main Indian tenets of religion and spiritual ideas continue. Atharva Veda is considered to be the source of Tantra. But many differ in the sense that while in Vedic tradition Brahmanic restrictions and practices excluded large numbers of people, Tantra accepted all; it did not have any discrimination relating to cast and birth.

Tantra is different from other traditions because it takes the whole person, and his/her worldly desires into account. Other spiritual traditions ordinarily teach that desire for material pleasures and spiritual aspirations are mutually exclusive, setting the stage for an endless internal struggle. Although most people are drawn into spiritual beliefs and practices, they have a natural urge to fulfill their desires. With no way to reconcile these two impulses, they fall prey to guilt and self-condemnation or become hypocritical. Tantra offers an alternative path because it takes into account all lower life including the sexual urge and tries to exceed it by transformation. Most of the sadhaks cannot go beyond the crude practices; they either rot in it or get frustrated and may be that perversions ensue. It causes all dispute and disrepute. At the beginning it takes up sex life and the practitioner has to go through the first stage of practice called, Pasvachara, behaving as animals. There are ritualistic systems for this like conducting Chakras. Five preliminary items for use are; wine, meat, fish, mudra and coition but using mantras under Guru, using the items moderately. Successfully done, one can win over it and go to the next stage; Veerachara. Here one has to win over fear and many other weaknesses. Sitting over a dead body on moonless night in a cremation ground he practices meditation uttering mantras and follow the rituals; it is his sadhana. After these two stages, as one wins over the lower nature he practices Daivachara; sadhana for uniting with the God. When he is successful; it may take quite long years, he becomes a Siddha Tantric or Kaula. As there is no discrimination between sexes, woman becomes a partner with a man. She is called Bhairavi like her counterpart, called Bhairav. Such titles are derived from the founder and master of Tantra, Shiva. Parvati is his wife and partner.

A Siddha Tantric has mastered all lower nature; he is above a normal human being. He is the epitome of perfection. A Bama Khyapa (Bamdev) takes out the piece

of meat from a dog's mouth and eats it giving back a portion to the dog and he talks to the dog who he recognizes as the man reborn as dog for some heinous acts in the past life to pass over his Karma to take birth again as man leading towards the soul's evolutionary goal. An Aghori Baba remains naked always like Troilanga Swami who has no shame. He goes to the cremation ground and gets the fluid (soft matter) from the skull of a dead body burst open during burning at the dead of night and eats mixing it with his hot rice like mixing with clarified butter. He does not eat for days on. They have no hatred for anything, any man or any action. They don't know what is doing a crime for they aren't family men nor have any interest for power, sex, fame or leadership. No modern science can make a man like Bama Khyapa or Aghori Baba. They are Trikaladarshi. They can tell your past, present and future. They can create food (matter) out of nothing, from the ether. They can leave their lives at will. At their will they may allow someone to meet them or not. It was well known among the people of his time that unless Aghori Baba wished no one could meet him. They are usually rough in their behavior but very simple. They don't follow the rules of the civilised society. We know sophisticated civilised persons; we are accustomed to meet with or deal with them as part of that society; many of them are bundles of weakness. We all suffer for we are under bondage of life and its usual rules whereas they are the *Jibanmukta*; free from all bondage of life. Even prospect of death brings no fear to them; some of them die at will.

Let us see how a master Tantric, not a theorist, taught about the Kundalini Yoga, the esoteric truth of it when the recluse met him. Though the whole of the interview for days would be very interesting we confine to his defining the chakras or subtle centres in the body of man which controls his life – the secrets of Kundalini Yoga.

When he went to him he caressed his back with affection and asked him to take out his chador from his body and to loosen the knot of his cloth. Then he pushed his hand to the end of his spinal cord and touching the last bone said that it was already done. He asked if the other one was joking with him. But the person did not understand it. The master assured him that his Kundalini or Kundalini Shakti had already been awakened but he did not know. He said that it coils three and half rounds at that point and sleeps. This is symbolically compared to a snake. It sleeps until under certain circumstances or activities and rises up as a result of sadhana. Once it rises up its mouth opens towards the higher region and it rises up and up but it cannot go to the last stage easily and automatically unless good efforts and sadhana are made to open up the other centres to allow the serpent to move up. This, the lowest centre at the spinal cord is called "Muladhara". When it awakens the person usually does not find himself or herself at ease with his or her worldly situation. It takes one away from the narrow grove of self-interest, hatred, jealousy and other meanness and opens him to broader ways of life; maybe thirst for knowledge and education, spirituality or any other like doing great goods to the others. It takes one to the broad way of life.

The master said that through the spinal cord there is a subtle path which the Kundalini has to cross and go up to the central pore of the palate finally which is called “Sahasrar”; when one reaches there he becomes a master of spirituality, a great Tantric. But this is not the path for breath to follow. This path and very subtle pores in each of the six centres are open to action. The serpent, after crossing the first block is blocked by the second just opposite the sex centre. It is hard to cross it. Bama Khyapa took his finger there to show it and found that it too was opened in the body of the aspirant he was checking. The centre is called “Svadhithana”. The third centre is opposite the naval; it is called “Manipur”. Up to this centre is the seat of the lower nature marked by Sri Ramakrishna as Guhya, Linga, Navi or anus, penis and naval round which the mind and passion of the ordinary person moves. The fourth centre is opposite the heart; it is called “Anahata”, the fifth centre is opposite the throat; it is called “Vishuddha” and the sixth centre is called “Aghna” Chakra or centre; it is opposite the region between the two eyebrows. Each centre has different significance, they open to newer vistas of life. The centres are symbolized by lotuses differing in the number of petals in each of them. The last centre has thousand petals. After reaching the highest the Kundalini Shakti or serpent force rises to the “Sahasrar” at the pore of the central palate. Here one gets merged with the divine. It is symbolically conceived as the merging point of Shiva and Parvati; God and his Shakti, the male and female aspects of the divine. One reaching to that level reaches the highest rung in the ladder; he becomes a fully realized person.

Ancient links to the Cult of Tantra

Having discussed the Tantra proper we may see how it got its support from the Vedic world. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we get two hymns, the translated version of them are:

In the beginning, this (universe) was but the self (Viraj) of a human form. He reflected and found nothing else but himself. He first uttered, ‘I am he.’ Therefore he was called Aham (I). Hence, to this day, when a person is addressed, he first says, ‘It is I,’ and then says the other name that he may have.” (Upanishad-92)

And,

“He was not at all happy. Therefore people (still) are not happy when alone. He desired a mate. He became as big as man and wife embracing each other. He parted this very body into two. From that came husband and wife. Therefore, said Yajñavalkya, this (body) is one-half of oneself, like one of the two halves of a split pea. Therefore this space is indeed filled by the wife. He was united with her. From that men were born.” (Upanishad 100)

These are the Hindu ideas and philosophy but according to Gautama Buddha who denied God, there was no division, not even a unity; only the absolute and one’s merger in it as a result of all sadhana taking one to the gate of Nirvana. He found desires as the cause of all suffering. To end it he preached ending of all desires and thereby achieving Nirvana, the highest aim of his doctrine.

Sri Aurobindo observed, “The Buddha himself, it may be remarked, seems to have conceived of Nirvana as a status of absolute bliss of freedom, a negation of Karmic existence in some incognisable Absolute which he refused steadfastly to describe or define by any positive or any negative, as indeed definition by any exclusive positive or widest sum of positives or any negative or complete sum of negatives would seem by the very fact of its bringing in a definition and thereby a limitation to be inapplicable to the Absolute.”²

But Buddha was not the founder of Buddhist religion which was founded eons after him, gradually taking shape. It was divided too like many other religions. And the Mahayana Buddhism gave birth to Buddhist Tantric religion. They took the ultimate form of Buddha as Swabhavakaya or Vajrakaya. The Absolute is zero or Sunya. Here Buddha was conceived as the lord of Tantra; Adi-Buddha or the primordial form of Buddha and his female counterpart the Adi-Shakti; Karuna and Sunyata are conjoined to make the whole as are the parallel forms of Hindu Tantric Parameshwara and Parameshwari or Shiva and Shakti.

Tantra is basically a Shakti cult, worshipping the mother figure as the ultimate mover of the life on earth, its primordial force. The female deities of Buddhist Tantra was conceived at what primitive past has not been actually calculated as in case of the Hindu Tantra but it took shape first in the northern parts of Himalayan region like Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and its spread was in some adjoining parts of China or greater China spreading to eastern India like Bengal, Bihar and Assam. Gradually it spread to the others parts of India. Against the Hindu Tantra giving importance to six subtle centres in the body there are four such centres in Buddhist Tantra like one in the naval (Nirman Chakra), one in the heart (Dharma Chakra), in the throat is the Sambodhi chakra and in the head is Mahasukha chakra. As in here, there too each chakra is represented by lotus with multiple petals. This idea of union between male and female had its root in Radha Krishna unity in the Vaishnava literature. The whole of Vaishnava religion moves round the love of Krishna and Radha. So the Saivite religion also moves round the love of Hara and Parvati and their union.

Tantra the Slippery Path

Among all the six cardinal passions in man sex impulse is the strongest; it moves the whole of life. Anything living is a created being and the impulse to create is the strongest in it. This circle continuously pulls all the creatures. Man being the highest among the created beings his life is limited within the circles of different impulses but he found an inherent urge to go beyond and meet the source of all the natural forces that move round him. That impulse too is indomitable at least in some of the human beings with urge for higher life. They found that this sex impulse is the strongest to deter his progress towards it. At the same time they found that this passion is almost unconquerable. The search for higher truth engaged them to such activities like Tantra which fulfils their mundane life and at the same time, going through some

rituals and other activities, help them to obviate the force perpetually pulling them down; to transcend and go above it to get sort of freedom from the monotonous animalistic impulse and thereby getting the chance to rise up higher in the rung of life and those who have strong urges to meet with the unseen power, with absolute freedom certainly engage in such religious practices. The *urhat* of the Buddhist and *Mukti* in the mind of a Hindu is always alive unless he is out and out a materialist believing in nothing what is not seen or tested and living in materialistic pursuits of life.

Because it is hard to overcome the sex impulse, because the Tantra was and is open to anyone desirous of entering the ritualistic ways without giving any weight for one's capability or capacity, many entered the path without restriction. The society was permissive and alms and help from the householders were easily available so many entered it who did not have enough capacity or urge to go the higher way of life. At the same time the mantras and ritualistic practices gave occult power to do something over the others or to make some personal gains. There being no restrictions in such practices many were allured to the path and got satisfied with the small or least they could achieve. They misused the system and got ruined ruining others on the way. So this Tantra earned ill reputations and became defamed in the eyes of the non-believers.

But exceptions were there as it is everywhere. There were great persons and personalities who became great Tantrics without going through the rigorous practices of it as they were and lived much above the ordinary human level. Two examples are Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Ramakrishna was an unusual priest of Mother Kali he called *Bhabatarini* at *Dakshineswar* for four years from 1855 and for the next four years he had undergone training under a *Bhairavi* and practised Tantra *sadhana* and for the next three years he joined many schools of spirituality like worshipping Lord Rama, joined the *Vaishnava* sects and did their *sadhana*, he took oath and joined the Islam and worshipped the Allah for six months as a devout Muslim. He followed all formalities to be a devout Christian. He later worshipped all of them, even he took *Sanyasa* to become a *Vedantin* and reached *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* under the guidance of *Totapuri*.

Yet, he returned to his Kali, the image of which was established in the temple, and he fed her during the beginning of his priesthood and *sadhana*. Among many of his utterances one was that, a girl plays with the dolls in her childhood but when coming to age she is married, she keeps all her dolls in a bundle and forgets about them. Everything was strange and exceptional about Sri Ramakrishna. Knowing the images as dolls he worshipped them and found the divine living in them. From the image of his beloved Kali to the featureless existence of the One and only One Brahman beyond all comprehension, he was in all of them. He had the firm belief that every religion had a truth; by adoring and worshipping according to different religions he confirmed that all leads to the same truth through different ways. Of this

realisation of Sri Ramakrishna Sri Aurobindo eloquently wrote, “Of all these souls Sri Ramakrishna was the last and greatest, for while others felt God in a single or limited aspect, he felt Him in His illimitable unity as the sum of an illimitable variety. In him the spiritual experiences of the millions of saints who had gone before were renewed and united.”³

Sri Aurobindo the Revolutionary was in Alipore jail for one year between 1908 and 1909. There God was his direct guide to get him trained and drenched in different ways of sadhana and transformed him to a Yogi. He had begun it earlier but jail house became the suitable field for his new adventure and success. He did sadhana with the help of Gita (Niskama Karma; Karma Yoga), Upanishad (Advaita Vedanta), Tantric sadhana (Shakti Sadhana) as was given to him by God. And, “The Veda which I first began to read long afterwards in Pondicherry rather confirmed what experiences I already had than was any guide to my Sadhana”⁴

He practised Tantric sadhana without going to any temple, to any human Guru. He did not require to go through the systematic process of reaching the Mother force which directly took him to her lap and taught him. His Tantric self was very evident when he wrote later his master pieces, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *The Life Divine*. In them what he said covered a good deal of the Tantric Philosophy. Usually man worships God with the notion that he is available high up in heaven but Sri Aurobindo wrote that the divine is very much involved in matter at the lowest level for what is involved only may evolve. He said that the divine force is not in heaven only to be drawn to one’s being by aspiration and askesis, it also rises up from below, as if a coiled snake awakened, going up to the heights.

Awaken yourself!

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A Spiritual Narrative

Meeting with the Mystics: Experiences Occult

Prologue

Teenager Promode Kumar Chatterjee, a tiny member of a joint family in north Kolkata, doing nothing except trying to study but a habitual school dropout, was married as tradition dictated. His guardians at the age of 15 years only. Giving birth to by two children successively his 15 year old bride died. The boy tried his luck here and there to study the subject of his choice, often obstructed by his own father who engaged him in a petty job and took away his son's entire income. After quite some struggle he could get admission to the Government Arts College, Calcutta in 1906. He was again married by his family at the age of 22 while he was still a student. He completed his Painting Art studies very successfully in 1911.

Some persons like him have an indomitable character and they are led through the path to their destined goal by the God, unseen. Promode's fleeing nature in the face of his father's torture turned him to a great traveller in his youth. He was a well read religious person; versed in religious history and scriptures and a seeker of yogic paths as in Indian traditions. While Bengal was the abode of many Siddha or realised Tantric, its path; religious practices and rituals are not very open to public knowledge. Promode Kumar felt very curious, became an ever enthusiast to know the secret of this often unknown and hidden religious path and its ritual and cultural practices. In quest of Tantra he moved alone through the width and depth of the country; Tantric pilgrimage centres and Himalayan caves and forests and met many extraordinary personalities; many realised souls, Yogis and Saints and witnessed their *bibhutis*, the boon of their spiritual attainments, not of Tantric Gurus only but of practitioners of the other paths too.

He began his travel hearing a call from the beyond, by a pull of Vairagya; apathy towards family, towards his wife or woman in general. At the end of his studies he left for visiting some pilgrimage centres with the mother and aunt of one of his close friends. And then began his longer journeys to the Himalayas and other places depending on the all-powerful lathi and lota-kamandulu or a big walking stick, an all-purpose water pot on his hands and a blanket on his shoulder while wearing a

simple dhoti. One of the strange things was that he travelled mostly on bare feet, traversing all through the mountainous rough roads and thorny paths with speed. After the end of his journey for about seven years he became a changed man. Though he joined his family and led a family life he still moved to places. He had a girl child again and some granddaughters and grandsons were born during the course of his long life of 94 years.

Once a person of good spiritual attainments, he came back to family life. That was his destiny as predicted by some Sadhus when he travelled in full frame of a recluse and disliked family life. However, there is no doubt that he became a changed man; he devoted his time as a full time practitioner of painting art, as a Swadeshi teacher and achieved miracles of sorts. While travelling he always carried a roll of papers, a sketch book and a pencil and drew the remarkable figures he met or interviewed on the way. He painted some wonderful landscape and portions of Himalayan beauties too. While he was a painter in Western Art style from his student days to the time when he began his career, his religious-spiritual outlook, realisations and achievements on the way combined with his growing reverence for Indian traditions turned his inward eyes to Indian Art. After viewing and knowing much, diving deep in the core of Indian religious-spiritual heart when he reached Tibet and travelled to the interior of the country his artistic insight had undergone a sea change, especially after viewing the Rama, Sita and Laksmana's golden images.

Though he became an accomplished artist, especially a portrait artist, the present subject is about his experiences while meeting and encountering with the great Mystics, Sadhus, Yogis and Gurus who did their sadhana in seclusion, hiding in caves, jungles, cremation grounds and other places which weren't usually visited by others. They never wished people to know who they were, what they did and how they realised the truth. A God seeker does not wait for other's appreciations, nor waits for his publicity. There were many such realised persons in India the number of which has greatly dwindled in this violent age when men are hungry to eat up anything on their way, dig the bowels of the earth and water to extract as much wealth as available. Going further they dig the space and other planets to devour any resources from such celestial bodies. As a result of their hungry devastation of all the surroundings; environment forest and wildlife have been reduced to a great extent; mountains like Himalayas have been broken and dwarfed, rivers have been choked and oceans with other spaces utterly polluted. Even the system of cremation has mostly been mechanised. The modern digital life instigates people to seek material profit only which becomes the highest aim of a modern man. Science like art is there to help man to know and develop life but men have been using them with the complicated technology to change the very structure of life. With the changes already done to Nature and Environment, with the dearth of suitable places like hills, forests, caves and cremation grounds the existence of Tantric sadhana; the original root and cult of it; a great tradition linking China and Tibet and adjoining areas, Buddhism and Shakti cult with Tara and Kali as the presiding deities, has been choked. The

Yogis and Rishis and Sufis in their hermits and caves are almost extinct. What remains are their modern caricatures; dry rules, gorgeous temples, mosques and the modern interpretations of the truth; speakers galore, not true seekers, interpreters many but not the real practitioners.

Meeting with the Mystics Experiences Occult

When life suddenly became unbearable without getting the right atmosphere and surrounding to proceed with the seeking for God Promode Kumar became impatient and his wife, knowing his mental condition beseeched him to remain in family and do everything from there while she would not come to disturb. More worried at this, he sought the help of friends and with the help of one of his elderly friends, living and working in Uttar Pradesh, offered him a chance to get possession of a cave suitable for his purpose if he was too ready and sincere to take possession of it from a Sadhu who had been living there but decided to leave it for some time. Promode Kumar, ready for all conditions immediately jumped to the spot with minimum possessions of his own, ready to beg alms and lead his life alone, only to worship God and try to realise Him in the traditional Yogic ways.

Remaining Out of Body Living in a Second Sheath

Close to Mallital near Nainital in the ever known, ever mystic Himalayas, there was a highly secluded spot surrounded by pine and some other trees. It had a big cleavage, maybe from olden time, flowing water making it deeper and smooth so as to make it a path going down below up to 30, 40 feet and at the end of it there was a *guha* or cave. It may be that some great soul, a Sadhu or Fakir, made it a suitable place for tapasya or sadhana; a place most suitable for the purpose of calling intensely and realising the God. Promode reached there, took charge of the cave and began his sadhana; begging alms, cooking his own food with fodders collected from the surroundings; living peacefully engaged in the main job for which he came. As usual, he was visited by callers seeking remedies to their problems or asking for medicine for patients including some other aspirants. Keeping his dealings with the outsiders to the minimum he tried to live in his own way doing the work he came for.

He could deal with the other callers but a bare bodied man with unkempt hair, rather ugly looking, used to visit him but unlike others his time was not fixed. Any time of the day or evening he would come and sit without a word. He had nothing to ask for but to observe the cave man. The cave man felt uneasy about him and began to struggle with himself as to how to deal with him. Then, seeing his condition the unusual guest one day introduced himself and gradually they had some talks exchanged. He was convinced that the guest had superior capacities and that he might be a *siddha purush*. He received his help towards his further development on his way. He was truly a man far advanced on the way to God. A god realised mystic.

One day at the early dawn when he got up as usual; let's hear him what happened, "Coming out of the exterior part of the cave from where the sky is visible I look at it daily at this time. Orion is usually visible almost vertically but today I beheld another image in its place.

"What an image! I have never seen; as if painted on the sky... Bright blue body extended across the sky to its end; crown on its head, earrings in ears, a jewel in the breast attached to a garland; tender luster of the jewel shined moon like. Jewelled ornaments adorned the waist below which hung the yellow cloth like valance. In his one hand was a mess end of which was gigantic. The image was looking at me, it seemed." (Sadhusanga 1/14)

Then he entered the cave and sat for meditation. Vision of the new image fulfilled his heart. There was a flow of Ananda in him. Without any particular thought he was naturally immersed in meditation and remained disconnected from the world outside. Suddenly he saw in the light of the dim fire enkindled, that someone was sitting erect in his asana on the floor of the inner cave as if in deep *Samadhi*. He was stunned beholding that, "It is me! It is my body!" And he realised that though he was looking as if with the eyes, he had no eyes. The yonder body that lay motionless had everything, every organ in it including the eyes. But his body in the subtle physical, the subtle body; free from physical bondage, had no organ but all the memories, all the sense and accumulated experiences of his life in it; it was strangely lighter than the physical body. And by extending his views further he could see everything including the fields, distant lands, mountains, the sky and the stars, as if there was no obstacle before his eyes to see anything in the surrounding beyond the walls of the cave. He realized that he was in a different sheath without anything material in it yet all the sensations of a normal human body was there. Waves of joy inundated him from time to time. It was very strange condition, unexpected and untested before; a life with a different flavour. He could not guess how and when he came out of his body. But there was a pull of attraction for the body. He did not wish to leave it. He realised that this was the state in which lived the realised yogis, that in this state they become *trikalagnya*, having knowledge of all the time; past, present of future. It was a state in which he could feel and see, think or go into memory but no aspect of bodily presence was in him. A thought visited him, if he had died then! But in the absence of any sign of death he dismissed that idea.

Then he felt a kind of pull upwards but it was not a physical pull. It was that his existence became vaster than the 'I', his ego sense melt into vaster consciousness. Waves of Ananda flowed through him; they came into his shore and melted. But then, there was some alteration of understanding; at times he felt sad that he was detached from his body which he did not wish to shun; a sadness spread through his being but that remained for a short while. Then he came to a position which he described as the luminous darkness; as if he became the float of the fishing line which goes deeper into the water when the fish catches the bait and pulls at it into the water. There is all darkness in the water and again that flow of Ananda flowed

through him with the loss of 'I'ness. Then suddenly he heard sounds or he became combined sound of hundreds of conch shells as made in festivals mixed with great sound of huge clouds clashing. That strange sound seemed to be the sound of the rotation of the universe; unheard even in dreams. And with this sound there came a change; as if he, the float, drowned in water came out into view, floating, arising out of the bodiless being into his physical body with the memories gained. And to his astonishment he found that the great man was sitting close to him. But still, even reaching, intensely desirous of getting back his body and of talking to that great man he could not easily get his body back. After some struggle and strong desire he came back to his body to find that the great man was sitting by his side and was smiling at him sweetly. He deeply realised that it was he who with his immense occult power gave him that experience at the beginning of his sincere efforts to do the yogic activities to teach him how lived the Yogis and Rishis; bodiless yet in the body when they wished. It was a state beyond the mundane existence of the mortals. (Sadhusanga 1/6-18)

Encounter with a Bhairavi on her Way to Realisation

Usually Promode walked alone but this time a young man joined him fully dressed and equipped. After a few days taking something from a Sadhu the unaccustomed young man fainted for the whole day and night but lived again the next day and didn't proceed further for fear of life and left. Free to himself, Promode walked alone, bare feet as usual. Somewhere beyond Mussoorie he was delighted finding the ever revered Ganga flowing through a ring like path at a distance below. The sky was overcast with clouds but forceful wind dispersed them to a good extent. He found few pilgrims going towards the village for shelter who would move to Uttarkashi after this. He was prepared mentally to go with them the next day. It was past evening. Darkness spread everywhere. Instead of going with them he remained at the outskirts and decided to pass the night at the outer side of a half built abandoned guest house under construction. He sat there, happy to be alone for meditation.

After some time he saw a woman figure at a distance asking him something by gesture in a language beyond his guess. To get rid of her he directed her to the path the pilgrims went on by gesture of hand. She seemed to look at him sternly but left and returned after half an hour. She stood close to him, a Bhairavi or woman tantric. She seemed to be fair looking with a fair complexion but sun burnt and somehow tired. Her age seemed like 32 to 34. He was about 29 or 30 at that time. This time the woman addressed him in Bangla but the tongue seemed to be attuned to a dialect of East Bengal. She asked him if he was a Bengali. Promode found it little strange that a Bhairavi was moving alone in the Himalayas; usually it is not their place to dwell in. On his agreeing about his identity she said that it was good for her that she got him, one of her community and that she would live with him. She had a penetrating sight gaze and piercing insight. In no time she could extract some essential stories of his life and knowing that he had planned not to eat anything that night for want of

resources to buy, she said that she would bear all his expenses if he took her to Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath and returned her to her native village. He was mentally worried that she proposed to stay with him. He said that the place he chose to stay that night was strewn with animal litters and that he too liked the places she named for visit but who knew what would happen!

Without relying on his words she accompanied him to his chosen place and found it quite clean and safe. Spreading her bed and opening her store house hanging from her shoulder she brought out some eatables and immediately collecting some groceries from a shop and woods nearby, she made fire and prepared good roti and curry. Promode ate them to his heart's content, as offered to him. She kept her portion separately to eat later. He found it a bit strange that a lady called him, an unknown young man, addressing him with 'tumi' or 'tum' instead of 'apni' or 'up' as usual at the beginning while introducing herself. He was already rebuked by her for his efforts to avoid her. Nevertheless, simple hearted as he was, he asked if she was a Tantric. She agreed asking to which sect he belonged. He replied that he belonged to none but was trying in his own way to do his sadhana. Curious as he was, he asked if through her tantric sadhana one might realise God. She replied that the idea of God was different with different people and that realising God was a concept not very clear always. In the tantric system if someone sincerely performed Veerachara sadhana (the second higher stage of sadhana) and was successful in it, he or she would be crowned with *atmashakti* or self-realising power and using it for the good of others or the world he or she would achieve great things in life like getting his most desired divine fulfillment.

She was in her good mood up to this but when Promode expressed his doubtful feelings that her description about God and realising it was illusive, questioning why a sadhak or aspirant cannot meet the God, her mood suddenly changed; she became furious.

She said, whatever she has said was enough to understand for a man of intelligence. Since he read philosophy he ought to have understood that all opinions about God are not the same. Leaving aside God, did he try to acquire sufficient power to realize God? If he tried Mother Goddess would have crowned him with success, she confirmed that she had direct knowledge of it. He should be powerful enough to approach God.

And then suddenly in high pitched voice she abused him addressing him as a loafer, a fop, an animal's kid. *"Only brainless, powerless fathers can beget such dandies who move round in fancy dress with longish hair on head wearing dhoti with cigarettes in hand; licking legs of Englishman outside but shouting at their tuberculosis affected mother, wife and children at home. And finally they die with blood coming out of their mouths. Reading two leaves of English they come to doubt everything like Prakriti (Nature), God and Shakti (Divine Power) and argue with everyone. I warn you, never again argue with me."*

Shocked, he thought, "Oh, is she a stark mad!"

In an instant she began shouting, as if to bring down the roof on their head, “What, am I mad?” I am a Bengali and you too are a Bengali, I am born as such by the curse of Ma Bhagavati, the Goddess of power. Do you know my power! I can throw you into perdition, ruin your life but I also can make a man out of you! Do you want to verify!” (Sadhusanga 2/183-84)

At this sudden admonition Promode paled with fear. He beheld how a beautiful woman turned to a fierce one with anger and passion. As before he kept his head bent, looking at the floor contemplating to flee from there but apparently hesitating. He was a young man of good health and strong body accustomed to go through all hazards of climbing mountains and living in the open anywhere, with or without food. He was not less courageous but his only drawback was that he was too gentle and never aggressive or violent.

In a moment the Bhairavi jumped and holding his right hand wrist strongly said, “Where do you want to flee! Do you have capacity to go away from me against my will? You know, I consider a man like you a worm? Are you man? Keeping wife and children at home you have come out to practice religion. Ignorant! You have read Vedanta, thinking of getting merged in Brahman! Nothing will happen, let your mouth be smeared with ashes! You have no power or endeavour to earn and enjoy the object of enjoyment! Your parents have married you to a girl so you are doing a farce of enjoying routinely and begetting somehow some marrow-less children. Ignorant, do you know that after bhoga, enjoyment only one can earn the capacity to do yoga?” (Sadhusanga 2/ 184)

Ashamed of himself with remorse and humiliation he kept mum. He felt that he would fall down anon, senseless. Considering his condition the Bhairavi gave him a good jerk and said, addressing him with tui or tu, “*How dare you to contemplate doing yoga? Are you really feeling apathy towards bhoga? Don't you have desires in you still? Just look within and tell me.*” (Sadhusanga 2/ 184)

Promode kept silent still with his head bent. Only a word, “Ma”, came out of his mouth.

After this the tantric told him about all her unfulfilled desires in such rough and unrefined language that he became stunned again and wrote in his travelogue that he had no inspiration to repeat such words neither verbally nor in words. Bewildered, he was as if mesmerized.

Then bending down at her feet hypnotized, he said, “You are my mother, save me! I am really ignorant and weak hearted, so much that I am incapable of being called a man and....” (Sadhusanga 2/ 184) His voice was choked.

Then she unhandled him and holding his bearded chin raised his face and intently looked at it with immense affection as a mother looks at her helpless child. After some time her eyes were moistened and drops of warm tears began falling on Promode's chest and rolling down below. By its effect all the stains of his heart, all the remorse were cleaned pure. Her lips were trembling as if trying to utter

something but could not. After some time she restrained herself and asked, *“What are you thinking of me! Am I witch, a rakshashi, a demon, a madcap! Tell me whatever you like!”* (*Sadhusanga 2/ 185*)

Releasing himself from her he stood a little aside telling that he didn't say any such thing to her. And that ignited the fire in her again. Promode saw madness again writ large on her face. Holding his hand again she began, *“Won't you be man, a real male? Won't you regain masculine virility and vigour? I have for long been in search of a real man to whom I could safely surrender myself. You appeared to be one such male. Fie on you! Is it a manly behaviour? Go your away! I can't look at an effeminate man. What do you do? Can you tell me how do you manage your family? What is your profession?”* (*Sadhusanga 2/ 185*)

Hearing about his profession of painting her mood suddenly changed and she became normal again. She pleasantly asked what type of painting he did and whether he earned with that. When replied that he painted both man's and god's portraits, she asked if he could paint the portrait of a fierce deity, Chhinnamasta (a truncated manifestation of Goddess Durga). She was replied that such printed pictures were available in the market at the cost of six or eight annas (half a rupee).

On hearing this she broke into peal of loud laughter continuing for some time, pooh-poohing his claim that her pictures are available cheap at the market. But when Promode rejoined that he had heard about the terrible image of the goddess her mood changed again and she, looking fiercely at him shocked him again telling, *“Oh fool, must she look terrible to such an effeminate man like you! Can they realise the beauty of such a terrible deity who faint seeing blood? Those who spend their time guessing about sin and piety, heaven and hell, Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth), Sarasvati with vina (Goddess of Learning) or the God with flute in hand would suit them best. Go, unfortunate, go away! Who else would be afraid of such a powerful Shakti (a great female deity) than the one who's afraid of a woman!”* (*Sadhusanga 2/ 185-186*)

With these words she pushed him by the neck towards the Ganges which was flowing below advising him to drown in the river by fastening a pitcher with rope on his neck while praying that he becomes a powerful man in the next birth or at least he may be born with capacity to understand what is Shakti. She abused him more and shouted more. Shamed and humiliated again he proceeded through the slope towards the river which was quite away from there, flowing unmindful of what happened between them.

Suddenly he heard a loud tittering by a female voice at his back. Turning, he looked but found none. Again he heard the same sound before him but none was there. He stopped in the moonlit night for some time but no person could be seen. As he proceeded he found a female figure looking like the Bhairavi going ahead of him at a distance of some five, six hands. He called her to talk but without responding she moved at normal speed without even looking back. The distance was widening in spite of all efforts by Promode to reach her. When there was a distance of some ten or twelve hands she dipped in cool water and looking back at him for the last time,

dived deeper in the river at the dead of night. Promode sat the whole night at the bank of the river but did not find her coming out of the water anywhere.

Was it a bad dream or hallucination! Promode Kumar was shocked beyond expression but surely, his mental frame was solid and there was no chance of any hallucination to befall him. It seems that the remaining part of her first stage of sadhana could be completed by using this man as the instrument. But he failed her. If successful, she could go to the next stage, “Veerachara” towards achieving her goal. This must be the cause of her frustration and all reactions.

Transforming Oneself to Another at Will

Promode Kumar was then living in the Ashram of Keshavananda Brahmachari in Vrindavan. One afternoon when the Ashram head sat in a bench at the outer area of the Ashram surrounded by the inmates and his disciples talking pleasantly among themselves, a strange man like an ascetic, wearing a loin cloth only on a bare body, a blanket thrown over his shoulder or wrapped on his body during that summer month, appeared from somewhere. As if not concerned about anything around him, he sat on the bench without addressing anybody and looked aside. After some time Keshavananda asked him since when he had begun living in Vrindavan. At this the man seemed vexed. He asked in reply why he bothered to know it. After some time he asked for something to eat. Someone was sent for some food. Talks stopped as all looked at the stranger curiously. He asked everyone to resume their talks. Then he was addressed as Swami and was requested to speak something about God by the Ashram head.

At this he became furious and said, “*Talking about God to the cheats and thieves who licks the feet of the rich and always run after money! Who hears them? Shut up!*” (Sadhusanga 2/ 188)

When he was said that everyone weren't alike he asserted that everyone was such, all the ashramites, all those moving with a pitcher and a blanket on shoulder are the same. Abusing them roughly he again said that they all were cheats, and the questioner was asked to sit comfortably and do his own work.

Some eatables from the shop were brought and were given to him. He took a laddu and started eating that. Looking at the sky he remained silent. None could do anything but fixed their gaze at him. After some time he took another something and ate it fixing his eyes at the sky. He had such a personality that none could talk or do anything but looked at him. After sometime he got up and entered the garden nearby. As he was gone, everyone as if got their lives back, looked at Keshavananda who informed them that he had ruined himself by smoking ganja, that he was from South India and that he lived in the house of a big businessman from Bikaner.

After moving round for sometime the man came back and took his seat. At the sky his gaze remained fixed. Silence resumed. Keshavananda asked where he would go next. He, almost rebuking Keshavananda asked what their problem was when he

sat there. He asked them to resume their talks to which Keshavananda said that they had no secret; the Swami could hear what they talked. At this the man said that he would go then but asked for two annas (old Indian coin of the value of one eighth of a rupee). Immediately someone brought the coin and gave it to him as Keshavananda ordered.

Promode Kumar surmised that the man must be someone extraordinary; he earnestly wished to meet and talk to him. As the time of his departure was near, Promode proceeded and hid himself behind a pillar. As soon as the man came he followed him. He walked fast. After crossing the gate he turned and looked at Promode. So long all were talking in Hindi, the language of the area but now he asked Promode in clear English if he was a Bengali and if he was from Calcutta to which he was answered in the affirmative. Then he was asked to follow him. That was exactly what Promode had so long desired.

He talked very fast in English, as if soliloquizing monologues, which Promode could not follow. Finding his companion lagging behind he came closer and put his left hand on his shoulder. While going with him, Promode sensed a kind of freshness and freedom unlike in the past moments. They came to the bank of Yamuna River and again entered the town. The man asked him if he was habituated to consume hemp to which he was replied in the negative.

Coming to a shop selling marijuana he gave that two anna coin to Promode and asked him to buy hemp. As it was bought he was asked to keep it. Then coming to a small thatched home he called its resident, Shantoji. He was a teenaged Sadhu. He was given the pack and was asked to prepare ganja. He readily agreed and took it inside his room.

As they sat nearby Promode asked how he would call him. He replied that his name was Parthasahai Iyengar, his residence was near Madras. Then Promode asked him why he was so displeased with the ashramites. After all, they sacrificed everything and lived there only to call the God. He was abruptly stopped and replied that they sacrificed nothing. They did not know who they were and that they did not call God. They were there to live comfortably exploiting the householders. All rogues, tramps, ghosts and ghouls! He further said the word 'God' made all the difference. Man's relationship with God is very vague. When he was further asked *"Why Can't man know God?"* He was answered in clear English, *"No man can know God. If God is known by man then it is a magnified man-don't talk about God. Speak something else."* (Sadhusanga 2/ 191)

He was said that all are swindlers, thieves, duplicate personalities, lived cheating others. Bewildered, he said how it was that he being a Sadhu had never seen a real Sadhu! Then he was answered that there was a real Sadhu called Jagadish Baba who lived in the bank of Yamuna. When the aspirant wanted to see him, the only real Sadhu, he was told that he lived unknown, away from man and that it was

impossible to see him in the evening. He said that they would go to him the next day. Instead, he proposed to take him elsewhere.

In the meantime the ganja was ready. The leaves mixed with burning cinders in the chillum, was handed over to the Sadhu who drew in the smoke; one or two short pulls and then a long one; the fire blew high up. He kept the smoke inside him for long and then released the thin smoke slowly. The chillum was then handed over to his disciple who drew the smoke in similarly and handed over the chillum to his Guru, the Sadhu. This went on for some three rounds or more. When the cinders were fully burnt and leaves turned to ashes it was shaken off and the chillum was thrown inside the knapsack.

Sadhu moved followed by him. He said that Promode was very fond of Sadhus, that he wanted to see some miraculous powers in them but usually Sadhus were useless, idle lots through whom no man was benefited but cheated. He said that he too was very credulous, not even intelligent like him, and tried to follow the same path. Only some ten or so years ago he took a real turn. When Sri Ramakrishna was referred to the Sadhu said that anyone who sincerely believed in God and aspired for him could see him in the form he wants and even he may be blessed to be like a God. He too could try it. Promode thought there was no point in arguing with such a strong man. But then, he thought that he could not till then guess anything about him or measure him. He was an enigmatic person.

They came near a big marbled house on high floor; the house of a big merchant from Bikaner. Sadhu said that this was his refuge. While a servant was hinting them to go telling that the Seth or owner was not at home, a beautiful sixteen year old girl came down to receive them. On the first floor they came before an exceptionally big room wherein everything a home may require was kept including two, three beds and kitchen utensils. The girl washed the legs of the Sadhu. Promode said that he wasn't a Sadhu so he washed his legs and entered the room. Two dishes of delicacies were brought which both of them refused. Sadhu climbed the bed and stretched himself comfortably. The girl entreated them to partake of their food as otherwise they would consider themselves sinners who had done something seriously wrong and cursed if Sadhus came out without touching their food. Promode had to take something. The lady of the house, wrapped in gold all over her body, came and made obeisance to them. As Iyengar stretched his feet she started massaging them and the girl sat at his head, rubbing it to give comfort. Evening fell gradually and Promode felt distressed for he hadn't come to see the beauties of Rajputana. He would be benefited had he gone to Jagadish Baba, he thought.

As he was so thinking, the man on the bed coughed which seemed to have come out of a throat full of phlegm. Turning to him he found an exceptional young man of exceptionally white complexion, wearing a golden silk dress with ornaments on the arms and lower part of the hands, was seated in a particular posture looking at the lamp burning and the two women standing before him with hands joined in

reverence. The seated body was calm and quite as a statue! He had never beheld such a figure, never had he dreamt of it.

This is the first time that he had seen Parthasahai Iyengar, a half-cracked, middle aged, hot tempered man. This transformed image of him astounded him. He thought that this must be a Siddhi or special bounty of God on him, a *bibhuti* which a Siddha in Anima, Laghima and other yogic feats may be endowed with to perform at will. While he was so contemplating in his mind the transformed figure looked smilingly at him and sweetly called him by lowering his eyes. As he came Sadhu's long hands were extended to get hold of him and drew him close to his breast. At this Promode's tremulous body lost its senses soon.

When he came back to wakefulness he found before him a bright complexioned middle aged Sadhu wearing a loin cloth sitting with sandalwood paste marks on his forehead. A lamp was burning and by his side was standing Parthasahai Babaji. He tried to remember where had he seen this person after he lost his wakefulness and remembered that Parthasahai whispered in his ear, "*He is Jagadish Baba. Do your pronam to him and let us go now. Tomorrow you come again. I need not accompany you then.*" (Sadhusanga 2/ 194)

After the pronam he got up and came out of his hut. Entering a grove and crossing it, crossing some tall trees he reached the bank of Yamuna. Iyengar Baba walked placing his hand on his shoulder. As they reached Keshi Ghat he said, "*Let us go back to the place we came out from.*" (Sadhusanga 2/ 195) And while uttering these words he embraced Promode bewildering him; and he lost wakefulness again. When he came back to his senses he found himself sitting on the floor of the Bikaner house and Iyengar Babaji was lying on the bed with the mother at his feet and daughter at his head, serving him, as before. As he looked he found Iyengar was eyeing him with bright playfulness.

He got up to hear him say, "*Now go. Go to Jagadish Baba tomorrow morning; the road is straight from Keshi Ghat along the bank of river Yamuna. Would you remember rightly?*"

"Surely," he said.

With soft smile Parthasahai asked, "*Doesn't it seem that you have some reverence for me now!*" (Sadhusanga 2 / 195)

Human being appears from and Disappears to nowhere; Cooked Foods are Brought out of nothing

He was walking leaving Gneuli behind. It was a path that leads towards Yamunotri, the source of Yamuna in the Garhwal section of Himalayas. For the first five miles it was devoid of ups and downs through the valley. Then there was the steep rise. For two and a half miles he had to climb with much labour and effort. As it ended he calculated that from there Gangnani's hill ranges were another four miles. During the heavy labour over the steep rising path he felt almost exhausted. He had no food with

him. He drank only a few hand cupful of water from the falls on the way. Extremely tired, he stopped for some time and realised that he had been so long walking alone without seeing the face of any human beings through the hilly paths, sometimes through the jungles with some fear in his heart and was somehow unhappy after viewing and witnessing some undesirable things like a big antelope hunted and a goat carried for sacrifice. But coming to this spot he realised a kind of great calm loneliness in such desolate place. This is the exceptional quality of such a desolate place. His sight fell on a falls ahead through a tree, three and a half hands tall before him, and he decided to go there to drink a few handfuls of water and rest for a while before proceeding further.

But his attention was drawn towards the strange tree before him. It was thickly bushy full of knobs giving more branches and leaves from each knob. Its leaves looked ashen from a distance but were actually light blue in colour with greenish touch and underneath they were violet. Leaves were big like in wild alocasia plant. The plant had a height of only three and a half hands but it spread seven to eight hands on either side covering good spaces all around. He had never seen such a plant even in the Himalayas before. He admitted to himself that here very big trees existed like pine, deodar, kelu and oak. There is no dearth of strangeness in the Himalayas.

As he was so thinking, very tired and hungry, that there was none to ask what kind of tree it was! There suddenly appeared shockingly before him from the short sized bushy tree, a quite tall figure, almost stark naked except that something was hanging from his shoulder. He wore nothing, not even in his loin. How he came out as if while sitting inside the tree and stood before him was beyond his comprehension. He was more than six feet, a thin built body with a small face, but his matted hair was so big covering and spreading over his head and falling over his shoulders, that it seemed strange how he carried the weight of that matted hair so easily. It seemed as if a sad face like a moon shined over the dark jungle of his body. He had sparse hairs on his beard and chin not due to age but due to their sluggish growth. What seemed exceptional was his eyes; throbbing yet without a blink.

Once he cast a glance at him and turned his face. This created an immense effect on him. He was overwhelmed; his inside was illumined as a path is illumined by a sudden lightning for an instant but goes back to its previous position of darkness immediately. He felt the effect of his great personality on him. With folded hands like a real Arya he welcomed him with the words, "Namah Narayana!" But he realised instantly that it was due to his heritage, done quite mechanically. He had neither any reverence for him at that moment nor any other feeling but remained passionless under the influence of the new comer. The Sadhu then addressed him with a few words that he could not follow immediately but realised in a while. The sonorous sound of his voice again overwhelmed him. He was asked, "Are you going to Yamunotri?" As he replied in the positive the Sadhu began moving asking him to

follow him, telling that he too was going there. And he followed him as if chained, mesmerised. The hunger too followed him impressing him with its telling presence.

He followed him thinking aloud that may be he was God himself, came to test him, as he had heard and read such tales from his young age. As he was so thinking the moving figure ahead turned back for a moment and smiled looking at him. It immediately dawned on him that even if he wasn't a God he must be a Yogi of high order who could know the happenings inside his mind and heart. When they came near the falls, the Yogi didn't look back to see if he rightly came following him. Going close to the water he stood keeping a foot on a stone and began clapping with rhythm as with a song and began calling in musical tone, "Gungni, Gungni, Gungni!"

After two, three minutes a damsel, paragon of beauty, came along the side of the falls near him, asking, "Why Yogi!"

She was really a beauty incarnate. Her dress was a replica of the ancient Arya tradition. She wore a blue skirt, had bodice on her breast covered by a white scarf but there was no cover on her head. At a glance he could see her face only once. Rest of the time he looked at her feet. But her stay was for very short duration. Hairs on her head was reddish golden-brown and it was arranged in a bun to the left of her head like a crown covered by a dazzling jewelled ornament which attracts one in an instant. Her feet were very beautiful and harmonious with other parts of her body. An Indian woman's beauty of feet is no less important than her face; if she has a revered or divine personality we often worship her feet, offer our gifts at her feet. Each finger of her feet had a shining jewelled golden ring. Her footsteps were not only romantic but unearthly; her movements were like floating in the air as if carrying no bodyweight. As she stood before him the Yogi said that they two would be going higher up. Let her feed them something.

She nodded her agreement, "Achha, " and showing a place by the side of the falls asked them to sit. As she came so she went in dancing posture towards the nearby bush and vanished. The Yogi indicated him by gesture to follow him and going ahead occupied the place fixed by her. He too took his seat by his side. And she came anon in the same fashion carrying in two hands two big tree leaves with foods on them covered by other leaves and kept them before each carefully, telling them to eat, "*Eat them, child, eat them.*" Saying this she moved to the bush and vanished. As if it was quite usual as if it happened often!

There was no human habitation nearby, no huts anywhere. He understood that the bush was created for cover of the activities as happened. There were two fruits in each leaf and in his leaf there were two rotis (handmade breads) smeared with ghee (clarified butter) ; hot and smelling ghee still. In the Yogi's leaf there wasn't any roti but a round paste, a ball like thing. Foods were in thick, big and soft green leaves like big lotus leaves but there weren't any lotus pond, neither any such tree bearing such leaves in that locality; he never had seen them, neither before nor after.

The taste of the fruits was like ambrosia though he never tasted it before. The rotis were equally delicious. He was more hungry than tired. He ate them in no time. The effect of the fruits and the other food was felt immediately. He felt newer energy and kind of intoxicated pleasure. He thirsted for viewing once again the divine figure of Gungni and looked intently at the yonder bush for a while. The Yogi while still eating looked smilingly at him and slightly frowned. He understood that his hope was futile.

Then he got up and going to the falls drank three cupped handful water. Coming back he stood before the Yogi who was eating still. He ate so slowly that it seemed he had no work after eating. However, he finished and stood up. After looking at his companion once he began walking followed by the later. Their destination was the next human habitation and locality, the podao, which was some four to five miles away. There was a distance of two, three hands between them as they walked. The path seemed extremely easy now. He never had traversed the roads with such ease before. It was his full youth and he was an artist. Gungni entirely occupied his mind; her beauty was a great attraction for him and his curiosity as to how she satisfied her guests was a matter of importance. He was thinking about the relationship between the Yogi and Gungni. The path was going down now but he could not go faster as he followed the Yogi. At the same time he could not control the stream of his thoughts. The Yogi then showed him the podao at a distance to which he agreed and said, “Ji hun.”

The Yogi then asked him what was he thinking about, what else did he want; as if he had nothing to ask for, as if whatever was to be asked he got.

He said that one thing he could not understand.

“What’s that?”

He said, that calling Gungni, her bringing food at a place where none lived, no home existed, not even a shop; how was it possible?

For some time there was no answer. Silently he walked and then asked about his next question to which he said that he considered him a Yogi, even a realised Yogi whereas he himself did not know anything of Yoga. Was there a possibility of his learning it? Would he take him as his disciple?

He was asked then if he was married to which the reply was, yes. Then the Yogi looked at him with hateful regret and said something which he could not express. The Yogi’s contention was, when he would have to live two days hence with his wife what was the efficacy of asking and enquiring about Yoga?

By then the sloping road came to its end. They came to the bank of Yamuna. It was evening. The full moon showed in the sky. Shops and community living rooms were seen at a distance. The river was flowing silently. Suddenly he said to the Yogi that he felt a great urge to see some of his Yogic feats.

Just after uttering this he felt whipped by his own desires and words. And hearing it the Yogi cast such a look at him that each joint of his body was shaken; shocked to the core of his heart he was afraid. Out of fear he could not look at him but kept his head and eyes lower. His heart was palpitating.

Then the Yogi said, "*What are you looking at! When dying with hunger Gungni appeared and gave you food and drink. Having been fed you want to see Yogic feats? You blind, man from Bengal, gone astray!*" (Sadhusanga 2/ 204)

And the next moment he could not see the speaker though he did not see him rise up and go. His heart was emptied! He could never forget it throughout the rest of his life. (Sadhusanga 2/ 204)

He who is Chosen by the God Chooses the God; God is Beyond Religion

Before going for a sojourn to Vrindavan he came to Mathura for a few days. At a time when he was resting at the Yamuna Ghat a Muslim gentleman stood with very inquisitive eyes as if searching for something with penetrating look. As the four eyes met it seemed as if he wished to meet the visitor. After this happened for some time the visitor too felt inquisitive and went to him. He was asked if he was a Bengali from Kolkata to which he agreed. Then they sought for a place as the other one wanted to talk to the visitor. Visiting his dwelling place to sit for a while to hear him as requested, the recluse found it so disagreeable that he proposed the bank of the river as better for the purpose. Eventually they settled in a suitable place on the bank of the river.

There he told the recluse visitor that for ten, twelve days his son was absconding beyond trace which induced him to search for him here and there frantically, particularly outside the Radha Krishna temple. But the speaker could not come to the subject at the beginning in spite of all urgings by the hearer as if he was under some compulsion to tell the greatness of his family and religion before coming to the main story. He was a man of 55 whereas the visitor was a young recluse.

"You may not know but we are the race of the Emperors, our influence was immense in Delhi. From the time of Sultan Alam whole of Hindusthan moved as we ordered. Lord Duffrin giving lands settled us in Agra. All this history is written in Akhbar..."

"So what I was telling, this religion of us, the whole of the world has to accept this Islam as their religion, otherwise none ever would be saved. We are that Muslim. Hindus are kafirs to us, each Hindu, though he may be great, we know him to be kafir. Our Mollahs do not step on their shadows. If ever realising the greatness of this religion as the Khoda's gift, the kafirs accept it we take them as our men but for that we cannot have friendship with the kafirs." (Sadhusanga 2/207)

The impatient visitor stood up to go. The astounded speaker looked with wide eyes and then said, O.K. I am telling of my son, sit. The visitor sat and he began,

"To tell you the fact, there cannot be any comparison between our religion and the religion of worshipping dolls. We have firm belief in Koran which says that Hindus

would never be able to go to heavens, they are sure to go to Jahannam! We teach the boys of our conservative and traditional families so that they remain devoted to our religion.” (Sadhusanga 2/ 208)

The visitor realised that there might be some secret behind the rage of the speaker, there was a strong urge to speak the way he was speaking. He again said, “Come then to your son’s affairs.”

“So be it”, he said and continued, “The name of my son is Dadar Rahman, He was studying in school, he read a few books in English too. He was peaceful and calm by nature. He was shy; never a smart talker. We kept him under strict control; it is always the system in a highly conservative family like ours. We believed that he would grow one day to be a real Muslim. He is about sixteen. Do you know what he asked of his mother one day?” (Sadhusanga 2/ 208)

The man looked askance at the visitor as if expecting that he would look agape. But he said, “*Tell me how do I know; I wasn’t present at that time.*” (Sadhusanga 2/ 208)

“Do you know what he asked? He asked, ‘Amma, why do you call Hindus kafir? Tell me, you have to tell me today.’” But she’s a woman, she could not say a word in reply. At night she told me what the boy was asking to know from her. Hearing this the whole of my body was, as if burning! I took him by the ear to the courtyard and began forcibly whipping him while telling him that those who worshipped the dolls instead of believing in the sacred Islam are called Kafir. This has been written in Koran. Would you ever again ask this question? Would you ever take the name, Hindu, in your lips? But he said nothing. Replied me nothing. I was gasping!” (Sadhusanga 2/ 208)

He was really gasping almost out of breath. And said again, “We are the beings born out of Khoda, why does a boy of our family utter such things!” (Sadhusanga 2/ 208)

“But that was over. Henceforth he didn’t utter any such word, didn’t talk to anybody but remained with himself, became reticent. I thought that getting that fine treatment he realised the truth.” (Sadhusanga 2/ 208)

A few days after that incident, Kasem, his brother’s son, who used to recite prayers or read the Namaj five times a day, who the family believed was growing to be a perfect Muslim, who they believed would be a great man one day, was studying with Dadar, his elder first cousin, and slept with him, confided to his uncle that Dadar had already become a kafir. He secretly told his uncle that his elder brother often waited outside the temple with a look fixed at the idols of Kishen-ji and his Bibi (Krishna and Radha), that his eyes were often moistened and that he had seen him shedding tears, talking to himself, mumbling while standing still. He said that one day while they were coming back home from school Dadar asked Kasem to go ahead but Kasem knew that it was a plea to avoid him as he would certainly go to the gate of the temple. He asked him not to go, that he would not allow him to go, that he already had become a kafir and that Khoda would punish him by sending him to Jahannam. To this Dadar argued that how could Allah be hateful or jealous who was

merciful, who loved all, how could he behave like the petty mortals! He further said that one may get Allah with love only. When there is love how could there be hatred or rage?

Then the uncle, grave and serious, took Kasem to the religious heads and they heard Kasem with all attention. They came to a conclusion that Dadar was getting disturbed and influenced, may be by some children of the panda or semi-priests or priests of the temple to which Kasem, the eye witness confirmed that Dadar had no friends among the sons of such persons attached to the temple. “Neither we ever mixed with them nor did they ever try to befriend us”, he said.

They came back but the father of Dadar remained suspicious that some mischievous Hindus might have spread their net to convert him, innocent as he was. The visitor at this point asked him if he had ever known that a Hindu tried to convert a Muslim to which his reply was, No. Hadn't he heard, the recluse asked, that Hindus never believe in religious conversion because they believe that one may only be born as Hindu but not in any other way one may become a Hindu? He agreed but said that it might happen in the case of a Hindu converted to Islam but wanted to go back to his original religious fold and community after doing some religious rites as penance. But there too no evidence could be given. And he admitted that it was not applicable to his son for he was the son from a well-known, conservative Muslim family.

However, the father said that coming home from the Dorga, the religious meeting place, he found his son as innocent as before but he suspected that he had become so crooked that he learnt to hide his mental condition and ideas from others. And that night he was beaten mercilessly by the devout father for his reformation. He admitted that he had beaten him black and blue and that he had fainted at the end but the next morning he said nothing. Each occasion that the father had beaten his son mercilessly, he boasted that by that he knew how to make the bent one straight; they knew how to beat away all silly ghosts from the head of a person gone astray. The son was beaten another day and mercilessly too but he said nothing, complained nothing, as usual.

At the end, his mother said to her husband that Dadar had not been talking to anybody, that he had been avoiding all and that he always had his red eyes riveted somewhere, full of tears and if he was compelled to talk, tears only rolled down his eyes and cheeks. She surmised that some Hindu deity might have possessed her son. When his father went to his bed room with a sort of man with unearthly knowledge, usually an ignorant village quack, his son had already fled telling Kasem that he was leaving as Ludly had called him, that he already had become a kafir and that there was no use searching for him.

The further said that two weeks had passed since then but he had not given up all hope. He daily came to the vicinity of the temple and searched for him. Ever since he had seen the visitor he hoped that he might find a trace of his son. He gave him his

address for any information. When the visitor asked, of what use searching for him when he had deliberately chosen another life and admitted to have had sort of conversion, mentally and emotionally! The father said that after all he was a child, after committing a mistake once in life, they might, with the help of religious heads and their counselling, convince him about his fault and that he strongly believed that it would be quite possible to help regain his holy identity.

Next day the recluse left for Vrindavan and there as usual, he put up in Keshavananda-ji's ashram. In the afternoon he was strolling on the bank of Yamuna where other Sadhus usually take a walk. The Yamuna was very vast on the opposite bank where line of bluish green trees covered the back ground as if converging with the horizon. At a rarefied place he found three beautiful trees stood in such a way making a small rectangle. He wondered how nature had made such harmonious arrangement, as if creating a piece of grassless land for sitting and meditation. And indeed, there sat as if a Vaishnava Yogi, one in a very revered position and posture.

As a recluse seeker he moved round places to meet extraordinary sadhaks, yogis and tantric.

He highly revered them. Going near he saw a young boy was sitting wearing a loin cloth only in the fashion of an ascetic. A young full grown brightly white complexioned body glowing with his inner wealth, he felt. An artist is easily moved by such beauty of an ascetic. To him the juvenile Yogi seemed to be like Paramahansa Sukh Dev, son of illustrious Vyas Dev of the lore. It is needless to add that he was very pleased. Wintry climate was gradually setting in but he had nothing in his body. Feeling sort of sever in his body he attributed it to him and taking out the warm covering from his own body he put it on his. There was no movement. No responses but his eyes revealed themselves; his lotus petal eyes were slightly red and crystal. There was vision in them, a look detached from the surroundings. Though he remembered the talks and anxieties of that narrowly conservative Muslim gentleman of Mathura ever since he entered Vrindavan, he forgot everything of it the moment he saw this young ascetic. He virtually surrendered himself to him and sat by his side seeing and seeing him only.

After a while there came a fair lady with beautiful face and body. She wore a skirt, a bodice and a scarf on her body, all blue. She had a dish with food covered by a cloth on one hand and her other hand carried a shining pot with some drink. Coming in harmonic rhythm she kept the food and drink before the meditating ascetic. Addressing him in her local dialogue Braja bouli as child, she requested him to eat and drink them. She said that she came to feed him, that she had works at home finishing which she would come in the evening to take him there. The rhythm of her language and tone created music.

But the anchorite sat tight with eyes fixed at the distant jungle beyond the Yamuna. Then she came closer to him and bending held his chin, saying, "My

child!" At this the ascetic opened his eyes and implored her to take there, "*Champa, take me there, take me there!*" (*Sadhusanga 2/ 213*)

The lady from the Braja bhumi or land of Krishna's birth, embraced him like a mother and said, "Not now. I will come to take you in the evening. Now take some food" And she took some food and fed him once or twice but he refused to take more. Then from the pot he drank a draught or two of milk and again was immersed in his inner being with eyes sailed towards the distant horizon. So long it seemed that she did not notice the visitor but now she looked at him and in beseeching tone said, "Would it harm you in any way if you stay here for some time?" (*Sadhusanga 2/ 213*)

His reply satisfied her but looking at the boy she said in tearful eyes, "Only yesterday Ludli said to me that he has been constantly in meditation. He has no other feeling. Feed him or he would not live long. He is not fed for ten, twelve days. Little milk only, would it sustain him?" (*Sadhusanga 2/ 213*)

Then like a doe she suddenly turned to the boy and said, "What shall I do now! My dear child, stay here now. I have much work at home, it beacons me. Let me go. I shall come back in the evening and take you there." (*Sadhusanga 2/ 214*)

The anchorite was immersed in himself; silent, unmoved he sat in the same place as the recluse was intently looking at him. The departure of the fair lady seemed quite puzzling. She took her dish in one and the milk pot in another as she came, turned to go the way she came and proceeded few steps, her back to the visitor; but he did not see her going back farther though there were no trees between them. She vanished after turning back.

He sat there for quite some time. As the evening was approaching air was blowing at the bank of Yamuna River but it did not seem that the anchorite had any earthly feeling to be affected by weather. He sat there as before.

Now the visitor felt an intense urge to talk to him. He began uttering the name of God, "Hari, Hari, Hari", as the Vaishnavites do. As if to fulfil his intense desire the anchorite looked at him. And he asked him whether any pain was troubling him.

He said that he had no trouble as he was then in Vrindavan. He said that when he was with his own people in Mathura, his parents and brothers, they had beaten him as they were afraid that he would lose his Iman. They don't know what is Iman. So "Ludli and Kanhaia", telling this he began shedding tears. Then he uttered another name of Krishna, Govinda-ji and Sri Radha! The word Ra was repeated few times and he lost his sense. Remained stilled with eyes fixed somewhere. The visitor looked at him with wonder.

Then suddenly, "*Friend, do you know where is Radhakunda?*", and he sat up with immense curiosity.

The visitor said, "*Yes, I know.*"

"Then you take me there, " he said but almost immediately said, "No, you cannot go there. None can reach there unless Brajarani (Sri Radhika) wished it. I shall be taken

there by friend Champa. She only can.” He said all this quite slowly. (Sadhusanga 2/ 214-215)

“*Would you please tell me about the Radhakunda?*” The visitor asked.

In its name there was immense change in the face of the anchorite. Flash of joy and kind of unearthly light visited him. He said,

“There the sky is full of love; full of friends; sakha and sakhi. All are happy with immense ananda in each of them. Rhythm of dance with sound of anklets and music with celestial tunes reverberate in the air. You will be mad in that strange atmosphere. And in Bangshipith sound of flute reverberates in the air. The effusive atmosphere with effulgent divine light covers the whole life. Oh, my Krishna-ji. I shall go there never to return!” (Sadhusanga 2/ 215)

Hearing him with rapt attention the recluse was so much influenced that he too kept silent for quite some time as the boy was immersed in meditation. Then taking chance of his body movement he said that he already had been blessed with great fortune. Would he be kind enough to show him some of the riches of that world?

He was replied, addressed as friend that he had no capacity to go there without the help of Champa Sakhi; she was his guru, his eyes. She only could take him there or show him anything.

And Champa was seen at a distance. Seeing him the boy was changed again; “I shall go now, now shall I see them, Shyamsundar and Radharani!” (Sadhusanga 2/ 216)

While so talking his eyes got fixed and no more words came out of his mouth.

Champa came there. She was unbelievably different; a paragon of beauty. The visitor had never seen such dresses as she was wearing; thin and light, as if flying in air. Her movements were unbelievably light, as if she was floating rhythmically in the air. She came and touched the anchorite teenager and he got up. None spoke a word. She moved ahead and he followed. They vanished before the visitor’s eyes. He was there as if swooned. Time passed silently until the visitor realised his own presence to move.

Next day he again visited the same spot where the boy meditated. Between the three trees that triangular space was vacant. No one was sitting there. There was no eager waiting, no expectation.

“How futile, it would be to report to his father!” he thought. ((Sadhusanga 2/ 216)

A Siddha Yogi is Trikaldarshi: He knows the past present and the future

While going to Mussoorie he heard of a Yogi who lived two, three miles away from Parchhet, north of Jharipani, a hill resort like Mussoorie. He heard that the Sadhu, known as Lete Baba, always lay down but he ate nothing. As there were few days still to begin his work at Mussoorie he decided to visit the Sadhu. Halting the night at Jharipani he began his journey the next morning. Contrary to what he heard, it was a very arduous path full of ups and downs through the mountain and mountainous

jungles. After very hard labour of walking throughout the day he reached a cave almost at the fall of evening and entering it found semi darkness in it and deeper darkness in the cave hidden by the cave. It was extremely dirty. While he was thinking of spending the night there somehow as the evening was approaching fast, he suddenly discovered two burning eyes looking at him from the corner of the cave. There was a commotion inside as he was covering the mouth of the cave. Realising this he moved a bit away and the owner of the burning eyes fled for life by his side. He found it to be an animal like a jackal. He was really afraid now to live with animals in their cave; it might easily be the den of even a tiger!

Somehow he came out in the open and hearing some human voice down below he came down very fast in the still fading light. A mountain labourer couple were getting ready to disperse from the place with a load of logs of woods from the jungle. Even they the poor daily labourers, were afraid hearing him from a distance. But nearing them when the recluse said that he had come to see the Sadhu in his cave they said that it was in the next mountain range which they would help him to reach the next morning. They became his host for the night in their hut feeding him simple food from their hearth.

Coming to the spot surrounding Lete Baba's cave he realised another truth. It was surrounded by eye soothing, charming scenario. The outer walls of the cave were covered by different flowering plants and flowering creepers. It dawned on him that the ancient people who selected the places of pilgrimage had such harmonious sight in accord with nature that the places, apart from other spiritual importance, have their invaluable beauty and harmony, exuding peace and charm of the surroundings. In spite of all scientific outlook and green-mentality of the moderns the insight and harmonic ideas of the ancients were far superior.

After viewing the flowering creepers and short sized flowering plants he turned towards the cave. Going to its mouth he found another cave inside and in it Lete Baba was lying to one side with hands below his head on a tiger skin. He had a thin and small face surrounded by long matted hairs. With bright brown body colour his eyes were red. As the visitor appeared at the mouth of the first cave Baba looked at him from inside. At his leg side a mountain labourer was sitting. He asked the visitor to sit, "Baitho, baitho." As he advanced near him he was asked by gesture to sit. Then he was asked if he was a Babu from Kolkata to which the new comer humbly agreed. Then the Sadhu said that up to yester evening he had much of trouble to face. The visitor humbly agreed. Then Lete Baba said the visitor that he had come to Mussoorie for work and the work would be finished within a month.

The recluse added that he didn't believe Baba at that moment for he surmised that telling about the future was very difficult. But he admitted later that though he had entered into a contract with them at Mussoorie to stay for six months with them for the particular work, the circumstances became such that he could not actually stay for even a month. His work was finished earlier. He was astounded at

the beginning for two things mainly, Baba said that he came from Kolkata and that he came for work at Mussoorie. Then Baba looked at him for some time. But the visitor could not. He kept his face and look down.

Baba asked if his father had died four years ago to which he agreed. Then he was said that since that time he had a quirk of fate, misfortune. As he admitted the truth he was said that more misfortune awaited him. At this the visitor felt nervous. More of misfortune! Even when he did not care for himself, what would happen to his dependents! He implored Baba to do something to mitigate his suffering. At this Baba turned and lying supine looked up for some time. And as if from there he spoke, “Are you afraid of suffering! Don’t you know that suffering purifies a man!” (Sadhusanga 2/ 224)

At this cool solution the visitor’s heart was comforted. He felt bliss. Then Baba said, “*Don’t ask for anybody’s help. Don’t call anybody. It comes to go away. Then good times will come.*”

And then looking at him said, “*You have come to see a Sadhu. Tell me, what have you brought?*” (Sadhusanga 2/ 224)

At this he took out dried apricots, dates and walnuts from his backpack and offered him by keeping them near him. He took an apricot and popped it in his mouth. Then he asked the visitor to take back the rest and keep them in his backpack. They talked then for some time. After it Baba said something to the man sitting close to his legs and he left. Within five minutes he came back carrying food on a big leaf covered by another leaf and kept the food before the visitor. Opening it he found plenty of sweet halwa and malpua; sweets made of atta or wheat flour. He ate them to his heart’s content and the man who brought them took out the left over. Even the strangeness of arranging such hot and juicy food almost instantly in such a place did not strike him so much, nor fear nor devotion affected the visitor as much when the Sadhu asked him to go.

Eating over, Baba asked him to take rest for a while. He lay down in the outer cave for some time and got up soon. He said that it was time for him to go. This was a bolt from the blue! He had so many things to ask, so many queries remained! He made pronam, obeisance to the Sadhu and stood. “Where do you like to go?” Baba asked. When he replied that he would go to Jharipani Baba said no by moving his hand. He said, “No, no, you will go to Mussoorie” and asked his follower to take him to Landour. Visitor again made a pronam but his eyes were filled with tears of frustration. He wished to stay more with Baba. What a disappointment! (Sadhusanga 2/ 224)

And Baba said, “*Good fortune waits you. You have reached your path to move on! What else do you want?*” (Sadhusanga 2/ 225) At that time he was a family man with children. He could not reconcile his situation with Baba’s words.

However, more wonder was waiting for him. The man took him to a road and accompanied him for a while, then said, “*Fear not. Go straight. You will reach.*” (*Sadhusanga 2/ 225*)

He walked for one hour, maximum for one and half hour but one hour to evening he reached Landour, a few miles from Mussoorie. He walked through arduous ways for a whole day to reach Lete Baba from Jharipani. He was never before surprised so much in life, he wrote. Because the way he came was inconceivable to him. (*Sadhusanga 2/ 225*)

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Sufi and Bhakti Kindred by Love

A Forceful source of Indian Heritage

Though begun earlier the Bhakti and Sufi movement and Poetry reached their climax in India in the fifteenth century with the participation of several geniuses from different regions of India so much so that it lost the distinction and differences of tongue and tone, its music flooded the whole of India transcending the barrier of religion and languages. And it was exclusively an

Indian festival of Bhakti movement in which both Hindu and Muslims including the hitherto neglected sectors of the society from both communities joined as participant performers and audience. In a sense it was a unified action in the whole of India flooding it with dance and music in love for the divine.

The Source was Love for God

Love for the beloved, the divine itself either approached directly or through the human agency, culminating in an intense desire to bloom and merge in God; the movement and poetry were forceful enough to overcome all obstacles of orthodoxy and social resistance. It grew up as Sufi movement in the Middle East but the movement of Love was already there in India. May be the air blew from the East where it was born sometime in the sixth century to Middle East two centuries later to induce the imagination of men and women in love with God. Bhakti and Sufi movement and poetry grew up almost independently without a meeting between the parties and the poets involved, as if connected by an invisible inner thread of love relationship, by an inner heart connection, without the earth yet becoming a global village due to inconceivable development of communication. But the movement and poetry of Bhakti and Sufi cult are not so powerful genres in modern time. Nevertheless, they continue in other forms for the element of Love cannot die out. It weaves the hearts together in spite of many a hindrance.

The Indegenous Bhakti Current

Bhakti movement was born out of Hindu religion like many other offshoots of it in India. Its first emergence in the Tamil epic, *Silppadikaram* reached its zenith during the period of the Alvars, the wandering devotees of Krishna, between sixth and tenth

century. The *Bhagavata*, a Sanskrit work which weaved the theory of Bhakti for Krishna and exercised great influence on the Bhakti movement was composed after the advent of the Alvars. This Bhakti was apart from the Gita. It is a devotional story of the cowherd Krishna which was already in vogue in the folk lore of Tamil Nadu. It is said that the *Saiva Siddhanta*, the doctrinal basis of Tamil Saivism, is more indebted to the passionate songs of the Saiva poets than to any other text. *Virasaivas* contributed significantly towards the emergence of *Satasthala Siddhanta*, a system of religious activities of the Bhakti cult derived from Sankhya and Vedanta tradition. *Gaudiya Vaishnavism* of Bengal, a Krishna cult, derived its doctrines and practices from the emotional experience of Sri Chaitanya Deva and the lyrics of Jayadeva, Vidyapathi and Chandidasa besides other Vaishnava poets. The Bhakti movement in India was indigenous, growing up from the native soil much before the advent of Sufi and it flourished in poetry, song and dance. It is said that when Sufism arrived in India with *fana*, *dhikr* and *sama* with its beloved-lover framework, it did not surprise Indians for such things were already in practice. It came as another dimension of the many splendoured Bhakti movement. The forceful Vaishnavism and Saivism continued in their own ways.

Birth of Sufi

Derived from the Arabic word *suf* or wool worn by the God-lovers, it rose up from the Arabic world in the eighth century. Sufism or Islamic mysticism acquired a religious connotation by the tenth century. Rabia, the mystic of Basara (801A.D.) is usually considered as the first important saint of the Sufi movement. "It also grew because of the spiritless legalism as the Quranic thought was in the process of a slow systemisation leading to the rigidity of law and jurisprudence. Sufism, thus, grew as an attitude of protest against the ruling class and against the rigidity of law." (Das 151) It was a direct process of link between the devotee and the divine.

Many artisans and workers joined the Bhakti and Sufi movement. Among the Indian exponents of Sufism and Bhakti movement, Kabir was a weaver, Ravidas a cobbler, Ramananda, a Brahmin but spoke against untouchability, Chaitanya, a Brahmin and great leader of the movement but repudiated the caste system. There are large numbers of examples from both the movements which included members from the lower strata of the society and also from the upper limb of it who revolted against the rigid religious systems. But the revolt, it seems, wasn't a sword and dagger revolt. The devotion for the God wished to leave all restrictions aside and grew directly as a channel to God without following any man made system of discrimination.

"Sufism, though rooted in the Quran, derived much of its inspiration from various sources, some of which were anti-Quranic, including the folk traditions of Arab and Persia.... Its approach to God through love, its dependence on God's mercy and its idea of tawhid and dhikr, often appeared anti-Quranic in certain aspects." (Das 153)

Sisir Kumar Das wrote that though *Mohabbat* or love has the Quranic authority, *Ishq*, an important Sufi symbolism for ardent love for the divine has no sanction in the script.

Besides Buddhist sources, “Zachner suggests a possible influence of Sankara on Abu Yazid al-Bestami, the Persian Sufi of the late ninth century. In one of his sayings one finds a striking parallel with the Upanisadic doctrine of *Tat twam asi...* Abu Yazid’s utterance *subhami ma a’zma sha’ni* (glory be to me, how great is my majesty) was considered as blasphemy, for which he was banished from his native place. Mansur Al-Hallaj was executed for similar offence, that of declaring *anal haq*, which looks like almost a verbatim translation of the Sanskrit *so’ham.*” (Das 153)

“Persian Sufi poetry too had its origin in the community of the Sufi lodge. While the ode (qasida) and the lyric (ghazal) were cultivated at the courts of the former Caliphal governors in eastern Iran, it was the quatrain (rubai) that was preferred for the expression of brief mystical insights. The language was often direct and simple, but paradoxical.” (Sufism 157)

“It was also perfectly possible to write poetry in a Sufi style without being a practicing mystic. It is no exaggeration to say that all of the major Persian court poets of the seventeenth century wrote poems that were loaded with Sufi imagery, though few of them had serious connections with Sufi orders.” (Sufism 164)

Persian Sufi Poets

Rumi and Abdul Latif

The greatest Persian poet, Jalal-u-din or Jalau’din Rumi who was a preacher at the beginning hence called Maulana, was born on 30 September 1207 in Balkh, Afghanistan and died on 17 December 1273 in Konya, Turkey. He is widely read in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan besides in English speaking world through translation. More down to earth they were more translatable. His poems, it is said, were the best seller in US in 1997. He wrote more than 40, 000 verses.

One of his great followers, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was born in Hyderabad, Sindh (now in Pakistan) in 1649. More reticent and indrawn from his childhood, Abdul Latif mostly lived in sand mound, hence called Bhittai. On maturity he followed many routes to find the truth. Moving with Yogis for years throughout the Indian subcontinent with his disciples to study Nature and beauty besides meeting the Munis and mystics, he died in 1752.

To both the master and devotee love is the central force of all human activities and woman is an essential part of this love. Shah wrote in one of his verses that fasting and offering prayers are good but they aren’t the ultimate path of seeking the lover which is love. Rumi had written earlier,

Come, come, whoever you are,
Wanderer, idolater, worshipper of fire,
Come, and come yet again,

Ours is not a caravan of despair.

(Latif / Roy 128-29)

They had no other religion than love on earth, the way to reach God. Rumi calls love a mirror through which God sees himself. *“He sees himself, He himself is Beloved. He created the love and beauty and himself is Lover of that.”* (Rumi / Roy / 130).

Proceed one step more and find what another mystic poet, Tagore wrote,

Thus it is that thy joy in me is so full. Thus it is that thou hast come down to me. O thou lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not?

(Tagore / Gitanjali / Das 62)

Self-sacrifice for the lover is the essence of this philosophy which is available aplenty in the philosophy of the subcontinent. Here ‘I’ and ‘We’ of the lovers are mingled and abolished and merged into God. Thus Rumi says,

O Thou whose soul is free from “We” and “I”, O thou
Who art the essence of the spirit in men and women,
When men and women one, Thou art One.

(Rumi / Roy 133)

Attar’s utterance is,

What you most want,
what you travel around wishing to find,
lose yourself as lovers lose themselves,
and you’ll be that.

(Looking For Your Own Face / Poets 59)

Hafez writes,

Of this fierce glow which Love and You
Within my heart inspire,
The Sun is but a spark that flew
And set the heavens afire!

(Strife / Poets 177)

Hallaj confirms the essential in direct terms,

I am he whom I desire, whom I desire is I:
we are two spirits dwelling in a single body.
If you see me, you have seen him,
and if you see him, you have seen us.

(Sufism 153)

And Rumi confirms this conviction of Sufi, defining what makes a Sufi,

What makes the Sufi? Poetry of heart,
Not the patched mantle and the lust perverse
Of those vile earth-bound men who steal his name.

The True Sufi /Poets139

Indian Sufi Poets

Ameer Khusro

Born in 1254 A.D. at Patiali village on the banks of Ganga in UP, India, Ameer Khusro the nom de plume of Abul Hassan, born of a Turkish nobleman as father and Indian woman as the mother, was a genius; great musician, a spiritual personality, a courtier under as many as seven Sultans of Delhi and a Sufi poet. He was born later than Rumi but in the same century of Rumi's birth. Ameer Khusro, a disciple of Saint Nizamuddin Aulia was loved for his poetry. Khusro was an accomplished spiritual personality. As a musician he shaped the great musical instruments like Sitar, Tabla and other types of drum from the existing olden instruments like Veena and Dhol. He was the inventor of Kwali and Tarana and led many musical sessions. With all qualities of a spiritual personality he transcended the religious boundary like a true Sufi poet. "It is recorded that apart from writing several 'Divans' or books of poems on spirituality inspiring Sufi subjects, Khusro had once written in a span of two and a half years, about two lakhs of couplets in Persian language, which is un-paralleled in the history of poetry in any country in the world. As such Khusro may be rightly acclaimed not only as a great Sufi but also as the poetical genius of India."¹

Khusro wrote,

I am a pagan and a worshipper of love
The traditional creed, I do not need;
Every vein of mine has become taut, like a wire²

And few lines more from his another poetry takes us to the core of his Sufi poetry:

I become you,
You become me,
I become the soul,
You the heart,
How can they claim,
I am apart, you are apart?³

Sant Kabir

The great Bhakti movement flourished in India through some great presence during the fifteenth century like Narsi Mehta, Vidyapati, Umapati, Mira Bai and Ravidas (also known as Raidas or Ruhidas). Sant kabir's life and work enriched this movement and made a synthesis with the Sufi movement and poetry which was akin to it. He was a Bhakti poet who collaborated with Sufi poetry and movement. He is the focal point of Bahkti cult. He was steeped in Hindu philosophy and esoteric practices as a disciple of the great Hindu pundit and preacher, philosopher-reformer Saint Ramananda. "Kabir's finest poems have as their subjects the commonplaces of

Hindu philosophy and religion: the Lila or sport of God, the Ocean of Bliss, the Bird of the Soul, Maya, the Hundred-petalled Lotus and the 'Formless Form'." (Underhill 494-97) But Kabir had immense mystic sensibility to grow independently out of all these to prove himself a Sant or Saint.

Let us taste one out of his immortal poems:

From the beginning until the ending of time, there is love between
Thee and me; and how shall such love be extinguished?
Kabir says: 'As the river enters into the ocean, so my heart touches
Thee.'

(Kabir /Tagore 34/110/514)

Dance and Music are integral parts of the movement in poetry

The dance of the whirling Dervishes, a Turkish tradition and culture, now recorded by the UNESCO as World Intangible Heritage called *Sama*, represents the mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through love to a state of perfection. Rumi was the founder of the Mechievi Order of whirling dervishes. This dance has inspired large numbers of Sufi poets as the main part of Sufi performance like the Bauls dancing with one-stringed instrument in hand and singing full throated mystical songs full of love for the beloved through the meadows and fields in the country sides of Bengal from the medieval time till date. A prominent among the Bauls, Lalan Fakir sang,

How does the strange bird
flit in and out of the cage.
If I could catch the bird
I would put it under the fetters of my heart.

(Chakraborty 250)

"Poetry is employed for esthetic effects, such as meter and rhyme, and for the emotional effect of its content; for Sufis, properly interpreted poetry in the ritual context of listening to music was particularly powerful." (Sufism /164)

Manika Vachakar, the greatest Tamil Saiva Poet sang,

*At other's will I danced, whirled, fell. But me
He filled in every limb*

(As quoted in Das 154)

And the greatest of the Muslim mystic poets, Maulana Rumi sang,

The truth we have not found
So dancing, we beat the ground

(As quoted in Das 156)

Greeks too knew of this madness and mad-dance as in Euripides's *The Bacchae* and in the maddening trance of Dionysus. Guru Nanak sang, "*Some call me wild, while others that I am out of step*" (Das /155).

The Vaishnava Poet of the eighth century, Andal, wished only God Krishna as her beloved, to be possessed by him as did Radha of the myth and Mira Bai of

Rajasthan later aspired. Mahadeviyakka, a twelfth century Sadhika and poet, wanted Lord Siva in the same vein to marry her. And Sant Kabir was directly married to God,

The Everlasting One
Has wed me, O Kabir;
And he is taking me Home with Him.

The Wedding / Sethi 530-31

Sant Kabir and the great Vaishnava saint Chaitanya sang songs of madness, infused in them by the God, both of them reached Godhood. Kabir asserted, *“I have ascended the divine throne and met the Lord. God and Kabir have become one: no one can distinguish who is who.”* (Adi Granth. Ramkali. Kabirji. p. 969. Sethi 39).

Doctrinal difference between Islam and Sufism

The idea of total identity or even complete merger with God is a common phenomenon in Indian religious poetry but it is taboo as per Quranic tradition. It has been debated whether the idea of *fana* has been derived from Indian sources or from Quran. Suggestions have been made that it is akin to *Nirvana*. But Syed Amir Ali writes, “Even when the Sufi talks of *fana-fil-Allah* (Annihilation in God) he does not mean to imply that human soul becomes merged in the universal soul.”⁴

“According to a strict interpretation of the Quran, total merger with God is anti-Islamic. The relation between God and man can be either of Rabb (Lord) and Marbub (Slave), or Ilah (to be worshipped) and Maluh (worshipper), or Malik (master) and Mamluk (servant). The devotee can never claim a complete identity with Him though he tries to feel, and indeed feels a nearness to Him.” (Das 172)

“Sufi poetry drew its interpretation from the idea contained in Ana’l Haq and continued to receive support from the exponents of Sufi doctrines. Sarias-Saqati, a younger contemporary of Rabia, for example, defined the mystical love as ‘real mutual love between man and God’...It must be remembered that Sufi doctrines as formulated by Al-Qushairi, the classical authority of Sufi doctrines, recognizes the importance of taqwa (the awe of God), khushu (fearfulness) and ubudiya (servant-hood) in the life of a true Sufi.” (Das 173)

The Essence of Bhakti and Sufi

Another interpreter of Sufi Poetry writes, “It is also noteworthy that the practice of Sufism has close resemblance with the ancient Indian philosophy of Yoga, which aims at the union of the soul (atma), with the Supreme Being (Paramatma)”⁵

Though Sufis did not comply with the religious dictate, there were restrictions and watch over them whereas in India it was spontaneous. So Indian Sufis or poets akin to Sufi like Kabir of Benares sang,

“Like oil in sesame seeds
fire in flint,
your Lord lies within you,
awaken him if you can”⁶

Similar is Guru Nanak's song,
"Like scent in a flower
and our reflection in a mirror
does the Lord dwell eternally within us,
Seek Him within, brother"⁷

In such poetry only the lover-beloved relationship remains. In both the Sufi and Bhakti poetry the subject is the longing for God and the journey with all perils in waiting for him. Once the true meeting is achieved the poetry ceases to move. One of the finest examples of such poetry of longing and waiting is found in Rumi:

Hearken to this Reed forlorn
Breathing ever since 'twas torn
From the rushy bed, a strain
Of impassioned love and pain.
....
'Tis the flame of love that fired me
'Tis the wine of love that inspired me
Wouldst thou learn how Lovers bleed
Harken, harken, to the Reed.'

(Das 173-74. Translated by R. A. Nicholson)

"Shah Latif says, 'The seas of separation roll / And draw each single separate soul'.... And this is why Radha goes out in abhisar in dark rainy nights. Sassi is perished in the trackless deserts and Sohni plunges herself into the rushing tide to meet death. And this is why, Lalla danced nude, Mira left her home, Chaitanya wept, trembled and rolled on the ground of Vrindavan in ecstasy and al-Hallaj danced in his fetters to the place of execution and Rumi celebrated the incident in haunting rhyme." (Das 174)

Further Spiritual Thrust

All serious Sufi Poets were God loving Sadhaks.

Dr. S. L. Peeran, Poet, Essayist and one of the most modern followers of the Sufi path writes,

"Sufism teaches beyond the mere ablution and performance of Namaz and Zakath giving charity and performing Hajj. It is an inner path to the Lord Almighty, to reach Him, to win his friendship with devotion, with sincerity, with sacrifice, with love. Love is the most beautiful flower in the garden of life."⁸

Here are some more words about Sufism telling it in terms of infinity beyond any religion, pushing it towards futurity with newer dimension for embracing truth.

"We are stepping into an era of oneness that will bring together matter and spirit, feminine and masculine, and our spiritual practice must reflect this new alignment. We cannot renounce the earth or follow a patriarchal model of spiritual progress. Our soul's journey is part of the journey of the whole of creation. Our heart is

connected to the heart of the world. Our remembrance is the remembrance of the world. Through our awakening the world can awaken....”

“Who is the appropriate person to speak about fanâ (annihilation) and baqâ (permanence)?”

He answered, “That is knowledge for the one who is suspended by a silk thread from the heavens to the earth when a big cyclone comes and takes all trees, houses, and mountains and throws them in the ocean until it fills the ocean. If that cyclone is unable to move him who is hanging by the silk thread, then he is the one who can speak on fanâ and baqâ.”⁹

This leads us to the Supramental light and consciousness as Sri Aurobindo introduced us to that decades back, giving us assurance that the world is moving towards its spiritual goal in spite of all apparent contradictions. The realisation of the ultimate truth consciousness embracing the earth depends on man himself, his attitude towards collaboration with the Divine plan.

“The creative truth of things works and can work infallibly even in the Inconscient: the Spirit is there in Matter and it has made a series of steps by which it can travel from it to its own heights in an uninterrupted line of gradations: the depths are linked to the heights and the Law of the one Truth creates and works everywhere....

“This Knowledge is the covert Supermind which is the support of the creation and is leading all towards itself and guides behind this multitude of minds and creatures and objects which seem each to be following its own law of nature; in this vast and apparently confused mass of existence there is a law, a one truth of being, a guiding and fulfilling purpose of the world-existence.” (Sri Aurobindo 73)

Let us end with wonderful hope in an age of nightmarish violent ambition for religious, racial and imperialist domination of the earth wishing them to be vanished like bad dreams.

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Sant Kabir: A Great Mystic Poet

Fifteenth century was the time for the efflorescence of Bhakti Poetry in India by the participating great devotees of God and poets and singers like Vidyapati, Mira Bai, Ravidas (also known as Raidas or Ruhidas) and the great Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. It had its earlier link with the sixth century Vaishnavite and Saivite saints. Bhakta kabir's life and work enriched this movement and made a synthesis with the Sufi movement and poetry which was akin to it in essence. He was a man of the earth; a weaver by profession. "Like Paul the tentmaker, Boehme the cobbler, Bunyan the tinker, Tersteegen the ribbon-maker, he knew how to combine vision and industry; the work of his hands helped rather than hindered the impassioned meditation of his heart." wrote Evelyn Underhill (*Songs of Kabir* Introduction). A poet of the earth he became a spiritual leader among his men living in India's spiritual centre, the oldest town of the world, Varanasi or Banaras. He was a Bhakti poet. His ideas were akin to Sufi and Baul. His poetry was spiritually rich; esoteric and mystic.

A simple life on earth touching the sky with enormous spiritual height, Sant Kabir remained a legend and mystery in his life time (fifteenth-sixteenth century) and beyond. His poetry was based on his mystic, spiritual vision and lifelong faith on God. Many of his poems are songs. Disciple of a great Hindu pundit, preacher and philosopher-reformer, Saint Ramananda, he was steeped in Hindu philosophy. With esoteric practices he was at the focal point of Bahkti cult. Claimed by both Hindu and Muslim community as a man born with their religion, he used to say, "*I am the child of Allah and of Ram.*" He also said that he was neither a Hindu nor a Musalman. Temple and mosque, idol and holy water, scriptures and priests were usually renounced by him.

He cared little whether people knew him a Brahmin or a Mohammedan, a Sufi or a Vedantin, a Vaishnavite or a Ramanandi. His way of life and preaching were different from any orthodox religion in spite of his deep faith in God. He had large numbers of followers in his life time who were called Kabirpanthi. Kabirpanth has still a million followers, it is said.

Before going through Kabir's poetry we may try to understand the subject of Mystic Poetry. For this I prefer to approach Sri Aurobindo who was a poet and yogi;

master of spirituality. In letters to his disciple he defined mystic poetry in different sentences.

“Mystic poetry has a perfectly concrete meaning much more than intellectual poetry which is much more abstract. The nature of the intellect is abstraction; spirituality and mysticism deal with the concrete by their very nature.” (Poetry 353)

“Mystic poetry does not mean anything exactly or apparently; it means things suggestively and reconditely, things that are not known and classified by the intellect.” (Poetry 353)

“It is when the thing seen is spiritually lived and has an independent vivid reality of its own which exceeds any conceptual significance it may have on the surface that it is mystic.” (Poetry 355)

“In the more deeply symbolist – still more in the mystic-poem that mind is submerged in the vividness of the reality and any mental explanation falls far short of what is felt and lived in the deeper vital or psychic response.” (Poetry 355)

Among the English poets, Sri Aurobindo said, “Blake stands out among the mystic poets of Europe.” (Poetry 529)

We get the subtle feel and taste of the true mystic poems in the luminous simplicity and vivid vision of William Blake. His poems reveal his apathy towards religious institutions and rituals like that of Kabir. He tells us how a priest deprives a man from the joy and laughter of life. He held satirical ideas about them. His experience about priest and church is expressed in two poems.

So I turned to the garden of love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.
And I saw it was filled with graves

....

And priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires.

(The Garden of Love /Experience 36)

Dear Mother, dear Mother, the Church is cold.
But the Ale-house is healthy & pleasant & warm;
Besides I can tell where I am use'd well,
Such usage in heaven will never do well.

(The Little Vagabond /Experience 36)

When none responded to repeated knocks on a moonlit door the traveller's words addressed to some unknown listeners echoed and reechoed in the vast without any answer; there were phantom listeners only.

“Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,”

(The Listeners)

We get different satisfactions from some great poems like that of Walter De La Mare. It points towards something unknown and occult.

Occult and fairy-tale-flavour in Christina Georgina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" charms us.

And the weird sensation in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" delights us. But they are not mystic or spiritual poems. We get spiritual poems in Swami Vivekananda,

From dreams awake, from bonds be free!
Be not afraid. This mystery,
My shadow, cannot frighten me!
Know once for all that I am He!

Other Poems 7

Sri Aurobindo wrote many spiritual and mystic poems like,
O marvel bird with the burning wings of light and the unbarred
Lids that look beyond all space,
One strange leap of thy mystic stress breaking the barriers of mind
and life, arrives at its luminous term thy flight;
Invading the secret clasp of the Silence and crimson Fire
Thou frontest eyes in a timeless Face.

(The Bird of Fire /Collected Poems 571)

There are mystic poets elsewhere and in India. Some mystic poets from Pondicherry were Nolini Kanta Gupta, Harindranath Chattopadhyay and Tehmi among few others.

How Kabir's Poetry was Presented and Interpreted

Kabir's works are mostly collections of songs composed in various metres of old Hindi. There are seventy-two works. The most important and famous works are: the *Kabir Bijak*, the *Suknidhan*, *Sabdās*, *Sakhis*, *Rekhtas*, *Mangal*, *Vasant* and *Holy Agams*. *Kabir Bijak* is considered as the authority on all religious matters and doctrines of the Kabir-panthis.

His poems were written in colloquial Hindi of his time. His poems were written at least 144 years after his death as they survived orally. He was unlettered. During the colonial period he was translated by Christian missionaries for religious purposes; such translations were done interpreting the inclination of his utterances towards Christianity. Some of his poems were translated as part of the *Adi Granth* of the Sikh religion and other books but the translations were not done by any poet. There were purposes behind such representations of Kabir's poetry. In 1917 Rabindranath Tagore published 100 poems of Kabir in his own English translation. About translated Kabir the observations of a modern scholar is worth noting:

"From the present Dalit critic Dharmveer to Christian missionaries of the colonial period, Kabir has been placed in one religious discourse or the other, denying him autonomy of voice...." Kabir is reduced to a countryside version of either a Martin Luther or a Sankara, and if at all he is granted originality, it is translated in terms which are overtly so classical and scriptural that the people-centric discourse of Bhakti remains under expressed."¹

Tagore's Translations of Kabir's Poems

First published in 1917 under the title, *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, the work was entirely different from any other so far published. About this occasion a scholar observed, "Coming close on heels of Tagore's Nobel Prize fame it received an immediate international limelight. It has been reprinted many times over and by different publishers, both in India and abroad. No subsequent translation of Kabir has received so much attention. The purpose of Tagore's translations in general was to internationalize Kabir as well as his own writings."²

It has been held by some scholars that very few or none of the poems translated by Tagore was written by Kabir. Someone wrote that they were done in pseudo oriental mould. Scholars have also opined that it was for the first time that a poet of Tagore's stature translated a poet with the pure intention of presenting Kabir as a poet. These are creations by a poet out of love for another poet, for sheer love of his poetry due to their affinity to his ideas and realizations. Many such poems suited the translator's mood and choice. The translations are highly sophisticated and very pleasing to read though he might have taken freedom of free translation to render them more to the spirit of the poems.

About the source material of Kabir's songs translated by Tagore, Evelyn Underhill wrote,

"It has been based upon the printed Hindi text with Bengali translations of Kshiti Mohan Sen; who has gathered from many sources – sometimes from books and manuscripts, sometimes from the lips of wandering ascetics and minstrels – a large collection of poems and hymns to which Kabir's name is attached, and carefully sifted the authentic songs from the many spurious works now attributed to him. These painstaking labours alone have made the present undertaking possible."

"We have also had before us a manuscript English translation of 116 songs made by Mr. Ajit Kumar Chakravarty from Kshiti Mohan Sen's text... A considerable number of readings from the translation have been adopted by us". (Underhill /468)

Excerpts from a few Poems by Sant Kabir in *One Hundred Poems of Kabir* by Tagore.

He himself is the limit and the limitless: and beyond both the limited
and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.
He is the immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature
The Supreme Soul is seen within the soul,
The point is seen within the Supreme Soul,
And within the Point, the reflection is seen again.
Kabir is blest because he has this supreme vision!

Kabir 7 /85 / Das 501

How could the love between Thee and me sever?
As the leaf of the lotus abides on the water: so thou art my Lord, and
I am Thy servant....

From the beginning until the ending of time, there is love between
Thee and me; and how shall such love be extinguished?
Kabir says: 'As the river enters into the ocean, so my heart touches
Thee.

Kabir 34/110/ Das 514

Have you not heard the tune which the Unstruck Music is playing?...
The Kazi is searching the words of the Koran, and instructing others;
but if his heart be not steeped in that love, what does it avail, though he
be a teacher of men?
The Yogi dyes his garments with red: but if he knows naught of that
colour of love, what does it avail though his garments be tinted?
Kabir says: 'Whether I be in the temple or the balcony, in my camp
or in the flower garden, I tell you truly that every moment my Lord is
taking His delight in me.

Kabir 54/112/ Das 522

Tagore wrote in his poem, "O thou lord of all heavens, where would be thy love
if I were not?"

Gitanjali 56 Das 62

Kabir sang,

I hear the melody of His flute, and I cannot contain myself:
The flower blooms though it is not spring, and already the bee has
received its invitation.

Kabir 68/102/ Das 527

Tagore in his poem wrote,

I have had my invitation to this world's festival, and thus my life has been
Blessed. My eyes have seen and my ears have heard.

Gitanjali 16 /Das 47

Tagore found similarities of his ideas and feelings in Kabir so he wished to bring
him forth before the modern public again colouring him in his own heart's tune away
from the old Hindi versions of Kabir's songs.

Kabir's Poems in others' Translations

Differences are always there between languages while transcreation takes place. The
poems in *Collected Poems of Kabir* as edited by V. K. Sethi have similarity of ideas with
Tagore and Kabir is very much present in these poems too almost in the same way as
in Tagore though he is more poetic. In his preface to the book, *Kabir the Weaver of
God's Name*, which contains the poems, S. L. Sondhi writes that, "The primary aim
of the translations has been to bring out the spiritual meaning that is the essence of
Kabir's compositions; they are therefore not a rigidly literal rendering of the original,
nor are they poetic for the sake of being poetic." (Sethi Preface)

Here it may be opined that spiritual or whatever may be the content, poetry has
its own basic value. The preface writer has said that the translation has not been done

keeping the poetry in mind but the essence of it in contents has been retained, meaning that it has been a free transcreation. Tagore too did the same in his own rich language.

Critique of Kabir's Poetry

Kabir's poems are sometimes didactic but they always contain his high pitched assertion of conviction, deep faith, devotion and adoration of God. His faith carries him through his poetry and they have music through rhythms and rhymes. Sri Aurobindo in assessing the Bhakti poetry of the time mentioned that "It is the penetrating truth and fervour of a thought arising from the heart of devotion that makes the charm and power of Tukaram's songs. A long strain of devotee poets keeps sounding the note that he struck and their work fills the greater space of Marathi poetry. The same type takes a lighter and more high-pitched turn in the Poetry of Kabir."³

Evelyn Underhill, the introducer of *Songs of Kabir* translated by Rabindranath Tagore, made several observations on Kabir's poetry which are worth noting.

"His desperate attempts to communicate his ecstasy and persuade other men to share it – a constant juxtaposition of concrete and metaphysical language; swift alternations between the most intensely anthropomorphic, the most subtly philosophical, ways of apprehending man's communion with the Divine... rooted in his concept, or vision, of the Nature of God; and unless we make some attempt to grasp this, we shall not go far in our understanding of his poems."

"Kabir belongs to that small groups of supreme mystics-amongst whom St. Augustine, Ruysbroeck, and the Sufi poet Jalalu'ddin Rumi are perhaps the chief".
(Underhill /492)

Underhill comes to point when explaining the particular mystic trend in Kabir's poetry,

"This eternal distinction, the mysterious union-in-separateness of God and the soul, is a necessary doctrine of all sane mysticism.... Its affirmation was one of the distinguishing features of the Vaishnavite reformation preached by Ramanuja; the principle of which had descended through Ramananda to Kabir."

"In accordance with this concept of the universe as a Love-Game which eternally goes forward, a progressive manifestation of Brahma-one of the many notions which he adopted from the common stock of Hindu religious ideas, and illuminated by his poetic genius-movement, rhythm, perpetual change, forms an integral part of Kabir's vision of Reality. Though the Eternal and Absolute is ever present to his consciousness, yet his concept of the Divine Nature is essentially dynamic. It is by the symbol of motion that he most often tries to convey it to us: as in his constant reference to dancing, or the strangely modern picture of that Eternal Swing of the Universe which is held by the cords of love....

"So thorough going is Kabir's eclecticism that he seems by turns Vedantist and Vaishnavite, Pantheist and Transcendentalist, Brahman and Sufi. In the effort to tell

the truth about that ineffable apprehension, so vast and yet so near, which controls his life, he seizes and twins together-as he might have woven together contrasting threads upon his loom-symbols and ideas drawn from the most violent and conflicting philosophies and faiths....

“Kabir’s finest poems have as their subjects the commonplaces of Hindu philosophy and religion: the Lila or sport of God, the Ocean of Bliss, the Bird of the Soul, Maya, the Hundred-petalled Lotus and the ‘Formless Form’.” (Underhill 494-97)

Kabir’s deep knowledge of Hindu religion and philosophy placed him as a leading poet of the Bhakti cult taking him to the heights. Kabir’s poetry was the voice of a learned lover of God. His voice was sometimes akin to Sufi who too find oneness with God; by all references he was a part of the Indian Bhakti cult in the medieval age.

Most major portion of Kabir’s poetry are mystic poetry often carrying allusions to mainly Hindu religious myths and symbols; allegorical, full of devotion, ideas of surrender to God and his adoration. Christians too have truly found that Kabir’s ideas have similarities with Christian ideas of piety and Sufi ideas of directness in addressing God. He was steeped in Hindu philosophy, mythology and even scriptures though he denied them verbally, denied rituals of all religions, declaring himself as illiterate, in direct relationship with the divine; a follower of *Sahaja* or simple path. He was in fact a pundit of pundits, relied upon by his learned Guru Ramananda as his scholar representative in great debate sessions. Sant Kabir had the wisdom of a seer, knowledge of a scholar and capacity to penetrate the inner heart of man more than a psychologist; a great seer poet without writing an alphabet. Not by intellect but by faith and spontaneous vision he was beyond all religious strictures and rules. Religions have found affinity with him but he denied religions. He was as free as a Baul and Sufi and as near to God as any true devotee. By contradiction he transcended all formalities. Sant Kabir sang,

No one tells me about the bird
That sings within the body
Its colour is a colourless hue,
Its form a formless form,
It lives under the shade of Nam.

....

In the vast tree dwells a bird,
It hops, it pecks, it eats,
And from branch to branch it flies.

....

But they fly away in the evening.
Morning they return for the day;

....

But where, O Pundits,
Where, O learned ones,
Is the home of the bird

That no one is able to see,
That sings within each body?

The Bird that Sings Within / Sethi 254

Bird is a symbol of the soul which lives in the world tree or the human body-cage, eating two fruits; good and bad effects of previous birth, leaving in the evening at the end of mortal life and coming back in the morning, at the rebirth of the mortal. Bauls and fakirs are ripe in such bird symbolism who too prefer direct communion and relationship with God without any outward rituals. Lalan Fakir was a prominent Baul of Bengal who sang,

How does the strange bird
flit in and out of the cage.
If I could catch the bird
I would put it under the fetters of my heart.⁴

It is an esoteric truth that a seeker when withdraws into his Self leaving the nine portals of the body, concentrating on the inner state in union with the divine, he vanquishes death by dying inwardly before physical death. Death cannot defeat him. And all the usual physical phenomena cease to operate in that condition. It's a different world altogether; unseen and unheard of by the ordinary men of the world. Upanishad describes the world where neither sun nor stars shines, none of the normal phenomena operates. Kabir tells us his inner experience,

Since you were born, you will one day die;
Be not dejected on this account
But one who willingly dies while living
Will never have to face death again.

....

When the moon becomes one with the sun
The unstruck melody resounds within;
When the melody of the veena resounds
The soul shares the throne with the Lord.

To attain Truth /Sethi 476

Eighteenth century Saint-Poet of Bengal, Ramprasad Sen the Kali worshipper was a singer. He sang in one of his songs,

'O mind, you don't know agriculture:
Such a fertile field
as human being
remains fallow.
Gold it would yield
after cultivating...⁵
Kabir had already sung the song in a different way,
O my mind, keep away now,
Through indolence you have
Wasted away your human life;
Burglars have crept into your house,
They are robbing you of your wealth.

To attain Truth /Sethi 478

Contradictory situations continue in the inner world of the mystic;

The vagrant rabbit of the wild woods
 Has made the ocean its abode;
 The lively fish of the seas
 Has made the mountain peaks its home.
 The base one has devoured liquor,
 But the noble one has become intoxicated.
 Without an orchard, without a tree
 Grows a fruit of rare delicacy.

....

Says Kabir; Hearken O, sages,
 On the path of supreme knowledge,
 By my master's grace
 The elephant comes and goes
 Through the needle's eye.

Fish Climbs to the Peaks /Sethi 480-81

Fish, a symbol of soul leaves its ordinary watery region to enjoy the spiritual heights and rabbit of the wood goes to the ocean of bliss. Paradoxical as they are: ordinary mind swollen with impurities like an elephant becomes so humble and small by God's grace that it passes through the needle. All such things happen as the fallen is raised by the divine grace; examples are found in scripture that by the grace of God a dumb becomes talkative, lame crosses the mountain.

How true it is then when Blake claims,
*And the desert wild
 Become a garden mild.*

The little girl lost /Innocence 45

Like storm the force of God realization cleans the heart and clears all debris of habits like thatched huts, making the devotee pure and strong in his being inviting the divine grace in the shape of rains after the storm and in that state man is established in relationship with God.

When falsehood and duplicity
 Fled from my body's house,
 I realized the Lord
 In all his glory.
 Rain came in torrents
 After the storm,
 Torrents of divine love
 That drenched this slave,
 Heart and soul.
 Then, O Kabir, emerged the sun,
 The glorious sun of Realization,
 The darkness faded away.

The Storm /Sethi 265-66

Kabir was famous for denying all paraphernalia of rituals and formalities in establishing relationship with the Lord. He never visited any temple, mosque or church.

What worth yoga and oblations,
What value penance and austerities,
What use almsgiving
If one has not realized
The Lord's Name.

The final accomplishment /Sethi 321

Religious rules often work as clogs on the path to spiritual ascendance of the devotee, working as snares rather than freeing him from reaching God. God is free and everywhere; not only in temples, mosques and churches, he is with the suffering humanity rather than in the palace of the King. Tagore wrote,

Whom dost thou
worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?...
come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!
Meet him
and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

Gitanjali 11 / Das 46

Swami Vivekananda too sang,
Ye fools! Who neglect the living God,
And His infinite reflections with which the world is full.
....
Him worship, the only visible!
Break all other idols!

The Living God /Other Poems 20

Surrendering at the feet of the divine and receiving its grace are the usual ways of a sadhaka. Kabir, a great devotee is no exception.

Where he likes to keep me,
There will I stay,
There will I act as I am directed.

Merging in His Order /Sethi 474

How the grace acts to uplift the seeker from a fallen state of lower nature is given below:

I was burning in the flame of desire,
He poured the elixir of devotion
And quenched the fire;
I became placid and cool.

The Bestower of Bliss /Sethi 402

A Vaishnav Poet of the eighth century, Andal, wished only God Krishna as her beloved. The legendary Radha was possessed by him whom Mira Bai of Rajasthan later aspired for. Mahadeviyakka, a twelfth century Bhakta poet, wanted Lord Siva in

the same vein to marry her. Kabir visualizes his marriage with the Lord which is the culmination of his intense love for the Lord as of Radha for Krishna.

I am smitten, my Master,
 With the love of your Name.
 Separation ceaselessly torments me,
 My heart aches in agony;

....

Afflicted with longing for you,
 I am without sleep, day and night.
 The Disciple's Yearning; Kabir Sangraha, 2:64:6 Sethi 484

Under the circumstances marriage is the best solution. Here the opposition of the saint poet to all rituals and traditions halts and he feels the ecstasy of marriage where the priest is God himself. The rituals in terms of the Vedic tradition come alive. The source of highest knowledge and wisdom, Veda is invoked here. This is one of the high pitched supreme voices of the seer-poet who feels fulfilled in marriage with the divine.

Sing, O brides, songs of joy and bliss;
 To my home has come my royal Bridegroom.
 In the lake within my body
 I'll set up the wedding altar;
 Brahma himself will chant
 Nuptial hymns from the Vedas.
 I'll circle the altar
 With my beloved Lord,
 And all the sages, gods and deities
 Will look on in wonder.

....

The Everlasting One
 Has wed me, O Kabir;
 And he is taking me Home with Him.

The Wedding /Sethi 530-31

And here are some pithy sayings in quatrains like Ruba'i that was preferred for the expression of brief mystical insights by the Sufi poets.

The Lord dwells within your body;
 Unaware; you roam in delusion
 Like the musk deer that roves about
 Sniffing every blade of grass.

Doha /Kabir Granthavali-64:3- Sethi 539

Like the iris within the eye
 Is the Lord within the body;
 The ignorant ones know it not-
 They search for him far and wide.

Doha /Kabir Granthavali-64:9- Sethi 540

Following short poems are echoes of the lore from Upanishad as we often find in Tagore's song: "*Eyes cannot see you, you are in the eyes.*"

Like oil in a sesame seed,
Like spark in a flint stone,
Your Lord resides within you;
Wake up, if you will,
And realize Him.

Kabir Sakhi Sangraha 106: 8 /Sethi 540

If I say He is one,
It is not so;
If I say He is two,
It is slander;
From his own knowledge
Proclaims Kabir;
He, the Lord is
What He is.

Bijak, Sakhi 120 /Sethi 543

Many things look like enigma, paradox and juxtaposition of heterogeneous things which are clear visions of Kabir who used all such terms as are parts of the ancient spiritual vocabulary in vogue at his time. The mystic visions and realizations are expressed in most of his poems but some are blessed with spiritual experiences. Most of the symbols used in poems are in tune with his deep rooted faith. Kabir's poems are the genuine expression of his love and devotion for the God. Often he confirms his intimacy and oneness with God. He declares,

"I have ascended the divine throne and met the Lord. God and Kabir have become one: no one can distinguish who is who." (Adi Granth, Asa, Kabirji. p.484. Sethi 39)

This declaration by Kabir brings us closer to similar utterances by some true Sufi poets who were equally averse to all religious rituals like Abu Yazdi al-Bestami the Persian Sufi of the late ninth century. "In one of his sayings one finds a striking parallel with the Upanisadic doctrine of *Tat twam asi...* Abu Yazdi's utterance *subhami ma a'zma sha'ni* (glory be to me, how great is my majesty) was considered as blasphemy, for which he was banished from his native place. Mansur Al-Hallaj was executed for similar offence, that of declaring *anal haq*, which looks like almost a verbatim translation of the Sanskrit *so'ham*."⁶

Hallaj confirmed the essential in direct terms,
I am he whom I desire, whom I desire is I:
we are two spirits dwelling in a single body.
If you see me, you have seen him,
*and if you see him, you have seen us.*⁷

Ameer Khusro wrote,
I become you,
You become me,⁸

We find that Sufi poets realized the same like Indian Bhakti poets; ultimate union with the God. A sufi calls himself the God: I am He. In Rumi also we find the echo of the same thing. Kabir declares it, Vivekananda affirms it. They did not copy one another but felt or realized the same truth at different times and places which the traditional ritual bound religions could not comprehend nor accept. Poets were punished for uttering the truth they realized. It is the punishment of difference between true spiritualism and traditional religion.

Still they utter the truth. It was repeated, even if one may say intellectually, by a recent poet, Syed Ameeruddin, living among us.

Thus, I visioned
Summits of illumined peaks
Of benign Nirvana
Aham Brahman, Anal Haq,
And touched a moment eternal
Breathing the divine light of bliss –
The Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Syed /Visioned Summit 156

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Poems

Aju Mukhopadhyay

Gratitude, Grateful, A Presence, Presence, I and Me, Do I walk or I walk Me?
Beyond the Finite Awareness, Beyond Wakefulness, Everywhere, The Being, The
King and the Artiste, A Prayer, The Burning Lamp, Silence, Image of a Rustic Girl,
Nuclear the Evil Force, Inwardness, Invisible Yet Perceptible, Flower of the Future
(19 poems)

Grateful

The body I was born with, the cover
The one I am living in, the shelter
In spite of some subtle differences they are the same;
Excitement, happiness and bereavements
All the relationship in between us,
Earthly creatures, are inevitable links
Which pass through it;
Want struggle hope failure and success on earth
Astronomical conditions of birth
Pending knots of family life
Childish innocence, youthful lust, prudence and strife
Flow through my veins, cause of my becoming
They are the cause of suffering and joy;
Through all these I have become
As they were from stage to stage;
None's to be blamed none's to be entirely relied upon.
From the beginning this is growing to become
To blossom like flower as ingrained in it.
All its urges for expression and expansion are in here
Helped to blossom by the coexisting presence
A witness ever present in its growth and decadence
That leads me through mind, life and body
Until It goes out and changes the sheath

Without loss, remorse or timidity.
This play of Sharira-Prana-Mana
Cannot be summarily dismissed as
As only a material existence;
Warm love and deep care of the divine lover
The true sustainer that leads me ever
Loves all and inspires the others to
Help me, love me and push me to victory
All that passing through my shelter has led me to glory.
I'm so grateful to all, to the source Real!
It is not miracle, not a scientific tale;
All these are tangible facts of life until
To the infinite it sails.

A Presence

An ever-awake presence in every heart
including that of the demon and the desert
in humans and animals in a state rudiment
in the bosom of the hazy and dark inconscient
in the dark cave, a spark of the supreme presence
carries in every matter a spiritual sense;
It is the cause why severe passion and violence
of the vital world, wave of advance of the forces adverse
cannot bring a catastrophe total
a total annihilation with a blow fatal
by creating a control somewhere in the deep
causing the face of the harmony to peep
and save the earth from threats diurnal
leading Nature to a state sempiternal.

Presence

neither near nor far
without a form or colour
you reign in me
sometimes with a flash
sometimes you brush
with an unnamed fragrant touch
a suggestion or vision regal
a hug beyond feeling
a cool breeze
serene love
peace from above;

through umpteen ways and means
 you come in different phase
 of life's seasons;
 you touch them who want
 show them your rupa human
 appear in the person revered
 and worshipped by man;
 mellow sweet song
 flowing river invisible
 a love a touch a fragrance a warmth
 to name you or see you I am not able
 as a being in heaven hell or earth

I and Me

In the dawn of my life I looked at Me
 From a cosy close-up length
 But the worldly wisdom kept us apart-
 Left to lurch in the Sun
 Lost in the many hued worldly illusion
 Oblivious of Me I went very far
 Though glancing at Me from time to time
 Keeping the time as in chime
 Face to face as in a transparent mirror
 While luffing the ship in the ocean of life
 Forever dreaming that the earth will burst open
 Sea will change in the most auspicious way
 A deep pinkish unearthly flower will bloom
 Containing the I and Me in its core.

When the birds fly past me
 To the unknown sky
 Rivers meander at long distance
 Wind does not break at my shore
 And silence makes me alone
 I see Me at a long distance:
 Coming closer I long to embrace
 As I wait for a shower of grace.

Do I Walk or I Walk Me?

Suddenly I stopped
 inspired by a questioning thought;
 am I walking or I'm walking me?

Am I a becoming or a being?
The whole system called I or he or she
is a cosmic reality
yet a thirst aided by insight
welled up from inside;
can this really walk or stalk
unless propelled and guided
by the inner reality?
Is walking an act of mine
or of the self indwelling?
Stunned by the divide of I and me
I was inclined to embrace the reality
when someone accosted me
asking for something otiose
which compelled me to come back
to the diurnal fact
bewildered!

Beyond the Finite Awareness

Inside the depth of absolute silence
Beyond the finite awareness
Beyond any controlling gear
Clad in embroidered roseate sari she appeared
But in a while her attire changed to pink only
Already pinkish her face became pink entirely
Her hands and body and everything about her
Complied with her pink order
Including the bunch of pink flowers swinging
Happily in the air smilingly;
Wellness and blessings emanating from her
She was seated majestically
Mother of profound love and grace;
On some rare moments the Lord appears
Seated in a chair
Permitting me to worship his feet.

Beyond Wakefulness

Venturing into the blue deep vast
With or without birds
Among the stars
Face to face with rising sun
With the cool peaceful moon

Or viewing the strange images unseen
 Happens when drowned in the unknown depth
 Without any trace of the wakeful being;
 Any effort to question, analyse or link
 Breaks the chain as to the mental plane they sink.

Everywhere

In the quiet darkness of the forest
 Forever I rest
 In the cloven cave of the tree
 Forever I am free
 For the warm nest of the bird
 Forever I have regard
 In the flowing current of the river
 In the healthiest heart of the tiger
 In the sweetest nectar of the flower
 In the busiest bosom of the war
 In the swiftest sword of the slayer
 Everywhere forever I am a player
 In the clamouring rays of the Sun
 Forever I return
 In the peaceful calmness of the moon
 In the hottest bed of the noon
 Between the land and sea I am the lagoon,
 In the innocent smile of the child
 I remain forever in every field
 In the vast body of the sky
 Everywhere forever moves this I.

The Being

Without a shape, formless
 without fragrance, odourless
 without colour, not even whiteness
 beyond all sound
 pure and profound
 light or darkness, nothing abound
 whatever and whomever most I adore
 is that absolute, the essence of all
 beyond any question of rise or fall.
 Vast and limitless without a shore
 with all sense; It I adore
 up to the last drop of my blood

overlapping all sense of regard
up to the last puff of breath
beyond all human strength;
with the last raft of mind to sail
I try to reach It and hail
though I know not
if to my call It will respond.

Such a Being
overwhelming
beyond all cognition
will fulfil me beyond all definition
if by chance I reach it
completing a full circuit.

The King and the Artiste

The big multicoloured crown
Topped by the sea-green ring
Tinged by the white circle around
Touched by crimson purfling
Together with the bright silver cover-
The complete crown was waiting
For the king to appear;
But the king would never appear to wear the crown
No one knows his name, he is of such renown.
Behold, hypnotized for an eternity,
The great creation on the western sky
With a beholden heart for the artistry;
But the colours faded soon rendering the crown dry
Unmoved the artist moved to the other corner of the sky
To create town and hill and river
With golden bricks and rocks of silver.

A Prayer

Let the flower-soft petals of your feet touch my chest
Let the fragrance of your lotus-presence perfume the rest
Let the ruby of your eyes illumine the depths of my being
Let the melody of your myriad sounds keep me vibrating
Let your rose-love smile delve deep into my soul
Let no mundane misguidance deviate me from my role
Let the glow of your being set aflame my heart
Let your sleepless care for the child keep me alert

Let this eager earth-bound tree
 Raise its hundred arms forever towards thee
 One day to reach the blue of the sky
 Overcoming the fear and hurdle and shy
 Let this worm-eaten life be a Sun-lit happy venture
 At your white-petalled feet with a joyous surrender.

The Burning Lamp

The lamp was burning golden-brown
 In my dark room steadily, alone
 No one was there around
 Flowers bloomed of a mystic hue
 Radiating my obscure chamber;
 When you came to light the lamp
 No one knew
 No tread, no flash, no sound.

Silence

Entering into silence why try to see an image?
 There is nothing in it, no sight
 Why try to burden it with words?
 It's beyond words
 Away from family and friends
 Apart from the mundane balance
 Thoughtless, depthless, soundless
 Infinite space, eternally free
 It cannot be filled in or emptied
 It's already full
 Most resourceful
 To the Self it's the door.
 In the face of an all covering silence
 Nothing remains but awareness
 Not exactly physical, sensual or mental
 Accessible to all, seemingly surreal;
 Plunging entirely into it
 Beyond I-ness, beyond Am-ness
 The real being emerges out of it
 It is the Consciousness, divine in essence
 It may give you the right vision right experience.

Image of a Rustic Girl

Who could bring dry wood
from the wood
once the rain would start
without an alert?
For fear of getting them on her head drenched
the wench ran under the darkest clouds overhead
gnashing their teeth giving alert
threatening her safe journey to homestead.
Steady and smart
quickly to come out of the wood
she ran faster than her mood.

It was nothing but a play
among the rain and the cloud
with the damsel and the wood;
but she was an elf, gossipmongers say.

Nuclear the Evil Force

Those who were wiped out from the earth scene instantly
Due to the dropping of atom bombs wantonly
Had their sufferings mitigated by God's bounty
Even before they guessed it at Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Trailed by Nibakusha who carried their maimed existence
Or carry still the poison of human munificence.
The evil of nuclear fission continued
To predate its victims in Chernobyl and Fukushima;
The nuclear plant for any sane use like power generation
Innocently proliferates as a prelude
To further destruction of our age old civilization.
It is the irony of our fate and age, the result of our megalomaniac Karma
But Karma may be uplifted by human wisdom
To defeat the evils of life like nuclear fission
To keep high the flag of human freedom.

Inwardness

Living in society helping the needy
Busy with friends and relatives, wild and greedy
Arguing in every issue, debating in groups
Gleeful, bavard or shy, living in a family
Popular or unpopular, criminal or honest;

This is at our best living outside.
 Vibrant even when retired or ostracized
 We still live in market place in our memories
 In the company of onlookers
 With our colleagues, friends or rivals
 Of the time past in bitter-sweet taste
 In erotic sense, with pain or pleasure
 With fear of the unknown, hope for the future;
 Alone yet in company, we still live outside.

But with an intuitive glimpse when we live
 Without all cherished guests of life
 When all dreams and reverie wing past our life
 Not in haste or turmoil but calmly,
 When a voiceless, guiltless hush settles;
 Neither pleasing nor bitter
 In impeccable atmosphere serene
 Under the graceful serenity;
 May be that it is time for going inside.

Invisible yet Perceptible

Age is pushing them below with feet
 as they try to rise from the subconscious deep
 the relationship; physical vital mental
 heterosexual or asexual or obscure camaraderie
 passionate quagmire from the oblivious memory.
 On one hand something invisible
 yet protective and perceptible
 is trying to pull you out of the rusty rustic past
 purging you out of the iron base
 from moment to moment
 for life is meant for correction at each step;
 on the other hand something shining
 is trying to emerge out of the mud,
 the past holding the key is pulling
 the legs towards the sludge;
 a claim of birth to hold life in its sphere till death.
 All the strife and struggle are ephemeral
 against a flight eternal;
 a reward for one who believes and relies on grace
 of the invisible yet perceptible existence.
 There may be changes in the world contemporary

resulting in a situation topsyturvy
but to hold on to that something;
a spiritual spark in the being
is the game of all games
a winsome play between the light and the darkness.

Flower of the Future

Unknown and uncertain
Are the results
Of the mystic bud
Blooming unseen
While shimmering hope
Is rising up
From the luminous vast
That the flower of the future
In harmony with Nature
For a Divine purpose
Has been opening its petals
From ages far behind
Towards a time
Peaceful and glorious.

AJAY KUMAR SINGH

Poetry of Saint Kabir

Kabir is one of the foremost poets of the Saint Poets tradition of India. His language is a mixture of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Avadhi, Bhojpuri and many other dialects of Hindi. There are many views on the date/ year of birth and death of Kabir. He most probably lived in Kasi (Benaras) between the late fourteenth century and mid fifteenth century. He is known to have wandered a lot. He moved to Maghar to die there.

Kabir was brought up by a childless Muslim couple by name Neeru and Neema. He had no formal education or initiation by any Guru. He was self-taught.

Let us approach Kabir's poetry under some traditional heads.

Brahman (The Supreme Reality)

Though Kabir is said to be illiterate, he had self-knowledge. It appears he had knowledge of contemporary religious and spiritual schools of thought. He has said of his poetry –

Don't think it is a mere song
This is my view of the ultimate reality.

His Brahman is formless, nirgun (without attributes), unseen, unexpressable, beyond touch etc. He is unique. He is thinner than the fragrance of the flower. He is eternal.

In the beginning was He alone, sufficient unto himself:
The formless, colourless, and unconditioned Being.
Then was there neither beginning; middle, nor end;

Then there was no activity:
The Supreme Being remained merged
In the unknown depths of his own self.

But he is omnipresent
He is the world, world is He, He dwells all hearts.

The creature is in Brahman and Brahman is in the creature;
They are ever distinct yet ever united.
He Himself is in tree, the seed and the germ.
He Himself is the flower, the fruit, and the shade.
He Himself is the Sun the light and the lighted.
He Himself is the Brahman, creature and Maya (Illusion)

Kabir repudiates the difference between nirgun and sagun, the form and the formless, he Truth is different from everything. The words nirgun and sagun are its expenses.

Kabir calls Him by various names like – Vishnu, Rama, Govinda, Khuda, Allah, Karim, Rahim, Mahadev, Sidha etc. But Kabir talks against avatars (incarnation) and says that his Rama was never born as a son of Dasaratha or Fish (Masyavatar) or Tortoise (Kurmaavatara) etc.

In the end Kabir says that Brahman cannot be described in words
O, how may I ever express that secret word?
If I say He is within me, the universe is falsified
If I say He is without me, it is falsehood
He makes the inner and outer world to be indivisibly one;
The conscious and the unconscious, both are His foot stools.
He is neither manifest nor hidden;
He is neither revealed nor unrevealed;
There are no words to tell that which He is.

MAYA (Illusion)

Kabir's Maya resembles the Prakriti of the Sankhya. She is the creative force. She is herself unmanifest but is the mother of all that is manifest. The Three gunas are her helpers. She binds the Jiva (Individual Soul) with Kama (desire), anger, pride, selfishness, envy, attachments etc., because of which Jiva forgets its true nature. It is near impossible to get rid of her. Everybody – Keshava, Shiva (gods), priests, kings, yogis, bhaktas (devotees) are under her sway –

Maya is the lamp, man the insect,
The fool repeatedly falling into the flame,
Kabir says that rarely one or two can get over Maya with the Guru's grace.
He says
The apparent Maya can be shunned by many
But it is difficult to get rid of the subtle one –
It is the subtle maya, that is eating everybody,
The prophet, the Auliya.

Jiva (Individual Soul)

Jiva is, in fact, Brahman like the waves are the river
 The river and its waves are one,
 Where is the difference between the river and its waves?
 When the waves rise, it is water;
 and when it falls, it is the same water again
 Tell me sir, where is the difference?
 Because it has been named as wave
 Shall it no longer be considered as water?
 Within the Supreme Brahman, the worlds are being told like beads:
 Look at that rosary with the eyes of wisdom

The pitcher in the water
 The water in the pitcher
 Water within and without
 When the pitcher broke
 The water merged with the water
 O wise one, tell about this Truth.

The Path

Kabir is described as a Jnanamargi, the one who searches for the ultimate truth through knowledge/wisdom. But it is impossible to put him in any one category. He is rational as well as Bhaktha, a devotee. It appears that in the beginning, Kabir had walked on the path of difficult and complex practice of Hathayoga. In many of his utterances there are references to 5 Pranas, 16 Centres, 21 nadis, 72 rooms, the union of Trikut, Poorak, Rechak, Kumbhak, Dhauti, Neti, 10 doors etc., which are all technical terms used in the Hathayoga. Later he drops these dry practices and criticizes the extremes –

Kabir, those who follow the middle path
 In no time they reach the other shore
 But by clinging to the extremes
 The world (people) is sinking the midway.

He makes fun of the showy so called yoga practices. He turns more towards Bhakti. But his bhakti is not the traditional one. It is his own –

O Sadhu! the simple union is the best
 Since the day when I met with the Lord,
 There has been no end to the sport of our love.
 I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears,
 I do not mortify my body,
 I see with eyes open and smile
 And behold His beauty everywhere:
 Whatever I say becomes His name,
 Whatever I hear becomes His remembrance,
 Whatever I do becomes his worship

Wherever I go becomes His pradakshina (circumulations)
When I lie down, it is sashtanga dandavat (prostration) to Him

How simple! but it requires absolute purity. It is bhakti of attitude, bhakti of surrender, rather than bhakti of rituals. It is a difficult path, not easy as some would assume_

The path of bhakti is very subtle.
There has to be desirelessness,
There has to be complete merger with the feel of the Lord

In the services of the Lord,
You have to offer your head without a moment's delay.

Kabirsays bhakti is like extremely fine (1000 count) White cloth, it does not take any dirt.

Kabir has given a lot of importance to the body. It is through the body that one has to reach the God. According to him nothing from without is necessary –

The moon shines in my body
But my blind eye cannot see it.
The moon is within me, and so is the Sun.
The unstruck drum of Eternity is sounded within me;

But my deaf ears cannot hear it.
So long as man clamours for the I and the mine
His work are as naught:
When all the love of I and the mine is dead.
Then the work of the Lord is done
The musk is in the deer, but it seeks not within itself,
It wanders in quest of grass.

Grass of momentary wordly pleasures.

Guru

(The teacher) plays a crucial role in the whole process. Without Guru nothing can be achieved. We know the famous couplet in which when faced with the choice of touching the feet of Guru or Govind (the God) both of whom are standing before Kabir, he first chooses the Guru. At another place Kabir says –

I was following the tradition and the Vedas
Then I met the Guru who gave me the real lamp.

But he also warns us against the fake Gurus and says that if a blind takes another blind for Guru, the blind will push the blind and both are sure to fall into the well.

The Experience (Spiritual)

What does the realization mean? Kabir says –

Simply and slowly but slowly and steadily
 Everything dropped; son, wealth, maya (illusion), kama (desire)
 One (the individual Soul) merged in the One (the one and the only supreme reality)
 The slave Kabir and his Rama.

Or

I have observed for long and O friend Kabir is wonderstruck
 The drop has merged in the ocean, how can it be seen.

He exclaims –

The redness of my Red, wherever I see it is Red
 I went to see the redness, I too became the Red
 (The formless original intelligent substance).

And according to Kabir this can be tried and achieved through purity of heart (intensions) and purity of heart and purity of deeds rather than anything else.

Mysticism

The spiritual experiences find expression in mystic utterances, like this one –

The sweetness rains incessantly in the sky-cave
 Without the instrument there is jungling there,
 You listen only when you pay attention
 Without pond the lotus blooms there
 And the swan sorts in the pond
 Without moon there is moon light

This bliss and peace is the result of purity, selflessness and surrender. This also leads to harmony with oneself and the world. This is Kabir's enlightenment.

At many places the mystic utterances are even more apparently contradictory –

Brother I saw a wonder
 The lion is grazing cows
 First son was born then came the mother
 The Guru touches disciples's feet
 The ocean's fish climb on the tree
 The cock caught and gobbled the cat

It helps to understand what Kabir is saying if, for example, we know that the lion here can be signifier of man's mind while cows signify desires. It will be a good idea to try and explain to ourselves the real meanings of other words in this verse, it can be very revealing, satisfying and inspiring.

Love

Love is predominant idea in Kabir's poetry. It is pre-requisite of attainment of any purity. Love is necessary for wading through the world and no spiritual progress is possible without love. In Kabir we find brilliant flashes of Ishq Mazazi (Worldly love) and Ishq Haqueeqi (Love of The Truth). By worldly love we do not mean love of enjoyment of worldly things. It means love as a tool to mend our worldly affairs.

Kabir says –

The heart that does not throb with love is like a cremation ground. It is like the blacksmith's bellow which breathes thou it is not alive.

He declares –

Thousands have by reading books but getting no wiser
But the one who has understood the two and a half letters of love
Becomes a wise person.

Kabir's poetry is full of his intense love for God. A few examples follow-

Come into my eye, I shall hide you within my eyes.
I shall not see anyone else, nor shall I allow others to see you

I made my eyes the room, the isiris is the bed
Shutting the curtain of the eyelids, I won the love of my Lord

I shall write letters to the beloved, If He were in some other country
He is in my body, in mind, in eyes, What message shall I send to him.

Internalisation

Kabir discarded all outside rituals and internalized the path, the practices and the experiences. He said –

Everything is false without self knowledge
Be it Mathura, be it Kashi (the places of pilgrimage)

The yogi dyes his garments, instead of dyeing his mind
In the colour of love.
He sits within the temple, leaving Brahman, to worship a stone.
And Kazi (the Muslim priest) reads the book (the Quran) his whole life.
Without ever realizing The Truth.

Kabir boldly declares –

If the Khuda resides only in the mosque,
Then who does the outside country belong to?
If Rama lives in the stone image in the temple,
Who looks after the outside world?

Rebellious Traits

There are strong rebellious traits in Kabir particularly on the social front. There is strong and direct social concern in Kabir. He tried to expose the superficial difference between Hindus and Muslims. In the process he boldly made fun of the un-essentials/ falsehood in the practices of both the sects. For example –

They collected stones and rubble and made a mosque.
Climbing that the Mulla gives a cock-crow,
Has the Khuda gone deaf?

Similarly he asks Hindus that if by having bath in Ganga you get realization, then why are the fish and frogs living in Ganga not all realized souls? He also says.

It is all ordinary water in the pilgrim centers.
Nothing happens, I have had baths and seen this.

If by worshipping the stone you get Hari (the God)
I am prepared to worship the mountain
Otherwise this flour stone is better
Which people can use to grind the grains

He declares –

People diecounting the beads
But the mischief in the mind remains
Drop the beads from the hand
And count the beads of the mind.

It is obvious that it is mental purity which will lead to other types of purities.

Kabir firmly believes in one God –
Where can two Lords of the world come from
Tell me who has deluded you
He is one and makes himself called
Allah, Rama, Karima, Keshava, Hazarat.

And look at this one-

Kaba is actually Kashi and Rama Rahim
When the thick flour (gross) becomes fine powder (subtle)
Kabir partakes and enjoys it.

So, it is all a question of subtlety. Subtlety of understanding. Refinement. Born out of purity of body, mind and soul. Only then can one join Kabir in saying –

Mind is Mathura, Heart is Dwarika
Body you understand to be Kashi
Or,
Make your mind your Mecca,
Your body, the Ka'aba-,
Yourself itself is the Supreme Master.
Pilgrimage without understanding is of no use.

Practical Wisdom

Kabir's poetry is full of practical wisdom. In North Indian villager, even illiterate labourers you will find appropriately quoting Kabir to describe, understand and the guidance in day today situations. A few examples –

You must speak in such a manner losing all pride in your mind
That your speech should be a balm for others
And be a balm to you too.
If we do that most frictions in human relationships can be avoided.

At another place he advises-
Your critic you must always keep nearby
If need be sheltering him in your courtyard.
Without soap, without water, he will clean your nature.

Kabir says the company of good people
Is like company of a scent seller
Even if you buy nothing,
You get the fragrance anyway.

Rasa (aesthetic emotions), Alankara (Figures of speech), Metre, Language etc.,

As we have seen, Kabir effortlessly invokes almost all rasas. Particularly Adbut (wonderment) and Shringar, both Viyoga (separation) and Sanyog (union) rasas are found in abundance in his poetry. Use of wonderful symbols, images and metaphors can be seen everywhere. Almost all Alankaras are also found without any extra effort on the part of Kabir. We are not going into details here. Then as far as language is concerned, the great Hindi scholar Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has called him the dictator of language. He uses it as he pleases, Words of Rajasthani, Punjabi, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Bundelkhandi, Urdu, Brij are amalgamated to give out a heady brew. Scholars have also recognized and arranged his poetry according to Hindusthani Ragas (melodic moods). For example, Kabir's padas are arranged in the Guru Granth Sahib of the Sikhs according to ragas. Some of the ragas found in Kabir's poetry are –

Raga Siri, Gowdy, Sorathi, Tilanga, Ramkali, Kedar,
Bhairava, Kalyan, Asavari, Sarang etc.,

You may have heard some of them rendered by M.S. Subbalaxmi or Pt. Onkarnath Thakur or Kumar Gandharva or Abida Begum and many other Sufi singers of Pakistan or even playback singer Mukesh.

Conclusion

Just a glance at the poetry of Kabir shows us that he was one of the fiercest critic of meaningless religious rituals of both Hindus and Muslims and advocate of integrity and purity of aacharana (character). He is one of the best examples of syncretic Indian culture. His boldness is remarkable, he is open minded in his attitudes. Influences of various traditions can be seen in him in various degrees. He is known to have association with many Sufis of his time. This influence can be seen in his poetry. So, much so that Kabir is treated by many as a Sufi poet. He certainly is one but at the same time he cannot be contained in any one category alone.

I think it would be appropriate to conclude this piece with a quotation from Nabhadras, a later Ramanandi medieval saint poet –

Kabir didn't honour the world's conventions,
such as caste, the four stages of life, the six philosophical systems.

He sang of a faith that opposed bhakti as a non-faith.
He showed that yoga, ritual sacrifice, fasting and charity were trivial and base
without the practice of devotional worship.
His remains, shabdas, and sakhis are the truth about Hindus and Muslims.
His words didn't belong to a faction:
what he said was good for everybody.

SURESH CHANDRA PANDE

Indian Philosophy, Spiritualism and the Vedanta

The sub-continent of India has a complex set of philosophical systems. So much so that there appears a lot of antipathy, unvarying animosity wide spread in the western world as each one seems to vie for understanding the real purport of Indian philosophy. Traditionally, Indian Philosophy has been divided into Orthodox and Heterodox or Unorthodox schools of thought. The orthodox Hindu philosophy includes six major thought systems – Vaisheshika, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and Vedanta or Uttara Mimamsa. These six systems of philosophy are said to have been founded by sages – Kanaada, Gautama, Kapila, Patanjali, Jaimini and Vyasa respectively. Still, these philosophies invite scholarly discourse in and across the country. Besides, the five major heterodox schools of Indian philosophy include – Jain, Buddhist, Ajivika, Ajnana and Charvaka. There are many more minor systems which divide Indian philosophy into sixteen schools of thought. Out of these schools some survived and are still surviving while many others got extinct after a wee little stint of sunshine. All these philosophical texts provide enough of discussion and material on ontology, epistemology, axiology and etymology.

The orthodox schools of Indian philosophy originally called *Sanatana Dharma* are labeled collectively as *Hinduism*. There are no two opinions about it. To be obvious, *Hinduism* in modern times comprises the above mentioned six systems of philosophy and theology.

Vaisheshika

Expounded by Maharshi Kanaad Vaisheshika in itself is a distinct school of Indian philosophy. It is the only realistic/ objective philosophy concerning the universe that explores all objects of physical world as things reducible to a finite number of atoms-Parmanu together with Brahman as the fundamental force to infuse life and consciousness into these atoms. Concurrently, all objects of physical universe are believed to be composed of five elements – earth, water, air, fire and ether together with five subtle co-ordinate elements – smell, sound, sight, taste and touch. These 10 when in complete accord with five sense organs acts as offerings to the holy spirit for igniting the symbolic lamp. The flame rises from base of the spine to the head above

to represent elliptical movement of nature and spirit through spinal stairways. This is what we popularly know as microcosmic mystic power center.

Accordingly living beings are rewarded or punished as per the absolute law of Karma. The Vaisheshika thus expounds a significant characteristic of Indian thought prevalently known as naturalism. Later on significant commentaries were also written by Prashastapada, Udayanacharya and Sridhara. However, in due course of time in 11th century the Vaisheshika school fused entirely with the Nyaya school and thereafter the combined school was referred to as Nyaya-Vaisheshika. All the same, it preserved amiably epistemological, soteriological and metaphysical differences. (2). In brief Vaisheshika postulates that our experiences are derived from *Dravya*-substance, *Guna*-quality, *Karma* – activity, *Samanya*-commonness, *Vishesh*-particularity and *Samavaya*-inherence. The first three have a real objective existence and the last three are products of intellectual discrimination. There are nine classes of substances – *Dravyas*. Some of which are non-atomic, some atomic and others all pervasive. The non-atomic ground is formed by space-time duo. These are unitary so indestructible. The other four earth, water, fire and air are atoms composed of indivisible and indestructible components. Self is omnipresent and eternal. The mind too is eternal but of atomic dimension so is infinitely small. Besides there are 17 *Gun*-qualities listed as *Rupa*-form, *Rasa*-taste, *Gandha*-smell, *Sparsha*-touch, *Sankhya*-number, *Parimana*-size, *Prithaktva*-separateness, *Samyoga*-conjunction, *Vibhaga*-disjunction, *Paratva*-remoteness, *Aparatva*-nearness, *Buddhi*-judgement, *Sukha* – pleasure, *Dukha*-pain, *Ichchha*-desire, *Dvesha*-aversion, *Prayatna*-effort. These *Gun*-qualities are either physical or psychological. Two atoms combine to form a binary molecule – *Dvyanuka*. Two, three, four or more *Dvyanukas* combine into grosser molecules of *Tryanuka*, *Chaturanuka* and so on. Atoms possess an incessant vibratory motion. The activity of the atoms and their combinations are not arbitrary but are based on laws that are expressed as the-*Adrishta*-invisible or supersensible force. The Vaisheshika written in aphoristic style-Sutras, present its theories on creation and existence of the universe by using naturalistic atomism, by applying logic and realism thus is one of the earliest known systematic realist ontology in human history. Quite unlike the introductory texts of Hindu Philosophy, God does not find mention in the Sutras, therefore, the texts are non-theistic. The critical edition of Vaisheshika Sutras are divided into ten chapters. The first deals with the definitions of *Dharma* and the importance of the Vedas. The second presents five substances with respective theories of Perception and Inference. In the third chapter Kanaada states his premises about the self-*Atman* and its validity. The fourth chapter discusses the body and its adjuncts. The fifth defines and discusses *Yoga* and *Moksha* asserting that *Atma-Saksatkara*-Self-knowledge is the means for spiritual liberation. In the sixth chapter *Virtue-Punya* and *Sin-Papa* are examined both as moral precepts and as discussed in the Vedas and the Upanishads. The seventh chapter discusses qualities and measurements. The 8th chapter dwells on nature of cognition and reality. In 9th Kanaada discusses epistemology, particularly

the nature of perception, inference and human reasoning process. In the last ultimate chapter Kanaada's text focuses on Soul, its attributes and threefold causes.

Nyaya

Nyaya philosophy expounded by Aksapada Gautama states that nothing is acceptable unless it is in accordance with reason and experience. So it stands for a technique of logical thinking and reasoning. Accordingly there are four means of attaining valid knowledge – Perception, Inference, Comparison and Verbal testimony. Invalid knowledge includes – Memory, Doubt, Error and Hypothetical reasoning. However, the most important contribution of this school of thought is its methodology based on the system of logic. In original form Nyaya is both philosophical and religious. It's ultimate concern being an end of human suffering ensuing from ignorance of reality. It's principal text is Nyaya Sutras. The Nyaya theory of causation defines a cause as an unconditional and invariable antecedent of an effect. An effect does not pre-exist in its cause. Three kind of causes are distinguished.

1. Samavayi-Material cause exemplified by the thread of the cloth.
2. Asamavayi-refers to the colour of the cloth or that which gives colour to the cloth. It is therefore known as non-inherent cause.
3. Nimitta – the efficient cause exemplified by the weaver who weaves the cloth. God is not the material cause of the universe because atoms and souls are also eternal rather is an efficient cause.

Early Naiyayikas wrote very little about Ishwara-the supreme soul. Evidences available so far suggest that early Nyaya scholars were non-theistic or atheists. Later on and over times, Nyaya scholars tried to apply epistemological insight and methodology to the question – Does God exists? Some offered arguments in favour others against. A literal interpretation of the texts of Nyaya school seems to have rejected the need of a God for the efficacy of human activity. However, Udayana's-Nyayakusumanjali gave following arguments to prove the existence of creative God.

1. KARYAT: The world is an effect. All effects have efficient cause. Hence efficient cause is God.
2. AYOJANAT: Atoms are inactive. Nothing moves without intelligence. What moves the atom is intelligence source. That intelligence source is God.
3. DHRTYADEH: What supports and sustains the world is an unseen principle called ADRSTA. This invisible intelligent that is behind all is God.
4. PADAT: Each word has meaning and represents an object. This representational power of words has a cause. That cause is God.
5. PRATYAYATAH: The Vedas are infallible. Human beings are fallible. Infallible Vedas cannot have been authored by fallible human beings. Someone authored and that someone is God.

6. SHRUTEH: The Vedas testify the existence of God. Hence God exists.
7. VAKYAT: Moral laws are divine. Divine injunctions and prohibitions come from divine creator of laws. That creator is God.
8. SAMKHYAVISESAT: By rules of perception and inferences consciousness grows. The ability to conceive numerically must depend on something. That something is divine consciousness. So God must exist.
9. ADRSTA: It means unforeseen. An unseen power keeps a balance sheet of the merits and demerits. Since unseen power is unintelligent it needs an intelligent guide to supervise the work. This guide is God.

Thus the offerings of Nyaya aphorisms dictate that true knowledge leads to the nacre of liberation. Moreover, God's grace is essential for obtaining true knowledge.

That is why, the first Sutra succinctly asserts that perfection is attained by correct knowledge. The nature of correct knowledge and its truthfulness can be gained by the help of sixteen categories given below: 1. Praman: It means right knowledge. 2. Prameya: It means object of right knowledge. 3. Samsaya: It is doubt. 4. Prayojana: It means purpose. 5. Drstanta: It stands for a familiar instance. 6. Siddhanta: It is an established tenet. 7. Avayava: It also stands for members of an inference. 8. Tarka: It means reasoning. 9. Nirnaya: It means ascertainment or results. 10. Vada: It stands for discussion. 11. Jalpa: It stands for sophistic disputations. 12. Vitanda: It means cavil. 13. Hetvabhasa: It means fallacies. 14. Chala: It is for quibbles. 15. Jati: It means futile rejoinders. 16. Nigrahasthna: It means methods of losing an argument. The ultimate purpose being Salvation, complete freedom from pain can be attained by the right knowledge of the above mentioned. As far as syllogism is related Gautama prescribes five member syllogism – 1. Pratijna: It means a statement that which is to be proved. 2. Hetu-statement of reason. 3. Udaharana – statement of a general rule supported by an example. 4. Upanaya – application of the rule of this case. 5. Nigamana – the conclusion. Thus the characteristic feature of Nyaya syllogism (3) is its insistence on the example which suggests that the Nyaya logicians wanted to be assured not only of formal validity but also of material truth too. Five kinds of fallacies-Hetu, are distinguished. 1st is the inconclusive which leads to more conclusions than one. 2nd is contradictory which opposes that which is to be established. 3rd is the controversial which provokes the very question that it is meant to settle. 4th is counter question which itself is unproved and the 5th is mistimed – Kalatita, which is when the time in which it might hold good does not apply. Another philosophical thesis stated in the Sutras is relation of Words to their meaning. A word means neither the bare individual nor the universal but all the three – the individual, the universal and structure or AKRITI of the word.

Samkhya

Samkhya or Sankhya is a Sanskrit word when transliterated literally, context-wise it means to reckon, count, enumerate, calculate, deliberate, reason, reasoning by

numeric enumeration, relating to number and rational. Being the third Astika school of Hindu philosophy, it has its peculiar influence on other schools for it refers to systematic enumeration and rational examination. Samkhya is an enumeration philosophy and its epistemology accepts three out of six *Pramanas* – proofs, as the only reliable means of gaining knowledge. These three include *Pratyaksa*-perception. *Anumana*-inference and *Sabda*-word / testimony of reliable spokesperson. Samkhya is traditionally viewed as a theistic philosophy as it accepts the authority of the Vedas. It adopts a consistent ontological dualism of matter and spirit. This school assumes the existence of two bodies, a temporal body and a body of subtle matter that persists after biological death. The body of subtle matter consists of the higher functions of *Buddhi*-consciousness, *Ahamkara*-I-consciousness, *Manas*-mind as coordinator of sense impressions and *Prana*-breath that is the principle of vitality.

Samkhya philosophy thus regards the universe as consisting of two independent realities – *Purusha* (Consciousness) and *Prakrti* (Matter). These two realities exist parallel without affecting each other. *Jiva* (Living Being) is a state in which *Purusha* is bonded to *Prakrti* in some form. This fusion, Samkhya scholars believe, lead to the emergence of *Buddhi* (Intellect) and *Ahamkara* (Ego). The mind and the thoughts that appear and reappear are also considered a part of *Prakrti*. The universe is described as one created by *purusha-prakrti* entities infused with various combinations of variously enumerated elements-senses, feelings, activity and mind. The existence of God or Supreme Being is considered non-relevant by Samkhya philosophers. So much so that Paul Deussen and many others regard Sankhya as an atheistic philosophy. It is not true because scholars like Radhanath Phukan regard Samkhya as equally theistic as Yoga.

In Samkhya *Purusha* (4) is ubiquitous, all conscious, all pervasive, motionless, unchangeable, immaterial and without desire. *Prakrti* is the universal and subtle nature determined by time and space. The chain of evolution begins when *Purusha* impinges on *Prakrti* to the extent that a magnet draws iron savings to itself. Besides these there are three primal qualities of matter called *Gunas*. They make up the *Prakrti* and are further important principally as physio-psychological factors. The first is *Tamas*-darkness, which stands for obscurity, ignorance and inertia. The second is *Rajas*-passion, which is energy, emotion and expansiveness, The highest is *Sattva* – goodness, which means illumination, enlightenment and knowledge. To these correspond personality types such as – to *Tamas* comes ignorant and lazy persons, to *Rajas* impulsive and passionate ones and to *Sattva* comes already enlightened and serene persons. Some 19th and 20th century scholars suggest that Samkhya may have non-vedic origin. Richard Garbe – a Christian missionary in 1898 advocated that India had regions less influenced by Brahminism. Samkhya philosophy likewise in its essence is not only atheistic but also inimical to Vedas. According to Dandekar and more recent scholars – Samkhya in its origin is pre-vedic and non-Aryan thought complex. However, there are scholars like Surendranath Das Gupta who as early as 1922 displayed disagreement by conforming to the fact that the origin of Samkhya

may have its roots deeply embedded in Upanishads such as – Katha Upanishad, Shvetashvatara Upanishad and Maitrayaniya Upanishad. Similarly Arthur Keith in 1925 said that Samkhya owes its origin to the vedic–upanishadic-epic heritage is quite evident as it is naturally derived from / out of the speculations in the Vedas, Brahmanas, and the Upanishads. Johnston in 1937 also analyzed the then available Hindu texts for tracing the origin of Samkhya philosophy and confirmed that this philosophy owes its origin to Brahmanas and Upanishads. Chandradhar Sharma in 1960 affirmed that Samkhya in the beginning was based on the theistic absolute of the Upanishads, but later on it rejected theistic monism and was content with spiritualistic pluralism and atheistic realism. More recent scholars like Ruzsa in 2006 and Anthony Warder in 2009 also traced its origin to the vedic era. Mikel Burley in 2012 suggests that Samkhya and Yoga are roots of evolutionary thoughts ingrained in the soil of Vedic India. Notwithstanding the controversy and antagonism Acharya Kapila, his disciple Asuri and Panchshikha unanimously are supposed to be creators and initiators of Samkhya school of Hindu philosophy. Rishi Kapila is considered a Vedic sage estimated to have lived in 6th century. George Williams states that Kapila lived long before the composition of epics and Puranas and his name was co-opted in various later composed mythologies. The Narada Purana States that Kapila was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Other Puranas such as Bhagvata, Brhmanda, Padma, Skanda, Vishnu along with Valmiki Ramayana affirm the same thesis by calling Kapila, Vishnu himself who descended on earth to disseminate true knowledge. The commentary on Sankhya Sutra also mentions Kapila as the founder of Samkhya and an individual as an incarnation of Vishnu. Whatsoever may be the origin, the book 3 of the Bhagavata Purana tells that Kapila was the son of Kardama Prajapati who wedded Devhuti as his wife. The Bhagavata Purana narrates that once at the bank of river Saraswati, Lord Vishnu advised Kardama to marry Devhuti and blessed him by telling that He Himself will be born as their own son. Besides, there are so many legends in the subsequent Puranas that it becomes truly difficult to assimilate all within the short span of this article.

Yoga

Yoga is the 4th major orthodox school of Hinduism. Ancient, Medieval and most of the Modern literature is beset with Yoga school of Indian philosophy. Most of the scholars admit that Samkhya is the theory and Yoga is the practice. Thus Samkhya and Yoga are closely knit together. The systematic study of Yoga aims to better oneself physically, mentally and spiritually. Besides, has largely influenced all other schools of Indian Philosophy. However unlike Samkhya, Yoga school of Hinduism incorporates a personal deity or God. Side by side organized techniques, practices and experimentations steadily lead to liberation called Moksha. So Yoga is also favoured as an experimental mysticism. The roots of Yoga could be located to as early as Rig-Veda where we see the sage in deep meditation by having complete control over his mind and intelligence, dedicating in devotion to the rising sun-

Savitur. By having calm, concentrated and composed temperament one perceives the self-Atman within oneself. The practice of such stands later became part of yoga school and are found in plenty in Brihadaranyak and Chandogya Upanishads. Katha Upanishad clearly states – when mind with thoughts and five senses stand still, power of intellect and reason does not waver, is truly a state of being in Yoga. It is not thoughtless and heedless sluggishness but splendor of creation/dissolution in its entirety.

Yoga school of Hindu philosophy though closely linked to Samkhya differs largely in its foundational concepts of Purusha and Prakriti. The Purusha is defined as that reality which is pure consciousness and is devoid of thoughts or qualities, while the Prakriti is the empirical, phenomenal reality which includes matter, and also mind. The yoga differs from samkhya in its views on ontology of Purusha, on axiology and on soteriology too. The metaphysics of Yoga considers consciousness and matter, self / soul and body as two different realities. To be unequivocal Yoga is a way of life. Instead of being a religion, it is a beautiful science bringing the mind, the body and the soul together into a unified whole. (6) This science for practical purposes has been split into five major portions: (i) Proper exercise: It includes physical exercises and postures called Asanas. Asanas are gentle stretches which help in lubricating the joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments and other parts of the body. These also help in improving blood circulation, release of tension, increase in flexibility and tone the nervous system. Asanas also help in calming down the mind by bringing equanimity. (ii) Pranayama: It means proper breathing exercise. Particularly because our modern age is an age of disordered and mismanaged lifestyles. Improper and shallow breathing habits generate from inside unsolicited diseases. All the cells and tissues in our bodies survive on oxygen. The inadequate supply of oxygen infectiously germinate many diseases inadvertently. The exercise of deep inhalation and exhalation of breath keeps our respiratory system devoid of all harmful toxics and further provides an abundance of oxygen to keep cells and tissues healthy. Pranayama not only purifies breathing system but also connects the body to Solar-plexus where tremendous potent energy is stored. (iii) Savasana means proper relaxation. In this age of restlessness and constant motion, proper relaxation necessarily demands to form a part of regular exercise so as to recharge, enhance and rejuvenate our body and mind. (iv) Proper diet and nutrition is another requirement for keeping our body and mind fit and healthy. What we eat has a subtle impact on our health and wellbeing. Prescribed Yogic diet help enhancing both the mind and the body. (v) Positive Thinking and Meditation: Our mind is what drives our body. When we shift our attention from negative thoughts to positive thoughts it changes our perception of the world around us. Along with positive thinking incorporating a regular meditation course helps to keep our mind attentive, agile and clear. The Ashtanga yoga of Sage Patanjali renovated by Rishi Ramdeva now a days is gaining world-wide grounds. Notwithstanding, Patanjali for practical purposes, has classified classical Yoga into eight parts called-Ashtanga Yoga in his treatise-Yoga Sutra. This

eightfold path of Patanjali's Yoga consists of a set of prescriptions for a morally disciplined and purposeful life. The eight limbs defined by him are as below.

1. **YAMAS:** Simply Yama means abstinence. In broader perspective Yamas are ethical rules in Hinduism and mainly known as moral imperatives-do's and don'ts. The first imperative is Ahimsa-non-harming other living beings. Another is Satya – truthfulness or non-falsehood. Asteya is the third – it means non-stealing. Brahmacharya is chastity, marital fidelity and sexual restraint. Aparigraha is the fifth tenet which means non-avarice, non-possessiveness. These are actually self-restraints which help in the growth of the self if properly practiced.
2. **NIYAMAS:** The second component of Patanjali's Yoga path is Niyama. Literally it means observances and inclusion of virtuous habits. The Niyamas are listed as –
 - I. **Shaucha:** stands for purity, clearness of mind, speech and body. (ii) **Santosha:** It is for contentment, acceptance of others, acceptance of circumstances as they are, and to get past or change. Maximum optimism is also Santosha.
 - II. **Tapas:** It means persistence, perseverance, austerity, asceticism and self-discipline.
 - III. **Svadhya:** It means study of Vedas, study of self, self-reflection, introspection on self thought, speech and action.
 - IV. **Ishvarapranidhana** that is contemplation of Ishvara – the unchanging reality.
3. **ASANA:** Patanjali's Yoga Sutra defines Asana as posture that one can hold for a period of time, staying relaxed, steady, comfortable or motionless. He does not prescribe to any specific Asana – "Sthirsukhamasanam" (II-46). However commentators later on attached a list of twelve meditation postures. (i). Lotus or Padmasana (ii) Hero or Virasana (iii) Glorious or Bhadrasana (iv) Lucky mark or Svastikasana (v) Staff or Dandasana (vi) Sopasrayasana or Supported (vii) Bedstead or Paryankasana (viii) Seated heron or Kraunchanishadasana (ix) Seated elephant or Hastanishadasana (x) Seated Camel or Ushtranishadadana. (xi) Evenly balanced or Samasansthanasana. Any motionless posture that is in accordance with one's pleasure or Sthirasukhasana. A more later treatise – Hath Yoga Pradeepika mentions 84 Asanas taught by Lord Shiva.
4. **PRANAYAMA:** Simply Pranayama means the control of breath. It is also a practice of consciously regulating the breath by the prescribed procedure of inhaling and exhaling. Or by changing the timing and length of the breath-deep or short.

5. **PRATYAHARA:** It is a combination of two Sanskrit words-Prati + Ahara. Prati means against or contra and Ahara denotes to bring near or fetch. Thus Pratyahara is drawing to one within one's own awareness. It empowers one to stop being controlled by the external world, fetch one's attention to seek self knowledge and experience the freedom innate in one's inner world. Moreover, it is a move from outside to inside, from outer sphere of the body to the inner sphere of the spirit.
6. **DHARANA** as the 6th limb of Yoga, is holding one's mind onto a particular inner state, subject or topic of one's mind. The mind is fixed on the Mantra or one's breath, navel, tip of tongue, on any place or an object one wants to observe or a concept /idea in one's mind without jumping from one topic to another.
7. **DHYANA:** Literally it means contemplation, reflection, profound and abstract meditation. This limb of Yoga mainly focuses on a personal deity. But in other aspects it is an uninterrupted train of thought, current of cognition and the flow of awareness. In other words Dhyana is a process of mind in which the Sadhaka experiences a course of uniform modification of knowledge.
8. **SAMADHI:** It is complete oneness with the subject of meditation. A spiritual state wherein the mind is so absorbed in the object of contemplation that it loses its own sense of identity. There is only one. All is in union with the harmonious whole. A state of trance is also Samadhi.

Thus the ultimate goal of Yoga is a sustained state of pure awareness. The transcendence of the mind to realize the true self or the highest self. This experience of pure awareness is a state of liberation. All mental and philosophical constructs fall away to deepen one's practice to gain enlightenment. Yoga is an inward journey to explore the deepest levels of our being. Central to this is Karma Philosophy of Yoga. It is not only concerned with the Yoga of action but also about the law that shapes the ultimate destiny.

Purva Mimamsa

Mimamsa – a Sanskrit word literally means critical investigation, reflection, profound thought, examination and discussion. The Purva Mimamsa Sutras written by Rishi Jaimini are one of the most important ancient Hindu philosophical texts. Sage Jaimini himself is supposed to be the founder of this School of thought. These texts provide rules for the interpretation of the Vedas and also impart philosophical justification for the observance of Vedic rituals to attain Moksha. As such Jaimini presents material activity and its results as whole reality because material existence is endless having no liberation. The Mimamsa concerns itself with earliest parts of the Vedas called Karma Kanda. That is why, it is known as prior-study-Purva Mimamsa. As the goal of Mimamsa texts is to provide enlightenment through Dharma, this

school is said to be a set of ritual obligations and prerogatives. (5) When rightly followed, properly performed these rituals bring complete accord to further boost personal goals of the performer. Since Dharma cannot be known through perception or by reasoning, one has to depend on revelation in the Vedas which are considered eternal, authorless and absolutely infallible. Thus being purely practical in origin Mimamsa acts as a powerful intellectual force by its direct contribution to the contents and methodology of Hindu culture.

Purva Mimamsa is one of the six Vedic schools of Hinduism chiefly known for its philosophical theories and the nature of Dharma based on hermeneutics of the Vedas, the Brahmanas and the Samhitas. Besides, Mimamsa has several distinct sub-schools each one grounded on its exclusive epistemology. One such is Prabhakara sub-school in the name of 7th century philosopher. Another is Bhatta sub-school in the name of Kumarila Bhatta. Simply, the school of Mimamsa consists of both the atheistic and the theistic doctrines. Therefore, there is less interest, investigation and examination in the existence of God. Instead more weight is given to the soul which is eternal, omnipresent and inherently active spiritual essence. It is worthy to note that the Mimamsa school explicated Dharma as a code of rituals and social duties rather than as Devas or Gods. What is more, Mimamsa school also gave rise to the study of philology and philosophy of language. Subsequently, their deep analysis of language and linguistics influenced other schools of Hinduism.

The central concern of Mimamsa texts is epistemology, as mentioned before, and the question to interpret and elucidate correctly the premises they framed is found in their critique. The questions such as – What is Devta or God? Are rituals dedicated to Gods efficacious? Can it be proved that the Vedas or any other canonical text is intrinsically valid or infallible? If so, how? To Mimamsa scholars, the nature of non-empirical knowledge and human means to it, are ambiguous to such an extent, that one can never reach or demonstrate the level of certainty. This is the reason, there are instances of falsifying knowledge in most of the cases. Notwithstanding debates and arguments Mimamsa texts allude to as Francis Clooney affirms the most distinctively Hindu forms of thinking that is without real parallel elsewhere in the world. Truly, it has attracted relatively less scholarly study, although its theories, questions on exegesis and theology have made tremendous impact on all classical Indian philosophies. Mimansakas were predominantly concerned with the central motivational force called Niratisaya Priti-ecstasy. Moreover, Mimamsa Sutras consists of twelve chapters:

- i) It is the import of the collection of words which have various meanings such as – Injunction, Explanatory passage, Hymn, Tradition etc.
- ii) In this chapter discussions relating to differences of various rites and refutations of erroneous proofs are held.
- iii) In 3rd chapter sense of the passage, the context, their respective weight in apparent opposition to one another, the ceremonies called

Pratipattikarmdni, things mentioned incidentally and the duties of the sacrifice are expounded.

- iv) This chapter elaborates the influence of rites – the principle and the subordinate and fruits caused by Juhu – the dice-playing which forms part of the Rajsuya sacrifice.
- v) It discusses relative order of various passages of Sruti as well as different parts of sacrifices.
- vi) The persons qualified to offer sacrifice, their obligations, the substitutes for materials used in sacrifices, expiatory rites and the different sacrificial fires are made clear. In
- vii) and (viii) chapters transference of ceremonies by virtue of one sacrifice to another are discussed elaborately.
- ix) This chapter deals with the adaptation of hymns when quoted in a new context and melodies and mantras.
- x) In this chapter discussion revolves round the non-performance of the primary rites and dependent rites, non-offerings to the Grahas etc.
- xi) In eleventh chapter there is discussion of Tantra-Combining several acts in one. Avapa-performance of an act more than once.
- xii) In the 12th chapter Prasanga, Tantra and accumulation of concurrent rites is explained. The scope of this philosophy is too vast to be condensed, yet I have attempted abridgement for incorporating the essentials only not to unnecessarily enlarge the scope of the article.

The VEDANTA is called Uttara Mimamsa and is the sixth limb of Indian philosophy-Shad Darshna. It will be discussed later for I have to first justify the title or topic of this chapter. This is the reason, I have given to Spiritualism the foremost priority.

Spiritualism

It is indeed a science dedicated to the relationship between incorporeal beings and real human beings. Spiritualists, therefore, do not adhere to a particular religion but to a philosophical doctrine with a scientific fulcrum and moral substratum. Two terms-Spiritism and Spiritualism have been dealt separately with different connotations. Spiritism was founded in 19th century by French educator Hippolyte Leon Denizard Rivail, under his pen-name Allan Kardec. He then wrote several books on the nature, origin and destiny of spirits and their inherent relation with the corporeal world. As a codifier he verified that Spiritism is an evolution affirming religion. Spiritism is currently represented in 35 countries by International Spiritist Council. It has influenced a social movement of healing centers, charity institutions and hospitals involving millions of people, who regard Allan Kardec as a prophet of a new universal religion. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) is another Swedish

scientist, philosopher, seer and theologian. He claimed to have experienced visions of spiritual world and is said to have talked with angels, devils and spirits by having visits to heaven and hell. His *magnum opus* that popularized him in and across the world 'Apocalypsis Revelata' (1766) stresses on the fact that man is in a position to be revealed and taught by the Lord through His spirit. However Spiritism differs from spiritualism primarily because of its belief in reincarnation theories. Compared to Spiritism, Spiritualism is a metaphysical belief that the world is made up of two fundamental substances-matter and spirit and the nature of relationship between these two. It is also a philosophy, a doctrine and a religion that is related to the spiritual aspect of existence. Moreover, Spiritualism is commonly used for psychic or paranormal practices and also for such beliefs which are recorded throughout the course of human history, however, in a variety of cultures. Adherents to Spiritualism holds the belief that spirits of the dead survive mortal life. Accordingly insentient beings from the spiritual world come to communicate often with the living beings. It is of course a conviction of traditional indigenous religions. It has an extensive history. Although spiritualist practices have been motivated by mere curiosity and fascination for the supernatural, they have also been driven by more serious concerns about the fate of the human soul. Thus, spiritualists have offered a new religion based not on an ancient tradition but on facts that apparently can be observed by all and sundry. The strong involvement of emotion in accepting and rejecting spiritualism has made it difficult to gather impartial evidences for and against it. Compared to western counterparts Indian spiritual system, has grown diverse thoughts which have enriched cultural heritage and the continuity of vibrating traditions. Right from the Vedic times India had enjoyed rich spiritual traditions liable for her world-wide popularity and eminence. It is because the Vedas provide spiritual orientation by moral codes and infallible laws of ethics. This spirit of the Vedas have further been nurtured by great thinkers such as Yajnavalkya, Maitereyi, Gargi and Nachiketas. As a matter of fact, India's spirituality is an inner quest, a pathway for reaching highest truths, a composite thinking for enlightening everyday realities and a caring consideration for challenges of human values and their evaluation. Moreover, queries concerning the nature of God, the creation of the world, the universe and Brahman also find relatable answers. In India Spiritualism thus has been judged as an experimental aspect of religion not a mere theological ritual. As spiritualism deals with religious practices likewise some fine arts as – music, dance and painting are also part of it because these too represent the experimental aspect of religious spirit. Besides, the same spiritual practices leading to the attainment of Moksha or Jeevanmukta further conclude that man is divine by nature-Amratasya Putra. Therefore he who keeps himself in ceaseless communion with God, his higher self, is transformed into a divine courier for the wellbeing of mankind. Consequently Spiritualism, if emulated by and large would bring about Satyam – righteous social evolution, Shivam-emotionally integral and Sundaram – aesthetically beautiful.

Vedanta

The Vedanta is also known as the Uttar Mimamsa. The Vedanta Philosophy as it is called today comprises all various sects existing in India. All progressive interpretations beginning with Dvaita-dualistic philosophy and ending with Advaita – non-dualistic, roll up within the purview of Vedanta. What is more, it practically forms the base of the scriptures of the Hindus together with whole corpus of orthodox philosophy that regards Vedanta as foundation. It seems rather pertinent here to state that the Vedanta as it appears today through several interpretations is not a counterpart to Pantheism. It is scrupulously made clear by the celebrated example of – ‘The Serpent And The Rope’. That is the illusion of a snake in the rope attributable to ignorance. The whole of the Universe, as it exists today, is the unchanging Supreme reality, and all the fleeting changes we see are only apparent further attributable to space-time and causation – the name and the form. In reality all these are one and the same. The Vedantists, therefore, assert that there exists Noumenon an existent reason for the appearance of all phenomenon. This means that when we are in ignorance we see the phenomenon only. We do not see the God. When we see God the whole of the universe vanishes. In Vedanta philosophy it is called inexpressible – Anirvachaniya. Obviously therefore, from all that is inexpressible sprang up the ideology of Self-Abnegation. The Vedanta or Uttar Mimamsa thus is called Jnana-Kanda. It is further stated that all philosophical treatises scattered throughout the Vedas were collected collectively to be named as the Vedanta. Along these lines, the basic teaching of the Vedanta scriptures is that our real nature is divine. The God is the underlying reality that exists in every being, therefore religion is a search for self-knowledge and for God within. Moreover, according to Vedantins – Brahman is Supreme Cosmic consciousness, Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient, therefore, the divine base of all beings. In order to discover the Brahman, true Vedanta spirit does not start out with a system of pre-conceived notions. It possesses absolute liberty, an unrivalled courage among religions regarding facts to be observed and diverse hypotheses laid down for coordination. Least hampered by priestly order each man was wholly free to search wherever or whatever he pleased for spiritual explanation of spectacles the universe offered. Thus Vedanta teaches Nirvana to be attained here and now, that we do not have to wait for death to reach it. Nirvana is true realization of the self. After having known once never again can one be deluded by mirages of personality. The wise man by concentration alone, on the self, realizes the ancient effulgent one scarcely seen or realized by other means. That man is really blessed who sees or discovers the hidden-the unmanifest. Thus, Vedanta holds keys to the laws of the mind, the thought process correlated to the Quantum Field (7). The operation and distribution of particles at atomic and molecular levels. At another place Sir John George Woodroffe avers – “Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans appears like a

feeble Promethean spark before the Vedanta. The Vedanta is the most impressive metaphysics human mind has ever conceived.”

All Vedanta schools in views and deliberations differ from each other regarding their theories on Ontology, Soteriology and Epistemology. Literally meaning end of the Vedas, Vedanta reflects ideas, speculations and philosophies contained in Prasthanatrayi – the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagvad Gita. Advaita being sole representative, the Vedanta school essentially is a Vaisnava theological division. A greater aesthetic articulation and a broader discourse set within the parameters of Vaisnavism. The Vaisnavism has four traditional schools called Sampradayas.

- (i) NIMBARKA: It is one of the most ancient Sampradaya based on the philosophy called Dvaitadvait-Dualistic Nondualism. Nimbarkacharya (8) was a 7th century Telugu Brahmin, yogi and philosopher who taught theology and astronomy. The highest reality according to him rests in a personal God called the Brahman, Krishna or Hari. As far as existence is concerned, Nimbarka propounds three categories of existence namely – Isvara, Jiva and matter. The relation between these three has been explained extensively by the application of natural difference / non-difference theories of Dvaitadvaita philosophy.
- (ii) RAMANUJA: Consecutively, Ramanujacharya (9) an 11th century South Indian theologian, philosopher, social reformer and the founder of Sri Vaisnavism tradition within Hinduism was a chief proponent of Qualified Non-Dualism – Vishishtadvaita. Narayana is the Absolute God. The Soul and the Universe are only parts of this Absolute, hence Vishishtadvaita is the solution to pantheistic ideologies. Ramanuja was first of the Vedanta thinkers to make a basis of his system as identification of a personal God with the Brahman or Absolute reality of the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras. Correspondingly, God has two modes of being – as cause and as product. As cause He in his essence is qualified only by His perfections. As product He has as His body, the souls and the phenomenal world. There is a pulsating rhythm in His periods of creation and absorption. So a synthetic philosophy of love in its religious aspect ensues to establish Sri Vaisnavism. It is essentially a philosophy of religion in which reason and faith coincide. The ultimate reality – Brahman is realizable, knowable and not unknowable. Brahman is the ground of the cosmic order as its creator, sustainer, and destroyer in terms of immanence and transcendence. Every Jiva comes from God and goes back to him as the home of all perfections. Ramanuja's views give a new orientation to Avidya by identifying it with Karma and Kama. Jiva as a moral and spiritual entity revels in his/her own innate freedom. Liberation can be attained by triple technique-Karma yoga or self-

purification, Jnana-yoga or self-realization and Bhakti yoga or the practice of the feeling of the presence of GOD as love.

Actually, the Vishishtadvaita of Ramanuja is an improvement on the Kantian way of stating the problem and avoiding skepticism by harmonizing metaphysics, ethics and religion. In this way the Metaphysics of Ramanuja includes epistemology, -the study of the Pramanas, ontology – the study of three Tattwas and the ethics deals with the Sadhana or the way of knowing Brahman, while its religion expounds the Bhakti/Prapatti and the nature of Mukti. Ramanuja distinguishes the empirical world of space-time with the transcendental realm which is also the home of eternal values of truth, goodness, beauty and bliss. It describes ascent of the Mukta after the dissolution of the body to the blissful realm of Vaikuntha, by straight and shining path of Devayana.

- (iii) MADHAVACHARYA: Madhvacharya sometimes anglicized as Madhva Acharya, and also known as Purna-Prajna and Anand Tirtha, was a 13th century Hindu philosopher and a leading proponent of Dualism-Dvaita school of Vedanta. The premises and foundations of Dvaita Vedanta, also known as Dvaitavada and Tattvavada are credited to him. His epistemology has three correct means of knowledge. 1. Prtyaksha-Perception 2. Anumana-Inference 3. Sabda-Relying on word expert testimony. His Metaphysics is a plural reality. Primarily there are two categories of reality-One independent and the other dependent. Ishvara is God Vishnu or Krishna-the cause of the Universe. So an Independent Reality, while the Created Universe is Dependent Reality consisting of the Jiva-individual soul and Jada-the inert matter. Jiva is sentient and the matter is insentient.

While the soteriology of Madhva concludes Jnana and Karma to be insufficient without following the Bhakti. The knowledge of God is not a matter of intellectual pursuit or acknowledgement but an attraction, affection, constant attachment, loving devotion and complete surrender to the grace of God. Meanwhile his ethics considers evil and suffering subjected only to man – not to Gods. Moral laws and ethics therefore, are necessary for the grace of God and for liberation. What is more Madhavacharya conceptualized Brahman in the aphorism – Atat tvam asi – thou art not that. Therefore, Brahman according to him is a being who enjoys His own bliss and manifests every now and then to assist the process of evolution. The entire universe accordingly evolves through a nebulous chaos. His writings led some colonial era Indologists such as George Abraham and Grierson to affirm that Madhavacharya was considerably influenced by Christianity.

- (iv) VALLABHACHARYA: Popularly known as Vallabha, (10) He was a 15th century Indian Telugu philosopher and founder of Krishna centered Pushti

Sect of Vaishnavism in the Brij region of India. He propagated the philosophy of Pure Non-Dualism-Shuddha-Advaita. He outright rejected asceticism and Monastic life instead cherished householder's life. The householder through loving devotion to God Krishna could achieve salvation. Thus he became one of the leading exponent of devotional school of Vaisnavism popularly called – The Bhakti movement. The hagiographies written by his followers claim that he won many philosophical debates against the followers of his predecessors such as Ramanujacharya, Madhavacharya and others. It is also evidenced that he had visions and miracles of unusual type. So he was also claimed to be the incarnation of God-Agni. After having complete interpretation of Vedanta, he founded Pusti-Marga – a sub-traditional school of Vaisnavism. It was the culminating point of his philosophical thoughts. Literally Pushti-Marga means a nourishing, flourishing and thriving spiritual path. It is a metaphor for Krishna's grace too. This school had unique facets of devotion such as – Krishna in the form of a child and His miraculous early youth pranks. The devotional mantra – 'Sri Krishna Sharanam Mama' – became the initiatory Mantra of the Pushti-Marga. That is why, this path got further enrichment by the use of traditional music, by the celebration of festivals and the establishment of temples all over the world. It also grew in strength and size by the contribution of Ashtachapa – Eight poets of the Bhakti movement including Surdas. The followers of Pushti Marga are still found as regional diasporas scattered around the world. The Nathdwara temple is one of the wealthiest and more elaborate among shrines of God Krishna in India. Shuddha – Advaita or Pure Monism regards the entire universe as manifestation of Brahman. As it is not tainted by the concept of Maya, it is Suddha. Jiva being part of Brahman is Advaita. As everything is imbued with the spirit of the Lord and the Lord Himself being eternally perfect, everything in His creation is perfect. It is based on the Vedanta philosophy of – "Ekmevadwitiyam Brahman". The ultimate truth is one and the only one – that is Brahman. The Vedas, The Brahma Sutras, The Bhagvad Gita and The Shrimad Bhagawat are the four fundamental scriptures. The practical theology consists the Shodasha Granthas-16 pieces in verse form which are light house for the devotees.

These are the four schools of the Vedanta I have studied in brief and dealt separately. However, the Vedanta study remains incomplete without giving reference to Advaita of Acharya Shankara.

ACHARYA ADI SHANKARA: Generally known as Shankaracharya, a Nambudiri Brahmin initiated by Govinda Bhagavadpada into Sannyasa was born in 8th century at Kaladi (Kerala). He is believed to have died prematurely at Kedarnath – a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva located in the Northern Himalayan state of Uttarakhand (India). He is deemed to be the founder and organizer of four

monasteries – Mutts still flourishing (i) In the east is Govardhan Peetha in Puri (ii) In the west Dwarka Shradha Peetha (iii) In the north Badrikashram Jyotirpeeth (iv) In the south Sringeri Sharada Peetham. (5)

As Shankara is the Acarya of the Advaita School of Hinduism, his teachings and extensive commentaries on The Upanishads, The Brahma Sutras, The Bhagvad Gita and many other sacred texts are significant parameters to define and classify Advaita thought. Literally Advaita means Non-Dualism – a classic system of spiritual realization in Indian tradition. According to Advaita-Brahman is the Ultimate Reality-the Paramarthika Satyam, unchanging, unborn and not sublatale. It cannot be superseded by any other higher reality. So, Brahman is Absolute Truth. All else is Maya. The Universe, the material objects and the individuals, all are fleeting, ephemeral and transitory objects subjected to constant change. Adi Shankara held that ‘Sat-Cit-Ananda’ is the true form of Brahman. It is eternal bliss consciousness. Besides Brahman, Atman is another focal point or central premise of Advaita. It is known as individual essence, irreducible essence and the unity of consciousness through all states of individuated phenomenality. It is therefore, as the Advaitins regard an interchangeable reality synonymous to Brahman. Some interpretations depict Advaita as Nihilistic philosophy. The greater awareness of Atman is an experience of oneness with Brahman. These are not two but one-called the identical reality. All existence also is a single reality, a unity in multiplicity – there is no dual hierarchy of the creator and the created universe. Acharya Shankara (11) proposes three levels of reality, using sublation as ontological criterion (i) Paramarthika: It is Absolute Reality metaphysically true and ontologically accurate so cannot be sublated by any other. (ii) Vyavaharika: It is empirical or pragmatic reality, sublatale because of its ever changing nature. It is a phenomenal world that we handle everyday when we are awake. (iii) Prathibhasika: It is apparent reality based on imagination. It has been well illustrated by the perception of a rope in the dark as being a snake.

In order to explain empirical reality the doctrine of Maya has been postulated by the Advaitins. Maya is empirical reality. It entangles consciousness. It has charismatic power to create bondage. This bondage prevents unveiling of true unitary self, cosmic spirit or the Brahman. Maya and Brahman together constitute the universe like two interwoven threads create a fabric. Maya is the manifestation of the world whereas Brahman which supports Maya, is the cause behind. Brahman is the sole metaphysical truth. Maya is true in epistemological and empirical sense. Maya manifests and perpetuates as a sense of false duality or divisional plurality. Shankara then shifted the axis of thought from God to the self-Atman. Accordingly, Brahman goes beyond God or the creator – “I am The Universe and The Universe resides within me” is the ultimate truth. Thus, the true goal of Advaita is the attainment of the Self. The hindrance behind this attainment is Maya or Ignorance. Sticking to I-ness is MAYA. To get rid of this ignorant Maya which is Mithya – an error in judgment and Vivarta-illusion /whirlpool, One has to be wary and aware while

awake – Jagrat Avastha, dreaming state – Swapna Avastha and sleep state – Sushupti Avastha. Ultimately, by overcoming all these three states one arrives at the Turiya Avastha – deep meditative state. It is an state of identity between individual consciousness and pure awareness. So Advaita is all about the Jiva and the Atma. Both the Jiva and the Atma are not different from the Paramatma. Nonetheless, the world is but Avivarta-a superimposition on Brahman. Brahman with creative power of Maya is Iswara. Iswara is not controlled by Maya. Whereas the Jiva tends to be overpowered by Avidya-Maya. This aspect of Maya confounds the distinct existence of self and non-self by concealing Brahman, so as to construct the world. With the help of epistemological discussions non-reality of duality between the Brahman and the world is further established. It explains how pure consciousness is verily veiled by universal ignorance Accordingly three planes of existence come out – One is the plane of Absolute existence-Paramarthika Satta. The second is Vyavaharika Satta-Pragmatic/Experimental and the third is Pratibhasika Satta – illusory existence. What is more, the concept of Moksha or liberation is brought to light by Sadhana Catushtayam. Each aspirant is expected to cultivate the following:

1. Nityanitya Vastu Viveka – It stands for the ability to discriminate between what is eternal-Nitya and what is temporary-Anitya. The absence of this discrimination ensues delusion.
2. Ihamuhurtarth Phala Bhog Viraga – Means disinterestedness in enjoying the fruits of one’s own actions here and hereafter. It is to apprehend continuation and formation of Karma.
3. Sama Adi Satka Sampatti – These are virtues or qualities such as-control of internal sense organs, control of external sense organs, abstinence, quietness, sincerity and faith for self transformation without which one cannot be free from delusions of ignorance. 4. Mumuksyatva: It means intense aspiration for salvation. (12)

Thus, the Advaita tradition has spawned a large number of literary works beautiful, entertaining and helpful for practicing Jnana Yoga. That is why, the whole gamut of Vedanta is monikered as Advaita too.

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Prayer: A Harmoniously Attuned Accord

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON-an English poet (1809-1892) composed a longer poem MORTE D' ARTHUR. This poem deals with the legend of KING ARTHUR of England. The wounded king is going with his three queens on a mysterious journey to the Island of AVILION for his recovery. Bidding good bye to his favourite KNIGHT words of wisdom flow from his lips highlighting the importance of PRAYER..... '*Pray for my soul/ More things are wrought by prayer/ Than this world dreams of...*' These lines of TENNYSON have become proverbial and flawlessly speak about the truth of life. As such every day we see the magnitude of populace – communities, rural-folks, urban-elites, denizens, citizens even netizens from national corridors to international podiums praying in one form or the other. All of us, all over the world, pray either for our own well-being or for the welfare of others. Mere recitation with lips, without the heart, mind and the soul wholly attuned is not PRAYER. It is an empty pretention – a false show. In tandem PRAYER is neither a commercial transaction such as – asking GOD for wealth, for prosperity, for profits in business, promotions in service or progeny – nor a wish fulfillment. Nevertheless the forms of the PRAYER vary. Other than the essence that is always and everywhere the same, identical or alike. The real aim of all great men of the world, as *THE BHAGWAD GITA* proposes in Chapter IX, Verse XXX, XXXI is that whatever a man possibly be either benevolent or malevolent ought to get time on daily basis for PRAYER. What actually then is the purport of PRAYER? Is it a direct way of appeasing God-*ISTA* for gaining personal ends? Neither is it a despondent's cry or wail for not achieving objects of desire nor a last resort to which we all turn up when our overall efforts go topsy-turvy. PRAYER is not an ecstatic trance we experience at the fulfillment of love. Is PRAYER a means of getting peace of mind or direct realization of the cosmic spark in the tiny self or to seek for the erotic unity of the finite with it's infinite beloved. In all cases PRAYER is a means to an end. That is why, I too agree with the belief that we all must pray singly or in unison – together in Chorus. Pray we all must to some Higher Power, to Almighty sincerely, with firm faith, resilience and abiding trust. They say – if we strive to make our minds scrupulously assertive, resolute, unwavering in faith and intention the

results may be amazing even miraculous. There are numerous instances in Persian theology chief being of RABIA wherein the aspirant devotee has direct vision of his/her desired Lord.. The spiritual land of India too is replete with many real-life stories of saints who succeeded in materializing their deity or deities whenever they were called for. What is more the author of *VEDANT DESIKA*, NAMADEVA, PURANDHARDASA and lately the SATYA SAI BABA of *PRASANTI NILAYAM* (A.P.) can be cited as instances. These illustrious saints or prodigious commoners by their mode of PRAYER induced and enticed the devotees from every nook and corner of world to pro for their PRAYER congregations.

As a matter of fact, devotees to whatever faith they belong to, while congregating for PRAYER communicate their sense of complete dedication or surrender mainly known as PRAPATTI. This PRAPATTI is the extended form or acme of BHAKTI. It is not mere physical surrender but the greater realization of the fact that individual self-JIVATMA is the fragment of the same supreme-PARAMATMA. Like the kitten having no body-consciousness – DEHATMA BUDDHI, the devotee surrenders to mother cat knowing Her to be the one and the only protector, sole guardian, legitimate judge and the omnipotent absolute reality. Being multitalented, the versatile author of the VEDANTA DESIKA has also composed a Ten (10) verses treatise called NYASA DASAKAM. It is not only for daily recital but also briefly and succinctly elaborates the concept of PRAPATTI by focusing on the doctrine of SARANAGATI. This doctrine of SARANAGATI has six ANGAS or parts – 1. Undertaking the vow to act according to the commandments of SRUTI, SMRTI, SASTRAS and PURANAS in order to please and appease GOD. 2. Never under any circumstance to go against the will of GOD to displease HIM. 3. Firm faith in GOD called – MAHAVISWASAH. 4. To choose GOD as protector 5. Humbleness or humility called – -KARPANYAM. 6. Individual-self or JIVATMA is offered as an offering in the YAGNA of SARANAGATI called ATMANIKSHEPANAM. If thus SARANAGATI is performed keeping these rules intact the JIVATMA in true sense becomes PRAPANNA very dear to GOD Himself. Sequentially, the aspirant devotee or the PRAPANNA too devotes himself unconditionally to his/her titular deity-*ISTA* by singing or composing songs of praise and admiration. So much so that most of the disciples are seen lost in the frenzy of rapture. While the majority of highly intellectual people seems deriving immense benefit by participating in SANKIRTANA. AKHANDAKIRTANA is supposed to be a greater YAJNA or sacrifice. It does not cost anything to the householders these days. Instead it produces tremendous purity of mind, induces divine ecstatic moods and many other benefits of limitless denominations. Truly it is the form of PRAYER that breaks down barriers of separation between man and man, eradicates vicious qualities and helps by erecting bridges of goodwill and amity. Any activity harmful to any being human or sub-human can never be a heavenly commandment. Therefore, one should try to satisfy and mollify all his fellow-beings. Never should try to cause damage or hurt. Service to our fellow beings is the best way to achieve faith and GOD himself seeks

His seat in the heart of him who serves his fellowmen. A prayerful heart is the vehicle of the soul and service to humanity makes the heart prayerful. Furthermore, SANKIRTANA provides inner strength for cultivating the stand point of serving others. This is because service to humanity is the highest prayer and worship of GOD. The name of Lord GAURANGA or CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU adequately fulfills the credentials of a real SANKIRTANIST. He who while chanting the name of his beloved Lord rolled about on earth in divine ecstasy, quite unmindful of his body, relatives and surroundings even differences between man and man, everywhere he saw GOD, His beauty and glory till his eyes were filled with tears to utter a touching cry – “O’ my beloved Lord draw me within thy fold! O ‘my Love, take me into thy affable bosom so that I may lost in thee forever and ever to become one with thee!” This is the sort of merger the devotee yearns for. This is the kind of love that cannot be expressed through speech Or verbal communication. It is a feeling-an awareness akin to existence wherein the devotee attains oneness with GOD through surrender. It is a unique experience indescribable and indefinable. The poets all over the world have sung about the might, glory, crown and the blissful flowering of love. In our day-today world love of the vulgar makes us low while love of the noble cures, free sand elevates the soul. Both P.B. Shelley and John Keats wanted to reach the infinite through the finite. They saw the finite as an exact replica of the infinite, viz – The beauty of the flower, the sun and the moon is the real revelation of GOD’S infinite beauty. In this love there is no trace of duality. It is a mystic experience mysteriously sung by KABIRA. Ordinary people or the gentry in common gets sanctified by the vision, touch or thoughts of such sort of emancipated bards who were very dear to the heart of their Lords.

What is more, all the great educators of the world have collectively prescribed and approved PRAYER as a means of getting away from the entanglements and the embarrassing situations of the world. PRAYER is a direct communion of the soul with GOD along with the pining of the soul for getting back things blissful, objects celestial and forms eternally divine. Roughly estimated PRAYER for a few is a confession of sin or a safe haven to hole up Achilles’ heels. As such they have further endorsed expiation, remonstrance and ultimate cleansing as a regular practice and remedy fostered by PRAYER. Thus by washing the dross and gross of the mind, by cleansing it meticulously, the aspirant strives for greater perfection called SIDDHI. He gets ready and makes tidy the field by all means so that divine grace may descend or precipitate. Petitions for divine grace as well as divine intervention unsolicited like TULASHI’s sublime entreaty and overwhelming supplication in VINAY PATRIKA is an unusual feat in the cult of BHAKTI literature. It designates true faith. Faith is the foundation on which the beauty and grandeur of the building rests. Caught in the whirlpool of mundane existence man steers to come out only through the vehicle of faith. While Prayer is a solicitation to GOD in humble and reverent way of adoration. Duration of PRAYER varies from man to man, as per uninitiated devotee’s stage/stages of progression. For commoners there are rules of prayer and

its duration too. An enlightened devotee knows well that his existence has no meaning without realizing and discovering the evidence of the foot-prints of the existence of GOD. So the necessity of PRAYER arises and makes a way to enter into the life of man. PRAYER being a means of seeking union with the divine is naturally an untainted, uncorrupted and undefiled avenue of love called – PREMA. FAITH usually known as ASTHA in Indian pantheon cannot be gained by easy means. Among thousands of devotees there are few who succeed in gaining the grace of GOD by dint of their faithful merit and intrinsic worth. In order to have unyielding faith the foremost prerequisite is cultivating the habit of trust or simple believe in everyday transactions. Without trust we neither can march forward in our daily dealings nor can have the social sanction or seal of approval. Going a little ahead in devotion we become conscious of the importance of SHRADDHA basically known as reverence. Reverence in the object of devotion culminates in knowledge of highest sort and helps by conquering the prowess of the senses. How good-humoredly the *Bhagwad Gita* elaborates in Chapter IV, Verse XXXIX -

*Shrddhavan Labhate Jnanam Tatparah Samyatendriyah Jnanam
Lavdhva Param Santim Acirenadhi Gacchati*

SHRADDHA thus further elevates the devotee to rise in faith strong like a rock and tough like the mountain. Unparalleled trust, reverence beyond compare and perfect faith combined together can do wonders. Additionally, there are innumerable tales, parables and fables strewn together in the spiritual literature of the world recounting the marvelous exploits of faith. Faith in the excellence of divine name has found expression in all YUGAS hence further assumes extraordinary importance particularly in KALIYUGA. There is no paucity of scriptural proofs and evidences with regard to the greatness of Divine Name. A devotee who starts the practice of chanting Divine Name right from his childhood little by little experiences the predispositions of his mind waning. So in due course of time succeeds in desisting from sins and peccadilloes. All SADRIPUS six-fold foes decline and weaken giving position and location to steady peace and secluded love. The NAMA-JAPA has thus a huge potentiality and immense usefulness. Besides regular exercises of SANDHYA-VANDANAM with the intonation of GAYATHRI MANTRA thrice a day – Dawn, Noon and Dusk has been prescribed as the finest kind of PRAYER that strengthens the SADHAKA in achieving enlightenment and divine grace within chosen span of time. This is the PRAYER that has the intensity of intellect, intuition and divine grace to set forth and draw more and more fruitful results. It is like a flame or glow that rises upward higher and higher to disperse and concatenate more and more light. However, Prayer is not worship. It is a mystifying illumination or emanation out of man's dedicated and worshipful spirit. It is a constant endeavor having sincerity and unaffectedness as its hallmark to generate tremendous force as real as primeval oomph. That is why PRAYER in most countries of the world is used as a therapy or healing device. It is applied to cure diseases, melancholic maladies and complaint disorders. No more a superstition or miracle but as real as practically

time-tested or patented capsule. Millions of people both men and women have discovered that PRAYER supplies them a never ending flow of sustaining vigorous power in their daily lives. Truly speaking PRAYER gives to frail human vertebrae a fullest dynamic strength, a protective covering or shield to fortify. Thus PRAYER is a prerequisite designed for all-embracing thorough development of human personality. It is as I have said earlier a means to supplement finite energy by addressing it to the infinite cause of the Omnipotent. As a consequence when we pray we link ourselves with the inexhaustible driving force or power that spins through whole of the universe. As such PRAYER the major exercise of the spirit must be whole heartedly put into practice by all of us. If the power of PRAYER is let loose to be directed for the support of common masses there is hope enough in spite of everything that PRAYER for the visualization of a more healthier and mature world will surely be responded. Consequently, the world we live in will be seen humming as harmoniously as the idyllic garden of divinity. Humanity will thrive quietly alongside proliferating supernatural beings of divine origin.

Gahana Karmano Gatih

Besides having a highly complex organism, human body possesses a free intelligence endowed with immaculate, illumined and blissful ubiquitous being. Hence is spark of the supreme, omnipotent, ever-present all-pervading primordial *joie de vivre* – the oomph. Notwithstanding the auspicious awe and wonder this phenomenon is intriguingly clouded by ignorance, unawareness and lack of placidity – the nescience. This ignorance fosters, binds and captivates the embodied being called JIVA into material or physical union. Subsequently, the misery and the quagmire of this inescapable thralldom insists on demanding release, deliverance or enlightenment by steady course of actions. Additionally, this course of action, as a guiding principle characterizes a process of growth distinctively known as evolution. In evolutionary way there are uninterrupted phases of awakening the living beings to their essential nature. These include inculcation and expansion of virtuous tendencies and cultivation of habits having a liking for cleansing the impurities. As all living beings are expressions of the divine, the subtle body of each one carries numerous imperfections and attributes of past lives including those in sub-human species. *Rishi Dattatreya* once engrossed in sorting out two contraries, the pair of opposites – darker and brighter phenomenon of life, unequivocally nurtured discontent and unhappiness. When he further concentrated on unquestionable and constructive aspect of nature's creation shortly realized the futility of his resolution. Later like all eco-philosophers, mystics and pantheists the whole corpus of life-forms and organisms appeared to him sacred and adorable. So much so that he acquired spiritual illumination and awakening from 24 insignificant teachers, creatures such as – dog, cat, jackal, spider, vulture, crow etc. None was despicable, as all were a spark more or less of the supreme being. All were a link in the spiraling chain of evolution. This truly is Karma yoga. The Yoga of best transaction of duties sans self-interest and attachment. The art of equanimity of temperament in the face of all circumstances.

In tandem, several interpersonal identities churn, blend, socialize and shape the natural world of man. This fallacious bond of inconsiderate and ignorant identities like a mirage look illusory and deluding. The inner ambience becomes shrouded by thick haze of indolence, torpor and ineptitude. Amazingly, at this juncture divine

intervention takes place unsolicited. Wherein beings rise in welcome to pray, to please and appease their well-chosen deity either from temple or from mosque, from Church to Gurudwara or Pagoda. So also the divine disembark more suddenly, metamorphose to reciprocate, accept, acknowledge and hug the beings. His ante to emancipate beings from all allurements and bondages of worldly life becomes implicit. He further creates unwelcome misfortunes and distressful situations in life to mull over the existence. Such unhappy events, occurrences jolt the individual out of his slumber and make him realize the futility of worldly attachments. The fright of angst and woe further foster the divine wake-up call to weigh-up the course of life and existence. Often virtues keep at bay sinful propensities, preponderate, offer stiff resistance and act as a shield to safeguard. So misfortunes are mostly blessings in disguise. Alongside the route from Karma to destiny pass through countless interactive modules, so as to document an occult and mysterious course known only to omniscient creatures. The Law Of Karma described in vedic scriptures coherently explains the science of destiny as continuity of life-cycle. The sublime mental imprints called Sanskaras are carried forward with one's subtle body even after the demise of physical body. Sanskaras carve or shape our nature and collectively account for the Fate or Destiny. Nevertheless, pure scruples of inner conscience keep recording the Sanskaras in order to facilitate the necessities of absolute justice that too at an appropriate time. In ancient texts there are three categories of Karmas – Sanchit, Kriyamana and Prarabdha. Sanchit Karmas connote involuntary mental actions such as – impact of good or bad company,. Influence of ambience around, happenstances, deeds done reluctantly in a state of helplessness and activities accomplished together with revulsion. These impressions despite being deep seated produce weak potency and feeble reaction. Sanchit Karmas therefore remain dormant. But in amiable company as a lame begins to tread, likewise with good soil and adequate rains rotten seeds begin to germinate. That is why, good and bad Sanchit Karmas bear fruits only in favorable environment and are destroyed when confronted with an adverse milieu. The company of holy persons, sacraments and pilgrimages can effectively wipe out the stock of such Sanchit Karmas. Kriyamana Karmas are physical actions. These produce fruits in a short time like consumption of drug that follows intoxication. Whereas mental or bodily actions performed intentionally, voluntarily or deliberately under strong emotional stimuli are termed Prarabdha Karma. Motivated by intensity of emotions and violent actions strongly felt by inner conscience, rebound to form potent, deep and subtle imprints – Sanskaras. What's more, the Karma that lead to destiny cannot be altered or diluted by any means. It is, therefore termed as extraneous deleterious impurity. In subtle realms-Sukshma Loka inner conscience (psyche) waits for suitable environment to sprout and make offshoots. Thus the law of Karma creates blueprint designed for destiny. Whatsoever the jurisdiction, all Karmas are subjected to divine law which takes time in preparing an appropriate environment for dispensing just reward or punishment.

Additionally, misfortunes are punishments given by the wrath of God to chastise an erring person or one gone astray. Each individual is answerable for his personal happiness and misery. Both the *BHAGVAD GITA* and the *RAMAYANA* conform to this belief. Generally SANSKARAS have two branches intended for spiritual produce – 1.Promoting happiness. 2.Eliminating unhappiness, sin or corrupt practices of the mind like jealousy, perfidy, deception, scandalous planning, revengeful annoyance and cruelty. All these are pollutants like smoke filled room to suffocate and stultify the soul. The soul being pure and uncontaminated never accumulates such pollutants instead retains meticulous care of its purity and sublime ambience side by side discarding or neutralizing bad SANKARAS. Divine intervention also provides an appropriate and well-timed opportunity for self expansion. As the subtle body carries with the nucleus seeds conserved from earlier lives, so also congenital deficiencies or genetic diseases serve as blue prints for physical body. Physical deformity in next birth according to Roman Catholics is a partial remission of temporal punishment due for sin after absolution. Is not physical infirmity a cautionary punishment? Awards rejuvenate and revivify in next life. Through repentance inherited innate burdens are further relieved and calmed down. The divine law expects man to abide by time-tested moral codes of exemplary conduct – SADACHARA and also prevents others from violating them. Any country or community if does not endorse morality and ethics has to suffer severe consequences. There is doubt, disbelief even dissent in and about divine justice also. Because over and over again we see virtue being punished and vice rewarded. That is why such KARMAS are popularly ascribed to fate-BHAGYA or KISMET. Natural calamities are commonly attributed to the will of God. So are called PRARABDHA – predestined. Many due to unexpected adversities become resentful towards God, foster accusations, ill-will and eventually blame Him. While some others become atheist in spite of their prolonged adherence to religiosity. Adoration time and again results to answer contempt or disbelief. Superstitions form irrational behavior. Most of us think all is predestined for the reason that beings have absolutely no role in the agenda of their own destiny. Whatever is destined cannot be altered. Subsequently man finds himself helpless, unaided, messed up and befuddled while confronting hard times or adversity. The result is psychosomatic disorder leading to widespread skepticism and agnosticism. Since times immemorial man has been attempting to correlate human activities with events over which he has no control. Research in deeper sciences of consciousness has discovered ways and means to find answers to such problems of life. Everybody is inquisitive enough to know his future. We cannot predict it. But certainly know that by and large it is determined by our own KARMAS-rationality of actions. The uncertainty is governed by the unknown random laws of nature – RTA. Whatever be the case destiny is a curious phenomenon. The earth inhabited by several billion human species besides non-human is beyond mathematical calculation. It is also beyond human efforts to record each moment and all movement of life of innumerable beings of this cosmos. Hence

no one can water down or challenge rather has to conform to the belief – *KARMANA GAHANO GATHI*.

In the science of India's spirituality Karma stands for physical, verbal, mental, rational, intellectual or social activity. If human consciousness is in evolved state each of the Karma instantaneously generates a subtle mental imprint. As mentioned earlier these imprints cannot be apparently expunged. Their end result may possibly appears in appropriate time in this life or in any future life in any form. Scriptures also affirm that Supreme Creator inscribes the destiny of human race on their forehead. Accordingly this divine inscription cannot be expunged. It is also beyond human capacity to decipher it more precisely. *KARMA SADHANA BRATA* therefore is to realize and bring to fruition this Vedantic ideal. As all works and their results are fleeting nothing monumental can change this fate subjected to fleetingness. The consequences of all religious and secular KARMAS are useless and waste of time. What can ensure freedom everlasting and fulfillment eternal is the yoga of union with the Chetana. But no one, however, exalted he may be can avoid doing Karma and escape from ensuing results. Indisputably, a KARMA SADHAKA when his VRATA is fulfilled gains AMRATA-immortality. How? KARMA is not bondage but the results have a binding effect. These agitate, confuse even frighten the mind by various ways. Are KARMAS appeasement of hunger and their result the inter-relationship of past, present and future – a passageway of time? Delay or interval between KARMAS and ensuing results are ingrained in debate and dispute. Yoga Sadhana involved in the pursuit of KARMA has a subtle impact great and tangible on the Sadhaka leading to self-knowledge equal to immortality. A Sadhaka is neither swayed nor won – over by the average or advantageous outcome of KARMAS performed. The Karmas he does and the result there from tend to elevate him leading him to union with the indestructible and everlasting. So in Yoga, KARMA means YOGIC pursuit or well organized leisure activity. A mode and medium of day-to-day activities. Therefore it's authority, control in and on the law of nature is unyielding, unavoidable, inexorable and relentless – *GAHANA KARMANO GATHI*...

Literature in Close Proximity with Religion Rooted in Cultural Miscellany

Literature – as *WEBSTER'S ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF DICTIONARIES: NEW AMERICAN EDITION* defines – is the body of writings of a language, period, subject etc.; – any printed matter as advertisements or brochures. As such Literature of any county or countries of the world contains the voice of the people articulated through particular dialect or language. How many dialects and languages are spoken all over the world? The exact calculation and survey is beyond human capacity. Although some samples of market research are readily available but their authenticity cannot be taken as appropriate. G.N. Devy, chairman of PLSI – People's Linguistic Survey Of India, says "each time a language is lost the corresponding culture is killed." (1) He further tells that India already had lost 250 languages in last five decades. Most at risk are tribal communities whose children receive no formal education even if they go to school they are taught in one of India's 22 officially recognized languages. PLSI is also working on projects to document about 6000 living languages spoken around the world. *ETHNOLOGUE* – a journal published from Washington (USA) has recorded 6909 known tongues in order to chronicle languages of the World. So it becomes our legitimate task to make concerted efforts for preserving the languages spoken by country's endangered communities. Work is going on and is in progress at regional levels too. A language even if, it is spoken by a small community gives a unique world view of how a man communicates with himself, society, nature and God and also the way he looks at time and space. Thus no communication is possible without language. Divine communication comprise pictograms, logos, symbols or signs. While enlightened persons are seen communicating through signs, symbols nonetheless through gestures. Likewise world-religions deep-seated in cultural milieu, ethics and native traditions of the people reveal an exceptional unity amidst upcoming multiplicity. Man cannot separate him effortlessly from the milieu he is born and brought up. Because the tradition man is born in has native beliefs transmitted by word of mouth from age to age. Tradition is a religious doctrine preserved orally from generation to generation.

As a matter of fact, through language translation man can learn convincingly to interact with people of the world and spruce the way for membership of global

community. So as to materialize dream of assimilating world into a big family – *VASUDHAIVAKUTUMBAKAM* – We have to recognize whole of our planet earth as our home – town by getting hitched diverse streams of globe flowing together to merge and communicate in one markedly single language namely English. The man who at first saw the vision of spiritual unity of the world was Romain Rolland – a lodestar, a savant and a Nobel laureate. He dedicated his whole life to the reconciliation of mankind, strove hard to establish a sound moral world order in which the east and the west could co-exist in perfect harmony. His ambition to bring seemingly contradictory East and West on one and same religio-spiritual platform evoked admiration of Leo Tolstoy, M.K. Gandhi, R.N. Tagore, A.S. Freud, Albert Einstein, J. L. Nehru and a host of others. So much so that his powerful philosophical strong hold and amazing spiritual insight brought him closer to Adi Shankara's Advaitic truth. He set out on a voyage interior, into still unexplored realms of thought, accepted wisdom and atmosphere of the spirit. Wherein we visualize man either a Hindu or a Semitic, in East or in West, as an infinite being, a cosmos manifested in finite material body-atom, branded as microcosm in macrocosm. The silk-worm dies invisibly to become a beautiful butterfly. The serpent vanishes into the rope and the illusion of duality ceases. It is not death but victory over death – a rising and a resurrection, an expedition en route to immortality. How pertinently Romain Rolland elaborates the theory of metempsychosis, the cycle of unending creation as an uninterrupted succession like vapors of water forming clouds than returning back to earth in the form of rain. His talk on polyphonic unity of life, art, creation and literature accordingly cements all discords and dissonances.

I on my behalf taking for deliberation English Literature in addition to Literature produced in English by Indians. The initial phases of English Literature brings together an embryonic religion amply displayed by miracles and mysteries related to the life of ignorant people steeped in religious superstitions and inherited faith. Pantomime or mute plays having predominance of gestures made public all occurrences in spite of imminent probability and cryptic vulnerability aspiring on the whole for a better humanity. The milieu rooted in cultural vulgarity and religious naivete further forms the backdrop to anticipate sophistication and forbearance besides being good enough to provide aesthetic beauty and pastime hilarity. What is more Ancient Roman and Celtic literatures vividly explore amazing tales of augury prevalent among rustic folks. The gradual course of development brings forth revival of classical learning – the Renaissance. It focuses on innumerable texts pertaining to religious literature passing from one continent into another in rapid succession. The dramas of William Shakespeare meticulously explore the traditions, prevalent customs and religious beliefs like superstitions, portends and omens amply practiced by contemporary populace. These still structure a separate research theme under a separate column. The metaphysical lore, part of spiritual literature and puritanical outlook on life is not free from religious bias, predisposition and contemporary ambience. Skepticism and agnosticism further rules the roost to delineate the

doubting Thomas. Mathew Arnold's "Scholar Gipsy" deserves contextual mention. Then the perception of modernity and post-modernity comes to vanguard Post-Millennium epoch wherein Literature and religion co-mingle to boost up the Nobel and the noble in literature. Some Nobel laureates like Harold Pinter though primarily concerned with human predicament and existentialism prefers presenting psycho-analytical views to study the characters so are least concerned with religion. But morality that lies at the root of religion shapes art and articulation of the dramatist. Thomas Tranströmer – a poet who won the Nobel in 2011 because through his cadenced and translucent images gave to Swedish Academy in Stockholm a fresh access to reality, to human identity and a spiritual dimension that often seems to pothole the metaphysical territory. Similar but more down-to-earth so strongly fascinating is Alice Munro better known as the Chekhov Of Canada. Like a caged bird her characters display a perennial quest for freedom – fly into the heights of space to justify the fact that human body is an abode of free-intelligence – a primeval *joie de vivre*.

India on her side not only translated to assimilate the spirit of the west but also familiarized western world by Her ancient wisdom, the so called oldie-goldies for the benefit of English speaking world. One notable Westerner, who interpreted east to the west is Edwin Arnold. Arnold became popular all around the world for his epic poem of eight cantos chiefly known as the Great Renunciation or The Light Of Asia. It deals with the life and times of Prince Siddhartha who later became the Buddha. This poem is an epic of rare excellence and occupies a high place among narrative poems. M.K. Gandhi used to say 'I read The Light Of Asia with even greater interest than I did the Bhagwad Gita'. The poem overall explicitly articulates and beautifully combines religion, culture and literature. Aurovindo – a Maharishi born in India but brought up in Western soil, an extraordinary talent for whom life was a beautiful paradox with God 's key to unlock. He truly had the key so unlocked within no time the vast treasure of cultural synthesis. His "Savitri" being magnum opus and "Life Divine" were prerequisite for the YOGA he practiced in later life that culminated in foundation of the Ashram at Pondicherry. Whenever we talk of Aurovindo we talk of World culture. Tagore's Gitanjali – as it is, an offering of songs at the altar of divinity that is God. A multi-dimensional genius, Tagore attempted almost all genre of literature including music-now known by his own name Ravindra Sangeet. What is more literature cultivated by him, particularly devotional literature of the Vaisnovites rooted, as it is, in cultural beauty and diversity obviously outlines an adjacent propinquity to religion.

Indian culture is unique for it has embraced and invested most of its resources in meeting needs of soul rather than fulfilling refinements of flesh. East-west encounter is another main theme that came into existence after Indians adopted English as a language for creative/critical purpose. Before taking this into account, I would like to raise in brief some questions and their answers postulated in deep spiritual intuitive enquiry by William Blake in his "Vision Of Eternity" – What is the cause of the

Universe? How are we born on earth? Who sustains life in us? Where is our abode? When a human being dies does he cease to exist or he still exists? What is transmigration of soul. etc. Being a major prophetic English poet Blake does not evade any of these and similar issues, he has postulated answers to all of them in his poems like – “Songs Of Experience” and “Jerusalem”. Likewise Blake’s perception of a synoptic vision, complete identity or oneness of God with individual self, seems to echo eternal truth – the Vedantic view. The holiness of man and the faith in the holiness of all life on this earth forms the core of Blake’s spiritual humanism and strengthens his vision. He realized the highest state of meditative blessedness. A sublime state of inner poise and enlightenment. A state beyond all senses, beyond all understanding also beyond all expressions. It is pure unitary consciousness wherein awareness of the world and its multiplicity is completely obliterated. A distinct echo of such an ecstatic state of realizing eternal truth is also heard in – – ‘The blessed mood/In which/The burden of the mystery/Of all this unintelligible world is lightened...../We are laid asleep in body and become a living soul’ W. Wordsworths “Lines Composed A Few Miles Above TINTERN ABBEY”. It is the evolutionary state of spiritual enlightenment in which Blake grew to get abiding bliss. Like W. Blake another western peer is Henry David Thoreau. An American transcendentalist whose seminal mind had an enduring impact beyond the boundaries of America. As I have said earlier about the Nobel, herein noble Thoreau deserves mention. Foremost he was noble from head to toe. His sweet solitude is a rare concept wherein he sees the true loneliness of the spirit. It at once reminds us the sylvan solitude of Indian sages. Mahatma Gandhi regarded Thoreau as his preceptor-the Guru, for his Satyagraha owes its origin to Thoreau’s essay on “Civil Disobedience” which Gandhi coincidentally chanced in and practically experimented in South Africa later on at Champaran in Bihar. Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” is a document of ethical and spiritual values. It is a potent weapon hurled against arbitrary laws of government by the individual. Being sacred voice of conscience it reveals supremacy of moral laws candidly exposed against unjust and unfair laws of the then government. Thoreau’s faith in the power of the spirit is what Gandhi practically experimented throughout his life and career. D.F.Karaka’s book “Out Of Dust” throws enough light on Gandhi, he says “writing on Gandhi is like going on a pilgrimage”. It is because the whole corpus of literature on Gandhi including the Bibliography is colossal. To overcome evil through self suffering and self-sacrifice is self-abnegation. While M.K.Gandhi used Bible and Leo Tolstoy to strengthen his spirit in South Africa, Thoreau in the library of R.W. Emerson avidly read to draw inspiration from Indian scriptures such as – *Manusmṛti*, *the Bhagwad Gita*, *the Vishnu Purana*, *the Rgveda*, *the Upanishads* and *the Hitopadesa* etc. He was so overwhelmed by the Gita that he declared it to be a Universal gospel for no occidental gospel sustained the reader to such a higher, purer, and rarer region of thought than the Bhagwad Gita. Besides being an empirical transcendentalist Thoreau was an ascetic by taste and temperament so practiced non-attachment, non-accumulation and non-

violence. Since the Universe belongs to God, any claim to ownership or personal possession is against moral law and is in fact a sin against divinity. Thoreau's preference for a life of self-abnegation and renunciation bears a striking similarity to Vedanta school of thought. To him worldly allurements were only a passing show, a fleeting moment only to distract the seeker of truth from cultivating self-culture and promoting inner spiritual flowering. That is why he called earthly empire of CZAR only a hammock left by ice. He saw inside individual infinite continents and seas – a vast moral world yet unexplored. Reducing his needs to a bare minimum he cultivated a fabulous garden for deeper meditations so as to communicate with the Ultimate reality. Look inward Angel he said and detach thyself from the false contacts with matter and identification with material envelopments and realize oneness with Absolute reality. Like all psychologists Thoreau believed firmly in the immortality of the soul and doctrines regarding transmigration. At many places in his writings he refers to after – life and second birth as a peculiar religious experience. Physical body being subject to death and decay, Thoreau upheld a serene framework free from mundane manacles thus entirely contented with essence of things hence a complete – spiritual-superman enlightened with beams of heavenly light. Man as per Christians, Hebrews and other occidental religions is a born sinner while the eastern philosophies and metaphysics regard him potentially divine. Man is in the image of God. The concept of man puts east and west diametrically opposed. Nowhere in west man is portrayed as loftier, limitless and sublime as in the east. The question of man's destiny too has allured the west. What Thoreau experienced was a discipline of reconciliation of mind, body, feeling and intuition to secure individual wholeness and balance. As a result man becomes a channel through which the universal expresses itself without obstructions. Notwithstanding social and ethnic cause imbued with sects and cults of various sorts expressed in rhetorical fashion by Indian English Poets, Indian diasporas more particularly Raja Rao combines transcendently yet pragmatically Gandhian philosophy with Vedanta, Non-dualism, Monism and pure-monism in contrast to the dialectical dilemma of man. Raja Rao was a little in higher podium than his contemporaries M.R. Anand & R.K. Narayan because of his encyclopedic knowledge of science and metaphysics. J.L.Nehru often got dumbfounded whenever he saw Raja Rao spitting metaphysics. Along with combining world religions Rao's novels present gallery of intellectuals arguing intensely world-wide philosophies. His first novel "Kanthapura" is called a Gandhi Purana wherein he presents India's freedom struggle, narrates it in an amazing yet accurate legendary mode of Hari-Katha that has no immediate peer. Kanthapura is based on the philosophy of self-less action-the Karma Yoga. His another novel "The Serpent And The Rope" is a voluminous piece of work. It's range is encyclopedic therefore, covers almost the whole of the globe. So has been hailed as magnum opus based on the philosophy of self-knowledge or Jnana Yoga. Another Novelette that has a humorous, queer and teasing title "The Cat And Shakespeare" is a tale illustrating Ramanuja's theory of Marjar Sishu Nyaya. Here Cat is the universal

mother and Shakespeare stands for our day today world – the mundane realities. It integrates Raja Rao's philosophy of Bhakti Yoga wonderfully. Thus in his three successive novels he integrates amazingly Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga along with the material philosophy of Marx in another short novel "Comrade Kirrilov". From cultural point of view Raja Rao is excellent. In post millennium epoch of multiculturalism it seems nice to read Raja Rao avidly. J.L. Nehru's "Discovery of India" garrulously elaborates to discover the unity among diversity of India by drawing two extreme yet parallel examples of a Pathan and a Tamil. Truly Nehru's picture of India is multicolored wherein the one and the same appears in many. I am not adding to a list of bibliography but want to acquaint my readers with the cultural vastness of India expressed through history and archaeology by a renowned British historian A.L. Basham whose book concludes by saying that – "India's civilization warmly welcomed and assimilated the good points from different outside cultures, integrated all so as to thrive and continue and never to be lost". A Sufi Poet S. L. Peeran of Bangalore writing up-to-date has brought Poetry closer to religion. I think thoughtful readers will surely admire him for the niceties of Islamic culture and ways of human conduct. My own poems and an still unpublished article – - "Gahana Karmano Gatih" requires, as it has ample of scope for further discussion on literature and religion and is wholeheartedly dedicated to spiritual ideas and love for God.

Religion by and large is thought to be a set of beliefs in supernatural powers which govern the universe. It also recognizes God as an object of worship. Basically, it incorporates any system of faith or worship or practical piety. Etymologically religion means to link back to God, study of the divine in the human and to seek further in God an ultimate refuge after experiencing the futility and the emptiness of the temporal, the ephemeral and the impermanent. Some regard that in their infancy humanity was without any script so the original message of the CREATOR pertaining to creation was communicated orally. This message by the ancient ancestors was preserved in memory for the posterity and was called religion. Perhaps in the very beginning the purpose of religion would have been to set forth rules for purposeful, wholesome, pure and pious life and ways of living. So also the scriptures. Theology is not apart from religion. It is a science which treats of facts and phenomena of religion and relation between God and Man. Relationship between man and God is a curious aspect of religion because God has no existence apart from man. God manifests in the form of a man. The manifestation of God is never without purpose. Theophany and epiphany also deal – in plenty this aspect of manifestation. India has innumerable stories which narrate the descend, the sudden arrival and purpose of the incarnations appearing time after time. What matters most, is the milieu and the background, the contemporary venue against which the prophets appear as messengers of God. In addition to absolute and full-grown incarnations, we have a large number of Saints, Sages, Seers and Godmen who perform their respective task to represent a particular age or era, time or period in a

country ordained to them. Truly up-till-now, so far, there is colossal mass of literature produced by inquiring minds regarding man and the universe. The birth of man and the birth of the universe. This topic has been dealt at length by almost all branches of learning. If one attempts to go through it all human life will fall short and the residue will still be enormous. What has attracted most of us from the very outset of creation is the nature around us, night sky full of stars and planets, comets which are closely associated with superstitions, the beauty of the dawn and the wonder of sunset highly adored by ancient sages. Not only this but also, we have ample of tales elaborately told about Big-Bang to present day God Particle popularly known as Higgs Boson. Still the controversy that the universe popped out of nothing – the Quantum-Vacuum etc., persists. So though there is scope enough for further debate, I feel elated in coming to a close by acknowledging God as the supreme pervading force with religion as moral code of conduct for the welfare of humanity. As such, I think, if we want to contribute to individual and world peace simultaneously, we should adhere to one basic principle that is to have a mind open to everything and attached to nothing. Besides religion the pursuit of humanity forms an integral part of literature. That is why, so many tributaries originate and grow up, on humanity and humanism, so as to make an all-encompassing confluence. The literature of the globe is overfed with this genre of literature. How exalting are R.N. Tagore's and Thomson's paeans sung in praise of humanity. Despite, humanity all over the globe, is still reeling under social and economic exploitation hence has implicitly taken a major concern, a whirling consternation representing contemporary writers. The theme of acculturation and social injustice has further provided issues and areas to one and all be they of regional, national or international stage. What truly matters is that humanity has been at the core of literature from the initial stages to chronological histories of human evolvment. Culture is much used, abused even misused in multicultural context. It therefore defies all definitions. However it includes enthusiastic participation and spontaneous outburst of joy in the celebration of festivals. In India festivals shine as visible manifestation of a living mythology. As per Indian almanac or calendar, all 365 days of the year are mythologically significant so holy. Sacramental festivals such as birth and naming ceremony. Secular and non-secular sacraments like thread – ceremony, tonsure, studies, marriage, house-hold life and funeral rites. Occupational festivals as New year celebrations. Astronomical festivals such as rituals and rites performed at solstices. Rituals at the eclipses and on full moon day, Theological festivals like Holi, Deepawali, nine-day's festivities at Navratras called Dussehra. Festivals thus involve group activities therefore are sorts of bonds to people and communities altogether. These are reaffirmations of the belief that we are an inseparable member of cosmological culture. So the role of festivals is tremendous mostly in preserving and sustaining the unity in the massive diversity of India's cultural traditions steeped in mythology. Literature too is vast that incorporates in imaginative poetic form or in fictional mode or through enactment of plays the cultural multiplicity of national

even international import. Religion thus in terms of cultures, traditions, customs practiced by various communities of the nation /nations unites humanity through an obvious thread of unity that aids to integrate the globe. It is not mere show of rituals or rites but a code, a formula, a set of rules and the regulations for daily living or diurnal routines of life. So let us proclaim aloud publicly – ‘where there is religion there is victory. assured’ – YATO DHARMAH TATO JAYAH!

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P C K PREM

Life is a Fulfilling Journey as Sages Emphasize Right *Karmas*

To fathom the essence of ancient Indian literature if appears complex and a bit difficult, it carries inherent charm and magnetism. You just go through a few pages of any ancient book. It instills some curiosity with anxiety because the burden of truth and the purity sanctifies 'the inner self.' With each page you travel, it fills you with a sense of deep peace and harmony. It fascinates, instructs, and assists man to know and ponder over its perception of the spirit of Indian Consciousness and Universal Unity. Holy Scriptures all the way through legends and myths give different meanings each time you read. Ancient wisdom continues to not only emphasize deep spiritual, psychological and philosophical truths but also teach how to live a high-quality life. The eternal truth permeates all religions and tells man to become a better human being despite modern absurdity in conduct and piebald sloppiness or unreliability in speech, acts and sequence of learning.

To comprehend the true meaning of old literature, one ought to hold some knowledge of its origin and consequent diffusion. Sage *Vyasa* was not contented after he finished the writing task of breathtaking magnitude of bringing together different strands of thought of *Vedas* and *Mahabharata*. It was a serious cause of unhappiness and frustration. Celestial sage *Narada* could understand the inherent reasons of *Vyasa's* sorrow, discontent and unhappiness. *Narada* admires the sage that he had accomplished a wonderful work and elucidated the meaning of *Karma* and *Jnana* essential for human beings if they wished to attain salvation, which was normally the objective of man in ephemeral existence.

However, it was not possible for an ordinary man to comprehend the quintessence easily, and so, he ought to write about the importance of devotion – *bhakti* so that people in existing times of crisis, intolerance and impatience understand the correct meaning of devotion in difficult times. Consequently, sage *Vyasa* deliberates long and resolves to write *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana* wherein he emphasizes the substance of devotion – *bhakti* and later on, the sacred message of the blessed book travels to Sage *Suka*, son of sage *Vyasa* and thereafter to King *Parikshita* and then to Sage *Suta*. Sage *Suta* revealed the divine message to a gathering of seers and sages in the forest of *Naimisaranya*, and afterward, the saintly men broadened the

magnificence of wisdom of the great *Purana* everywhere, and made it easy for man to understand it.

Hindus consider *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana* as the most blessed text, which is storehouse of all wisdom and knowledge of the world and it is the most important religious book of *Hindus*. It elucidates the depth of philosophy in simple language as enshrined in *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and ancient scriptures including *Puranas*, which are more than fifty. However, it is also a fact that *Puranas* also tell truth of life and existence through various inherent educative anecdotes and legends. Immense ease and simplicity of the book makes it quite popular, and people often organize *yajnas* – sacrificial ceremonies to achieve a solemn purpose, listen to the tales and sing hymns in the glory of Lord *Krishna*, an incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*. Tremendous spiritual and religious value, the book carries with it and the mere listening to the various discourses eliminates worldly, physical and materialistic sufferings, and grants divine luminosity and salvation people believe.

Puranas (known as the fifth *Veda*) like the great epics have source in interconnected historical facts, and the sacred books idolize and praise Lord *Vishnu*, the Supreme Person, who assumes various forms of gods and deities (The great Trinity, *Shakti* and other gods). The objective is to teach man the true art of life based on truth and righteousness, the *Sattva* gunas. In *Vedas*, the path of *karmas* (deeds), penance (*tapa or upasana*), and Knowledge and wisdom (*Jnana*) gets prominence whereas the *Puranas* put emphasis on human beings to recognise the true significance of devotion because devotion – *bhakti* is the right path to attain deliverance (*moksa or mukti*). If a man pursues the path of religion, he understands the distinction between ‘the right and the wrong’, and therefore, the correct preference leads to true contentment and bliss.

To sustain contemporary perception, connotation and susceptibility of primeval times is the objective so that the sacred message of *Srimad Bhagavata* is understandable irrespective of location, age and times. It is an endeavor to portray the essence of scripture from the modern point of view. One understands the fundamental nature of devotion (*bhakti*) if one makes efforts to understand the complexities of acts (*karma*), and endeavours to attain the objective. The will to make an effort is noticeable when one approaches the right pathway to deliverance (*Moksa*).

To hold on to a predetermined prototype is not easy when deeper philosophical truths, metaphysical thoughts and anxieties interfere. Probing into the psyche of ancient sages and seers instrumental in interpreting and redefining cultural heritage is the purpose in most of the religion-oriented discourses where one finds integration and resuscitation of elemental value system. To transmit primeval energy and vigour to modern age looks emotive but after preliminary fervor, zeal and excitement fade out, the questions of knowledge crop up amidst doubts and misgivings. Therefore, man needs devotion, meditation and endurance but it gives pleasure as one learns even a bit of it and conveys ancient message of righteousness and truth.

Truth and righteousness are the cardinal principles of *dharma*, and these more often than not guide men. The genuine nature of acts or activities or exploits (*karmas*), excellent or virtuous acts (*sukarmas*) and dreadful or iniquitous (*kukarmas*) actions originates from three qualities (*gunas* – *sattvik*, *rajasik* and *tamasik*), the three modes of *Prakriti*. Qualities are modes of material nature. *Sattva* means – preservation, integrity, truth, dedication, love and compassion, absolution and the virtues bring awareness, optimism, contentment and knowledge. *Rajas* is creation, infatuation, ravenousness, yearning, pleasure of the senses and the qualities of desires, self-worth, protectiveness, jealousy and abhorrence govern it, which lead to unrestricted longings and attachment, and therefore, one is attached to material action and becomes a victim of *Maya*-deluding energy. The quality of *Tamas* symbolizes – destruction, ruin, ignorance and self-image resulting in weariness, lethargy, obscurity, inertia, indifference and delusion and then... the final annihilation.

Individuals' patterns of life are sure to go through far-reaching transformation with the predominance of a particular *guna* (quality).

Pervasiveness of *tamasik* qualities with slightly perceptible shades of *rajasik* qualities causes disintegration in the quality of life that lead to corruption, fraudulence and degradation in contemporary life. Many allegories surface in the conduct and character even as a man knows flaws and untruths he lives with, ignoring virtues, justice and rectitude. A modern man lives at various levels with outward truthfulness and restrained play of deception and untruthfulness. Every created being continues the journey and if the light of truth and knowledge enlightens, he travels ahead with faith, self-confidence and resilience, which are signs of a man of near perfection if not absolute exactitude.

Man grows, expands and learns art of life where family and society act as the strong foundation to march ahead confronting obstacles and challenges. He never exists in a vacuum or nothingness but lives and exists in the already obtainable surroundings. He inherits social, economic, intellectual and religious life when he takes birth and the environment becomes a learning school from the day he begins to crawl. As he grows up, he begins to speak, walk and gradually understands human relations and society. He struggles, encounters difficulties and undergoes sufferings, struggles to get rid of these discomfoting issues and evaluates words and deeds/actions (*karmas*). Many thoughts of principles and practical difficulties assault, and he decides between the trustworthy and the unscrupulous as every recognized or unfamiliar acquaintance in society teaches.

It is improper to thrust aside or ignore work either obligatory or otherwise. *Karma* defines and expresses an individual life. A life of activity is significant and superior to a life of idleness or lethargy. In *Bhagavad-Gita*, lord *Krishna* says –

Niyatam kuru karma twain karma jyaayo hei akarmanaha
Sarirayatra-api cha te na prasidhyeda akarmanah

You should perform allotted duties – the obligatory functions, because action is superior to inaction. If you abstain from action, you cannot maintain your body even. (Chapter III, Verse 8)

Activity is sign of life. To be reflexive is nearly death. *Karma* is essential and it is difficult to say that a man is unconscious of the causes of pain. Any wrong act causes agony. Even a word, a step or a hint if not projected with purity of mind, leads to the house of sin. A search for a permanent resolution remains incomplete because a man very soon learns that joys and pains in life are concomitant, and not a moment goes without experiencing the pleasure and suffering born of *karmas*. If pleasures gain ascendancy, the sufferings subside but the incidence of the twin attributes continues. Sufferings in a man's life originate from the obvious or imperceptible backdrops of blemishes or intuitive limitations (negative, iniquitous, unethical or positive, optimistic, ethical) when he fails to fine-tune or reorganize priorities of life. Sufferings are the corollaries of failures in the fulfillment of desires, and these quite often drive man to miseries or delight. A man cannot grow or progress without a life of activity irrespective of the nature of activity whether good or bad – principled or immoral.

It is essential to keep the body fit if one is to attain objective of life. A perfect body is never disheartened for the capacity to continue struggle is unbroken. A full life of pleasure needs satisfying involvement in constructive actions. Merely to discharge mandatory functions is inadequate. Growing in life is possible if diversification of acts or *karmas* exists for it leads to progress both inner and outer. Some hold the view that it leads man to bondages but it is a reasonable stance. In one's acts, one can progress in life and attain material prosperity but he can also grow ethically and spiritually very strong if he is detached and cares little for the fruit of *karma*. Think acts as if a great *yajna* (*yagya*) where a man is free from material attachment.

The ethical merit of words, thoughts and acts is better, consequential and inspirational than the acts done with the iniquitous objective a man realizes in the end. Moral quality leads to joy abundant but unscrupulous conduct brings miseries. A man ought to continue a life of activity or inactivity irrespective of the consequences. Lord *Krishna* says –

*Karmani eva adhikaraste mah phalesu kadachana
Mah karma phala hetu bjur mah te sango astu akarmani*

Your right is to work (duty) only but you have no right over the fruit. Neither you should become an instrument in turning *karma* (act) bear fruit (reward) nor should you incline towards inaction. (Chapter II, Verse 47, *Bhagavad-Gita*).

It is obvious in *Gita* that if a man considers his acts as a sacrifice – *yagya*, it is naturally devoid of any attachment to fruit of action or to material world, and thoughts of wellbeing of man and society overwhelm as there is no motivation in

one's action. A man exercising mental control is a *yogi* in the real world wise men affirm.

If a man acts with perfect self-control and takes pleasure in the internal uniformity and equilibrium, it is an act of highest virtue. A man's quality of discipline and self-restraint depends upon absolute indifference for any act done and its reward.

Durena hy avaram kama buddhiyogad dhanamjaya

Buddhau saranam anvichcha drpanah phala hetvah

(Chapter II, Verse 49, Bhagavad-Gita)

If self-interest or any motif guides an act, it is of low character and the consequences bring desolation. However, if *karma* performed in absolute strength of will of mind, it is superior. In truth, the essence of an act from the viewpoint of an ordinary *Hindu* is service of man and society. The *Vedas* do not say differently. When one talks of acts of men or *karmas*, the *Vedas* affirm that to do one's *karmas* is strengthening of social bonds and consciousness. In many verses of *Rigveda*, social anxieties get appropriate voice as a man notices in *Srimad* and *Bhagavad Gita*. The verses below speak eloquently but subtly about the duties, obligations and *karmas* of man. If a man wants from man and society rational and comforting environment to live, it is reciprocal. *Rigveda* 110.117) says –

“The farmer with his plough makes it possible to grow food for the people. Only he who treads each measured step covers the distance and reaches his destination. A teacher who imparts his knowledge is more highly esteemed than a silent sage is. A generous individual is for superior to a miserly, wealthy man. May all the members of society have a common objective! May their hearts beat as one and their minds think alike, so that with their combined energies and diverse skills, they may be able to accomplish their objectives satisfactorily.”

Karmas, the acts of man determine the course of man's destiny and if one speaks of collective thought pattern, it designs one's future life. *Karmas* if performed for the sake of community prove blissful, and benefit man and society.

Honesty and integrity determine quality of acts whether good or bad. Truth and probity bring happiness whereas deception and wickedness cause sufferings. An anguished or sorrowful ordinary man seeks refuge at the feet of the god or goddess, or resorts to esoteric mechanism. He slowly comprehends the nature of acts (*karmas*) and hesitantly turns to prayer and worship, a better solution at least, to get rid of pains and afflictions. A man explores the nature of *karmas* and bit by bit understands that every act originates from the attributes of three *gunas* namely *sattva* (symbolizes – virtues, moral principles, love, worship, prayer, effulgence, compassion and understanding of ‘the self’ and a wish to go beyond the earthly existence), *rajas* and *tamas*. The conduct and nature of man depends upon the impact of *gunas*. When he turns to religious books, he knows the true meaning of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Various scriptures exhort men to live honestly and truthfully, and a life of *dharma*. In virtuous

karmas, is inherent the *dharma* (a life of truth and righteousness) of man, for a *karma* performed with a righteous intent to serve man is *dharma*, and it forever functions as a motivating factor in life.

Karmas – the acts of individuals appear simple, multipart and enigmatic as well in nature. However, inherent instincts of survival decide an individual's life. *Karmas* are precursors to human relations and give birth to feelings of love, passion, anxieties, thirst, uncertainties, jealousy, hatred, greed and attachment. *Karma* carries the yearnings for reward of whatever nature it may be. Social obligations presuppose definiteness and thus, liberation from worldly joys or sufferings becomes difficult, for attachment to the material world causes pains and joys.

Comprehension of the nature of acts is imperative to determine its social connotations. *Karmas*, if understood correctly, guide a man to freedom from earthly shackles. 'Pleasant and enjoyable' *karmas* called *preyas* (pleasant) do not create obstacles, for such *karmas* cause attachment to transient material joys, and bring pain, grief and sorrow. Virtuous and humanistic thoughts originating from acts enrich man with inner ecstasy and bliss and at this moment, *karmas* are bereft of the thoughts of reward. When one is just worried about the righteous sway of acts it will bring wellbeing of humankind, it is a positive sign of disinclination toward the fruit of action. This possibility brings hope. Impassiveness to incentive brings inner peace and proves enlightening not only to a man but also to the world. Acts (*karmas*) attain a unique characteristic called *shreyas* (good). The objective of acts or deeds (*karmas*) is to infuse inner joy and delight in man and society and so, *karmas* put on the face of *dharma* (truth and uprightness), and provide joy and happiness.

Through righteous and truthful acts, a man can spread message of love and peace, truthfulness and justice, self-sacrifice and abandonment of attachment to the material world. Ethical approach to relations and material joys transforms every word and act into a commitment to the welfare of human beings and society. A spirit of objectivity and distance in the reward or fruit of *karma* is cause of supreme bliss. To perform duties rightly is the real *dharma* of man irrespective of the status he holds in the social, economic or political hierarchy, otherwise ubiquitous putrefaction stares and it is a dangerous sign.

Karmas – righteous or impious determine the nature of life from the social, economic, psychological, philosophic, political and religious aspects. *Karmas* are integral to the essence of *dharma* and evaluate man, who acts with a sense of integrity, truth and uprightness essential for the growth, evolution and affluence of humankind. Man's enrichment not only relates to material expansion but also growth of inner man ('the Self') when he adheres to principles of *dharma* – truth and righteousness.

All the saints and sages in the past advised and encouraged man to perform his duties religiously and righteously and therefore, continued to spread virtues. The *Rig-Veda* says –

O citizens of the world,
 Live in concord and harmony
 Live properly organized and show cooperative spirit
 Speak truth with one voice
 And resolutions and decisions should be made in unison,
 This is what our great ancient seers and sages,
 The great leaders and wise teachers and preceptors
 Have said and adhered to these principles righteously.
 In the same way, O citizens, you should not falter
 When carrying out your duties.

A spirit of altruism, cordiality and self-sacrifice in *karma* encourages love, compassion and reverence for the man and society. When a man invokes innate energy born of pure and righteous *karma*, one espouses a great cause for the benefit of human race. *Karma*, not conducive to the ethical growth of man destroys the objective of life, and is termed *adharma* (unethical conduct, unrighteousness) and does not contribute to the true expansion of humankind. Culture of values and graciousness harmonizes social, economic and political thought and proves definitely therapeutic little by little. The real joys of life relate to the inner man – ‘the self’. Life of truth, integrity, honesty, uprightness, ethical principles, is a source of strength for civilization and so create cultured and enlightened men.

Karmas depend upon the nature of man (*prakriti*-a mother of creation). It has three dominant constituents – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. If a man fails to restrain *prakriti* it brings aberrations, sense of defeatism, failures, transient joys and victory. Illusory notions about life and the ingredients of *prakriti*, determine existence of man.

An implication of *karmas* – the consequence of three *gunas* born of *Prakriti* is obvious.

*na hi kaschit kasanami api jatu tisithati akarmakrit
 karayate he a-vash karma, sarvaha prakrit jaiha gunaiha*

No one can ever really stay action-less even for a moment because everyone is helpless and is driven to action by the force of *gunas* – qualities that are born of nature – *prakriti*.

(The Bhagavad Gita Verse 5 Ch. 3)

One can easily infer that *prakriti* is the foundation and source of all-embracing *karmas* and the individual soul is the field of experiences good or bad. *Purusa* symbolizes father and as such, nature appears omnipresent and pervasive, and the birth of created beings represents and signifies the principles of sacred union between *prakriti* and *purusa*. It means the birth of soul (individual) in the wombs of purity, goodness, and is certainly optimistic, affirmative, or pessimistic nursing negative or unconstructive qualities.

The knowledge of nature (*prakriti* and *purusa*) and its influence on man and society reveals many essential characteristics of human behaviour. An analysis of the

power of the three constituents of nature (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) facilitates correct approach to man's acts, words and thoughts.

These ever-existing *gunas* function in the mind and heart, and effectively manipulate intellect and psychological frame. *Sattva guna* symbolizes purity, grace, decency, truth and honesty and these virtues illuminate the man within and create an aura outside of love, peace, compassion and harmony. *Sattva* chases away miseries, vices, greed and maliciousness. Cultivating *sattvik* qualities transforms life, and the man feels supremely blessed because it is ascendancy from the material world to the intellectual and the ethical, and finally, a step towards the spiritual. Virtuous qualities (*sattva gunas* – truth, righteousness, serenity and poise) fill life with inner harmony and pure thoughts and a man turns into an embodiment of love and compassion.

Rajasik temperament harbours feelings of passion, attachment and infatuation for money and power, magnificence and splendour. A man of *rajasik* nature is interested in the pleasures and joys of the material comforts and power. The preponderance of *rajasik* qualities distracts a man from *sattvik* living. At times, he evinces curiosity in virtues, performs certain virtuous *karmas* and so, helps society. If he acts with *sattvik* propensities, it is a temporary phase because he is more eager to enjoy life of wealth, comforts and power that damage, destroy and impair *sattva gunas*, and the struggle continues and if *sattva gunas* overwhelm, it sanctifies a man and he acts for the benefit of all.

Undoubtedly, he contributes to the growth of life because he is self-motivated, vibrant and energetic in diverse endeavours and achieves brilliance but the talent gives transitory joys while 'the self' – the inner man, is partially gratified. Therefore, a *sattvik* man glorifies and brightens up the inner man and spreads goodwill, truth and wholesomeness outside, and proves an asset to the society. A man of *rajasik* nature though brings material radiance in life yet the inner man ('the self') is rarely at peace, for infatuation and ambitions disturb and provoke him so he is ever disgruntled within and outside and yearns for more power and wealth.

Tamasik character is prone to dark areas of life and often indulges in sadistic acts almost inhuman and violent. A man of *tamasik* nature casts a magic spell on men with *sattvik* and *rajasik* qualities, for in the initial stages *tamasik* qualities appear pleasing to the mind, heart and senses. A *tamasik* person pollutes the environment where *sattva* and *rajas gunas* survive. Lethargy, neglect, violence, inertia, passions, cruelty, harshness and callousness are the overwhelming qualities of *tamasik* man. He is deadly heartless and unsympathetic and least obliging to man and society. He is violent and sardonic, and derives pleasure when human beings suffer.

Unprejudiced and in-depth analysis reveals that *rajas* and *tamas* qualities are less demanding and more pleasure giving and therefore, drive a man to materialistic consideration where *tamasik* man is more spiteful, atrocious, sadistic and ferociously insensitive, and inhumanly infects surroundings. To love and acquire wealth and power are the characteristics of *rajasik* nature, and the *rajasik* man directs energies and endeavours towards the attainment of material objects. *Rajasik* man is not only interested in self-promotion and glory but also exercises authority and resources for the wellbeing of man and humanity.

Nature of *Karmas* and Three *Gunas*

Life of a man on earth in multifaceted forms and shapes depends upon the nature of *karmas* born of *gunas*. The words of *Swetasvatara Upanishad* (Verse 11) are pertinent.

*Sankalpāna sparshāna drishṭi mohaiha grasamābu vrishtya atmaviviridhājanāma
Karmanūgnāya nukramēna dehi sathanēshu rūpayāna abhi samprapada yate*

As food and drink, contribute to the growth and energy of physique, similarly the progress and growth of an individual soul (the inner self) depend upon the result of various *karmas*. Virtuous *karmas* help a soul grow rapidly. Righteous and truthful *karmas* purify the heart as food nurtures body. Virtuous *karmas* born of *sattvik gunas* nourish the inner self (the soul).

As one goes a step ahead, one finds that a man of *rajas* qualities must move towards *sattvic* region while a man of *tamasik* nature ought to ascend from the *tamas* to the *rajas*, and then, make efforts to gain purity and bliss. It enriches life provided he strives hard to fill life with *sattva gunas* and the path leads to freedom from worldly bondages. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* carry distinctive personality traits in them that guide and control a man. Ultimately, *sattvik* life it is that fills life and existence with absolute ecstasy, inner knowledge, wisdom and harmony. Disturbing surfeit of *rajas* and *tamas gunas* and deadly prevalence of *tamas*, give birth to greed, violence and corruption without compunction.

Most of the scriptures expound the character of *karmas* in multiple perspectives that not only open the mind to reason but also lead a human being to supreme pleasure he derives from devotion, *bhakti*.

Unyielding endeavors to look into the social, economic and political thought-patterns of the age of *Mahabharata*, *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana* and other religious books as enshrined in numerous texts, enlighten. The texts illuminate the emotional and philosophical anxieties of men, sages and kings of ancient times. Ethical values, truth and realistic understanding of life underline the significance. In most of the cases, sages and seers offer counsels full of knowledge and wisdom and at times, through little tales and legends try to give them a pragmatic shape to facilitate understanding. If sufferings overwhelm men, efforts to find solutions also continue. To reprimand and censure iniquity is an accepted principle of life, and one earnestly wishes to live a good and ethical life even as one is engaged in *karmic dharma*. A man if understands the complex and multifaceted assault of *karmas*' nature, and penetrates within to comprehend 'the self,' surrenders to 'the self' and dedicates to the supreme reality with a spirit of devotion, he attains the objective of supreme peace and eternal contentment.

Karmas as *Dharma* Symbolize Purity of Objectives

Man is a social animal and never lives in being alone. A man never exists in vacuum and while living he has to survive in the already obtainable surroundings. He inherits social, economic and religious life the moment he takes birth and this situation becomes a learning school for him from the day he begins crawling and mumbling in apparent innocent selfless smile with light of hope and curiosity in the eyes. As he grows up, he begins to speak, walk and gradually understands human relations, society and the moment he is out of the college, he somewhat knows what he is to do in life with the available social, economic and political thought and wealth. A simple thesis it is and everyone knows. As a man struggles, he encounters difficulties and it leads to sufferings. He evaluates his acts – *karmas*, as each person understands. He learns one should speak the truth. Many thoughts of ethical nature assault and he faces a situation where he has to decide between the good and the bad in life as every human and material bond in the society, known or unknown teaches that moral values strengthen life.

Until then, a man lives life as it comes to him but slowly as he learns vagaries of life and existence constituting joys and pleasures, sufferings and pains of earthly life, he gets ready to confront realities of worldly life. Apparently, a man understands that agonies and miseries are inseparable from life but surprisingly, he fails to grasp the causes and if he understands, he tries to ignore. When sufferings are primary in life then, why a man does not make efforts to find a way out. If remedy exists for a diseased and ailing body, why then sufferings and anguish of the mind and intellect, should not find an answer. Genuine efforts to eliminate sufferings and pains whether mental or objective from life are essential but after one gets relief, one forgets and restarts life. No one can escape work – either obligatory or otherwise. *Karma* defines and expresses life. A life of activity is much more significant and superior than a life of redundancy or lethargy. In *Bhagavad-Gita*, lord *Krishna* says –

*Niyatam kuru karma twain karma jyaayo hei akarmanaha
Sarirayatra-api cha te na prasidhyeda akarmanah*

You should perform allotted duties – the obligatory functions, because action is superior to inaction. If you abstain from action, you cannot maintain your body even. (Chapter III, Verse 8)

Activity in life is necessary and none can say that he does not know the causes of pain but search for a permanent resolution remains incomplete, for a man very soon learns that joys and pains in life are concomitant, and not a moment goes without experiencing pleasure and suffering while a man is engaged in *karma*. If pleasures gain ascendancy, the sufferings subside but the incidence of the twin attributes continues. Sufferings in a man's life originate from certain obvious or imperceptible backdrops of flaws or intuitive limitations (negative or unethical and positive or ethical qualities) when a man fails to adjust or reorganize priorities of life. Sufferings born of the failure of fulfillment of desires after putting in efforts with sincerity usher in a life of miseries or delight with offshoots of reward or punishment and here, one infers that a man cannot grow or progress without a life of activity.

A man is aware of the consequences of his acts and words spoken. He understands the virtues or the sins inherent in the spoken words as well as acts, and invariably knows the retribution for acts or *karmas* performed with malevolent intent. For an ordinary man, it is essential to know the fundamental reasons. He questions within. Why he did a wrong or right and what for? What was the purpose? When he analyzes each word and act, he arrives at the probable cause of thoughts, words and actions. Only in-depth penetration into the mind's varied fluctuating thoughts is required to know the origin. It is not possible to know the source of each thought and emotion that crowd the mind but a few sources will be adequate to figure out what actually goes on inside.

He realizes that the ethical worth in words, thoughts and acts is superior, meaningful and inspiring than acts done with iniquitous objective. Moral quality leads to joys abundant while unprincipled conduct brings miseries. A question naturally disturbs as to why this happens. Whatever may be the consequences of a life of activity or inactivity, one must continue to do one's duties irrespective of the results that is what one learns when the great Lord says –

*Karmani eva adbhikaraste mah phalesu kadachana
Mah karma phala hetu bjur mah te sango astu akarmani*

Your right is to work (duty) only but you have no right over the fruit. Neither you should become an instrument in turning your karma (act) bear fruit (reward) nor should you incline towards inaction. (Chapter II, Verse 47, Bhagavad-Gita)

One should perform his duties well without ever thinking of the fruit. To engage oneself selflessly in some work for the wellbeing of people is a virtue, every man should imbibe.

To live with a sense of truth and probity brings happiness while pretense and depravity cause sufferings. An ordinary man undergoing sufferings would seek refuge at the feet of god or goddess or consult *pundits* or astrologers for getting rid of the agonies. He would slowly grasp the nature of acts – *karmas*, and with a hesitant mind would turn to prayer and worship, as life of *dharma* appears a better solution to pains and afflictions. The natural inference is that every act has an excellent or awful

expression and one needs to be very guarded in choosing an act. Consequence of one's *karma* has a relation with reincarnation. Until the individual soul – *jiva* is purified it continues to take birth after birth and then, it attains final beatitude. Right act changes the course of life and when a state beyond the reach of *karma* reaches, it is merger with the divinity, Supreme Bliss.

Nature of *karma* determines the character of man here and hereafter. Analytical intellects speak of various kinds of *karmas*. A collective effect of acts tells how long a soul will live in a particular body before entering another. Right attitude, attributes and propensity is the result of earlier life, what good a man earns from past. What you do now in the present sets the agenda of action for you or any human being in life next whether he will take birth as a human being or an animal. The best *karma* carries no desire for name, fame or status. The thought of *karma* with slight changes exists in some other religions also.

Exploring the nature of *karmas* is required if man is to recognize its involvedness, and progressively comprehend that every act originates from the attributes of three *gunas* namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The conduct and nature of man depends upon the impact of *gunas* on him. When he turns to religious books, he knows the true meaning of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Various scriptures urge men to live truthfully and candidly, which is nothing but a life of *dharma*. In *karma* of truth and upright nature is inherent the *dharma* of man, for *karma* performed with a clean motive to serve man is *dharma*, for religion is not the subject of scrutiny where it functions as a motivating factor in the life of a man.

A man confronts difficulties in life and at that inexplicable mental make-up; he turns to religion and god. For a while, peace and inspiration permeate mind and heart. Noble thoughts persuade a man to act elegantly. Life of a contemporary man irrespective of social, economic or other status appears contaminated as negative qualities namely – jealousy and hatred, passions, greed and aggrandizement determine his life one witnesses around. Unfortunately, even those who should lead the people to growth and prosperity are unquestionably not carrying out their duties appropriately, and so a disheartening scenario engulfs.

Energetic and vibrant mind is not at peace and therefore words, thoughts and feelings at the experiential level within bear the burden of corporeal world. Acts and *karmas* are inscrutable in nature and inherent instincts of survival decide the individual's course of life. Acts or *karmas* are precursors to relations with created beings so feelings of love, passion, anxieties, thirst, uncertainties, jealousy, hatred, greed and attachment take birth. *Karma* carries the yearning for reward of whatever nature it may be. Social obligations presuppose definiteness and thus, liberation from worldly joys or sufferings thereof becomes difficult.

Karmas, if understood correctly, guide a man to freedom from earthly shackles. *Karmas* acquire varied characteristics depending upon man's nature. *Karmas* connect him to societal relations in totality and prove bondages. *Karmas*, pleasant and

enjoyable when do not create obstacles, are *preyas*, for such *karmas* cause attachment to material joys transient, and therefore, fleeting nature of enjoyment brings pain, grief and sorrow. Virtuous and humanistic thoughts originating from acts enrich man with inner ecstasy and bliss, for at this moment, *karmas* are bereft of the thoughts of reward. Impassiveness towards fruit brings inner peace, and proves enlightening not only to man as such but also to the world. Here, *karmas* attain a unique characteristic called *shreyas*.

*Preyas and Shreyas –
The Pleasant and the Good Karmas*

Meaningful discourse on the significance of *preyas* and *shreyas* forms a solid background of conversation of tremendous import and principle between a young *Nachiketas* and *Yama*. Lord *Yama* in chapter I, *valli ii* (*valli* is attached to different branches of holy *Vedas* as if a creeper or a division) of *Kathopanishad* explains that *shreya* means good or in other words, good means *sattva gunas* or virtues. It is knowledge that takes a man to deliverance – the final liberation. On the other hand, *prayas* relates to sensual joys and enjoyments, having basis in *tamas gunas*. It is also obvious that *rajas gunas* do contain elements of *tamas* and thus, a life of purity appears illusive. Human beings engaged in acts or *karmas* definitely attain what is good and noble and what is pleasurable and enjoyable. Therefore, it is apparent that the objective of *karmas* is to infuse inner joy and delight to man and society. *Karmas* put on the face of *dharma* – truth and uprightness, when these provide joy and happiness. It is right duty, conduct or truth. The essence of *dharma* in almost all religions is right conduct, law and doctrine or moral principles, right belief, conduct and true and right knowledge. Right and truthful way of life is integral part of all religious structures.

‘Truth and forthrightness’ is essence of righteous frame of mind the spirit of acts and therefore, thoughts and words justify acts and then, *karmas* become *dharma* and this inimitable amalgamation glorifies man’s existence. It is oversimplifying a complex issue but for an ordinary man, it is so simple and yet, carries great significance. Through upright and truthful acts, a man can spread message of love and peace, truthfulness and justice, self-sacrifice and abandonment of attachment to the material world, for material infatuation causes inner and outer chaos in thoughts and acts.

Ethical approach to relations and material joys around transforms every expression and act into an indissoluble obligation to human beings and human race as such. In other words, it is a spirit of disinterestedness in the reward or fruit of *karma*. To perform one’s duties whether social or otherwise, is the real *dharma* of man irrespective of the status or position he holds in the social, economic or political

hierarchy. In this light, if one weighs up words and acts of a modern man, the decay ubiquitous would be obvious.

Religion, the moral filament nay *dharma* means scriptural knowledge and adherence to the principles of *dharma* undoubtedly but from a realistic perspective, it relates to routine civilized and straightforward activities of man. In reality, *karmas* infused with the spirit of morality determine the entire social life from the social, economic, psychological and philosophic, political and religious aspects. *Karmas* are integral to the quintessence of *dharma*, and evaluate man, who performs duties and accomplishes social obligation and miscellaneous functions relating to the wellbeing of man and society with a sense of integrity, truth, principles and uprightness essential for the growth, realization and material comfort of man and humanity.

Impact of Affluence and Growth on 'The Inner Man'

Enrichment of man not only relates to material opulence but the growth of inner man that begins to tread the path to truth and ultimate salvation spreading light and hopes around. Our saints and sages have always encouraged men to perform duties religiously and righteously. In simple words, one is attracted to these words of *Veda* –

O citizens of the world,
Live in concord and harmony
Live properly organized and show cooperative spirit
Speak truth with one voice
And resolutions and decisions should be made in unison,
This is what our great ancient seers and sages,
The great leaders and wise teachers and preceptors
Have said and adhered to these principles righteously.
In the same way, O citizens, you should not falter
When carrying out your duties.

(Rig-Veda)

Straightforward and unadorned words speak of perennial truth. If a man accomplishes his work religiously, it means he is self-sacrificing and not attached to the fruit of *karma*. Only this spirit among men will lead to peace and harmony, which a modern man needs so urgently. Graciousness, purity, a spirit of philanthropy and selflessness in *karma* encourages love and respect for the society while helping the distressed and the suffering. However, when a man invokes instinctive energy born of uncontaminated and righteous *karma* he espouses a great cause for the benefit of society and humanity. *Karma* not conducive to the ethical growth of man and society destroys the objective of life, and it is *adharma* – immoral or disparaging acts, words and thoughts. An act of *adharma* or unrighteousness or dissipation does not benefit or purify man but contaminates and wipes out refinement. *Adharma*, in truth, does not contribute to the true development of man and humankind.

Traditions of supremely elevating values and affability harmonize social, economic and political thought, prove therapeutic little by little but definitely it cleanses not only an individual but also the polluted system. A contemporary man

adopts a negligent and deceptive approach deliberately, for he cannot fight against the forces of insatiability, hatred, corruption and dishonesty but wishes to grow materially with the support of these negative qualities. He refuses to follow laws of *dharma* or righteous act, and thereafter, disfigures and contaminates cultural values based on *karmas* as *dharma* or *dharma* as *karmas* or one may call religious aphorisms. The acts or *karmas* are causes of not only joys and pleasures but also afflictions as said earlier. The real joys of life relate to inner man – 'the self'. If a man lives with truth, integrity, honesty, uprightness, ethical principles, he becomes a source of strength to the society.

Mystifying Play of *Prakriti* and *Purusa* – Design of *Karmas*

It is important that a discriminating man comprehends the real nature of man. *Karmas* depend upon the nature of man – *prakriti*, having dominant components of three *gunas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. A man ought to exercise control over nature and conduct. Without restraint, *prakriti* brings aberrations, failures, transitory joys and victory, and illusory notions about life and existence. The ingredients of *prakriti* determine total existence of man with its social and intellectual life and if *prakriti* is predominant, it causes instability and disarray because the three *gunas* – evolved from *prakriti*, namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which review and appraise the attitude and conduct of man further determine its journey to good or bad. Therefore, one can conclude that *prakriti* is the mother of creation.

The truth and fact reveal another implication of *karmas* – the consequence of above three *gunas* born of *Prakriti* –

*na hi kaschit kasanami api jatu tisithati akarmakrit
karayate he a-wash karma, sarvaha prakrit jaiha gunaiha*

No one can ever really stay action-less even for a moment because everyone is helpless, and the force of *gunas* – qualities that are born of nature – *prakriti* drive it to action.

(The Bhagavad Gita Verse 5 Ch. 3)

It is obvious that *prakriti* is the origin and source of wide-ranging *karmas* and its related ramifications and thus, the individual soul is the field of experiences of enjoyments and grief or distress. *Purusa* symbolizes father and as such, nature appears ubiquitous and pervasive, and the birth of created beings represents and signifies the principles of sacred union between the *prakriti* and the *purusa*. In other words, it means it is the birth of soul (individual) in the womb of purity or righteousness – optimistic or affirmative, or pessimistic or uncooperative qualities. The knowledge of nature – *prakriti* and *purusa*, and its influence on man and society would reveal many essential features of human behaviour. An analysis of the power of the three constituents of nature – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* would facilitate correct approach to man's acts, words and thoughts. These characteristics of nature operate

in the life of man ingeniously and unnoticeably. Its subtle, indirect and invisible working in the life of man brings many changes.

All these *gunas* function inside the man – in the mind and heart, and effectively influence the intellect and psychological frame. Disguised ‘inner man’ or ‘the inner self’ remains unnoticed and undetected until it signals its presence in acts and thoughts-in truth, the prototype of *karmas*. *Sattva guna* symbolizes purity, grace, decency, truth and honesty in words and acts. It illuminates the man within and creates an aura outside spreading message of love, peace, compassion and harmony. *Sattva* chases away miseries, vices, greed and maliciousness from life. If men inculcate *sattvic* qualities – purity and sacredness in conduct, thoughts, feelings and acts, society and the world will turn out supremely consecrated. It is ascendancy from the material world to the intellectual and the ethical, and finally, a step towards the spiritual.

No doubt, virtuous qualities (*sattva gunas* – truth, righteousness, serenity and poise) fill an individual *jiva* with inner harmony and pure thoughts and at that moment, a man turns into an embodiment of love and compassion so essential for the growth and progress of man and society. In truth, good things happening around bring brilliance on the faces of people – the consequences of virtuous life. A man with *rajasic* temperament harbours feelings of passion, attachment and infatuation for money and power, magnificence and splendeur. He is more interested in the pleasures of the world and aspires to collect material comforts and power. The preponderance of *rajas* qualities distracts him from *sattvic* living. At times, he displays interest in virtues and performs certain *karmas* that help man and society.

If he acts with *sattvic* propensities, it is a short-lived phase because he is more eager to enjoy life of wealth, comforts and power that damage, destroy and impair *sattva gunas*. He indisputably, contributes to life of men around because he is dynamic and energetic in diverse endeavours, which bring achievement and brilliance but these attainments give transitory joys while ‘the self – the inner man or self’, remains partially gratified. One can infer that *sattvic* qualities bring meaning to life. A *sattvic* man glorifies and brightens up ‘the inner man’ and spreads goodwill and transparency outside, and thus, such a man proves an asset to the society.

A man of *rajasic* nature though brings material brilliance in life yet ‘the inner man – the self’ is rarely at peace, for passions and ambitions disturb and provoke him and so the man is ever discontented and victim of delusory attainments, and yearns for more power and wealth. Outer embellishments fascinate this man rather than the beauty and glory of ‘the self – the soul, the inner man.’ If ever he evinces interest in *sattvic* qualities of life, it is a quick-fix journey, for he is uncomfortable. He is more inclined towards the *tamasic* areas of activities one can conclude.

A man of *tamas* nature casts a magic spell on men with phony and simulated *sattvic* and *rajasic* qualities, for in the initial stages these qualities appear agreeable to the mind, heart and senses. A *tamasic* person pollutes the environment where *sattva*

and *rajas gunas* survive. Lethargy, neglect, violence, inertia, passions, cruelty, austerity and insensitivity are the awe-inspiring qualities of a *tamasic* man. He is deadly inhuman and unsympathetic, and least obliging to man and society. Without rewarding characteristics, he enjoys hurting others. He is violently sardonic and derives pleasure in the sufferings of men while sense of compunction and love for humanity are absent.

Close and genuine analysis reveals that *rajas* and *tamas* qualities are less challenging and provide more gratification and therefore, drive a man to materialistic considerations where *tamasic* man is more spiteful, atrocious, sadistic and violently heartless, and viciously contaminates the surroundings. To love and acquire wealth and power are the characteristics of *rajasic* nature, and the *rajasic* man directs energies and endeavours towards the attainment of material objectives. *Rajasic* is not only interested in self-promotion and glory but also exercises authority and resources for the wellbeing of man and humanity.

Nature of Man as the Three *Gunas* Overwhelm

Sattvic symbolizes virtues, moral principles, love, worship, prayer, effulgence, compassion and understanding of 'the self' and a wish to go beyond the earthly existence one concludes. A *sattvic* man loves man, humanity, and works for the objective of bringing happiness and prosperity to all irrespective of caste, colour or creed. He is a true humanitarian. He is calm, serene and loves to live in harmony with all created beings. A man of *rajasic* disposition is unsympathetic to *sattvic* life. *Rajasic* man wields terrific energy, force and enterprise, opulence, power and brevity and deep deliberation and planning, and loves to control men and material and thus, for the attainment of these objectives makes efforts, and tends to adore *tamasic* qualities.

Not very admirable and inspiring qualities put together such as indulgence, lack of control, ferocity, wickedness, repulsion, hatred, lethargy, indolence, and a sense of destruction, ignorance, foolishness and violence, impudence and recklessness, sadism and pathetic lack of love and obsession, if govern the mind and heart of a man, he is besieged with *tamasic* qualities. One cannot expect anything from such a man, for he spreads malice and hatred and loves to upset or disturb others. Frequent going back to analyze different *gunas* is imperative to comprehend their varied disguises known and known. Here, a man is bewildered but fails to do anything.

All the three qualities are born of *karmas* one knows. In other words, one concludes that a *sattvic* man abandons material gains and bodily enticements with a sense of total detachment. He is aware of life's ultimate reality and purpose. Consciousness of 'the self' grants him blissful and celestial state of mind and heart. If a man of *rajas* nature abandons excitement, he is full of sorrow and miseries, and instinctive predilection to outperform, forces him to acquire worldly pleasures, power and wealth again. However, for a man of *tamas* nature, existence is at the animal level one is inclined to observe.

A *tamasic* man is wicked, sluggish and immensely apathetic, lives a life of disrepute and humiliation contributing to his failure and defeat, for he does not grow or progress, but lives like an animal. An alert and moving man upholds *rajasic* values of life, and thus, a life of activity and incessant efforts lead him to growth and prosperity. One can easily discern *Karma's* role in men nurturing *tamasic* and *rajasic*

qualities. In such men, one notices either suffering or demoniac life or transitory joy, power and adventure. A life of *dharma* engulfs a man in purity, blissful illumination and enlightenment inner peace, harmony and sanctity.

In other words, one learns that life of a man on earth in multifaceted forms and shapes depends upon the nature of *karmas* born of *gunas*. The words of *Swetasvatara Upanishad* (Verse 11) are so pertinent here –

*Sankalpana sparshana drishti mohaiha grasamabu vrishtya atmaviviridhdhijanama
Karmanugnaya nukramena dehi sathaneshu rupayana abhi samprapada yate*

It is quite clear in the verse that as food and drink contribute to the growth and energy of physique, similarly the progress and growth of an individual soul – ‘the inner self’, depends upon or is the result of various *karmas* – actions performed by the living being in various stages of life in different forms or shapes. The performance of virtuous *karmas* help a soul, grow rapidly. One infers that the righteous and truthful actions – *karmas* purify the heart as food nurtures body. Virtuous *karmas* or actions born of *sattvic gunas* nourish ‘the inner self’ – the soul. Qualities of mind and heart determine the growth of man. If these are virtuous and uncorrupted, a man proves beneficial to the society and if not, he brings misfortunes unrestrained.

If a man lives with *sativa* qualities, he achieves freedom. A man is a wonderful creation of the Invisible – the Supreme Lord. A man of *rajas* qualities must move life towards *sattvic* region of living while a man of *tamasic* nature needs to ascend from the qualities of *tamas* to the *rajas*, and then, make genuine efforts to gain purity and bliss sure path to *sattvic* nature. This would enrich life provided he strives hard to fill life with *sattva gunas* and this path would lead him to freedom from worldly bondages. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* characteristics guide and organize all activities of man. Ultimately, *sattvic* life fills life and existence with supreme ecstasy, inner knowledge, wisdom and harmony.

Probing into the living conditions from the modern background, one finds a disgusting and unforgivable split in the words and acts of man. Disconcerting surfeit of *rajas* and *tamas gunas* with deadly pervasiveness of *tamas* gives birth to greed, violence and corruption without compunction. A modern man ought to protect ‘the self’ from negative qualities if he wishes to live in peace.

***Karmas* say *Yajnas* Determine the Rational and Psychosomatic Magnitude**

An act – *karma* externalizes its shape at the earthly level. It causes disturbance, good or bad, detrimental or valuable to man and society. Therefore, all actions have roots in each word, thought and moment. Nature and *gunas* – qualities of word, thought and moment determine the impact of acts or *karmas* on the outside world having effect on the doer including surroundings. It is essential to understand the influence of one's *karmas* born of the mysterious play of three *gunas* of nature – *prakriti*, before one comprehends the impact of *karmas* and the cause of joys and sufferings in human life. *Karmas* encourage and motivate 'the inner and outer man' to activity and non-activity after he attains a certain level of attachment or indifference to allurements and rewards, acts and thoughts.

One understands that attachment to *karmas* and the fruit thereof, causes sufferings, distress and pain – physical and psychological. In other words, one can without doubt conclude that poor understanding of one's acts leads to sorrows. Thus, the degree of ignorance needs minimizing in a gradual manner in order to lessen sufferings. When a man understands the interplay of cause and effect, one knows the consequence. These are integral to each other and thus, a collective view helps in understanding the nature of sufferings due to the clash or conciliation of cause and effect. When one relates these to nature and three *gunas* – qualities, one comes very close to its true meaning.

If a man understands the nature of sufferings, and makes legitimate efforts to avoid as far as possible the assault of negative *gunas* it helps him to elevate life. From a *Hindu* point of view, ancient holy scriptures categorize sufferings as *adhibhautika*, *adhidaivika* and *adhyatmika*. Sufferings and anguish relating to physical or worldly life are termed as *adhibhautika*. *Adhidaivika* symbolizes agonies arising out of the fury and wrath of nature whereas distress, torture and anguish relating to the inner world or spiritual aspects of man are *adhyatmika* sufferings.

Adhibhautika sufferings originate from living beings namely – men, animals, birds and various creatures. Relationship of different temperament a man has with various living beings causes discomforting situation and it causes wretchedness and misery.

Drought, unwanted heavy rains, snowfall or storms, earthquakes or cloudbursts, lightning or famine or tsunami like catastrophic incidents bringing miseries to men and other living beings, fall in the class of agonies called *adhidaivika*. Sufferings relating to 'the self – the inner man' are *adhyatmika*, for these relate to the inner world of man.

Non-fulfillment of spiritual hunger is the consequence of active intellect, ego and mind that create disturbance in the mind and heart of man. Questions of life and existence assail a man who desires something else than the worldly pleasures and as such, these sufferings relate to physical and intellectual aspects. A sick body brings weakness whereas strong and healthy physique is a source of contentment, self-reliance and optimism. Jealousy, hunger, thirst, passion, craving and envy cause mental distress and anguish.

Purity of mind and physique, encouraging and positive frame of mind, peace, knowledge and a renunciation of material gains and power give mental peace and tranquility. Injuries caused by snakebites, violent beasts and other poisonous beings relate to *adhibhautika* agonies, and comforts that one gets out of material and worldly power fall in the category of *adhibhautika* delight and pleasures. One aspires for pleasures and wants freedom from sufferings originating out of materialistic considerations. When a discriminating man learns that ignorance is the cause of suffering, and therefore, makes efforts to get rid of ignorance, it is beginning of a virtuous journey to emancipation. A man suffers from improper knowledge and therefore, suffers without relief, confronts questions relating to joys and the causes of sufferings, and strives for freedom from sufferings and therefore, deliberates on the mystery of life, death and salvation.

Attachment to worldly joys and pleasures makes a man captive, who suffocates amidst plenty and therefore, a man in solitude, thinks of liberty and release from earthly ensnares. The thirst for deliverance needles him to think about an enigmatic life. A self-centered, egoist and selfish man, tied up with worldly pleasures of senses and varied comforts scarcely gets an opportunity to enjoy green pastures of independence. Psychological and physical bondages originate from the nature of *karmas* and so a man wants freedom. If he is pure in mind and heart, believes in the reality and righteousness, and loves humanity, he secures serenity of mind and now, the inner journey to spiritual delight begins. If *karmas* lead to hopes of a better future, these also drive a man to miseries and death. Virtuous *karmas* decontaminate life and lead a man to light and spiritual bliss.

A man may think of a self-sacrificing life and carry out duties as if service to man and society. *Karmas* – good or bad, cause sufferings and miseries, and these consistently arise out of three wings of nature – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Nowhere is he capable of perceiving a correct understanding that could make human beings good, bad or selfless. He knows he understands but even then, he is unable to restrain ugliness of *karmas* but the quest continues and this forces a man to explore deeply the

world within and perhaps at that stage, a few revelations could resolve intricate puzzles of the nature of *karmas*. A man living a realistic life cannot entirely run away from the enjoyment and sufferings born of *karmas*. To comprehend the ultimate truth of a detached and disinterested life is the real objective of life and therefore, a man requires liberation from human bondages and in this direction, he ought to make solemn efforts, and this is achievable if he understands the nature and essence of *karma*. Acts of man determine the rational and emotional enormity and its dimensions.

Karmas truly determine the intellect and psychological frame of a man. If *karmas* are righteous and help man and society, these are good and raise the stature of man in the eyes of society. It is impossible to probe into the mind and heart of a man. One can conclude that *Karmas* – good or bad have origin in the nature of man. However, actions and words of a man give inkling of the nature and character. For righteous and honest acts constitute the essence of life. For many upright, compassionate and noble men *karma* is *dharma* if it is righteous, and it is termed as *adharmas* if it smacks of dishonesty and untruth. An enquiry into the dimensions of *karmas* would throw light on their characteristics. To arrive at the correct and logical conclusion regarding the impact and effect of *karmas*, one should understand the visible and the invisible influence *karmas* exercise on life in totality.

A cautious analytical study reveals that the world manifests two inseparable, effective and unmistakably defined categories – the noumenon – *purusa* and the phenomenon or the primordial matter – *prakriti*. Thus, nature has two components – *prakriti* and *purusa*. If *prakriti* guides and overwhelms a man, he is weak, wavering, uncertain, and incapable of holding a definite opinion. Foreign elements consistently encroach upon his solitary moments within and outside, and easily ensnare him. If he gets out, it is a temporary relief. If a man is strong, courageous and determined, it indicates the dominance of noumenon – *purusa* as the signs of power, and therefore, stability and equanimity identify such a man. At this stage, one begins to realize ‘the self – the inner-man’.

A life of *dharma* – truth and righteousness is essential for reinforcing inner discipline. A man should take care of the nature of his *karmas*, if he wishes to get rid of sufferings born of *karmas* having negative propensities. This leads one to the conclusion that honest conduct emerges out of strength and straightforward attitude. Righteous *karmas* lead to fulfillment and joy eternal, a man ought to know particularly in the modern context. *Karmas*, in other words, constitute *dharma* of a man, to be simple and this is sufficient for an ordinary man to know. *Dharma* or *dharma* as right *karmas* helps eliminating sufferings from life. It is worthwhile to understand the psyche of modern times where man is too much with the world, and far away from the inner world that speaks truth if one cares to listen to the inner voice.

Dr Radhakrishnan observes pithily in slightly different words –

Dharma gives coherence and direction to the different activities of life. It is not a religious creed or cult imposing an ethical or social rule. It is the complete rule of life, the harmony of the whole man who finds a right and just law of his living. Each man and group, each activity of soul, mind, life and body, has its dharma. While man is justified in satisfying his desires, which is essential for the expression of his being. He will not get the best out of them if he does not conform to the dharma or the rule of right practice....Dharma tells us that while our life is in the first instance for our own satisfaction, it is more essentially for the community and must of all for that universal self which is in each of us and all beings. Ethical life is the means to spiritual freedom, as well as its expression on earth. (Basic Writings of S. Radhakrishnan 191)

The words 'conform to the *dharma* or the rule of right practice' speak eloquently of the significance of *karmas* and *dharma* as *karmas*. Inherent is the rule that if *karmas* are not right these drive men to sufferings unmitigated and thus, the very purpose of human birth is lost.

Many a time, acts of uprightness and truth cause sufferings to individuals, for they have to fight against forces of iniquity, hostility and impiety. *Dharma*, *karma* and the ensuing sufferings, in reality and truth, have roots in the mysterious role, the three attributes of nature (*gunas*) play in life. *Dharma* means truth, compassion, tranquility and non-violence. These elements are obvious when one scrutinizes temporarily the meanings of three qualities – *gunas* born of *prakriti*. A man must live life with honesty and dignity so that he leaves an imprint on man and society, and at the same time, ensures that he causes no harm, injury or loss to fellowmen.

True humanism and universality in attitude direct a man to the principles of *dharma* – truth and righteousness. Vagueness or confusion would not arise if *karmas* or actions inspire love, peace and compassion. Born of the union of *prakriti* and *purusa*, the three *gunas* constitute complete nature and behaviour of a man. The sacrificial nature of *karma* purifies a man's mind and heart and at this moment, *karmas* of sacrifice constitute the true, benign and munificent character of a *Hindu*. It is high time one examines how *karmas* and sufferings arising out of *karmas*, influence the living of an ordinary man.

A common person is dependent and looks up for help because he is susceptible. He sells his skills and labour to earn living. He improves economic conditions and cares for his family and relations. Instructions, philosophic and sympathizing words and preaching of wise men, religious men, *babas* and *sadhus* and those who govern including sophisticated intellectuals come to him aplenty. Truth, honesty and sincerity are cardinal principles of life. A life of *dharma* (a religious life), pure *karma* (act or deed) and truthful expressions make life beautiful. One should earn livelihood by honest means. One should work for the wellbeing of man and society only, then one goes to heaven – a land of joys and bliss and it exists on earth one should know, for none can confirm what exists beyond death. He hears these words in religious congregations and religious places where he worships and offers prayers or oblations.

Wise counsels with a soft and well-meaning language of these men who control the society and the system pour in and he stands appalled. Such principles and laws of life stun him. One can presume the psychosomatic conditions of such a man. These are simple and plain words. No philosophy appears here, for it is a lesson to live life as it comes – whether there is joy or suffering. He must work and work in whatever situation or location he is. He must carry the load of society because the wise, the rich, the powerful and the rulers promise a better living. He is imparted an exhaustible wisdom of life where truth and righteousness are essential and therefore, a life of virtues ennobles and beautifies life. This background becomes necessary in contemporary times.

A minority group of shrewd, clever and wealthy people becomes the arbiter of destiny of the class of ordinary men, and they claim wisdom to guide and determine destiny of an ordinary man. An ordinary man must understand the infirmity and flaws of his life and existence, for he is dependent and economically not very sound whether he moves collectively or individually. This has been continuing for ages. Earlier laws and principles of life governed the psyche of the religious men, the rulers, the wealthy and the learned men, who worked for the general weal and whatever money the rulers collected or realized was in the form of taxes and they used it for the wellbeing and security of the people. These powerful men of authority never appropriated the money so collected as taxes, for personal benefit. Today, religious men occupy seats of opulence and amass wealth pouring in as donation from the worshippers. However, they rarely use this money honestly and genuinely for the welfare of the public.

Modern sovereigns get money as reimbursement nay salary plus numerous perquisites or freebies...for self-maintenance. True they must get it. However, they should never say, “They serve people.” Every person from the lowest ladder to the highest man of the country survives on the money collected through taxpayers, who constitute more than ninety percent of this group, and they the minority group that governs, says, they serve people. It is huge erroneous belief, a delusory thought. They serve, it is tolerable but they get money for the work they do. It is no service and no devotion to people. It is self-service and self-promotion. Such kinds of loud assertions must stop, for it is unethical and nakedly a corrupt practice. If one is true to *Karma*, it is the *dharma* of man.

There is nothing called ethical in the system. Immorality and greed, aggrandizement and prejudices, jealousy and passions work in all wings of life. The rulers no longer really serve but they work for self-promotion, and corrupt practices are just normal in politics. Corruption in personal and public life is a natural phenomenon now one is constrained to observe. Still, hopes are alive. An ordinary man lives on hopes and promises and he knows, those offering bunches of optimism and guarantee of a life of peace and prosperity, are insincere and corrupt but still he looks beyond the horizon and expects some great man of virtues to arrive. That is the

zeitgeist of life and existence. At another level, one can understand that good deeds definitely give peace and joy internal and bad or vicious acts lead to seeming joys but undoubtedly, these deeds drive man to anguish and sufferings.

Karma has a reaction good or bad and that determines the nature of sufferings. Sufferings, agonies and transitory joys arise out of the influence of *karmas* on life. Ancient scriptures categorize sufferings as *adhibhautika*, *adhidaivika* and *adhyatmika* a mention already exists. Sufferings and anguish relating to physical or worldly life are termed as *adhibhautika*. Ferocity and anger of nature bring destruction to life and property and this anguish is termed as *Aadhidaivika*. On the other hand, sorrows, afflictions and grief relating to the inner world or spiritual hunger of man are *aadhyatmika* sufferings about which a reference already exists. *Karmas* and *Yajna* – its varied nature is significant. If a man considers each act as a sacrifice, a kind of *yagya* (*yajna*-sacrifice), he is peace with – the self.

A man's mind, body, soul and life spread message of humanism around and thus, fulfill the objective of life if engaged in an act of *Yajna* – act of charity or sacrifice or gift, in other words, purifies a man in totality. If a man wishes to make a notable contribution to existence and identity, he requires earnest efforts in the direction of leading a virtuous life. *Karmas* carry inherent ingredients of joys and sufferings where sufferings play a reformatory role, provided a man has the aptitude and eyes to look into the genuineness and truth. Faith, at this stage, enters life. *Dharma* and qualities born out of the principles and laws of *dharmas* – truth, compassion, tranquility and non-violence necessitate certain acts to purify life so that continuity to lead a righteous life is undisturbed.

Everyone aspires for deliverance and makes solemn efforts but attachment to earthly allurements stays on, and gradually vitiates the path to freedom. In this endeavour, a man contemplates on acts of sacrifice – *yajna*, so that this life and the life beyond, is free from material attachment and joys that do not give lasting harmony and contentment.

Karmas drive a man to movement whether he is active or passive and thus, joys, pleasures or sufferings give troubles, for *karmas* are the cause and effect of conduct and nature of man that speak of magnitude and scope of three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. A man acquires a sparkling, uncontaminated and higher plane of living in terms of values whereas a man with *rajas* qualities lives at a lower level as compared to a man of *sattvic* nature. A man of *tamas* quality almost lives life at the animal level bereft of human feelings, for he is apathetic, malicious and sadistic.

Karmas whether virtuous or otherwise carry the consequence of high-quality acts so performed. A man cannot run away from the influence of *karmas*. To run away from obligatory duties otherwise also causes sufferings. In the abandonment of *karmas*, a man cannot seek happiness and peace but the rejection of the fruit of *karmas* imparts significance. When a man is engaged in meaningful and socially

advantageous acts, and remains unresponsive or casual to reward, he attains lasting peace.

Karmas for the wellbeing of man and society bring inner peace and harmony and provide substance. *Karmas* if performed like a physician or teacher prove beneficial, and these bring joy and happiness, for the motive is pure and humane. In truth, the purpose behind an act makes it dignified or reprehensible, pious or sinful.

Unfortunately, ostensible transitory excitement, pleasures and passions beat and devastate a modern man. If he extricates from the chaotic lifestyles by adhering to virtuous *karmas* or considers performance of noble *karmas* as *dharmas*, he can live a happy life. If he does *karma* with a motive proving compassionate and munificent in the end, it grants liberation. Nobility of purpose and objective is evident when one engages in acts benefitting man and society irrespective of pains and sufferings these bring in the initial stages. In such good *karmas* or acts is inherent the spirit of sacrifice. To serve man and society is *yajna* – an act of sacrifice, a man should know. Oblations of selfless service bring peace and prosperity. When a man works with the intent to serve humanity, he serves god and in such a situation, his acts become humanitarian and pure imbued with thoughts of sanctity of sacrifice. In other words, when a man begins to act in a spirit of dedication and abandonment, his *karma* turns into *yajna* – an act of sacrifice. The surrendering or relinquishment of fruit of *karma* leads to detachment and indifference, which is good for a man on the path to emancipation from the bonds of material world.

Waywardness of *prakriti* and its three *gunas* needs restraint. When an act assumes the form of selflessness or altruism, it becomes *yajna*. A man can distinguish sacrifice or *yajna* based on the nature of surrender. Thus, a man in a spirit of abandonment and self-sacrifice diverts energies to *yajnas* i.e. sacrificial acts in nature, *dana* – charitable or philanthropic and *tapa* – intensely meditative, so that greatest advantage accrues to the doer, and to people for whom such acts or *karmas* are meant to benefit. All acts of sacrifice, *dana* and *tapa*, if performed with a *sattvic* principle and objective, bequeath immense satisfaction and peace. Purity and cleanliness of mind and heart are essential in acts of sacrifice, *dana* and *tapa*. If one aspires for fruit with an evil mind, it is dangerous and detrimental. If there is repeated emphasis on the three qualities and fundamental principles from *Vedic* point of view contained in different scriptures like *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, epics and *Puranas*, it is with a positive message to humanity. Ultimately, *dharmas* – a life based on tenets of truth and righteousness emerging out of the *sattvic* nature of *karmas* prove a blessing to the entire humankind.

Sattvic ingredients in acts sanctify man and elevate a man to heights of glory. If a man does everything in a spirit of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapa* and makes them integral to mandatory duties, these shall take him to spiritual pursuits. *Karmas* of man infused with *sattva* ennoble, purify man and society irrespective of location, stage and situation. *Yajnas*, if organized religiously make a man nearly perfect. The performance of *yajna* as said earlier depends upon the state of mind. If an act carries

with it a spirit of purity, service, cleanliness and devotion, it is termed as *yajna*. All acts of whatever nature, originate out of obligatory duties towards man. Prayers before the god or goddess are *dev yajna*. Gods and deities without ever making it obvious, bless a devotee with health, inspiration and prosperity with the will and energy to serve humanity. Such *yajnas* continue to decontaminate man until he reaches a stage where he begins to establish communion with the Supreme Lord.

It is an acknowledged fact, that the gods – the imperceptible powers or the Supreme lord, bless a man of prayers and worship living a life of truth, devoutness and bliss. This is a universal phenomenon. The people around the world irrespective of religions pray and worship gods and deities – the invisible forces as they stand before idols of stone, metal, brass or gold with all the possible precious ornamentation of pearls and jewels. *Dev yajna* has travelled through many ages, it is still effective and forceful the devotees believe.

Nature and its objects – animate or inanimate, exercise influence on upbringing of man like a mother taking the baby in the lap, or as the child begins walking while holding a finger of mother or a close relation. Naturally, a man learns many things from people and surroundings as he grows up. Each living being on earth appears as a teacher. Thus, in the initial years of life, after the parents, the teacher or *guru* become a child's guide, philosopher and benefactor. He learns subtly and at times, obviously to emulate parents and teachers. He learns to worship *gurus*, for a *guru* to him appears as an embodiment of wisdom and knowledge. *Guru* imparts knowledge of the world and then, teaches him as to what is beyond physical existence. A true *guru* not only tells about the art of life, living and society but also guides him to the study of religious books with devotion and purity of mind. The wise *guru* dwells upon the theme of *karma*, *dharma* and sacrifice – *yajna*. Thus, a child surrendering at the feet of a *guru* gets blessings of happiness, sound health and intellect with the solemn refrain that a man ought to serve man and god.

A man may not agree that ancestors play a great role in life for he is indebted for origin to those who are dead one believes. However, somewhere within, he bows head in reverence before the photographs, statues or graves with garlands and oblations. A man touches the feet of parents or bows his head before them. This practice or holy ritual during *shradhas* extends to the dead souls – the great ancestors, the manes, the *pitres*. This sacred feeling of prayer or worship before the *pitres* – manes is *pitre yajna* when a man conducts *shradhas*, remembers birthdays, or the days of death of parents or other ancestors gracefully with the help of *pundits* or *purohits* while serving people gathered on the holy occasion with food and gifts. A man feels blessed with health, happiness and prosperity many believe and it makes many get rid of *pitredosh* (the fury or curse of ancestors). He offers prayers and holds *yajnas* because he owes origin to the dead. This *yajna* connects one to the dead with a spirit of love, reverence and devotion, and inspires faith in the cosmic plan of creation while strengthening the belief that no created being is without purpose or meaning.

Genuine service and dedication to the wellbeing of man with devotion, love, compassion based on *sattvic gunas* is *Nara yajna*. A man serving man and humanity, in reality, also appears to organize a *yajna* – an act of sacrifice. To serve and worship with faith that man is a creation in the image of god is a *yajna* having cosmic ramifications and it tells man that to love man is also a prayer to god and an act of worship before god. *Nara yajna* requires faith, devotion and a spirit of charity with detachment and disinterestedness. In contemporary context, one can see vividly what the modern rulers do.

Modern rulers ought to learn that service to the people is their *dharma* and if they fail, it is treachery. In fact, they should know that if they survive, it is because of the money and power given to them by the people. If they do not use it to benefit people, it is an act of corruption. Could a modern ruler think on these lines and live life infused with *sattva gunas*? One can only hope, perhaps. *Nara yajna* is a solemn prayer that grants liberation to a devotee of man with immense peace and happiness on earth. One contemplates, heaves a sigh and with an apologetic heart laments at the conduct and attitude of modern rulers, who rarely work with a spirit of *yajna*.

All religions urge that a man should not only love humanity but all the created beings ought to imbibe warm, affectionate and humanitarian relationship with living beings. This thought originates from the faith that the entire creation – the Cosmic Life has roots in the Supreme Lord. Here, many religions may disagree, for each has its concept and theory with regard to the birth of created beings. However, none contradicts that there must be some invisible hand or force that has been instrumental in this huge cosmic creation. To love all creations on earth signifies a great tribute to the Great Lord. The noble function of protecting and adoring created beings is also a *yajna* – called *Bhuta yajna*, of the highest order.

If a man performs his duties – *karmas* in a spirit of sacrifice, *dana* and *tapa*, this would beautify life adding purpose and meaning. All animated beings deserve care, attention, love and sympathy, for that is a real homage to Him who created and designed cosmic life. Doing one's duty in a spirit of *yajna*, abandoning fruit or reward would thus, enlighten a man with the true meaning of *karma*, *dharma* and *gunas* guiding a man to the path of deliverance. Dedicated *karma* thought as *yajna* and *dharma* suffused with the feelings and objective of welfare and happiness of man and society will not only purify the doer but it would be an immense service to humanity.

It would be quite pertinent to analyze precisely the classification of society based on the vicious cycle of *varna*, a system prevalent in *Hindu* society. The concept of *varnas* in a society needs some thought here in view of the significance of *karma*, *dharma*, *gunas*, *yajnas* and character of sufferings in the life of man. One knows that *Hindu* society categorized as *Brahmins*, *ksatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras* exists despite efforts to the contrary. The four classes indicate different vocations and status in the society. The categorization also indicates the qualities or *gunas* of each class depending upon its mental, psychological and intellectual level. It is quite irrational

to infer that one caste or class is inferior or superior to another. This is not the intention to degrade or humiliate a particular class based on caste or social status. To make distinction because of class or caste is very erroneous and disregards the spirit of true religion.

With the passage of time, classes turned into castes and then, many castes took birth within a single caste. The functions of learning, protecting the society and the country, to cater to the essential requirements of the society and to look after the comforts and convenience of each class by rendering manual, skilled or unskilled help became the functions of *brahmins*, *ksatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras* respectively. However, with the change in outlook and intellectual attainment of people with the spread of education, the scenario underwent radical transformation. Social and political system changed as democratic values made roots into the system.

Castes and classes also delineated the mode and features of *prakriti*, and thus, instability and inconsistency continued to determine the conduct and behaviour of an individual belonging to a particular class or caste as he developed mental and intellectual faculties, societal limitations and personal prejudices. If a *sudra* devoted time and energy to learning, the progressive attitude inherent in a democratic system permitted him to change functions. Thus, he assumed the role of a *brahmin* without disturbing contours of caste. The process continued to change the fabric of the society with each caste evincing interest in the nature of work of other classes depending upon the extent of comforts it would grant. Thus, there were far-reaching transformations in respect of functions among the four castes and classes. Each caste and class, in order to enhance its social status, level of lifestyles and economic dependence, preferred to earn more without concern for the nature of job. Even a *brahmin* began to sell shoes and worked as a domestic help and a *sudra* solicited the services of a *brahmin* to serve him and took over the functions of *ksatriyas*. In the contemporary scenario, man is valued, and dignity of labour is supreme. Even then, plethora of different castes within a caste is a sickening development that divides the society despite social, religious and political claims to the contrary.

If one visualizes the effect of three *gunas* on these classes and castes, it becomes apparent that a *sudra* gets the qualities of *sattva* when he embraces truth, virtue and morality and preaches the significance of these values as a teacher. A dispassionate analysis reveals that *ksatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras* contain the virtues and insufficiencies of other classes and castes. If one takes a secular and catholic view, it would be better to term castes as classes, for classes seem to convey a sense of honour to each class while caste means humiliation to certain groups. White, brown, red and black colours refer to *brahmins*, *ksatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras* respectively with a slight variation if one extends interpretation. Mind and intellect of a man reflect on the *karmas* whether social or obligatory. While examining and scrutinizing the structure of the society, the composition of classes and their characteristics should form the basis of study. If some people hold other views valid based on political

considerations then one cannot help, for self-interests prove disastrous for the society as a whole.

Majority among the people continues to suffer injustice and inequality while the cunning, the intelligent and the corrupt minority in the system claiming to serve people only brings miseries and sufferings to the people without any concern for justice or equality. Castes and classes governing the system breed hatred, jealousies and unprincipled life-styles. In the structure of castes or classes, the power of the class or caste appears reduced and consequently, it gets concentrated in a few hands. A few become intolerant and inhuman. Elsewhere, the struggle is between the rich and the poor with political philosophies adopting different yardsticks for the wellbeing of the people where self-interests determine the principal thought while class, colour, caste, creed and economic criteria dominate the entire system. Emergence of this thought seemingly secular or catholic, in truth, distorts ancient political and social thought, which had its roots in principles of *dharma*, truth and righteousness.

If ancient scriptures advocated a system based on the principles of *karma* and *dharma*, it visualized a man caring for man, society and humanity. Politics now, is an art of the state but now, it is politics of individuals, an art of the family-promotion, dynastic politics, or political beliefs of a particular class of people wanting to perpetuate rule by iniquitous and violently rapacious mechanism. It believes to categorize men keeping in view the qualities of mind and intellect, and does not recognize cataloging based on birth or lineage. This requires strong, unforgiving and ruthless corrective measures so that worldly and wide-reaching thought encompassing humanity emerges.

Nature of *karmas* determines the path of life. Ethical approach creates an atmosphere of goodwill and peace around. Genuine efforts to understand the meaning of *karma*, *dharma*, *yajna* and sufferings are essential if a contemporary man wishes tensions and strains to disappear. A *Hindu's* view of an ethically complete, harmonious, prosperous and adequate life means adhering to the principles of *dharma*, for that would elevate man and society paving the way to unique oneness in contemporary consciousness.

The *Vedas* – The Basis of Primeval Faith – The Eternal Religion and the Dilemmas and Anxieties of Modern Man

The *Vedas* are the embodiment total knowledge and wisdom of humankind – its total culture, civilization and growth and these comprise the entire world. Literature of the world here reveals in reasonable language what the sacred books say about life and existence – social and economic implications, political thoughts and system of governance, ethical values, spiritual and metaphysical quests of human beings and its dimensions. What precisely the planetary system means to the human beings is a matter of inquest.

The four *Vedas*-*Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda* put forward the fundamental thoughts of truth and the eternal system or order of life and existence. In truth, the objective of all scriptures is wellbeing of created beings – living beings you may call. It involves elevation or strengthening ‘the self, the inner self’ of beings on earth namely religious or spiritual growth that takes a breathing individual to liberation or *moksa* from the cycle of transmigration. It is possible if one is able to achieve unity or merger of the individual soul – *jiva* with the cosmic soul. A silent merger with the imperishable *Brahma*, the ultimate truth, it is.

A man is the most enlightened being from the physical, psychosomatic and spiritual density, a unique creation. Wisdom of the *Vedas* is a path to self-realization and thus, one gets illuminated teaching from a learned man of the *Vedas* because they are cosmic in nature and therefore, they speak about man and humankind and about the growth of material, moral and spiritual growth. *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda* are the four *Vedas* that elucidate wisdom and knowledge (*jnan – gyana*) and devotion (*bhakti*) and acts of man (*karmas*). Undoubtedly, the *Vedas* collectively convey the philosophy and essence of Indian consciousness and its universal appeal to humankind. These are the starting points, the foundation of religions in India – that is a true secular way of life and living sans hang ups but it also does not ignore ‘the inner self’, the spiritual aspect of life for inner joy and realization (of God).

The *Vedas* speak about the philosophical and intellectual anxieties of man and the civilizing or the cultural organization and various observances of restraint on

mind, body and heart. These features rather virtues in Indian civilization, heritage, and traditions have not only strengthened culture and evolution of society but also it has made it fit to survive the devastation of time for ages.

Rigveda leads man to the path of wisdom and knowledge (*jnan – gyan*). Its verses dilate upon the concept of Creation. If one looks into the *Suktas* below, one gathers fair idea of creation Rig 10.129.1, 3 –

The non-existent was not then
Nor was the existent
The was not, nor the firmament,
Nor that which is beyond.
..... In the beginning, there was darkness,
Intensified darkness, indistinguishable darkness,
All this visible world was reduced to its
Primordial nature.

It speaks about the life that maintains blessings, cosmic energy that keeps growing even as ‘immortal nature of the universe takes its place in the hearts of mortal humans’. The *Veda* speaks of cosmic intelligence, stream of consciousness divine and the spiritual stream of divine light in different verses and need cautious study and apt understanding. This *Veda* enshrines the entire gamut of human knowledge what lies on earth and beyond, and therefore, the entire cosmic plan the god designs for the benefit of man, society and humankind – from this earth to the other worlds that include solar systems, the vital principles, and dimensions of nature and so on. It speaks of three regions, terrestrial, interspatial, the celestial, and three divine regions.

One learns that the Supreme is the source of divinity. It eulogizes nature gods i.e. *Agni*, *Varuna* and *Surya*. Most of the hymns relate to *Agni* and *Indra* – the praises almost follow a similar pattern e.g., ‘I glorify god *Agni*, the chief priest and the lord of sacrifice, the giver of wealth...further it says ‘god brings wealth, food and eminence. *Agni* the deity of sacrifices connects man with the god and when a devotee pours oblations, he transports oblations to gods of heavens. It praises *Indra* – when there was no light, *Indra* made light, and it gave form when there was none so it says in almost in all hymns. *Indra* is a major deity in the *Veda*. Hymns to him speak of its power, magnificence, grandeur, mysterious attributes, generosity and rewarding works. He wields thunderbolt, the most powerful weapon. Prayers to him bestow many benefits on humankind namely – rain, wellbeing, affluence and cattle, material fortunes, offspring, annihilation of enemy, grandeur etc. The patrons want priests to sing praises so that these may bring prosperity and happiness and impart internal and external meaning to what they say. In other words, it is yearning for spiritual riches and material fulfillment.

In *Srimad, Sri Krishna* speaks that He is the Supreme Person and exists in all created beings and all beings exist in him. So the god says in *Rigveda* (4.26.1), “I give

the earth to the noble men; /Rain to the mortals who till the soil; /I set free the roaring waters; /The cosmic powers obey my orders. '*Atharvaveda* (13.5.14) speaks of One God – '*This God is 'One.'*'"

He surveys all that breathes
And that breathes not.
He possesses the Power Supreme
He is the One,
The One Alone.
In Him All divine powers
Become the One Alone.

Atharvaveda is another, the last out of the four *Vedas*. Varied types of hymns beautify it. Two sages say poets namely *Atharvana* and *Angirasa* are the architects of this *Veda*. It contains hymns relating to 'the inner world' its multiple layers that are conducive to granting or blessing peace of mind and if some disturbance resides it is because of the incomplete inquest or fulfillment that appears gratifying but still coerces a man to go further. Sizable parts of this *Veda* contain hymns from *Rigveda*. Hymns of the *Veda* speak of great knowledge about the material world and its manifold activities relating to acquisition of happy and healthy life, and material enrichment – from the sound health and long life to freedom from ailment, and thereafter, realization of yearnings, spirituality and theology, and mysticism.

Yajurveda is earthly and easy in approach with liberty to understand its inherent motif and acts of prayer and worship to the god of fire. It relates to rituals, *yajnas*, and their rewards thereof, which are conjectures and still worth realizing with doubts or without. Lord of Fire is very important, for in every *yajnas* or sacrifice, a devotee offers oblations to the god of fire – *Agni*. Rituals, rites and their application with meaning to day-to-day life, find explanation to life. It is an endeavour to purify and sanctify the mind and body and thereafter, arousing of inner realization it is. This great god, the lord 'free from lapses, faults and impurities, /He transcendeth all the bodily facilities /Being the Divine Poet He is Genius' so says *Yajurveda* (10.8, 31.18) and thereafter again, it is obvious that the single path –

I now realize the presence of the
Almighty Lord, the universal entity,
the one who is self-illuminated and
radiant like the sun.
He is beyond all darkness, with
this realization, now I fear not even
death.

The *Vedas* in various ways tell man of an ideal life at the psychological, material, philosophical and behavioral plane without any confusion. What one learns about the true path, gets unique exposition in *Atharvaveda* 19.4.3) that says –

Carefully observe the ways,
Of those that are virtuous and righteous,

And vigorously follow the path
Laid down by the sages.
This is the path, which leads to happiness.
It is here that the enlightened souls
Dwell in sweet blissfulness
And live eternally
In the realm of heavenly bliss.

To tread virtuous path, a sagely man often prays (*Rig* 5.51.15) in solitude – ‘May we always serve humanity without /demanding the price of our service! /May we ever be benevolent, kind, self-sacrificing / detached and adjustable /May we surrender all the serve /humanity like the sun and the moon.’ It is the beauty, grandeur and magnificence of *Hindu* way of life that it embraces humanity in totality and tells man to live as ‘One’. If humanity understands, it fulfills the sacred objective of existence. Just see what *Atharvaveda* says earlier. It is what the Supreme Person so often speaks in *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana*. In fact, message of the *Vedas* find justifiable expression in most the scriptures of *Hindus*.

It is a wonderful book of sacred songs – enriching and spiritual, and bequeaths inner realization. An album of sacred melodies and soulful tunes it is that takes man to divine experience and ecstatic moments as the doors open to spiritual regions that through devotion fulfill man with serenity and harmony. Here again, the hymns relate to or sung as prayers before the lord of Fire (*Agni*), the lord of Thunderbolt (*Indra*) and Moon god, and the deities symbolize direction and control, destruction of darkness etc, affluence, delight, and lay emphasis on virtuous acts and thoughts that purify life and existence.

Whatever name you give to God, the Invisible Supreme Energy or Delusory Potency, it is One Alone without a second (*Sama Veda*. 372).

He is one.
Come together, you all, with power of spirit
to the world of heaven,
Who is only One, the guest of the people;
He the ancient desireth to come to the new;
To Him all pathways turn; really, He is one.

At another level, the thought gets beautiful heartwarming expression in *Samaveda* 1670 –

He preserveth the indomitable universe,
Createth three regions, the earth, mid – region and the celestial
He sustaineth and protecteth the sanctity of all vital functions
That keep the constancy of universal life.

If one goes back, one learns that scriptures travel through either what man heard and revealed (*Shrutis*) or kept in memory (*Smritis*). Wise men consider these as eternal truths, which do not have any beginning or end. Authors if exist must be phenomenal men or gods, one is made to believe, for no probable or logical option is

left. One can easily infer that these are the oldest what you call ancient literature or you may call scriptures on earth or say religious literature. Learned men opine that the *Vedas* are the origin and source of all other scriptures. Scriptures speak of the man's ancient nature when he finds goodness and virtues around sans dark areas.

It ought to be kept in mind that whatever travels through what people hear and transmit, finds some logical distortion as it is the collective wisdom spoken through many mouths. Only realistic analysis and sensible refinement bring some substance out of the huge stuff one hears. It is after many years say a few thousand years that some learned scholars turn the ancient knowledge into the written word on palm leaves or copper plates or *bhoj patras* – the leaves of tree.

The *Vedas*, the wise men aver, are the foundation of primeval religion – the eternal religion, the religion that tells of existence of man and life. The *Vedas* therefore, appear as the origin of Indian culture, civilization and wisdom. As they come to us through the word, so they are principal authority and therefore, the scholars think them as a precious wealth of knowledge on earth for man. Once, the wise people of the scriptures, the religious men or the knower of the *Vedas*, opine that only people who are interested to attain knowledge deserve to know the vast wisdom of the *Vedas*. It is an attempt to attain knowledge of man and his way of life as to how he lives, so believe *Hindus*. Universality of its laws or its cosmic dimensions, guide a man to a happy, peaceful and satisfied life on earth. It also helps him in gaining wealth (material pleasures) as also the inner richness that grants lasting peace. Here man forgets the existence of body and understands 'the self' sans mortal existence, which finally leads to attainment of *moksa* or deliverance so often used words, the fulcrum of inquest.

Going back to the eternal edict and principle, source and roots speaks of man and his way of life, means the religion. A *Hindu* view of life is simply bereft of unnecessary tags of complexities in apparatus that constitute its code of pragmatic life with all its anxieties of the inner world of man – the spiritual, intellectual, philosophic and metaphysical. On the other hand, the code of living in the external world is concern of social, economic and political areas, which play a momentous role in the life of man. Therefore, *Hindu* life reveals a way of life that derives its inspiration, strength and foundation from the *Vedas* and so it speaks of universal oneness and consciousness, universality and secular outlook. At another level, the conflict continues with a slight variation in the inner world and the world outside. It exists in all of us irrespective of location, time and nature. Conflict between the good and the bad if overbearing, say an argument between the earthly (hate, lies, darkness, illusion, ignorance or death) and godly forces (life, love, truth, illumination or knowledge) that exists in man i.e. in all human beings.

A cursory look at the scriptures and teachings of preceptors speak of a fundamental truth about religion i.e. a way of life. It guides man to god – the unseen force, an image, a man nurses inside but fails to portray and the efforts continue

throughout life. It is with me and perhaps with each one of us, who are engaged in householder's duties and obligations believe in universal laws, a code with their source in the *Vedas*. These give a message that living a life of satisfaction and delight, joy and melodious life in the world is the objective that gives a man material and inner wealth of satisfaction. To stretch the correlation further one attains in this satisfaction or contentment an inner light of hope or one may obliquely say spiritual enlightenment, where pure thoughts crowd the mind and eliminate negative mindset.

One infers that religion (or religions) or man's self-proposed way of leading a pure and sanctified life, acts as lighthouse to the inner man – the soul, and it takes the individual soul – *jiva* (created being) towards God realization, maybe this realization is only for a flicker of a moment. However, here, man reaches divinely permeated ecstatic moments, and he experiences unique sense of limpidness and divine glimmer within that defies precise explanation. If the experience lingers on it is a path to salvation. One may say differently but it is the highest peak of attainment of inner glory, a moment of liberation from the bondage to which man feels fastened.

Religion emphasizes the need to be wholesome and godly or divine. It is a great objective and requires a man to cultivate virtues of *sattvic* nature – truth, love, charity, compassion, grace, dignity ...for the maintenance of peace and harmony. Religion is a path to light, knowledge and wisdom discarding dark areas that assail life and it is, indisputably, a path to love, compassion and peace. However, distortions have abruptly crept in recent times and contemporary man loves to live at many levels sans compunction.

A modern man puts on several faces (or masks?) in most of the cases. To understand him is easy but the interpretation is just beside the truth. A continuous conflict inside the man – 'the inner self' makes life miserable because he flips between the '*sattvic*', and 'the *tamasic* and the *rajasic*' qualities and therefore, irresolution overwhelms him but he refuses to accept. An incessant struggle it is between the good and the bad, the truth and the untruth, the light and the darkness i.e. the positive and the negative qualities. Only positive attitude ushers into joy abundant. The main thrust of the *Vedas* is on the inquiry into the truth – the truth of 'the inner self, the self or the soul', which is quite strenuous and requires austere practice of discipline. This truth is much superior to any other truth we know – the truth of life and existence. Light is a symbol of hope, for it illuminates the outside world and one can see what exists. Light is symbol of a force that instills energy to life, whereas in darkness one is lost with not a dot of glow to show the path? If man is conscious of light and truth, it is path to the land of god.

It contains very powerful hymns, the chanting itself of these soulful intoning fulfills. Through these hymns, one eulogizes the deities of family or gods depending upon the depth of faith. Some speak about the universe – its origin and living beings and so naturally, they tell about the socio-economic and political life and universal anxieties of men namely – relations between men and women, family and its bonds,

feelings and thoughts of love, compassion and generosity. It is about the intellectual concerns, philosophical probing, and various others exploratory subjects and a range of gods. In fact, whatever exists on earth concerning man, it is an innovative approach or say, the spiritual and philosophical quest of sages and seers that they identify each object existing in nature with some deity or god and the perception strengthens faith.

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JAYSHREE SINGH

Consciousness for Higher Reality and Existential World: A Study based on East-West Thinkers' Concepts

Introduction

For centuries discourse analysis has been in the poetics, philosophy and religion both in the eastern and western world regarding illusion and reality, fantasy and truth, finitude and oneness, bondage and liberation, ethics and ecstasy of eternity. This paper elaborates upon developing self-consciousness that is to know thy nature and to acknowledge one's being-for-oneself. Metaphorically it relates to the plastic and dynamic level of consciousness that waver mind, will or feelings and often unable to recognize difference between 'essence' and 'existence' on one hand, while on the other side allegedly characterizes Heidegger's 'being-in-the world' (53) or Sartre's 'man-in-the world' (26). The paper attempts to know how much our 'Self' has to encompass determination of identity. Another important aspect this paper examines the comparative understanding of social liberation against emotional bondage; psychological liberation against physical bondage; and epistemological liberation against ontological bondage. Indeed, illusion in itself is a means to a disillusion or for illusory liberation. Interesting is how an illusion carries an individual into a trance of duality – that is a matter of concern for investigation here – how to differentiate between reality and illusion; reality and higher reality; reality and ultimate truth of life.

The critical interpretation regarding the concept of bondage and liberation is not just to identify these two terms in context of experiencing them in physicality and social relativity. These terms philosophically have established their inherent abstract significance in the subjective misperception and objective contradiction. As a result, the concept has advertently and inadvertently debated the concerns for individuality and morality in the normal order of human life. In view of this experiential reality of human understanding, the problem of the research is embedded in such complex questions:

Is the sense of freedom finite? And if it is, then how is his being determined with limitations of civility, culture and nature? Does the human mind interpret progress

and the price of life in terms of spiritual experience? How does man's self-consciousness overlap his understanding for utopian and dystopian representations? Why do not human beings culminate infinitely? Why is it difficult to churn the human mind to liberate itself from the anxiety and web of illusory immortality? Do the notions of self-enlightenment in the postmodern era have successfully linked the individual potential of syncing humanity and divinity? Or the Indians or human beings in general still have misinterpreted the secret of actualisation and the notion of existence with self-fulfilment and self-liberation?

Modern western philosophy conceptualizes that God is non-existent. It is a human mind and body driven by inherent energy, emotions experience a desire for liberation and exploration, subsequently builds its persona in the process of self-realisation and self-perfection. Indian thinkers opine that God pervades within human beings. The Supreme Being has to be realized through nobler instincts of sublimation that liberates human senses from primordial desire. Indeed, both in context of understanding the humanitarian aspect of human frailties and fallacies show their concern – former believes in the fact that these divest mankind from spirituality and morality, while the latter grounds the reason that these are the cause of misinterpreting the actual notion of higher nature of metaphysical reality.

Some of the selected modern thinkers have been taken into reflection with regard to their notions of their realization of energy and existence in the world of homo sapiens. For example, they are – Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi and Servapalli Radhakrishnan, Ralph Waldo Emerson. The selected stalwarts of socio-political thought primarily passed their investigation on the nature of human existence as according to their perspective, perception, prevailing precepts and preoccupied philosophies of their respective regions.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

As regards self-perfection in his writings *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and *Will to Power* (2003), Nietzsche writes that the world is a microcosm that evolves out of the potentialities of an individual's identity, soul and existence. Man's paradoxical nature lies in his spirit of quest for freedom and wish-fulfilment. It is potentially humanizing. He never indicated that faith in one's own will-power is to be understood as the faith in God. He meant that when the freedom to Will to Power soars, a person attains symbolically the power to conscience and his self-consciousness strives for self-perfection and self-realisation; then belief in God's existence does not prevail, because a person is completely directed to be in Becoming, rather ever realising that Becoming one day will affect his Being, and God who is imagined as the alternative of Being, Unmanifest and Invincible appear in the form of destiny. God is dead when one's existence precedes existence, but it is amazingly symbolic that God seems dead to modern man.

Karl Theodor Jaspers (1883-1969)

Karl Jaspers in context of freedom and limits of human experience writes that individual freedom and existence is much permeated in the existential roots. His works emphatically reflect visions of Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. His works are *Existenz Philosophie* (Vols.3, 1938), *Von der Wahrheit On Truth* and *Philosophy is for Everyman*. According to him, an individual freedom consists of subjectivity and objectivity, both validate human experience. The transcendence of experience through situation or mental state can delude a thing to no-thing-ness or to understandable. Humans have to understand existence in context of superficial and minimal. The human world encompasses authentic true beings and their relationship with consciousness. The determinate forms of the objects transcend it onto an experience to have the continuity of integral cultural tradition for the existence of humanity.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Martin Heidegger espoused authenticity in human existence. While dismantling the traditional theories and perspectives, Heidegger formulated the “question of being”. Time and History are time-binders to understand the uniqueness of the individual while his worldly involvements and commitments. The worldliness and human condition lead a human to an inauthentic modality, if falls in the trap of angst, fear, guilt, curiosity, ambiguity, idle talk; he gets distracted from spiritual aristocracy.

He is best known for his phenomenology and existentialism. His famous book *Sein und Zeit – Being and Time* (1927) rules out the theological sense of being, rather questions the fundamental significance of primordial being which in the flow of time and space become a thinking being on account of practical engagements. This is the original way of discovering the world; He says the possibility-for-being has to be shaped for authenticity in human existence, while in view of finitude of time.

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

Concerning the infinite in the finitude Swami Vivekananda believes that the person who follows austerities to be destructive or constructive, or discards sacrifice through the practice of *Yoga*, eventually is driven to the sense of alienation, loneliness and self-centred disillusion in his life. Henceforth these conflicts drift him apart from the ultimate realization of cosmic vision of unity. Only the renunciation of prohibited acts can bring harmony, well-being and bliss in the ecology and environment.

Swami Vivekananda delivered a long speech on *Vedanta Philosophy: An address before the Graduate Philosophical Society* on 25 March 1896 at the Graduate Philosophical Society of Harvard University. In this book he discusses the nature of the human mind, human will power and so on. The book *Teachings and Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda* summarizes divinity as immanent and transcendent in the following way – Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity

within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or mental discipline, or philosophy – by one, or more, or all of these – and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

Mahatma Gandhi had given contemplative commentary on Human Self. He was a “practical idealist”. Modern civilization disintegrates mankind and Nature. In such a kind of life, man and nature are two different entities of creation i.e., nature is an inanimate object of desire, while human nature is an animated part of being that survives on resources of nature. Due to this rationality, human beings have estranged themselves and Nature from cosmos and its harmony. His true self and his true relatedness to his fellowmen i.e., from reality itself is de-sublimated, consequently humanity is berserk with grief and violence.

In the book *Selected Writings by Mahatma Gandhi* introduced by Ronald Duncan, Gandhi opines, if the spirit is embodied with inconsistencies, immoral and self-destructive tendencies, then the highest law of mankind cannot even integrate humanity, cannot bring reform or high moral development. Gandhi believed that moral evolution of mankind is a continuous process. But it is also true that mankind cannot do away with the conflict of interest, however it is inevitable. But it is also a fact that conflict can be resolved in the capacity of non-violence, so violence is undesirable. Hence human being must make endeavour to liberate society from violence and it is not an impossible deal, if there is persistently a desire for self-transformation.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan theorizes his philosophical ideas on the realization of the actual world. Externalized facets of human consciousness manifest instinctual drive or creative impulse. These are primordial features and God’s physical feelings pervade in these concepts of the real world; hence the realisation of the actual world is in the unity of man’s consciousness with the laws of nature and transformation of man’s wisdom. In his book *Idealist View of Life* (1929) points out that the reality and diversity of the world of experience is grounded in ethic of social service and inner realisation and it is innate feelings that form varied experiences, that either frame subjective misperception or objective contradiction concerning the real. He says that social and cultural determinants are the variables to get to any sort of understanding the ultimate real.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

Emerson’s idea of transcendental reality explores further the communion of the human soul with nature, the communication of the human mind with man’s own self and the compatibility of humans with their motive of self-actualization. His ideas on organic unity suggest enlightenment of human perception, thought and

action, which is indeed a point of investigation in the research study because every man does the work as per the choice, freedom and need, then how each man's job/action, thought, perception shape virtue, wisdom, power, beauty, truth, justice in order to have harmony with the laws of men, nature and God on this earth. Consequently, the study extends to the preservation of international goals through self-realization.

To say briefly these selected thinkers thematically explain their concern regarding human existence and life, which either in the process of human development has become secular and mechanized or the self-oriented notions of actions and thoughts has deluged human-life with insensitivity.

The western thought understands self-realisation of pure-consciousness without being caught in the duality of ifs and buts or 'going beyond finitude' in order to be 'Real' (finitude is only a transcending itself). The distinct singularity of two independent realities (self-transcending capacity against being determined by limitations set by others) complements and conflicts with each other. The relationship between finite and infinite, (particular and universal, nature and freedom) become comprehensible (intelligible) as a progressively developing and self-projecting whole. Some of the proponents in the western thought are – Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Sartre, Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Friedrich Nietzsche, Michael Foucault enunciates varied forms of interpretations to understand the freedom of 'Self' in wholeness for the growth of mankind or in oneness with nature. Many others like Herbert Marcuse writes in the context of the futility of modern, materialistic civilized illusions that 'we live and die rationally and productively. We know that destruction is the price of progress as death is the price of life, that renunciation and toil are prerequisites for gratification and joy, that business must go on and that the alternatives are utopian' (35). Eventually understanding of the motive of man's morality in context of reason and experiential ideas happens for the sake of existence and metaphysical identity. Their theoretical transpositions elucidate transcendental idealism, absolute idealism, enlightenment to create the motto of self-actualisation, existentialism and humanism, one-dimensional man or power of freewill and to the farthest extent it is also termed as manifestations of radicalism to envision democracy.

On the contrary Indian eastern thought that derives its inspiration on theoretical ideologies on *Dharma sutras* from *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, *Bhagavad Gita* and *Brihatkatha*, *Jataka Tales*, *Panchtantra*, *Kathasaritasagar* and even from the book *Speaking Tree* in contemporary times. Many of the great thinkers to be named here are Lord Krishna, Mahatma Buddha, Adi Shankaracharya, Maitreya, Bengali saint Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Radhakrishnan, and so on. According to their doctrines, bondage of senses is a manifestation of decadence, and an obstruction to spiritual quest or salvation (*mukti/moksha*). The soul that is embodied in human body only can aspire

to be in liberation, if it is beyond the duality of illusion and reality, me and thou, subject and object, self and the other, desire and memory, choice and anguish and it is beyond good and evil, not tied to any particular bondage, boundary, limitation or duty as these are the customary notifications of society for an individual's socialization process.; while the human body may not distinguish between 'what is eternal and non-eternal' (Pitchon 3). The soul/spirit/self in itself is a liberated essence, which a human body can realize through awareness, meditation and understanding the existence of pure-consciousness which is omnipresent in all beings as the 'Over-Soul'. Ralph Waldo Emerson in his Essay *The Oversoul* details 'the fine innuendo by which the soul makes its enormous claims of that Unity, that Over Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other' (65) and that 'the man who surrenders his human-will, leaves sorrows behind, and beholds the glory of the Atman (Sovereign Soul), by the grace of the creator (*Katha Upanishad*).

Ralph in the Selected Essays – *The Poet, Nature, Self-Reliance, Over-Soul and The American Scholar* transcendentalizes the man's essence, existence and efforts with the eternal goals set by the Supreme Being for the mortals. Ralph Waldo Emerson belonged to the period of 1803 to 1882 in the history of American Literature. Because of the death of his father, the straitened circumstances infused in him the sense of higher individualism and 'Trust thyself'. His philosophy and criticism propound that happiness, harmony and health are the outcome of the integrity in the performance, passion and piousness. All these can be ingrained if the men are thinking scholars, if the poet's perception is sensibly universal, if the beauty of nature penetrates its artistic effects into human nature, if there is 'Oneness of All'. In his Essay *The Oversoul* (1851) details 'the fine innuendo by which the soul makes its enormous claims of that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other' and that 'the man who surrenders his human-will, leaves sorrows behind, and beholds the glory of the Atman (Sovereign Soul), by the grace of the creator (*Katha Upanishad*). He believed in the motto of 'trust thyself'. According to him self-realisation lies in transcending the beauty of nature which penetrates its artistic effects into human nature, if there is 'Oneness of All'.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's theory of transcendentalism vis-a-vis his thought on potentials of human beings theorises how to be a complete Man, whose phenomenal existence eternally represents human and non-human unity. The essays awaken the human consciousness towards the human and natural activities that are necessary components to imbibe the spirit of unification, collective consciousness, self-sufficiency, self-enhancement and self-realization not only in context of the studies in nationalism but also in context of internationalism. Emerson's essays manifest the nationalistic perspective in the inner growth, self-growth that contributes in the growth of all men. One of the writers' critique on Ralph Waldo's Transcendent in America is well discussed by Williamson Lola in her book "*Transcendent in America*"

(2010). She traces the history of various Hindu-inspired movements in America, and argues that together they constitute a discrete category of religious practice, a distinct and identifiable form of new religion. Williamson provides an overview of the emergence of these movements through examining exchanges between Indian Hindus and American intellectuals such as Thomas Jefferson and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and illuminates how Protestant traditions of inner experience paved the way for Hindu-style movements' acceptance in the West. Williamson focuses on three movements – Self-Realization Fellowship, Transcendental Meditation, and Siddha Yoga – as representative of the larger phenomenon of Hindu-inspired meditation movements. She provides a window into the beliefs and practices of followers of these movements by offering concrete examples from their words and experiences that shed light on their worldview, lifestyle, and relationship with their gurus.

The world beyond the senses cannot be known by reason, but by being sensitive, contemplative to the experience through pure-consciousness and intuition for universality. The essential self can be understood through knowledge of experience and sensibility of judgment. The immanence of God's creation is visible in Man, Nature and Divinity. World is a microcosm that evolves out of the potentialities of an individual's identity, soul and existence. Man's mind and nature's beauty both conspire with the Supreme Over-Soul to emancipate and harmonise inner self. According to transcendentalists' perspective the integrity of the individual's personality must not be encroached by systems, institutions or society. "All through his career he focused on the Infinitude of man, when this infinitude is fully developed, Man becomes one with the Divine or the over-soul" (Tilak 14). Thus, Emerson's philosophy was influenced by *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads* emanates a way of living, not a system of thought, encouraging 'man thinking' (14). The eastern civilization considers the world and man as equal to universal and individual. Nature and Man are the image of oneness. They build each other and balance ecology and create well-being for each other. Nature is personified; nature evolves human self and body to reach the ultimate reality of beauty and truth. Tagore speaks: *As we become conscious of the harmony in our soul, our apprehension of the blissfulness of the spirit of the world becomes universal and the expression of beauty in our life moves in goodness and love towards the infinite. This is the ultimate object of our existence, that we must ever know that 'beauty is truth, truth beauty (SA, The Realization of Beauty, 334-337)*

Jean Paul Sartre in his book *L'Existentialisme* writes that responsibility arising from freedom is even greater than one would suppose, because by his choice man not only engages himself but engages all men, mankind in its entirety (p.27). For example the character Dr. Faustus in the play written by Christopher Marlowe surrenders his will to Lucifer to have his choice of wish-fulfilment in the present life, his desire affects all those around him – his scholars, his servant, his wife, and even his aide Mephistopheles, because all experience his change of behaviour and actions, eventually all even Lucifer, the power of evil could not remain untouched by Dr

Faustus's devilish misadventures, all faced decay and doom due to the essence in 'ethical anxiety' (Sartre 77). Nietzsche writes in his manuscript *Will to Power* about freedom and values in context of good and evil that "*The belief that the world as it should be really exists, is the belief of unproductive men who do not want to create a world as it should be*" (78). Both Sartre and Nietzsche constitute the significance of freedom per se the values that purport 'self-overcoming' (636), one's rights and opportunities, existence, choice, exploring one's paths to create continuity in creation of culture and civilization. Indeed, these values of cognition precede existence over essence, but these values cause momentary egos, own ethics, one's original choice. Theoretically Immanuel Kant explains this as moral idealism. For Nietzsche it is moral individualism. For Hegel it is absolute idealism. For Heidegger it is metaphysical anxiety manifesting nothingness. For Kierkegaard and Sigmund Freud, it is a subjective condition, involving mentally with an idea. Kafka in his book *The Metamorphosis* (later known as Existentialist) describes it as symbolization of idea, so absurd that it appears with indefiniteness and object-lessness. While Schopenhauer alike Platonic ideas regard that existence (thing-in-itself) and world can only redeem a person, if there is negation of the will to live. And Albert Camus, the French philosopher in his book *The Rebel in Les Temps Modernes* reveals that existence cannot be bound within actions, it is beyond anxiety, and rather it is a way to freedom of experience the absurdity of human actions.

Thus, according to western thought human consciousness is always in the process of becoming, it is never-in-itself. The man's capacity to desire necessitates the being-in-itself and his intangible flight to capture that desire is being-for-itself. Such state of human condition demonstrates either an evasion from bad condition or to acknowledge/overcome his abstracting from object or uncertainty, hence all human activities paradoxically are subjective to social contract (Rousseau) and possession (Fichte). To sum up the argument as regards the intermediary relationship between the cognitive senses and existence, Fichte's quote from his philosophy is apt, he writes that 'the phenomenal world as such, arises from self-consciousness; the activity of the ego; and moral awareness' (445).

Carl Jung as regards "*the phenomenology of the objective psyche*" says that it manifests puffed-up ego, especially when a person falls in the trance of illusion and in trap of disillusionment, subsequently psyche of the person forms his nature, which may be deprived of emotional quotient and psychological emptiness. It is perilous and potentially destructive. Psyche, in etymological sense, literally means the conscious personality. It subconsciously presents the inner spirit (human nature) that controls outwardly the matter (human body). Generally, it is believed that it is not in the control of the body, yet the thought, behaviour and personality are driven consciously and unconsciously either due to instinctual drive or because of wisdom, experience and creative impulse. Psyche basically evolves in the internalisation of any of these aspects, but it reflects in personal image or self-identity.

Sometimes the immature psyche is compared with the soul. Understanding the image of the soul is beyond the mortal being's wisdom and experience. The soul has a complex function in spiritual terms. Ontologically, the philosophy of existence believes that the soul exists within the mortal body. Soul is immortal, beyond worldly illusion and pervades in a state of being and becoming. Transcendentalism impersonally means a universal sense of unity and oneness in any aspect of the creation, in which the Supreme creator pervades His Omnipresence. Subsequently Soul force within a person keeps him closer to God, to his 'Self', to reality, to ultimate truth and beauty. In that case we can draw an example from the mythical reference of Sanjay, who as a charioteer (because of his telepathic perceptions and divine sight, gifted to him by the sage Ved Vyasa) could verbally narrate to the blind Maharaja of Hastinapur i.e. Dhritarashtra in the epic *Mahabharata*, about the bloody war taking place between Kauravas and Pandavas. He could visualise the events happening at a distance in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, while Dritharashtra indeed blind physically, yet could not hold his conscience to understand the significance of the vision that Sanjay was narrating, because Dritharashtra's heart and mind were wrought completely in his unlawful aspirations and design; his violent mind saw only the killings, defeat and revenge instead of the loss of human self in the whole war, referring to brute force. He feigned to be ignorant of the violence, yet he knew he was the cause of violence. It is apt to say that in terms of Sanjay and Dritharashtra the psyche of violence holds different interpretations. Dritharashtra legitimises the political phenomenon of the power of violence as an end in itself, while Sanjay with his divine sight expresses the logics of violence as instrumental to some still hidden good behind the evil. Hegel writes in this context that *'Violence, in contrast, is what is suffered when a thing, person, or natural and social process is subjected to an end and/or a means external to it'* (11-27).

The psyche in metaphysical sense often creates emotional and psychological inconveniences and formulates human nature; psychologically human consciousness is concerned with human perception and cognitive knowledge of the world and also with nature – of which human is a part. To quote Hegel responding to Kant's philosophy in his book *Antinomies of Reason* suggesting about unsolvable contradictions that engenders violent psyche in human consciousness and *"it amounts to a self-imposed, self-incurred externalisation of absurdities. Human mind sets a level of its maturity to this extent, thinking it to be his spiritual welfare, thus it is believed that enlightenment can only happen when the human mind releases itself from immaturity"* (32). *"In actual sense ultimately it is a reflection of human psyche; it is intentional artifices of his/her reason in matters of conscience and civil liberties"* (50).

It is maintained in exploratory sense that no sooner the power of psychosis becomes predominant over the contemporary reality of political and social existence, then "delusion offers to the entire human race the capacity of waging extreme struggle against spiritual and institutional, ethical and political without distinguishing the realm of obedience and the realm of the use of reason" (Aulagnier 223).

Kant views the self in relation to the thing-in-itself to understand the complicated process of the bondage regarding the consciousness and perception. He says that sensory consciousness and perception constitute the relational level of self-certainty through the spirit, through the appearance and forms subjectively the negativity for otherness in its identity, besides that the self extends itself over the object and ultimately manifest the self and the other (*Critique of Pure Reason*: 1788).

On humanitarian grounds, the concept of bondage grapples with the complex social dialectics, in which there is the need for understanding tenderness and fortitude among individuals trapped by circumstances. It is apt to quote Friedrich Hegel, who says:

Since the self does not exist as the concept, but only as a formal identity, the dialectical movement of consciousness does not seem to it to be its own activity, but seems to occur in itself that is, as a change in the object. Consciousness appears differently, therefore, according to the differences in the given object, and the ongoing development of consciousness appears as a development of the object. The observation of its necessary changes, however, the concept, falls, because it is still as such interior, within us (*Consciousness*: 332).

Sensory consciousness belongs to the categories of feeling as content, external or internal, and spatial and temporal experience as form. But these both belong to the spirit in its concrete form, both as feelings and as intuitions. Consciousness as a case of relation comprises only the categories belonging to the abstract self. Hegel in his book *Phenomenology of Spirit* treats *consciousness* and *perception* as features of the object. Sensory consciousness therefore apprehends the object immediately as subsisting, a something, an existing thing, an individual entity, and its immediacy as determined in and for itself. What the object is otherwise in its concrete form concerns the spirit; the self as a concrete entity is the spirit. Even the categories of feeling are only sensory in the form of immediacy; their contents can be of a quite other nature. In consciousness, the self is still abstract thought and has initially as object, therefore, the abstract categories of thought. Spatial and temporal singularity is the here and the now, and the object of sensory consciousness, as I determined in my *Phenomenology of Spirit*. More essentially, the object is to be taken only according to the identity of the relation by which it has its determination. In this way it exists for consciousness only as an external entity, neither externally for itself nor a being external to itself. The other can achieve this freedom only through the freedom of the spirit (*Consciousness as Such*: 335).

Most of the literature written in the world enumerates upon extra-sensory perceptions and heightened emotionalism. Characters in the writings exude extreme impulsive feelings on account of social catastrophe, predicament and psychic state of misfits or solitary beings. Even there are portraits of such characters that seemingly yearnings shame the society, subsequently they are shunned from the society.

The pieces of literary writings probe the lost persons in the corrupt and materialistic world and attempts to delve deep into the unconscious mind that is sick because of human anguish and saturation. It is at the same time bewildered and protesting the complexities of their life from inside and from outside due to their conscious sense of perception, which is described thus as in these words by a psychologist: *Perception* is a psychological process very much related to both sensation and memory that stores lot of information and generates sense of the multitude stimuli or variables that influence our selection of stimuli from the environment and personal factors and characteristics of the perceiver. The intensity of the stimuli decides the selection, contrast and processing as well as the mental set (Gerow 159). Psychologically such state becomes a bondage from which it becomes nearly impossible to release oneself; however that illusion leads a person to adopt certain defence mechanism to escape ever-increasing pressures and tensions of real life, the person's inner strength weakens to fight the adverse circumstances, in that case his disintegration of self is extended certainly to an idea of choice and anguish in existentialist terms, but it is in a way a modus operandi of deconstructing the defence mechanism for survival and hence it is a freedom of will, thought and action, nevertheless it is an illusory liberation of real-life in any form.

Modern writings that follow unconventional trends of non-conformity in the act of escaping the realities, present this condition as potentially humanizing. One of the psychologists expresses concerns that 'man's imprisoned state, in other words, it means bondage; it prepares him mentally for his anticipated freedom by developing fantasies of liberating adventure. It may be called as disillusionment or illusory liberation or the release of repressive emotions. The release of psychic energy that represents human disorganization or disorder manifests primal conflict in the form of aggression, frustration, guilt, anxiety and disrupted behaviour and interferes with normal human enterprise' (Garden and et al. 43).

Man's paradoxical nature lies in his spirit of quest for freedom and wish fulfilment. However, it is a trap to fall into another sort of bondage that is illusory liberation from real life. Their metaphysical experiences without reasoning on moral grounds the sensibility of their imaginative approach to understand the world of illusions, which give them sense of hope, some meaning in life, but when that disillusion shatters, it breaks their ephemeral, visionary psychic peace which is formed on their make-believe world in a disguised manner and that bondage or illusory liberation psychologically and socially result in decay and degeneration instead of spiritual emancipation.

Karl Marx (1867) in his book *Das Kapital* had interpreted the sickness of the modern civilization from the point of view of man's alienation or estrangement from cosmos, from his true self and from his true relatedness to his fellowmen i.e., from reality itself. The basic metaphysical conception of man's essential sociality is

associated with the phenomenon of the alienation of the worker from his own life activity. 'He works in order to live'. Thus, he does alienate himself from his life activity and from his product. He does not reckon labour as part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. Thus, his social relation in the process of human development and production is based on commodity or on the products of labour. Besides being alienated from man, society, he is alienated from nature too. Instead of controlling and dominating over nature he is controlled and dominated by it and becomes a mere fragment of nature's being, nature's slave. This alienation of man from nature implies his alienation from his own universal generic essence that makes him encounter all fellow-men as hostile beings. As a result, his search for his own being in the midst of his existence within the community obstructs social liberation. The rational society in the cause of human development, social relations, and social production generates two-fold feelings of anguish and responsibility. *'The slaves of developed industrial civilization are sublimated slaves, but they are slaves, for slavery is determined. This is the pure form of servitude or bondage; to exist as an instrument or a thing and their material prerequisites of freedom become the source of their liberation in order (1) to live (2) to live well (3) to live better'* (Horton 221-226).

An awakening of conscience develops an act of rebellion and it is represented by the sudden realization that something exists. Out of this social and intellectual climate with its alterations between fear and optimism, between gradual and peaceful social adjustment and sudden upheaval, Feuerbach, vacillating the Hegelian human consciousness and Marx's self-consciousness representing the *Spirituality and Materialism*, argues about the modern view of human nature in context of human liberation and social bondage:

The individual man for himself does not have any man's being in himself either as a moral or thinking being. Man's being is contained only in community, in the unity of man with man – a unity which rests, however only on the reality of the difference between *I* and *Thou* (*Glückseligkeitstrieb*, 1848).

He presents the well-being of 'ich-du' relationship, to derive happiness without hindrance of morality and materialism, without the conditions of natural necessity. To illustrate this it is apt to understand the *East and the West Humanism*: East Humanism embodies truth and Dharma i.e. Oughtness to reach to grand harmony in self and God, while West Humanism determines every individual as a moral being participating for the sake of harmony and humanity (Mukherjee 178-180)

The western civilization presents artificial disassociation between self and the universal nature through machine and city-walled life. There man and nature are two different entities of creation i.e nature is an inanimate object of desire while human nature is an animated part of being survives on nature. Their modern civilization struggles to settle rationality and well-being. Tagore says: *It is like dividing the bud and the blossom into two separate categories, and putting their grace to the credit of two different and antithetical principles. But the Indian mind never has any hesitation in acknowledging its*

kinship with nature, its unbroken relationship with all. (SA, 'The Relation of the Individual to the Universe', 282)

According to Julene Parker Louis, the soul is the creative consciousness of the divine energy or the cosmic power; it is a source of self-realization of the ultimate reality that human life is a matter in the form of body to fulfil the objective of the physical manifestations of life. He writes: 'the four aims of life are called *Purusharthas* in Sanskrit. *Purusha* means eastern dawn and represents the creative consciousness of Brahman, the absolute truth and eternal reality of the universe. *Artha* means objective. Together *Purushartha* means the objective of pure consciousness as an objective of human life'.

The person who follows austerities to be destructive or constructive, but discards sacrifice through the practice of *Yoga*, eventually the sense of alienation, loneliness and self-centeredness disillusion his life and drifts him apart from the ultimate realisation of cosmic vision of unity. Only the renunciation of prohibited acts can bring harmony, well-being and bliss in the ecology and environment. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: *He who has brought his senses, mind and intellect under control – such a contemplative soul intent on liberation and free from desire, fear and anger, is ever liberated (Bhagavadgita, 5: 27-28).*

Indian theology turns the interpretation of bondage and liberation in terms of equating 'Self' macrocosm with 'Infinite' microcosm. Every thought and action implicitly is imaging inner self, identifying with the knowledge of self and self is the eternal element within an individual which is identical with '*Brahman* as according to *Chandogya Upanishad*, the sacred power pervading and sustaining the cosmos' (Olivelle 44). According to *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, the highest spiritual goal is the realization of one's inner identity with the 'Divine Absolute' (p.45), hence the manifestations of contemplative knowledge of spiritual principal blends with the one divine Reality, although it is known with different names in forms of nature, art, religion, philosophy, theology, epistemology, ontology and science. S. N. Dasgupta remarks, '*For I am the abode of Brahman*' (*Gita*, xiv, 27). '*Brahman* is upheld in the super personality of God' (476). But at the same time, *Bhagavad Gita* makes use of *Samkhya* ideas: nature (*prakriti*) is distinguished from the innumerable eternal souls, but it is a projection of the Supreme Being and not (as in *Samkhya*) a self-substituent entity (Keith: 1925). To interpret in simple terms that God's creation of nature, man and environment is the revelation of Manifest Destiny and the self-consciousness for being in harmony with the 'Infinite' is Unmanifest Destiny. The human consciousness if attains realization of the cosmological law and process, then selfhood is unified in the totality of 'Self' and 'All-Being' and it determines God's determinism and self-purification of primordial Nature. David White (1984) in his article on *The Bhagavad-Gita's Conception of Human Freedom*, published in the journal *Philosophy East and West* writes '*Controlling the senses, the mind and the buddhi, the wise man seeking liberation, having given up selfish desire, fear and anger and whoever is always*

alike this is truly liberated' (Gita, V:28). Unless there is equanimity in the existence and world, it cannot be instrumental to the attainment of the final freedom which is said to be the Supreme Good and goal of all human existence and supreme good is a final, total liberation and bondage to continual birth, life, death and rebirth. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an eminent Indian freedom fighter of pre-independent India period opines that Bhagavad Gita undoubtedly preaches action, but an action is not the ordinary action as we take it. It is *Nishkama Karma*. *Nishkama* does not mean action without desire or detached action; rather it is to act according to God's Will. Acting according to God's Will is possible only in the stage of identity with God, hence *Nishkama Karma* means to act as a successful instrument in God's hands through complete identity with him. Such action will not breed 'bondage'. Bondage survives in the duality of *Maya* (material prosperity), which gives space to a pernicious ego that shelters under beastly ignorance and identifying itself to be omnipotent, breaks the law of harmony and peace. This spiritual crisis leads to bondage and this individual egoism can only be vanquished through self-surrender and identification with cosmic oneness and eventually it is the journey to liberation, that passes from lesser truths to greater truths and transcends human senses of perception and action and advances one's body and soul to surrender to the omnipotent cosmic energy who is the creator of primordial nature. *Bhagavad Gita* synthesises the modern psychological findings with spiritual truths. It is a little beyond Kant's dictum 'duty for duty'. It preaches duty for Deity. The *Nishkama Karma Yoga* identifies all action of man with God's determinism, which is dynamic and the man does not seem to be inactive after realizing God, rather more active after being in union with original source of energy, hence *Yoga* is favourable to the physical, psychological and spiritual nature of man. It combines selfishness with unselfishness and harmonises the good of the individual with that of the society. It fulfils the good in the world and good in the world to come. Shri Krishna in Gita professes that the Yogi, whose soul and body is engulfed in the welfare of all beings goes to thin because the phenomenal reality of human existence is itself a kind of freedom, liberation (*mukti, moksha*) from all bondage. Lord Krishna says to his favourite disciple Arjun, the son of Pandu in the epic Mahabharat, while explaining the realization of non-identity:

'He whose buddhi is integrated transcends both good and evil action in this world' (Gita, II: 50).

'Those who unceasingly follow this, they also are liberated from the bondage of actions' (Gita, III: 31).

The pleasure of acknowledgement of oneself as object is the plastic consciousness and it is indeed self-enterprising and self-determined, therefore causes a conflict of desire, which is potentially a version of bondage. On the other hand, self-transcendence, self-transformation that constructs an aura of oneself as a subject, free from being enslaved in being-for-itself and the being-in-itself or free from the

unilateral relations of being-for-others as an ego-object, that state of ecstasy is transcendental idealism or absolute idealism to attain liberation at dynamic level.

Gandhi tried to imbibe among Indians in pre-Independent India through his seminal work *Hind Swaraj* the human reality in relation to situations, the origin and the nature of value. It means that if Indians wish to be recognized or to be projected as being-for – itself, then they have to determine their choice, anguish, freedom and its consequences in context of moral self-existence. There has to be interplay of existence and essence. The ethical meaning of human consciousness, human projection of emotional optimism is represented in human conduct. If these are the precepts of human outlook, naturally the bliss of existence is achieved and the essence gets its goal of eternal actions that may emancipate and benefit mankind and will not bound human consciousness in the guilt of bondage of senses that instigate hate, acrimony, cut-throat competition, fear etc.

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Meera Bai's Holiness: A Historical Legend of Mewar Kingdom

Meera Bai's illustrious, joyous deliverance of spirituality significantly and extraordinarily establishes her unrestrained consciousness with the prevalent contemporary movement of Bhakti tradition of the medieval times of the Indian History. Her pious Soul is a reflection of being a blissful, honest, mystical, devout worshipper, completely immersed in the Bhakti 'bhava' and 'rasa'. In other words, Meera's essence characterises her poetic literary sentiments in sacred harmony and cosmic unity with all divine Oversoul of the Lord Krishna.

The word 'Mira' confers immortality which also implicates the eternal character of the incarnated human Meera Bai. While drawing a portrayal of Mira's divine being, it is important to understand her imperishable existence like the ever-shining celestial pole-star the Great Bear.

The fundamentals of an immemorial Indian 'Sanatan Dharma' derived from Shrutis and 'Smritis' are sourced from Vedic-Culture Orientation written 5000 years in Sanskrit Language, which is the progeniture of all the languages of the world.

Subsequent to the aforementioned consideration of the premise, the efforts have been then to find the root and the meaning of the word 'Mira' in order to draw connotation, interpretation and implications of the eternity of 'Meera'.

The suggested meaning of the word 'Meeran' implies the immensity of the ocean, the unbound limit of 'Will', but the limitations in thought and action of a human character, the decorum of a righteous splendour. In the Sanskrit language the word 'Meeran' also illustrates prosperous, successful and beneficial. In the Hebrew language of Israelites' women, the same word 'Meera' refers to an enlightened or saintly woman.; while in the Arabic language the word 'Meera' stands for a woman belonging to an affluent blue-blood majesty of royalty.

All the aforementioned lexical semantic formations of the word 'Meera' coincidentally tally with the holy spirit of Meera Bai whose life with her insightful Mentors, Saints and Almighty's blessings becomes a relevant example of purity, piety and parity.

Meera Bai's emotional ecstatic lyrical sweetness profusely unpremeditatedly flows in her poetic-lore in praise and in love for the Lord Krishna and that epitomises her as a follower of Bhakti tradition. Her poetic submission is overwhelmingly unravished and divine, there is absolute unison of her spirit with her endeared Lord Krishna. Her spirit throughout her journey of human-life had been in a blithe and sovereign state. She did not restrain her piety from worldly strains and mental bondages. Meera has forever been known for this distinguished canonical nature.

The land of Hindustan has not been able to credit itself till date, before or than ever as such to produce the greatest sacerdotal poetess Meera. None of the known or existing poetesses, whether in ancient or modern languages of India has been genuine in comparison to the poetess Meera. Even if exploring the world-renowned poetesses, then only two talents got the acclaim zenith like Meera. Among these is one of the poets, Sapho of Greek Civilisation, who survived 700 years before the birth of Christ and the divinely Meera who existed in the sixteenth century of medieval times of the Indian History. Both the poetesses created purely, spiritual emotionality of love-compositions, which lyrically were very ardent and intense. The literary creations of both express strongly melancholy and regret. However, Meera is much superior to Sapho concerning the love, because the latter elicited love in context of physical union of bodies, whereas the former's lyricism on love was an expression of humane gratitude and purity.

Meera's poetic lore canonised with the eternal love and bliss, that can be briefly summarised in these words – a man while seeking the knowledge of eternal truth and infinity reaches to such a state where all the store of learning and wisdom culminates in a memory, this resting situation of stored knowledge gushes itself in a rejoiced manner which is one of the most valuable gifts of realisation of unity with divinity. This is the actual doctrine of Hindustani intellectual faculty.

There are two propositions of the Bhakti tradition –

1. Nar Narayan doctrine
2. Sattva doctrine

Meera Bai is the worshipper of the Sattva doctrine, in which one's love is based on oneness with God and its representative canonical piece of literary scripture is 'Shrimad Bhagavad Gita'. The Puranic centre of this Sattva doctrine was near Chittoor in Madhyamika Nagari, which is currently known as 'Nagari' or town. Even the composer of the great epic Mahabharata, Ved Vyas too got a spurt of creative spark after composing the aforementioned scripture of divine love.

Hence in my opinion it is the bestowments of the Divine Anchor and Almighty upon Meera and the Meera's enlightenment for the love of God could be the whole source of heartfelt emotional submission in her poetic-lore.

The Biographical Aspects of Meera's Life

Meera had been known as the Granddaughter of Rao Duda of Merta (this place also had been popularly known as Meddinipur since after the earlier name Madhapur during the Treta Yug of the Ancient Indian History Times) and She was the only daughter of his fourth son Kunwar Rattan Singh. She was born in a village called Baaajoli, during Vaishakh Sud Tritiya (the first half of the May month's third day of the Lunar fortnight), Mool Nakshatra (astronomical location of stars in the constellation of Sagittarius zodiac sign), Tuesday was the day of Vikram Samvat 1555 (the Ancient Indian Calendar started in the name of Great King Vikramaditya), i.e., 8th May, 1498 A.D. The ruler and the father of Meera, Kunwar Rattan Singh that same day laid the foundation of the capital city with the integration of twelve villages in the banner of Rajasthan, and began the construction of the fort at Kurri.

According to the existing sources of folk literature and contemporary situations, it is opined that Shri Rattan Singh with his wife Veer Kunwar and his only child, daughter Meera in 1500 A.D. settled at the newly built fort of Kurrkie. Meera's mother Veer Kunwar died in 1503 A.D. at Kurri, when Meera was hardly a child of five years old. During her childhood, Meera had to bear the loss and death of her mother at Kurri. Due to this mishappening, she was called to Merta by her grandfather Rao Duda. Subsequently her destiny took her in such social milieu, where she spent her time in meeting with pious saints and attaining education.

Soon after the completion of the Fort at Kurri, in the year 1515 A.D there was the death of Kunwar Rattan Singh, and then the death of Rao Duda of Merta in the same year, which left Meera destitute. Meera's responsibility and upbringing was then borne by Rani Garjiya Devi (the daughter of Maharana Raimal of Mewar (contemporary Udaipur) the wife of King Veeramdev of Merta. She was also the elder mother of Meera. After the death of Rao Duda, Veeram Dev inherited the throne and got crowned as King, who besides managing the state, decided to fulfil his responsibility towards his niece Meera by arranging marriage alliance with Bhoj, the eldest son of Maharana Sanga of Mewar. He strengthened the relations of Merta and Mewar at social and political level. After marriage Meera lived at Chittor with Kunwar Bhojraj. where Meera also brought from Merta her Mentor Pandit Gajadhar. She handed over all the responsibility of worship and care of the Murlidhar temple to Pandit Gajadhar, which was built at the fort of Chittor by Rana Sanga for Meera. Meera allotted to her Mentor Gajadhar, a Jagir of two thousand 'bigha' land near the area of Mandal and Pur village near Bhilwara. Besides that, she felicitated her mentor by honouring him with the titles namely 'Vyaas Assan' and 'Vyaas'. After the seven years of married life with Meera, Kunwar Bhojraj in 1523 A.D., the destiny of Meera took a turning point since after the death of Bhojraj, all the gentle persons who had compassion for Meera since her childhood, left for heavenly abode – the father of Meera, Shri Rattan Singh sacrificed his life while fighting against Babur in the Battle of Kanawha on 17th March, 1527 A.D., while her

father-in-law Maharana Sanga who got injured in the battle of Kanawha, also died on 30th January, 1528 A.D. After the death of Maharana Sanga, Rattan Singh second was enthroned as the Maharana of Mewar, who too was benevolent towards Meera. Soon after the enthronement of the Shri Rattan Singh as Maharana of Mewar, the second wife Karmvati of Late Maharana Sanga moved to Ranthambore (which was granted as Jagir to both of her sons named – Vikramaditya and Udai Singh) to live under the protection of her brother Surajmal Hadda.

Maharana Rattan Singh while on a trip to Bundi for hunting, was murdered by Surajmal Hadda, the brother of Karmavati, and after his death in 1531 A.D. Next descendent – Vikramaditya was called by all nobles of Mewar to be crowned as the King of Mewar. After returning from Ranthambore to Chittoor, Rani Karnavati with both of her sons Vikramaditya and Udai Singh started participating in the administrative affairs. Her son Vikramaditya was an incapable, impatient and non-visionary ruler. From then onwards Meera began to face struggle and ordeal, which had not been in her life earlier since her marriage and arrival to Chittoor. Karmavati, the mother of Vikramaditya and his sister Udda both troubled Meera constantly; being disgusted with such painful humiliation, Meera abandoned Chittoor for her maternal home place Merta in 1534 A.D. On account of the attack of Maldev on Merta, Meera had to leave with Veeramdev and Jaimal and she spent some time in Ajmer, but there too the attack of Maldev could not let her more to stay, so she left Ajmer along with Veeramdev and she lived for a while at Todda. In such continuous hard times of unsettled and unblissful life, Meera in 1538 decided to find shelter in the Lord Krishna Leela-Sthali (site of God's sportive doings/presentations) known as Brijbhoomi of Mathura and Vrindavan. She found solace in Vrindavan, but here too she went through painful emotional trauma due to the prevailing environment of jealousy and cutting edge among disciples and followers with regard to sustenance of the existing orthodoxy and fanaticism of varied communal sects. Meera did not wish to be in bondage or in belief of any other communal sect, except being a devotee of her Lord Krishna Girdhar Gopal. Hence while staying in Brijbhoomi for six to seven years, she maintained distance from all sorts of communal sects, subsequently she had to undergo excommunication and condemnation from all other existing communal sects' leaders. The pain of experiencing competitive hatred among different communal sects, their internal strife owing to their respective orthodox, pretentious practices of religious worshipping and monetarist doctrines left Meera in utter disappointment. Consequently, after six years of stay at Vrindavan, she with the desire of seeking shelter in her Lord Girdhar Gopal made up her mind to leave for Dwarka in order to immerse herself in her Lord's Brijbhoomi of Vrindavan.

However, the truth is that Meera never returned to Chittoor once she had departed from Mewar. And even not returned to Merta, but that's also the truth that while departing from Vrindavan and enroute to Dwarka, she made her way to Ajmer, then while crossing from Mewar, she had halts at Mandal, Bagore, Raipur, Ameth, Kitela and in the course of her arrival to Saevantri she paid her visit to the temple of

Lord Roop Narayanji, (the image of the Lord Dwarkadheesh), then went to see Garhbore/Charbhujia temple. During that course of her journey, she rested two to three days at Garhbor in the midst of the group of devotees. At the pious devotional site of her stopover in Garhbore, there exists still a temple in memory of Meera named as the idol of Murlidharji. At Garhbor, Lord Vishnu in the image of the religious structure of Four Arms (Chaarbhujia) is set up, which is worshipped with the name of Lord Krishna. In reliving the memory of the holy site of Meera, till date the pious devotees of the Garhbore Temple carry tiny form of Shri Krishna – Shri Vighrahaya Bal Gopal in the cradle, the founded image of Lord Krishna from the Charbhujia Temple to Meera Mandir and sing hymns being awakened overnight in the Meera Temple during the fourth day of the Krishna Paksha of each month (the dark fortnight of the Lunar month). That day the chief priest of the Charbhujia Temple prepares the offering of rice and sugar (bhog) for the deity and distributes that propitiatory offering to the onsite present devotees of Lord Krishna. For the last 550 years this immemorial customary tradition to commemorate Meera has been continued by the holy priests of the Garhbor Temple. Meera after taking a sojourn at Garhbor, paved her way to Kapadvanj while on her way to Desuri, Ghaneyrao, Sadri, Lattarra, Saevari Bhatund, Kaagdarra, Pindwarra Sirohi, Khera, Dheema, Siddhpur, Pattan, Unjha, Danta, Iddar and then reached to Dankaur.

After spending almost two years at Dankaur, she reached Shiyani while being on her journey to Khera, Dholka, Meethapur, Baagedara. Shiyani is a small town established during the tenth century A.D. as a religious and commercial route for the devotees going to Dwarka. This has been a holy town, known also as smaller Kashi (but similar like Kashi – a place of pilgrimage for pious Hindus in the city of Banaras in the state of Uttar Pradesh of Northern India). Meera had a stay here for a few days with her group of devotees, subsequently the idol of Shri Keshavrai got made with the request of natives of this place and the contemporary Thakur Vakhat Singh, which was then installed by the hands of Meera. Departing from Shiyani, Meera commenced her journey to Saayala, Dholiya, Chotila, Rajkot, Gondal, Jaitpur, Vadol and reached Junagarh.

According to Meera's state of being transcendentalism is found in the source book entitled "*Divya Dwarka*", she reached Junagarh and from there she headed to Sarsai, Somnath, Chaarod, Mangraul, Madhapur, Porbandar, Sudamapuri, Miyaanni and finally stepped at Aarambh Adda. In those times Shivasangan Vadher was the King of Aarambh Adda. Alike Meera, the King of Vadhera was also the pious follower of Ranchhodrai. Being inspired by Meera, Vadhera Raja Shivasangan made Dwarkadheesh Temple at Baett (made of shells). In Baett Dwarka this temple exists popularly as the Temple of Meera. The book entitled 'Divya Dwarka' refers to that in 1540 A.D. The clan of Jadejas arrived from Kutch region founded new capital Navanagar (Jamnagar) and with the divine inspiration of the Lord Krishna devoured the charan poet Issardass in Vikram Samvat 1670 (1560 A.D.) Rawal Jaam installed a

new idol of Dwarkadheesh in the Jagat Temple of Dwarka. During that auspicious moment, Meera was at Baett in Dwarka and she was almost sixty years old.

The Introduction of Meera's Father, Mother and Related Ruling Clans

Meera was the only child (daughter) of the founder of Mertiya clan Rao Duda. Her mother Veer Kanwar was the only daughter of Jhala Sartanji (Sultan Singh). While before the birth of Meera, there has also been a reference of a son of Rattan Singh, but most likely the child died after a life of six-seven months. As far as the marriage of Ratan Singh is concerned, it has been disseminated from the available resources that probably he got married in the year 1495 A.D., because his elder brother Veeramdev's third marital knot was tied in 1496 A.D. with the daughter of Maharana Raimal of Mewar and the sister of Maharana Sanga known as Gaurajayadevi. During Meera's early childhood, her mother Veer Kunwar died at Kurri. After sometime Meera was called from Kurkie to Merta by her Grandfather Rao Duda. Subsequently her complete grooming, care, education and learning happened in Merta, Meera was cousin of Rao Jaimal and was nine years elder to Jaimal.

According to the source 'Meera Charit', an interesting and mystical myth got surfaced with regard to her birth, that before her birth a scholarly saint Keshavanand from Merta came to Rao Dudaji, with his blessings only Rao Duda as Grandfather and Kunwar Ratan Singh was blessed with the birth of Meera. Saint Keshavanandji mostly used to reside at Pandharpur in Maharashtra. When Rao Duda was at the last stage of his life, that time only Saint Keshavanandji decided to immerse in a state of deep meditation. During the same time in Pandharpur, he met with the Saint Chaitanya Das, who was to set off on a journey to Vrindavan from Pandharpur (Maharashtra). After an interpersonal conversation, Keshavanandji urged Chaitanya Das to go to Vrindavan while traversing his way through Pushkar and Merta and he said to hand over a garland of beads to Rao Dudaji, which he had to pass on to her granddaughter Meera. Saint Chaitanayadass carrying the same beads of garland visited Rao Dudaji at the very end of his last breath and as per the advice of Saint Kesavananda handed the garland to Meera. Soon after this incident, Rao Dudaji died at the age of seventy-five years of his life in the year 1515 A.D.

According to Ancient mythological stories derived from Purana and from the folklore entitled 'Madhav Ki Madhavi', Meera in her earlier life was born as Madhavi, one of the women of the cowherd class. That same cowherd woman Lalita's friend Madhavi was blessed by Saint Keshavanand, took birth as Meera the daughter of Rattan Singh. While on the other hand Lalita, the woman of the cowherd class, a native of Brijbhoomi, took birth as the Saint Haridasji in the contemporary age of Meera. Perhaps Meera had most likely travelled to Vrindavan to meet Sant Haridas Ji. In this way one Krishna's cowherd-woman reincarnated as

Meera, while the other cowherd-woman as Saint Haridass. Both these women got reunited in their next birth in the land of Vrindavan.

In this way Meera was from the paternal side the granddaughter of the founder of Merta Rao Dudaji, from her maternal side the granddaughter of Sartaan Singh (Sultan) of Jhala clan. While following a pure devout path Meera set her distinctive and illuminated space with her sentiments of sweetness as a sovereign spirit in the contemporary Bhakti sectarian tradition. Since then, the holiness of Bhagirithi Meera has glorified the three genetically inherited ruling clans connected to her since her birth, and have made them proud with her enlightened spirit.

Meera as a Pupil under the Mentor Rai Dass Ji

Meera received education in childhood from Guru Bihari Dass and Saint Nivrati Nath. When Bihari Dass in 1512-13 A.D. left Merta for Vrindavan, that time Meera was of sixteen years of age, so one day simply asked Rao Dudaji, her grandfather, who would be her mentor, then he too innately replied that Lord Krishna is the Universal Mentor and according to Sanatan Culture - The husband is the mentor in a woman's life. If a wish for a mentor is there, then God arranges a mentor for a woman. Then from that onwards keeping this in mind, Meera took a pledge that whosoever saint would be sent on her entrance by the Lord Shyam Sunder on the Full Moon Night, that would be the mentor of her sanctification. And coincidentally that happened! Saint Raidass in his old age arrived at Merta during the June-July months of rainy season (as per Hindu Calendar it is named Guru Poornima or Ashaadhi Purnima), the moonlit fortnight of the Full Moon Day, Saturday, Vikram Samvat 1570 (18 June, 1513 A.D.), after imparting holy profanation to Meera, he remained for two days in Merta.

According to the historical sources Ravidass Ji was born on 25th January 1377 A.D. (during Magh – the eleventh month of Vikrami Calendar, the moonlit night of the Full Moon Day, Sunday, V.S. 1433) and he passed away in 1520 A.D. On the basis of the sources on the biographical sketch of the Saint Rannchoddass of Rajkot, Rannchoddass survived as mortar for 458 years of age, and as per the existing source of his Biography, there was Famine in 1520 A.D. in Gujarat. Saint Pipaji with a troupe of disciples and their saints Dhannaji, Kabir and Raidass set off for the journey to the region of Gujarat during the times of famine. Rao Duda passed away in 1515 A.D. at the age of seventy-five years of age. On the basis of the available archive of Mir Charita, Saint Raidass visited Merta in his old age before two years of the death of Rao Dudaji in the month of Ashadh (June-July months of rainy season), moonlit night of the Guru Poornima (Full Moon Day), Saturday, V.S. 1570 (18 June 1513 A.D.). Thus, the conversations during the meeting between Meera and Raidass seemed true. The most significant coincidence in Meera's life was that whosoever Saint met Meera for holy sanctification and mentorship, all visited Merta to bless and see Meera. This is as similar as to the instance that all the

Mentors of different sectarian doctrines were present in Dakshineswar the holy shrine of Kali (the southern part of India), whoever wished to bless Ramakrishna Paramahansa with sacramental consecration; in the same way Meera had not to wander outside her native place for seeking wisdom and blessings from her Mentors, all reached there to see her.

The Disappearance of Meera

The history of Mewar is evident of the fact that when Meera left Chittoor, Mewar became a place of unrest and row and due to the violative behaviour of Vikramaditya there was anarchy and disturbance, all nobles of Mewar Kingdom were filled with dissatisfaction. Finding Mewar in such chaotic upheaval state, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat attacked Mewar twice in 1533 A.D. and 1535 A.D., at the attacker's first onset Rani Karmavati got rid of him by giving bountiful booty, and second time with self-immolation of thousands of women. Grabbing the opportunity of the weakened state of the kingdom of Mewar, the king Prithiviraj's mistress's son Banveer murdered Vikramaditya in 1536 A.D. and headed to kill the only surviving heir Udai Singh. But the foster mother of Udai Singh saved his life by replacing him on the sleeping-bed with her own son Chandan, thus surrendered him to death and saved Udai Singh tactfully the prospective heir of Mewar.

After the murder of Vikramaditya, Banveer ruled despotically as the Maharana of the state. But when all noblemen came to know about the skilfully survived prospective heir of the Mewar State and had been securely reached to the fort of Kumbhalgarh, then in 1537 A.D. all the nobles (Jagirdars of Mewar) conducted the coronation ceremony of Udai Singh and did the declaration of the Maharana of Mewar and attempted to release Mewar from the hard times. Subsequently in 1540 A.D. Udai Singh attacked Chittor and let Banveer flee with his family from Mewar for forever.

Simultaneously on the other hand considering the condition of Merta from 1538 A.D. to 1562 A.D. The continual attacks of Rao Maldeva and continuous internal row and disturbances caused instability for Rao Viramdev and Jaimal. Consequently, Akbar sent the Mughal forces under the command of Shafruddin and subjugated Merta, then incapacitated Jaimal left Merta and was patronised by Udai Singh in Chittore. As long as Maldeva was alive, Rao Veeramdev and then his successor Rao Jaimal till his death in 1562 A.D. could not live in peace with regard to securing Merta. With reference to the aforementioned crisis, Maldeva almost till twenty-five years did small-big twenty-two attacks on Merta.

Observing after the available historical data and contemporary cycle of incidents of Merta and Mewar, neither Jaimal nor Udai Singh got any chance in their life to think of Meera Bai, because both of them were too intricately involved in resolving their kingdoms' issues. Jaimal when finally lost his power over Merta in 1563 A.D. it became impossible for both Jaimal and Udai Singh to think regarding Meera. After a

certain while the emperor Akbar attacked Chittor in 1567-68 A.D., then onwards the critical ordeal for Mewar kingdom began, and at the end a phase occurred when the borders of Mewar kingdom, leaving aside the full plains of Mewar, got limited to the core hilly forest area along with 300 Square Kilometer foothills of the Aravalli ranges. Under these circumstances, Mewar Maharana Udai Singh left his earthly body for heavenly abode 22nd Feb, 1572. Thereafter the fight for the protection of self-dignity and sovereignty started under the command headed by Maharana Pratap and his contemporary nobles, which emerged in the form of constant struggle among the youth of Mewar with new grit, vigour and determination. At this time the state council of Mewar seriously debated the issue of constant crisis in Mewar.

Hence Maharana Pratap with his loyal coterie of supporters and nobles finally inferred after the death of Maharana Udai Singh that Merta and Mewar regularly at intervals faced crisis and calamity due to atrocious treatment and pain inflicted on Meera by Vikramaditya, which led her to depart from Chittoor, and that was the main reason of befallen state of Mewar kingdom and even natives of Mewar bore the same belief regarding this crisis. In consequence of the urge of masses and in respect of constant disasters, Maharana Pratap and his supporters in 1572 A.D. might have discussed, that such havoc in Mewar could be on account of the murder of Surajmal in Bundi at the hands of Maharana Rattan Singh second in 1531 A.D., then the pains and sufferings given to Meera by Vikramaditya. In this way after evaluating analytically all circumstantial prevalent facts, it can be emphatically concluded that Maharana Pratap did his utmost efforts to bring back Meera from Dwarka to Chittoor.

With a unanimous decision Maharana Pratap sent one – the first category of noble courtier Umrao (he may be from Jhala clan) and the sixth son Haridass and the eighth son Ramdass of Jaimal along with the company of priests from Mewar and Merta to get back Meera from Dwarka. All the Brahmins reaching Dwarka implored Meera to return to Mewar, but Meera wanted her rest of life to be in shelter of the Ranchhod Rai while being in Dwarka. However, she did not accept their proposal and tried to make them go back to Mewar by paying them with charity honorarium, but all Brahmins thought to sit on hunger-strike. Meera found herself in moral crisis and to be responsible for the killing of Brahmins (Brahmahatya), so next day at early dawn she sought sight of the ceremonial adoration of Dwarkadheesh, tried to convince the group of Brahmins, but, finding Brahmins discontented upon her refusal to return to Mewar, then she said to the Brahmin Priests that if her Lord allowed her to go, she then would return to Mewar. Again, Meera went inside the Temple of Ranchhod Rai to do prayer, sang hymns, and in a certain while in front of the eyes of Brahmins, she vanished and could not be visible anywhere. Then all eye-witness conjectured that Meera merged herself in the idol of Shri Vighraya of Ranchhod Rai. In a form of evidence, the part of her saree cloth found attached with the idol of Shri Vighraya of Lord Dwarkadhish.

That incident of transcendentalism of Meera in the idol of Lord Krishna occurred on the day of Basant Panchami, Magh Shukla Panchami, Thursday, Vikram Samvat 1629 (8th January 1573 A.D.) Vasant Panchami is an important Indian festival celebrated every year in the month of Magh according to the Hindu calendar. Celebrated on the fifth day of Magh, the day falls somewhere in the months of February or March according to the Gregorian calendar. The significance of the day lies in the worship of Goddess Saraswati, symbol of wisdom and also the onset of spring season.

As per above mentioned references, the Basant Panchami is an important day, because according to the existing manuscript of Bhurdaan, a Bhatt of Merta, gave reference of the Basant Panchami 1546 A.D. and also the archival sources known as 'Khayaat' of ruling family Mentors mentioned reference of 1547 A.D. Magh Shukla Panchami. Thus, the dissemination of archival sources has proven both of these facts occurred on the same day (Magh Shukla Panchami, Thursday, Vikram Samvat 1629 (8 January 1573 A.D.) i.e., the disappearance of Meera took place on the day of the arrival of Spring season and Maharana Pratap's efforts to implore Meera for returning to Mewar.

Meera Bai: A Poetess of Divinity, Cultural and Creative Unity

This paper opens immense scope to analyse's poetic power and divinity in context of literature and nature, because her poetics present a magnitude of human struggle within the social environment, which in itself represents a part of nature. As a woman poetess she was the first to reflect upon humanity, nature and God in creative unity and as a poetess of divinity she was the first to locate diversity and disharmony between the men and nature. She felt pity for the human laws, customs, traditions and the humans' violation of the nature's law that sings music of sublimity, nobility and joyousness. The study engenders the intellectual stimulation, dialogue and significance not only in context of gender and voice, but it also throws an alternative perspective to rethink and reinvent Indian History in context of environment, ecological balance and cosmic harmony.

Meera Bai in Indian History and Indian Poetics

The poetry of Meera Bai manifests an absolute sense of aesthetic beauty and expresses a sense of quest. She does not possess the multitude of human efforts like Kabir, consciousness of mind and soul like Tulsi and inward knowledge and vision like Surdas, yet Meera Bai in her poetic songs alike her contemporary poets poignantly determine the basic perception and knowledge of the humanity and professes the value-oriented essential characteristics of the Veda. Therefore, her songs even in the contemporary times of changes in the political situation of the country as well as in the social conditions have the poetic truth and poetic taste. It is true that her poetic truth and beauty lies in her vision of humanity and nature in today life, it is neither the future world, nor it is beyond the range of sight. However, in her songs she never related to any of the contemporary social taboos, fragmented nobility, destroyed values and declining tradition, although she herself had been the sufferer of these oppressive factors of worldly life. She never protested against these miseries of being dispossessed and deprived, rather she attained strength from her adverse circumstances through her cultivated brilliance. She in her own way represented the least privileged group of women. It is apt to quote:

“To look at a much later period, the tradition of ‘medieval mystical poets’, well-established by the fifteenth century, included exponents who were influenced both by the egalitarianism of the Hindu Bhakti movement and by that of the Muslim Sufis, and their far-reaching rejection of social barriers brings out sharply the reach of arguments across the divisions of caste and class. Many of these poets came from economically and socially humble backgrounds, and their questioning of social divisions as well as of the barriers of disparate religions reflected a profound attempt to deny the relevance of these artificial restrictions and the issues of contemporary quality that characterize so much of contemporary society” (Sen 11).

The Poetess and Perceiver of Sentiments

In the context of literary poetics and perceiver of nature, the study of Meera Bai’s poetic writings depicts her as the perceiver of sentiments. Her poetic songs reveal her penance, her lassitude and sorrow which she felt owing to the separation on the death of her mother in her childhood, then the death of her patrons her husband prince Bhojraj, her father-in-law Rana Sangram Singhji, the king of Mewar in the 15th-16th century and finally her being a quester whose inner – self had always longed the reunion with God, the only saviour in her despair, the only loving icon in her loneliness. She derived from her penanced life tranquillity, gracefulness, purity, happiness and freedom from passions. Her strength, poise, tolerance and her focus churned the ills of world and she visualized God’s fantasy in this way:

*Thane kai kai kehe samjau mahara vahala Girdhari
Purab janam ki priti mahari ab nahi jatt niwari
Sundar badan jovatt sajani priti bhayi chhe bhari
Mahare ghare padharo Girdhar mangal gavey nari
Moti chowk purau vahala tan man to par vari
Mharo sagpan to syu sawariya jag syu nahi vichari
Meera kahe gopin ko vahalo ham syu bhayo brahamchari
Charan sharan hey dasi thari palak na kijay nayari (Saubhagya, 116).*

Initially this togetherness of Meera with her Lord Krishna was primarily a fancy for the unimaginable Supreme Spirit and she delved the God’s presence in her feelings and in her expression with aesthetic imagination and poetic creativity that has the sense of perception but no knowledge and insight. Later this same search of love for God Krishna became spiritual and psychical to praise Supreme Divinity without whose omnipresence and graciousness even Meera’s essence could not find solace and her ship of earthly life could not be sailed across the ocean, she wished God to be her partner in this difficult journey.

She sings a hymn on the request of saints that showed her purity, deep love and her determined devotion to God in this way:

*Ab to Hari naam lou lagi
Sab jag ko yeh makhan chor naam dharyo bayragi.
Kitt chhodi veh Mohan Murlī kitt chhodi veh gopi*

Mudr mudraiyi dori kati bandhi mathe Mohan topi.
Matt jasomatti makhan bandhe jake panv
Shayamkishor bhaye nav gaura chaitanya jake nav.
Pitambar ko bhav dikhave kati kopin kasey
Gaur Krishna ki dasi Meera rasna Krishna basey.
Ali mhane lage Vrindavan niko
Ghar ghar Tulsi Thakur puja darshan Govindji ko.
Nirmal nir bahe jamna ko bhajan dudh dahi ko
Ratan Singhasan aap virajaya mugat dharyo Tusi ko.
Kunjan kunjan phiru sawara sabad sunatt Murlji ko
Meerare prabhu Girdhar Nagar bhajan bina nar fikko
 (Saubhagya, 311).

Thus, her both songs show her 'Self' being engaged in her duty to nature and in harmony with God's love. She had sought shelter in her Lord Krishna both in her days of solitude and bliss. This was and till date relevantly denotes that Meera, in place of feeling displaced and alienated, because of going through social separation, social disregard and social disaster, found her well-being and balanced self-control in her spiritual upliftment which was beyond human understanding in her contemporary and even in the present times of earthly life. Her human 'Self' immensely contributes an example of how to remain harmonious with the surroundings, social milieu and with the predicament that is illusory and full of duality on this earth.

Her human self-liberation

Meera Bai existed in the history of the pre-independent period of India and she belonged to a village Merta in Jodhpur. She survived from the period 1498 to 1547. It was the period of political violence, natural violence in the history of India. Even the state of Rajasthan faced the impact of political upheavals on account of the wars and conquests inflicted by Moghuls. The ruling king of Mewar Rana Sangram Singh is a historical evidence of the contemporary circumstances in two ways. First it was he who fought the battle of Khanwa in 1527 against Babur, the Moghul invader and secondly, he proposed the marriage of his Princes Kumar Bhojraj with Meera. This alliance between two Rajput kingdoms later proved to be a political doom, because a little girl's consent and choice was ignored for selfish interest, although that little girl survived her name and identity with her spiritual and ethical path. Meera who had suffered the cruelty due to patriarchal and hierarchical arbitrariness, neither hated nor showed any anger to her household members, yet she gained strength and wisdom by remaining the eternal consort of Lord Krishna (Khanna, 99).

Another factor from the point of exploring Meera Bai's background is that since the tender age of five, she nurtured the idea that Shree Krishna was her husband. When she got from a saint an icon of Krishna, her mother directed her that it was a toy and it was to be respected as it was Lord Krishna's Murti. Her mother also

communicated to her while a marriage procession passing by down their fort that Meera too would get a bridegroom like that of Murti. This reveals the status of the girl in the society and mental setup that is framed around her. She took the toy seriously as her companion, then as her prospective husband and started to regard the idol of Lord Krishna as her only companion after the death of her mother. Later on, as she kept on growing and maturing not just as beloved of Lord Krishna but as a mystical lover of 'Girdhar Nagar' while being in association of saints and her undeterred love for God led her to attain love, power, truth and wisdom.

Aforementioned historical factors delineate social, cultural, political, psychological and ecological perspectives when we study Meera Bai's life and her songs in view of literature and nature. It is apt to add here Meera Bai's life and her devoted compositions seek 'human-self liberation' (Clark 102) in place of liberation. It means her self-liberation was above all worldly temptations and necessities and secondly her mythical-self condemns the exploitative conquest of nature in the name of alliances, progress, prejudices and injustices against the environment and ecology. Her one of her *padavali* states social politics that symbolizes ecological crisis i.e., "a systematic violation of basic rights whose long term effect in weakening society can scarcely be underestimated" (Clark 87). She writes:

Meera Baidanced with bells on her ankles.
 People say Meera Bai has gone mad.
 The mother-in-law says
 She devoted the family honour.
 The king sent her a cup of poison
 Meera Baidrank it laughingly,
 Offering body and soul at Hari's feet.
 Meera drinks the sweetness of his vision.
 Girdhar is Meera's Lord.
 She comes to take refuge in him (Nilsson, 49).

Ironically these verses sensitize and problematize the social ecology in contemporary cultural times. According to a critic it illustrates 'Human violence against the natural world which is ultimately a product of oppressive structures of hierarchy among human beings' (Garrad, in *Ecocriticism*, 2011). Secondly it also explains Meera Bai's "universal consciousness as heightened consciousness of beautiful objects" (Deshpande, 62).

Endless Draught of Love for Divinity and Nature

Meera Bai confronted during her age two brute force against soul force. (Mahatma Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* also mentioned these forces, written in 1909). The soul force emancipated Meera Bai and she fearlessly like a superhuman took up the challenges, insults, harms, injuries and poison and she formulated spiritually a new order of social realm which later on followed by many religious reformers and corruption, exploitation and violation of dignity, identity and rights. While on the other hand,

the brute force was opted by her mother-in-law or her brother-in-law Rana Vikramaditya in order to subdue her miraculous charisma among the masses of Chittor (Chopra, 19). They sent her the poisonous cup of milk or garland with snake wrapped inside it. Chittor was the capital city of Mewar State during Moghul emperor Akbar's rule in India. For ages it had been the city of fertility, victory and beauty but the political intricacies deteriorated its ethnic and ethical claim of identity among Rajput princely states in the history of medieval India. And it was only the struggle of the South Rajasthan great warrior Maharana Pratap (the ruler of Mewar in the 16th-17th century) against Akbar (the third Moghul emperor of India) could bring back the lost glory to Mewar. Thirdly the spiritual goals of Meera Bai reflected in these verses convey that harmony, mental strength, pure consciousness, peace, reunion of human self with eternity can only be the ultimate realization in action and realization of beauty (Tagore, *Sadhana*, 312).

'The lyrics of Meera Bai are the holy heritage for Indian Literature philosophy, religion, culture and history' (Kulshrestha, 22). In addition to that, they have been globally respected because of mystical presence of superconscious qualities of divinity and moreover all symbols and signs of nature are the impressions of God's creations which human mind can only perceive alike Meera Bai when one is completely immersed in the sanctity of truth and pure-consciousness for humanity and nature. Her lyrics in praise of God have aesthetically been a mode of her consciousness for her Lord Krishna and they manifest her self-revelation as regards creative unity that exists between her and Lord Krishna, between her and other objects of nature. It suggests symbolically oneness in all images as nature itself is the manifestation of God's creativity and creative unity when there exists compassion and love for all. Thus, nature personifies ecological balance and it can only be realized if the human heart, mind and body alike Meera regards it to be unbreakable.

In one of the translated versions of her poems '*Unbreakable*' she writes:

Unbreakable, O Lord,
Is the Love
That binds me to You:
Like a diamond,
It breaks the hammer that strikes it.
My heart goes into You.
As the polish goes into the gold.
As the lotus lives in its water,
I live in You.
Like the bird
That gazes all night
As the passing moon
I have lost myself dwelling in You
O my Beloved-Return (Khanna, 137).

Meera Bai in these verses is overwhelmingly arrested in the awe-inspiring majestic charm and spell of light and love of Lord Krishna just like the lotus in water, bird in the moonlit night and diamond which is an unbreakable rock.

These lines aesthetically drive the human mind to the beautiful objects of nature whose indispensable relationship creates harmony and well-being. She professes her consciousness for cosmic harmony as well as for humanity that needs to be associated not only with environment, ecology but also with self-liberation, self-enlightenment and also with ethics of eco-justice. Her devotion to Lord Krishna is not a mere projection of her emotional lyricism, it suggests that when the human heart suffers in passion of mythical union with Infinite Supreme Creator of Universe, then all objects of nature reflect sanctity of relationship with one another, there seem to be ecological relationship in the mankind and nature.

Creative Unity between Human, Nature and God's Laws

The human laws cannot be in conflict with God's laws. Her poem '*Drink the Nectar*' relates to Meera's illumined outlook to the worldly crisis in her times and even at present times:

Drink the Nectar of the Divine Name,
 O human! Drink the nectar of the Divine Name!
 Leave the bad company,
 Always sit among righteous company.
 Harken to the mention of God (for your own sake)
 Concupiscence, anger, pride, greed, attachment
 The suave – Lover
 Soak yourself in the dye of His colour (Khanna, 140).

These lines metaphorically express a message to mankind to transform their behaviour, mindset, thought in order to achieve eternal bliss on earth and all earthly illusions are mere traps to deviate the mind and human body to attain pleasure or to lead to misery. Thus, self-liberation is impossible in the midst of illusory liberation. The realization of eternal structure in humanity and nature can only be achieved if one man's action enables all men to live happily like Lord Krishna protected the humble villagers from heavy rains; he lifted the mountain like an umbrella to rescue the villagers from the wrath of God Indra who felt his ego hurt when villagers prayed to Lord Krishna in place of him. Similarly, all men's action, will and thought contribute to the construction of a happier world, if they surrender their fulfilment and enjoyment of action for the welfare of all. Only then catastrophe of nature can be salvaged. Therefore 'Meera was not just yogi searching for the love of Lord Krishna; she was a messenger of God who spread harmony in the society and tried to eliminate social ecological crisis both in environment and in human nature' (Prabhat, 299).

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Sufism of Waking – World and Sufi Mystics’ Spiritual Vision

Introduction

To understand Sufism, William C. Chittick in his book entitled “*Sufism: A Short Introduction*” (2007) writes that the traditional reality of the exotic, frantic wild ritual activities that “Sufi Dancing” represents is to search the true vision which is ecstatically God’s disclosure of Himself and His Manifestations that can only be realized by the knowledge of the Real. According to him the religious ideals of Islamic faith that are manifested in the spiritual vision of Sufism sets a preview of classical formulations of the teachings that have permanently coloured the traditions of Sufis. The Sufi literature has its original canonical creations immensely in Persian Language and then in Arabic language and its popularly spread in the regions from Turkey to China and especially in the Indian Subcontinent. Sufism beautifies the intrinsic aspects of Islamic society. It derives its historic inheritance from a number of similar traditions – Kabbalah, Christian mysticism, Yoga Sutras (God is as Pranava or Om), Vedanta or Zen. Notwithstanding these traditional resemblances, Sufism has its original archetype animating spirit of transcendental experience with divinity and its creative beauty that seems unreal, yet it is real.

Further the author illustrates that Sufism, as a mystic experience of transcendentalism corrects activity and corrects understanding to achieve higher goals of human perfection, that it is accomplished by spontaneous virtue and spiritual perfection. Sufi teachers go beyond the Sharia and jurisprudence to ecstatically undergo the spiritual involvement by remembering God with the accompaniment of dance and music. It is a sort of immersion with fervent devotion for the Folk of Sama, it is the music – a secret language of God’s luminous audible signs. For Sufi followers ‘God is Great, All – Merciful, Compassionate’ and remembering God is an everlasting happiness, the garden of the Soul laughs when it is near God, it weeps when it is separated from God.

To delve deep into the Sufi cult, a follower understands religious messages and attractive revelations of Islamic tradition and its manifestations from the point of three religious’ connotations – that is “submission” (Islam), “faith” (Imam), and

“Doing the Beautiful” (Ishan). All these are the constructs that an Islamic tradition tries to conceptualize by *Shariat* (daily activities of the revealed law to serve God), by *Hadith* (the corpus of sayings attributed to Muhammad), the *jurisprudence* (God shows mercy, love and mutuality in place of wrath and majesty, even if one falls to disobedience), by *Quran* (that freely and clearly expresses the incumbency of what to do and what not to do), by *Shahadah* (the testimony of faith and knowledge is commonly brought by Prophets, the Messengers of Gods), and by *Kalam* (the tongue’s realm expressing objects of faith in the remembrance of God).

According to the late medieval mystic Jami, Abd-Allah ibn Muhammad ibn al Hanafiyah (died c. 716) was the first person to be called a “Sufi”. Sufism provides for joy in life. The Sufis are Muslims and live Islam in perfection with body and soul. The body of Islam is Sharia, the law, and soul of Islam is Sufism, spirituality. For Sufis, Sharia is indispensable, because law provides order in life and Sufism provides for joy in life.

Sufi and Metaphysics

Major ideas in Sufi metaphysics have surrounded the concept of *Wahdat* or “Unity with God”. Two main Sufi philosophies prevail on this controversial topic. *Wahdat ul-Wujood* (Unity of Being) essentially states that the only truth within the universe is God, and that all things exist within God only. *Wahdat-al-Shuhud* (Apparentism, or Unity of Witness or oneness of manifestation), on the other hand, holds that any experience of unity between God and the created world is only in the mind of the believer and that God and his creation are entirely separate. It is the state where there is no difference between God and human being who is trying to achieve a particular state i.e. ‘No One Except God’ (Tauheed 426). Sufism, known as *tasawwuf* in the Arabic-speaking world, is a form of Islamic mysticism that emphasizes introspection and spiritual closeness with God. While it is sometimes misunderstood as a sect of Islam, it is actually a broader style of worship that transcends sects, directing followers’ attention inward. Sufis are likely to be described as Islamic mystics; at best as “the inner truth of Islam.” Sufism predates both Islam and Christianity, and that it is a mistake to equate it with any particular culture or phase of a culture. Outlining the four principles of Repentance, Sincerity, Remembrance, and Love, it traces the fundamental stages and states of the spiritual novice’s transformative journey, emphasizing the importance of embracing both human limitations and God’s limitless love.

Sufis regard Muhammad as al-Insān al-Kāmil, the primary perfect man who exemplifies the morality of God, and see him as their leader and prime spiritual guide.... Traditional Sufi orders during the first five centuries of Islam were all based in Sunni Islam. At first, expressed through Arabic, then Persian, Turkish and later a dozen other languages in different regions and cultures, Sufi thoughts have found expression through myriad poetic forms and diverse musical genres. *Sufi kalaam* is a

form of devotional song. They are meant to be sung at the Sama mehfiles for the upliftment of souls. It has had a long tradition that merged with the *Qaul*, *Qawwali*, *Kafi*, *Tarana*, *Khayal* and such other genres. *Silsila* is an Arabic word meaning chain, link, connection often used in various senses of lineage. In particular, it may be translated as “(religious) order” or “spiritual genealogy” where one Sufi Master transfers his *khilafat* to his spiritual descendant. Sufism is a dimension within Islam that seeks the divine truth and knowledge by deepening one’s relationship with the Creator.... Sufi singers often perform poetry, thus, leading to multiple versions of the same song; this also means that it is often worth one’s time looking up the meaning of the lyrics of these songs.

The concept of Sufi Metaphysics was first deeply discussed in written form by Ibn al-Arabi (1164-1240 A.D.) in one of his most prolific works entitled – *Fusus-al hikam* (The Calling by Revelations of the Brides of Absoluteness in the Places of Absoluteness of the Wisdom of Bezels) where he applies deep analysis on the issue of Oneness through the metaphor of mirror. The vision of a thing by itself is not the same as the vision of itself by another order which becomes for it like a mirror. And He manifested to it His own Self in the image that the place bestows what is shown to it which is not possible to manifest into it without the existence of such a place (of manifestation) and without His revealing Himself to it.

And when indeed the *haqq* brought into existence the totality of the universe, that body was a figure (shape). There was no spirit in it and it was like an unpolished mirror. It is of the glory of the Divine order that in fact He never prepared any place which was not to receive the Divine Spirit by the blowing of the Divine Spirit into it. And all that is nothing other than the order for the coming about of the aptitude from such a spiritless image to receive the effusion (because) the revelation is ever constant. (Ibn al-Arabi quoted in Rauf; 2006)

Nothing is left to say except that which concerns the receiver, and the receiver does not become immanent except from the Most Holy Effusion. The totality of the order is from Him, the beginning of it and the end of it. The totality of the order (of being) returns to Him as it started from Him. And the order necessitates the polishing of the mirror of the universe, and Adam is the same as that polish of such a mirror and the spirit of such an image. He writes that I am not of the prophets, nor envoy, but I am an heir and a cultivator (*hâarith*) of the other world. (Ibid.2006)

And from God he heard and to God he returned,
 And when you have heard that, indeed keep in the
 receptacle of your heart what He has given you,
 Then, with understanding, detail it
 In the most succinct speech, and collect it,
 Then, in your turn, according to the requester,
 do not prevent it,
 This is the Mercy that He has enlarged for you,
 so enlarge it.

And I pray to God that I be of those that He helps by the purified Mohammedian religion, and which bonds and registers that we have been collected in the Day of Judgement in his own group of people, just as He brought us to be of his own people (now). (Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusus-al-hikam*).

In this metaphor, al-Arabi compares an object being reflected in countless mirrors to the relationship between God and his creatures. God's essence is seen in the existent human being, as God is the object and humans being the mirrors. Meaning two things, that since humans are mere reflections of God there can be no distinction or separation between the two and without God the creatures would be non-existent. When an individual understands that there is no separation between human and God they begin on the path of ultimate oneness. This metaphysics of Sufi philosophy is also narrated in the hadith: "Whoever recognized himself, undoubtedly recognized his Rabb (Allah)". (Rauf; 2006)

Sufi Saints of Central Asia, Middle East and South Asia

To understand the propriety of Sufism, it is apt to illustrate some famous Sufi writers' references such as Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240 A.D.), Amir Khusrau (1253-1325 A.D.), Kamil Darvesh Shah Latif (1689-1752), Ali Ibn Ahmad Bhushanji, Sana'I Nizami, Attar, Rumi, Sa'di, and Hafiz. Similarly, the twelve orders of *Silsilas* in the *Sufi* faith, among them Shaikh Moin-ud-din Chisti (1236 A.D.), Shaikh Farid-ud-din in Northern India, Shaikh Jamal-ud-din Hanawi, Shaikh Ala-ud-din Auliya from Delhi to Devagiri, from Multan to Lakhnauti, Niris-ud-din Chirag-in Delhi and Shaikh Siraj-ud-din in Bengal were popular mystics who emphasized on deep devotion and on love as the bond between God and the individual soul.

Ibn al-ʿArabī, in full Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭāʾī Ibn al-ʿArabī, also called Al-Sheikh al Akbar, (born July 28, 1165, Murcia, Valencia – died November 16, 1240, Damascus), celebrated Muslim mystic-philosopher who gave the esoteric, mystical dimension of Islamic thought its first full-fledged philosophic expression. His major works are the monumental *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* ("The Meccan Revelations") and *Fuṣūṣ al ḥikam* (1229; "*The Bezels of Wisdom*"). Ibn al-Arabī was born in the southeast of Spain, a man of pure Arab blood whose ancestry went back to the prominent Arabian tribe of Ṭāʾī. It was in Sevilla (Seville), then an outstanding centre of Islamic culture and learning, that he received his early education. He stayed there for thirty years, studying traditional Islamic sciences; he studied with a number of mystic masters who found in him a young man of marked spiritual inclination and unusually keen intelligence. During those years he travelled a great deal and visited various cities of Spain and North Africa in search of masters of the Sufi (mystical) Path who had achieved great spiritual progress and thus renown.

It was during one of these trips that Ibn al – ʿArabī had a dramatic encounter with the great Aristotelian philosopher Ibn Rushid (Averroës; 1126-98) in the city of

Córdoba. Averroës, a close friend of the boy's father, had asked that the interview be arranged because he had heard of the extraordinary nature of the young, still beardless lad. After the early exchange of only a few words, it is said, the mystical depth of the boy so overwhelmed the old philosopher that he became pale and, dumbfounded, began trembling. Ibn al-Arabi once explained in *Futuhat* the usefulness of the religious sciences and the truth of Sufism in these words:

Philosopher means lover of wisdom because the word Sophia (Sūfiyā), means wisdom in Greek; philosophy, therefore, means love of wisdom. Everyone who is endowed with intelligence loves wisdom. However, people who think reflectively are wrong more often than they are right with regard to divine sciences (*ilāhīyāt*), both if they are philosophers and if they are Mu'tazilites or Ash'arites. (Ibn 'Arabī 1999a, vol. 4, pp. 227-28)

In the light of the subsequent course of Islamic philosophy, the event is seen as symbolic; even more symbolic is the sequel of the episode, which has it that, when Averroës died, his remains were returned to Córdoba; the coffin that contained his remains was loaded on one side of a beast of a burden, while the books written by him were placed on the other side in order to counterbalance it. It was a good theme of meditation and recollection for the young Ibn al-'Arabī, who said: "On one side the Master, on the other his books! Ah, how I wish I knew whether his hopes had been fulfilled!"

Much of the later literature of eastern Islam, particularly Persian and Indo Persian mystical writings, indeed, can be understood only in the light of his teachings. Ibn al-'Arabī's lyrics are typical *ghazals*, sweet and flowing. From the late 9th century, Arabic-speaking mystics had been composing verses often meant to be sung in their meetings. At first a purely religious vocabulary was employed, but soon the expressions began to oscillate between worldly and heavenly love. The ambiguity thus achieved eventually became a characteristic feature of Persian and Turkish lyrics.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau (1253-1325 A.D.), was a devout Muslim, a profound expounder of ethics and strict observant of *Sharia*. Hazrat Ziyauddin Barani draws a vivid picture of his friend, Hazrat Amir, in these words:

Above and beyond all his scholarship, fluency and proficiency he was an upright Sufi. For most of his life he offered prayers, observed fasts, recited the Holy Qur'an, etc. He was equally exceptional in performing obligatory worship and doing beneficence to others by way of charitable acts. He kept fasts regularly and was among the most trustworthy disciples of the Sheikh. I have not met any other devotee more sincere and more faithful than Hazrat Amir Khusrau. He was impregnated with divine love and participated in *sama*. He was a maestro who used to invent new *ragas* and tunes. Hazrat Amir Khusrau had a poetic nature and was a kind-hearted man of elegant taste. In every art related to skill and refined taste, God had made him unique. He was completely inimitable and his personality in this era was one of the wonders of time.

Amir Khusrau says that Hazrat Amir Khusro, after having offered *tahajjud* (late night) prayers, would recite seven chapters of the Holy Qur'an every day. "Tell me O Turk", Nizamuddin Auliya once asked him, "how did you find your devotion?" "Sir, it so happens that I bitterly weep late in the night", Hazrat Amir Khusro submitted. "Praise be to Allah, now some signs have begun to emerge."

His famous *kalaam* are till date sung with pleasure and ecstasy, an example of it is here:

mohe apne hī rañg meñ rañg de rañgīle
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
hamrī chadariyā piyā kī pagriyā donoñ basantī rañg de
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
jo tū māñge rañg kī rañgā.ī merā joban girvī rakh le
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
aan parī tore darvāje par mirī lāj-sharam sab rakh le
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
'nijāmuddīn-auliya' haiñ piir mero prem piit kā sañg de
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī

(Diwan Ghuraat ul Kamaal by Khusrau)

Amir Khusrau as a *mureed* (devotee and disciple) had unbounded devotion and inflamed love for his *Pir* (Saint) named Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, a learned theologian, the saint who resided that time in Delhi. Amir Khusrau's complete immersion and surrender to his mentor and to his spiritual leader is illustrated in these poetic verses. As a disciple Amir Khusrau wishes to be completely absorbed in the spiritual influence of his divine saint and mentor Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

The popular Sufi poet and prophet was Shah Latif Bhitayi of the western part of the subcontinent of India, existed in the period of early eighteenth century. He writes in his poetic verses:

Jaey Hititi Hui Maruyi
TT Ladhayami Kari Kimmasi
Aardayasiyumi Umar Rakhey
Bheji thi Vantasi
Jaye na chhadua, ki Jhaliyayi
TT Panhinjo Angu Aachchiyansi
Lahey Lahey, Lathifa chaye
Hittan Hund Halansi
Mokhey Malir Samuhin
Vathi Baahan Vayaansi
Rehbar Thi Rerdihayansi

Suhanrey Sanmih Dey

Shah Latif Bhitayi says if his *Maruyi* (Conscience) had been in his times in imprisoned custody, he would have looked after it. He would have asked *Umar*

(Body) to release Conscience. If body had not acknowledged his request, then he would have become *Jamin* (Mindfulness) himself to get himself imprisoned in shackles, in place of letting Conscience remain imprisoned in body (*Umar*). He would have liberated Soul and would have held its form as the Being of Almighty, the Supreme Power and would have let it return to its Eternal Abode 'Malir'. In this composition Shah Sahib has ecstatically referred that the Soul that seeks surrender in Divinity, while it is being in the form of incarnated body on earth, the Almighty compensates all deeds of body to transcendentalism Soul and releases Soul from the custody of Heart (*Naffs*).

Shah Sahib spiritualism the waking body with awakened consciousness and extrinsically and intrinsically the prophet's wisdom finds submission to the infinite truth of divine (*Mckamey Hak*). Shah Latif Bhitayi not only in Sindh, but also in the most of the popular illuminated Sufi Darvesh used to be acclaimed for his poetic piety and pure consciousness. After '*Quran Sharif*' in Sindh, Shah Sahib's '*Risalo*' is very much in acclamation. He epitomises the Sufi Soul and its culture in Sindh. Many devotees of God and Prophets (*Darvesh*) have been products of the land of Sindh. On account of his miraculous enlightened persona and his acclaimed compositions (*Kalaam*) are not only known in Sindh, but claims magnanimity and elevated place among the world's most popular beings with absolute realisation of consciousness. Like an enabled *Darvesh* (a prophetic seer), a righteous saint, Shah Sahib lighted the ignorant hearts that used to get lost in the darkness of the waking-world or illusory world.

H.T. Sorley in his book entitled "*Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit – His Poetry, Life Times*" (1940; 1966) critically analyses the message of the *Risalo* (A Collection of Shah Abdul Latif's Poems) which is like and unlike the message of the typically English mystic poets' poetic pleasure. There is in Shah Abdul Latif a strain of love mysticism which shows some affinity with the love mysticism of Shelley and Browning. Wordsworth and Donne too have some little common with his poetry. The nearest English parallels to Shah Abdul Latif in his love religious mood are Crashaw and Isaac Watts. In these two poets the philosophy of love is preached in emotional language as a means to a true understanding of the nature of God and to affect the mystic union with the divine by lifting the false veil of the phenomenal world and probing the depths of the human heart. The true message of the *Risalo*, however, is religious and there is a real difference in this respect between the Sindhi poet Shelley and Browning. While Shelley and Browning see love as the key to understanding the world, Shah Abdul Latif finds it in union with God through the difficulties and vicissitudes of love. Love is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Although the love mysticism of Shelley and Browning has a philosophic depth which takes it outside any assimilation to eroticism, the scheme of things in which, for them, difficulties dissolve and disturbances are reconciled in peace, is a unity that comes from a union of lovers thinking similar thoughts and finding complete satisfaction in the loving relationship. Shah Abdul Latif is not satisfied with such a solution. He

finds his solution instead in the submissive sinking of individuality in the divine and in a conception of God which is truly Muslim. It insists upon the utter unworthiness of man when compared with the majesty, mystery and completeness of God. Thus, love for Shah Abdul Latif is merely the means of approaching the divine. It is not a description of the divine itself. Read the solemn dedication to God with which the *Muntakhab* opens:

‘In the beginning Allah is,
Who knoweth all, who sits aloft,
The Lord of all the world that be.
He is the mighty, old of days,
Of His own power established.
He is the Lord, One,
only One, Sustainer and Compassionate.
Sing ye the praise of Him who heals,
The True One, sing ye praise of Him.’

To get an English parallel to this sustained attitude of worship we must go to the predominantly religious hymns where we find something very like it.

‘O worship the King,
All glorious above
gratefully sing His power and his love
Our shield and defender,
The Ancient of Days, Pavilioned in splendour
And girded with praise.’

Thus, despite all the love mysticism with which the text of *Risalo* abounds, its import is deeply religious. Its object is the respectful adoration of something far above ordinary human endeavour. We shall look in vain in Shelley or Browning for this attitude which, while typically Muslim, is also ‘Christian’ in the strain of the Old Testament, definitely Hebraic in conception and unaffected by the gospel of the New Testament. Even Blake, the greatest and most comprehensive of the English mystic poets, fails to reach this pinnacle of single-minded adoration. Blake is so overcome with other ideas of the complexity of the divine and he is so obsessed with the power of the human imagination to rake reality that he cannot confine himself to a jejune monotheistic attitude. Isaac Watts, who does soar to the height of adoration, is nearer Shah Abdul Latif but he is a poet of much narrower range. In fact, to give any idea of the complicated mysticism of the *Risalo* we must recognize it as a blending of many elements. It has something of the love idealism of Shelley and Browning, something of the wild religious fervour of Blake, and something also of the simple human conviction of Watts and Crashaw. So, complex a phenomenon is mysticism in Islam and Christianity and so intimately have the two been at various stages inter-related that it is possible to trace in each influence that have gone to the making of both. Islam has been little affected directly by the Christianity of the New Testament but it has many contacts with the religion of the Old Testament and with

the old Greek philosophy. This philosophy started with Plato and rose to intellectual mysticism in Plotinus whence it reached a religious consummation in Iamblichus and Dionysius the Areopagite and so – produced much of the typically Christian mysticism of the middle ages in Europe. It was about this period that the language of the Arabs formed the chief means of communication of ideas between East and West. By that time Islam itself had become – deeply penetrated with. the thinking of Persia and was not wholly closed to Buddhist and Vedanta ideas. The history of mysticism is thus a complicated story of the fusion and blending of a vast body of beliefs that came in different ways from a limited number of sources (Sorley 231-232).

Fariduddin Masud was born in 1175 (571 AH) in Kothiwal, 10 km from Multa in the Punjab region of what is now Pakistan, to Jamāl-ud-dīn Suleimān and Maryam Bībī (Qarsum Bībī), daughter of Wajīh-ud-dīn Khojendī. He was a Sunni Muslim and was one of the founding fathers of the Chishti Sufi order. He was a great mystic (Sufi) of his times. He conveyed the message of love, harmony and peace through his poetry among the people. In real sense he was a spiritual guide who spread warmth and love. He was known as Baba Farid Ganj Shakar Baksh. Ibne Battuta, an Arab traveller was all praise for this Sufi mystic. He shifted from Multan Punjab to Delhi to attain spiritual knowledge in Islamic doctrines in the mentorship of Qutub-u-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, who died in 1235 A.D., hence Fariduddin his successor returned to Ajodhan an old name of Pakpattan (now in Pakistan). In commemoration every year Urs is held. According to Qamar Hashmi in his book entitled “*Kalam-e-Khwaja Ghulam Farid*”, the poetry of Farid advised his followers to be kind-hearted, peaceful and ethical.

Here mentioning an excerpt of his poetic verses that expresses the meaningfully that life journey in the form of an earthly being should be morally congenial, should be away from judging anyone either by way of tongue or by way of merit or demerit, or by way of beauty. Unless mankind is away from evaluation of others, then only one can look into oneself and find others with those qualities which one does not possess.

He says:

Na Ras Jibh Na Rup Na, Kari Kivehha Maan Ni
Na Gunn Mant Na kaaman Maye Jaana Ni
Na Gunn Many na Kaaman Jaana, Kyu Kar Sahu Nun Bhaavan
Sahu Bahutiyan naari Bahu Guunyari, Kit Bidh Darshan Panwa
Na Jaana Sahu Kisey Rawesi, Meyra Jiyu Nimaanna
Na Ras Jibh Na Rup Na, Kari Kivehha Maana

Baba Farid used to say do not use a harsh word for anyone, for the True Lord abides in all and does not break the heart of anyone as they are priceless gems. Humility and sweetness are the essences of human virtues. Once he told a visitor “do

not give me a knife, instead give me a needle, as a knife is an instrument for cutting and a needle for sewing together”.

Hazrat Shaikh Khwaja Syed Muhammad Nizamuddin Auliya was the fourth Spiritual Successor (Khalifa) of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer – the founder of the illustrious Order of Chishti saints in this country. He was specially selected by his Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Khwaja Fariduddin Ganjshakar, for this onerous responsibility because of his unique merits as a learned scholar, an able and diligent administrator and a perfect Spiritual Master, on the recommendation of a “*basharat*” (revelation) from the Holy Prophet.

After the demise of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar, Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia, therefore, succeeded him as the fourth *Sajjadanashin* (highest spiritual leader) of India; Hazrat Allauddin Ali Ahmed Sabir of Kaliyar being the third in the order of precedence.

Types of Saliks

According to Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, there are 3 kinds of dervishes or Saliks: • *Salik* – Those who renounce the world and devote their lives exclusively to Sufism.

- *Waaqiff* – Those who have acquired a stability between ‘Obedience’ and ‘Devotion’.
- *Raajai* – Those who, having acquired due stability, suspend and do not return to the path of Sufism.

Essentials of Devotion

Hazrat Nizamuddin says that for a salik, there are six essentials of devotion to God:

1. He should remain in seclusion which will help him in overpowering his Nafs (appetitive soul).
2. He should remain clean and under wazoo’ (ablution) which must be refreshed when necessary.
3. He must try to observe fasting daily but, if he cannot do so, then he must cut off his eating to the minimum.
4. He must try to avoid everything except God.
5. He must be an obedient devotee of his Pir.
6. He must hold God and Truth above all.

According to Hazrat Nizamuddin, a salik must avoid four things:

1. The world, especially the rich.
2. Mention of anything else except the zikr of God.
3. Give up love of everything else, except of God.
4. Purification of heart from all other worldly things except God.

“Akhlaq” Or Morality

Hazrat Nizamuddin emphasises upon the cultivation of moral and religious values for the character of a dervish. He says that a *salik* achieves success by 4 things:

1. less eating
2. less sleeping
3. less speaking
4. less meeting with people

He advocates mercy and piety in all dealings and says: To hurt a human heart is to hurt the grace of God. A dervish must never curse anybody however great may be the persecution which he may suffer. He must always refrain from disclosing the faults of the people which is a virtue and one of the best devotions to God. Rights of a Neighbour.

One day, speaking on the rights of a neighbour, Hazrat Nizamuddin said: If your neighbour needs a loan, give it to him; if he needs anything else, give it to him; if he needs your sympathy in illness and misfortune, give it to him. And if he dies, then attend his funeral service and pray for his salvation.

Like all great Sufis, Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia was a staunch follower of the Prophet's traditions and *Shariat*. He stressed upon the punctuality of offering Namaz in congregation and even in his advanced age, he followed this rule strictly. Moinuddin Hasan Chishti was born in Sijistan (modern-day Sistan) in Iran in 1141-42 CE. After receiving Khilafat at the age of 52 from Sheikh Usman Harawani, he went on Hajj to Mecca and Medina. While he was praying in the Prophet's mosques in Medina, the Khwaja is said to have heard the Prophet telling him to go to Hindustan and to the city of Ajmer. At that time, he had no idea where Ajmer was. However, he proceeded via Baghdad and Herat to Lahore and then to Delhi and Ajmer. Muizzuddin Muhammad bin Sam of Ghor had already defeated Prithviraj Chauhan and established his rule in Delhi. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti started living and preaching in Ajmer. His instructive discourses, full of spiritual insights, soon drew the local populace as well as kings and nobles and peasants and the poor from far and wide. Moinuddin Chishti (1141-1236) also known as Gharib Nawaz (benefactor of the poor) was one of the most significant saints of the Indian subcontinent. He came to India in the early 13th Century. He first travelled to Lahore and then Ajmer. He got married in Ajmer. He came to Delhi during the reign of Sultan Iltutmish. He introduced and established the Chisti order in South Asia and significantly contributed to the spreading of Islamic Sufi mystic order. In his discourses Chishti preached about loving all our fellow creatures, irrespective of religion and status. His key teachings include charity and compassion for the poor and helpless, leading a pure life of devotion to the Divine, and achieving oneness with God in the service of his creations. The *Dargah of Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti* is the most revered shrine of Muslims not only in Rajasthan, but in India also. The

Dargah is a living example of Mughal Architecture and their faith. The daughter of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan had established a prayer room especially for the woman followers. The shrine has been visited by Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Sher Shah Suri, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Dara Shukoh, Jahanara Begum and Aurangzeb, among many others. Even today, film stars and heads of states, both the rich and the poor make a pilgrimage to the shrine.

The book '*Shams-e-Tabrizi*' (2011), translated by Farida Maleki, published by the Science of the Soul Research centre, New Delhi states that Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, is the most accessible, liberal and pluralistic aspect of Islam, and a uniquely valuable bridge between East and West. The book refers about Al-Ghazâlî, who (c.1056-1111) was one of the most prominent and influential philosophers, theologians, jurists, and mystics of Sunni Islam. He was active at a time when Sunni theology had just passed through its consolidation and entered a period of intense challenges from Shiite Ismâ'îlite theology and the Arabic tradition of Aristotelian philosophy (*falsafa*).

Al-Ghazâlî understood the importance of *falsafa* and developed a complex response that rejected and condemned some of its teachings, while it also allowed him to accept and apply others. Al-Ghazâlî's critique of twenty positions of *falsafa* in his *Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahâfut al-falâsifa)* is a significant landmark in the history of philosophy as it advances the nominalist critique of Aristotelian science developed later in 14th century Europe. On the Arabic and Muslim side al-Ghazâlî's acceptance of demonstration (*apodeixis*) led to a much more refined and precise discourse on epistemology and a flowering of Aristotelian logics and metaphysics. With al-Ghazâlî begins the successful introduction of Aristotelianism or rather Avicennism into Muslim theology. After a period of appropriation of the Greek sciences in the translation movement from Greek into Arabic and the writings of the *falâsifa* up to Avicenna (Ibn Sînâ, c.980-1037), philosophy and the Greek sciences were "naturalized" into the discourse of *kalâm* and Muslim theology (Sabra 1987). He wrote in the eleventh century:

"The heart of man has been so made by God that, like a flint, it contains a hidden fire which is evoked by music and harmony, and renders man beside himself with ecstasy. These harmonies are echoes of that higher world of reality which we call the world of the spirits.....they fan into a flame whatever love is already dormant in heart" (*Shams-e-Tabrizi*, xii Foreword).

Al-Ghazâlî had published his two refutations of *falsafa* and Ismâ'îlism; he left his position at the Nizâmiyya madrasa in Baghdad. During this period, he began writing what most Muslim scholars regard as his major work, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences (Ihyâ' ulûm al-dîn)*. The voluminous *Revival* is a comprehensive guide to ethical behaviour in the everyday life of Muslims (Garden 2014: 63-122). It is divided into four sections, each containing ten books. The first section deals with ritual practices (*'ibâdât*), the second with social customs (*'âdât*), the third with those things

that lead to perdition (*muhlikât*) and hence should be avoided, and the fourth with those that lead to salvation (*munjiyât*) and should be sought. In the forty books of the *Revival* al-Ghazâlî severely criticizes the coveting of worldly matters and reminds his readers that human life is a path towards Judgment Day and the reward or punishment gained through it. Compared with the eternity of the next life, this life is almost insignificant, yet it seals our fate in the world to come. In his autobiography al-Ghazâlî writes that reading Sufi literature made him realize that our theological convictions are by themselves irrelevant for gaining redemption in the afterlife. Not our good beliefs or intentions count; only our good and virtuous actions will determine our life in the world to come. This insight prompted al-Ghazâlî to change his lifestyle and adopt the Sufi path (al-Ghazâlî 1959a, 35-38 = 2000b, 77-80). In the *Revival* he composed a book about human actions (*mu'âmalât*) that wishes to steer clear of any deeper discussion of theological insights (*mukâshafât*). Rather, it aims at guiding people towards ethical behavior that God will reward in this world and the next (al-Ghazâlî 1937-38, 1:4-5).

Falsafa was a movement where Christians, Muslims, and even pagan authors participated. After the 12th century it would also include Jewish authors. For reasons that will become apparent, al-Ghazâlî focused his comments on the Muslim *falâsifa*. In the early 10th century, al-Fârâbî (d. 950) had developed a systemic philosophy that challenged key convictions held by Muslim theologians, most notably the creation of the world in time and the original character of the information God reveals to prophets. Following Aristotle, al-Fârâbî taught that the world has no beginning in the past and that the celestial spheres, for instance, move from pre-eternity. Prophets and the revealed religions articulated the same insights that philosophers expressed in their teachings, yet the prophets used the method of symbolization to make this wisdom more approachable for the ordinary people. Avicenna continued al-Fârâbî's approach and developed his metaphysics and his prophetology to a point where it offers comprehensive explanations of God's essence and His actions as well as a psychology that gives a detailed account of how prophets receive their knowledge and how they, for instance, perform miracles that confirm their missions. Avicenna's philosophy offers philosophical explanations of key Muslim tenets like God's unity (*tawhîd*) and the central position of prophets among humans.

One of the most popular and the greatest Sufi mystics known across in the Islamic Sufi World is the name of Jalal ud-Din Rumi. He was the most prolific Sufi poet and writer. Rumi was born in Balkh, capital of Khorasan, in what is known as Afghanistan, on September 30th, 1207. And migrated with his family to Anatolia shortly before his home city was destroyed by the Mongols in 1221. After training as a Muslim preacher and jurist, he taught Sharia law, of the Hanafî school, in a madrasa in Konya, where he died on the 17th December 1273 – around the time of Dante's eight birthday – where his shrine, the Yesil Turbe, or Green Tomb, still stands. At the age of 37, Rumi's life was transformed by meeting an enigmatic wandering Dervish called Shams Tabrizi. Shams brought about a major spiritual

epiphany in the respectable jurist, and the two quickly became separable. From Shams, Rumi discovered that beyond safe forms of Muslim devotion – the life of prayer and preaching and studying the Sharia – and beyond the call of renunciation – of fasting, self-control and self-discipline – that there lay above all a spirituality of love. Hen Shams mysteriously disappeared, Rumi's grief was expressed in one of the greatest outpourings of the poetry of longing and separation ever produced in any language: a great waterfall of Persian verse-some 3,500 odes, 2000 quatrains, and a mystical epic – the *Masnavi*, 26000 couplets long, a rambling collection of tales and stories of “the Nightingale who was separated from the Rose”. It is, in the eyes of many, the finest, deepest, most complex and most mellifluous collection of mystical poetry ever written in any language and out of any religious tradition. Rumi's writings certainly stand as the supreme expression of mystical Islam.

Rumi saw his writing as an extension of that of Shams – indeed Rumi explicitly states that Shams is the voice speaking through his poems:

Speak, Sun of Truth and faith, pride of Tabriz!
But it is your voice that mouths all my words.

In another couplet he describes himself as impregnated by the spirit of Shams:
The lady of my thoughts gives constant birth,
She's pregnant but with the light of your glory.

(Shams-e Tabrizi, xiii Foreword)

Rumi's absorption and total annihilation in his master Shams al-Din Tabrizi, shines through his poetry collection entitled *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, which has been accessible even to western readers. In one of his poetic compositions, Rumi expounds on Shams's love, compassion, grace and power in a series of paradoxes about his beloved Sheikh. Rumi describes the face of Shams as the Sun that makes the ephemeral eternal. He writes about Shams:

No favour was left which that winsome beauty did not bestow.
What fault of ours, if he failed in bounty towards you?
Thou art reviling, because the charmer wrought tyranny;
Who ever saw in the two worlds a fair one that played not the tyrant?
His love is a sugar-cane, tho' he gave not sugar;
His beauty is perfect faith. Tho' he kept not faith.....
The Sun of the face of Shams Din, glory of the horizons,
never shone upon a perishable, but he made it eternal

(Nicholson 23).

In these lines, Rumi describes Shams as a bounteous tyrant because he gives the disciple freedom, but demands everything in return; he bestows faith on the disciple, but then hides himself to increase the disciple's longing.

In the eleventh century, in Persia, there lived a mathematician named Ghiyathuddin Abulfath Omar bin Ibrahim al-Khayyami – or, Omar (1048-1131), son of Abraham, the tent-maker. His book entitled “*Umar Khayyam ki Rubaiyat*” was

published in 1960 in the translated version from Persian to English. One of the original lyrics is derived from his original script –

maa.em ba-lutf-e-haq tavallā karda
vaz tā.at-o-ma.asīyat tabarra karda
āñ-jā ki ināyat-e-tū bāshad bāshad
nā-karda chū karda karda chuñ nā-karda

The poet Umar Khayyam in these lyrics expresses that inner fear prevents and hesitates him to face the reality of divine truth on the earth. He felt that the reality of life as a sword frightens humans to accept the ultimate, infinite truth to surrender to the Almighty while traversing the path of life in the earthly world. However, rather than

The “carpe diem philosophy” professed in FitzGerald’s *Rubāiyāt*, the Khayyam Persian original, offers a pessimistic view of the world and the Sisyphean situation humans are stuck in. In his quatrains the world is a “salt-desert, a nest of sorrow, a station on the road”, but in FitzGerald’s transcreation it becomes more about making “the most of what we yet may spend” (12).

Omar wrote poetry, and while his rhymes received little attention in their day, they were rediscovered and translated into beautiful English – more than seven centuries later – by a gentleman and scholar named Edward FitzGerald. It was a meeting of minds, a great collaboration of the past and the present, and FitzGerald’s rendition of those passionate verses has become one of the best loved poem cycles in the English language. With their concern for the here and now, as opposed to the hereafter, Omar Khayyam’s quatrains are as romantic today as they were hundreds of years ago; they are a tribute to the power of one moment’s pleasure over a lifetime of sorrow, of desire over the vicissitudes of time. Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, presented here with Edward FitzGerald’s original preface, is truly a classic, and it will stand forever as one of our finest monuments to love. *The Rubāiyāt* of Omar Khayyam is a lyric poem in quatrains (four-line stanzas). Rather than telling a story with characters, a lyric poem presents the deep feelings and emotions of the poet on subjects such as life, death, love, and religion. *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is a poem of high divine and spiritual meaning. The beauty and simplicity of this poem is so immaculate that people of all faiths and those who have no faith at all can seek divine solace in it. Omar has used popular metaphors in his passionate praise of wine and love.

Rubāiyāt of Omar Khayyam is the title that Edward FitzGerald gave to his 1859 translation from Persian to English of a selection of quatrains (*rubā’iyāt*) attributed to Omar Khayyam (1048-1131), dubbed “the Astronomer-Poet of Persia”.

Although commercially unsuccessful at first, FitzGerald’s work was popularised from 1861 onward by Whitley Stokes, and the work came to be greatly admired by the Pre-Raphaelites in England. FitzGerald had a third edition printed in 1872, which increased interest in the work in the United States. By the 1880s, the book was

extremely popular throughout the English-speaking world, to the extent that numerous “Omar Khayyam clubs” were formed and there was a “*fin de siècle cult of the Rubaiyat*” (Yohannan 202).

FitzGerald’s work has been published in several hundred editions and has inspired similar translation efforts in English and in many other languages. In the context of a piece entitled *On the Knowledge of the Principals of Existence*, Khayyam endorses the Sufi path (Mehdi 8). Csillik (1960) suggests the possibility that Omar Khayyam could see in Sufism an ally against orthodox religiosity (*Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 75). Other commentators do not accept that Omar’s poetry has an anti-religious agenda and interpret his references to wine and drunkenness in the conventional metaphorical sense common in Sufism. The French translator J. B. Nicolas held that Omar’s constant exhortations to drink wine should not be taken literally, but should be regarded rather in the light of Sufi thought where rapturous intoxication by “wine” is to be understood as a metaphor for the enlightened state or divine rapture of *baqaa* (Albano 59-77).

A person’s *baqaa*, which literally means “permanency”, is a term in Sufi philosophy which describes a particular state of life with God and is a manzil or above that comes after the station of *fanaa*. Inaayat Khan writes in his book *A Sufi message of spiritual liberty*, “The ideal perfection, called *Baqaa* by Sufis, is termed ‘*Najat*’ in Islam, ‘*Nirvana*’ in Buddhism, ‘*Salvation*’ in Christianity, and ‘*Mukhti*’ in Hinduism. This is the highest condition attainable, and all ancient prophets and sages experienced it, and taught it to the world. *Baqaa* is the original state of God. At this state every being must arrive someday, consciously or unconsciously, before or after death. The beginning and end of all beings is the same, difference only existing during the journey.

Bjerregaard (1915) defended that Omar Khayyam was a Sufi (3). Idries Shah (1999) and Dougan (1991) attribute the reputation of hedonism to the failings of FitzGerald’s translation. In his essay “*The Enigma of Edward FitzGerald*”, Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges wrote that “*the two (Khayyam and FitzGerald) were quite different, and perhaps in life might not have been friends; death and vicissitudes and time led one to know the other and make them into a single poet,*” shedding light on the birth of “Fitz-Omar”. Scholars and writers view FitzGerald’s *Rubáiyát* simply as English poetry with Persian allusions, and it is widely accepted his quatrains in English are loose translations based on the original verses. In fact, FitzGerald himself called the translation “*very un-literal*”, but “*at all cost, a thing must live...Better a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle*”. He called his transcription of Khayyam’s verses, “*transmogrification*”. In what is called the 67th Bodleian quatrain, Khayyam had written:

Roz-ast khush o hava nah garam ast na sard
Abr az rukh gulzar hami shawid garad
Bulbul ba-zaban pahlavi ba gul zard
Fariyad hameen zind kah mein baawad khurd

The quatrain was trans-created by FitzGerald as in verse 6 of his book *The Rubaiyat* (1859 edition):

*And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
High piping Pehlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
"Red Wine!" – the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That yellow Cheek of her's to incarnadine*

David is the author of the Psalms in the Bible (see also the Qur'an, Surahs 4.163 and 17.55), but instead of singing his holy songs (Psalms), he calls for wine, perhaps because, from an Omani point of view, singing about Wine is ultimately just as significant as singing about God. Actually, there is a little more to it than this, as we shall see shortly, but first we need to take a look at the strange connection between the Nightingale and the Rose.

Persian folklore links them in variations on the following basic story: Originally, the Nightingale could not sing very well, and all Roses were white. But then one day the Nightingale noticed Rose and fell deeply in love with her. So inspired was he by her beauty that he actually began to sing melodiously for the first time, but not only that, in pressing his body against the flower, a thorn pierced his breast, and his blood poured out over the Rose, turning it red. Thus, they were created together with the Song of the Nightingale and the Red Rose. Prof. R.A. Nicholson, in his notes on this verse in a 1909 edition of *The Rubaiyat*, says:

"In Persian poetry the Nightingale (Bulbul) is constantly represented as the lover of the Rose (Gul), a charming fancy, and one that is supported by rhyme, if not by reason."

In Persian Art, too, *the Rose and the Nightingale* are a popular decorative theme. In verse 6 the link between David and the Nightingale is singing, and the reference to the Nightingale, the Rose, and "*that yellow Cheek of hers to incarnadine*", derives from the foregoing folktale, FitzGerald using "to incarnadine" meaning "to make blood

red", the link with red wine being, of course, that it is like blood in colour. But whatever, according to Heron Allen (as note 11a, p.15 n.2), in Persian literature yellow is the colour of sickness and misery (compare yellow = jaundiced in English), so that the Nightingale's song, in turning the yellow cheek of the rose to incarnadine (the colour of healthy flesh) is effectively infusing it with health and happiness. Incidentally, in editions after the first, FitzGerald changed "yellow" to "sallow".

But getting back to David, why are his lips "*lock't; but in divine / High piping Pehlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine! / Red Wine!"*?" The explanation of this curious phraseology appears to be that David is here not literally the Psalmist (Singer of Holy Songs), but a four-image of the Nightingale, whose Song is not a Psalm but a bird call: "*Wine! Wine! Wine! Red Wine!*", if repeated over and over again, would have the characteristic repetitiveness of birdsong. That, I think, is why David's lips are "locked" – they are locked in repetitive bird call; why they are "high piping" – which relates more to birdsong than a sung Psalm; and why he sings in "Pehlevi", the

ancient language of Persia – which relates more easily to the Persian Nightingale than to the Jewish David, for, as FitzGerald tells us in his note on this verse, “*Hafiz also speaks of the Nightingale’s Pehlevi, which did not change with the People’s.*” That is, in Persian lore the Nightingale’s song preserves the original language of Pehlevi, whilst that of the People changes with time.

While there have been many controversial cases of transcreation, FitzGerald’s work raised many questions primarily because he was accused of attributing verses to the *Rubáiyát* that Khayyam never wrote. Of the 1,400-and-odd quatrains attributed to Khayyam, some scholars estimate only 200 are his, while others such as Ali Dashti (author of *In Search of Omar Khayyam* and an authority on the works of the Khayyam) say that “only 36 quatrains have a likelihood of authenticity”.

In the introduction to *Rubáiyát*, Daniel Karlin notes that “the structure of the poem, in one sense, ‘*translates*’ nothing, because it has no counterpart in the original text”. Despite the contention, FitzGerald’s *Rubáiyát* not only gained immense recognition but also established Khayyam as a poet, who was freethinking and hedonistic.

Idries Shah (16 June 1924-23 November 1996), also known as Idris Shah, né Sayed Idries al-Hashimi and by the pen name Arkon Daraul, was an author and teacher in the Sufi tradition who wrote over three dozen books on topics ranging from psychology and spirituality to travelogues and culture studies, and also a leading thinker of the 20th century. His seminal work was *The Sufis*, which appeared in 1964 and was well received internationally. Born in India, the descendant of a family of Afghan nobles, Shah grew up mainly in England. His role in the controversy surrounding a new translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, published by his friend Robert Graves and his older brother Omar Ali Shah, came in for particular scrutiny. However, he also had many notable defenders, chief among them the novelist Doris Lessing. Shah came to be recognized as a spokesman for Sufism in the West and lectured as a visiting professor at a number of Western universities. His works have played a significant part in presenting Sufism as a form of spiritual wisdom approachable by individuals and not necessarily attached to any specific religion. Abdullah Dogan taught a practical fourth-way method of self-development for Westerners, initially drawing on the ideas of G.I. Gurdjieff, Hazrat Inayat Khan and Sri Ramdas of Kerala, among others. Increasingly his own inner development informed his teaching.

Abdullah’s main aim was to wake people up so they might find their psychological and spiritual potential. To this end he instructed individually, held regular question-and-answer sessions for groups of pupils and conveyed his ideas in written, graphic art and musical form. Both Idris Shah and Abdullah Dogan argue that Omar’s poetry is to be understood as with a specialized knowledge of philosophical ideas. On the other hand, Iranian experts such as Mohammad Ali Foroughi (Three Times the Prime Minister of Iran) and Mojtaba Minovi (Iranian Historian) rejected the hypothesis that Omar Khayyam was a Sufi (Bowen 72).

Foroughi stated that Khayyam's ideas may have been consistent with that of Sufis at times but there is no evidence that he was formerly a Sufi. Aminrazavi Mehdi (2007) states that "*Sufi interpretation of Khayyam is possible only by reading into his Rubā'īyyāt extensively and by stretching the content to fit the classical Sufi doctrine (The Wine of Wisdom, 128)*. Furthermore, Frye (1975) emphasizes that Khayyam was intensely disliked by a number of celebrated Sufi mystics who belonged to the same century. Shams Tabrizi (spiritual guide of Rumi) and Najm al-Din Daya (Razi) a 13th century Persian Sufi in Anatolia on reading the translated version of Fitzgerald's of Omar Khayyam's poetry (Ibid.), described Omar Khayyam as "an unhappy philosopher, atheist, and materialist" (Bowen 72). Dāya says in his commentary of the Qur'an, "*Verily all that God created in the world of form has its like in the world of meaning; all that He created in the world of meaning – this being the hereafter – has its true essence in the world of reality, which is the uttermost unseen. Know too that of all that God created in all the worlds, a specimen and sample is present in man (Quoted in Esmā'īl Ḥaqqī, Rūḥ al-bayān, Istanbul, 1389/1970, I, 404)*

While on the other side, some Sufi mystics like Attar of Nishapur regarded him not as a fellow-mystic but a free-thinking scientist who awaited punishments hereafter. Rahim in his review of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's book mentions Nasr's underline notion that Muslim philosophers did not see a dichotomy between intellect and intuition but considered them to make a hierarchy within the totality of the sources of human knowledge. He discusses the limits of theological schools and philosophers who restrict knowledge to that which is attainable by demonstration (224). Consider, for example, his statement about the divine essence: "*Islamic metaphysics places the Absolute above all limitations,*" and "*It knows that the Divine Essence... is Non-Being or Beyond-Being*" (63). He in the chapter Nine of his book *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (2006) argues that it is "reductive" to use a literal interpretation of his verses (many of which are of uncertain authenticity to begin with) to establish Omar Khayyam's philosophy (165-183). Instead, hse cited as evidence Khayyam's interpretive translation of Avicenna's treatise *Discourse on Unity (Al-Khutbat al-Tawhīd)*, where Avicenna expresses orthodox views in agreement with the Sayyed Hossein Nasr on Divine Unity (The belief in 'Unity of the actions of Allah (SwT)' informs us that everything and everyone which exists in the entire universe – even the leaves of a tree which move with the passing breeze – originate from Allah (SwT). Nothing can take place without His command – the cutting which the sword performs, the burning which a fire produces and all other actions stem from His order. To sum this belief up in one sentence, we refer to the tradition mentioned in Bihar al-Anwar that reads: "*There is no one effector in the creation except Allah*" (178). The prose works believed to be Omar's are written in the peripatetic style (in Aristotelian manner travelling from one place to another) and are explicitly theistic, dealing with subjects such as existence of God and theodicy (The Wine of Wisdom, 160). As noted by Bowen these works indicate his involvement in the problems of metaphysics rather than in

the subtleties of Sufism (71). As evidence of Khayyam's faith and/or conformity to Islamic customs, Aminrazavi in his book *The Wine of Wisdom* (p.14) mentions that in his treatises he offers salutations and prayers, praising God and Muhammad. In most biographical extracts, he is referred with religious honorifics such as Imam, *The Patron of Faith (Ghīyāth al-Dīn)*, and *The Evidence of Truth (Hujjat al-Haqq)*. He also notes that biographers who praise his religiosity generally avoid making reference to his poetry, while the ones who mention his poetry often do not praise his religious character (48). For instance, Al Bayhaqi's account which antedates by some years other biographical notices, speaks of Omar as a very pious man who professed orthodox views down to his last hour (Dogan 174). On the basis of all the existing textual and biographical evidence, the question remains somewhat open (Aminrazavi 14) and as a result Khayyam has received sharply conflicting appreciations and criticisms (E.D. Ross 360).

Kabir flourished during medieval India between the period 1398-1518 AD. The writer Prabhakar Machwe in his book on '*Kabir*' (1977) describes Kabir's mysticism, which was of the same kind and degree as that of the Vedanta or the Sufi. For him there was no dualism between the finite and the infinite, as is well illustrated in the following two quotations from Rabindranath Tagore's *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*.

'O how may I ever express that secret word?
O how I say He is not like this, and
He is like that?
If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed,
If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.
He makes the inner and outer worlds to be indivisibility one;
The conscious and the unconscious both are his footstools.
He is neither manifest nor hidden,
He is neither revealed nor unrevealed;
There are no words to tell which He is.'

(Aisa lo nahin taisa lo) Kabir: Tagore, P.9.)

And again, he expresses:

When He himself reveals Himself, Brahma brings
Into manifestation That which can never be seen
As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree,
As the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are in the void –
So from beyond the infinite, the infinite comes:
And from the Infinite the finite extends.
The creature is in Brahma, and brahma is in the creature:
They are ever distinct, yet ever united.....
He Himself is the limit and the limitless:
And beyond both the limited and the limitless is he, the Pure being.
He is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.
The Supreme Soul is seen within the Soul.....

(Sadho Brahma alakh lakhaya): Kabir: Tagore, P.6.

It would be easier to follow Kabir's mystic philosophy if we approach it from these three aspects: his concept of God or Brahman, his concept of Soul or Atman, and his concept of Maya or the World as illusion.

Kabir calls the brahma the primal principal or the Essence. It is beyond time, space, qualities and attributes... It is unaffected by any change. It is free and ultimate. It is beyond causation – 'Neither to the left, nor to the right, nor in front: neither below, nor above, formless (*Kabir Granthavali*, SSD, p.242). It can only be pointed to as Mahatma Gandhi has put it, 'It is like Euclid's point'.

Kabir's Godhood is *Nirguna* or attributeless. There are generally three attributes – *Sat* (Being), *Rajas* (Becoming), *Tamas* (Non-Being): But Brahma is neither of the three. It is never born, nor does it grow, nor does it die. It merely is (*Tat Sat*). 'As snow is caused by water and again snow melts into water, so whatever has come to itself and nothing more can be said' (*Kabir Granthavali*, p. 13). In as much as it is formless, it is colourless and beyond sensual perception. All categories begin with It and so It cannot be categorised. 'God is in the world and the world is in God and He permeates everything'.

Khalik Khalak Khalak men Khalik, sab ghat rahya samai' (*Kabir Granthavali*, p. 104)

But Kabir is not merely a philosopher who stops at the logical impossibility of describing or defining Godhood. Being a poet, he sometimes personifies his God, and sometimes draws parallels between god-and-Soul and lover-and-beloved or beloved-and-lover relationship. Kabir's God transcends both Islamic monotheism and Hindu polytheism. He is Allah and also ram, and also more, Kabir asks:

For Turks in mosques and for Hindus in temples
Both Khuda and Ram are there
Where mosque and temple is not
Who rules supreme there? (*Gyansagar*, p. 63)

To mention contemporary writers – is one such Sufist mystic – Sadia Dehlvi (1957-5 August 2020). She was a devotee of Khwaja Garib Nawaj of Ajmer and Nizam ud-Din Auliya of Delhi. She criticised radical interpretations of Islam and called for a pluralistic understanding of Islam. In April 2009, Dehlavi published a book on Sufism entitled *Sufism: The Heart of Islam*. Sadia's discourse in her book is against delinking of Sufism from Islam (by Western writers) or the assertion that Sufism is not part of Islam (by Muslims). Dehlvi try to convince both groups by stating that "*the Messenger of Islam remains the primary source of Sufism.*" She argues that "Sufism cannot be understood without reference to the Holy Book." She says, "*Although Sufism, similar to other mystic traditions, offer universal ethics and meditation practices, its internal spiritual current cannot be alienated from its outward Islamic dimensions.*"

To her Muslim readers she tells clearly that Sufism emanates from the *Sharia*. "Sufis strictly follow the Sharia," Sadia declares. "The Sufi philosophy is classified

into three stages: *Sharia*, the outward law, *Tareeqa*, the Way and *Aqeeqah*, the Truth.” But elsewhere she states that “those who pursued the study of *Sharia* laws came to be known as jurists. The scholars who devoted themselves to the development of virtuous inner qualities came to be known as Sufis.” While all Muslims recognize *Sharia*, fewer people understand *Tareeqa* as part of mainstream Islam. She writes: “I feel that the stress on rationale is misplaced. I often argue that had God been an academic trophy, the ability to know Him would be restricted to those with powers of intellect. Stringent modern attitudes, requiring a scientific basis for everything, tend to overlook the importance of the heart and sincere emotions.”

In her next book, *The Sufi Courtyard: Dargahs of Delhi* (2012), Sadia attempts to bring in discourse a sort of visualisation of Sufi Shrines in Delhi, the Divine Mysteries of Sufi Saints/Pirs as well as Dargah Evenings and the rituals. She alleged that, there was an urgent need for a compendium on Sufism, a kind of carry-with you reference a handbook that could explain the basic facts about Sufism, its origins, its history in India, the major Silsilas or spiritual lineages, their specific traits, commonalities and differences and the impact of Sufism in India. One needed something that one could go back to, in order to check the meaning of particular words like *Barkat*, *Aqeedat*, *Sam'a*, *Haal*, *Urs* and other Sufi practices and rituals. One is needed to understand why women are by and large not permitted inside shrines. One is needed to know about the areas of conflict between the clergy and the Sufis and between the state and the Sufis. What kind of relations did they build with other spiritual traditions, the reasons for their popularity and their relevance today? In Delhi, this specific book on Sufism, expects to get information on all the major Sufi shrines and little notes on the history of the Sufis, their times and their contributions. In a way this book attempts to reframe Islamic mystics and their spiritualisation of the waking-world for the heavens.

Similarly, the book *Delhi by Heart* (2013) authored by Raza Rumi brings forth the influence and reflections of mystical Islamic Sufism from the times of the advent of Nizam ud-Din Auliya in Delhi, which later in span of ups and downs of history from mediaeval to the post-modern Delhi opens up certain in-depth, inherent, indented conceptions, formations of Islamic culture and its adaptations in the Hindustani culture of past, present and future. *Delhi by Heart* is a sensitively written account of a Pakistani writer’s discovery of Delhi – Why, asks Raza Rumi, does the capital of another country feel like home? How is it that a man from Pakistan can cross the border into ‘hostile’ territory and yet not feel ‘foreign’? Is it the geography, the architecture, the food? Or is it the streets, the festivals and the colours of the subcontinent, so familiar and yes, beloved... As he takes in the sights, from the Sufi shrines in the south to the markets of Old Delhi, from Lutyens’ stately mansions to Ghalib’s crumbling abode, Raza uncovers the many layers of the city.

He connects with the richness of the Urdu language, observes the syncretic evolution of mystical Islam in India and its deep connections with Hindustani

classical music – so much a part of his own selfhood. And every so often, he returns to the refuge of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, the twelfth-century *Pir*, whose dargah still reverberates with music and prayer every evening. His wanderings through Delhi lead Raza back in time to recollections of a long-forgotten Hindu ancestry and to comparisons with his own city of Lahore – in many ways a mirror image of Delhi. They also lead to reflections on the nature of the modern city, the inherent conflict between the native and the immigrant and, inevitably, to an inquiry into his own identity as a South Asian Muslim. Rich with history and anecdote, and conversations with Dilliwalas known and unknown, *Delhi By Heart* offers an unusual perspective and unexpected insights into the political and cultural capital of India.

Conclusion

To sum up, the Sufism and non-Sufi Islam, it can be understood in this way that Sufi followers die many times to achieve something better in love of God for the voluntary cultivation of their Soul, while non-Sufi leads his life to physical death by attributing his deeds for the sake of God's mercy in place of God's knowledge that is immanent in his creation that pervades His image and Beatitude. Thus, the reflection and perception of one's physical form in the mirror that is in the 'self' is Sufism. He means seeking for the face of God, one rises up from the self and self is the veil of veils. Human disposition in context of his fall, subsequent God's mercy or wrath are all symbolic representations of God's revelations of truth to mankind. If humility comes in man, when he sees good as coming from God, while a man recognizes his incapacity and worthlessness due to his sins and forgetfulness to God, the man reaches an exalted state of salvation and glory.

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**NOTES BY A LOVER OF
ANCIENT WISDOM**

Gotra

COMMENTS ON ARTICLE "GOTRA VS GENE" SHARED ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA

Gotra Vs Gene

Do you know why every time you sit in a puja the priest asks you for you Gotra?

Science behind Gotra (GENETICS) is nothing but what is today popularly known as GENE MAPPING.

What is Gotra System?

Why do we have this system? Why do we consider this to be so important to decide marriages?

Why should sons carry the gotra of father, why not daughter?

How/why does gotra of a daughter change after she gets married? What is the logic?

Infact this is an amazing genetic science we follow. Let's see the SCIENCE of GENETICS behind our great GOTRA systems.

The word GOTRA formed from two sanskrit words GAU (means cow) and Trahi (means shed).

Gotra Means Cowshed

Gotra is like cowshed protecting a particular male lineage. We identify our male lineage / gotra by considering to be descendants of the 8 great Rishi (Sapta rishi + Bharadwaj rishi). All the other gotra evolved from these only.

Biologically, human body has 23 pairs of chromosomes (one from father and one from mother). Of these 23 pairs, there is one pair called sex chromosomes which decides the gender of person.

During conception if the resultant cell is XX chromosomes then the child will be girl, if it is XY then it is boy.

In XY – X is from mother and Y is from father.

In this Y is unique and it doesn't mix. So in XY, Y will suppress the X and son will get Y chromosomes. Y is the only chromosome which gets passed down only between male lineage. (Father to Son and to Grandson).

Women never gets Y. Hence Y plays a crucial role in genetics in identifying the genealogy. Since women never get Y the Gotra of the woman is said to be of her husband.

They are 8 different Y chromosomes from 8 Rishis. If we are from Same Gotra then it means we are from same root ancestor.

Marriages between same Gotra will increase the risk of causing genetic disorders as same Gotra Y chromosomes cannot have crossover and it will activate the defective cells.

If this continues, it will reduce the size and strength of Y chromosome which is crucial for the creation of male.

If no Y chromosome is present in this world, then it will cause males to become extinct.

So Gotra system is a method to avoid genetic disorders and attempt to protect Y chromosome.

Amazing bio-science by our Maharishis.

Our Rishis had the – “GENE MAPPING” – sorted out thousands of years ago...

Are the details of chromosome combinations mentioned in the formation of female and male child and how Y chromosome gets transmitted from father to son – are these details authentic?

Yes.

If yes, it is then a validation of the old Indian tradition of gotra as explained in the post that was shared.

If families remember their gotra for generations after generations then they will follow the injunction of their forefathers that inter-marriage within them same gotra should be avoided since progeny from consanguineous marriages suffer progressive degeneration and become diseased.

In ancient India when spiritual knowledge was widely prevalent and formed the basis of social order, families maintained purity of their lineage for long generations by adhering to spiritual laws of higher living.

That does not mean female child was at a discount or that the system an evil of male chauvinism. Far from it. In ancient India purity and higher education of the female child or daughter was of equal importance.

Hence begetting a son was crucial to the parents and to the family line, as the male progeny was instrumental in perpetuating the purity and nobility of the lineage for the good of society.

So modern genetics validates by showing the scientific basis of gotra system though it has lost its higher purpose at the present time when spiritual knowledge is lost and darkness of ignorance and selfishness reign. Awful social evils like female feticide, ostentation and greed and promiscuity prevails today.

In the light of this discussion we can better understand the teaching in the Secret Doctrine volume II, p. 671-672:

How father transmits his life atoms to his son and how one's character moulds and shapes family heredity.

It is a combination of heredity and "Karmic heirloom" – that is, what one inherits from family heredity as one part and what he brings his own individual Karma from his previous life.

On Love

Pure Love, you have brought out is unexpected, universal, untainted by personality, Love for Love's sake. Plato in his admirable discourse on Justice, in his dialogue on Ideal Republic, says the same thing. Universal Justice is Love Immortal which is selfless, embracing All – friends and foes alike. The same is the burden of the Song Celestial – Bhagavadgita. Quotes from Plato and Bhagavadgita reinforces what the Great Prophet said, which you have cited:

Poet Pindar is quoted by Plato, the choice one has to make:

Whether shall I the lofty wall
Of Justice try to scale;
Or, hedg'd within the guileful maze
Of Vice, encircled dwell?

Bhagavadgita, Chapter IV: Devotion through Spiritual Knowledge:

“Those who have spiritual discrimination call him wise whose undertakings are all free from desire, for his actions are consumed in the fire of spiritual knowledge. He abandoneth the desire to see a reward for his actions, is free, contented, and upon nothing dependeth, and although engaged in action he really doeth nothing; he is not solicitous of results, with mind and body subdued and being above enjoyment from objects, doing with the body alone the acts of the body, he does not subject himself to rebirth. He is contented with whatever he receives fortuitously, is free from the influence of ‘the pairs of opposites’ and from envy, the same in success and failure; even though he acts he is not bound by the bonds of actions. All the actions of such a man who is free from self-interest, who is devoted, with heart set upon spiritual knowledge and whose acts are sacrifices for the sake of the Supreme, are dissolved and left without effect on him.

“The Supreme Spirit is the act of offering, the Supreme Spirit is the sacrificial butter offered in the fire which is the Supreme Spirit, and unto the Supreme Spirit goeth he who maketh the Supreme Spirit the object of his meditation in performing his actions.”

The Enlightened Ones teach that the Law of Life is Sacrifice – Yajna. This I understand to be the true meaning of Jihad, which the Great Prophet says is his very being. Krishna says He is Adi-Yajna in this body. Our true Self, the Divinity within, is Yajna itself. The One Self becomes all this, all, All, is Self, One and indivisible, but

appearing to imperfect minds as divisible. As long as we have and maintain fragmented consciousness, bring selfish and wedded to selfish life, we are full of injustice, do sins and suffer endlessly, thinking all the while we are good and doing good. This outer illusionary self, the mortal self, has to sacrifice itself to the Divine – perform Yajna in the fire of spiritual knowledge, and merge with the Supreme who is ALL, in ALL, the ONE without a second.

Realisation of IT is Justice of Plato, Love of Sufi saints and Vaishnava mystics, Ideal of human Perfection taught in the Bhagavadgita, Islam of Mohamedanism.

Quran and Geeta

When I read the following I wonder whether I am reading the Holy Koran.

“May I bow down to that Supreme Being whom Brahma, Varuna, Indra, Rudra and the Maruts praise with divine hymns; whom the Sama-chanters methodically sing about throughout the Vedas and Upanishads; whom the yogis see with their mind absorbed in ‘That’ through meditations; and whose end or beginning neither the hosts of gods nor demi-gods know.”

Even though Sanatan Dharma ultimately leads to one Supreme Being, most of us can't visualize God in the beginning with our sense organs. The concept of all gods and demi-gods is a mere attempt to give a form to that Supreme Being.

As a king rules through various ministers, so does the Supreme King rule through saints and avatars (Gita 4:7-8). This concept extends to all religions. There is only one sun and one ocean for the entire earth regardless of how it is divided by nations, cultures, races or religions. And, so is there only one Supreme Being (Brahman) who exists externally through various manifestations as experienced all around us. There is nothing but one existence, eternally unchanging, immovable, imperishable, and indescribable by either by the human mind.

Therefore, let us seek unity in diversity and diversity in unity. A tree is nothing but a conglomeration of various parts such as the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc. The tree doesn't not have an identity without them, and without the togetherness of the tree the same components have no value. Similarly, God exists or manifests through all of us. And we all belong to that one God, the Creator.

No matter what name or form we assign to the Lord, God will always remain immaterial and incomplete. Any attempt to define God will be futile. It is only wise not to establish any material concepts or try to enforce it on others in the name of religion.

Such a Creator is best described as Sat-Chit-Ananada, or Existence-Awareness-Bliss.

Swami Vivekananda on Islam

Some thoughts of Swami Vivekananda on Islam and Mohammed: “For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam – Vedanta brain and Islam body – is the only hope. I see in my mind’s eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body. “I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. “The Mohammedan rule was experienced as liberation for the poor and downtrodden. That is how one fifth of our people became Mohammedans. To think that all these were brought by sword and fire is sheer madness. “Mohammedanism in India is quite a different thing from that in any other country. It is only when Mohammedans come from other countries and preach to their co-religionists in India about living with men who are not of their faith that a Mohammedan mob is aroused and fights. “You ask, ‘What good can there be in his religion?’ If there was no good, how could it live? The good alone lives, that alone survives... How could Mohammedanism have lived? Had there been nothing good in its teachings?”

– Swami Vivekananda

Islamic Philosophical Cosmology is Pure Theosophy – Divine Wisdom

Suhrawardi taught a complex and profound emanationist cosmology, in which all creation is a successive outflow from the original Supreme Light of Lights (Nur al-Anwar). The fundamental of his philosophy is pure immaterial light, where nothing is manifest, and which unfolds from the Light of Lights in a descending order of ever-diminishing intensity and, through complex interaction, gives rise to a “horizontal” array of lights, similar in conception to Platonic forms, that governs mundane reality. In other words, the universe and all levels of existence are but varying degrees of Light – light and darkness. In his division of bodies, he categorises objects in terms of their reception or non-reception of light.

Suhrawardi considers a previous existence for every soul in the angelic realm before its descent to the realm of the body. The soul is divided into two parts, one remains in heaven and the other descends into the dungeon of the body. The human soul is always sad because it has been divorced from its other half. Therefore, it aspires to become reunited with it. The soul can only reach felicity again when it is united with its celestial part, which has remained in heaven. He holds that the soul should seek felicity by detaching itself from its tenebrous body and worldly matters and access the world of immaterial lights. The souls of the gnostics and saints, after leaving the body, ascend even above the angelic world to enjoy proximity to the Supreme Light, which is the only absolute Reality.

Suhrawardi elaborated the neo-Platonic idea of an independent intermediary world, the imaginal world (‘alam-i mithal عالم مثال). His views have exerted a powerful influence down to this day, particularly through Mulla Sadra’s combined peripatetic and illuminationist description of reality.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahab_al-Din_Yahya_ibn_Habash_Suhrawardi

Struggle with Shaitan and Inner Self

Struggle with the shaitan is indeed hard and at times disheartening. I always think that the real meaning of Jihad is this – war against our animal nature to conquer and make it subservient to the Divine Self – our true nature and self. I think this is ISLAM – Surrender to Divine Self, which is the SELF of ALL, embracing All, including ALL

Mahabhrata war is an allegorical account of this terrible war. Arjuna is the Warrior; Krishna is the Divine Self within; Kouravas are the satanic forces of our lower animal nature; pandavas, born of celestial powers, are our higher nature linked to the Higher Self; Kuru kshetra is this body in which the war rages for supremacy.

When Arjuna decided to wage war against his unrelenting enemies with great enthusiasm, he soon found himself overwhelmed by the odds he had to fight against and was demoralised. This is in the first chapter of the Gita, called, Yoga of Despondency of Arjuna. He tried to get away from the field of battle.

Then comes Krishna to tell him that he cannot get away but has to fight and conquer; he said that his fears and delusion are due to his wrong ideas and beliefs about life and nature of reality, and dispels his ignorance with a discourse which forms the 18 chapters of the Bhagavadgita. Thus enlightened he fights and conquers.

Arjuna complains to Krishna that he is impelled to do evil by some secret force against his will and asks what it is. The reply given by Krishna is:

“It is Lust which instigates him (man). It is passion, sprung from the quality of Rajas; insatiable and full of sin. Know this to be the enemy of man on earth. As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and mirror by rust, and as the womb enveloped the foetus, so is the universe surrounded by this passion. By this – the constant enemy of the wise man, formed from desire which rages like fire and is never to be appeased – is discriminating knowledge surrounded. Its empire is over the senses and organs, the thinking principles and discriminating faculty also; by means of this it cloudeth discrimination and deludeth the Lord of the body. Therefore, O best of the descendants of Bharata, at the very outset restraining thy senses, thou shouldst conquer this sin which is the destroyer of knowledge and of spiritual discernment.”

How to conquer? Advise of Krishna is:

“The senses and organs are esteemed great, but the thinking self is greater than they. The discriminating principle (Buddhi) is greater than the thinking self, and that which is greater than the discriminating principle is He (the Supreme Spirit). Thus knowing what is greater than the discriminating principle and strengthening the lower by the Higher Self, do thou of mighty arms slay this foe which is formed from desire and is difficult to seize.”

Teaches Mahatmas:

“There is *that* within man, or overshadowing him, which presses towards rendering him master of himself and of life, by making him a true servant of the Deity; for only when he is the servant of the Most High will man cease to be the servant of the blind, self-centering forces which operate with in him. ‘Ye *cannot* serve God and Mammon.’”

I believe this is the common teaching of all the great prophets, Teachers, Gurus the world over applicable to all mankind.

On Miracles and Universal Justice, called Karma

I fell to thinking of miracles. One popular conception is that miracle is suspension or breaking or annulment of laws of nature, or of life, in favor of a chosen one or a favoured one.

It may seem so. Indeed we have seen it happening in the lives of people.

But to call it miracle in the sense of stoppage of law of life neither sounds reasonable nor just.

Apparent miracle is still in accordance with recondite laws of life of which we are not aware but of which the Enlightened Ones know. So, we call them miracles.

If someone in great difficulty received help and succour it can only be due to the fact that he only has reaped what he has sown in the past by way of help he had extended and sacrifice he had made for another in need. He receives his reward.

Similarly, the misfortune that befalls one and is helpless

It cannot be accident. The discord and disharmony he had created in the past hurts countless beings and hampers their progress and well-being. He must receive the reaction flowing from the disturbance he caused.

Universe is governed by Absolute Justice whose heart is Mercy.

The troubles we face in life is in exact measure of the troubles we had caused knowingly or unknowingly.

“With what measure you mete, it will be measured unto you, heaped up, pressed down and running over.” (Jesus in Gospels)

But the retributive reaction that befalls the sufferer has implicit lessons for him to learn. If he knows the Immutable law of Justice, then he will say that he has received what he had sown, and will not complain but endures, blame no one, accepts responsibility, and tries to tide over difficulties as best as he can. Acceptance of responsibility itself is half the battle won, and it puts him in the right frame of mind to learn the lesson adversity has brought to him. Such lessons get burnt into the soul units higher progress.

It is thus that the Divine Justice is at the same time Divine Mercy

There is no way by which we may evolve to become gods.

A wise man said – men are not made into steel in character in ease and comfort.

When one resigns oneself to the Divine – Divinity and Law being One – the help and guidance that comes from such surrender will be full of rich lessons the soul learns. It is thus we evolve and progress. Hence the Law is Divine Mercy.

Buddha said: no evil to him who does no evil.

“All that we are is the result of what we have thought, formed of our thoughts, founded on our thoughts; if a man thinks evil thoughts pain pursues him as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the ox that draws it; if a man thinks good and wholesome thoughts happiness follows him like his own shadow that never leaves him, ” teaches the Buddha.

Thoughts, intent, motive driven by desire are the real springs of action; if these are discordant, hurtful to others, obstructing the harmonious progression of life to higher order, the relentless tendency in the universe to restore the disturbed harmony must inescapably react on the beings who caused the disturbance, till the imbalance caused is restored.

Fortune and misfortunes of life are self-earned. We learn from them. Life is the great school in which we are learning lessons of life.

How important it is that we study, understand and apply what we understand of the Law of Justice or Karma, in all its aspects and ramifications.

Placing reliance on the law of absolute Justice which is ever true, and think and act in accordance with it, we elevate ourselves and our fellowmen and fellow creatures to higher plane and nobler life.

Think and act in ways that causes harmony, peace, progress of all; abundant good Will to all and ill will to none, forgiving and even doing good to those who hurt us, ever be full of gratitude to the blessings of life, to such no suffering / misfortune befalls.

“Sow kindly acts, thou shalt reap their fruition; sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvest; accept the woes of birth.” (The Book of the Golden Precepts)

On Purification of Soul

In our lower nature we are imperfect but in Soul and Spirit we are Divine, and the latter is our true being, the former a passing illusion. Conquering of the lower self is, we are taught, is not the work of a day or even one life time, but one of hundreds of lifetimes. It took a soul to become a Buddha undeterred effort, devotion, purification and sacrifice of many hundreds of rebirths. Our duty is to try, keep on trying, and resign all personal interest to the Divine Self – whether successful or failure. Dwelling on past errors and sins, they say, only strengthen those very shortcomings in us, give them a new life and fresh power to perpetuate their hold on us right kind of regret is to take note of the errors and strive to overcome them, first by not moaning over them, and, second, developing the opposite qualities of virtue. Resign all results to the Just Law.

The path to perfection is indeed narrow and strait. Upanishads say it is like walking on razor edge without hurting oneself

Bhagavadgita says that out of thousands of mortals perhaps one may try to acquire Self-knowledge, and out of a thousand so trying perhaps one may succeed.

Many lives of intent devotion and unflagging endeavor may bring success.

But our duty is to TRY and keep on TRYING

We are taught that no effort is lost or in vain. Every sincere attempt brings its reward in time. Enemies one slays in one life – Demons of concupiscence – will not return in the next, and the holy germs that sprout unseen in the disciple's soul, grow and bear fruit in time.

Symbol of Linga

It is macrocosmic as well as microcosmic creative / generative power

Throughout the infinite universal space creation, preservation and destruction to regenerate still on a higher plane is incessantly going on.

Linga literally means, Sign, indicator, mark

It is indicator of Supreme Being

The Shiva Purana describes the origin of the lingam, known as Shiva-linga, as the beginning-less and endless cosmic pillar (Stambha) of fire, the cause of all causes.[48]

Lord Shiva is pictured as emerging from the lingam – the cosmic pillar of fire – proving his superiority over the gods Brahma and Vishnu.[49] This is known as Lingodbhava.

The Linga Purana also supports this interpretation of lingam as a cosmic pillar, symbolizing the infinite nature of Shiva.[49][24][34]

According to the Linga Purana, the lingam is a complete symbolic representation of the formless Universe Bearer – the oval-shaped stone is the symbol of the Universe, and the bottom base represents the Supreme Power that holds the entire Universe in it.[50]

A similar interpretation is also found in the Skanda Purana: “The endless sky (that great void which contains the entire universe) is the Linga, the Earth is its base. At the end of time the entire universe and all the Gods finally merge in the Linga itself.” [51]

In the Linga Purana, an Atharvaveda hymn is expanded with stories about the great Stambha and the supreme nature of Mahâdeva (the Great God, Shiva). [34]

Shiva literally means pure consciousness

Shakti is the dynamic creative power of that cosmic ideation in creative action

Shiva and Sakti are ever conjoined

Vishnu comes from the root Vis – to pervade, and to enter, meaning: pervades the whole manifestation and enters into them to become embodied consciousness and yet remains as One indivisible Unity

Brahma means: Bruh – to expand, bruhat-vast

The three are One in threefold action

I am sure of The Qur'an is read properly one can find these ideas in it

Ancient Indian iconography are symbolical of various cosmic truths,
and should not be called pejoratively as idolatry

On Hindu Philosophy

It is said in the texts that 80% of the fighting male population of the civilization was wiped out in the eighteen days Mahabharata war.

Sanjay, at the end of the war went to the spot where the greatest war took place; Kurukshetra.

He looked around and wondered if the war really happened, if the ground beneath him had soaked all that blood, if the great Pandavas and Krishna stood where he stood.

“You will never know the truth about that!” said an aging soft voice.

Sanjay turned around to find an Old man in saffron robes appearing out of a column of dust.

“I know you are here to find out about the Kurukshetra war, but you cannot know about that war till you know what the real war is about.” the Old man said enigmatically.

“What do you mean?”

The Mahabharata is an Epic, a ballad, perhaps a reality, but definitely a philosophy.

The Old man smiled luring Sanjay into more questions.

“Can you tell me what the philosophy is then?”

Sanjay requested.

Sure, began the Old man.

The Pandavas are nothing but your five senses,

sight,
smell,
taste,
touch
and sound...,

and do you know what the Kauravas are?

he asked narrowing his eyes.

The Kauravas are the hundred vices that attack your senses everyday but you can fight them... and do you know how?

Sanjay shook his head again.

“When Krishna rides your chariot!”

The Old man smiled brighter and Sanjay gasped at that gem of insight.

Krishna is your inner voice, your soul, your guiding light and if you let your life in his hands you have nothing to worry.

Sanjay was stupefied but came around quickly with another question.

“Then why are Dronacharya and Bhishma fighting for the Kauravas, if they are vices?”

The Old man nodded, sadder for the question.

It just means that as you grow up, your perception of your elders change. The elders who you thought were perfect in your growing up years are not all that perfect. They have faults. And one day you will have to decide if they are for your good or your bad. Then you may also realize that you may have to fight them for the good. It is the hardest part of growing up and that is why the Geeta is important.

Sanjay slumped down on the ground, not because he was tired but because he could understand and was struck by the enormity of it all.

What about Karna? he whispered.

“Ah!” said the Old man. “You have saved the best for last. Karna is the brother to your senses, he is desire, he is a part of you but stands with the vices. He feels wronged and makes excuses for being with the vices as your desire does all the time.*

“Does your desire not give you excuses to embrace vices?”

Sanjay nodded silently. He looked at the ground, consumed with a million thoughts, trying to put everything together and then when he looked up the Old man was gone....

disappeared in the column of dust.....leaving behind the great philosophy of Life!

Evolution

Masnavi correctly epitomized evolution of man to perfection thus:-

A stone becomes a plant; a plant an animal; an animal a man; a man a god. In what way did I grow less by dying

Ancient wisdom teaches double evolution of spirit and matter.

The embodied spirit entity evolving in subhuman species hastens towards self-consciousness, ie., to Man stage, transmigrating from simpler forms to more and more complex forms, with corresponding mental growth towards Mind-consciousness.

Embodied spirit in higher mammalian animal is nearer to human self-consciousness. Still mind in them is in the germ.

This progression of embodied spirit towards self-consciousness is called metempsychosis.

This is by natural impulse following Cosmic evolutionary law.

As animals do not have mind, or has mind only in the germ, no moral responsibility accrues to them for their action. Their action is always perfectly true to the universal evolutionary impulse following the plan in the universal mind.

Animals species of nature follow instinct, which is seen as the terrestrial manifestation of dynamic progression proceeding from the universal Mind or Cosmic Ideation.

Instinct never errs, never goes against nature's laws. Hence plants and animals do not sin.

Therefore, disappearance of dinosaurs and other antediluvian prehistoric animals are not because they did not follow the law of the whole, as the speaker said.

It was Nature's progressive modification of forms following the unfolding pattern of intelligent creative forces following faithfully the reflection in them of the cosmic ideation.

But once the spiritual entity reaches Mind – consciousness, it enters human form, the crown piece of physical evolution, Once the spirit entity becomes self-conscious, as we are. It becomes morally responsible.

It is now endowed with thinking mind, and reason, and intuition. Intuition is clouded by activity of rational mind

Further evolution of Mind-being, Man, hence forth is by his own effort by making moral choices, sow causes and reaps effects by the action of the just law of Karma.

Man's further progress to divinity depends on whether he will consciously acts with knowledge and understanding in harmony with the whole or selfishly producing disharmony and discord.

Disturbance of harmony he thus causes reacts on him as pain, suffering, disease and endless reincarnations.

Civilization and nations this evolve in great cycles of time.

Races which go against cosmic and Karmic laws accumulate much evil, which manifest as epidemics, pestilences, wars, natural

Calamities in which masses perish.

One cycle ends and another succeeding one begins.

At the end of each such racial cycle only those units of the race survive in the terrible cataclysms which effect mass destruction which are MORALLY FIT.

Morally unfit are swept away in great floods or fires or volcanic explosions or terrible earth quakes, sinking of continents etc.

The morally fit becomes the seed (Shishta) for evolution of next racial cycle on a higher type.

Even the failures are not abandoned in nature's progressive march toward perfection but are provided further opportunities to grow.

Our civilization is certainly heading to the end of a cycle when all the Units have to make the choice – whether they live and aid higher universal progression or relapse into irresponsible selfish indulgence.

Such as the latter become in nature's laws "morally unfit." Nature spits them out of her mouth.

This is the meaning of belief in all religions about Judgement Day

This is not going to be tomorrow or next year. The cycles of time is measured by the celestial clock – the zodiac. Smaller evolutionary cycles coincide with the cycle of the precession of equinox.

Discourse in the Fifth Skanda of Bhagavata Purana on the Episode of ಪ್ರಿಯವ್ರತ

Priyavrata, having attained to freedom from the cycles of rebirths and attained to the ceaseless savouring of the nectar of the lotus feet of the Lord, after having been initiated and instructed by Devarishi Narada, refused the instruction of his father, Manu, to him to assume the sovereignty as King on earth and to establish a lenage of wise rulers, as priyavrata had all the essential qualities of a wise Ruler depicted in the ordninaces of the scriptues.

Though he was not ever given to disobeying his parent, yet contemplating how contact with unreal entities in the course of the rulership on the earth would cause impediment to his spiritual freedom, he did not consent to his father's (Manu's) suggestion.

(There is a background episode describing how, earth fell into anarchy following Daksha Prajapati left the throne for ascetic practices)

Then, Brahma, seeing that the order of the outward manifestation of the world had come to a stop, and of the need to give impetus to it, he himself proceeded on his vahan to earth to pursue Priyavrata to fulfill his Karmic duty even though a reunciant.

Brahma's discourse to Priyavrata on inviolability of Karmic destiny and responsibility, and how, one can be in involved in worldly affairs and yet be free and untouched by sin or bondage, if one has renounced inwardly, and how, one cannot escape bondage and sin if one is not attained to inward relinquishment even though such an one may dwell in the forest doing ascetic practives.

Brahma instructs him on the moral and mental asceticism by which one may overcome one's defects even when engaged in duties of worldly life.

Beautiful Sanskrit verses are captivating Priyavrata obeys Brahma's command.

Description of Priyavrata's lineage is symbolic. Perhaps it refers to the transition stage between physical and Manasic evolution of humanity – middle point in third root race.

His progeny are called ಅಗ್ನಿನಾಮನಃ (symbolism of Fire, Sun may be recalled – ref to ಅಗ್ನಿಶಾಸ್ತ್ರ ಪಿತ್ರ 's) and his wife's name is ಬರ್ಹಿಷ್ಠತಿ (probably refers to ಬರ್ಹಿಷದ್ ಪಿತ್ರ) who are devoted physical line of evolution.

Taking each Sanskrit verse in the Bhagavata and analysed in the light of Theosophy is a study in itself.

Very beautiful and full of ಜ್ಞಾನ

True Religion

Want to know whether you have gone to saints, or thieves!*

A beautiful story is told about a great mystic, Nagarjuna.

He was a naked fakir, but he was loved by all real seekers.

A queen was also deeply in love with Nagarjuna. She asked him one day to come to the palace, to be a guest in the palace. Nagarjuna went. The queen asked him a favour.

Nagarjuna said, "What do you want?"

The queen said, "I want your begging bowl."

Nagarjuna gave it – that was the only thing he had – his begging bowl. And the queen brought a golden begging bowl, studded with diamonds and gave it to Nagarjuna.

She said, "Now you keep this. I will worship the begging bowl that you have carried for years – it has some of your vibe. It will become my temple. And a man like you should not carry an ordinary wooden begging bowl – keep this golden one. I have had it made specially for you."

It was really precious. If Nagarjuna had been an ordinary mystic he would have said, "I cannot touch it. I have renounced the world." But for him it was all the same, so he took the bowl.

When he left the palace, a thief saw him. He could not believe his eyes: "A naked man with such a precious thing! How long can he protect it?" So the thief followed....

Nagarjuna was staying outside the town in a ruined ancient temple – no doors, no windows. It was just a ruin. The thief was very happy: "Soon Nagarjuna will have to go to sleep and there will be no difficulty – I will get the bowl."

The thief was hiding behind a wall just outside the door – Nagarjuna threw the bowl outside the door.

The thief could not believe what had happened. Nagarjuna threw it because he had watched the thief coming behind him, and he knew perfectly well that he was not coming for him – he was coming for the bowl, "So why unnecessarily let him wait? Be finished with it so he can go, and I can also rest."

“Such a precious thing! And Nagarjuna has thrown it so easily.” The thief could not go without thanking him. He knew perfectly well that it had been thrown for him. He peeked in and he said, “Sir, accept my thanks. But you are a rare being – I cannot believe my eyes. And a great desire has arisen in me. I am wasting my life by being a thief – and there are people like you too? Can I come in and touch your feet?”

Nagarjuna laughed and he said, “Yes, that’s why I threw the bowl outside – so that you could come inside.”

The thief was trapped. The thief came in, touched the feet... and at that moment the thief was very open because he had seen that this man was no ordinary man. He was very vulnerable, open, receptive, grateful, mystified, stunned. When he touched the feet for the first time in his life, he felt the presence of the divine.

He asked Nagarjuna, “How many lives will it take for me to become like you?”

Nagarjuna said, “How many lives? – it can happen today, it can happen now!”

The thief said, “You must be kidding. How can it happen now? I am a thief, a well-known thief. The whole town knows me, although they have not yet been able to catch hold of me. Even the king is afraid of me, because thrice I have entered and stolen from the treasury. They know it, but they have no proof. I am a master thief – you may not know about me because you are a stranger in these parts. How can I be transformed right now?”

And Nagarjuna said, “If in an old house for centuries there has been darkness and you bring a candle, can the darkness say, ‘For centuries and centuries I have been here – I cannot go out just because you have brought a candle in. I have lived so long?’ Can the darkness give resistance? Will it make any difference whether the darkness is one day old or millions of years old.”

The thief could see the point: darkness cannot resist light; when light comes, darkness disappears.

Nagarjuna said, “You may have been in darkness for millions of lives – that doesn’t matter – but I can give you a secret, you can light a candle in your being.”

And the thief said, “What about my profession? Have I to leave it?”

Nagarjuna said, “That is for you to decide. I am not concerned with you and your profession I can only give you the secret of how to kindle a light within your being, and then it is up to you.”

The thief said, “But whenever I have gone to any saints, they always say, ‘First stop stealing – then only can you be initiated.’”

It is said that Nagarjuna laughed and said, “You must have gone to thieves, not to saints. They know nothing. You just watch your breath – the ancient method of Buddha – just watch your breath coming in, going out. Whenever you remember, watch your breath. Even when you go to steal, when you enter into somebody’s

house in the night, go on watching your breath. When you have opened the treasure and the diamonds are there, go on watching your breath, and do whatsoever you want to do – but don't forget watching the breath.”

The thief said,

“This seems to be simple.

No morality?

No character needed?

No other requirement?”

Nagarjuna said, “Absolutely none – just watch your breath.”

And after fifteen days the thief was back, but he was a totally different man. He fell at the feet of Nagarjuna and he said, “You trapped me, and you trapped me so beautifully that I was not even able to suspect. I tried for these fifteen days – it is impossible. If I watch my breath, I cannot steal. If I steal, I cannot watch my breath.

Watching the breath, I become so silent, so alert, so aware, so conscious, that even diamonds look like pebbles. You have created a difficulty for me, a dilemma. Now what am I supposed to do?”

Nagarjuna said, “Get lost! – whatsoever you want to do.

If you want that silence, that peace, that bliss, that arises in you when you watch your breath, then choose that. If you think all those diamonds and gold and silver is more valuable, then choose that.

That is for you to choose! Who am I to interfere in your life?”

The man said, “I cannot choose to be unconscious again. I have never known such moments. Accept me as one of your disciples, initiate me.”

Nagarjuna said,

“I have initiated you already.”

Religion is based not in morality, but in meditation.

Religion is rooted not in character, but in consciousness!

Manisha Panchakam

Manisha Panchakam is a set of five verses (slokas) composed by Shri Adi Shankaracharya, the Hindu philosopher. It is said that in these five verses Shankara brings out the essence of Advaita Vedanta.

It is believed that Shankara wrote the Manisha Panchakam at Varanasi (Kashi/Benaras), the ancient sacred city of India, and the home to the famous Kashi Visvanatha temple.

According to the legend, Adi Shankaraachaarya, was on his way to the temple after finishing his bath. Suddenly he saw a chandaala (an outcaste) and his four dogs on the way, and gestured to him to keep a distance, as per the custom in those days. The outcaste then asked him some questions which form the substance of two verses which are a prelude to the main work. Among the questions asked, the significant one was like this – “Whether My body should give way to you or my Soul?”. On hearing these questions, Sri Shankara assumed (realized) that the person before him was no ordinary person but Lord Shiva himself, and the dogs, the four Vedas. Shankara replies to these questions in five verses. These five verses have been collectively given the name ‘Maneeshaapanchakam’. The word ‘maneeshaa’, meaning ‘conviction’ appears in the last line in all the five verses.

Manisha Panchakam conveys the message that once a person has attained Self-knowledge, considerations such as his caste are totally irrelevant.

True Worship

We worship God with flowers, offer ritual adoration (puja) and pay obeisance. There is something sacred and superior than this! It is to offer God a pure mind and good conduct. This is called Paraa Bhakti. By worshipping God with puja and flowers, the spiritual aspirant remains stationary in their journey to God; failing to rise to a higher position is unwise. The worldly flowers always fade, lose fragrance and develop unpleasant odours. Instead of worshipping with worldly, impermanent flowers and receiving transient rewards from God, worship Him with what is lasting to attain a much higher stage. The first flower to offer God is non-violence (ahimsa). The second is control of senses (dhama). The third is compassion to all living beings (daya). The fourth is forbearance (kshama). The fifth is peace (shanti). The sixth is tapas (penance). The seventh is meditation (Dhyana). And the eighth is the flower of Truth (Sathya).

Satya Sai

Accept the Woes of Birth

Arna asks Krishna – “My mother left me the moment I was born. Is it my fault I was born an illegitimate child? I did not get education from Dhronacharya because I was considered a non-Kshatriya. Parshu-Raam taught me but then gave me the curse to forget everything since I was a kshatriya. A cow was accidentally hit by my arrow & its owner cursed me for no fault of mine. I was disgraced in Draupadi’s swayamvar. Even Kunti finally told me the truth only to save her other sons. Whatever I received was through Dhuryodhana’s charity. So how am I wrong in taking his side?”

Krishna replies, “Karna, I was born in a jail. Death was waiting for me even before my birth. The night I was born I was separated from my birth parents.

From childhood you grew up hearing the noise of swords, chariots, horses, bow and arrows. I got only cow herd’s shed, dung, and multiple attempts on my life even before I could walk!

No army, no education. I could hear people saying I am the reason for all their problems.

When all of you were being appreciated for your valour by your teachers I had not even received any education. I joined gurukula of Rishi Sandipani only at the age of 16!

You are married to a girl of your choice. I didn’t get the girl I loved & rather ended up marrying those who wanted me or the ones I rescued from demons.

I had to move my whole community from the banks of Yamuna to far off Sea shore to save them from Jarasandh. I was called a coward for running away.

If Dhuryodhana wins the war you will get lot of credit. What do I get if Dharmaraja wins the war? Only the blame for the war and all related problems.

Remember one thing Karna. Everybody has challenges in life. LIFE IS NOT FAIR ON ANYBODY. Dhuryodhan also has a lot of unfairness in life and so ha Yudhhishthir.

But what is Right (Dharma) is known to your mind (conscience). No matter how much unfairness we got, how many times we were disgraced, how many times we were denied what was due to us, what is important is how you REACTED at that time. Stop whining Karna. Life’s unfairness does not give you license to walk the wrong path of अधर्म.

On Buddha

Buddha was destined to do what he did. This destiny is the fruitage of strong search for Truth spread over several hundreds of rebirths, which are all recollected by Buddha himself in Jataka Tales.

The power of motivation, absolutely unselfish and overflowing with compassion to find the path of liberation to suffering humanity, was irresistible force, which built up over several incarnations, nothing could stop or deflect. His father's scheme of sequestering him and surrounding him with all worldly pleasures proved powerless. By the impulse of force of universal compassion he went ahead to find the Truth.

Now the question is, did he abandon his wife and child? He fulfilled his duty as householder in begetting a son. Attachment to wife, child and family was swallowed up in the ocean of Universal compassion for all living beings which surged in his heart.

Answering the call of duty to humanity he left family temporarily till he found the path to Nirvana

As soon as found the truth he came back to his family, wife, son, father, and preached them the good law. They became his disciples and entered on the path to Bliss.

Had Gautama abandoned his mission out of attachment to family world would have been so much poorer.

Because of his self-sacrifice millions found the way to truth

The ways of the Enlightened cannot be judged by our limited worldly standards.

First Cause, God and Natural Law

Ancient Sages traced the chain of cause and effect to First Cause. But the First Cause itself, they said, is a periodical radiation from Absolute Causeless Cause (for how can Absolute, infinity, have a prior Cause?)

Appearance and disappearance of universes from and in the Unknowable Absolute Causeless Cause is, they said, like ebb and flow of tides of the ocean-rises and subsides again and again without beginning or ending.

The first that appears is the First Cause so far as that particular universe of manifestation is concerned, differentiating into many; at the end of it, the many are reabsorbed into the First Cause, which in turn merges back into Absolute Causeless Cause of all that was, is, and ever shall be.

This periodical appearance and disappearance of the universe (which are countless) is according to Karmic and Cyclic Law – inherent in the Absolute – Law and Deity being One.

There is no god separate from law. The two are one

Pythagoras demonstrates it mathematically in harmony of numbers, harmony of music, and geometry

Plato showed First Cause to be Self-existing, the eternal paradigm and cause of all.

This universal order, rhythm, is seen in the harmony of spheres and in every relation of manifested universe; and it is seen in the realm of the soul as Justice – Universal, unerring, undeviating Justice, which is Mercy also at the same time. Hindus and Buddhists call it Karma – the law of Cause and effect, the law of ethical causation: what you sow, you reap.

One becoming the many, and yet remain One and Indivisible is fundamental conception of Vedanta, Sufi Islam, Buddhism, Platonists, Pythagoreans, Gnostics, Jewish Kabbalist and so on.

So that all beings are essentially One and inseparable. Each lives in all, and all in each. Harm done to One is harm done to oneself and to all. We are One, the many appearances is due to limitation physical senses and physical mind-brain complex. If that is controlled and transcended one perceives and participates in the Unity of Self –

Sees himself as All-Self – Universal Brotherhood.

A Broad Outline of Hinduism

By a lover of Ancient Wisdom

Preliminary Remarks

The ancient system of thought and a way of life, popularly designated as *Hinduism*, is so vast, diverse and complex that any attempt to set forth a comprehensive view of the whole of it in writing would run into hundreds of volumes. Even the best of the academic scholars would not be able to do justice to it. This is because of mainly two reasons:

- Firstly, what remains at the present time of the ancient so-called Hindu scriptures is only a fraction of what was there originally a few millenniums before. What the European scholars have obtained and translated into English and other European tongues pertain to the remnants which are extant. This is admitted by Orientalist scholars.
- Secondly, the ancient scriptures of India, just as the scriptures of any of the ancient peoples, such as the Books of Moses, the Hebrew Bible, Zoroastrianism, the ancient Egyptian scrolls and papyri, etc., etc., have two aspects. One is the outer formal rendering in verse (metrical speech) and prose, or pictorial representation, like hieroglyphics, allegories, myths and symbols. To the academic scholar, however learned, or, any uninitiated student, who reads them gets the literal meaning of it. They are invariably in mythological and symbolic language. But this is only the veil which conceals the inner meaning. The general public and the scholar has access only to the outer garment. This is *Exoteric* aspect of ancient religions.

The other is the hidden sense in the scriptures which escape the eye of intellect. The outer garment of the scriptures however have within them an altogether different sense and meaning which is hidden – as the soul which is invisible in the visible body. This inner, hidden knowledge is *Esoteric* aspect of world religions. It is called in India, *Gupta Vidya*, by the Hebrews as *Mercavah* (meaning, vehicle of higher knowledge). Only those who are initiated into the venerable sacred Mysteries have in them developed to perfection the faculties of unerring spiritual perception who can

instantly grasp the hidden light behind or beneath the *Exoteric* veil, and apprehend the soul of things – the world of Reality.

World religions are much misunderstood, misjudged and misrepresented because the esoteric sense in them is missed and exoteric aspect is taken in their dead-letter sense. Institutionalized religions under the governance of uninitiated priests are all exoteric, liable to err, and, as a result, each one of them, in course of time, become, spilt into numerous mutually conflicting sects and sub-sects.

If the foregoing is kept in mind and, while reading the ancient scriptures of any people, or of studying their customs and practices, we will not pass judgment, or make uncharitable remarks, on them, because none of them, is perfect in their exoteric sense, but we must try to discern within them the light which is perfect but obscure.

This inner soul of the outer religion is universal which we must seek, and all the great Teachers and Guides of mankind spoke and taught a portion of this one universal Wisdom-religion to different peoples in different epochs, according the needs of each.

Sanatana Dharma

An attempt is made in this brief but necessarily imperfect outline of “Hinduism” to present chief features of it from an *esoteric* standpoint. It will, of course, be sorely wanting in scholarship, but it is not meant so much to the academic scholar as to the common man.

What is called *Hinduism* is a misnomer. How did this nomenclature come into usage is to be inquired into.

In the Zend Avesta, the holy scriptures of ancient Persians, written in ancient script of Pahlavi language, the geographical name of India is written as *hapta hindu*. Max Muller shows that Sanskrit *S* is represented by the *Z* and *H* in the Avesta. *Hapta Hindu* transliterated in Sanskrit is *Sapta Sindhu*, or the “Seven Rivers;” and that it is the old Vedic name for India itself. (*Chips from the German Workshop, vol. 1, p. 81*) Esoteric philosophy shows that “Avesta” of the Zoroastrian religion, is the spirit of the “Vedas” – the esoteric meaning made partially known. (*Isis Unveiled, vol II, page 220, fn*) The great scholar, Alexander Wilder, shows that *Hapta* is the Sanskrit *Sapta* (seven), and *Hindu* is *Sindhaya*. (*Isis Unveiled, vol.I, p. 570, fn 2*) The geographical name of India was known in Indo-Iranian tradition as the *land of the seven rivers (sapta sindhaya*, in Sanskrit). Hence the inhabitants of the Land of the Seven Rivers came to be called *Hindus*, and the religion of the people was named by Europeans as *Hinduism*.

It is to be noted that nowhere in the whole of the scriptures of ancient India, either in the Vedic doctrine, or in the later development of it, or again in the ancient historical records of the people, the term *Hinduism* is used to designate its corpus nor

are the people of the land are called Hindus. The present nomenclature is a European invention.

In fact no particular nomenclature was ever used to designate vast and diverse traditions of the people of *the land of the seven rivers*. However, the compound term *Sanatana Dharma* came to be used later to designate it. The literal meaning of *Dharma* is the sacred law. Is it man-made law? In its origin it is not man-made law but law, or order, inherent in the universe. In the Esoteric sense it has its origin in the very spirit of the universe.

Dharma is not a person but an unconditioned and underived entity, combining in itself the spiritual and the material principles of the universe, whilst from Dharma proceeded, by emanation, Buddha [‘refelcted’ Bodhi rather], as the creative energy which produced, in conjunction with Dharma, the third factor of the trinity, viz., ‘Sangha’, which is the comprehensive sum total of all real life.....The real primitive significance of the word Samgha or ‘Sangha’ applies to the Arhats or Bhikshus, or the “initiates”, alone, that is to say to the real exponents of Dharma – the Divine Law and Wisdom, coming to them as a reflex light from the one “boundless light.” Such is the philosophical meaning. (*Theosophical Glossary, Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, 1971, p. 342*)

Such is the Esoteric sense of the compound term *Santana Dharma*. Hindus refer their religion to be Sanatana Dharma. It can in fact be said that the essence and the source of all religions *in their primitive purity* is Sanatana Dharma.

Veda

The etymological root of the word *Veda* is *vid*, “to know, ” or “divine knowledge.” They are the most ancient as well as the most sacred of the Sanskrit works. While orientalists, judging by exoteric garment of the few copies of the Vedas that are extant ascribe to it no more than a millennium and half or two BCE. The *Esoteric tradition*, however, has it that the vast corpus had been first taught orally for thousands of years and then compiled on the shores of the Lake Manasa-Sarovara (phonetically *manasarovara*) beyond the Himalayas, in Tibet.

Vedas were compiled in their final form by Veda-Vyasa, according to tradition, about 3100 years BCE when the Sage flourished. Therefore Vedas must be, at least, as old as this date.

Its antiquity is proven sufficiently by the fact that they are written in such an ancient form of Sanskrit, which is different from Sanskrit now in use, and very few can understand it.

Vedas are not a single work. There are four chief Vedas. Every hymn is the production of various authors, and written at various periods of the ethnological evolution of the Indo-Aryan race. Mr. Krishna Sastri Godbole shows that according to astronomical data which he compiled, based on the evidence in the scripture of

Zodiacal configuration of planets, that the Vedas must have been written at least 25,000 years ago. (See *Theosophist*, vol. II, p. 238, et. Seq., Aug. 1881).

The Vedic writings are all classified in two great divisions – exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric is called *Karma-Kanda*, divisions of actions or works, ” and *Jnana Kanda*, “division of (divine) knowledge. Upanishad – which are called *Vedanta*, meaning, the *end of* knowledge – comes under the latter category. Both these categories are regarded as *Sruti* or revelation. To each of the hymn of the Rig Veda the name of the Seer or Rishi to whom it was revealed is prefixed. These great Seers (such as Vasishta, Viswamitra, Narada, etc.), as their very names tell, were born in various ages. Many thousands of years must have elapsed between the dates of their compositions. (*Theosophical Glossary*)

The teachings of the Vedas

Vedas being a compilation (*Samhita*) of the *Revelation* of a long line of great Seers and Sages over many ages who apprehended the very soul of things in their totality, it is the ultimate knowledge and wisdom attainable by man.

They treat of the ultimate Absolute CAUSE – which is ever UNKNOWABLE, because infinite, boundless and Eternal, before which even the gods have to bow in ignorance; the origin of the Universe from and in that Absolute CAUSELESS CAUSE, its evolution, development, and final reabsorption in the UNKNOWN; this appearance and disappearance of the universe in the BOUNDLESS SPACE, like regular ebb and flow of the tide of the ocean, is governed by Cyclic and Karmic Law.

Evolution of the of the universe in its triple aspects of Spiritual, Intellectual and Physical is the Macrocosmic; and the evolution of all beings, and Man, the Microcosm, also in their threefold being as spiritual, mental or intellectual and physical, proceeds simultaneously with the evolution of the universe in its three aspects or stages. Therefore, Man, being the highest product of this universal evolution, is a perfect copy of the Universe, the Macrocosm. Vedas teach Man is potentially God. Realization by man of his divine heritage in his Dharma.

All beings are shown to have originated from one identical universal Spirit-substance, which is One, differentiated into many through involution of spirit into matter, and the many resolving back, through evolution of embodied spirit, into the ONE which in reality is indivisible Universal Self or Spirit. This stupendous evolutionary journey of souls (embodied spirits) is governed by universal Karmic and Cyclic Law. Therefore all beings are bound up together in an inseparable bond of Universal Brotherhood through the law of interdependent reciprocity.

Knowledge and understanding of the Law, and living and evolving in accordance with it, is DHARMA or the Law of Virtue. Ignorance of it and negligence to live in accord with the universal harmony is Sin, Adharma, the law of vice.

All the religions, in fact, teach the same truth. But the manner and the method of the teaching, the many metaphors, figures of speech, allegories and symbols used, (which are the outer garment of the scriptures) vary. Therefore, one must study the ancient scriptures with an eye to Esoteric truths hidden beneath the outer garment.

Four Vedas

- Rig Veda: Consists of hymns in praise of the Supreme and the many divine manifestations of it.
- Yajur Veda: Prose and poetical hymns on ritualistic sacrifices
- Sama Veda: Knowledge imparted in Melodies and chants
- Atharve Veda: Magical knowledge of charms. Spells, incantations, etc.

Arrangement of the Vedic Corpus in brief

- The Samhitas are the most ancient part of the Vedas, consisting of hymns of praise to many manifestations of the Supreme.
- The Brahmanas are the commentaries on the hymns of the four Vedas.
- The Aranyakas constitute philosophy underlying the ritual sacrifices prescribed in the Vedas.
- The Upanishads consist of the mystical and philosophical teachings of Vedic corpus; the Soul of the Vedas, called Vedanta.

Upa-Vedas

Upa-Vedas are applied knowledge. Each Upa-Veda is associated with one of the four Vedas. There are four Upa-Vedas:

- Dhanurveda: Warfare, associated with Rig Veda
- Sthapatyaveda: Associated with Yajur Veda: Designing homes, buildings, cities, villages in harmony with flow of dynamic energies of nature.
- Gandharva Veda: Music and dance associated with Sama Veda
- Ayurveda: Associated with Atharva Veda; the science of healthy living through entire life span.

Vedangas

Veda-angas, mean 'Limbs of the Vedas.' They are the six auxiliary disciplines associated with the study and understanding of the Vedas. They are:

- Phonetics: *Siksha*
- Metrical speech or metres: *Chandas*
- Grammer: *Vyakrana*
- Etymology and linguistics: *Nirukta*

- Rituals and rites of passage: *Kalpa*
- Time keeping and Astronomy *Jyotisha*

Parista

They are supplement and appendix attached to each of the 4 Vedas and their auxiliaries dealing mainly with details of ritual and elaborations of texts in logical and chronological order.

The six Schools of Indian Philosophy *Shad-darshanas*

Darshana means demonstration or proof. The six schools of Indian philosophy are the six viewpoints or approaches to apprehend Truth or Reality. The six schools admit the authority and validity of the Vedas. They postulate Individual Soul (Purusha) and Primordia Matter (Prakriti). Hence they are classified under the head *astika*. There are other schools of philosophy which do not accept Vedas and, therefore, classed under *nastika* schools. They are Buddhism, Carvaka, Jainism, and Ajivika schools. The six *astika* schools are:

Sankhya

Sage Kapila is said to be the founder of this school. It is a very old system which is accepted by Vedanta and its system pervades literature of ancient India. It admits two ultimate realities, namely, Spirit and Mater (Purusha and Prakriti). They are independent factors, yet mutually interdependent. It postulates Universal Soul or Eternal Cosmic Intelligence (called Mahat), on the one hand, and Pre-cosmic Substance, called Prakriti, consisting of three qualities – quiescence, action, and inertia, on the other.

Evolution of the worlds and the principle of Soul, or Egoism, of mind, of the senses, of subtle elements, of gross elements and of the deities presiding over senses and faculties are propounded, over which Spirit (Purusha) presides; soul's bondage in matter due to its self-identifying attachment to the experiences of life made of the three qualities, threefold misery to which the embodied Soul is subject, and manner and method of its liberation and enlightenment, are taught in the Sankhya doctrine.

Yoga

The Yoga doctrine is propounded by the Sage Patanjali. The word Yoga literally means Union – spiritual union of Individual Soul with the Universal Soul. Yoga of Patanjali is the practical moral, mental and spiritual exercise to realize the principles expounded in Sankhya.

Hence, Sankhya and Yoga are twin doctrines, and closely allied. The Samkhya emphasises attainment of knowledge by means of study, concentration and meditation. Yoga presents a practical path for the realization of the Self. Practice of Yoga requires a study of Sankhya.

Yoga includes moral restraints, total and absolute restraint of mental functions, and awakening of spiritual discrimination, called *Viveka*. With this restraint the mind empties itself of all contents, becomes free from the trammels of the senses, and thus the Soul frees itself from bondage to desires and passions, and attain to liberation, called *Kaivalya*.

Nyaya

The system of Nyaya was founded by the Sage Gautama. It is a realistic philosophy based mainly on logic and reason. It admits of four separate sources of knowledge: Perception, inference, comparison, and testimony. According to Nyaya doctrine the objects of knowledge are the self, the body, the senses and their objects, cognition, mind, activity, mental defects, rebirth, the feeling of pleasure and pain, suffering, and freedom from suffering (liberation). The Nyaya seeks to deliver the self from its bondage to the body, the senses and their objects. Existence of God is proved by Nyaya by several arguments. God is the ultimate cause of creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world out of eternal atoms, space, time, ether, minds and souls.

Vaisesika

The School of Vaisesika was founded by the Sage Kanada. This school is allied to the school of Nyaya, and both have one object, which is liberation of soul from bondage.

It postulates that the world is composed of seven categories, viz., Substance, quality (guna), action (Karma), generality (Samanya), particularity (Visesa), the relation of inherence (samavaya), and non-existence (abhava)

Substance is the substratum of qualities and activities, but is different from both. A quality is that which exists in a substance and has in itself no quality or activity. An action is a movement. Particularity is the ground of the ultimate differences of things. Inherence is the permanent or eternal relation by which a whole is in its parts. A quality or an action is in a substance. The universal is in the particulars. Non-existence stands for all negative facts. With regard to God and liberation of the individual soul the Vaisesika school is substantially the same as that of the Nyaya.

Purva Mimamsa (or Karma Mimasa)

Mimamsa means “reflection” or “critical investigation.” The purva or earlier Mimamsa School was founded by the Sage Jaimini. Mimasa developed from the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas. It gives a methodology of interpretation with which complicated Vedic injunctions regarding Vedic rituals can be understood. It provides a philosophical justification of the beliefs on which ritualism depends.

Faith underlying Vedic ritualism is substantiated by Mimamsa in the following way:

- Belief in the existence of soul which survives death and enjoys the fruits of the rituals in heaven.
- Belief in some power or potency which preserves the effects of the rituals performed.
- Belief in the infallibility of the Vedas.
- Our life and actions are real and not dreams.

The Mimamsa is interested in interpreting the Vedas. It discusses the nature and validity of knowledge, criterion of truth and of falsity, sources of valid knowledge, etc. Details are not gone into in this short article.

Mimamsa accepts the argument of Vedanta as regards the existence of soul. Jaimini distinguishes the self from the understanding and the senses. The self is neither the body, nor the senses nor even the intellect. It is the Cognizer – “Known by itself and incapable of being seen or shown by others, ” said Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Mimamsikas accept the plurality of selves in order to account for variety of experiences.

Uttara Mimamsa (Jnana Mimamsa) or Vedanta

Founded by Badarayana or Veda Vyasa, Uttara Mimamsa is the Vedanta, one of the most significant of all Indian philosophies. Upanishads are the concluding portion of the Vedas, and hence called Ved-anta, meaning the end of knowledge. They expound the supreme philosophical knowledge and wisdom.

The great Sage Badarayana initiated the efforts to simplify the Upanishadic philosophy. Badarayana is also known as Veda Vyasa. He was the first scholar to take up the challenging task of systemizing the immensely vast philosophical doctrines of the Upanishads. The result of his efforts was one of the most illustrious works on Vedanta. Badarayana’s work is known as Brahma-Sutra or Vedanta-Sutra. It is also referred to as Uttar-Mimamsa-Sutra. The Brahma-Sutra has 555 sutras (axioms). Most of them are aphoristic and almost unintelligible at first sight. Hence, a number of commentaries were written to interpret them. Among these the commentaries of Shamkaracharya, Ramnujacharya and Madhavacharya are regarded authentic and are held in very high esteem. They are regarded as the greatest scholars of Indian philosophy. They are not only the principal commentators of Brahma-Sutra (Vedanta-Sutra) but are also its leading interpreters.

Thus we have three major schools of Vedanta based on the philosophy of the distinguished trio: *Advaita Vedanta* (Non-dualism or Monism) of Shankaracharya, *Visishtadvaita* (qualified Monism) of Ramanujacharya, and *Dvaita* (dualism) of Madhvacharya.

All three schools are founded on the Vedanta philosophy. However, there have been differences among them. Even the followers of a particular system, within their own fold, differ to some degree on certain issues.

The Vedanta philosophy is focused on the *Jagat* (the universe), the *Jiva* (individual soul) and the Brahman (the Supreme Being). Brahman is the repository of all knowledge and power. *Jivas* are trapped in the *Jagat*. Attached to the physical world and driven by passions and desires, they remain chained to ceaseless actions (*karma*). As a result, they subject themselves to countless births in various forms. Their transmigration from this birth (life) to the next depends on the *karma* (the quality of action). *Moksha* or *mukti* (liberation) is the goal of life. This philosophy, in general, is accepted by all the three schools. Now let us understand the basic difference among the three schools.

Dvaita means “two,” or dual. *Dvaita* school is based on the concept of dualism. Madhavacharya emphasizes the distinction between God and individual soul (*Jiva*), and say they are two different realities. In addition, the school differentiates God from matter as well as the soul from matter. The school maintains that the God, *Jiva* and the *Jagat* are three separate and everlasting entities. God governs the world and has control over the souls. The souls in its ignorance remains shackled in the world. By devotion and God’s mercy, the soul can migrate to the Heaven above. It can obtain *Mukti* from the cycle of life and death and live with God forever in the Heaven.

Vishishtadvaita Vedanta: *Visishtadvaita* literally means “qualified non-dualism”. Ramanujacharya stresses that God alone exists. He says that Brahman is God. He is not formless. The Cosmos and the *Jivas* form his body. When the *Jiva* (soul) realises that he is a part of *Paramatman* (God), the soul is liberated. On liberation, his soul enjoys infinite consciousness and infinite bliss of God. The soul is in communion with God, but it does not share the power of the creation or destruction.

Advaita Vedanta: means “non-dualism”. Brahman is the sole Supreme Reality. Brahman, *Jagat* (manifested universe) and *Jiva* (Soul) are not different, separate entities but essentially one and inseparable from Brahman. It is the school of *monism*, meaning Oneness.

Advaita Vedanta and Gaudapadacharya

Gaudapada (6th Century CE) was the teacher of Govindapada, who was the teacher of Adi Shankaracharya. Shankara is widely considered as the founder of Advaita Vedanta. Gaudapada-acharya’s seminal work, *Gaudapada Karika*, also known as *Mandukya Karika*, is the earliest surviving complete text on Advaita Vedanta.

In the *Karika*, Advaita (Non-dualism) is established on rational grounds (*upapatti*), independent of scriptural revelation. Its arguments are devoid of any religious, mystical, or scholastic elements. Scholars are divided on a possible influence of Buddhism on Gaudapada’s philosophy. The fact that Shankara wrote an independent commentary on the *Karika*, apart from his commentaries on

Brahmasutras, principal Upanishads, and Bhagavadgita (*Prastanatrays*), proves the importance of Gaudapada Karika in Vedantic literature.

Adi-Shankara elaborated on Gaudapada's work, and more ancient scholarship to write more detailed commentaries on *Prastanatrays* (*Brahmasutras, Upanishads and Bahgavadgita*). Mandukya Upanishad and the Karika have been described by Shankara as containing "the epitome of the substance of the import of Vedanta." It was Shankara who integrated Gaudapada's work with the ancient Brahmasutras. His interpretation, including the works ascribed to him, has become the normative interpretation of Advaita Vedanta.

Shankara pointed out the differences between the Vedanta school and the Mimamsa school, and shows that Advaita Vedanta is the culmination of the knowledge and wisdom of the Vedas, whereas the other schools are only preparatory to the realization of Brahman to be One and non-dual, that every soul is One with THAT (*Tat tvam asi*, meaning, *Thou art That*).

The metaphysics of Advaita Vedanta of Shankaracharya is centred on the establishment of the reality of only the Brahman, showing that the world cannot have an independent being of its own and demonstrating that the being of the world is rooted in the Brahman. He accepts the Upanishadic doctrine that there is but One Reality which is infinite, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, characteristic of which is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Absolute Being, Consciousness and Bliss)

Advaita propounds four levels of Being:

The lowest of the four levels is "insignificant being" (*tuchcha satta*). It includes merely imaginary, fanciful, self-contradictory, like the horns of a hare, or son of a barren woman etc. They belong to imagination and are shown to have no intrinsic reality.

The next higher level is the illusory Being (*pratibhasika satta*) or apparent Being, like the mistaken notion of a rope to be a snake.

Higher than illusory Being is the pragmatic Being (*vyavaharika satta*) identified with empirical reality. It is the produced as a moral effect of our past actions (Karmas) which continue to bear fruit in life after life, till illusion is dispersed by illumination of the mind by spiritual knowledge of Brahman to the true Self of man.

The ultimate Being (*paramarthika satta*) is above all contradictions, the pinnacle of existence, uncontradicted, unchanged in past, present, and future.

The lower levels of Being are illusory (Maya) arising out of mistaken notion of true Self to be the body, senses, mind and brain, and other subtler vehicles of the soul. Once this illusion is dispersed, realization dawns that true Self to be none other than Brahman, the Supreme Being. Misconception of the Real to be unreal arises because of superimposition of the mistaken notion of Reality (*adyasa*), like mistaking a rope to be a snake.

The cosmic illusion is identified as Maya, and the individual illusion is called Avidya (Ignorance). Maya cannot be accepted as real since the illusion of Brahman

sublates it, nether can it be called unreal as it is experienced by one and all until Brahman is realized. Hence it is ontologically indescribable (*sadasat-vilakshhana*). Maya is considered as positive entity (*Bhavarupa*). Its characteristic power is concealment of the true nature of Brahman (*Avarana Sakti*), and the projection of the world of multiplicity (*vikshepa Sakti*).

Advaita propounds that the only cognition which is free from error, and true, is that which is uncontradictable (*abhadya*) as absolutely true, and that only Brahman stands the test of truth. Hence it is called Advaita (Non-dualism).

According to Advaita Vedanta, the Brahman shines through the individual as the witness of Self, actions, cognitions, and the states of the mind. It is called the "Witness consciousness" (*sakshi Chaitanya*). This witness consciousness delimited by the psycho-physical adjuncts is the *Jiva*.

The Witness consciousness is continuous with Brahman and non-different from it. *Jiva* in its identification as a separate entity distinct from Brahman is a mere appearance, like a dream. It is essentially one with Brahman.

Shankara calls Absolute Reality as Para-Brahman, and the manifested Cosmic Intelligence which radiates from the former as *Iswara* or lower Brahman. The *Iswara* is the same as *Parabrahman* in its essential character but associating with Maya produces the world of appearance. But *Iswara* is not overpowered by Maya like the *Jiva*. *Iswara* is never in bondage.

Smriti Texts

In Sanskrit tradition scriptures are categorised under two heads: *Sruti* (Revealed knowledge), and *Smriti* (what is remembered). The four Vedas and the 108 Upanishads come under the *Sruti* category. Bhagavadgita, eighteen Puranas, Sastras, Tantras, Agama, Brahma Surtras, the Epics, and many others come under *Smriti* category. *Smriti* literally means recollection of memory. It is secondary authority. It derives its authority from *Sruti*, and its object is the expand and exemplify the principles of *Sruti* or the Vedas and the Upanishads. *Sastras* are codes of law governing spiritual, moral and secular lives of people. *Agamas* and *Tantras* are manuals of worship. In case of conflicting views, *Sruti* view will prevail. While *Sruti*, being ultimate revealed knowledge, is changeless; whereas *Smritis* admits of changes according to changing conditions and needs of people in their religious life in different epochs.

Puranas

There are 18 Maha Puranas and 18 Upa-Puranas (minor Puranas) with over 400,000 verses which, according the scholars, were compiled between 300 to 1000 CE.

Puranas are more than a myth. Each of the Puranas deal with five distinct subjects: Cosmic and anthropic creation; secondary creation (also dissolution and

renovation of worlds) ; great periods of evolution of the earth and humanity; genealogy of celestial beings (gods), genealogy of sages, heroes and great kings.

Knowledge Puranas contain is encyclopaedic covering as they do such range of subjects as folk tales, pilgrimage, temples, medicine, astronomy, astrology, theology, philosophy, geology etc.

Western scholars point out that Puranas are inconsistent as there are contradictory statements on a subject in different puranas. While this is true so far as the reading of the outer textual content is concerned, the Occultists teach that these contradictions are purposely introduced in the Puranic texts by the Rishis who compiled them in order to conceal the secret meaning which is revealed only those who are found worthy and initiated into sacred Mysteries.

It must be mentioned *en passant*, that like the mythologies of ancient peoples, such as the Egyptians, Persians, Chinese, pre-Christian Scandinavian countries, ancestors of Aztecs, Mayas, Greek myths, etc., are repository of sacred occult knowledge. They are recorded in symbols, emblems, fables and allegories. Puranas contain a comprehensive knowledge pertaining to cosmic and anthropic origins, principles, powers and forces of Macro – and Microcosmos, ancient evolutionary history and so on. On the very less known subject of universal language of symbolism with which Puranas and other ancient scriptures are compiled, a passage from the Bok II of *The Secret Doctrine*, (*fac simile* of original edition) by Madam H.P. Blavatsky is quoted below:

The great archaic system known from prehistoric ages as the sacred Wisdom Science, one that is contained and can be traced in every old as well as in every new religion, had, and still has, its universal language – suspected by the Mason Ragon – the language of the Hierophants, which has seven ‘dialects,’ so to speak, each referring, and being specially appropriated, to one of the seven mysteries of Nature. Each had its own symbolism. Nature could thus be either read in its fulness, or viewed from one of its special aspects. (Vol. 1, page 310)

This is the reason why Orientalists, Egyptologists find extreme difficulty in interpreting the allegorical writings of the Aryans and the hieratic records of old Egypt.

Ancient mythologies, Puranas, Vedas, Zend Avesta, the Old and the New Testaments, Hebrew scriptures are all records of a great body of sacred and secret knowledge, well known to Initiates of sacred Mysteries.

Epics (Ithihasas)

Ithihasa is a historical narrative in allegory and symbolism composed in classical literary style. Ramayana composed by Rishi Valmiki and Mahabharata composed by the Sage Veda Vyasa are two epics which have influenced literature and various art forms for centuries all over India, Indonesia. Ramayana accepts the principles of

Santana Dharma and duties of ruler in particular. The aim of the epics is to teach the laws of right living according to Sruthis and Smrithis by means of exploits of the great national heroes – Rama and Krishna. Ramayana is the account of the deeds of a divinely great hero – Rama – who set example in application of Dharma, the Laws of divine Virtues, in every aspect of private and public life of kings and commoners. It portrays in the life of the hero the ideal of humaneness, brotherhood, firmness of character, honesty, sacrifice and goodness. Ramayana is depicted in 24, 000 verses.

Mahabharata has a more profound theme which involves history, mythology, ethics, metaphysics. It is the history of Bharatas, a royal family of North India which divided into two parties – Pandavas and Kauravas – and a war between them for dominion. It is an encyclopaedia of Hindu Dharma. Mahabharata consists of 200, 000 verses.

Bhagavadgita is a part of Mahabharata. Mr. W.Q. Judge in his rendition of the Bhagavadgita in English wrote the following:

“The Bhagavad-Gîtâ tends to impress upon the individual two things: first, selflessness, and second, action: the studying of and living by it will arouse the belief that there is but one Spirit and not several; that we cannot live for ourselves alone, but must come to realize that there is no such thing as separateness, and no possibility of escaping from the collective Karma of the race to which one belongs, and then, that we must think and act in accordance with such belief. The poem is held in the highest esteem by all sects in Hindustan except the Mahommedan and Christian. It has been translated into many languages, both Asiatic and European: it is being read to-day by hundreds of sincere Theosophists in every part of the world”
(*The Bhagavadgita, the Book of devotion, published by Theosophy Company (India) Pvt. Ltd.*)

Schools of Philosophy which Reject the Authority of the Vedas

Hinduism, so called, admits all viewpoints even when they are opposed to the basic tenets of the Vedas in a spirit of tolerance. As said before the scriptures which are based on the Vedic tradition are called *Astika* schools and those opposed to it are called *Nastika* schools. The former was detailed in the foregoing. The latter is given below in brief. Details cannot be gone into but a brief description of them is given:

The School of Charvaka

It is a materialistic school which denies existence of God. It is also called *Lokayata*. Charvaka literally means sweet tongued or pleasing (*charu*) speech (*Vach*). It is the precursor of modern western school of empiricism. According to them the only source of valid knowledge is what is derived from senses perception. That is, nothing exists except what is perceived by the five senses. They speak of external and internal perception, the first is perception through senses and the second by operation of mind which operates on the impressions received from the senses.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a vast system of philosophical metaphysical and ethical knowledge broadly classified into Hinayana (Lesser vehicle) and Mahayana (greater vehicle) Basic teachings of Buddhism are the four Noble Truths, the eight-fold path which are taught in both the schools. Mahayana school is highly philosophical and metaphysical which are said to be the exclusive teachings of the Buddha to those students who were qualified for higher knowledge. Mahayana consists of various schools. The best discourse in beautiful verse of the Buddha can be seen in the small devotional book *Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold.

Jainism

Jainism is based on the teachings of 24 Teerthankaras, of whom *Rishabhadeva* was the first and last was *Vardhamana*. They do not speak of God. The teachings of the liberated and perfected Sages constitute Jainism. The principal tenet of Jainism is Ahimsa – Non-violence. It is divided into two schools: Swetambara and Digambara. They differ only in minor details of faith and practice. The philosophical outlook of Jainism is based on a common sense type of realism. Their epistemology, logic and reasoning have a scientific spirit, and they give much importance to Ahimsa, *syavada* and *anekantavada*. It is one of the most tolerant and peaceful religion.

Jainism consists of a huge mass of literature in Sanskrit and Prakrit languages, mostly in the latter. Only some portions of it so far translated. Bulk of it is in Prakrit and remains to be translated into English and other languages.

Closing Remarks

The brief, but by no means adequate, outlining of the ancient Indian traditions, religions, and schools of philosophy give us a glimpse of the richness of Indian culture, if we also take into consideration the prolific art-forms, like, music, painting, architecture, sculpture, etc., which the spiritual tradition have given birth to over many thousands of years, though the latter aspect of Indian culture has not been touched upon in this paper. In terms of rich diversity in ethnicity, religions, philosophies, linguistics, arts, and the spirit of unity which underlies this marvellous diversity of India is unparalleled anywhere in the world. It is the sacred duty of every Indian to preserve this sacred traditions, celebrate the spirit of unity in diversity, and enrich it. Respect for religions other than the one we are born into, broadminded appreciation of universal truths and laws of virtue which underlie all religions without exception beneath the surface of varying and diverse languages and modes of expression with which they are clothed in different religions and philosophies, liberate our minds from shackles of bigotry, conceit and intolerance, and fill our hearts with love of mankind as a wonderful live, multifarious, dynamic and evolving expression of One Life. Of such a grand and noble destiny which beckons mankind, Madam Blavatsky wrote:

In sociology, as in all branches of true science, the law of universal causation holds good. But this causation necessarily implies, as its natural outcome, that human solidarity on which Theosophy so strongly insists. If the action of one reacts on the lives of all, and this is the true scientific idea, then it is only by all men becoming brothers and all women sisters, and by all practicing in their daily lives true brotherhood and true sisterhood, that the real human solidarity, which lies at the root of the elevation of the race, can ever be attained. It is this action and interaction, this true brotherhood and sisterhood, in which each shall live for all and all for each, which is one of the fundamental Theosophical principles that every Theosophist should be bound not only to teach, but to carry out in his or her individual life. (*The Key to Theosophy, Indian edition, p. 232*)

Note

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The Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita

by
A Lover of Ancient Wisdom

Chapterwise.

18 Lessons we can Learn from the Bhagawad Geeta:

- Chapter 1: Wrong thinking is the only problem in life
- Chapter 2: Right knowledge is the ultimate solution to all our problems
- Chapter 3: Selflessness is the only way to progress and prosperity
- Chapter 4: Every act can be an act of prayer
- Chapter 5: Renounce the ego of individuality and Rejoice in the Bliss of Infinity
- Chapter 6: Connect to the Higher Consciousness Daily
- Chapter 7: Live what you learn
- Chapter 8: Never give up on yourself
- Chapter 9: Value your blessings
- Chapter 10: See divinity all around
- Chapter 11: Have enough surrender to see the Truth as it is
- Chapter 12: Absorb your mind in the Higher
- Chapter 13: Detach from Maya and Attach to Divine
- Chapter 14: Live a lifestyle that matches your vision
- Chapter 15: Give priority to Divinity
- Chapter 16: Being good is a reward in itself
- Chapter 17: Choosing the right over the pleasant is a sign of power
- Chapter 18: Let Go, Lets move to Union with God

The Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita

A Lover of Ancient Wisdom

Introductory Remarks

What is attempted in this chapter is a brief recounting of the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita as the writer understands, which is the result of his own studies and reflections. It is by no means a scholastic exposition as the humble writer has no pretense to any scholarship. It is however the conviction of the writer that without an intimate acquaintance with the basic philosophy, the psychological system, and the allegorical symbolism of the Bhagavad Gita on the part of the reader, the poem may not only not make much sense to him, but is also very likely to misunderstand and misinterpret the import of the poem and draw conclusion that is at variance with the spirit of the Gita. Therefore, it is felt necessary to briefly recount the philosophical and psychological foundation of the Scripture.

Bhagavad Gita, consisting of seven hundred verses, is a part of the Epic, the Mahabharata, which consists of one hundred thousand verses. The author who composed the epic is said to be Sage Vyasa, who is also one of the important dramatis personae in the story.

Scope of this Chapter

Writing on all the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita would be a book in itself. As the essence of the Gita is to be presented in just one chapter of this book, comments are restricted to the first four chapters alone, which, in fact, should be amply sufficient for anyone wishing to acquaint himself with the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita. The remaining chapters progressively unfold deeper mysteries of Life, of the nature of the universe and man, their origin, evolution and destiny, and the knowledge of spiritual practices by which a seeker after Truth may realize the ultimate Truth of True Self – the Universal Divine Perfection.

Background Setting

The theme of the Mahabharata consists of a contest between two branches of an extended family of warriors and rulers, called Kurus, for the sovereignty of a kingdom whose capital city was Hastinapura. The elder branch was called as Kauravas by the general name of the tribe; the younger was called as Pandavas, by the patronymic, called Pandu.

Though it is important to be acquainted with all the characters, their lineage and relationships because these have significance in the allegorical narrative of the epic, it is passed over for the present in view of the limited scope of the article itself, and the limited space available for the article. Only a sketchy outline of the same is attempted.

Kauravas are one hundred brothers who are sons of the King, Dhritarashtra, who was born blind. The chief character of the hundred sons was the eldest son, Duryodhana.

Pandavas, the younger of the two factions, are five in number born of Pandu but not in the natural way. They were each of celestial birth as gift of the gods to the two wives of Pandu. The names of the five brothers in the order of their age are Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva.

Pandavas stood for the law righteousness, or Dharma, whereas their cousins, Kauravas, who being elder of the two, ruled Hastinapura, as their father being blind was incapacitated to rule, were given to evil ways...

Bhishma, the grandsire of the two factions, a great warrior, learned and respected was under a self-imposed vow to remain a bachelor, not to sit on the throne and to defend and protect the kingdom of Kurus and Hastinapura.

Drona, a master of martial art, was the tutor of both the Kauravas and Pandavas, taught them archery, use of every weapon, and the science and art of warfare. He was a Guru whom both Pandavas and Kauravas revered.

Ashwattama was the Son of Drona

Krupacharya was the family priest of Kauravas and a warrior too.

Vidura was half-brother of Dhritarashtra, was pious, devoted, and full of wisdom who tried to guide the blind king on the right path and his evil-minded sons but without success.

Karna was the eldest brother of the five Pandavas who was a gift of the sun god to Pandu's wife Kunti which she had invoked before her marriage. Fearing social ostracism for having got a child out of wedlock she had set the child afloat in a basket on the river Ganga. The child was rescued by one who was a charioteer and a poet – not a warrior. Karna not knowing his real parentage had believed his protegee to be the real parent. Even Pandavas were not knowing Karna was their sanguineous brother. Karna becomes a great warrior and becomes a loyal friend of Duryodhana.

Shakuni was the maternal uncle of Kauravas, a cunning evil genius whom Duryodhana trusted.

The Game is Dice and Exile

Pandavas claim their share of the kingdom but Kauravas refused to concede even an inch of the land. The blind king being infatuated with his wicked sons sided with them. Kauravas tried everything means to kill and get rid of Pandavas but the latter, never deviating from the law of righteousness, escaped providentially each time from the death trap laid by Kauravas.

Under the cunning counsel of Shakuni and permission of the blind king, Kauravas invite Pandavas for a game of dice with heavy stakes. Clever Shakuni tricks

the dice to always fall in favour of Kauravas and Pandavas lose everything. Under the mutually agreed conditions, Pandavas had to go on a 13-year exile to live in forests and thereafter one year into secret hiding; and that, if during the one-year hiding they were to be found out, then they had to go on another cycle of exile on the same terms.

Pandavas being adherents to truth and righteousness had the blessing and grace of Krishna, the divine Avatar who had incarnated at that time of transition marking the end of Dwapara Yuga and the dawn of Kali Yuga, the age of spiritual darkness which was setting in.

The Mahabharata War

At the end of the successful completion of exile, the Pandavas claim their share of the kingdom from Kauravas but the latter refused to give-in. None of the counseling by the wise, and persuasion by Krishna, on behalf of Pandavas was of any avail. The war became inevitable.

The war took place on the plain of Daob, situated between the Jumna and Saraswati rivers. It was called Kurukshetra, or the plain of the Kurus.

The hostile armies met on the plain of the Kurus. Bhishma, being the oldest warrior among them, commanded the army of the Kauravas. Bhima, the second son of Pandu, noted for his strength and prowess, led the army of the Pandavas.

The Bhagavad Gita, means, Song of Bhagavan, or Song Celestial, containing sublime teachings of the philosophy of life, the goal and purpose of life, the cause of bondage and the means for liberation, obligatory duties of man towards all sentient beings, the principles of man and the universe, origin, evolution, and destiny of the universe and man, governed by the law of cycles and Karma, and so on.

Duryodhana chooses the army of Krishna for the war, whereas Panadavas choose Krishna himself to instruct and guide them. Arjuna, the mighty archer, the third son of Pandu, chooses Krishna as his charioteer.

War having commenced, the two contending armies in battle formation stood ready facing each other.

A description is given by way of introduction of the chief characters on either side together with names and description of the weapons each of them was wielding.

Challenge is thrown by Bhishma by blowing his conch and is seconded by his followers. It was responded to by the Pandavas and their followers by blowing their respective conches so that the noise was excessive. The arrows had already commenced being flying on either side.

Arjuna, perceiving this, asked Krishna, his charioteer, to drive the chariot to the space between the two armies so that he may examine the lines of the enemy.

Beholding that arrayed against him to wage war were his cousins, uncles, grandsire, his respected teachers, and friends, Arjuna was horror-struck and was overcome with sorrow at the prospect of having to kill his own kinsmen and the preceptors to whom awful respect was due. Despondent Arjuna then tells Krishna that he cannot fight and kill his own kinsmen and that he would rather have them come upon him and kill him rather than kill them for the sake of winning the kingdom. He puts forward various arguments why he cannot wage war. This dejection of Arjuna is depicted in the first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, entitled, "The Despondency of Arjuna."

Krishna then replies to Arjuna's stance with arguments which form the didactic and philosophical doctrines, by which he persuades Arjuna that his resolution not to fight and conquer was born of a mistaken notion of the nature of Self, and the mystery of the nature action and inaction. Then Arjuna is enlightened, his despondency gone, resolves to fight and conquer.

Mythology and Allegory of Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita

The great epic is an allegory which conveys great truths about Man as the Soul and his evolutionary development in the overall scheme of universal evolution. The whole episode then is raised from the plane of fable to a sublime Science of the Soul.

Pandavas are shown to have been born to their mothers, Kunti and Madri, directly from the celestial powers, gods. The five Pandavas then represent the spiritual pole of man's being, man's higher nature aligned to Divine Self.

Kauravas, one hundred in number, are sons of the blind king, Dhritarashtra, represent the material pole of man's being, the Lower Self.

Human Soul is situated in this body between the two poles. If man, the human Soul, follows the impulses of the material nature, his Lower animal Self, it will drag man down to his own destruction. If man, on the other hand, chooses to follow the dictates of his Divine Conscience, of God within, represented by Krishna, and conquers the lower animal self and destroy the evil propensities and passions, he is raised to divinity and allows the divine to become the ruler in the body, and thereby establish the Law of Righteousness, Dharma, in the kingdom of man.

"The battle refers not only to the great warfare that mankind as a whole carries on but also to the struggle which is inevitable as soon as any one unit in the human family resolves to allow his higher nature to govern him in his life." (Mr. Judge's rendition of the Bhagavad Gita, p. XV, Theosophy Company (India) Pvt Ltd., Mumbai)

Arjuna, also called Nara, represents man as a race, as well as any individual who resolves to evolve his higher nature by living the Higher Life towards enlightenment and service of Humanity. The first chapter, "The Despondency of Arjuna, " is

significant in that it portrays the great difficulty any individual faces when he resolves upon walking on the path of Truth. The difficulty is this:

“Opposition from friends and all the habits he has acquired, and also that which naturally arises from hereditary tendencies, will confront him, and then it will depend upon how he listens to Krishna, who is the Logos [Spiritual Sun, or the Higher Self] shining within and speaking within, whether he will succeed or fail.”
(*ibid.*)

Teachers show that the Bhagavad Gita can be read in different ways, depending on the view taken: It can be applied to the individual who aspires to Truth, or to the genesis of Cosmos, or the evolution of the Astral World, or to the angelic hierarchies constituting the World Soul who govern the universe in accordance with the Cosmic and Karmic Laws. The higher and the deeper reaches of the Gita is the study pursued by Adepts who are advanced in the great Science of the Soul, which is beyond the scope of an average person of the world.

But for the ordinary person who aspires to enter the path leading to enlightenment, the poem gives invaluable instruction and guidance in a philosophical exposition. Hence, the Gita is to be studied in the latter context.

Indian Psychological System

“The location of the plain on which this battle was fought is important, as well as are also the very rivers and mountains by which it is bounded. And equally as needful to be understood, or at least guessed at, are the names of the respective princes. The very place in the Mahabharata in which this episode is inserted has deep significance, and we cannot afford to ignore anything whatever that is connected with the events. If we merely imagine that Vyasa or Krishna took the Sacred Plain of Kuru-Kshetra and the great battle as simply as accessories to his discourse, the whole force of the dialogue will be lost.....

“But there is the highest authority for reading this poem between the lines. The vedas themselves say, that what we see of them is only ‘the disclosed Veda,’ and that one should strive to get above the *disclosed* word. It is here clearly implied that the undisclosed Vedas must be hidden or contained in that which is apparent to the outer senses. Did we not have this privilege, then surely will we be reduced to obtaining true knowledge solely from the facts of experience as suffered by the mortal frame, and fall into the gross error of the materialists, who claim that the mind is only an effect produced by the physical brain-molecules coming into motion. We would also have to follow the canonical rule, that conscience is a safe guide only when it is regulated by an external law such as the law of the church, or of the Brahminical caste.

“But we very well know that within the material, apparent – or disclosed – man, exists the *real* one who is undisclosed. This valuable privilege of looking for the inner

sense, while not straining after impossible meanings in the text, is permitted to all sincere students of any holy scripture, Christian or Pagan.”

“And in the poem itself, Krishna declares that He will feed the lamp of spiritual wisdom so that the real meaning of his words may be known; so too the Upanishads uphold the existence of a faculty together with the right to use it, whereby one can plainly discern the real, or undisclosed, meaning of holy books.

“Indeed, there is a school of Occultists who hold, as we think with reason, that this power may be so developed by devoted persons, that even upon hearing the words of a holy book read in a totally unfamiliar language, the true meaning and drift of the strange sentences becomes instantly known. The Christian commentators allow that in studying the Bible, the spirit must be attended to and not the letter. The *spirit* is that *undisclosed* Veda which must be looked for between the lines.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad Gita, by Mr. W.Q. Judge, pp. 4-7*)

Chapter First

The Despondency of Arjuna

(*Arjuna Vishada Yoga*)

In Sanskrit, the first chapter is called “Arjun-Vishad, ” – which in English means, “The despair and despondency of Arjuna.” What caused Arjuna’s despondency and the significance of it are to be understood. It is to be noted that even before considering whom he has to fight, and the consequences to himself and to others, Arjuna in a flush of determination proceeded to fight the war. The forces of the warring factions are drawn up, the war cry has been sounded, and the arrows have already begun to fly from both sides, such that there is not any possibility of stopping the conflict. After surveying both the armies he realizes that he has to fight his kinsmen, preceptors, and friends. He is overcome with sorrow and despondency at the prospect of killing his own kinsmen, and tells Krishna, his charioteer, that he cannot engage in such a war for the sake of the kingdom. Now, this has a vital significance.

Arjuna’s despair is a portrayal of any serious seeker after Truth, who studies Occult Philosophy and resolves to conquer his lower self, which is full of egotism and passions and strives for union with his Higher Divine Self. By that aspiration and determination, the devotee causes his whole lower nature to stir up and actively oppose his endeavor and resist him.

He has aroused two sets of forces. One consists of his friends and relatives who are wedded to the established social conventions, and think him a fool to go against it, and oppose him. The other set of forces he arouses to oppose him is – which is far more difficult to meet – are all his lower tendencies, faculties, desires, and passions, all of which are rooted in material life. They include even his religious beliefs and conventional knowledge acquired in schools of learning and from secular teachers.

Hitherto he had cherished and conformed to their dictates. After studying the Occult (hidden) Science and Philosophy of life realizes intellectually the Truth or Reality to be other than relativism and even falsity of conventional life and longs to pursue Truth. Now he is trying to conquer and rise above his own limiting lower nature and aspire to reach the Light of the True Self.

By the very power of his higher aspiration and determination, his higher better part and the lower-self-centered part separate out, confronting and opposing each other, and claim his indulgence. Old established habits of thoughts, beliefs, tendencies which have been acquired by him in his past incarnations have become deeply ingrained. These habits are actually thought entities he has created with a life of their own which make up his lower self. These do not given-in easily to be displaced and fiercely fight to remain lodged, and oppose the promptings of nobler diviner nature. The lower material nature of his then ranges itself against his resolve and makes a league with his life companions devoted to the worldly life to defeat his purpose. His senses and organs addicted to the enjoyment of their respective objects resist his effort to control them. This causes confusion of mind and brings on despair. He sees no possibility of winning the war against the enemies – his own material self. He addresses Krishna of his demoralization and dejection in the following words:

I am not able to stand; for my understanding as it were turneth round, and i behold inauspicious omens on all sides.

This is the universal experience of every true aspirant to tread the path of Truth. Writes Mr. W.Q. Judge, a Teacher par excellence, thus:

All of us are brought to this study by our own request made to our Higher Self, who is Krishna. Arjuna requested Krishna to be his charioteer, and to drive him forth between the two armies. It does not matter whether he now is consciously aware of having made the request, nor whether it was made as a specific act, in this life or in many another precedent one; *it was made and it is to be answered at the right time*. Some of us have asked this many times before, in ancient births of ours in other bodies and other lands; others are making the request now; but it is more than likely in the case of those who are spurred on to intense effort and longing to know the truth, and to strive for unity with God, that they have put up the petition ages since. Now Krishna, the charioteer of this body with its horses – the mind – drives us forth so that we may stand with our Higher Self and all tendencies connected with it on one side, and all the lower (but not necessarily evil) principles on the other. The student may, perhaps, with ease face the crowd of friends and relatives, having probably gone through that experience in other lives and is now proof against it, but is not proof against the dark shadow of despair and ill result that falls on him. Every elemental that he has vivified by evil thinking now casts upon him the thought, “After all, it is no use; I cannot win; if I did, the gain would be nothing; I can see no great or lasting result to be attained, for all, all, is impermanent.”

The first chapter, then, propounds the truth that practical realization of the true Self-called God realization in popular parlance – is the hardest and most difficult of

all human endeavours, because all along the way to the Holy Seat nature of the embodied soul, made of the three qualities, causes illusions and confounds the soul.

Another truism it expounds is that once a devotee has turned his face in the godward direction and determined to tread the difficult path cannot turn away but is spurred to fight on further by the force of the recurrent efforts made in the past lives. It is karmic and Cyclic Law of our own being. This is made plain by Krishna to Arjuna, in the 18th chapter, Verses 59 and 60:

From a confidence in thine own self-sufficiency thou mayest think that thou wilt not fight. Such is a fallacious determination, *for the principles of thy nature will compel thee.* Being confined to actions by the duties of thy natural calling, *thou wilt involuntarily do that from necessity,* which thou wantest through ignorance to avoid.

The habits, tendencies, character, good or bad, are brought over by the Soul, the Real Inner Man, in each rebirth by the thoughts and actions of past lives. No thought or an act is lost but make indelible impressions on our inner nature and the ambient Astral Light of the world, which bring about various mental, moral, physical, psychical results which man, who produced them, has to experience, and which make the circumstances of his life.

The Soul, the Real Man, is the Reincarnating Ego, who is unborn, deathless, an inalienable portion of the Supreme Spirit – Paramatma. He is the Pilgrim Soul on a long sojourn in matter to gain experience through many reincarnations propelled by the Law of cause and effect, called Karma. The personalities or bodies in which he becomes embodied, are temporary and perishable and are the product of his past Karma. He has to strive to unite with his True Self, the Atman, during life in the body. This journey back to the Holy Seat is long and is accompanied by many Initiations into the Sacred Science of the Soul taught practically by Holy Sages and Masters in every part of the world and in every nation and race, and this mighty struggle is protracted through many reincarnations. The key that opens the gate leading to Enlightenment is knowledge of true Self, *Atma Vidya*.

“The *Self* must be recognized as being within, pondered over, and as much as possible understood, if we are to gain any true knowledge.” (Notes on the Bhagavad Gita, by Mr. Judge, p. 24)

Chapter Second

Devotion through Application to the Speculative Doctrine **(Sankhya Yoga)**

In the first chapter, it is shown that Arjuna, full of despondency, and confusion of mind, abandoned his duty as a warrior to fight the lawful war, and sits down on the bench of his chariot, saying, “I will not fight, ” after giving a number of arguments why it is wrong to fight the war, and asks Krishna to instruct him in his duty. The second chapter begins a sublime discourse on the sacred Science of Self, or *Atma Vidya*, in eighteen chapters.

Exposition of Philosophy of Soul-Self Speculatively

The truth of ultimate Reality to be True Self is expounded as a speculative doctrine, and then the practical devotional means by which it may be realized is traced out in the second and subsequent chapters.

Krishna begins the discourse by imparting the truth that man is not his body or mind but Self, which is unborn, deathless, the presiding Spirit of every man, and is not affected by incessant changes the bodily, mental, and material conditions undergo, nor is it killed when the body is destroyed. He shows that all errors, confusions, and delusions with which man in the world is afflicted are due to his mistaking the body to be the self and identifying himself with it. He teaches how to overcome this delusion and realize the Supreme Soul. Says Krishna:

“Those who are wise in spiritual things grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. I myself was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be.”

The Self is the eternal Real Man who is the source, support, Perceiver, the witness of changes but itself changeless and eternal.

“As the lord of this mortal frame experience there in infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same. One who is confirmed in this belief is not disturbed by anything that may come to pass.”

He says that manifested universe is pervaded by duality as heat and cold, pain and pleasure, light and darkness, good and evil, etc., which the embodied soul experiences through the senses, and suffers to constantly oscillate between the pairs of opposites, causing confusion. Says the Teacher that one must learn to rise above the pairs of opposites by practicing equal mindedness and rise to a higher state of consciousness where the duality ceases and unity is realized.

“The senses, moving towards their appropriate objects, are producers of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, which come and go and are brief and changeable’ these do thou endure, O son of Bharata! For the wise man, whom these disturb not and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is fitted for immortality.”

Krishna then gives Arjuna the correct perspective on life and duties with a knowledge of true Self in the body which belongs to It:

“Learn that He by whom all things are formed is incorruptible and that no one is able to effect the destruction of IT which is inexhaustible. These finite bodies, which envelop the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to Him, the eternal, the indestructible, unprovable Spirit, who is in the body; wherefore Arjuna resolve to fight.”

He shows that self-identification with the body is the fundamental mistake due to the illusion of matter which is the source of all error, all miseries and confusions.

“The man who believeth that it is this spirit which killeth, and he who thinketh that it may be destroyed are both alike are deceived; for it neither killeth nor is it

killed. It is not a thing of which a man may say, 'It hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter; for it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not slain when this mortal frame is destroyed. How can a man who believeth that it is incorruptible, eternal, inexhaustible, and without birth, that it can either kill or cause to be killed.'

"As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the dweller in the body, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new. The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water currepteth it not, the wind drieth it not away; for it is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible, and is not to be dried away; it is eternal, universal, permanent, and immovable; it is invisible, inconceivable, and unalterable; therefore, knowing it to be thus, thou shouldst not grieve."

"Death is certain to all things that are born, and rebirth to all mortals; wherefore it doth not behoove thee to grieve about the inevitable."

"Some regard the indwelling spirit as a wonder, whilst some speak and others hear of it with astonishment; but no one realizes it, although he may have heard it described."

"This spirit can never be destroyed in the mortal frame which it inhabiteth, hence it is unworthy for thee to be troubled for all these mortals."

Practical Devotional Means by which truth of Self may be Realized

Gita teaches that one should never abandon the duties one is obligated to perform. It is only through the performance of one's natural duties with no attachment to results is the way to final freedom. A warrior, for instance, to abandon his duty of fighting a righteous war is the foundation of dishonour, cowardice, and crime. Krishna then urges Arjuna to perform his duty while inwardly renouncing any interest to himself in the outcome, whether successful or unsuccessful, in which case he will be free from sin.

"Make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee and then prepare for battle, for thus and thus alone shalt thou be free from sin." (verse 38)

This is called the Path of Yoga, the path leading to union with the Supreme. Krishna propounds the famous teaching how to perform actions without becoming bound by the results of actions and become liberated:

"Thus before thee has been set the opinion in accordance with the Sankhya doctrine speculatively; now hear what it is in the practical, devotional one, by means of which, if fully imbued therewith, thou shalt forever burst the bonds of Karma and rise above them. In this system of Yoga no effort is wasted, nor are there any evil consequences, and even a little of this practice delivereth a man from great risk. In this path, there is only one single object, and this of a steady, constant nature; but widely-branched is the faith and infinite are the objects of those who follow not this system." (verses, 39-41)

Abandonment of Self-interest and Entire Devotion to the Supreme Self

Many religious ceremonies are prescribed in the Vedic scriptures which lead to enjoyment after death in heavenly spheres and then again, after the exhaustion of the merit earned, return to earth life to riches and pleasures. Krishna urges Arjuna to abandon these religious practices as happiness so derived is temporary, and leads to perpetual bondage to miseries of conditioned mortal existence. Conditioned existence as a whole are made of the three qualities – Sattva or truth, Rajas or passion, and Tamas, or indifference or darkness. The embodied soul is surrounded or environed by these qualities, which, together with the great duality of nature, in the way of pairs of opposites, delude the soul, leading to actions producing Karmic results by which man becomes bound to endless cycles of reincarnations or cycles of birth and death. The illusion produced by the qualities and the pairs of opposite ought to be overcome while living in the body through a mental effort at non-identification with them, with mind fixed on the Supreme Self which is free from the qualities and from the pairs of opposite. This is concentration or Yoga. Teaches the Lord:

“But those who desire riches and enjoyment have no certainty of soul and least hold on meditation. The subject of the Vedas is the assemblage of the three qualities. Be thou free from these qualities, O Arjuna! Be free from the pairs of opposites’ and constant in the quality of *Sattva*, free from worldly anxiety and the desire to preserve present possessions, self-centred and uncontrolled by objects of mind or sense.” (Verses 44-45)

Yoga is abandonment of self-interest and entire surrender to the Supreme Self which is the Self of All:

“Let then the motive for action be in the action itself, not in the event. Do not be incited to action by the hope of their reward, nor let thy life be spent in inaction. Firmly persisting in Yoga, perform thy duty, O Dhananjaya, and laying aside all desire for any benefit to thyself from action, make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure. Equal-mindedness is called Yoga.” (verses 47-48)

The Teacher urges the disciple to take refuge in this mental devotion which is knowledge. Those who do not follow this path and whose impulse to action proceeds from the desire for reward are miserable and unhappy.

“But he who by means of Yoga is mentally devoted dismisses alike successful and unsuccessful results, being beyond them; Yoga is skill in the performance of actions.” (verse 50)

A Description of *Sthita Prajna* – One who is Established in True Self

In answer to the query by Arjuna, how does one who is established in true Self and emancipated look like, where does he dwell, and what his walk in life, Krishna says:

“A man is said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge when he forsaketh every desire which entereth into his heart, and of himself is happy and contented in prosperity, and he is a stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger. Such a man is called Muni. When in every condition he receives each event, whether favourable or unfavourable, with an equal mind which neither likes nor dislikes, his wisdom is established, and having met good or evil, neither rejoiceth at one nor cast down by the other. He is confirmed in spiritual knowledge when like a tortoise, he can draw in all his senses and restrain them from their wonted purposes.” (verses 55-58)

Control of the Senses

“The tumultuous senses and organs hurry away by force the heart even of the wise man who striveth for perfection. Let a man restraining all these, remain in devotion at rest in me, his true self; for he who hath his senses and organs in control possesses spiritual knowledge.” (Verses 60, 61)

How uncontrolled Senses Lead to Loss of Knowledge of True Self

“He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern; from this concern is created passion, from passion anger; from anger is produced delusion, from delusion the loss of memory, from loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all.” (Verses 62, 63)

“The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of moving passions, snatcheth away his spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean. Therefore, O strong-armed one, he is possessed of spiritual knowledge whose senses are withheld from objects of sense.” (Verses 67, 68)

Total Surrender to the Self the Supreme Leads to Emancipation – Nirvana

“The man who having abandoned all desires, acts without covetousness, selfishness, or pride, deeming himself neither actor nor possessor, attains to rest. This, O son of Pritha, is dependence upon the Supreme Spirit, and he who possesseth it goeth no more astray; having obtained it, if therein established at the hour of death, he passeth on to Nirvana in the Supreme.” (Verses 71, 72)

Chapter III

Devotion through the right performance of action

(Karma Yoga)

Arjuna asks Krishna why he is urging him to engage in a dreadful war when Nirvana can be attained by acquiring spiritual knowledge. Krishna teaches that practical realization of the Supreme Self cannot come to men by a study of speculative science alone but by the active performance of duties of life with the highest motive of union with Spirit and renouncing all self-interest in fruits of action, performed as sacrifice to Him. This is Yoga of Action or Karma Yoga. Krishna shows that no one

rests even for one moment without action because everyone is involuntarily urged to act by the qualities inherent in nature with which the soul is embodied. Holy and nobler thoughts and actions proceed from Sattva quality; desires and passions which drive man to act for the satisfaction of personal desires are impelled by the quality of Rajas, the quality of passion; and, the tendency to sloth, indifference, indolence, sleep, etc., spring from Tamas quality. No one is free from the three qualities which actuate man to act in three ways, and actions so performed produce innumerable results on physical, mental and moral planes of life, some good and some bad, to which the soul becomes bound. We have accumulated a vast store of Karma from innumerable lives, and are able to expend only a portion of it in any one life and add the results of karma performed in each life to the storehouse of unspent causes. Thus by living the life full of desires for the enjoyment of either earthly pleasures or for heavenly enjoyment, binds and imprisons the soul to conditioned embodied life through an endless series of involuntary reincarnations, – which Krishna describes as the mansion of death. Emancipation comes only by selflessness and exclusive devotion to the Supreme Self, which is the Self of All.

“All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God makes the actor bound by action. Abandon, then, O son of Kunti, all selfish motives, and in action perform thy duty for him alone.” (Verse 9)

Krishna then expounds on the principle of Universal Brotherhood or the law of interdependent reciprocity. All beings in the universe are manifestations of One Supreme Spirit, and all are, therefore, interrelated and interdependent. This law of life requires that every individual work for the good of all and enjoy only what remains of such sacrifice. He thus becomes sinless. Individual happiness and progress are possible only when every individual labours for the progress and good of all.

“He who enjoyeth what hath been given unto him by them, and offereth not a portion unto them, is even as a thief. But those who eat not but what is left of the offering shall be purified of all their transgressions. Those who dress their meat but for themselves eat the bread of sin, being themselves sin incarnate.” (Verses 12, 13)

This is the wheel of Duty or Wheel of Dharna. We do not live for ourselves. We have duty towards not only our immediate kith and kin but to the whole of mankind, to the great Teachers and Guides of humanity (Rishis and Sages), to the spiritual progenitors of mankind (called Pitris), the angelic beings (gods) who are the presiding deities of the principles of our being, of our senses and faculties, and to the lower kingdoms of nature. We live by them and we owe a sacred duty towards all. Thus they benefit us and we, in turn, reciprocate by labouring for universal beneficence. Failure to live by this principle is the cause of sin, suffering, disease, and all sorrows. But our modern world has forgotten this great law of life, and selfish gratification is considered as the highest good. Hence the world's sorrows. Says the Lord:

“He who, sinfully delighting in the gratification of his passions, doth not cause this wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving, liveth in vain, O son of Pritha.” (Verse 19)

“Therefore perform thou that which thou has to do, at all times unmindful of the event; for the man who doeth that which he hath to do, without attachment to the result, obtaineth the Supreme. Even by action Janaka and others attained perfection. Even if the good of mankind is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty will be plain; for whatever is practiced by the most excellent men, that is also practiced by others. The world will follow whatever example they set.” (Verses 19-21)

Selfless benevolent action without self-interest for the highest good of all beings is Karma Yoga, teaches the Bhagavad Gita. By it, one attains enlightenment and perfection.

“Throwing every deed on me, and with thy meditation fixed upon the Higher Self, resolve to fight, without expectation, devoid of egotism and free from anguish. Those men who constantly follow this my doctrine without reviling it, and with firm faith, shall be emancipated even by actions; but those who revile it and do not follow it are bewildered in regard to all knowledge, and perish, being devoid of discrimination. (Verses 30-33)

Who is the Enemy of Man? Propelled by what Man Sins?

Arjuna asks Krishna why is man unconsciously to himself urged to commit offenses seemingly against his will. Even wise men are deluded by this insidious power and fall from grace, and it is difficult to subdue it. Krishna answers:

“It is lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of Rajas; insatiable, and full of sin. Know this to be the enemy of man on this earth. (Verse 37)

Where does this Power Reside and how does it Act

“As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust, and as the womb envelopes the fetus, so is the universe surrounded by this passion. By this – the constant enemy of the wise man, is formed from desire which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased – is discriminative knowledge is surrounded. Its empire is over the senses and organs, the thinking principle and the discriminating faculty also; by means of these it cloudeth discrimination and deludeth the Lord of the body.” (verses 38-40)

How then to Overcome this Satanic Principle?

“Therefore, O best of the descendants of Bharata, at the very outset restraining thy senses, thou shouldst conquer this sin which is the destroyer of knowledge and of spiritual discernment.”

The Conquering the Enemy of Man in Man himself with the Help of Higher Self

“The senses and organs are esteemed great, but the thinking principle is greater than they. The discriminating principle is greater than the thinking self, and that which is greater than the discriminating principle is He. Thus knowing what is greater than the discriminating principle and strengthening the lower by the Higher Self, do thou of mighty arms slay this foe which is formed from desire and difficult to seize.” (Verses 42, 43)

In a later chapter, Krishna teaches that this enemy of man is not to be just killed but burnt to ashes by the fire of Spiritual Knowledge which is the greatest purifier of man.

Chapter IV **Devotion through spiritual knowledge** **(Jnana Yoga)**

Genealogy of the Eternal Wisdom-Religion and the philosophy of Avatars are the two important doctrines expounded in this chapter. They are illustrative of the Law of Cycles. Wherever the name Krishna occurs in the Bhagavad Gita it must be understood that it means the Supreme Spirit or Paramatma, and also the divine Self of every man which is a portion of the Supreme; It is seated in the heart of every being.

The Origin of Universal Wisdom-Religion and how it Came down

Abstract Universal Absolute Wisdom underlies the universe. It is Absolute Truth, *Paramartha Satya*. There can be no Truth devoid of knowers of it. Absolute Being is Absolute Consciousness and Intelligence, which is One, non-dual, the True Self of all manifested beings. Souls who have through cycles of ages upon ages have reached perfection become That and merge into That, the state of *Para-Nirvana*. Hierarchies of these emancipated beings, who have been like us evolving through life-experiences in thousands of ages before, are a hierarchy of supra-human, divine, impersonal, intra-cosmic Intelligences, the rulers of planetary systems, govern the universal evolutionary progress in accordance with Karmic and Cosmic Laws, and come down periodically to teach and establish in the world among men a portion of the truth according to the needs appropriate to the conditions in which they are situated, It is to this that Krishna refers to when he says that it is a portion of this supreme universal wisdom he is now imparting to Arjuna – all truth seekers being Arjuna – as he (a great Soul) – had imparted ages before to earliest manifested beings. Says the Lord:

“This exhaustless doctrine of Yoga I formerly taught unto Vivaswat; Vivaswat communicated to Manu and Manu made it known to Ikshwaku; and being thus transmitted from one to another it was studied by the Raja Rishis, until at length in the course of time the mighty art was lost, O harasser of thy foes! It is even the same

exhaustless, secret, eternal doctrine I have this day communicated unto thee because thou art my devotee and my friend.” (Verse 1-3)

Vaivaswata means Sun, and Manu is the designation of collective evolving thinking humanity. There is profound truth in these names which is a deeper study. In the course of cycles of ages, called Yugas and Manvantaras, more or less of this supreme knowledge is imparted by high beings who come down among men, teach mankind arts and sciences pertaining to all aspects of human life, and give an impulse to higher human evolution, institute rule of royal sages which lasts for thousands of generations, and then, at last, the great art becomes obscured, in the course of the downward cycle. The lost knowledge is revived, again and again, errors and mistakes accumulated over time are corrected, and fresh impulse given to human development in the right direction.

Arjuna asks Krishna how has he to understand that he (Krishna) imparted this Yoga to Vivaswat who was a personage of many ages past. Replies Krishna:

“Both I and thou have passed through many births, O harasser of thy foes! Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest of thine.” (Verse 5)

Knowledge of our past existences and experiences are imprinted in our higher divine nature which is eternal, but the brain-mind of the outer mortal man, the shadow of the former, which is new in every rebirth, does not retain that memory. When man purifies himself and assimilates his consciousness with his divine consciousness, he will know first-hand his divinity, and of all the past, present and the future.

Then Krishna expounds the doctrine of Avatar. When Krishna speaks of himself as ‘I’ it must be understood Supreme Spirit and also divine Ego in the heart of all. He says:

“Even though myself unborn, of changeless essence, the lord of all existence, yet in presiding over nature – which is mine – I am born but through my own *maya*, the mystic power of self-ideation, the eternal thought in the eternal mind. I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and establishment of righteousness.” (Verses 6-8)

Krishna says: “Whoever, O Arjuna, knoweth mine divine birth and actions to be even so doth not upon quitting his mortal frame enter into others but entereth into me.: (verse 9) This is because to know the whole mystery of divine incarnations throughout thousands of ages is to have reached enlightenment

Doctrine of Action and Inaction

The fourth chapter expounds the doctrine of Action and Inaction. It is so mysterious that Krishna says that even sages have been deluded in distinguishing between the two.

Even sages have been deluded as to what is action and what inaction; therefore I shall explain to thee what is action by a knowledge of which thou shalt be liberated from evil. One must learn well what is action to be performed, what is not to be, and what is inaction. The path of action is obscure. (Verses 16 and 17)

Everyone faces in life the dilemma of what is to be done and what not to be done in many situations. Unless one has absolutely renounced inwardly all selfishness and entirely surrenders himself to the dictates of the Divine Self he cannot be free from error. The only one who is wholly dependent on the Supreme within is entirely free from error, and such one in reality does nothing though outwardly engaged in thousands of actions. This the doctrine of Inaction in Action. Says the Lord:

Those who have spiritual Discrimination call him wise whose undertakings are all free from desire, for his actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge. He abandoneth the desire to see a reward from his actions, is free, contented, and upon nothing dependeth, and although engaged in action he really doeth nothing; he is not solicitous of results, with mind and body subdued and being above enjoyment from objects, doing with the body alone and acts of the body, he does not subject himself to rebirth” (Verses 19-21)

“He is contented with whatever he receives fortuitously, is free from the influence of ‘the pairs of opposites’ and from envy, the same in success and failure, even though he acts he is not bound by bonds of action.” (Verse 22)

“All actions of such a man is free from self-interest, who is devoted, with heart set upon spiritual knowledge, and whose acts are sacrifices for the sake of the Supreme, are dissolved and left without effect on him.” (verse 23)

Actions of one who Sees Supreme Everywhere and in Everything are Sacrifices to the Supreme

The Supreme Spirit is the act of offering, the supreme Spirit is the sacrificial butter offered in the fire which is the Supreme Spirit, and unto the Supreme Spirit goeth he who maketh the Supreme Spirit the object of his meditation in performing his actions. (verse 24)

The way to seek Truth is Shown

Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error, O son of Bharata. By this knowledge thou shalt see all things and creatures whatsoever in thyself and then in me. (verses 14 and 15)

Spiritual Knowledge is the Greatest Purifier

As the natural fire, O Arjuna, reduceth fuel to ashes so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes. There is no purifier in this world to be compared to spiritual knowledge, and he who he is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual

knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time. (Verses 37 and 38)

The Chapter ends with a Clarion Call

No actions bind that man who through spiritual discrimination hath renounced action and cut asunder all doubt by knowledge, O despiser of wealth. Wherefore, O son of Bhatara, having cut asunder with the sword of spiritual knowledge this doubt which existeth in thy heart, engage in the performance of action. Arise! (Verses 41 and 42)

Concluding Remarks

As Mr. W.Q. Judge points out, the real “worship” is devotion to an ideal. Here “the Self of All” is ideal, and the action indicated is to think and act for, and as, the One Self in all things, without self-interest in the results. We are not attached to results by our acts, but by our thoughts; freedom comes from a renunciation of self-interest in the fruit of actions.

ESSENCE OF SUFISM
(A SUBJECT OF ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY)
SL PEERAN

Brief Note on Sufism

Overview of Sufism

Sufism is mystical and spiritual side of Islam. It focuses on the twin and mutually complementary themes of love and luminosity – the core of Islamic mysticism. Naturally, notes of tolerance and ‘Suleh-e-kul’ (equal respect and peace for all creeds predominate). The great Andalusian Sufi, Ibn Al Arabi (d.1240) penned in one of his poem

“My heart is capable of every form
A cloister of the monk
A temple for idols
A pasture for gazelles
The votary’s Kaaba”.

These lines recall the flute’s fancy in Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi’s (d.1273) MATHNAVI that may be rendered in English as

Dry my veins,
Dry my body and
Dry my skin,
So wherefrom comes the Friend’s call?

Humanism is the secular version of Sufism, and the two are inseparably intertwined. Sufism gives hope and its poetry gives a healing touch and reminder to man of his duty towards himself, life, world, faith and God. The Sufi poetry is the poetry of man and of all-embracing shades of life. It covers love, peace, tears, time, dreams, aspirations, hope, man-woman relationship, injustice, courage, beauty, charm, light, goodness, sincerity, piety, innocence, grace, sympathy, pity and faith.

Sufism aims at conquering the inner self and to reduce the ego to zero. It deals about annihilation of the human self and reaching the Higher Self.

It has become necessary for me to give an introduction to the nature of mystical, sufistic and yogic thoughts, feelings and experiences expressed profoundly in poems as a mode of communication. Poetry is a powerful form of expression of yearnings of the inner consciousness and soul of a mystic, a Sufi or a yogi. All aim at one goal but adopt various and diverse methods and means to reach it, based on the teachings

of each of their Masters. There are free thinkers, as well, who do not confine to the rigid system of any cult but freely float in the realms of consciousness to give expression to their imagination and inner yearnings, of which example, we can think of Kahlil Gibran. In English literature, William Blake stands foremost as a mystic poet. While in the orient, particularly, after the advent of Islam and its profound philosophical and mystical thoughts influenced deeply a set of its followers, to propound various schools for the purpose of teaching. To convey their thoughts, for the soul to take wings to reach higher echelons of consciousness. To reach the zenith of inner zone and to discover the source of the yearnings and pangs, for final merger with the higher consciousness and a Higher Being, whom each according to their religious and mystical experience have termed it as “God Almighty”, ‘Brahma’, ‘Holy Trinity’, ‘Holy Ghost’, ‘Allah’, ‘Huq’, ‘Truth’, ‘Beauty’, ‘Love’, so on and so forth.

In Sufism, four consciousness have been recognised “Naf’s-e-ammarah” (animal self, with characteristic and instincts of lower and baser self) ‘Naf’s-e-Lawwamah’ (moral, intuitive self) ‘Naf’s-e-Mutmaena (Realised self or conscious self) and Naf’s-e-Radhia (Totally surrendered self or highly purified consciousness). Each has a discipline and represents a subject, for guidance with its rules viz. canon law (Shariat), ‘Tariqat’ (spiritual path), ‘Marifat’ (Gnosis) and ‘Uboodi-yyat’ (servant hood, a true sense of being subject entirely to the Lord (Rabb, Truth or Allah)). The ultimate aim of the entire journey is to reach ‘as-sakinah’ i.e., absolute peace, supreme bliss, ecstasy and tranquility; by polishing the inner consciousness to highest degree of purity of thought and action. In this journey, the soul and inner consciousness yearns and struggles to overcome the baser elements and perseveres to remain within moral bounds, to reach echelons of higher spiritual life by transcendental meditation. Poetry is one form of expression of inner urges, trials, tribulations and pangs of the restless soul.

Holy Quran, dawned on Holy Prophet, which is one example of Highest form of consciousness, the Al-Huq ‘Truth’ revealing itself for guidance to mankind. The revelations are pure, sublime, profound and unique.

We have already been introduced to great persian Sufi poets like Omar Khayyam, Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi, Shaikh Sadi, Abdur Rehman Jami, Firdosi, Hafeez Shirazi to name a few. In Urdu, such high profound Sufistic thoughts were expressed by Meertaqi meer, Zauq, Mirza Ghalib, Meer Dard, Daaq, Mir Anees, Allama Iqbal and scores and hundreds of poets. But, not in the least and on higher plane of consciousness were hundreds of Sufi saints of India, who have expressed Sufic thoughts in Arabic, Persian and in Urdu language. Not to forget Amir khusroe, Kabir Das, Tulsi Das, Meera Bai in Hindi. In each of our Indian language, great yogies and saints have expressed higher thoughts in poetry.

In recent times, we find saints, savants, mystics and sufies expressing in English language like Sri Aurobindo & Rabindranath Tagore.

The Sufic and mystical poetry is the poetry of the heart, soul and higher consciousness. R.A. Nicholson in his introduction to selected poems from 'Divani Shamsi Tabriz' in para 4 states:

"It has been observed that the Neoplatonic deity – the Absolute One of Plotinus – owing to its all but inaccessible isolation was quickly overshadowed, if not dethroned, in the hearts of its worshippers, by the *dei minores* (daemons, angels, heroes and the like) forming a luminous staircase between earth and Heaven. These subordinate hierarchies, more or less remote from the divine Essence, seemed to offer a practicable hope, even a measure of responsive sympathy: anything was better than blank infinite negation. So with the Sufis. Professing to adore a universal abstraction, they make individual men the objects of their real worship. 'Among the religious philosophical sects of the period in which our poet lived the doctrine was generally held, that Man, if he be left to his own devices, will inevitably go astray: therefore he must choose a Master to guide him in the right path'. The Master is God's representative, his actions are God's actions, in spirit he is one with God....."

In Para 6 he Writes

"The great poets of Persia, with few exceptions, have borrowed the ideas and speak the language of Sufism. These again fall into two classes. Some, like hafiz, make the mystic terminology, 'adopte par une secte pour cacher aux profanes la connaissance de ses dogmes,' serve the function of a mask or a lady's fan in the last century. By tantalising the reader, by keeping him, as it were, suspended between matter and spirit, they pique his ingenuity and double his pleasure. Nearly every line is a play of wit. Love, Wine, and Beauty are painted in the warmest, the most alluring colours, but with such nicety; of phrase that often the same ode will entrance the sinner and evoke sublime raptures in the saint. The majority, however, are themselves Sufis by profession or conviction. 'The real basis of their poetry is a loftily inculcated ethical system, which recognises in purity of heart, charity, self-renunciation, and bridling of the passions, the necessary conditions of eternal happiness. Attached to this we find a pantheistic theory; of the emanation of all things from God, and their ultimate reunion with Him. Although on the surface Islam is not directly assailed, it sustains many indirect attacks, and frequently the thought flashes out, that all religions and revelations are only the rays of a single eternal Sun; that all Prophets have only delivered and proclaimed in different tongues the same principles of eternal goodness and eternal truth which flow from the divine Soul of the world. Among these, the genuine Sufi poets, Jalalu 'ddin Rumi is without a rival."

In sum, Sufi masters claim that Sufism enlightens the mind, sharpens the wit, broadens the outlook, purifies the heart and thinking and above all they claim Sufism makes a person humane and a perfect gentleman, by shunning the darker side of inner soul and illumining the soul and the mind.

Islam means peace and total surrender to the all enveloping Eternal Being Allah. The belief is that Adam is created by Allah with four elements and Eve from his rib. Due to their disobedience of Allah's command they were thrown to earth. They were to dwell for a time on earth and their soul would return to Allah purified and

enlightened by a process of self-purification. Their progeny has been in search for their own self and for peace. Great Prophets have come with their teachings. After a period of time, after Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), emerged the subject 'Irfan' or 'Tasawwuf' popularized by western scholars as 'Sufism'. The Saints and eminent Sufis wrote treatises, books and their lectures were recorded. So also their lengthy letters preserved.

In this book Chapter of "Essence of Eastern Spiritualism and Western Philosophy" an attempt is made to present to lay readers in a nut shell the essence of Sufism; a few verses of Holy Quran; briefly state the teachings of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him); present a few recorded lectures of Saint of Baghdad Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani (d1166), present excerpts from the books of Sheikh Ali Hujwiri alias Data Ganj Bakhsh of Lahore (book written in 1060), Sheikh Farid al-Din Attar (d1220), Al Ghazali (d1111), Moulana Jalauddin Rumi (d1273), Shaikh Sadi (d1292),) and Sheikh Sharafuddin b. Yahya Maneri (1381). It also deals on Sant Kabir and Sufi Saints. It is hoped that the readers will develop interest to read the original classical works on 'Irfan' / 'Tassawuff' or popularly known as Sufism.

Quotation from Holy Quran

In the Name of Most High Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful

Prayer – The Opening Verse Of Quran

Praise be to Allah
 The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds
 Most Gracious, Most Merciful Master of Day of Judgment
 Thee do we worship
 And Thine aid
 We seek
 Show us the
 Straight way
 The way of those
 On whom Thou
 Has bestowed
 Thy Grace those whose (portion)
 Is not wrath of Allah!
 (S:1 Verse1-7)

Allah! There is no god
 But, he – the living
 The self-subsisting, Supporter of all.
 No slumber can seize Him.
 Nor sleep, His are all things
 In the Heavens and on earth
 In His presence, except as He permitteth?
 He knoweth what

(appeareth to
His creatures As)
Before or after or
Behind them.
Nor shall they
Compass aught
of His knowledge
except as he willeth.
His throne doth
extend over the
heavens and the earth and
He feeleth and
Preserving them.
For He is the High.
The Supreme (in glory).
(S.2 Verse 254-255)

Say: He is Allah
The one;
Allah, the Eternal Absolute;
He begetteth not,
Nor is He begotten.
And there is none
Like unto Him.
(S.112:Verse 1-4)

Allah is He, than whom there is
No other god: –
The Sovereign, the Holy one,
The source of peace (and perfection),
The Guardian of Faith,
The Preserver of Safety,
The Exalted in Might,
The Irresistible, the Justly proud
Glory to Allah!
Above the partners, they attribute to Him.

He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator,
The Fashioner to Him belong the
Most Beautiful Names.
Whatever is in the
Heavens and on earth cloth declare
His praises and Glory;
And He is the Exalted in Might, the wise
(S.59.Verse 22-24)

Almost 99 Direct Instructions by Allah in the Quran for Mankind

1. Do not be rude in speech (3:159)
2. Restrain Anger (3:134)
3. Be good to others (4:36)
4. Do not be arrogant (7:13)
5. Forgive others for their mistakes (7:199)
6. Speak to people mildly (20:44)
7. Lower your voice (31:19)
8. Do not ridicule others (49:11)
9. Be dutiful to parents (17:23)
10. Do not say a word of disrespect to parents (17:23)
11. Do not enter parents' private room without asking permission (24:58)
12. Write down the debt (2:282)
13. Do not follow anyone blindly (2:170)
14. Grant more time to repay if the debtor is in hard time (2:280)
15. Don't consume interest (2:275)
16. Do not engage in bribery (2:188)
17. Do not break the promise (2:177)
18. Keep the trust (2:283)
19. Do not mix the truth with falsehood (2:42)
20. Judge with justice between people (4:58)
21. Stand out firmly for justice (4:135)
22. Wealth of the dead should be distributed among his family members (4:7)
23. Women also have the right for inheritance (4:7)
24. Do not devour the property of orphans (4:10)
25. Protect orphans (2:220)

26. Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly (4:29)
27. Try for settlement between people (49:9)
28. Avoid suspicion (49:12)
29. Do not spy and backbite (2:283)
30. Do not spy or backbite (49:12)
31. Spend wealth in charity (57:7)
32. Encourage feeding poor (107:3)
33. Help those in need by finding them (2:273)
34. Do not spend money extravagantly (17:29)
35. Do not invalidate charity with reminders (2:264)
36. Honor guests (51:26)
37. Order righteousness to people only after practicing it yourself (2:44)
38. Do not commit abuse on the earth (2:60)
39. Do not prevent people from mosques (2:114)
40. Fight only with those who fight you (2:190)
41. Keep the etiquettes of war (2:191)
42. Do not turn back in battle (8:15)
43. No compulsion in religion (2:256)
44. Believe in all prophets (2:285)
45. Do not have sexual intercourse during menstrual period (2:222)
46. Breast feed your children for two complete years (2:233)
47. Do not even approach unlawful sexual intercourse (17:32)
48. Choose rulers by their merit (2:247)
49. Do not burden a person beyond his scope (2:286)
50. Do not become divided (3:103)
51. Think deeply about the wonders and creation of this universe (3:191)
52. Men and Women have equal rewards for their deeds (3:195)
53. Do not marry those in your blood relation (4:23)
54. Family should be led by men (4:34)
55. Do not be miserly (4:37)
56. Do not keep envy (4:54)
57. Do not kill each other (4:92)
58. Do not be an advocate for deceit (4:105)
59. Do not cooperate in sin and aggression (5:2)

60. Cooperate in righteousness (5:2)
61. 'Having majority' is not a criterion of truth (6:116)
62. Be just (5:8)
63. Punish for crimes in an exemplary way (5:38)
64. Strive against sinful and unlawful acts (5:63)
65. Dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine are prohibited (5:3)
66. Avoid intoxicants and alcohol (5:90)
67. Do not gamble (5:90)
68. Do not insult others' deities (6:108)
69. Don't reduce weight or measure to cheat people (6:152)
70. Eat and Drink, But Be Not Excessive (7:31)
71. Wear good cloths during prayer times (7:31)
72. protect and help those who seek protection (9:6)
73. Keep Purity (9:108)
74. Never give up hope of Allah's Mercy (12:87)
75. Allah will forgive those who have done wrong out of ignorance (16:119)
76. Invitation to God should be with wisdom and good instruction (16:125)
77. No one will bear others' sins (17:15)
78. Do not kill your children for fear of poverty (17:31)
79. Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge (17:36)
80. Keep aloof from what is vain (23:3)
81. Do not enter others' houses without seeking permission (24:27)
82. Allah will provide security for those who believe only in Allah (24:55)
83. Walk on earth in humility (25:63)
84. Do not neglect your portion of this world (28:77)
85. Invoke not any other god along with Allah (28:88)
86. Do not engage in homosexuality (29:29)
87. Enjoin right, forbid wrong (31:17)
88. Do not walk in insolence through the earth (31:18)
89. Women should not display their finery (33:33)
90. Allah forgives all sins (39:53)
91. Do not despair of the mercy of Allah (39:53)
92. Repel evil by good (41:34)
93. Decide on affairs by consultation (42:38)

94. Most noble of you is the most righteous (49:13)
95. No Monasticism in religion (57:27)
96. Those who have knowledge will be given a higher degree by Allah (58:11)
97. Treat non-Muslims in a kind and fair manner (60:8)
98. Save yourself from covetousness (64:16)
99. Seek forgiveness of Allah. He is Forgiving and Merciful (73:20)

Poems

A Glimmer of Hope

The darkness grows and grows into eerie silence
Without the Cold Silent Moon in the dark sky
Twinkling stars are covered with a blanket of dark clouds
Even an owl cannot hoot nor a vampire move.
There is not a glimmer of light
Not even a candle or a smoke in chimney
The hearths are all choked with ashes
The electricity has failed, it is so dark.
The fauna, forest, beast and man in deep slumber
The stillness in the air is scary and somber
Even a ghost in the night is scared to walk
The batteries of the earth cannot throw light.
The sun, the golden sun that round one
With its might and power, burning and churning
Slowly and steadily peeps, but, before, heralds
Its trumpet to end the gloom of darkness
Wakes up the crow, the dark one, the dirty one
The owl, the koel, the Cuckoo, to siren
That the king and mighty is on his way
Up, up, you sloth and gluttons.
The muezzin in his shrill voice
Raises, alarm, awake, awake Oh faithful ones
For the 'Great one's arrival has ended the darkness
The world is aglow with the Light of Mercy.
Kindness, Compassion, Glory and Warmth
Light begets light, candle lights candle
A mighty soul, a Prophet of Light
Trumpets for all the uniqueness.

To be up and sing in chorus and harmony
Rejoice, in the Light of Wisdom
In the learning, in the elevation of mind and soul
The dark one, accursed devil vanishes in thin air.

Birth of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh)

On being led to the stakes
 Jesus was asked by his followers
 Who would come to them
 To deliver and liberate them.

Jesus, the savior, the succor
 Was being crudely dealt with,
 At the hands of his people
 Who shunned and allured him.

Now, Lord, wouldn't send
 Any more messenger to Jews.
 For Lord's beloved has been
 Made to wear a crown of thorns.

Only from the gentiles
 Would be raised a Prophet.
 would unite the people,
 Of varied colors and hues.

To an universal brotherhood.
 The world lay in darkness,
 In steep idolatry and tyranny.
 With baby girls being buried alive.

Sans love, affection and unity.
 The Lord of the Universe of seven heavens,
 Of seven seas, seven oceans
 His prophets, angels, books

Desecrated, polluted, corrupted.
 Women in sorrow and in chains.
 Sans rights, treated as chattel
 Profanity, vulgarity, unabashedly practiced.

So also human sacrifices, rape, and loot.
 Poor and wretched sans a succor.
 Sans equality, freedom and justice,
 Compassion, and mercy, a rare dove.

Orphans, widows lived sans love.
The sacred thread of matrimony
Severed and its pearls thrown asunder.
Devil in men's garb on prowl.

Genie sucking the blood, swarming around.
Synagogues, churches, and temples
Infested with pests and swine's
Men in wolf's garb with stony hearts.

Culture and civilization at a darkest hour.
A star was born, a light shone.
A manifestation of the ultimate Truth.
Purity in shinning dress dawning,

To cleanse and illumine the universe.
To take humanity to zenith of peace.
To open the floodgates of knowledge.
To unite man and man in a single bond.

To liberate the destitute, infirm, oppressed.
From the clutches of dreadful penury.
To soften the hearts and purify minds.
To make the spirit genteel.

To lay a foundation for equality.
Justice to become a paragon of virtue.
Lord of universe to be adored and obeyed,
Feared, and his laws observed.

His Will to prevail over humanity
A posthumous child, born, reared by foster mother.
Angels visiting and flooding heart with light.
Cleaning it in perfumes and scents.

Protected by a ring of an aura.
A white cloud to give shade.
Forehead shinning like a bright light.
The birth foretold by Jesus, the Savior.
Mentioned in Holy Books of the East.

The fire of Zoroastrians extinguished.
 The jewels in the crown of Khaizer fell.
 The attack by Romans on Mecca,
 Through elephants repelled Divinely.

The Master the leader of Qureshi
 The Trustworthy, Truthful, the Just
 Bringing peace among the warring tribals.
 Uniting them to reconstruct the Kaaba

With scrupulous honesty
 Captivating the heart of the widow.
 Enamored with the beauty, sterling
 Character of the foretold prophet.

Endears her and seeks his hand
 In matrimony in bonds of love.
 Serves him dedicatedly generously.
 Ahmed, the Qureshi, the succor of the distressed.

Open his heart and treasury to serve them.
 Ponders on the exquisite beauty of Lord the Cherisher.
 The Compassionate, The merciful, The Beneficent.
 The sole and unique Ruler of the universe.

Shuns idolatry of the Mecca.
 Intervenes among warring tribals.
 Mediates, compromises the disputants.
 Wins hearts, laurels and respect

Ahmed, the chosen, the orphan, the merchant
 The Qureshi, the Hashemi, the Meccan.
 Is accepted as the most virtuous
 Man of sterling qualities and piety.

Withdraws from the hub and the rub,
 Into a cave on the Mount Hira.
 In deep penance and meditation
 To reach higher consciousness.

Lo, one day, when he crossed forty
A light shone in the cave.
Gabriel the Angel in the shining white
Commands the praiseworthy Mohammed

To recite and read in the name of the Lord.
Mohammed hesitates, pleads ignorance
Gabriel hugs him tight, to enlighten him.
Mohammed recites the Holy words of Allah.

“Read in the name of the Lord and Cherisher
who created – created man, out of a leach like clot Proclaim!
And thy Lord Is Most Bountiful
The use of the pen” (S.96: 1-3)

Mohammed rushes home in fever
Asks Lady Khateja to rap him in a blanket.
With fright and frozen in chill fear
To be consoled, comforted by the Lady
Gabriel then command Mohammed

“O thou folded
In garments
Stand (to prayer) by night,
But not all night
Half of it or a little less
Or a little more
And recite the Quran
In slow measured rhythmic tones
Soon shall we send down
To that a weighty word” (S.73-1-5)

Thus, the message of the Lord of the Heavens
Of the universe, is revealed.
Gabriel again and again
Brings the message to recite and deliver: –

“O thou wrapped up (In a mantle)
Arise and deliver thy warning
And thy Lord
Do you magnify
And thy garments

Keep free from stain
 And all abomination shun
 Not expect in giving,
 Any increase (for thyself)
 But, for thy Lord's (cause)
 Be patient and Constant. (S.74-1.7)

The Heaven protects Mohammed the Prophet,
 The Messenger of peace to proclaim Islam
 Preaches his brethren with all gentility
 With love, compassion, and sinew.

Merchants, slaves, destitute women,
 Orphans, oppressed, infirm, sick
 Shun idolatry, cleanse themselves
 To pray five times a day.

To observe fast for a month.
 To give charity for the poor
 To proclaim and submit to Allah.
 To worship HIM, the lone creator.

Who has neither begotten a son, but
 Who is the Creator of the universe.
 Who neither sleeps nor winks
 Who is ever Generous, Merciful.

Who is Compassionate, Beneficent.
 Who is Ever protective, a Friend.
 Who is a Guide, a Giver.
 Who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent.

Who is Imminent, Eternal.
 Who is ever Loving, Forgiving
 Who is the Master of the day of Judgment.
 Who calls for account our deeds.

Who punishes and rewards.
 Who grants Mercy, redemption.
 Who blesses with Heaven for virtuous.
 Whose wrath is for disobedient.

Who punishes niggardly in Hell fire.
Who loves men with virtue, patience.
Who walk in straight path.
Who sing paeans for HIM.

Who take care of aged parents.
Who maintain the bond and ties –
of the family and neighbors
Who loves those who forget and forgive.
Who takes care of poor and depressed.
Who are ever just and caring.
Who opens the heart and breast.
To his obedient servants.

With million lights of knowledge
And protects them from the accused.
Who grants victory to His servants
Against adversaries & foes.

Who blesses them from Heaven.
With His Bounty and Grace.
Who sees, Hears, Grants.
Who is a Fashioner; Designer.

Who exercises His absolute control.
Who is Omniscient, Transcendental.
Who grants Supreme Bliss and Ecstasy.
Who is full of Forgiveness, the Redeemer.

Who is the Dominator and the Bestower.
Who is the Provider and the Opener.
Who is the Arbitrator, the Just.
Who is the Benevolent, the Tremendous.

Mohammed's message was shunned
Persecuted, harassed, tortured.
Emigrated with Abu Baker to Medina,
To be welcomed with open arms.

To set up the first Mosque.
 To regulate the life of his followers
 The virtuous, men of piety
 With love, affection, endearment.

With brotherhood, sacrifice.
 To be ever obedient and lawful.
 Granted just laws for peace,
 Women, aged, children, orphans cared

Protected, cruelty punished.
 Marriage institution saved.
 Social life regulated.
 Charity made a way of life.

To pray and fast in the name of the Lord,
 To seek, find, merge in the Lord's love.
 To love and be loved, to be always just.
 To shun idleness, gluttony, idiosyncrasy.
 To be ever humble, simple, obedient.

To learn, be wise and good to all.
 To be tolerant, patient, forgiving.
 To bear with injustice, seek Lord's help.
 To not wage war or create strife.

To compound and compromise.
 To be charitable and compassionate.
 To be always just and truthful.
 Mohammed was attacked by Meccans.

Wars after wars were waged.
 Mohammed ever forgiving loving.
 Patched bonds of peace.
 Compromise showed generosity.

United poor and rich, master and servant.
 A new social life, a new gait.
 A new learning, of excellence.
 Opulence and mirth surrendered.

Equality and fraternity patched.
Idolatry banished, black magic banned.
Cruelty, wretchedness vanished.
Promiscuity abolished, anger subdued.

Licentiousness removed, women respected.
Crime hither to spread, now unheard.
Charity, generosity, hospitality, civility,
Civic sense, good living, respectability;

Gentlemanliness, courtesy, becomes
A watch word, God fearing instilled.
Man and Man united universally.
World brotherhood established for peace.

**Excerpts from Golden Sayings of the Prophet
(PBUH) Collected by Hazreth Abdul-Fattah Jamil
Bari (RAA)**

Tradition No. 347

Narrated Aisha: The Prophet said,

“No one of you should say: My soul has become evil, ’ but he should say: ‘my soul has become remorseless.’” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 348

Narrated Anas t: Allah’ s Messenger e said,

“When anyone of you appeal to Allah for something, he should ask with determination and should not say; ‘O Allah, if You wish, give me, ’ for nobody can force Allah to do something against His Will.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 349

Narrated Abu Huraira The Prophet said

“Isn’t he who resets his head before the Imam afraid that Allah may transform his head into that of a donkey or his figure (face) into that of a donkey?” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 350

Narrated Aisha I heard Allah’s Messengers saying,

“No prayer can be (rightly said) when the food is there (before the worshippers), or when he is prompted by the call of nature.” Muslim

Tradition No. 356

Narrated Abu Huraira Allahs’ Messenger said,

“It is better that one should sit on live coals which would burn his clothing and come to his skin than to sit on a grave.” Muslim

Tradition No. 357

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“Be on your guard against two things which provoke cursing.” They (the companions) who present their said, “What are those things which provoke cursing?” He said, “Easing on the thorough fares or under the shades (where they take shelter and rest).” Muslim

Tradition No. 358

Narrated Ibn Umar Allah's Messenger said,

“None should try to cancel a bargain already agreed upon between some other persons (by offering a bigger price). And a man should not ask for the hand of a lady who is already engaged to his Muslim brother, unless the first suitor gives her up, or allows him to ask for her hand.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 359

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“None amongst you should point a weapon towards his brother, for he does not know that Satan might cause the weapon (to slip) from his hand and (he may injure anyone) and thus he may fall into Hell-Fire.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 360

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“He who is presented with flower should not reject it, for it is light to carry and pleasant in odour.” Muslim

Tradition No. 361

Narrated Anas The Prophet never used to refuse (a gift of) scent. Al-Bukhan

Tradition No. 362

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds.” Muslim

Tradition No. 363

Narrated Ibn Abbas Allah's Messenger said,

“If Adam's son had a valley full of gold he would like to have two valleys, for nothing fills his mouth except dust. And Allah forgives him who repents to Him.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 364

Narrated Ibn' Abbas The Prophet said,

“Allah ordered (the appointed angels over you) that the good and the bad deeds be written, and He then showed (the way) how (to write). If somebody intends to do a good deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write for him a full good deed (in his account with Him) ; and if he intends to do a good deed and actually did it, then Allah will write for him (in his account) with Him (its reward equal) from ten to seven hundred times to many more times: and if somebody intended to do a bad deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write a full good deed (in his account) with Him, and if he intended to do it (a bad deed) and actually did it, then Allah will write one bad deed (in his account).” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 365

Narrated Anas bin Malik Allah's Messenger said,

“He who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers).” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 366

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“He who called (people) to righteousness, he would be rewarded like those who followed him diminishing nothing in any respect to their rewards. And he who called (people) to error, he shall carry (the burden) of its sin, like those who committed it, without diminishing anything with respect to their sins.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 367

Narrated Ubaidullah Al-Khulani: I heard Uthman bin Affan saying, when people argued too much about his intention to reconstruct the mosque of Allah's Messenger

“You have talked too much. I heard Allah's Messenger saying, Whosoever built a mosque with the intention of seeking Allah's Pleasure, Allah will build for him a similar place in Paradise.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 368

Narrated Ibn Umar: Allah's Messenger said,

“The prayer in congregation is twenty seven times superior to the prayer offered by a person alone.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 369

Narrated Abu Musa The Prophet said,

“Comparing the house which remembrance of Allah is made and the house in which Allah is not remembered are like the living and the dead.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 370

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“Say Amin when the Imam says Ghir-il-maghdubi alaihim waladdal-lin; not the path of those who earn Your anger nor of those who go astray “all the past sins of the person whose saying (of Amin) coincides with that of the angels, will be forgiven.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 371

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“When the son of Adam recites the verse of Sajdah (prostration) and then falls down in prostration. The Satan goes into seclusion and weeps and says, ‘Woe unto me. The son of Adam was commanded to prostrate, and he prostrated and Paradise was entitled to him and I was commanded to prostrate, but I refused and Fire (Hell) was entitled to me.’ Muslim

Tradition No. 372

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“Any person who takes a bath on Friday like the bath of Janaba and then goes for the prayer in the first hour (i. e. early), it is as if he had sacrificed a camel (in Allah's Cause) ; and whoever goes in the second hour it is as if he had sacrificed a cow; and whoever goes in the third hour, then it is as if he had sacrificed a horned ram; and if one goes in the fourth hour, then it is as if he had sacrificed a hen; and whoever goes in the fifth hour then it is as if he had offered an egg. When the Imam comes out (i. e. starts delivering the Khutba), the angels present themselves to listen to the Khutba.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 373

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“There was a man who used to give loans to people. He used to say to his lad: When an insolvent comes to you show him leniency that Allah may overlook or (faults). ’ So he met Allah, and his faults were overlooked.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 374

Narrated Abduhah bin Amrbin Al-As Allah's Messenger said,

“The fasting of three days a month will be equal to the fasting of the whole year.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 375

Narrated Anas bin Malik Allah's Messenger said,

“Take Suhur (late-night meals) as there is a blessing in it.” Agreed

Tradition No. 376

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“O Allah! Pardon those who get their heads shaved.” They (Companions of the prophet e) said, “O Allah's Messenger! And (what about those) who get their hair cut?” He said, “O Allah! Pardon those who get their heads shaved”. They said, “O Allah's Messenger! And (what about those) who get their hair cut?” He said, “O Allah! Pardon those who get their heads shaved.” They said, “O Allah's Messenger! And (what about those) who get their hair cut?” He said, “ (O Allah! Pardon) those who get their hair cut.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 377

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said,

“For one among my nation who shows endurance against the hardships and rigours of Medina, I would be an intercessor or a witness on his behalf on the Day of Resurrection.” Muslim

Tradition No. 378

Narrated Anas Allah's Messenger said,

“O Allah! Bestow on Medina twice the blessings You bestowed on Mecca.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 379

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger was asked,

“What deed could be equivalent to Jihad in the cause of Allah?” He said, “You do not have the strength to do that deed.” They repeated the question twice or thrice. Every time he answered, “You do not have the strength to do it.” When the question was asked for the third time, he said, “One who goes out for Jihad is like a person who keeps fasts, stands in prayer (constantly), (obeying) Allah's (behests contained in) the verses (of the Quran), and does not exhibit any lassitude in fasting and prayer untill the mujahid returns from Jihad in the way of Allah.” Agreed upon

Tradition No. 410

Narrated Abu Huraira The Prophet said,

“He who finds a prostration of the prayer, he in fact finds the prayer.” Muslim

Tradition No. 411

Narrated Abu Sa' id Al-Khudri Allah's Messenger (in the mosque) saw (a tendency) among his Companions to go back, so he said to them, “Come forward and follow my lead, and let those who come after you follow your lead. People will continue to keep back till Allah will put them at the back. Muslim content like that of Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and all the rest).

Tradition on Charity

Charity

(When asked what type of sadaqah fetches the greatest reward, the Messenger of Allah [SA] replied) That which you give when you are healthy, stingy, fearing poverty and hoping for [more] affluence.

MK 1867 BM

It is better for a man to give a dirham as sadaqah during his lifetime than to give a hundred at the time of his death. MK 1870 AD

Sadaqah does not reduce the property. MK 1889 ML

Doing any good is a sadaqah. MK 1893 BM

Every bone of men's fingers and toes must offer some sadaqah every day the sun rises. If one gives justice between two men it is a sadaqah; if one helps a man with his beast, giving him a ride or loading his goods on it, it is a sadaqah; a good word is a sadaqah; every step one takes towards Salat [Prayer] is a, sadaqah; and if anyone removes anything harmful from the road, it is a sadaqah. MK 1896 BM

When you guide someone who has lost his way, it counts to you as a sadaqah. MK 1911 TM

Contentment

Affluence is not in abundance of goods; true affluence is the heart's content. MK 5170 BM

When one of you looks at someone who is superior to him in wealth and physique, he should look at someone who is inferior to him. MK 5242 BM

If one is satisfied with small provision from Allah, Allah will be satisfied with a few good deeds from him. MK 5263 BH

Excerpts from ‘The Kashf Al Mahjub’ by Hz Ali bin Uthman Al-Hujwiri (RAA) alias Hz Data Gunj Baksh (RAA)

The Uncovering of The First Veil: Concerning The Gnosis Of God (ma’rifat Allah).

The Apostle said: “If ye knew God as He ought to be known, ye would walk on the seas, and the mountains would move at your call.” Gnosis of God is of two kinds: cognitional (ilmi) and emotional (hali). Cognitional gnosis is the foundation of all blessings in this world and in the next, for the most important thing for a man at all times and in all circumstances is knowledge of God, as God hath said: “I only created the genii and mankind that they might serve Me” (Kor. li.56) i.e. that they might know Me. But the greater part of men neglect this duty, except those whom God hath chosen and whose hearts He hath vivified with Himself. Gnosis is the life of the heart through God, and the turning away of one’s inmost thoughts from all that is not God. The worth of everyone is in proportion to gnosis, and he who is without gnosis is worth nothing. Theologians, lawyers, and other classes of men give the name of gnosis (ma’rifat) to right cognition (ilm) of God, but the Sufi Shaykhs call right feeling (hal) towards God by that name.

Hence they have said that gnosis (ma’rifat) is more excellent than cognition (ilm), for right feeling (hal) is the result of right cognition, but right cognition is not the same thing as right feeling, i.e. one who has not cognition of God is not a gnostic (arif), but one may have cognition of God without being a gnostic. Those of either class who were ignorant of this distinction engaged in useless controversy, and the one party disbelieved in the other party. Now I will explain the matter in order that both may be instructed.

You must know that there is a great difference of opinion touching the gnosis and right cognition of God. The Mu’tazilites assert that gnosis is intellectual and that only a reasonable person (aqil) can possibly have it. This doctrine is disproved by the fact that madmen, within Islam, are deemed to have gnosis, and that children, who are not reasonable, are deemed to have faith. Were the criterion of gnosis an intellectual one, such persons must be without gnosis, while unbelievers could not be

charged with infidelity, provided only that they were reasonable beings. If reason were the cause of gnosis, it would follow that every reasonable person must know God, and that all who lack reason must be ignorant of Him; which is manifestly absurd. Others pretend that demonstration (istidlal) is the cause of knowledge of God, and that such knowledge is not gained except by those who deduce it in this manner. The futility of this doctrine is exemplified by Iblis, for he saw many evidences, such as Paradise, Hell, and the Throne of God, yet they did not cause him to have gnosis.

God hath said that knowledge of Him depends on His will (Kor.vi.III) According to the view of orthodox Moslems, soundness of reason and regard to evidences are a means (sabah) to gnosis, but not the cause (illat) thereof: the sole cause is God's will and favour, for without His favour (inayat) reason is blind. Reason does not even know itself: how, then, can it know another? Heretics of all sorts use the demonstrative method, but the majority of them do not know God. On the other hand, whenever one enjoys the favour of God, all his actions are so many tokens of gnosis; his demonstration is search (talab), and his neglect of demonstration is resignation of God's will (taslim) ; but, in reference to perfect gnosis, resignation is no better than search, for search is a principle that excludes the possibility of agitation (idtirab), and these two principles do not essentially involve gnosis. In reality Man's only guide and enlightener is God. Reason and the proofs adduced by reason are unable to direct anyone into the right way. If the infidels were to return from the place of Judgment to this world, they would bring their infidelity back with them (cf.Kor. vi. 28)

When the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, was asked concerning gnosis, he said: "I know God by God, and I know that which is not God by the light of God." God created the body and committed its life to the spirit (jan), and He created the soul (dil) and committed its life to Himself. Hence, inasmuch as reason and human faculties and evidences have no power to make the body live, they cannot make the soul live, as God hath said: "Shall he who was dead and whom We have restored to life and to whom We have given a light whereby he may walk among men...?" (Kor, vi, 122) i.e. "I am the Creator of the light in which believers are illumined". It is God that opens and seals the hearts of men (Kor.xxxix, 23; ii, 6) : therefore He alone is able to guide them. Everything except Him is a cause or a means, and cause and means cannot possibly indicate the right way without the favour of the Causer. He it is that imposes the obligation of piety, which is essentially gnosis; and those on whom that obligation is laid, so long as they are in the state of obligation, neither bring it upon themselves nor put it away from themselves by their own choice: therefore Man's share in gnosis, unless God makes him know, is mere helplessness. Abu 'l-Hasan Nuri says: "There is none to point out the way to God except God Himself: knowledge is sought only for due performance of His worship." No created being is capable of leading anyone to God. Those who rely on demonstration are not more reasonable than was Abu Talib, and no guide is greater than was Muhammad

(PBUH) ; yet, since Abu Talib was preordained to misery, the guidance of Muhammad (PBUH) did not avail him.

The first step of demonstration is a turning away from God, because demonstration involves the consideration of some other thing, whereas gnosis is a turning away from all that is not God. Ordinary objects of search are found by means of demonstration, but knowledge of God is extraordinary. Therefore, knowledge of Him is attained only by unceasing bewilderment of the reason, and His favour is not procured by any act of human acquisition, but is miraculously revealed to men's hearts. What is not God is phenomenal (muhdath), and although a phenomenal being may reach another like himself he cannot reach his Creator and acquire Him while he exists, for in every act of acquisition he who makes the acquisition is predominant and the thing acquired is under his power. Accordingly, the miracle is not that reason should be led by the act to affirm the existence of the Agent, but that a saint should be led by the light of the Truth to deny his own existence. The knowledge gained is in the one case a matter of logic, in the other it becomes an inward experience. Let those who deem reason to be the cause of gnosis consider what reason affirms in their minds concerning the substance of gnosis, for gnosis involves the negation of whatever is affirmed by reason, i.e. whatever notion of God can be formed by reason, God is in reality something different. How, then is there any room for reason to arrive at gnosis by means of demonstration? Reason and imagination are homogeneous, and where genus is affirmed gnosis is denied. To infer the existence of God from intellectual proofs is assimilation (tashbih), and to deny it on the same grounds is nullification (ta'til). Reason cannot pass beyond these two principle, which in regard to gnosis are agnosticism, since neither of the parties professing them is Unitarian (muwahhid).

Therefore, when reason is gone as far as possible, and the souls of His lovers must needs search for Him, they rest helplessly without their faculties, and while they so rest they grow restless and stretch their hands in supplication and seek a relief for their souls; and when they have exhausted every manner of search in their power, the power God becomes theirs, i.e. they find the way from Him to Him, and are eased of the anguish of absence and set foot in the garden of intimacy and win to rest. And reason, when it sees that the souls have attained their desire, tries to exert its control, but fails; and when it fails it becomes distraught; and when it becomes distraught it abdicates. Then God clothes it in the garment of service (khidmat) and says to it: "While thou wert independent thou wert veiled by thy faculties and their exercise, and when these were annihilated thou didst fail, and having failed thou didst attain." Thus it is the allotted portion of the soul to be near unto God, and that of the reason is to do His service. God causes Man to know Him through Himself with a knowledge that is not linked to any faculty, a knowledge in which the existence of Man is merely metaphorical. Hence to the gnostic egoism is utter perfidy; his remembrance of God is without forgetfulness, and his gnosis is not empty words but actual feeling.

Others, again, declare that gnosis is the result of inspiration (ilham). This also is impossible, because gnosis supplies a criterion for distinguishing truth from falsehood, whereas the inspired have no such criterion. If one says, "I know by inspiration that God is in space," and another says, "I know by inspiration that He is not in space," one of these contradictory statements must be true, but a proof is necessary in order to decide where the truth lies. Consequently, this view which is held by the Brahmans and the inspirationists (ilhamiyan), falls to the ground. In the present age I have met a number of persons who carried it to an extreme and who connected their own position with the doctrine of religious men, but they are altogether in error, and their assertion is repugnant to all reasonable Moslems and unbelievers. If it be said that whatever conflicts with the sacred law is not inspiration, I reply that this argument is fundamentally unsound, because, if inspiration is to be judged and verified by the standard of the sacred law, then gnosis does not depend on inspiration, but on law and prophecy and Divine guidance.

Others assert that knowledge of God is intuitive (daruri). This also is impossible. Everything that is known in this way must be known in common by all reasonable men, and inasmuch as we see that some reasonable men deny the existence of God and hold the doctrines of assimilation (tashbih) and nullification (ta'til), it is proved that knowledge of God is not intuitive. Moreover, if it were so, the principle of religious obligation (taklif) would be destroyed, for that principle cannot possibly be applied to objects of intuitive knowledge, such as one's self, the heaven and the earth, day and night, pleasure and pain, etc., concerning the existence of which no reasonable man can have any doubt, and which he must know even against his will. But some aspirants to Sufiism, considering the absolute certainty (yaqin) which they feel, say: "We know God intuitively," giving the name of intuition to this certainty. Substantially they are right, but their expression is erroneous, because intuitive knowledge cannot be exclusively restricted to those who are perfect on the contrary, it belongs to all reasonable men.

Furthermore, it appears in the minds of living creatures without any means or evidence, whereas the knowledge of God is a means (sababi). But Master Abu Ali Daqqaq and Shaykh Abu Sahl Suluki and his father, who was a leading religious authority at Nishapur, maintain that the beginning of gnosis is demonstrative and that its end is intuitive, just as technical knowledge is first acquired and finally becomes instinctive. "Do not you perceive," they say, "that in Paradise knowledge of God becomes intuitive?"

Why should it not become intuitive in this world too? And the Apostles, when they heard the word of God, either immediately or from the mouth of an angel or by revelation, knew Him intuitively." I reply that the inhabitants of Paradise know God intuitively in Paradise, because in Paradise no religious obligation is imposed, and the Apostles have no fear of being separated from God at the last, but enjoy the same security as those who know Him intuitively. The excellence of gnosis and faith

becomes compulsory (jabr), and there is no longer any free will in regard to its visible substance (ayn), and the foundations of the religious law are shaken, and the principle of apostasy is annulled, so that Bal'am and Iblis and Barasisa cannot properly be described as infidels, for it is generally allowed that they had knowledge of God. The gnosis while he remains a gnostic, has no fear of being separated from God; separation is produced by the loss of gnosis, but intuitive knowledge cannot conceivably be lost. This doctrine is full of danger to the vulgar. In order that you may avoid its evil consequences you must know that Man's knowledge and his gnosis of God depend entirely on the information and eternal guidance of the Truth. Man's certainly in gnosis may be now greater and now less, but the principle of gnosis is neither increased nor diminished, since in either case it would be impaired. You must not let blind conformity enter into your knowledge of God, and you must know Him through His attributes of perfection. This can be attained only through the providence and favour of God, who has absolute control of our minds. If He so will, He makes one of His actions a guide that shows us the way to Himself, and if He will otherwise, He makes that same action an obstacle that prevents us from reaching Him.

Thus Jesus was to some a guide that led them to gnosis, but to others he was an obstacle that hindered them from gnosis; the former party said, "This is the servant of God," and the latter said, "This is the son of God." Similarly, some were led to God by idols and by the sun and moon, while others were led astray. Such guides are a means of gnosis, but not the immediate cause of it, and one means is no better than another in relation to Him who is the author of them all. The gnostic's affirmation of a means is a sign of dualism (zunnar), and regard to anything except the object of knowledge is polytheism (shirk).

When a man is doomed to perdition in the Preserve Tablet, nay, in the will and knowledge of God, how can any proof and demonstration lead him right? The most high God, as He pleases and by whatever means He pleases, shows His servant the way to Himself and opens to him the door of gnosis, so that he attains to a degree where the very essence of gnosis appears alien (ghayr) and its attributes become noxious to him, and he is veiled by his gnosis from the object known and realizes that his gnosis is a pretension (da'wa). Dhu 'l-Nun the Egyptian says: "Beware lest thou make pretensions to gnosis," and it has been said in verse –

"The gnostics pretend to knowledge,
But I avow ignorance: that is my knowledge."

Therefore do not claim gnosis, lest thou perish in thy pretension but cleave to the reality thereof, that thou mayest be save. When anyone is honoured by the revelation of the Divine majesty, his existence becomes a plague to him and all his attributes a source of corruption. He who belongs to God and to whom God belongs is not connected with anything in the universe. The real gist of gnosis is to recognize that to God is the kingdom. When a man knows that all possessions are in the absolute

control of God, what further business has he with mankind, that he should be veiled from God by them or by himself? All such veils are the result of ignorance. As soon as ignorance is annihilated, they vanish, and this life is made equal in rank to the life hereafter.

Section

Now, for instruction's sake, I will mention some of the numerous saying which the Shaykhs have uttered on this subject.

'Abdallah b. Mubarak says: "Gnosis consists in not being astonished by anything," because astonishment arises from an act exceeding the power of the doer, and – inasmuch as God is omnipotent it is impossible that a gnosis should be astonished by His acts. If there by any room for astonishment, one must needs marvel that God exalts a handful of earth to such a degree that it receives His commands, and a drop of blood to such an eminence that it discourses of love and knowledge of Him, and seeks vision of Him, and desires union with Him. Dul 'Nun the Egyptian says: "Gnosis is in reality God's providential communication of the spiritual light to our inmost hearts," i.e., until God, in His providence, illuminates the heart of Man and keeps it from contamination, so that all created things have not even the worth of a mustard-seed in his heart, the contemplation of Divine mysteries, both inward and outward, does not overwhelm him with rapture; but when God has done this, his every look becomes an act of contemplation (mushahadat).

Shibli says: "Gnosis is continual amazement (Hayrat.)" Amazement is of two kinds: (1) amazement the essence and (2) amazement at the quality. The former is polytheism and infidelity, because no gnostic can possibly be in doubt concerning the essential nature of God; but the latter is gnosis, because the quality of God lies beyond reason's scope.

Hence a certain one said: "O Guide of the amazed, increase my amazement!" In the first place, he affirmed the existence of God and the perfection of His attributes, and recognized that He is the object of men's search and the accomplisher of their prayers and the author of their amazement; then he asked for increase of amazement and recognized that in seeking God the reason has no alternative between amazement and polytheism.

This sentiment is very fine. It maybe, again, that knowledge of God's being involves amazement at one's own being, because when a man knows God he sees himself entirely subdued by the Divine omnipotence; and since his existence depends on God and his non-existence proceeds from God, and his rest and motion are produced by the power of God. he becomes amazed, saying: "Who and what am I?" In this sense the Apostle said:

"He who knows himself has come to know his Lord," i.e. he who knows himself to be annihilated knows God to be eternally subsistent. Annihilation destroys

reason and all human attributes, and when the substance of a thing is not accessible to reason it cannot possibly be known without amazement. Abu Yazid said: "Gnosis consists in knowing that the motion and rest of mankind depend on God," and that without His permission no one has the least control of His kingdom, and that no one can perform any action until He creates the ability to act and puts the will to act in his heart, and that human actions are metaphorical and that God is the real agent. Muhammad b.Wasi' says, describing the gnostic: "His words are few and his amazement perpetual, " because only finite things admit of being expressed in words, and since the infinite cannot be expressed it leaves no resource except perpetual amazement. Shibli says: "Real gnosis is the inability to attain gnosis, " i.e. inability to know a thing, to the real nature of which a man has no clue except the impossibility of attaining it. Therefore, in attaining ie, he will rightly take no credit to himself, because inability (ajz) is search, and so long as he depends on his own faculties and attributes, he cannot properly be described by that term; and when these faculties and attributes depart, then his state is not inability, but annihilation. Some pretenders, while affirming the attributes of humanity and the subsistence of the obligation to decide with sound judgment (taklif ba-sihhat-i khitab) and the authority maintained over them by God's proof, declare that gnosis is impotence, and that they are impotent and unable to attain anything. I reply: "In search of what thing have you become so helpless?" Impotence (ajz) has two signs, which are not to be found in you: firstly, the annihilation of the faculties of search, and secondly, the manifestation of the glory of God (tajalli). Where the annihilation of the faculties takes place, there is no outward expression (ibarat) ; and where the glory of God is revealed, no clue can be given and no discrimination is conceivable. Hence one who is impotent does not know that he is so, or that the state attributed to him is called impotence. How should he know this?

Impotence is other than God, and the affirmation of knowledge of other than God is not gnosis; and so long as there is room in the heart for aught except God, or the possibility of expressing aught except God, true gnosis has not been attained. The gnostic is not a gnostic until he turns aside from all that is not God. Abu Hafz Haddad says: "Since I have known God, neither truth nor falsehood has entered my heart." When a man feels desire and passion he turns to the soul (dil) in order that it may guide him to the lower soul (nafs), which is the seat of falsehood; and when he finds the evidence of gnosis, he also turns to the soul in order that it may guide him to the spirit, which is the source of truth and reality. But when aught except God enters the soul, the gnostic, if he turns to it, commits an act of agnosticism. There is a great difference between one who turns to the soul and one who turns to God. Abu Bakr Wasit says: "He who knows God is cut off from all things, nay, he is dumb and abject (kharisa wa-nqaman), " i.e. he is unable to express anything and all his attributes are annihilated. So the Apostle, while he was in the state of absence, said: "I am the most eloquent of the Arabs and non-Arabs "but when he was borne to the presence of God, he said: "I, know not how to utter Thy praise."

Answer came, : “O Muhammad, if thou speakest not, I will speak; if thou deemest thyself unworthy to praise Me, I will make the universe thy deputy, that all its atoms may praise Me in thy name.”

Ali, Son of the Father of the Seeker

Ali said: ‘None may arrive at the Truth until he is able to think that the Path itself may be wrong.

‘This is because those who can only believe that it must be right are not believers, but people who are incapable of thinking otherwise than they already think. Such people are not men at all. Like animals they must follow certain beliefs, and during this time they cannot learn. Because they cannot be called “humanity”, they cannot arrive at the Truth.’

Rabia al Adawiy

HASAN came upon Rabia one day when she was sitting among a number of contemplators, and said:

‘I have the capacity of walking on water. Come, let us both go on to that water yonder, and sitting upon it carry out a spiritual discussion.’

Rabia said: ‘If you wish to separate yourself from this august company, why do you not come with me, so that we may fly into the air, and sit there talking?’

Hasan said: ‘I cannot do that, for the power which you mention is not one which I possess.’

Rabia said: ‘Your power of remaining still in the water is one which is possessed by fish. My capacity, of flying in the air, can be done by a fly. These abilities are no part of real truth – they may become the foundation of self-esteem and competitiveness, not spirituality.

Excerpts from Tazkirat e awaliya by Hazreth Fareed ud din Attar (ra)

Hasan Basra and Habib Ajmi

One day Hasan came to call on Habib. Habib placed two rounds of barley bread and a little salt before Hasan. Hasan began to eat. A beggar came to the door, and Habib gave the two rounds and the salt to him.

“Habib, ” remarked the astonished Hasan, “you are a worthy man. If only you had some knowledge, it would be better. You took the bread from under the nose of your guest and gave it all to the beggar. You ought to have given a part to the beggar and a part to the guest.”

Habib said nothing. Presently a slave entered with a tray on his head. A roast lamb was on the tray, together with sweet-meat and fine bread, and five hundred silver dirhams. He set the tray before Habib. Habib gave the money to the poor, and placed the tray before Hasan.

“Master, ” he said when Hasan had eaten some of the roast, “you are a good man. If only you had a little faith, it would be better. Knowledge must be accompanied by faith.”

One day officers of Hajjaj were searching for Hasan. He was hiding in Habib’s hermitage.

“Have you seen Hasan today?” the officers demanded of Habib.

“I have seen him, ” he answered.

“Where was he?”

“In this hermitage.” The officers entered the hermitage, but for all their searching they did not find Hasan. (“Seven times they laid their hands on me, ” Hasan afterwards related, “but they did not see me.”)

“Habib, ” Hasan remarked on leaving the hermitage, “you did not observe your duty to your master. You pointed me out.”

“Master, ” Habib replied, “it was because I told the truth that you escaped. If I had lied, we would both have been arrested.”

“What did you recite, that they did not see me?”

Hasan asked. “I recited the Throne-verse ten times, ” Habib answered. “Ten times I recited The Messenger believes, and ten times Say, He is God, One. Then I said. ‘O God, I have committed Hasan to Thee. Watch over him.’”

Hasan once wished to go to a certain place. He came down to the bank of the Tigris, and was pondering something to himself when Habib arrived on the scene.

“Imam, why are you standing here?” he asked.

“I wish to go to a certain place. The boat is late, ” Hasan replied.

“Master, what has happened to you?” Habib demanded. “I learned all that I know from you. Expel from your heart all envy of other men. Close your heart against worldly things. Know that suffering is a precious prize, and see that all affairs are of God. Then set foot on the water and walk.”

With that Habib stepped on to the water and departed. Hasan swooned. When he recovered, the people asked him

“Imam of the Muslims, what happened to you?”

“My pupil Habib just now reprimanded me, ” he replied. “Then he stepped on the water and departed, whilst I remained impotent. If tomorrow a voice cries, ‘Pass over the fiery pathway’ – if I remain impotent like this, what can I do?”

“Habib, ” Hasan asked later, “how did you discover this power?”

“Because I make my heart white, whereas you make paper black, ” Habib replied.

“My learning profited another, but it did not profit me.” Hasan commented.

Malek and his Licentious Neighbor

There was a certain youth living in Malek’s neighborhood who was extremely depraved and dissolute in his ways. Malek was constantly pained no account of his bad behavior, but he endured patiently waiting for someone else to speak. To be brief, in due course others came forward to complain about the young man. Malek then arose and went to him to bid him mend his ways. The youth reacted in a very headstrong and overbearing manner.

“I am the Sultan’s favourite, ” he told Malek. “No one has the power to cheek me or restrain me from doing as I please.”

“I will talk to the Sultan, ” Malek threatened.

“The Sultan will never swerve from his approval of me, ” the youth retorted. “Whatever I do, he will approve.”

“Well, if the Sultan cannot do anything, ” Malek proceeded, “I will tell the All merciful.”

“Ha, ” the youth replied. “He is too generous to take me to task.”

This floored Malek, and he left him. Some days went by, and the youth's depravity surpassed all bounds. People came again to complain. Malek rose up to rebuke him; but on the way he heard a voice.

"Keep your hands off My friend!"

Amazed, Malek went in to the youth.

"What has happened, " the youth demanded on seeing him, "that you have come a second time?"

"I have not come this time to chide you, " Malek answered.

"I have come simply to inform you that I heard such a voice."

"Ah, " the youth exclaimed. "Since things are like that, I dedicate my palace wholly to His service. I care nothing for all my possessions."

So saying, he cast everything aside and set out to wander the world.

Malek relates that after a certain time he saw the youth in Mecca, utterly destitute and at his last breath.

"He is my friend, " he gasped. "I went to see my friend." And with that he expired.

Al-Fozail ibn Iyaz (RAA)

Abu 'Ali al-Fozail ibn' Iyaz al-Talaqani was born in Khorasan, and in the beginning of his career he is said to have been a highwayman. After conversion he went to Kufa and later to Mecca, where he resided from many years and died in 187 (803). He achieved considerable repute as an authority on Traditions, and his boldness in preaching before Harun al-Rashid is widely reported.

Anecdotes of Fozail

One day Fozail was holding in his lap a four-year-old child, and by chance placed his mouth on its cheek as is the wont of fathers.

"Father, do you love me?" asked the child.

"I do, " replied Fozail.

"Do you love God?"

"I do."

"How many hearts do you have?" the child asked.

"One, " answered Fozail.

"Can you love two with one heart?" demanded the child.

Fozail at once realized that it was not the child speaking, but that in reality it was a Divine instruction. Jealous for God, he began to beat his head and repented. Severing his heart from the child, he gave it to God.

One day Fozail was standing at Arafat. All the pilgrims there were weeping and wailing, humbling themselves and making lowly petition.

“Glory be to God!” cried Fozail. “If so many men were to go a man at one time and ask him for a silver penny, what do you say? Would that man disappoint so many?”

“No, ” came the answer.

“Well, ” said Fozail, “surely it is easier for Almighty God to forgive them all, than for that man to give a silver penny. For He is the most bountiful of the bountiful, so there is good hope that He will pardon all.”

Once Fozail’s son suffered an obstruction of urine. Fozail came and lifted up his hands.

“O Lord, ” he prayed, “by my love for Thee deliver him out of this sickness.”

He had not yet risen from his knees when the boy was healed.

Fozail would often say in prayer; “Lord God, have mercy! For Thou knowest my repentance; and do not punish me, for Thou hast all power over me.” Then he would add, “O God, Thou keepest me hungry, and Thou keepest my children hungry. Thou keepest me naked, and Thou keepest my children naked. Thou givest not to me a lantern by night. All these things Thou doest to Thy friends. By what spiritual stations has Fozail earned this felicity from Thee?”

For thirty years no man saw Fozail smile, except on the day when his son died. Then he smiled.

“Master, what time is this for smiling?” he was asked.

“I realized that God was pleased that my son should die, ” he answered. “I smiled to accord with God’s good pleasure.”

Fozail had two daughters. When his end approached, he laid a last charge upon his wife.

“When I die, take these girls and go to Mount Bu Qobais. There lift your face to heaven and say, “Lord God, Fozail laid a charge upon me saying, “Whilst I was alive, I protected these helpless ones as best I could. When Thou madest me a prisoner in the fastness of the grave, I gave them back to Thee.”

When Fozail was buried, his wife did as he had bidden her. She went out to the mountain top and conveyed her daughters there. Then she prayed with much weeping and lamentation. At that very moment the Prince of Yemen passed by there with his two sons. Seeing them weeping and making moan, he enquired,

“Whence are you come?”

Fozail’s wife explained the situation.

“I give these girls to these my sons, ” The prince announced.

“I give each of them as a dowry ten thousand dinars. Are you content with this?”

“I am, ” their mother replied.

At once the prince furnished litters and carpets and brocades, and conveyed them to Yemen.

Shaqiq-e-Balkhi before Harun al-Rashid

When Shaqiq set out on the Mecca pilgrimage and reached Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid summoned him. “Are you Shaqiq the Ascetic?” Harun demanded when he came into his presence. “I am Shaqiq, ” he replied, “but not the Ascetic.”

“Counsel me, ” Harun commanded. “Then attend, ” Shaqiq proceeded. “Almighty God has set you in the place of Abu Bakr the Trusty, and requires trustiness from you as from him. He has set you in the place of Omar the Discriminator, and requires from you as from him discrimination between truth and falsehood. He has set you in the place of Othman of the Two Lights, and requires from you as from him modesty and nobility. He has set you in the place of Ali the Well approved, and requires from you as from him knowledge and justice.”

“Say more, ” Harun cried. “God has a lodging-place called Hell, ” Shaqiq said. “He has appointed you its doorkeeper, and has equipped you with three things wealth, sword and whip. ‘With these three things, ’ He commands, ‘keep the people away from Hell. If any man comes to you in need, do not grudge him money. If any man opposes God’s commandment, school him with his whip. If any man slays another, lawfully exact retaliation on him with this sword.’ If you do not these things, you will be the leader of those that enter Hell.”

“Say more, ” Harun repeated. “You are the fountain, and your agents are the rivulets, ” said Shaqiq. “If the fountain is bright, it is not impaired by the darkness of the rivulets. But if the fountain is dark, what hope is there that the rivulets will be bright?”

“Say more, ” Harun said again. “Suppose you are thirsting in the desert, so that you are about to perish.” Shaqiq went on. “If in that moment you come upon a draught of water, how much will you be willing to give for it?” “As much as the man demands, ” said Harun. And if he will not sell save for half your kingdom?” “I would give that, ” Harun replied. “And suppose you drink the water and then it will come out of you, so that you are in danger of perishing, ” Shaqiq pursued. “Then someone tells you, ‘I will cure you, but I demand half your kingdom.’ What you do? I would give it, answered Harun. “Then why do you want yourself of a kingdom, ” said Shaqiq, “the value of which is one draught of water which you drink, and then it comes out of you?” Harun wept, and send Shaqiq away with all honor.

Anecdotes of Ma'ruf

One day Ma'ruf was walking along with a group of his followers when a gang of youths came that way. They behaved outrageously all the way to the Tigris.

"Master, " Ma'ruf's companions entreated him, "pray to Almighty God to drown them all, that the world may be rid of their foul presence."

"Lift up your hands, " Ma'ruf bade them. Then he prayed.

"O God, as Thou hast given them a happy life in this world, even so grant them a happy life in the world to come."

"Master, we know not the secret of this prayer, " said his companions in astonishment.

"He with whom I am speaking knows the secret, "

Ma'ruf replied. "Wait a moment. Even now this secret will be revealed."

When the youths beheld the shaikh, they broke their lutes and poured away the wine they were drinking. Trembling overcame them, and they fell before the shaikh and repented.

"You see, " Ma'ruf remarked to his companions.

"Your desire has been fulfilled completely, without drowning and without anyone suffering."

Sari-e Saqati relates the following story.

One festival day I saw Ma'ruf picking date stones.

"What are you doing?" I asked him.

"I saw this child weeping, " he told me. "I said, 'Why are you crying?' He told me, 'I am an orphan. I have no father and no mother. The other children have new clothes, and I have none. They have nuts, and I have none.' So I am gathering these stones to sell them and buy him nuts, then he may run along and play."

"Let me attend to this and spare you the care, " I said.

Sari went on, "I took the child and clothed him, and bought him nuts, and made him happy. Immediately I saw a great light shine in my heart, and I was transformed."

Ma'ruf had an uncle who was governor of the city. One day he was passing some wasteland when he observed Ma'ruf sitting there eating bread. Before him there was a dog, and Ma'ruf was putting one morsel in his own mouth and then one in the dog's.

"Are you not ashamed to eat bread with a dog?" cried his uncle.

"It is out of shame that I am giving bread to the poor, " replied Ma'ruf.

Then he raised his head and called to a bird in the air. The bird flew down and perched on his hand, covering his head and eyes with his wings.

“Whosoever is ashamed before God, ” said Ma’ruf, “everything is ashamed before him.”

At once his uncle was filled with confusion.

One day Ma’ruf broke his ritual purity. Immediately he made ablution in sand.

“Why look, ” they said to him. “Here is the Tigris.

Why are you making ablution in the sand?”

“It can be, ” he replied, “that I may be no more by the time I reach it.”

A crowd of Shi’ites were jostling one day at the door of Reza, and they broke Ma’ruf-e Karkhi’s ribs, so that he fell seriously ill.

Sari-e Saqati said to him, “Give me your last testament.”

“When I die, ” said Ma’ruf, “take my shirt and give it in alms. I desire to go out of this world naked, even as I came naked from my mother’s womb.”

When he died, so great was the fame of his humanity and humility that men of all religions, Jews, Christians and Musims alike, claimed him as one of them.

His servant reported that Ma’ruf had said,

“Whoever is able to lift my bier from the ground, I am of that people.”

The Christians were unable. The Jews were likewise unable to lift it. Then the Muslims came and lifted it. They prayed over him, and in that very place they committed him to the ground.

Sari reported the following.

After Ma’ruf died I saw him in a dream. He was standing beneath the Throne with his eyes wide open, like one stupefied and distraught. A cry came from God to the angels.

“Who is this?”

“Lord God, Thou knowest best, ” the angels answered.

“It is Ma’ruf, ” came thq Command. “He has become dazzled and stupefied by reason of Our love. Only by seeing Us will he come to his senses. Only by meeting Us will he rediscover himself.”

Excerpts from “Futul Al-Ghaib by Ghouse ul Azam (ra)

The Seventy-Fourth Discourse

He (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

The first thing which a man of intelligence should see is the condition and composition of his own self and then all the creations and inventions. Then he should infer from them the existence of their Creator and Originator. Because the creation indicates the Creator and strong power is an indication of the wise actor behind it, because all things are in existence through Him. And it is this which is reported from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) in his comment on the word of Allah:

“And He has made subservient to you all that is in the heavens and in the earth.”

It is reported from the aforesaid in explanation of this verse that:

In everything there is an attribute from the attributes of Allah and every name is a sign for one of His names; so surely you are between His names and His attributes and works, inwardly through His power and outwardly through His wisdom. He is manifest in His attributes and concealed in His person. His person is concealed in His attributes and His attributes are concealed in His works. And He has revealed His knowledge through His will and He has expressed His will in movements. And He has concealed His skill and His workmanship and expressed His workmanship through His will. So He is hidden in His invisibility and He is manifest in His wisdom and power. “There is nothing like a likeness of Him and He is the Hearing and the Seeing.” (xlii-1 1).

Surely many secrets of spiritual knowledge have been brought to surface by this statement which cannot come to the knowledge of anyone unless he has a heart which has a lamp of spiritual knowledge in it. And this privilege of this great man is due to the fact that the sinless hands of the Holy Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) were raised in earnest prayer for him saying: “O Allah! give him understanding of religion and teach him the interpretation.”

May Allah shower on us the same blessings which He showered on such like people and may He gather us in their company on the Day of Resurrection together with their sanctity Ameen.

The Seventy-Fifth Discourse

He (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

I admonish you to fear Allah and to obey Him and to adopt the externals of law and purity of heart and self-control and cheerful appearance and the habit of making gifts of useful things and removal of suffering and poverty and the guarding of the sanctity of spiritual people and good dealing with the fellow members of society and good counsel for the youngsters and to discard enmity with companions and to refrain from hoarding and to discard the companions of those who do not belong to the class of spiritual pilgrims and to render help in matters religious and worldly. And the reality of religious poverty is that you should not convey your needs to one who is like you and the reality of affluence is that you should be above the need of creatures like yourself, Tasawwuf (spiritual culture) is obtained not through discussion and talk but through hunger and giving up of things liked and approved of. And do not keep your knowledge in the forefront while approaching a Darvish; rather keep gentleness as the leading demeanor, because a display of knowledge will make him uncomfortable whereas gentleness will make him feel at home. And Tasawwuf is based on eight qualities: (1) Generosity like that of Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham) (2) Cheerful submission like that of Hazrat Ism’ail (Ishaq-Issac) (3) Patience like that of Hazrat Yaqub (Jacob) (4) Prayer like that of Hazrat Zakariyya (Zachariah) (5) Poverty like that of Hazrat Yahya (John) (6) Wearing of woollen clothes like that of Hazrat Musa (Moses) (7) Travelling about like that of Isa (Jesus) and (8) a life of poverty with resignation and contentment like that of Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and all the rest.)

The Seventy-Sixth Discourse

He (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

I admonish you that you should associate with the rich with dignity and with the poor with humility. And it is incumbent on you to adopt humility and sincerity and this latter quality amounts to perpetual vision of the Creator. And do not blame Allah in respect of worldly means and be humble before Him in all conditions and do not damage the right of your brother relying on the fact that between you and him there is a friendship. And you should keep company with the darvishes with humility and good manners and liberality and kill yourself till you regain your life in

spirituality. And the people who are nearest to Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, are those who are most large-hearted in their behaviour. And the best of deeds is to guard one's own self from being inclined to what is besides Allah, the Great. And you should keep on exhorting people to stick to truth and patience. And it is enough for you to keep company with the darvishes and to serve the Awliya.

And a darvish is he who is indifferent to everything besides Allah. And to attack one who is beneath you is cowardice and to do the same thing with one who is above you is shamelessness; whereas to attack one who is equal to you is bad manners. To adopt the life of a darvish and of a sufi needs an effort; and do not mix it up with anything which is in the nature of a joke. May Allah give us strength and you too. O Wali! it devolves on you to keep on remembering Allah in all conditions because it brings together all the good things and it is also your duty to adhere to the covenant of Allah because it wards off all injurious things. And it is also a duty of yours to remain prepared to meet all the events decreed by Allah, because they are bound to happen.

And know that you will be asked about your movements and your restful conditions; so keep yourself engaged with what is most suitable for a particular time and save your organs from useless occupations. It is further your duty to obey Allah and His Prophet and those who rule in the latter's place. Give them their dues and do not ask from them what is due from them and pray too for them in all conditions. It is also necessary that you should think well of Muslims and bear good intentions in respect of them and try to secure for them everything that is good and that you should not spend any night while entertaining anything evil for any of them in your heart, nor any grudge nor any enmity.

It is also necessary that you should pray for him who has been unjust to you and should fear Allah, the Mighty the Glorious. And it is also your duty to eat the lawful things only and to inquire from people possessed of the knowledge of Allah in matters which you do not know. You should also cultivate modesty in respect of Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, and keep company with Allah and keep company with what is besides Allah only to the extent of your requirements of the companionship of Allah.

And give in charity from your wealth every morning, and in the night offer the funeral prayer for everyone who has died among the Muslims on that day. And when you have finished your Maghrib (early evening) prayer, invoke a prayer of istikhara (seeking good in one's affairs). And you should repeat morning and evening seven times: Allahumma ajirna minan nar, meaning: "O Allah! protect us from fire." And to stick to the prayers: Auzubillah-is-mai-al-Alim minash Shaitan-ir-Rajim,

meaning: “I seek the refuge of Allah, the Hearing, the Knowing from Satan the accursed.”.

And then proceed to the glorification of Allah with the concluding words of Sura “Hashr, ” (lix.22-24) viz.

“He is Allah besides Whom there is no God: Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful; besides whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Author of peace, the Granter of security: Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness. Glory be to Allah, from what they set up (with Him).

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. His are the most excellent names; Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise. Allah alone is the giver of strength and the helper, because there is no might and power excepting in Allah, the High, the Great.

The Seventy-Seventh Discourse

He (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

Be with Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, as if no creation exists. And be with the creation as if there is no self in you. And when you are with Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, without the creation you will get Him and vanish from every other thing, and when you are with the creation without yourself you will do justice and help the path of virtue and remain safe from the hardships of life. And leave everything outside the door while you are entering in your solitude and enter therein alone. And when you have done so, you will see your friend in your solitude with your inner eye and will experience what is besides the creation and then your self will vanish and in its place will come the command of Allah and His nearness. And at this point your ignorance will be your knowledge and your distance will be your nearness and your silence will be your remembrance of Allah and your bewilderment will prove friendship. O you man! there will be nothing left there at this stage excepting the Creator and the created. So if you have adopted the Creator, then say to the rest:

“Surely they are my enemies but the Lord of the worlds is my friend”. (xxvi-77).

Whoever has tasted it has come to know it.

He was asked: “How can one in whom the bitterness of bile predominates taste sweetness?” In reply he said, “He should with an effort keep away the sensual desires from himself, O you man! when a believer does a good deed his animal self changes into his heart (i.e. in response to the dictates of the heart). And the self attains the consciousness of the heart; then this heart changes into a secret; then the secret undergoes another change and becomes annihilated; then the annihilation passes

through another transformation and becomes another existence.” He further observed: The friends have an access through every door. O you man! The annihilation (self-effacement) is to deny all creation and transform your nature into the nature of the angels; then vanishing from the nature of the angels and then getting back to the first way; and then your Lord will water you as much as He likes and cultivate you as much as He likes. If you want this stage you should adopt Islam and then submission to the decree of Allah, and then acquire the knowledge of Allah and then realise Him and then exist in Him, and then you get such an existence you will wholly belong to Him.. Piety is a work of an hour and abstemiousness of two hours and knowledge of Allah is a work for all times.

Imam Ghazali on the Path

A human being is not a human being while his tendencies include self-indulgence, covetousness, temper and attacking other people.

A student must reduce to the minimum the fixing of his attention upon customary things like his people and his environment, for attention-capacity is limited.

The pupil must regard his teacher like a doctor who knows the cure of the patient. He will serve his teacher. Sufis teach in unexpected ways. An experienced physician prescribes certain treatments correctly. Yet the outside observer might be quite amazed at what he is saying and doing; he will fail to see the necessity or the relevance of the procedure being followed.

This is why it is unlikely that the pupil will be able to ask the right questions at the right time. But the teacher knows what and when a person can understand.

**Excerpts from “The Purification of the Soul”
Collected and Arranged by Hz.Ahamad Farid
(RAU) (Courtesy Al-Firdous Ltd, London)**

The Nature Of Intention

The intention of a person is not his utterance of the words, “I intend to do so and so”. It is an overflowing from the heart which runs like conquests inspired by Allah. At times it is made easy, at other times, difficult. A person whose heart is overwhelmingly righteous finds it easy to summon good intentions at most times. Such a person has a heart generally inclined to the roots of goodness which, most of the time, blossom into the manifestation of good actions. As for those whose hearts incline towards and are overwhelmed by worldly matters, they find this difficult to accomplish and even obligatory acts of worship may become difficult and tiresome.

The Prophet said: “Actions are only by intention, and every man shall only have what he intended. Thus he whose hijra was for Allah and His Messenger, his hijra was for Allah and His Messenger, and he whose hijra was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his hijra was for that for which he made hijra.”

Imam ash-Shaf’i said: “This hadith is a third of all knowledge.” The words, “actions are only by intention”, mean that deeds which are performed in accordance with the sunnah are only acceptable and rewarded if the intentions behind them were sincere. It is like the saying of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, “Actions depend upon their outcome.”

Likewise, the words, “every man shall only have what he intended”, mean that the reward for an action depends upon the intention behind it. After stating this principle, the Prophet gave examples of it by saying, “Thus he whose hijra was for Allah and His Messenger, his hijra was for Allah and His Messenger, and he whose hijra was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his hijra was for that for which he made hijra.” So deeds which are apparently identical may differ, because the intentions behind them are different in degrees of goodness and badness, from one person to another.

Good intentions do not change the nature of forbidden actions. The ignorant should not misconstrue the meaning of the hadith and think that good intentions could turn forbidden actions into acceptable ones. The above saying of the Prophet specifically relates to acts of worship and permissible actions, not to forbidden ones. Worship and permissible actions, not to forbidden ones. Worship and permissible actions can be turned into forbidden ones because of the intentions behind them, and permissible actions can become either good or bad deeds by intention; but wrong actions cannot become acts of worship, even with good intentions. When bad intentions are accompanied by flaws in the actions themselves, then their gravity and punishment are multiplied.

Any praiseworthy act must be rooted in sound intentions; only then should it be deemed worthy of reward. The fundamental principle should be that the act is intended for the worship of Allah alone. If our intention is to show off, then these same acts of worship will in fact become acts of disobedience. As for permissible deeds, they all involve intentions – which can potentially turn them into excellent acts which bring a man nearer to Allah and confer on him the gift of closeness to Him.

The Excellence of Intention

Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "The best acts are doing what Allah has commanded, staying away from what Allah has forbidden, and having sincere intentions towards what-ever Allah has required of us."

Some of our predecessors said: "Many small actions are made great by the intentions behind them. Many great actions, on the other hand, are made small because the intentions behind them are lacking."

Yahya Ibn Abu Kathir said: "Learn about intentions, for their importance is greater than the importance of actions."

Ibn Umar once heard a man who was putting on his ihram say: "O Allah! I intend to do the Hajj and Umrah." So he said to him: "Is it not in fact the people whom you are informing of your intentions? Does not Allah already know what is in your heart?" It is because good intentions are exclusively the concern of the heart, that they should not be voiced during worship.

The Excellence of Knowledge and Teaching

There are many proofs in the Qur'an concerning the excellence of knowledge and its transmission. Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, says:

Allah will raise up to high ranks those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge. (58:11)

And also: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? (39:9)

Also, in the hadith, the Prophet says, “When Allah desires good for someone, He gives him understanding of the dean.” He also said, “Allah makes the way to the Garden easy for whoever treads a path in search of knowledge.”

Travelling on the path to knowledge refers both to walking along an actual pathway, such as going on foot to the assemblies of the ulama, as well as to following a metaphysical road, such as studying and memorising.

The above saying of the Prophet probably means that Allah makes learning the useful knowledge that is sought after easier for the seeker, clearing the way for him and smoothing his journey. Some of our predecessors used to say: “Is there anyone seeking knowledge, so that we can assist him in finding it?”

This hadith also alludes to the road leading to the Garden on the Day of Judgement, which is the straight path and to what precedes it and what comes after it.

Knowledge is also the shortest path to Allah. Whoever travels the road of knowledge reaches Allah and the Garden by the shortest route. Knowledge also clears the way out of darkness, ignorance, doubt and skepticism. It is why Allah called His Book, “Light”.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim have reported on the authority of Abdullah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah said: “Truly, Allah will not take away knowledge by snatching it away from people, but by taking away the lives of the people of knowledge one by one until none of them survive. Then the people will adopt ignorant ones as their leaders. They will be asked to deliver judgments and they will give them without knowledge, with the result that they will go astray and lead others astray.”

When ‘Ubadah ibn as-Samit was asked about this hadith he said: “If you want, I will tell you what the highest knowledge is, which raises people in rank: it is humility”

He said this because there are two types of knowledge. The first produces its fruit in the heart. It is knowledge of Allah, the Exalted – His Names, His attributes, and His Acts which commands fear, respect exaltation, love supplication and reliance on Him. This is the beneficial type of knowledge. As ibn Mas’ud said: “They will recite the Qur’an, but it will not go beyond their throats. The Qur’an is only beneficial when it reaches the heart and is firmly planted in it.”

Al-Hasan said: “There are two kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the tongue, which can be a case against the son of Adam, as is mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet: ‘The Qur’an is either a case for you are a case against you; and knowledge of the heart, which is beneficial knowledge. The second kind is the beneficial kind which raises people in rank; it is the inner knowledge which is absorbed by the heart and puts it right. The knowledge that is on the tongue is taken lightly by people” neither those who possess it, nor anyone else, act upon it, and then it vanishes when

its owners vanish on the Day of Judgement, when creation will be brought to account.”

Notes

1. Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Qadar, 11/499.
3. This is illustrated in a hadith recorded by Imam Muslim in his Sahih, in which it is related on the authority of Abu Dharr that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “You will receive the reward for sadaqa even when you have sexual intercourse with your wives.” The sahaba said, ‘Will we really be rewarded for satisfying our physical desires?’ He replied, “If you have haram intercourse, you will be committing a sin; similarly, if you have halal intercourse, you will be rewarded. “Imam an-Nawawi said, “This hadith clearly shows that permissible actions become acts of obedience if there is a good intention behind them; sexual intercourse becomes an act of worship if it is accompanied by any one of the following good intentions: keeping company with your wife in kindness, as Allah ta’Ala has commanded; hoping to have, as a result of the intercourse, good and righteous offspring; guarding your chastity and that of your wife; helping to prevent haram lustful glances or thoughts, or haram intercourse; and any other good intention.”
4. Tahdhib al-Asma li-Nawawi, 1/173. Abu Ishaq ash Shirazi once entered the mosque to have something to eat, as was his custom, and then realised that he had dropped a dinar. He retraced his steps and found it lying on the ground, but then left it where it was, saying, “Perhaps it is not mine; perhaps it belongs to somebody else.”
5. Sahih, ja’mil – Ulum wa’l Hikam, p.19
6. Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
7. Muslim, 21/17.
8. Muslim, Kitab at-Tahara, 3/99

Excerpts from “The Hundred Letters” by Hazrath Sharufuddin Maneri (RAA)

Letter 22: The Origin of Sufism

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

Brother Shamsuddin, may God bless you! The foundation of Sufism is quite ancient, having been practiced by the prophets and the righteous. The fact of the matter is that the predominance of evil habits in our times makes the Sufis themselves appear evil in the eyes of people. Those associated with this Tradition are divided into three groups: The Sufis, the seekers, and the dissemblers. A Sufi is a person who is completely lost to himself, exists only in God, is freed from the hold of his lower self, and is conjoined to the Truth of all truths.

The seeker is one who engages in the struggle with self, undergoes austerities, and disciplines himself by means of various practices. The dissembler is one who, for the sake of position and success, makes himself out to be one of the above, but is devoid of any of their qualities. He is also ignorant of them! Despite all this, there is some hope that he might become one of them and, in the shadow of their riches, pass beyond both worlds, becoming a combatant in the army of God and not merely a camp follower. Each city has one vicegerent and one sultan, while others pass their time in the shadows of these two.

Among various peoples there are only a few who affirm the whole truth. When, however, someone begins to resemble others in one particular thing, he finds himself imitating them in other things as well. There is an injunction of the Law that says:

“Everyone who makes himself similar to a people in both behavior and belief will end up by becoming one of them.”

It has been said that the first Sufi in the world was Adam: God Almighty drew him forth from clay and placed him in the stage of choice and purity. He prepared the royal edict of vicegerency for him. For the first time, between Mecca and Taif, he made a forty-day retreat, thus becoming the inspiration for novices to undertake this practice. “I kneaded the mud of Adam for forty days with My very own hands.” When he had completed the forty days of solitude, God Almighty gave him the

fullness of spirit, lit the lamp of intelligence in his heart, and brought the light of wisdom from his heart to his tongue. He trembled and said, "Thanks be to God!" The Prophet also hinted at the efficacy of this practice when he said: "Anyone who dedicates forty days to God, God, in turn, will order streams of wisdom to issue forth continuously from his heart and upon his tongue!" Adam resolved to acquire sanctity. At the beginning of his vicegerency, he received the gift of the homage and prostrations of angels. He stood up and, like an intrepid traveler, resolved to reach heaven. He journeyed through all the climes of heaven. He passed far beyond the secrets of these kingdoms. He was told, "Keep control over all your senses! Do not yield to your own inclinations!"

Still a novice, he did not yet have the requisite control. Impelled by boldness and mirth he displayed a grasping attitude. From a hidden ambush he was smitten with this rebuke: "Adam has disobeyed his Lord!" (Q20:121). He was brokenhearted. He became immersed in begging forgiveness for his sins. Tradition dates the repentance of the Sufis from this occasion. He said: "O Lord, we have wronged ourselves"

(QZ:23). All his dominion and vicegerency were withdrawn from him. He stood there naked, full of repentance. It was said:

"Adam, journey in the world in order to discharge this debt!"

The condition of discipleship is that a disciple who commits a fault should go on a journey. Adam resolved on journeying over the earth, alone and naked. Since his body was naked, it was said to him:

"Adam, beg!" He begged a leaf from each tree, and receiving three leaves, he sewed them together and made a patched garment with which he covered himself. He then set out on his earthly journey.

For three hundred years he sighed with grief until he was thoroughly exonerated. "Undoubtedly God chose Adam!" (Q3:32), that is, He thoroughly purified him and made him a Sufi. He greatly esteemed the patched garment that he had made from the leaves begged from the trees. At the end of his life, he clothed the prophet Shish with it and conferred viceregency upon him. This became the Way of Muhammad and the means for conveying the wealth of Sufism to descendants of the prophets.

Sufis should be travelers who belong to some group in this world, that they might be able to assemble for companionship and relate what has occurred to them. Thus the Kaaba made its appearance. It was the very first religious sanctuary. Before that time, there had been no such thing. It appeared in the time of Adam. All that the prophet Noah required of the world was a blanket. The prophet Moses himself always wore the blanket that the prophet Shuaib had conferred on him the first day that he entered his [Shuaib's] service. And this is a very important condition in the Way, that there should be a spiritual guide who clothes the novice with the Sufi garb. Jesus always used to wear a woolen garment. Similarly, both Moses and Jesus themselves built Jerusalem as a place of spiritual trust." Then, in every country and region Sufis built meeting places for themselves, and made fixed abodes for periods

of solitude where they could practice inner converse with God. Fellow travelers could also come there and recount the traditions of the exalted, divine secrets. When the time for the foremost of the prophets and the King of the saints, the blessed Muhammad – may the peace of God be upon him and his family arrived, he himself donned such a blanket. “It was the practice of your father, Abraham”

(Qa2:78). He also yearned for the religious sanctuary of the Kaaba. The Pride of the world set aside a special corner in his own mosque and from his companions he selected a group of about seventy people who were travelers on the Path. They used to converse there together, while the Arab chiefs and ordinary people were not allowed to enter that space. When the Pride of the world bestowed great honor and dignity upon any of the companions, he would give him his own cloak or shirt. That person would then become a Sufi.

The beginning of this Way came from Adam, and its completion was found in Muhammad, the Apostle of God. It remains in the midst of believers and their community. It requires strength of heart, above all else. One should not pay too much attention to one’s unworthiness, for this particular work is dependent on the divine favor and grace, not on the actions of any person!

O brother, many thousands are prostrate in adoration, and many more thousands recite God’s praises and laud Him; thousands of others are amazed at His secrets, while others are swept along by His works. He created a fearless people out of mere dust. He chose all these servants and submissive ones even though they had not rendered any previous service to Him. He spoke without introduction of any kind, saying, “O handful of dust, am I not your Lord?” (Q7:172). In a single hour, an

intoxicated one is lifted up on the couch of bliss as he witnesses the glory of the Lord. At every moment there are signs that he has become attuned to God and accepted by Him. The exquisite gift of divine union is conferred upon him, together with a certain repulsion, veiling, and a hundred rebukes. Every moment is devoted to silent converse with God, yet grief and anger still have their place. Every moment someone is brought forth from the temple of idols and honored by having the garment of acceptance conferred on him, while another is taken outside a mosque and the rope of the pain of banishment is fixed around his neck – for thee is need to experience both His kindness and His rage! Peace!

Letter 23: In Quest of the Way

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

Brother Shamsuddin, may God make a seeker of you!

Everyone who is a seeker along this Way must be able to build on the capital of the Law in order to proceed from the Law to the Way. When he has found this path to the Way, he will be able to turn his steps from the Way to the Truth. How can anyone who has not laid hold of the Law be able to find the Way? And if he has not

yet happened on the Way, then what can he possibly have to do with the Truth? Never has permission been granted to any foolish person, who is both bereft of divine knowledge and ignorant of the Law, to place his feet upon this Way. Indeed, there would be the fear that such a person might be destroyed and end up nowhere. If a person undertakes struggles, difficult things, and ill-advised austerities all by himself, and if any of them be displayed publicly, then so much pride, arrogance, self-conceit, and folly would become manifest in him that he would throw his own faith to the wind and become enmeshed in the snares of Satan!

Know for certain that God Almighty has never made an ignorant fellow a saint, nor would He ever do so. The sheikhs tell us this, and the Quran testifies that "God did not befriend an ignorant man" (Q17:111) – for ignorance is the root of all baseness!

They say that the Way of travelers devolves on a twelfefold knowledge: divine unity, work, divine knowledge, conditions, ecstatic contemplation of God, witnessing God, being addressed by God, hearing God, realization of the divine existence, knowledge of the spirit, the ego, and the intellect. These types of knowledge are separate but interconnected, for knowledge of one implies knowledge of the others. It should be known that the members of these groups are all devotees of knowledge of the Law, the Way, and the Truth. They were so in the past and will always be in the future. But there were some poverty-stricken ones who perished of thirst in the wilderness.

Of what use to them was the Tigris of Baghdad or the Nile of Egypt?

Some thirsty ones fell in the desert and died; How would it benefit them if the whole world were the Euphrates?

The traveler along the Way should mull over such a thought! If this world and all its allurements were given to him, as well as the world to come, with all its joys; or if the calamities of the world were to be rained down upon him; or if all his efforts, substance, and pleasures were to be handed over to strangers; or if the future life, with the joys of paradise, were to be handed over to the faithful, while calamities and misfortunes were reserved for him, then his repentance should be such that, while everyone else repented of having done forbidden things in order to avoid falling into hell, he would repent of lawful things, so that he might not go to paradise! His intention should be such that, whereas all worldly men seek their own desires and ease and pleasure, he remains in quest of the face of the Lord. All men seek an increase in prosperity as a result of their efforts, while he seeks Him in little! If he gets anything, he gives it away; while if nothing comes to hand, he still gives thanks to God!

The sign of the traveler is that he is happy even when he does not get what he wants. In this way he will be free of all bonds. His dealings with his rebellious nature should be such that even if it were to yearn for something for seventy years, he would not give in to it! He should also have pursued the path of acquiescing to the Truth so

diligently that calamity or good fortune, denial or affirmation, rejection or acceptance – all are the same for him! He sets out with great trust, not asking anything from men or God, for he considers asking from men to be polytheism, and is too ashamed to ask anything of God. His abstention is such that if all he possesses in the world is a patched garment or a blanket he is so happy with it that others envy his absorption in remembrance of God: seeking Him by day, he spends his nights devoted to His service and labor. If his lower self were to cast a glance at all this submission, he himself would sell the worship of seventy years for a morsel of bread and throw it before a dog in order to escape a prideful sense of astonishment. [An example is then given.]

A traveler should be intelligent. He extinguishes his natural inclinations in the furnace of asceticism in order to open his mind to the gifts of God. If he looks to the right, he sees God; if he looks to the left, he sees God; if he stands up or sits down, he sees God. In his magnanimous vision the kingdoms of this world and the next amount to naught. His body melts away in eagerness, while his heart is blessed by God. Thoughts of wife, children, this world or the next no longer find a lodging place in him. Although his person is still in the world, his heart is with God! His soul remains here, but it has already attained its desired stage, having seen the Friend with the eyes of the heart. This stage can be acquired under the protection of an experienced spiritual guide. Assisted by the sanctity of such a master of the heart, one can safely pass through the calamities that lie along the Way. All the sheikhs of this group, the great men of religion, and scholars are in agreement on this point: that, without an experienced guide, no one (except in rare instances) can reach God. As the poet has said:

Until the glance of a man of God falls on you,
Where will you learn about your own
existence? If you are prone to sitting by yourself,
You will not be able to travel this
Path alone! You need a guide for the road,
do not go alone! Open your eyes lest you
drown in this ocean!

Many travelers become puffed up with pride after making some progress; they think they have attained the glory of God! Without an experienced guide, a person will become like Satan, and the duplicity of his lower self will come to light. He will be thinking about worldly matters and his own demands. He will remember a few words someone has spoken and think that he has attained his object! He will consider himself to be in possession of lawful influence in the kingdom of the Lord. He will fall into extravagant and heretical ideas, just as someone has hinted in the following verse: They are garbed as Sufis, these immature fellows.

But they have attained only the babble of beginners! Having advanced but a few paces on the path of truth and purity, They already indulge in slandering the good name of others! Anyone who sets out upon this Way and experiences the pain associated with it should find for himself a spiritual guide who is much respected by other guides and sheikhs. There should be general agreement about the man's

preeminence as a leader and his lawful exercise of spiritual power. All should concur that he follows the will of God, is a man of noble ancestry, and is experienced in the kingdom of the Lord. The novice should imitate him and bind himself to him so that he might remove every obstacle that lies in his path, point out to him the defects of his lower self, and inform him of the dangers that lie along the Way. Thus the novice will be enabled to come completely out of himself, as the poet has testified:

When a well-esteemed man comes across your path, He will protect you in all your endeavors! Since you can never distinguish the Way from its pitfalls, How far can you progress without a staff?

The volcanoes that mark this Way are many; It is not for everyone that this work is intended. The condition of being a novice is that, when someone wishes to bind himself to an experienced guide as his disciple, he will first have to put aside his own desires. The lexical meaning of the word disciple is “to seek, to want, ” and a disciple is “one who seeks.” Among the members of this group, a person is called a novice if he is seeking Him but has not yet obtained his desire. The sheikhs have said, “He is a disciple who, in compliance with his guide, is like a dead man in the hands of the washer – he turns whichever way he is turned! A novice should be so submissive to his guide that, at the slightest hint from the latter, he would gladly offer his life, his spiritual riches, and his worldly goods, but not leave his guide! He would obey him, even if the guide were to command him to drink poison! He would not delay but comply at once. He would make no use of his mind or rational knowledge. The example has been adduced of Shiekh Bu Ali Faramdi. Once he told his guide, Sheikh Abul Qasim Gurgani, about a dream he had had: “You spoke to me in such and such a fashion in the dream: why, O Sheikh?” Abul Qasim Gurgani turned his face away and said: “If there were no room for ‘why’ in your heart, then it would not have found its way to your lips!” A disciple cannot make genuine progress if he is always seeking the why and wherefore of the injunctions given him! The root of the matter at hand is this: “There are some things close at hand that you do not like, even though they are actually very good for you; and there are other things at hand that you like, but are harmful to you. God knows best; it is you who are ignorant!” Everything is smooth along the path of the disciple who is destined to enjoy eternal bliss and becomes an heir to everlasting wealth. Everything that he needs is at hand. The malicious glance of his enemy falls harmlessly on his beauty, and misfortunes are far from the wealth piled up in his lap. On the other hand, that poor fellow who is destined for misery falls into all sorts of thorns and is attacked from behind as he proceeds along his way. At every step a hundred obstacles and dangers arise to confront him!

O brother, everyone who has had the bridle of favor placed around his neck will find himself in the position of being “a felicitous one who is born thus from his mother’s womb.” He will repel all rage and vehemence, banishing them from within himself as well! On the other hand, a miserable person is born thus from his mother’s womb, as the poet has hinted.

This misfortune did not befall us today:

The color of our blanket comes from Gilan! Now what will you do? You should place hope before you and tolerate misfortune. Even though household goods are defective and not befitting the sanctuary, your hope should still be that whatever God finds, He will buy! [Some examples are given to confirm this teaching.] Peace!

Letter 29: Purity

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

Brother Shamsuddin, remain firm in trying to please Almighty God! Peace and salutations to you from the author of these words! In your own mind be convinced about the answer to this question: “How is a man’s worth measured?” It is measured by his purity: In both worlds, purity forms the threshold of riches and happiness, while corruption and pollution are discarded along the Way by all prophets and righteous people.

There is a saying in the Law that runs: “The foundation of peace rests on purity.” God does not countenance any corruption, nor does He display His beauty to anyone who is unclean. For a long time punishment has been meted out to the unclean. No one touches it [the Quran] except the pure! (Q56:79). The impure are beyond the pale of Islam, and the dust of misfortune has been poured upon them in their separation. The first step is to see that one’s body, clothes, and food are pure and lawful. All one’s senses should be purified of sin and rebellion.

As for one’s heart, it should be cleansed of all blameworthy qualities, such as avarice, jealousy, rancor and other similar – things. When this first degree of purity has been achieved, then the disciple has taken a step forward on the path of religion; when the second degree of purity has been achieved, he has progress, and with the third degree, three steps. This is the evolving reality of repentance. In this way repentance is gradually realized; hence it is called a “revolution.” In other words, the penitent progresses from a state of foulness and uncleanness to one of purity: He is a church that becomes a mosque; an idol-temple that becomes a hermitage; a devil who becomes a man; dust that becomes gold; a dark night that turns into a brightly illuminated day! At that moment when the sun of faith rises on the heart of the disciple, Islam reveals its beauty to him, and he reaches the head of the lane leading to mystical knowledge of God. Without this purity, however, every action that he takes may be called mere habit and custom, performed in imitation of one’s parents. That is not Islam! Look attentively at what has been written about this fundamental requirement and study it repeatedly. What is written here should not be overlooked! Many people simply pretend to be Muslims, but they are not.

Take care: They are Muslims only according to the external prescriptions of the Law. This, for them, is faith. The mandate of the path called the Way, on the other hand, is that a disciple should both confirm and manifest his purity in two ways. One consists of externalizing what is within his breast. That would, simply speaking, be

grace. By itself it is sufficient. It is something rather special. It applies particularly to prophets and righteous men. The second type of purity is that which is connected with what is external and its path is one of struggle. This is the common or ordinary way. The beginning of this purity is concerned with clothes. When anyone wants to attain this purity he should attend first to his clothes. Merely reading and learning about these visible things does not cause them to be realized: It is necessary to bestir oneself as much as possible and show oneself assiduous in renewing ablutions. [Some recommendations follow.] At the end of the night, toward dawn, let him take a bath. Let him consider this a good work. Almighty God will adorn him with a special kind of purity and will remove all external and internal pollution. At every moment he should be aware that God Almighty is then beside him. When someone realizes that God is really his provider, then he should don the robe of humility and be ashamed of the reams of information that his Lord has concerning him. One beloved of God said:

What is that sign by which you recognize him?" He replied: "No opposition to God should ever arise in my breast!" The One speaking from within my heart says: "Does not your Lord fill you with shame?" [Two references to God's mercy are then cited.]

One glance from the Friend equals a thousand felicitations; I am waiting for the moment when that glance will come!

Peace!

Excerpt from the Mathnawi By Hazrat Jalaluddin Rumi (RAA)

How Friends came to the Madhouse for Dhu l-Niin – may God Sanctify his Honoured Spirit!

It so happened to Dhu ‘l-Niin the Egyptian that a new agitation and madness was born within him. His agitation, became so great that salt (bitterness) from it was reaching (all) hearts up to above the sky.

Beware, O (thou of) salty soil, do not put thy agitation beside (in comparison with) the agitation of the holy lords (saints). The people could not endure his madness: his fire was carrying off their beards.

When (that) fire fell on the beards of the vulgar, they bound him and put him in a prison.

There is no possibility of pulling back this rein, though the vulgar be distressed by this way These (spiritual) kings have seen (themselves in) danger of their lives from the vulgar; for. this multitude are blind, and the kings (are) without (a visible) mark.

When authority is in the hands of profligates, (a) Dhu’l-Nun is inevitably in prison.

The great king rides alone! Such a unique pearl in the hands of children!

What pearl? (Nay), the Sea hidden in a drop, a Sun concealed in a mote. A Sun showed itself as a mote, and little by little uncovered its face.

All motes vanished in it the (whole) world became intoxicated by it and (then) became sober.

When the pen (of authority) is in the hand of a traitor, unquestionably Mansur is on a gibbet.

When this affair (dominion) belongs to the foolish, the necessary consequence is (that) they kill the prophets. Through folly the people who had lost the (right) way said to the prophets, “Lo, we augur ill from you.”

See the ignorance of the Christian appealing for protection to the Lord who was suspended (on the Cross) !

Since, according to his (the Christian's) belief, He was crucified by the Jews, how then can He protect him? Inasmuch as the heart of that King (Jesus) bleeds on account of them (the Christians), how should there be (for them) the inviolable defence of whilst thou art amongst them? To the pure gold and to the goldsmith the danger from the false counterfeiter is greater (than from any one else).

Josephs are concealed on account of the jealousy of the ugly, for because of enemies the beautiful live in the fire (of tribulation). – Josephs are in the pit through the guile of (their) brethren, who from envy give Joseph to the wolves. What happened to Joseph of Egypt on account of envy? This envy is a big wolf in covert.

Of necessity, kind Jacob always had fear and dread for Joseph because of this wolf. The outward (visible) wolf, indeed, did not prowl about (approach) Joseph; (but) this envy has actually surpassed wolves (in malignity).

This wolf dealt its wound, and by way of specious excuse] came (the words), “Lo, we went _to compete with one another.” Hundreds of thousands of wolves – have not this cunning; (but) this wolf will at last be put to shame – stop (and see) ! – Because on the Day of Bale the envious will without doubt be (raised from the dead and) brought together (to Judgement) in the shape of wolves.

The resurrection of the greedy vile eater of carrion (unlawful food) will be in the shape of a hog on the Day of Reckoning. Adulteris (erit) foetor membri latentis; wine-drinkers will have stinking mouths.

The hidden stench that was reaching (only) to (people's) hearts will become sensible and manifest at the Resurrection. The being of Man is a jungle: be on your guard against this being, if you are of that (Divine) Breath.

In our being there are thousands of wolves and hogs; (there is) goodly and ungoodly and fair and foul. To the disposition that is preponderant belongs the decision (as to what you are) : when the gold is more than the copper, it (the mixture) is gold.

The manner of acting that preponderates in your nature – in that same form you must needs rise (from the dead). At one hour a wolf enters into Man, at another hour a moonlike beauty with the face of Joseph. Good and hateful qualities pass from bosoms into bosoms by a hidden way

Nay, indeed, wisdom and knowledge and excellence pass from Man into the ox and the ass. The stumbling (restive) horse becomes smooth-paced and docile; the bear dances, the goat also salaams. Volition has passed from human beings into the dog, so that he has become a shepherd or a hunter or a guardian (of the house).

Into the dog of the Companions (of the Cave) there passed from those Sleepers a (moral) disposition, so that he had become a seeker of God.

At every moment a (different) species bursts up in the breast no a devil, and now an angel, now wild beasts. From that marvellous Jungle with which every lion is acquainted, there is a hidden way to the breasts which ensnare (th spritual prey).

O you are less than a dog, steal the spiritual pearl from within – from within {the breasts of) them that know God. As you (must) steal, at any rate (let it be) that lovely pearl; as you are going to bear a burden, at any rate (let it be) a noble one. How the disciples understood that Dhu ‘ l-Nun had not become mad, (but) had acted with intention.

The friends went to the prison (to inquire) about the story of Dhu and expressed an opinion concerning it, Saying, “Perchance he does this purposely, or there is some (deep) wisdom (in it) : he is an exemplar’ and a shining light in this religion.

Far, far be it from his sea-like (profound) intelligence that madness should prompt him to folly!

God forbid, in view of the perfection of his (spiritual) attain – ments, that the cloud of sickness should cover his moon! He has gone into the house (and taken refuge) from the wickedness of the vulgar: he has become mad on account of the infamy of the sane.

From (feeling) the disgrace of the dull body-serving intellect, he has purposely gone and become mad, Saying, Bind me fast and with the tail of a cow smite me on head and back, and do not dispute this (matter), That from the stroke of the part (of the cow) I may gain life, as the murdered man (gained life) from the cow of Moses, O trusty ones; That I may be made happy by the stroke of a part of the cow; (that I may) become well (whole), like the murdered man (by means) of the cow of Moses’ .”

The murdered man was revived by the stroke of the cow’s tail: he became pure gold (in spirit), even as copper (is transmuted) by the elixir. The murdered man sprang up and told the secrets: he revealed that bloodthirsty gang.

He said plainly, “I was killed by these people who are now disturbed (with anger) in contending against me.” When this gross body is killed, the essence that knows (spiritual) secrets is brought to life.

Its spirit beholds Paradise and Hell-fire and discerns all the mysteries. It reveals the devilish murderers, it reveals the snare of deceit and guile. To kill the cow (the fleshly soul) is the stipulation of- (imposed by) the (Sufi) Path, _ in order that the spirit may be restored to consciousness by the stroke of her tail. Kill most quickly the cow, your fleshly soul, so that the hidden spirit may become alive and conscious. Resumption of the story of Dlu’l-Nun, may God sanctify his spirit

When those persons arrived near him, he shouted, “Hey, who are ye? Take care!”

They said respectfully, “We are some of thy friends: ‘we have come hither in devotion to ask after thee. How art thou, O Sea of manifold intelligence? What aspersion on thy intelligence is this (alleged) madness?

How should the smoke of the bath-stove attain unto the Sun? How should the Anqa be crushed by the crow? Do not withhold (the truth) from us: explain this matter; we are lovers (of thee) : do not behave to us in this fashion. One ought not to drive lovers away or dupe them by mask and false pretence.

Communicate the secret, O King: do not hide’ thy face in the cloud, O Moon!

We are loving and true and with wounded (Mewing) hearts in the two worlds we have fixed our hearts on thee (alone). ”

He began (to use) foul words and bad names recklessly: he ‘spoke gibberish like madmen.

He jumped up and let fly stones and sticks; the whole party fled for fear of blows.

He laughed loudly and tossed his head (in scorn). “Look, ” said he, “at the vain bluster of these friends! See the friends! Where is the sign of (true) friends? To (true) friends pain is as (dear as) life.” How should a friend turn aside from the pain inflicted by his friend? Pain is the kernel, and friendship is (only) as the husk to it.

Has not joy in tribulation and calamity and suffering become the sign of (true) friendship?

A friend is like gold, tribulation is like the fire: the pure gold is glad in the heart of the fire.

How Luqman’s master tested his sagacity. (Was it) not (the case) that (this happened) to Luqman, who was a pure (unselfish) slave, and day and night was brisk in service.

His master used to prefer him (to all others) in the work (of service) and deem him better than his own sons, Because Luqman, though he was slave-born, was the master (of himself) and was free from sensual desire.

A certain king said to the Shaykh (spiritual Director) in conversation, “Ask me to bestow some bounty upon thee.” He answered, “O King, are not you ashamed to say such a thing to me? Come higher!

I have two slaves, and they are vile, and those two are rulers and lords over you.”

Said the King, “What are those two? That is a mistake.” He replied, “The one is anger and the other is lust.”

Regard as a king him that is unconcerned with kingship, him whose light shines forth without moon or sun. (Only) that one whose essence is the treasury (of spiritual truths) possesses the treasury: (only) he that is an enemy to (his own) existence possesses (real). existence.

Luqman's master (was) like a master outwardly; in reality his (Luqman's) master (was) Luqman's. In the topsy-turvy world there is many a one of this (kind) : a pearl is less than a straw in their sight..

Every desert has been named mafaza (place of safety) : a name and specious form has ensnared their understanding. In the case of one class of people, the dress makes (a man) known: (if he is dressed) in a qaba, they say that he belongs to the vulgar.

In the case of one class of people (the distinguishing mark is) the hypocritical appearance of asceticism; (but) light is needed, that (any one) may be a spy on asceticism (and detect its true character).

Light is needed, (a light) purged of cant and noxiousness, that he may know a man without (the evidence of) deed or word,

And enter into his heart by way of the intellect, and behold his real state and not be confined to tradition.

The chosen servants of (God) the Knower of things unseen are, in the spiritual world, the spies on hearts. He (such a one) enters within the heart like a fancy: the mystery of the (real) state is unveiled to him.

In the body of the sparrow what power and faculty is there that is hidden from the intellect of the falcon? He who has become acquainted with the secrets of Hu (God), what to him is the secret (inmost consciousness) of created beings?

He whose walk is on the spheres, how should it be hard for him to walk on the earth?

Since iron became wax in the hand of David, what should wax be in his hand, O man of iniquity?

Luqman was a slave in appearance, a master (in reality) ∴ servitude was (only) a frontispiece on his outside. When the master goes to a place where he is not known, he puts (his own) clothes on his slave.

He (himself) puts on the slave's clothes and makes his slave the leader.

He goes behind him on the road, as slaves do, lest any one should recognise him (as the master).

"O slave, " says he, "go you and sit in the place of honour: I will take (your) shoes, like the meanest slave.

Treat (me) roughly and revile me; do not bestow any respect on me.

I hold neglect of service to be your (proper) service, since I have sown the seed of contrivance by dwelling in a foreign land'."

Masters have performed these slavish offices in order that it might be thought that they were slaves.

They saw their fill of masterdom and were sated (with it) : (hence) they have made ready for (doing) the work (of slaves). On the contrary, these slaves of sensuality have represented themselves as masters of intellect and spirit. From the master (the spiritual man) comes the practice of self-abasement; from the slave (the sensual man) comes naught but slavishness.

So topsy-turvy, then, are the arrangements between that world and this world. Know this (for sure).

Luqman's master was aware of this hidden state (of Luqman's; he had seen signs (thereof) in him).

That traveller (Luqman's master) knew the secret, (but) quietly pursued his ways for the sake of the good (which he had in view).

He would have set him free at the first, but he sought to content (comply with the wish of) Luqman, Because it was Luqman's desire (to remain a slave), in order that none might know the secret of that brave and generous youth.

What wonder (is it) that you should hide your secret from the evil (one) ? The wonder is this, that you should hide the secret from yourself.

Hide your work from your own eyes, that your work may be safe from the evil eye.

Yield yourself up to the snare of the (Divine) reward, and then, (being) beside yourself, steal something from yourself. They give-opium to the wounded man, in order that they may extract the point (of a spear or arrow) from his body. At the hour of death he is torn with pain; he becomes pre-occupied with that, and (meanwhile) his spirit (life) is taken away.

Inasmuch as, to whatsoever thought you give up your mind, something will secretly be taken away from you, (And inasmuch as) whatsoever you may cogitate and (whatsoever) acquisition you may make, the thief will enter from the side where you feel safe, Become occupied, therefore, with that which is better,. In order that the thief may take away from you something that is less (in worth).

When the trader's bales fall into the water, he lays his hands upon the better merchandise.

Since something will (certainly) be lost in the water, take leave of the less (worse) and gain (possession of) the better. How the excellence and sagacity of Luqman became manifest to those who made trial (of him).

Whatever food they brought to him (Luqman's master), he would send someone to Luqman after (receiving it), That Luqman might put his hand to (partake of) it, on purpose that the master might eat his (Luqman's) leavings. He would eat his remnants and be enraptured': any food that he (Luqman) did not taste, he (the master) would throw away; Or if he ate (of it), ('twould be) without heart and without appetite: this is (the sign of) an affinity without end.

They had brought a melon as a present. “Go, ” said he, “call (hither) my son, Luqman.”

When he cut it and gave him a slice, he ate it as if it were sugar and honey.

On account of the pleasure with which he ate (it), he gave him a second (slice), (and went on) till the slices’ (given him) reached the seventeenth.

One slice remained. He said, “I will eat this (myself), so that I may tee what a sweet melon this is. He (Luqman) eats it, with such pleasure that from his delight (all) natures have become eager and craving the morsel.” As soon as he (the master) ate it, by its sourness there was kindled fire (which) blistered his tongue and burnt his throat. He became beside himself for a while on account of its sourness; after that, he said to him, “O (you who are) soul and world, How did you make-all this poison an antidote? How did you deem this cruelty to be kindness?

What patience is this? For what reason is this great fortitude? Or, perchance, in your opinion this life of yours is an enemy (which you would fain destroy).

Why did not you cunningly bring (forward) a plea, saying, ‘I have an excuse (for declining to eat) : desist for a while ‘. “Luqman said, “From thy munificent hand I have eaten so much that I am (bent) double with shame. I was ashamed not to eat one bitter thing from thy hand, thou who art possessed of knowledge. Since all parts of me have grown from thy bounty and are plunged in thy bait and snare – If I make outcry and complaint because of one bitter thing, may the dust of a hundred roads be on (all) parts of me! It (the melon) had the enjoyment of thy sugar-bestowing hand: how could it (such enjoyment) leave any bitterness in this melon?”

By love bitter things become sweet; by love pieces of copper become golden; By love dregs become clear; by love pains become healing; By love the dead is made living by love the king is made a slave. This love, moreover, is the result of knowledge: who (ever) sat in foolishness’ on such a throne?

On what occasion did deficient knowledge give birth to this love? Deficient (knowledge) gives birth to love, but (only love) for that which is (really) lifeless.

When it sees in a lifeless being the colour (appearance) qf a desired one, (‘tis as though) it heard the voice of a beloved in a whistle.

Deficient knowledge cannot discriminate: of necessity it deems the lightning to be the sun.

When the Prophet called the “deficient “ (man) accursed, (his meaning) as interpreted was “deficiency – of mind, ” Because one whose body is deficient is the object of (Divine) mercy: cursing and repulse (directed) against the object of (Divine) mercy are improper.

‘Tis deficiency of mind that is the bad disease: it is the cause of (God’s) curse and merits banishment (from His presence), Forasmuch as the perfecting of minds is not remote (impossible), but the perfecting of the body is, not within our power. The

miscreance and Pharaoh-like pride of every infidel who is far (from God) have all been produced by deficiency of mind. Relief for bodily deficiency has come in the (words of the) Qur'an – it is no crime in the blind man.

Lightning is transient and very faithless: without clearness (of mind) you will not know the transient from the permanent. The lightning laughs: say, at whom is it laughing? At him that sets his heart upon its light.

The lights of the sky are hamstrung (feeble and imperfect) : how are they like (that Light, which is) neither of the east nor of the west? Regard the lightning as (what) taketh away the sight; regard the everlasting Light as entirely Helpers' (to the attainment of vision).

To ride (your) horse upon the foam of the sea, to read a letter in a flash of lightning, Is, to fail, because of covetousness, to see the end; it is, to laugh at your own mind and intellect.

Intellect, by its proper nature, is a seer of the end (consequence) 'tis the fleshly soul that does not see the end. The intellect that is vanquished by the flesh becomes the flesh: Jupiter is checkmated by Saturn and becomes inauspicious.

Still, turn this gaze (of yours) upon this inauspiciousness, look on that One who made you ill-starred. The gaze (of him) that surveys this ebb and flow pierces from the inauspicious influence to the auspicious. He (God) continually turns you from one state (of feeling) to another, manifesting opposite by means of opposite in the change, For the purpose that fear of the left hand side may bring to birth in you the delight of "the (blessed) men are led to hope for the right hand side."

So that you may have two wings (fear and hope) ; for the bird that has (only) one wing is unable to fly, O excellent (reader).

(O God), either let me not come to speech (at all), or give me leave to tell (the whole) to the end.

But if Thou wilt neither this nor that, 'tis Thine to command: how should anyone know what Thou intendest?

One must needs have the spirit of Abraham to see in the fire Paradise and its palaces by the light (of mystic knowledge) ; And mount step by step above the moon and the sun, lest he remain like the door-ring fastened on the door; And, like the Friend, pass beyond the Seventh Heaven, saying, "I love not them that set." This bodily world is deceptive, save to him that has escaped from lust.

Conclusion of (the story) how the (other) retainers envied the King's favourite slave.

The story of the King and the amiss and their envy of the favourite slave and lord of wisdom Has been left far (behind) on account of the powerful attraction of the discourse. (Now) we must turn back and conclude The happy and fortunate gardener of the (Divine) kingdom how should not he know one tree from another?

The tree that is bitter and reprobate, and the tree whose one is (as) seven hundred (of the other) – How, in rearing (them), should he deem (them) equal, when he beholds them with the eye (that is conscious) of the end, (And knows) what (different) fruit those trees will ultimately bear, though at this moment they are alike in appearance? The Shaykh who has become seeing by the light of God has become acquainted with the end and the beginning.

He has shut for God's sake the eye that sees the stable (the world) ; he has opened, in priority, the eye that sees the end. Those envious ones were bad trees; they were ill-fortuned ones of bitter stock.

They were boiling and foaming with envy, and were starting plots in secret, That they might behead the favourite slave and tear up his root from the world; (But) how should he perish, since the King was his soul, and his root was under the protection of God?

The King had become aware of those secret thoughts, (but) like Bu Bakr-i Rababi he kept silence. In (viewing) the spectacle of the hearts of (those) evil-natured ones he was clapping his hands (derisively) at those potters (schemers).

Some cunning people devise stratagems to get the King into a beer-jug (But) a King (so) exceedingly, grand and illimitable – how should 'He be contained in a beer-jug, O asses?

They knitted a net for the King; (yet) after all, they (had) learned this contrivance from Him.

Ill-starred – is the pupil that begins rivalry with his master and comes forward (to contend with him).

With what master? The master of the world, to whom the manifest and the occult are alike; Whose eyes have become seeing by the light of God and have rent the veils of ignorance.

(Making) a veil of (his) heart, (which is as) full of holes as an old blanket, he (the disciple) puts it on in the presence of that Sage.

The veil laughs him with a hundred mouths, every mouth having become a slit (open) to that (master).

The master says to the disciple, "O you who are less than a dog, have you no faithfulness to me?

Even suppose I am not a master and an iron-breaker, suppose I am a disciple like yourself and blind of heart, Have not you help in spirit and mind from me? Without me no water is set flowing for you.

Therefore my heart is the factory of your fortune: why would you break this factory, O unrighteous one?"

You may say that you kindle the flame (of rivalry) against him in secret (not openly) ; but is there not a window between heart and heart?

After, all, he sees your thought through the window: your heart gives testimony as to what you are meditating. Suppose that, from kindness, he does not rebuke you to your face, (and that) whatever you say, he smiles and says a “Yes ‘ – He does not smile from pleasure at your stroking (flattering him) he smiles at that (concealed) thought of yours.

So a deceit is paid with a deceit: strike with a cup, (and you) get struck with a jug – serve you right! Were his smiles at you one of approval, hundreds of thousands of flowers would blossom for you. When his heart works (for you) in approval, deem it (to be) a sun entering Aries, Because of whom both the day and the spring smile, ‘and blossoms and green fields are mingled together, And myriads of nightingales and ringdoves pour their song into the unplenished world.

When you see the leaves of your spirit yellow and black, how know you not the anger of the King? The King’s sun, in the (zodiacal) sign of reproach, makes faces black as a piece of roasted meat.

Our souls are leaves for that Mercury (to write on) that white and black (writing) is our standard (criterion). Again, he writes a patent in red and green, that (our) spirits may be delivered from melancholy and despair. Red and green are Spring’s cancellation (of winter) ; in regard (to their significance they are) like the (coloured) lines of the rainbow.

How Moses, on Whom be Peace, took Offence at the Prayer of the Shepherd

Moses saw a shepherd on the way, who was saying, “O God who chooseth (whom Thou wilt), Where art Thou, that I may become Thy servant and sew Thy shoes and comb Thy head? That I may wash Thy clothes and kill Thy lice and bring milk to Thee, Ownershipful One; That I may kiss Thy little hand and rub Thy little foot, (and when) bedtime comes I may sweep Thy little room, O Thou to whom all my goats be a sacrifice, O Thou in remembrance of whom are my cries of ay and ah! ” The shepherd was speaking foolish words in this wise. Moses said, “Man, to whom is this (addressed) ?” He answered, “To that One who created us; by whom this earth and sky were brought to sight.” “Hark! ” said Moses, “you have become very backsliding ignorant, (depraved) ; indeed you have not become a Moslem, you have become an infidel.

What babble is this? what blasphemy and raving? Stuff some cotton into your mouth! The stench of your blasphemy has made the (whole) world stinking: your blasphemy has turned the silk robe of religion into rags.

Shoes and socks are fitting for you, (but) how are such things right for (One who is) a Sun?

If you do not stop your throat from (uttering) these words, a fire will come and burn up the people. If a fire has not come, (then) what is this smoke? Why has your

soul become black and your spirit rejected (by God) ? If you know that God is the Judge, how is it right for you (to indulge in) this doting talk and familiarity?

Truly, the friendship of a witless man is enmity: the high God is not in want of suchlike service. To whom are you saying this? To your paternal and maternal uncles? Are the body and (its) needs among the attributes of the Lord of glory?

(Only) he that is waxing and growing drinks milk: (only) he that has need of feet puts on shoes.

And if these words (of yours) are (meant) for His servant, of whom God said, He is I and I myself am he'; (For him) of whom He (God) said, Verily, I was sick and thou didst not visit Me, ' (that is), 'I became ill, not he (the sick man) alone'; (For him) who has become seeing by Me and hearing by Me) is foolish nonsense even in regard to that servant this (talk of your To speak irreverently to one chosen of God causes the heart (spirit) to perish and keeps the page (record) black. If you should call a man Fatima '– though men and women are all of one kind – He will seek to murder you, so far as it is possible (for him), albeit he is good-natured and forbearing and quiet. (The name) Fatima is (a term of) praise in regard to women, (but) if you address it to a man, 'tis (like) the blow of a spearhead.

Hand and foot are (terms of) praise in relation to us; in relation to the holiness of God they are pollution. (The words) He begat not, He was not begotten are appropriate to Him: He is the Creator of begetter and begotten. Birth is the attribute of everything that is (a) body whatever is born is on this side of the river, Because it is of (the world of) becoming and decay and (is) contemptible: it is originated and certainly requires an Originator."

He (the shepherd) said, "O Moses, thou hast closed my mouth and thou hast burned my soul with repentance." He rent his garment and heaved a sigh, and hastily turned his head towards the desert and went (his way). How the high God rebuked Moses, on whom be peace, on account of the shepherd.

A revelation came to Moses from God" Thou hast parted My servant from Me. Didst thou come (as a prophet) to unite, or didst thou come to sever?

So far as thou canst, do not set foot in separation: of (all) things the most hateful to Me is divorce.

I have bestowed on every one a (special) way of acting: I have given to everyone a (peculiar) form of expression. In regard to him it is (worthy of) praise, and in regard to thee it is (worthy of) blame: in regard to him honey, and in regard to thee poison.

I am independent of all purity and impurity, of all slothfulness and alacrity (in worshipping Me). I did not ordain (Divine worship) that I might make any profit nay, but that I might do a kindness to (My) servants. In the Hindoos the idiom' of Hind (India) is praiseworthy; in the Sindians the idiom of Sind is praiseworthy. I am not sanctified by their glorification (of Me) ; 'tis they that become sanctified and pearl-

scattering (pure and radiant). I look not at the tongue, and the speech I look at the inward (spirit) and the state (of feeling).

I gaze into-the heart (to see) whether it be lowly, though the words uttered be not lowly, Because the heart is the substance, speech (only) the accident; so the accident is subservient, the substance is the (real) object.

How much (more) of these phrases and conceptions and metaphors? I want burning, burning become friendly with that burning!

Light up a fire of love in thy soul, burn thought and expression entirely (away) ! O Moses, they that know the conventions are of one sort, they whose souls and spirits burn are of another sort.”

To lovers there is a burning (which consumes them) at every moment: tax and tithe are not (imposed) on a ruined village.

If he (the lover) speak faultily, do not call him faulty; and if he be bathed in blood, do not wash (those who are) martyrs. For martyrs, blood is better than water: this fault (committed by him) is better than a hundred right actions (of another).

Within the Ka`ba the rule of the qibla does not exist: what matter if the diver has no snow-shoes? Do not seek guidance from the drunken: why dost thou order those whose garments are rent in pieces to mend them? The religion of Love is apart from all religions: for lovers, the (only) religion and creed is – God. If the ruby have not a seal (graven on it), ‘tis no harm: Love in the sea of sorrow is not sorrowful.

How the (Divine) revelation came to Moses, on whom be peace, excusing that shepherd. After that, God hid in the inmost heart of Moses mysteries which cannot be spoken. Words were poured upon his heart: vision and speech were mingled together.

How oft did he become beside himself and how oft return to himself! How oft did he fly from eternity to everlastingness!

If I should unfold (his tale) after this, ‘tis foolishness (in me), because the explanation of this is beyond (our) understanding; And if I should speak (thereof), ‘twould root up (men’s) minds; and if I should write (thereof), ‘twould shatter many pens.

When Moses heard these reproaches from God, he ran into the desert in quest of the shepherd.

He pushed on over the footprints of the bewildered man, he scattered dust from the skirt of the desert’. The footstep of a man distraught is, in truth, distinct from the footsteps of others (At) one step, (he moves) like the rook (straight) from top to bottom (of the chessboard) ; (at) one step he goes crossways, like the bishop; Now lifting his crest like a wave; now going on his belly like a fish Now writing (a description of) his state on some dust, like a geomancer who takes an omen by drawing lines (on earth or sand).

At last he (Moses) overtook and beheld him; the giver of glad news said, "Permission has come (from God). Do not seek any rules or method (of worship) ; say whatsoever your distressful heart desires. Your blasphemy is (the true) religion, and your religion is the light of the spirit: you are saved, and through you a (whole) world is in salvation.

O you who are made secure by God doeth whatso He willeth, go, lose your tongue without regard (for what you say). "

He said, "O Moses, I have passed beyond that: I am now bathed in (my) heart's blood.

I have passed beyond the Lote-tree of the farthest bourn, I have gone a hundred thousand years' journey on the other side. Thou didst ply the lash, and my horse shied, made a bound, and passed beyond the sky.

May the Divine Nature be intimate with my human nature blessings be on thy hand and on thine arm! Now my state is beyond telling: this which I AM telling is not my (real) state."

You behold the image which is in a mirror: it is your (own) image, it is not the image of the mirror. The breath which the flute-player puts into the flute – does it belong to the flute? No, it belongs to the man (the flute – player) : Take good heed! Whether you speak praise (of God) or thanksgiving, know that it is even as the unseemly (words) of that shepherd.

Though your praise is better in comparison with that, yet in relation to God it too is maimed (feeble).

How often will you Say, when the Lid has been Raised

"This was not what they were thinking (it was) !"

This acceptance (by God) of your praise is from (His) mercy it is an indulgence (which. He grants), like (the indulgence granted in the case of) the prayers of a woman suffering from menorrhagia.

Her prayers are stained with blood; your praise is stained with assimilation and qualification.

Blood is foul, and (yet) it goes (is washed away) by a (little) water; but the inward part (the inner man) hath impurities

Which fail not (are not removed) from the interior (the heart) of ' the man of works except by the water of the grace of the Maker.

Would that in your bowing low in prayer you would turn your face (to attentive consideration) and apprehend the meaning of "Glory to my Lord!"

Saying, "Oh, my prostration (in prayer), like my existence, is unworthy (of Thee) : do Thou give good in return for evil!"

This earth has the mark of God's clemency, in that it got filth sand gave flowers as the produce; In that it covers our pollutions, (and that) buds grow up from it in exchange.

Therefore, when the infidel saw that in giving and lavishing he was meaner and unwealthier than the earth, (That) flowers and fruit did not grow from his being, (and that) he sought (and achieved) nothing but the corruption of all purities, He said, "I have gone backwards in (my) course. Alas! would that I had (still) been earth! Would that I had not chosen to travel away from earthiness, (and that) like a clod of earth I had gathered some grain!

When I travelled, the Way tried me: what was the present I brought (home) from this travelling?"

'Tis from all that propensity of his towards earth that he sees before him no profit in the journey. His turning his face back is that greed and oupidity (of his) ; his turning his face to the Way is sincerity and supplication. Every herb that has a propensity for (moving) upwards is in (the state of) increase and life and growth; When it has turned its head towards the earth, (it is) in (the state of) decrease and dryness and failure and disappointment.

When the propensity of your spirit is upwards, (you are) in (the state of) increase, and that (lofty) place is the place to which you will return; But if you are. upside down, (with) your head towards the earth, (then) you are one that sinks God loves not them that sink.

How Moses, on Whom be Peace, asked the High God (to explain) the Secret of the Predominance of the Unjust

Moses said, "O Bounteous Disposer, O Thou whom to commemorate for one moment is (worth) a long life I have seen the crooked, misshapen image in (the mould of) water and clay, and like the angels, my heart has raised an objection, As to what is the purpose of making an image and casting therein the seed of corruption.

To kindle the fire of iniquity and corruption; to burn the mosque and those who bend low in prayer; To set boiling the source of bloody tears! for the sake of (receiving) humble entreaties (from the suffering and oppressed) – I know for certain that it is the essence of wisdom (on Thy part), but my aim is (to know this by) actual seeing and vision.

That certainty (of mine) says to me, 'keep silence'; the craving for vision says to me, Make a stir (and outcry). ' Thou hast shown Thy secret. to the angels, (namely) that such honey as this is worth the sting. Thou hast displayed the Light of Adam manifestly to the angels, (so that all) the difficulties were explained. Thy Resurrection declares what is the secret of death the I fruits declare what is the secret of the leaves." The secret of blood and seed is the excellence of Man; after all, inferiority is

antecedent to every superiority. The ignorant (child) first washes the tablet, then he writes the letters upon it.

(So) He (God) turns the heart into blood and abject tears, then He writes the (spiritual) mysteries upon it. – - At the time of washing the tablet (of the heart) one must “recognise that it will be made into a book (of mysteries). When they lay the foundation of a house (to rebuild it), they dig up the first foundation. (Also), people first fetch up clay from the depths of the earth in order that at last you may draw up flowing water.

Children weep piteously at cupping, for they know not the secret of the matter; (But) a man, in sooth, gives the copper gold and fondles the blood-drinking lancet.

The porter runs to the heavy load: he snatches the load from others Behold the struggle of the porters for the load! Such is the endeavour of him that sees (the truth of) things, Inasmuch as burden are the foundation of ease, and bitter things, too, are the forerunners of enjoyment.

Paradise is compassed about with the things we dislike (to do) ; the fires (of Hell) are compassed about with our lusts.

The seed (source) of the substance of your fire (of torment) is the fresh bough (of lust) ; (but) he that is burned by the fire (of renunciation) is the comrade of Kawthar. Whosoever is the comrade of affliction in prison – that is the retribution for a mouthful (of unlawful food) and a lust.

Whosoever is the comrade of a high fortune in a palace – that is the reward for some battle-field and sore trial.

Whomsoever you have seen unrivalled in (his store of) gold and silver – know that he has been patient in earning. When the (spiritual) eye has become piercing, he (the owner) sees without causes. You who are in (the bondage of) sense – perception, pay you heed to causes!

He whose spirit is beyond (the world of) natural properties – to him belongs the position of power to rive (the chain of) causes.

The (spiritual) eye regards the fountain of the miracles of the prophets as (being) without cause, not as (arising) from water and herbage’.

These causes are (linked together) like the physician and the sick: these causes are like the lamp and the wick.

Twist a new wick for your night-lamp, Out) know that the lamp of the sun transcends these things.

Go you and make plaster for the roof of your house, (but) know that the roof of the sky is undefiled by plaster.

Alas that, after our Sweetheart had burned (utterly destroyed) our pain, the night-time of being alone (with Him) passed away and became day!

Except at night there is no unveiling of the moon: except through heartache do not seek your heart's desire. Forsaking Jesus, you have fostered the ass: of necessity, like the ass, you are outside of the curtain.

Knowledge and gnosis are the fortune of Jesus; they are not the fortune of the ass, O you asinine one! You listen to the moaning of the ass, and pity comes over – you; then you know not (that) the ass commands you to be asinine.

Have pity on Jesus and have no pity on the ass do not make the (carnal) nature lord over your intellect. Let the (carnal) nature weep sore and bitterly do you take from it and pay the debt of the (rational) soul.

For years you have been the ass's slave. It is enough, for the ass's slave is behind (even) the ass. The thing meant by (the Prophet's words) "put them (the women) behind "is your fleshly soul; for it must be last, and your intellect (must be) first.

This base intellect has become of the same temperament as the ass: its (only) thought is how it shall get hold of fodder. The ass of Jesus took (to itself) the temperament of the (rational) spirit: it took its abode in the place of the intelligent, Because (in Jesus) intellect was ruling, and the ass (was) weak – the ass is made lean by a strong rider – While from the weakness of your intellect, O you who have (no more than) the value of an ass, this worn-out ass has become a dragon.

If through Jesus (the spiritual guide) you have become heart-sick, (yet) health too comes from him do not leave him. How art thou as to affliction, O thou Jesus who: bast the (healing) breath of Jesus? for there never was in the world a treasure without a snake.

How art thou, O Jesus, at the sight of the Jews? How art thou, O Joseph, in respect of the envious plotter? Night and day for the sake of this foolish people thou, like night and day, art a replenisher of life. Alas for those bilious ones who are without excellence! What excellence is born from bile? Headache. Do thou the same thing that the sun of the east does with (our) hypocrisy and craft and thieving and dissimulation. Thou art honey, we are vinegar in (the affairs of) this world and in religion the (means of) removing this bile is oxymel.

We folk who suffer from colic have added more and more vinegar; do thou add more and more honey, withhold not thy bounty.

This was meet in us such (acts naturally) issued from us what is increased by sand in the eye? Blindness. (But) 'tis meet in thee, O precious collyrium, that every nothing should gain from thee something.

Thy heart is roasted by the fire of these unrighteous men, (yet) all thy appeal (to God) has been, "Guide my people!" Thou art a mine of aloes-wood: if they set thee afire, they will fill this world with otto of roses and sweet basil. Thou art not that aloes-wood that is diminished by the fire thou art not that spirit that is made captive by grief. Aloes-wood burns, (but) the mine of aloes-wood is far from burning: how should the wind (of evil words) assail the source of (spiritual) light?.

Oh, 'tis from thee the heavens have (their) purity; oh, thy unkindness is better than kindness, Because if an unkindness come from the wise it is better than the kindness of the ignorant.'

The Prophet said, "Enmity (proceeding) from wisdom is better than the love that comes from a fool."

Excerpts from The Bustan or Orchard of Hazrath Sadi (RA)

The Dervish under a Vow of Solitude

A dervish under a vow of solitude sat in a desert as a king passed with his retinue. Being in a special state of mind he took no notice, not even raising his head as the procession passed.

The king, emotionally overcome by his regal pretensions, was angry and said: 'These wearers of the patchwork robe are as impassive as animals, possessing neither politeness nor due humility.'

His vizier approached the dervish, saying: 'O dervish! The Sultan of the whole of the Earth has just passed by you. Why did you not pay the required homage?'

The dervish answered: 'Let the Sultan look for homage from those who seek to benefit from his goodwill. Tell him, too, that kings are created for the protection of their subjects. Subjects are not created for the service of kin

Excerpts From Principles of Sufism by Hazrath Al – Qushayri (RA)

Striving

Mujahada

God Most High says, “And those who strive for Our sake, We will certainly guide them to Our paths. God is with those who do right” (29:69).

On the authority of Abu Said al-Khudri, it is reported that when the Messenger of God (may God’s blessing and peace be upon him) was asked about the best kind of striving [jihad], he answered, “It is a just word spoken to a tyrannical ruler.” Tears flowed from Abu Said’s eyes when he heard this.

The master Abu ‘Ali ad-Daqqaq (may God grant him mercy) declared, “God will beautify the inner faculties with contemplation for one who adorns his outer being with striving, for God Most High says, ‘And those who strive in Us, We will certainly guide them to Our paths’” (29:69).

Know that anyone who does not exert effort at the beginning of his wayfaring will never attain the slightest benefit from the Path. Abu ‘Uthman al-Maghribi stated, “It is a grave error for anyone to imagine he will attain anything or that anything will be revealed to him of the Path without persistent striving on his part.” The master Abu ‘Ali ad-Daqqaq (may God grant him mercy) asserted, “The one who makes no firm stand at the start of his wayfaring will not be allowed repose at its end.” He also said, “[Their saying] ‘Exertion is a blessing’ means that exertion of one’s outward abilities brings forth blessings in the inner faculties.”

Abu Yazid al-Bistami related, “For twelve years I was the blacksmith of my soul. Then for five years I was the mirror of my heart. Then for one year I gazed at what was between the two, and I saw an infidel’s girdle visibly around my middle. I worked at severing it for twelve years. I gazed once more, and I saw an infidel’s girdle around my inward being. So I worked at severing it for five years, wondering how I could cut it. The answer was finally revealed to me. I looked upon mankind and saw that they were dead, so I pronounced Allahu akbar’ over them four times.”

As-Sari said one time, “O young men! Strive earnestly before you reach my age, when you will become as negligent as I.” AlJunayd reported that, even though as-Sari said this, the young men at that time did not have as-Sari’s fortitude in acts of worship. Al-Hasan al-Qazzaz explained, “This matter [Sufism] is based on three things: that you eat only when it is necessary, that you sleep only when overcome by drowsiness, and that you speak only in cases of urgent necessity.”

Ibrahim b. Adham observed, “A man attains the rank of the righteous only after passing through these six steps: (1) He must close the door of bounty and open the door of hardship. (2) He must close the door of dignity and open the door of humility. (3) He must close the door of repose and open the door of striving. (4) He must close the door of sleep and open the door of vigilance. (5) He must close the door of wealth and open the door of poverty. (6) He must close the door of worldly expectation and open the door of preparedness for death.” Abu

‘Anil b. Nujayd declared, “Whoever holds his soul dear holds his religion in contempt.” Abu Ali ar-Rudhbari said, “If a Sufi says after five days [of deprivation], ‘I am hungry, ’ then send him to the marketplace to earn something.”

Striving is essentially weaning the soul of its habitual practices and compelling it to oppose its passions at all times. The soul has two traits that hold it back from attaining goodness: absorption in worshipping its passions and refusal to perform acts of obedience. When the soul bolts, like a horse, toward a desire, one must rein it in with the bridle of piety. When it stubbornly refuses to conform [with God’s wishes], then one must steer it toward opposing its desires. When it rises up in a rage [at being opposed], then one must control this state.

Nothing has a more excellent prospect than what arises in place of an anger whose power has been shattered by good moral character and whose fire has been put out by kind acts. When the soul finds sweetness in the wine of arrogance, then it will be dejected unless it can make a display of its feats and embellish [its deeds] to whoever looks at it. One must break it of this tendency and submit it to the penalty of the disgrace that will come when it is reminded of its paltry worth, its lowly origin, and its despicable actions.

The striving of the common people consists of performing acts, and the goal of the elect [in striving] is to purify their spiritual states. Enduring hunger and sleeplessness is very easy, but cultivating moral characteristics and cleansing them of all lowly aspects are extremely difficult.

One of the harmful traits of the soul most difficult to perceive is its reliance on receiving acclaim. One who takes a drink from this cup bears the [weight of the] heavens and the earth on one of his eyelashes. Assign of this enormous burden is that, if that drink be [later] withheld from him, he will revert to indolence and cowardice in his striving.

For many years a certain sheikh prayed in the front row of worshipers in the mosque he frequented. One day something prevented him from arriving early at the mosque. He was forced to pray in the last row. After that he was not seen for some time. When someone asked him the reason for his absence, he answered, "I used to pray in the front row, and for a year now I thought I was sincere in doing this, for God's sake. But the day I was delayed, I felt ashamed to be seen praying in the back of the mosque. I knew from this that my lifelong zeal in prayer had been nothing but concern for the opinion men had of me, and so I had said my prayers."

It is related that Abu Muhammad al-Murtalsh said, "I used to go on the pilgrimage on foot without taking any provisions. I realized once that all my effort was defiled by my sense of pleasure in the way that I performed it. This came to me one day when my mother asked me to draw a jar of water for her. My soul found this burdensome. I knew then that what I thought was great obedience to God in my pilgrimages was nothing more than something pleasurable for me, coming from a flaw in my soul, for if my soul had been pure, I would never have found irksome something incumbent upon me."

There once was an old woman who was asked about her state. She responded, "When I was young, I had vigor and experienced many states. I thought they came from the real strength of my spiritual state. When I became older, these states faded away. I know now that what I thought were spiritual states was only the vigor of youth." Abu 'Ali ad-Daqqaq said, "Every sheikh who has told me this tale felt compassion for this old woman. Surely she was an honest woman."

Dhu'n-Nun al-Misri declared, "The greatest honor God can confer upon a servant is to show him the lowliness of his soul. The most degrading thing God can do to a servant is to conceal from him the lowliness of his soul." Ibrahim al-Khawwas asserted, "I have confronted all my fears straightforwardly." Muhammad b. al-Fadl said, "Repose is being free of the desires of the soul." Mansur b. Abdallah related, "I heard Abu Ali ar-Rudhbari say, 'Harm comes upon mankind from three things: the weakness of natural disposition, clinging to habitual practices, and the keeping of corrupt company.' I asked him, 'What is the weakness of natural disposition?' He replied, 'Consuming forbidden things.' Then I asked, 'What is clinging to habitual practices?' He said, 'Viewing and listening to prohibited things and engaging in slander.' I inquired, 'What is the keeping of corrupt company?' He responded, 'That is when you follow whatever passion toward which men incite you.'

An-Nasrabadhi said, "Your prison is your soul. If you escape from it, you will come into endless peace." Abu'l-Husayn al-Warraaq reported, "When we were starting out on the Path at the mosque of Abu 'Uthman al-Hiri, the finest practices we undertook were that when we were given charity, we gave generously of it to others; we never slept with anything left undistributed; we never retaliated against someone who offended us – we would excuse his offense and behave humbly toward

him; and if we felt contempt in our hearts for a certain person, we would take it upon ourselves to serve him and behave toward him with kindness until the feelings of contempt ceased.”

Abu Hafs said, “The self is complete darkness [of its own]. The lamp of the self is its secret. The light of this lamp is success [in striving]. One who is not granted success [in striving] by his Lord, in his secret he is darkness, all of him.” In saying, “The lamp of the self is its secret, ” Abu Hafs means that the secret of the servant is what is between him and God Most High. It is the locus of his sincerity. By it the servant knows that all events are the work of God; they are neither the work of his self nor do they originate from him. When he knows this, he will be free, in all his states, of his own power and might. Then by the [light of] success [in striving], he will be protected from the evils of his self. One who achieves no success [in striving] will not gain any benefit from knowledge of his self or of his Lord. For this reason, the sheikhs have said, “One who has no secret will be insistent [on following his desires].” Abu Uthman declared, “As long as one finds anything good in his self, he will never be able to see its faults. Only one who accuses his self at all times will be able to see its faults.”

Abu Hafs observed, “There is no faster way to ruin than that of one who does not know his faults, for surely disobedience to God is the path to unbelief.” Abu Sulayman said, “I know there is no good to be found in a deed myself performs as long as I expect to be rewarded for it.”

As-Sari commented, “Beware of the neighbors of the rich, the Qur’an reciters who frequent the marketplace, and the scholars attached to worldly rulers.”

Dhu’n-Nun al-Misri stated, “Corruption enters men in six ways: (1) They have weak intention in performing deeds oriented to the hereafter. (2) Their bodies are held hostage by their lusts. (3) They remain full of hope for worldly gain in spite of the nearness of death. (4) They prefer to please created beings over pleasing the Creator. (5) They follow their own desires, without so much as a backward glance at the Sunna of their Prophet [may God’s blessings and peace be upon him]. (6) They defend their failings by invoking a few slips of the early Muslims, while burying their many virtues.”

Medival Sufi Saints of India

The Saint who Gave away Everything at Night

Shaikh Aziz-ullah Mutkal was a disciple of Shaikh Ali Mukti.

When night fell, he distributed everything which he could spare among the neighbours. He did not even keep more water than necessary for the next day's ablution!

One day a rich man found that his house was quite dark in the night. So he sent a drum of oil for him with instructions to send for more when this would finish.

When the Master saw that his house was well-lighted inside and outside, he was astonished. When he came to know the cause, he was shocked and warned the rich man to send no more oil. Whatever oil was left in the house, he gave it away to the poor.

His tomb is at Burhanpur. The tomb of his father is at Ahmednagar

A Saint's Conditions for Dining in a Rich Man's House

Shaikh Ali bin Assam-uddin belonged to a family of Jaunpur. He received his education at Burhanpur at the age of seven or eight. He joined the service of the king and found some prosperity. Then he resigned and renounced the world. For two years he lived at Multan and received spiritual education from holy men there. Then he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. He is the author of several books in Arabic and Persian. He spent days and nights in his library.

"There are two ways of imparting education, " he said. "Theoretical and Practical. The theoretical method is long and difficult. The practical way is short and easy."

Once a minister invited the Master to dinner. He refused the invitation but the minister insisted again and again. So he accepted the invitation on three conditions: First: "I will sit where I please. Don't compel me to sit here or there."

Second: "I will eat what I please. Don't force me to eat this or that."

Third: "I will come back when I please. Don't insist that I should stay longer."

The minister agreed to all these conditions laid down by the Master.

On the appointed day the saint put in his bundle a few dry crusts of bread which he wore as a garland round his neck and ate them when he felt the absolute necessity.

He found the house was very exquisitely decorated for his reception. He sat down just from where the decorated started right on the street. The minister asked him to move in. "Did I not tell you that I will sit where I please without hindrance?" he said.

Anyhow he agreed to go on to the dining table. On the dining table the Master took out his dry crusts and began to eat. When the minister insisted that he should eat something else, the saint told him: "Did I not tell you that I will eat what I please?"

After eating his crusts, the holy man stood up to go away. The minister wanted him to stay longer. The holy man said to him: "Did I not tell you that I will come away when I please?". The Master died in 885 Hijri. he left behind this written message for his followers:

"O my brothers!
May Allah take pity on you.
Remember that my life was a sacred trust from God. Glory
be to Allah!
I am returning the charge of the sacred trust back to Allah.
Understand this. Salaam."

You Can never be Certain of the Road to the Mosque

Khwaja Ziya-uddin Bakshi. passed his time praying in solitary corner. He lived aloof from the people and either believed nor disbelieved anything.

It is said that in the time of Hazrat Nizam-uddin there were three Ziyas. One Ziya was a devotee of Nizam-uddin. Khwaja Ziya disbelieved him. The third Ziya neither believed nor disbelieved in him.

One day he told his slave girl to make his bed for sleeping. She said to him:

"Khwaja! have you a God?"
"Yes", he said.
"Does He sleep?" she asked.
"My God never sleeps."
"Then why do you sleep?"

Every Friday Khwaja Ziya went to the mosque for prayers but never failed to ask somebody the way to the mosque.

One person who knew him well said to him, "For many years you have been going to the mosque. Don't you know the way as yet?"

"It is better to have uncertainty about the road we are following than have self-assurance about it."

Khwaja Ziya used to stand in the last row for prayers.

Somebody asked him the secret behind his standing in the last row. He said, “I have read in the Koran those – stand, last of all will have their sins forgiven.”

Once a doctor asked him, “What is the trouble with you?” “If I knew the trouble”, he said, “I would be able to cure it myself.”

Once people asked him, “Do you regard Satan as your enemy?”

“I am so much absorbed in the love of my friend”, he said, “That I have no knowledge of an enemy.”

Once an old man said to him: “With what do you compare the world?”

He said, “The world is not fit to be compared with anything.”

Once a devotee told him that he wanted to live with him for a few days. He said to him, “With whom will you live if I am not there?”

“With God,” said the ‘devotee.

“Then make yourself understand that I am not there”, said Khwaja Ziya.

Khwaja Ziya said, “I have no other desire in the world except this that I should discuss truth and somebody should hear me or somebody should discuss truth and I should hear him.”

Khwaja Ziya said: “Wealthy people get four things out of their wealth: (1) physical troubles (2) mental worry (3) loss of religion (4) to be called to account on Doomsday. The holy men get four things out of renunciation: (1) physical comfort (2) mental pleasure (3) religion (4) salvation on doomsday.”

The Saint who Never Went to any Place except Jama Masjid

Shaikh Alauddin was the son of Shaikh Badr-uddin. companion of Hazrat Shaikh Farid-uddin Ganj-shakar. Shaikh Alauddin took the path of devotion to Allah at the age of sixteen and never swerved from that highway throughout his life.

The reputation of Shaikh Alauddin spread throughout the Muslim world; but the saint himself never went beyond the precincts of the Jama Masjid.

He prayed throughout the long night and was almost continually fasting. If at all, he took very little food. But he was peerless in his generosity, charity and shower of blessings on, those who sought him.

Amir Khusro wrote a great poem in honour of the saint. His tomb is near that of Shaikh Farid-uddin Ganj-shakar, and King Muhammad bin-Tughluq, who was one of his devotees, built a magnificent dome on his tomb.

What Kind of Nimaz is This?

Khwaja Hasan Afghan was a disciple of Shaikh Baha-uddin Zikaria.

Thus spake Hazrat Shaikh Nizamuddin: – “Khwaja Hasan Afghan was a man of very great holiness and spiritual powers. Once he was passing through a street and reached a mosque at the time of prayers. There he joined the other people in the performance of Nimaz.

“When the people went away, Khwaja Hasan Afghan went up to the Imam, who had led the prayers and said to him: ‘O Imam! when you started prayers, I joined you. From this place your mind went to Delhi. There you bought slaves and we brought the slaves here. Then we took the slaves to Kharasan and sold them. Then you came to Multan and I followed you with my neck hanging down. What kind of Nimaz is this?’ “

Happiness Means Five Prayers a Day

Khwaja Ahmed Badauni enjoyed a perpetual spiritual ecstasy.

Once an old man said to him, “Are you happy?” He replied, “Happiness consists in this: that one should perform his nimaz (prayers) five times a day.”

Pleasures of Prayer are above Paradise

Shaikh Ziyauddin Rumi was a disciple of Shaikh Sha-ha buddin Sarwari.

Sultan Qutbuddin bin Alauddin, the King of India, was a devoted follower of Shaikh Ziyauddin Rumi.

On the third day after the death of Shaikh Ziyauddin, Hazrat Nizamuddin went to his tomb to pay homage to the holy man. He found Sultan Qutb-uddin already there who was so deeply absorbed in prayers that he did not recognise Hazrat Nizamuddin and paid no respect to him.

Hazrat Nizamuddin told this anecdote about Shaikh Ziyauddin’s experience: – “Once I had a dream. I saw a friend, who had died, in Paradise. He was occupying a station of loftiness and grandeur but he was feeling gloomy and unhappy.

“I said to my friend, ‘Why are you feeling unhappy in Paradise?’

“He replied, don’t get those pleasures from Paradise which I got from my edstatic trances!”

A Saint Lost to the World

Hazrat Shaikh Nizamuddin said about Shaikh Taqiuddin Muhammad: –

“He was a man of great spiritual grandeur. He was so absorbed in godliness that he had no knowledge of any material substance. He did not know what day or what month it was.”

“Once a person brought pen and paper and requested him to write his name. He took the pen but appeared quite puzzled. His servant said, ‘The Shaikh has forgotten

his name.' He told him that his name was Muhammad and so he wrote it down on paper."

"On another occasion he went to the Jama Masjid but stood on the threshold quite confused. The servant understood that he had forgotten his right foot. The servant put his hand on his right foot, saying, 'This is your right foot.' So he lifted his right foot across the threshold."

God has not Sent you for Playing in the World

Fazlul Rahman Ganj Moradabadi was born in 798 A.D. He was the son of Hazrat Shaikh Allahullah and the grandson of Muhammad Barkatullah.

Right from his infancy, the child wasted no time, in games and devoted himself completely to prayers. When other children asked him to play, he said to them, "God has not sent me for playing in the world." He spoke Kalima as early as the age of two and a half years. Those who heard him pray at that age were truly astonished.

Hazrat Ganj was hardly eleven years of age when his father passed away. There was a famine in the land and there was nothing to eat in the house. His mother closed the door and the family lived on boiled leaves. She would not let anybody know her misery. She had many rich relatives but she prayed only to Allah for help.

After receiving elementary education in the village, the boy went to Lucknow for higher education, and then to Delhi for the same purpose. He walked all the way and lived on grams worth a paisa or two a day. In Delhi he joined the classes of Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz and became a disciple of Hazrat Muhammad Afaq. The Master soon recognised the new disciple and said to him, "One day you will dazzle the world like a sun."

Then he returned to Ganj Moradabad, and resided there. He became a centre of spiritual learning in the country. He built many mosques all over the country. He lived in a very small house. Both Hindus and Muslim flocked to him for light and wisdom.

His life was very simple. He dressed very poorly. He did not eat meat. He lived on bajra (rough corn) bread. He lived in a mud house. He used to smoke the hookah because of constipation. His disciples brought him costly clothes but he wore only rags. He did not – use a pillow for sleeping. However, he was fond of Delhi shoes and Delhi caps.

Once an Arab asked him for two hundred rupees. He did not know who the person was. He borrowed the money from a shopkeeper and gave it to, him. But the Arab was not satisfied.

He wanted another Rs. 50. He also managed that money for him. Then the Arab demanded a blanket and a pitcher. The Master gave him his own blanket and his own pitcher: Then the Arab wanted the Master to write ten letters for him. The Master did that also for an unknown guest. Then the Arab demanded fare for a pony. The

Master directed the Arab to take the money from a certain, shopkeeper. Such was the Master's limitless generosity and tolerance.

The Master had a miraculous touch and he cured everybody by simply praying for him. He cured some of the most 'dangerous diseases by simply giving water to the sufferers.

The Master died on the last day of Rabbia 1213 Hijri or 1835 A.D.

How to Keep awake to Remember God

Shaikh Meena was a famous saint of Lucknow. His real name was Shaikh Muhammad. He was a disciple of Sheikh Sarang. He was a son of Shaikh Quamuddin. He was called "Meena" out of love and endearment.

Shaikh Meena used to go daily to the tomb of his Master, Shaikh Sarang, which was thirty miles away. He went barefoot through jungles strewn, with thorns and haunted by wild animals.

At night Shaikh Meena would sit on a wall to recite the name of Allah so that he would not fall asleep. When he would fall asleep, he would fall down, and this would wake him up immediately.

When he used to sit on the ground for prayers, he would put thorns all round him so that he could not lie down to sleep. When he would lie down, the thorns would prick him and, wake him up.

In winter he sat down to prayers in wet clothes so that he would keep awake.

His tomb in Lucknow is a famous place of pilgrimage.

Whoever Takes a Breath Without Chanting the Name of God Wastes his Precious Time

Shaikh Sadr-uddin was a grandson of Shaikh Baha-uddin Zikaria. He shone in spiritual magnificence and could count many courtiers and members of royal families among his disciples.

"There is a citadel and a rampart, " said the Master. "The rampart is round the building. Sometimes it protects and sometimes it does not. The, Citadel is inside the building and it always protects.

"The citadel of enlightenment is made of three elements – material knowledge, mental understanding, and spiritual practice.

"If the whole world becomes your enemy, it can do you no harm inside the citadel of your inner self.

"Live in your own citadel. Have neither a desire for Paradise, nor fear of hell. There is nothing lasting in the world except the name of Allah, which is your citadel.

Paradise will automatically follow you and hell will run away from you.

"You should have faith in what Prophet Muhammad had said.

Walk forward with a firm step. This is not possible so long as you do not drive away all bit from your mind. “When you do some act of kindness, you get joy. When you do something evil, you get pain. Hell and heaven reside in you.

“Do not let a single breath escape without reciting the name of Allah. Great souls have said that whosoever takes a single breath without changing the name of Allah wastes his life.

“When the tongue is not remembering Allah, the heart is turbulent, and a turbulent heart is the invading army. It destroys the citadel. To be free from physical desires is to be free from the turbulence of the heart and the invasion of a ruthless enemy.

“He who is free from wants and desires, lives peacefully and powerfully in the citadel of his heart. Allah abides therein. Light oozes from his body. Satan and evil forces keep a distance from his citadel.”

Who is Allah?

*“Allah has no resemblance to anything in the world”, he said,
“and nothing in the world has any resemblance to God.”*

Saved by a Man Emerging from the River

Shaikh Amjad Dehlawi belonged to the age of Sultan Balol. He enjoyed the comradeship of Hazrat Khwaja Qutb-ul-Haq and enjoyed his blessings.

Once he left his house for prayers as usual across the river. He did not stop to know that the river was in flood. Amid the river he found himself drowning.

Just then there emerged a man out of the river and took him safely across the river.

Since then he recited the name of Allah in a corner of his house – and never again went out of his house! His tomb is in Hauz Khas, in New Delhi.

The Master who Prayed from Dusk to Dawn

Maulana Jalal-uddin Manakpuri was a descendant of Shaikh Assam-uddin Manakpuri.

He went to sleep when people got up after the morning prayers; and he got up when people went to sleep after the evening prayers! He earned his living by writing books. He wrote copies of the Koran and sent them to Delhi, and earned Rs. 500 a month. He never ‘put his pen to paper without a bath.

In days of famine he gave up eating meat. Once a Qazi along with his son came to visit him and also to test him. He said in his mind, “I will recognise the Master if he gives me a piece of slated sugar to eat!” When the Qazi reached the presence of the Saint, he was already holding a piece of slated sugar (Misri) for him! The Qazi

invited the Saint to dinner but the latter said, “Since forty years I have stopped eating food in the houses of Qazis (City Magistrates).”

When the Qazi insisted, the Master asked: “Is your son living on your income?” “No”, said Qazi. “Then I will dine in the house of your son”, said the Master.

The Saint who Cluttered his Door with Rubbish

Shaikh Ala-ucklin is a celebrated saint of Gwalior. He is an apostle of Sayyad Mahmud Gesudaraz. He achieved enlightenment and renounced the world. Rather he renounced the world to achieve enlightenment.

He spent all his life in a solitary corner of his house. He ordered his disciples to choke the entrance to his house with rubbish so that the visitors would lose faith in him and stop disturbing him! His tomb is in the Kalpi area of Ahmedabad.

The Saint who Saw not the Tree under which He Prayed for Years

Shaikh Muhammad Yassi is a celebrated saint of Jaunpur. He was a disciple of Shaikh Fatha-ullah Wadi. His father Shaikh Ahmed Yassi had migrated from Delhi after the destruction of Delhi by Tamburlane. At that time the boy was seven or eight years old.

He had been under the teaching of Qazi Shahab-uddin on the directions of his Master.

Shaikh Muhammad Yassi performed profound prayers continuously. He did not see the tree before his prayer house, although he lived there for years. One day he found leaves on his resting place and asked, “Where have these leaves come from?” that there was a tree in his house.

t of constantly bending for prayers, the bone his throat had stuck out, and his chin was touching his breast.

Every Day New Know is Gained in a Prayer even for a Thousand Years

Maulana Shams-uddin was a man of wisdom and enlightenment. He contented himself with only the necessities of life and kept away from comforts and luxuries.

He started from Mullan and, after spending years in the forest and wilderness he finally reached Delhi, where he settled down.

In his old age he lost his eyesight; but without any medication Allah restored his vision to him! He used to stand on the threshold of his door and say, “May God shower kindness and mercy on everybody!” `Some of his sayings are

- i. “God created souls thousands of years before the bodies and fixed a station for every one of them. They move in their orbits.”
- ii. “There is a place fixed for everybody in the world; but one without faith cannot encircle the skies.

- iii. “The souls of the creatures are not transferred; but everyone attains a higher level.”
- iv. “There are two kind of being in the world one souls without bodies; the other are bodies without souls.
- v. “If a man lives a thousand years and spends a thousand years in prayers, every day he gains new knowledge and experience which he did not have the previous day.” He died in 901 Hijri.

The Saint who would not Let a King Pray with Him

Maulana Kamal-uddin was a comrade of Hazrat Nizarnuddin. They both were against association with the royal families. Once Sultan Ghayas-uddin expressed a desire to perform his prayers in the company of Maulana Kamaludidin. He called the Maulana and said to him:

“I have boundless faith in your holiness. If you agree and are kind to me, I would like to join you in your prayers.”

Pat came the reply: “I have nothing left with me except Nimaz. Now the King wants to deprive me of even that!” The King was silenced and never repeated his demand again!

The Beads that Brought a King to the Saint’s Door

Shaikh Ahmed Sheri was a holy man of perfection and renunciation. He resided at Chanderi and enjoyed along life. He was healthy till the last and died in 928 Hijri. It is said that Shah Ahmed Sheri was an expert archer and peerless even at the age of ninety-four. Once he shot an arrow perfectly at the target and asked the people, “Should I now pierce the first arrow with the second?” When they said “yes”, he did it; and then shot several arrows piercing one another in a row.

Shah Sheri had a rosary which was magical. When he turned over the first bead, the King stirred up. On turning over the second bead, the King got ready. On turning over the third bead, the King, took his horse to pay him a visit. One day the King suddenly appeared at his door and the Master was puzzled. The mystery was solved when he saw his servant holding his rosary and repeating his performance!

The Prime Minister Who Preferred Prayers To his Post!

Maulana Majd-uddin Haji went on pilgrimage to Mecca. As many as twelve times and finally settled down in Delhi in the reigp of Sultan Shams-uddin.

The King appointed him as the Prime Minister of the Royal Court; but the Haji was not happy! He performed his daily duties with most meticulous conscientiousness; but he always yearned, to spend his time in holy prayers and the reading of the Holy Koran.

Finally, the King agreed to relieve him of his post, and he was allowed to resign from his royal duties. The tomb of Maulana Majid is, a popular place for social meets and meats and drinks. Here food is distributed. Among the poor by those whose wishes are realized!

True Ministership is Public Service

Khwaja Shams-uddin Dhari was a minister. Then he resigned his post and became a devotee of Hazrat Nizamaddin. One day Khwaja Dhari said to Nizam-uddin, "If you permit me, I want to build a semi, a rest house, for the poor visitors and pilgrims."

"This work", said Nizam-uddin, "is not less than what you have left behind..." This serai is perhaps the same which is still in existence in Delhi near the tomb of Nizam-uddin and in which a technical training school is now located. It is known as Arab-ki-Serai.

The Deer of the Forest Stood Round Him and Watched Him with Fixed Eyes

Maulana Dawood Pa-ilahi lived in, the village of Raoli near Delhi and was a devoted disciple of Shaikh Farid Ganj Shakar. Hazrat Nizam-uddin writes about him: "He was a Celebrated holy man. We started together from the residence of Shaikh F'arid, but he walked very fast and started performing his prayers long before us. As we understood his method of walking, we started earlier than he to be well in time for his prayers. Even if we were two miles ahead of him, he passed us by and left us two miles behind him!

He performed his prayers in the complete wilderness the forest and never lost his way even at night. The deer of the forest stood around him and watched him with fixed eyes!"

The Saint who Lived in a Forest with Lions

Maulana Fakhruddin Zaradi was an apostle of Saint Nizamuddin of Delhi. He got his education first at Hansi and then at Delhi. After education and discipleship, Maulana Zaradi shaved his head and joined a party of wandering beggars. Finally he built his hut across the River Jumna in a forest full of lions. In the complete wilderness, where later on the city of Ferozabad was established, he devoted himself to the prayers of Allah, the God Almighty.

Once a disciple asked him: "Should one achieve the object of his life through hard work or prayers to God?" He said, "The road is easy through prayers to God, but the reward which is gained easily is also easily lost. An object achieved through hard work by the grace of God is of more lasting value." When the capital of Delhi was shifted to Devgiri, Maulana Zaradi also went thither; and then went on pilgrimage to

Mecca and Bagdad. Then he returned to Delhi by river and died because the boat in which he was travelling sank.

Pearls of Sufism

The True Names

Those who know say that the person who wants to know the Divine Essence through names, attributes, and acts is like the dreamer who, in sleep, sees images that are not real. Those who know the true names, attributes, and actions of God are those who have reached through the way of mystic vision an understanding of the Essence and who then descend to the level of the names and attributes. They have understood that it is the Absolute Essence of God that is manifesting itself, every moment, under the appearance of a name and attribute. They are wide awake and see the reality of things. Lahiji

My True Servant

Man is my secret and I am his. The inner knowledge of the spiritual essence is a secret of my secrets. Only I placed this in the heart of my true servant, and no one can know his state but I. – A Hadith of the Prophet

This is your Heart

I saw God on the streets of the hidden with something in His hand. I said, “My Lord, what is it that you are holding?” He said, “Your heart.” I said, “Does my heart have such a station that it lies in Your hand?” He gazed at my heart, and it looked like something that was folded up. He smoothed and spread it out, and my heart covered the space from the Throne to the earth. He said, “This is your heart, and it is the most vast thing in existence.” O Sheikh Tazi, realize Once and The Lord of Eternity lives In every pot. Kabir.

In My Knowing. Him, I Create Him

He praises me, and I praise Him.. He worships me, and I worship Him. How can He be independent When I help and assist Him? In my knowing Him, I create Him. – Ibn Arabi

The Soul that Does not Live in God is not Alive

Spring makes red and white flowers appear on the trees, But the spring that is the origin of colors is colorless. Understand what I have said, and give up all talk; Run to

the Origin without color and unite yourself to it. Annihilate yourself before the One Existence? So that thousands of worlds leap out of you And your pure existence flames out of itself And goes on and on birthing different forms. Of course, none of these forms will last. Happy is the one who knows this mystery/ Happy is he who gives his life to know this! He leaves this house for another, far more radiant... You cannot understand this mystery through reason. The Way to Knowledge winds through searing and torment. If you do not feel pain, you do not look for healing... The soul that does not live in God is not alive. She seems like a soul, but does not deserve the name: She has not been made alive by the Beloved. The soul is given life by the four elements. Like a lamp that burns through the night: The light is from oil and wick, it is not eternal. While the oil exists, the lamp burns, but then goes out. The one made alive by God will never die. He through God and not through gold or bread. God is the Light, the Eternal Source of Lights. This Light is causeless, as is His fiery radiance... Like gold, God's value comes from His pure, perfect essence. – Sultan Valad.

O GOD, Grace We Love of You!

The “summons” of the Beloved has been heard and the “in-ner secret” has started to radiate its fire of knowledge into all aspects of the seeker’s mind and heart and life. At this third stage of the quest, the seeker becomes like a dry log immersed in fire; he learns to burn and to want to burn ever more passionately with the ardor of pure love for God.

What has become completely clear to the seeker by now is that the only thing that veils God from him is himself, and that the fastest, most powerful, and most beautiful way of wearing down this false self with all its disastrous vanities and distractions is to fall ever more completely in love with Love. In the fire of Love, all imperfections in the self are slowly burned away and everything cold – or even frozen – and vicious in the self is slowly healed.

Everything must be given to the pursuit of so demanding and overwhelming a love of Love. Every desire, appetite, passion, thought, emotion has to be fed to this Love, compelled to become one with it. This takes enormously steady inner work – constant heart work – and the greatest help to the seeker at this stage is to keep up a continual river of prayer in the heart, a constant stream of remembrance through saying the Divine Name in every, situation and circumstance. Continual remembrance of the Beloved is the key to remaining always in the Presence; constantly invoking the Beloved’s help and grace is the key to staying always open to them; constantly pouring out one’s heart in praise and gratitude is the key to experiencing the love that is always streaming towards you from the Beloved and is also your own inmost nature.

“Wherever you may be, ” Rumi tells us in his Discourse to, “in whatever situation or circumstances, strive to be a lover, and a passionate lover. Once you

possess your heart in love, you will always be a lover in the tomb, at the Resurrection, and in Para-dise forever and ever.”

In this third stage of the journey, the seeker learns how, as in Rumi’s beautiful phrase, “to possess the heart in love.” Such self-possession initiates the seeker progressively into the glory – what the Sufis call the *kibriya* – of the Beloved. As Rumi tells us, “Adore and love Him with your whole being, and He will reveal to you that each thing in the universe is a vessel full to the brim with wisdom and beauty. Each thing he will show you is one drop from the boundless river of His Infinite Beauty.”

Such a vision, the mystics know, drives the heart mad with wonder. As the dazzling gifts of this divine madness become ever clearer to the seeker, he strives with all his being to die more and more completely into the Love that he now knows is the one true Life and the source of immortal being. Everything in him starts to cry out with Rumi’s great cry:

Give me eastasy, give me naked wonder, O my
Creator!
Give birth to the Beloved in me, and let this lover die.
Let a thousand Wrangling. desires become one Love.

O God, Grace Me Love Of You!

The Prophet taught the following prayer to his companions:

“O God, grace me love of You, and to love to those who love You, and to love
whatever brings me nearer to You.
O God, make your love more precious to me than coot water to the thirsty.”
– Ghazali

The Only Cure

The source of my suffering and loneliness is deep in my heart.
This is a disease no doctor can cure.
Only Union with the Friend can cure it.
– Rabia

Empty Me of Everything but your Love

Lord, send me staggering with the wine
Of Your love!
Ring my feet
With the chains of Your slavery!
Empty me of everything but Your love
And in it destroy and resurrect me!
Any Hunger You awaken
Can only end in Feast!

– – – Sheikh Ansari

Draw it now from Eternity's Jar

Come, come awaken all true drunkards!
 Pour the wine that is Life itself!
 O Cupbearer of the Eternal Wine,
 Draw it now from Eternity's Jar!
 This wine doesn't run down the throat
 But it looses torrents of words!
 Cupbearer, make my soul fragrant as musk,
 This noble soul of mine that knows the invisible!
 Pour out the wine for the morning drinkers!
 Pour them this subtle and priceless musk!
 Pass it around to everyone in the assembly
 In the cups of your blazing drunken eyes!
 Pass a philter from your eyes to everyone else's
 In a way the mouth knows nothing of,
 For this is the way cupbearers always offer
 The holy and mysterious wine to lovers.
 Hurry, the eyes of every atom in Creation
 Are famished for this flaming-out of splendor!
 Procure for yourself this fragrance of musk
 And with it split open the breast of heaven!
 The waves of the fragrance of this musk
 Drive all Josephs out of their mind forever!

– Rumi

O Love

O Love, O pure deep love, be here, be now,
 Be all – worlds dissolve into your
 stainless endless radiance,
 Frail living leaved burn with you brighter
 than cold stars –
 Make me your servant, your breath, your core.

– Rumi

When the Real Gives you a Heart

Rabia said,

“The mystic is one who asks the Real for a heart. When the Real gives him a heart, immediately he returns it to the Omnipotent and Glorious One. Why? So it can be protected in his hand and hidden from all creatures in His veil.”

Rabia.

Certain Proof

Brothers, my peace is in my aloneness.
My Beloved is alone with me there, always.
I have found nothing in the worlds
That could match His love,
This love that harrows the sands of my desert.
If I come to die of desire
And my Beloved is still not satisfied,
I would live in eternal despair.
To a hand on all that He has fashioned
And hold in the palm of my hand
Certain proof that He loves me –
That is the name and the goal of my search.

– Rabia

The Lord's True Worshiper

Beloved Lord,
Either I am crazy
Or this world of Yours is.
The very worship You don't care about
Is the one everyone's trapped in –
the worldly desire. You love,
Hardly anyone knows anything.
To love You, love You, and no one else,
That's the worship that delights You.
That is why the soul was parted from You –
To return to you through adoration.
Why get caught in empty formalities?
I sing the glory of my love.
I sing of what I have seen myself
The one who reaches the rank of Lover
Is the Lord's true worshiper

– Kabir

I Take Refuge in you

Rabia was once asked,

“How did you attain that which you have attained?”

“By often praying, ‘I take refuge in You, O God, from everything that distracts me from You, and from every obstacle that prevents me from reaching You.’”

–Rabia

All Things are Obedient

Omm Ahmad was a holy woman from Egypt who was also a midwife. She never charged for her services but did her work only to please God.

One winter night, ” her son tells us, “She ordered me to light the lantern. I told her that we were out of oil. She then ordered me to pour water into the lantern and to remember God. As I did so, the wick caught fire of itself. I was astonished and asked her, ‘Mother, is the water really burning?’ ‘No’ she replied, ‘but to the one who obeys God, all things are obedient.’”

The Way of the World

“Every single day, ” Nasrudin proclaimed to his wife, “I am more and more amazed at the marvelously efficient way this world is organized, and for the best for humankind.”

“Give me an example, ” said his wife.

“Take camels. Why do you imagine they have no wings?”

“I have no idea.

“It’s easy – if camels had wings they could squat on house-tops and destroy our peace by stamping about up there and spit-ting their cud down at us!”

– Nasrudin

Fear is all you Need

One day, a cruel and vicious king said to Nasrudin,

“I am going to have you hanged, drawn, and quartered if you do not prove that you have insights as deep as those attributed to you.”

At once, Nasrudin said,

“I can see a vast golden bird in the sky when I look up, and demons howling and dancing in the earth when I look down.

“How can you do this?”

“Fear, ” said Nasrudin, “is all you need.”

– Nasrudin

Donkeys

Nasrudin used to take his donkey across a frontier every day, loaded with baskets full of straw. Because he freely confessed to being a smuggler when he came home every night, the frontier guards would search him again and again. They used to strip him, sift the straw, steep it in water, sometimes even burn it. Mean-while, Nasrudin was becoming more and more wealthy.

Then he retired, and went to live in another country. Here one of the frontier guards happened to meet him, years later.

“You can tell me now, Nasrudin, ” he said. “What on earth were you smuggling all that time when we could never catch you out?”

“Donkeys, ” said Nasrudin.

– Nasrudin

The Discovery

I have found something so rare,
So miraculous,
No one can assess
How much it is worth.
It is colorless and One;
It is eternal and indivisible;
The waves of Change never break over it;
It fills every vessel.
It had no weight; it has no price;
No one can ever measure it;
No one can count it;
It cannot be known
Through talk or erudition.
It isn't heavy and it isn't light.
There isn't a touchstone in any world
That can reveal its worth.
I live in it; it lives in me
And we are one, like water
Mingled with water.
The one who knows it
Can never die –
The one who doesn't know it
Dies again and again.

– Kabir

The Swing

Between the posts of “conscious” and “unconscious”
The mind has strung a swing:
On it bang all beings, all worlds
And it never stops swaying.
Millions of being, sit on it
And the sun and moon also.
Millions of eras come and go
But the swing remains.
Everything, Swings!
Sky and earth, air and water
And the Beloved Him and me
As He comes into form –
Seeing this

Had made Kaki – a servant.

True Generosity

Rabia once asked Sofyan Thawri, “What is your definition of generosity?”

He replied, “For the inhabitants of this world, generosity consists in giving away what one has; for those of the world beyond, generosity is to sacrifice one’s own soul.”

Rabia objected and said that he was wrong. Sofyan then asked her what her definition of generosity was.

“Generosity, ” she said, is to worship Him for love of Him-self alone, and not for any benefit or reward.”

– Rabia

Love’s Familiar

What does it mean to be Love’s familiar?
 To become blood, to swallow your own blood,
 To wait at fidelity’s door with the dogs...
 In weeping, the lover is like the clouds;
 In perseverance, like the mountains;
 In prostration, like water;
 In humility, like dirt in the road.

– Rumi

O Lord

O Lord,
 If tomorrow on Judgment Day
 You send me to Hell,
 I will tell such a secret
 That Hell will race from me
 Until it is a thousand years away.
 O Lord,
 Whatever share of this world
 You could give to me,
 Give it to Your enemies;
 Whatever share of the next world)
 You want to give to me,
 Give it to Your friends.
 You are enough for me.
 O Lord,
 If I worship You
 From fear of Hell burn me in Hell
 If I worship You
 From hope of Paradise, bar me from its gates.
 But if I worship You for Yourself alone

Then grace me forever the splendor of Your Face.
– Rabia

A Story Illustrating the Reality of Love

A young man who loved God turned his face towards the desert. His father, grieved at his absence, could not eat or sleep. A friend of the family railed at the son for his behavior. He could only reply, “My Friend has claimed me as His own; now, I can own no other friendship but His. When He unveiled His beauty to me, everything else I saw seemed unreal.” Those who love Him cannot care for anyone else; their senses are shut away and be-wildered in adoration, their ears are deaf to any reproach.

Without a caravan, they wander through the desert of divine knowledge.

They have no hope of understanding or approval from their fellows for they are the chosen of the elect of God.

– Sadi

What Remains but Drowning?

Love does not live in science and learning
Or in any careful order of pages and letters.
Whatever people chatter about
Is not the Way of Lovers.
The branches of Love are in pre-eternity
Its roots in the post-eternal
This is a Tree that does not exist
On any supports of heaven or earth.
We have dethroned reason and imprisoned desire,
For the majesty of Divine Love
Cannot live, with such fools and their habits.
So long as you hunger after anything,
What you long for will be an idol
When Love decides to love you back
You will no longer exist.
All sailors totter on planks of fear and hope –
But when “planks” and “sailor” have vanished,
What remains but drowning?
Shams of Tabriz, you are sea and pearl, ’
The mystery of your being
Is the secret of the Creator
My Soul the first time I saw you
My soul heard wonders from your soul.
And when my heart drank water from your fountain’
It drowned in you, and the river swept me away.

– Rumi

The Woman in the Desert

Once, I met a woman in the desert.

“Where are you from?” I asked her.

“From my homeland.”

“Where are you going?”

“To my home.”

“Where are your supplies?” I inquired.

“The One who called me graces me what I need because I trust in Him.”

“Don’t you have any water?”

“Only those who are afraid take water with them.” “Don’t you have a donkey or camel? The journey is long.”

“I have four different mounts. My first is Resignation and sit on it whenever God’s Providence oppresses me. Then, when harsh times come, I ride upon Patience and exercise forbearance. Then, when I am blessed by Divine Grace, I sit upon the moun of Gratitude and praise God. Whenever I am blessed by God’ love, I sit on the stallion of Yearning.”

She turned her gaze towards heaven and said, “O Lord, You love has consumed my soul, driven me out of my home, and mad me an aimless wanderer.

The woman started to weep and I asked her why.

“Yearning drags me everywhere and yet my Friend is absent My heart is driven mad by love and totally indifferent to itself How can there be any peace anywhere for me?”

I saw from her passion that she was sincere.

What is the true path to the Transcendent?” I asked her. “To seek for the Beloved through the heart upon the scales of the invisible World.”

– Abu Muhammed Morta’ash

If you do not Burn with Longing

Night and day I played my life. away

With those I believed my friends

And flow I am terrified.

The palace of my Lord is set so high
it heart trembles at climbing its stairs,

But I cannot be time now

if I ever hope to win His love.

My heart must cling to Him.

I must throw off all my veils

And meet Han with my whole body.

My eyes must now perform

The ceremony of the lamps of love.

Kabir says, “Listen, my friend –

He who loves, knows.

If you do not burn with longing

For the Beloved,
Don't bother wrapping your body in rich silk;
Don't bother ringing your eyes with kohl."

– Kabir

Story of a Moth and a Candle

Someone said to a moth, "Go, you ridiculous little creature, and make friends with someone of your own kind. How different your love is from the candle's! You are not a salamander – don't hover around the fire. You have to be brave before you can fight. It is absurd to try and embrace as a friend someone you know is your enemy.

"What does it matter if I burn?" the moth replied. "I have love in my heart and the candle's flame is a flower to me. I do not throw myself into the fire of my own will; the chain of His love is around my neck. You can deride my love for my Friend as much as you like; I am happy to be killed at His feet. I burn because He is precious to me and because my destruction may move Him. Do not say to a helpless man from whom the reins have fallen, 'Drive slowly.

– Sadi

Kill Me, My Faithful Friends

Kill me, my faithful friend,
For in my being killed is my life.
Love is that you remain standing
In front of your...Beloved
When you are stripped of all your
Then His attributes become your qualities.....
Between me and You, there is only me.
Take away the me, do only You remain.

– Hallaj

Only be Satisfied with me

My Joy –
My Longing –
My Sanctuary –
My Friend –
My Food for the Journey –
My final End –
You are my spirit, and my hope.
You are my yearning.
You are all my God.
Without You O my life, my love –
I would never have wandered
Across these endless countries.
How many gifts and graces You have given me!
How many favors You have fed me from Your hand!

I look for your love in all directions
 Then, suddenly, its blessing burns in me.
 O Captain of my heart –
 Radiant Eye of longing in my breast –
 I will never be free of You
 As long as I live. -
 Only be satisfied with me,
 Life of my heart,
 And I am satisfied.

God Looks at himself through Man

Shabistari in his “Rosegarden of Mystery” writes: By love has appeared everything that exists And by love that which does not exist appears as existing. Shabistari means here that man is the eye of the world, that the world is the reflection of God, and that God Himself is the light of this eye. Man is the eye that looks in the mirror, and just as the mirror reflects the face of the person who is looking into it, the reflection itself possesses an eye; in the same time that the eye looks in the mirror, the reflection of this eye looks back at it. God, who is the eye of man, looks at Himself through man.

This point is extremely subtle: from one perspective, God is the eye of man; from another, man is the eye of the world, because the world and man are one. This man – who is the eye of the world – is called the Perfect Man. Since man is a resume of every-thing that exists, he is a world in himself, and the relationship that exists between God and man exists between man and the world.

– Lahiji

Only for you

Life in my body pulses only for You.
 My heart beats in resignation to Your will
 If on my grape a clump of grass
 Were to grow,
 Every blade of it would tremble
 With my passion for You.
 – Sheikh Ansari
 Within This Body
 Are enchanted fields and woods,
 The seven seas and the innumerable stars.
 Within this body
 Are the touchstone and the jeweler.
 Within this body
 The Eternal keeps singing
 And Its spring goes on and on flowing.
 Kabir says, “Listen, my friend, listen –
 My beloved Lord is within.”

– Kabir

The People of the Hidden Letter

He said to me, Who are the people of the fire?
I said, The people of the exterior letter
He said, Who are the people of the garden?
I said, The people of the hidden letter.
He said to me, What is' the exterior letter?
I said, Knowledge that does not lead to action.
He said, What is the bidden letter?
I said, Knowledge that leads to reality.
He said, What is the action
I said, Sincerity.
He said, What is reality?
I said, That through which you reveal yourself.
He said to me, What is sincerity?
I said, Turning towards your face.
He said, What is self-revelatu.
I said, What you meet in the heart of your lovers.

– Niffari

Give up your Place

At the beginning of my mystical search, I knew nothing and so attached myself to the Imam Sayyed Mohammed Nurbaksh. During my second retreat of forty days I saw the Imam in a dream and he asked me, “Can you get up and give your place to some-one else?” When I woke up, I thought that since I had made hardly any progress, this dream meant that I should give my place to someone else who could benefit more from the Sheikh’s presence.

That evening, I told my dream to the Sheikh and what I had deduced from it. He said to me, “The real interpretation of your dream is this: you must forget yourself and give up your place’ to the Supreme Reality.” These words, which provoked a pain in my heart, marked the beginning of my spiritual evolution.

– Lahiji

Spiritual Hunger

Spiritual hunger is a living, radiant fire put by God into the hearts of His servants so that their ego can be burned; when it has been burned, this fire then becomes the fire of longing, which never dies, either in this world or the next.

There is no quicker way to God than spiritual hunger; if it. travels through solid rock, water gushes forth. Spirituat hunger is essential for the Sufis; it is the showering of God’s mercy on them.

– Abu Said Ibn Abi Khayr

That Single Sigh

If the eight paradises were revealed in my hut, and if the ridership of the entire world were placed in my hands, I would not give for them that single sigh that arises at dawn from the depths of my soul when I remember my longing for Him.

– Bayazid Bistami

Concerning Benevolence

If you are wise, hunger for the essential truth, for that re-mains, while all external things pass away. If you have neither knowledge, generosity, or devotion, you are a human being in form alone. If you want to sleep at peace beneath the ground, make tranquil the hearts of beings above it.

Give now of your gold and wealth, for soon it will pass from your grasp. Open the door of your treasure today, for tomorrow the key will not be in your hands.

If you do not want to be in misery on the Day of Judgment, do not forget those who are in misery now. Do not drive the beg-gar from your door, or you will one day wander desperate before the door of strangers. God protects the one who fears that one day he too might need the help of others. Are you not also a suppliant? Be grateful, and never turn away those that turn in tea to you.

– Sadi

Four Things to Know

Hatim al-Asamm said, “I have chosen four things to know and discarded all other kinds of knowledge.

“The first is this: I know that my daily bread is apportioned to me and will neither be increased or decreased, so I have stopped trying to add to it.

“Secondly, I know I owe to God a debt which no one else can pay for me, so I am busy about paying it.

“Thirdly, I know that there is someone pursuing me – Death – whom I cannot escape from, so I have prepared myself to meet him.

“Fourth, I know that God is observing me, so I am ashamed to do what I should not.”

– Attar

On Gratitude

How could ever thank my Friend? No thanks could ever begin to be worthy. Every hair of my body is a gift from Him; Now could I thank Him for each bait?

Praise be to the Lord forever
 Who from nothing conjures all praise waste beings!
 Who could ever describe Hid goodness?
 His infinite glory lays all praise be to Him.
 Look, He has graced you a robe of splendor

Franz childhood: I first cries to old age!
He made you pure in His own image; stay pure.
It is I horrible to die blackened by sin.
Never let dust settle on your mirror shining;
Let it once grow dull and it will never polish
When you work in the world to earn your living
Do not, for one moment, rely on your own strength.
Self-worshiper; don't you understand anything yet?
It is God alone that gives your arms their power.
If, by your striving, you achieve something good,
Don't claim the credit all for yourself;
It is fate that decides who wins and who loses
And all success streams only from the grace of God.
In this world you never stand by your own strength;
It is the Invisible that sustains you every moment.

– Sadi

ARTICLES OF S L PEERAN

16

Spiritual Consciousness

Spiritual consciousness in man is achieved by realizing love, kindness, compassion, mercy, goodness and all other positive qualities in him and to shun evil, hatred, envy jealousy, passion and all the negative tendencies in man. Man should express his thankfulness to the Lord for the bounties he has received from Nature and for the fulfillment of his needs. Nature is generous and provides all that man requires and only way he can be thankful is by protecting the Nature instead of being cruel, wicked and going about destroying all that is good, endearing and lasting. It is through love and sense of belongingness that one can sustain himself and exists in peace, solace and tranquility. To love is to keep oneself within the bounds and not let loose one's temper and strike at the adversary but be forgiving and tolerant at the deeds though unpalatable to one self. Spiritual consciousness is attained when one takes up to the process of cleansing oneself and attaining purity of mind, heart and by correct conduct. One should have a doubtless mind, serene soul and always have Lord Almighty in his thought and mind then the life's rigmaroles will be light and the troubles would be trifle. The rudder of faith in the Almighty Lord would certainly cut off the turbulence of life. The confusion and meandering thoughts may sometimes dampen the spirits but love is sustaining, it will always be pure and sublime and it cannot be shattered or curbed by iron or by walls of brick. Love is pure crystalline water and would be able to flow smoothly to soften any hard hearted wicked person. Love and love alone can win hearts and unarm a most deadly enemy.

As a seed seeks a safe place to hide, till it gains strength to sprout and grow, so also hearts that are weak or marred by frailties need love to make them strong and pure. Love lives in souls lofty and true and shuns the mighty and haughty. Love can never find a place in hearts that are hard and stony. Love shines and sparkles in speech, never adopting a harsh tone. Love reflects itself and ample shown in songs sung with melodious voice. Although love spells special passion for youth, yet its magic hold entranced, in its spell, and people of all ages-young and old. Neither age nor customs can dim its glory. In love, sympathy flows like a stream, gushing and

flowing like ecstasy, like magical springs emitting milk and honey. Love oozes from hearts that are kindly. Although it is sad and painful, the pangs of love, but I have found in the march of life that the pangs are sweet and better far to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all.

Love is a Divine spark, hidden in depths of heart, for man to cherish it till death does him apart. To give meaning to life, love is to be cherished. It is a binder and coagulator. Love is sacrifice and a sincere attempt to give up every lie. It is through love that one can immerse in His thoughts and get drunk in His breath. I have discovered in my life that love is lost and men come to logger heads when one raises his voice in a disrespectful tone; when one loses courtesy and manners are given a go by; when one let loses anger and mind goes berserk; when one loses smile and frown assumes form. I have also found in my life that love makes a hasty retreat and turns sour, when sympathy is flayed and arrogance is praised, when suspicion is raised and allegations are hurled; when nuisance is created and wrong is tolerated; when a guest is insulted and loved one is humiliated, and when shame is lost and passion is raised.

Love is a celestial gift to mankind. It is a seed of sympathy and goodness, charm, delicacy and tenderness. Love needs a soft and lofty heart.

I have found in my life that simplicity is Divinity profound and in it is sincerity found. In simplicity, shining truth radiates its glory and truth's lustrous lights have its own story to speak out.

Simplicity does not admit an iota of lie. It is always calm and gives the tranquility its due and patience is its main virtue. Simplicity does not admit an iota of lie. It is always calm and gives the tranquility its due and patience is its main virtue. Simplicity is profound in its goodness and it is quick in its forgiveness. It is steady and is also straight in its path. It keeps up all the promises and fills up its cup with knowledge. Simplicity is humble and modest and never bows to pride's behest. Simplicity always remains without fear and it is to everyone, it is always dear.

I have found in the march of life that truth is always crystal clear and it needs no eulogy or praise. Its effulgence and brightness showers on loving and compassionate souls. I have discovered that truth pursued with sincerity and humility, showers its spiritual grace and bliss. Truth is complete only with love, compassion, mercy, charity and justice. Truth is eternal and surpasses all barriers and is beyond nothingness. Truth is infinite and dwells in hearts that are pure, simple, humble and kind. Out of my experience, I found that Truth is a steep mountain, slippery and difficult to climb. It requires courage of conviction. Faith is its foundation and certainty is its wheel.

Love is its engine and prayers are its petrol. Truth has to confront obstacles, rough weather. Truth requires sacrifice. It has to face hunger and thirst. Sometimes, Truth loses its face and has to face humiliation and insults. Truth is let down by one and all. It has to stand above like a scare crow in a rice field. Truth is always simple and most humble. It fulfills all its promises and oaths. It is never deceptive neither it

camouflages. It is open minded and open hearted, never secretive or suspicious. It is generous and hospitable and charitable. It is quick in forgiveness and in repentance. It is fearless. It sheds tears for sufferers. One who is truthful reaches eternal light and reality i.e. Lord.

Godly behavior

When the mercy, compassion
 Charity, tremendousness
 Of the Lord, transcends
 In to the divine consciousness
 A person of purity of mind
 And heart becomes Divine.
 He displays Lord's qualities
 And humanity gets benefitted.
 The tongue of such a person
 Utters profound truths.
 The eye watches Beauty,
 The heart sparkles with love.
 The gait changes to innocence.
 Christ like behavior becomes explicit.
 A Midas touch turns sand to gold.
 A healer, a teacher, a Sufi Saint

Freedom from Myths, Mythologies and Evils of Man

Islam means surrender to the supreme will of the Master of the universe, the “Rub”, the “Malik”, the King. Only by such surrender, man achieves peace and freedom from creation of mental fiction, figment of imagination, myths and mythologies. The artificial man-made barriers between man and man on the basis of caste, creed, colour, nationality, language are all removed and all are made equal before the Supreme Master who has no equal or partner or an avatar or representative. There is no parallel to the Lord Almighty. Hence the crescendo “La illaha illallah, ” that there is no god, but God, the Allah. By reciting this kalima, you are at once released from the tyranny of man, man-made gods, tyranny of mind and heart, taboos and superstitions. You achieve freedom of mind and heart and it opens to higher vistas of knowledge and learning. You become logical, rational, sensible and at once spiritual. Thousands of great enlightened men in the form of messengers have brought home the message to mankind that the entire love should be only and be alone for the great Master, the Rub, the Lord, which brings freedom from falsehood, lies, stories, myths and mythologies, idol worship, which are all man-created, far far away from reality and truth. The strong have been devouring the weak. The superior ruling class and the rich people exploited the poor and weak. Several superstitions ruled the day. Astrology, numerology, witchcraft, black magic and umpteen inhuman practices were the order of the day. Humanity did not have the blessing of freedom, truth, peace, justice, equality, brotherhood and the feeling of oneness and to think of the neighbour as thyself. The ego, anger, jealousy, covetousness and several human weaknesses were unbridled and uncontrolled. There was lack of culture, courtesy, manners, cleanliness and good living. Goodness was absent. Crime, cruelty, hatred, division between man and man was common. The women, aged and infirm had no place in the society. Inequity, mayhem and tyranny of the selfish, self-centered kings was the rule of the day. It is the Mercy, Compassion and Beneficence of the Lord of the universe, that He kept sending messengers to reform man. Finally, Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) emerged as the Seal of the Prophets to complete the message of peace, harmony, brotherhood, freedom, honesty, love, equality, justice, truth and self-sacrifice to one and all. The Lord’s message is ingrained in the holy Quran and

sayings of Prophet Muhammad. The moment you recite the kalima, the crescendo of Islam “La illaha illallah, ” you at once give up idol worship both outwardly and inwardly and submit to the Will of the Lord Almighty and begin to accept His command as a humble servant. The Lord’s awe and wonder makes you at once knowledgeable and pure. You become humble, soft, clear, righteous, gentle, sweet-tongued, virtuous dedicated, sincere to the core, truthful, honest, modest and a person of great integrity and full of love, compassion, friendship, mercy, charity, hospitality and generosity. You will become a gifted person; recognize the right of others and to respect those rights. You will become dutiful and your goal will be to attain eternal goodness and you will wish to create a society of love, peace and brotherhood, freedom, good work and goodness and cleanliness. You shun back-biting, undue criticism, arguments, anger, pride, jealousy and hatred. All frivolous, useless, irrational, inhuman, illogical customs and traditions are done away with. You become your own policeman for self-control and self-purification. With you, looking up to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) for guidance and the holy Quran to follow the principles laid down by it, to live a virtuous and pure life, you shun satanic and diabolic ways besides all sexual perversions. You give up stubbornness, heedlessness, arrogance, power, pomp and show. You take care of the entire environment and shun pollution, disease, mayhem, chaos, confusion, crime and a wayward life. You observe silence and are always patient and full of gratitude and thankfulness Your earnings become lawful and so also your spending. You eat only permitted clean food by giving up haram, unlawful and unhealthy food, including blood, carrion, pork, drinking alcohol, drugs and such substances. Your inner purification begins and the heart glitters with love and compassion. You become a pure person... a Muslim.

Self Knowledge by Release from Attachments by Syed Liaqath Peeran

It is our common daily experience that our minds keep talking to ourselves. Repeatedly the hurts and injuries caused to us by others, keep troubling our mind. The wounds open up afresh and the bleeding is unstoppable. Our mind and heart start cursing our adversaries. When they come before us, instead of returning the smile and salutation, a frown, a grunt emerges from our face and mouth. We expose ourselves more and more for further attacks and this chain recoils. The mind and heart binds itself to sorrows and pains endlessly.

What is the remedy available to emerge from ourselves and to break from these shackles? The suggested remedy is to keep uttering the litany i.e. praise of Lord Almighty and keep repeating His name and glorify Him. Glorification of Allah's name, seeking repentance and forgiving others would release us from the futile meandering of the mind and attachments to the one's selfish ego. Attachments to the self, self-glorification, self-gratification causes misery. Self-importance is another factor to lead us to pride and anger. To subdue it, one needs to remind of another Greater Being, who loves us more than our adversaries, who unasked showers His Bounties and Grace. Hence to change the focus from oneself to the over-self i.e. to the Higher Being by His Glorification will surely release us from much mental torture, agony and despondency. The more we realize about the Glory of the Lord and His sustain unseen help reaching us from several unknown quarters, the more it would lead us to self illumination. It helps us to open the inner eye. Many mundane things worrying us would become insignificant and loses its importance in our eye and mind. How to emerge from low self-esteem and to broaden one's own outlook is a familiar question arising in several minds who suffer from it. Persons lacking in self-confidence and suffering from a feeling that they are short of talents, suffer from low self-esteem. It leads to self condemnation and shyness. They refuse to mingle with their peer groups; withdrawing in their own shell, with unknown fears gripping their mind. They fear of being laughed at by their friends and relatives. They curse themselves, their parents, brothers, sisters and their relatives.

Thus low esteem and lack of confidence would be a cause for nervous breakdown, migraine, nervousness, anxiety symptoms; leading to ideas of reference,

neurosis, further on to psychosis. It develops deep feeling of jealousy in the mind and suspicious of others. It would also be a cause for hatred to others. What can be the remedy to get rid of this illness? The best way is to lay faith in someone very dear to you as a friend, a teacher a guru, a priest or a family doctor. You should speak out our mind and let all your feelings and seek help to cleanse your mind and heart of the ill feelings. Another way is to join youth clubs / social clubs and find sincere friends, who can help you to overcome your weaknesses. You need to have patience and fortitude and have full faith in the Unknown power, who loves you and can bring you out of the moroseness, self-centeredness and self-indulgence. Those who have the difficulty in reading books can seek help from visual education, classical music, sightseeing and pilgrimages.

It is often the complaint of the many suffering from depression that no one loves them and they are friendless. They feel that their friendship is spurned and they fail to get proper reciprocation. During the period of depression, life appears listless and you feel you are a failure, that you are meeting failures at every step. It is indeed a period when such persons seek self-pity and their lamentation is grave and full of grievance. The faith in the Ever Loving unseen Lord is at the lowest ebb and they curse the destiny.

This is often a period when your shadow appears to be your enemy. As a counselor for over several decades my approach to such persons seeking my help has been multifold. It is difficult to make home the point that most of the adverse situations are due to their own short-comings and weaknesses. Such persons refuse to accept their wrong doings and mistakes. They refuse to amend and repent. Sometimes, the point has to be driven home by raising hopes and showing that their positive nature can bring them good results. Meditation, patience, doing some good by way of feeding stray animals, birds, ants and poor beggars would bring joy and happiness. Make them look up to the nature and commune with it; the bright sunshine, the colorful sun set, a walk in a flowery garden. Then slowly they have to be led to the altar of the Ever Great Love. Once the love in the heart is kindled to the mercy, the compassion and kindness; then you begin to see some change taking place in you. The failed reason begins to see the beatitude. The eyes open up to the reality. One should repose faith in themselves and in their Guru (Murshid) or their counselor and begin to accept their words as Truth. Only then the inner ego can be subdued and brought to submission.

When you submit and surrender to the Greater Being, the inner eyes open up and truly wonders start happening. Your heart filled with love and affection would light up other's hearts. You are accepted by others. Their response brings change in you and slowly you set goals for your self-improvement and you begin to see the results. One who expects change to occur on repetition of few mantras, doing some charitable work without bringing change in themselves would be living in a fool's paradise.

Humility is the first lesson of wisdom. So also, simplicity and sincerity in words and actions are very much necessary for change to occur in one's life. It has also been observed in life that things do not happen suddenly. One has to put in his sustain efforts with sound common sense and wisdom. Take all precautions to till the land in time; sow the seeds in time, tend the crops; protect it from insects, from animals, from theft and from vagaries of the weather and be very cautious in marketing your crops. You need to save for the rainy day. When you have money in hand then take abundant care and not to be attracted to the glitter of the world and become a spend-thrift. You have to be a Spartan in living and also not be overgenerous to make a show of your wealth. There is also a tendency to give loans to unscrupulous scoundrels who befriend you at such times to rob your wealth and peace and never return it. People living on salary have to live within their means. Though poverty pinches but at times it acts as a succor and virtue to save you from drowning by saving you from evil ways by attracting you to the glamour of life to ruin you. Wealth is not all enough for one's happiness and peace in life.

P.S. Every thought is supported by holy words from all scriptures.

Self Knowledge by Release from Attachments by T. K. Jayaraman

Part-1

1. Everyone does not have the same outlook on life. Our circumstances of life are also different. For many people, daily life itself is a great struggle. They have immense difficulties in satisfying their basic needs. There are people who worry about their next meal. Many suffer without shelter. A job is a dream for many. If I expatiate on Self Knowledge to such people, it would be an insult adding to injury.
2. But quite a few of us are able to overcome all the difficulties enumerated above and reach a stage when we can talk about happiness and the meaning of life. In such context, "Self Knowledge" becomes relevant.
3. I have deliberately chosen the words, "happiness" and "the meaning of life". The discussion in this article would be focussing on these concepts. Further these concepts will be linked to what we generally understand by "Self Knowledge".
4. First one should be very clear about the meaning of the words used. Unlike exact sciences, words used in spiritual discussions do not have unique definitions. Moreover, spiritual experiences cannot be adequately verbalized. But we cannot dispense with words. They are indeed a necessary evil.
5. The word, "self" may mean different things to people. According to Oxford Dictionary, Self Knowledge is "an understanding of yourself". There are several dimensions to human personality such as body, mind, emotions etc. Delving into each of these is beyond the scope of this article. Perhaps looking at the synonyms of the word, "self knowledge" may help us get an idea about its meaning.
6. I can think of 1) Realisation 2) wisdom 3) Anubhuti 4) Gnan 5) Nirvana 6) Moksha 7) Mukti. I do not know the equivalent terms in every tradition. The term, "Self Knowledge" is generally used by philosophers and spiritual teachers. Whatever be your religion, you won't deny that there are certain extraordinary human beings whom we don't hesitate to call as prophets,

saints, sages, jivan mukta, gnani, yogi, mahatma, paramahansa, fakir etc. Again, I have not exhausted the vocabulary. Such beings have appeared in every culture throughout human history. They are light unto themselves and to others. Their exemplary lives would be proof positive to show that they were established in wisdom and self knowledge. Once we agree on this point, there is no need to discuss the semantics of “Self Knowledge “. Surely the teachings of these enlightened are worth pondering for attaining Self Knowledge.

7. Now let us examine our lives. What is it that we want? You may desire to amass wealth to become a billionaire. No doubt that gives you happiness. Let us be frank and truthful. A growing bank balance makes you very happy. I don't want to advocate the view “Money is the root cause of all evil.” Many people hunger for power. There is a constant struggle to reach a higher position in society. One likes to become a high official, a minister, a chief minister, a prime minister, president. The list is endless. Indeed, the pursuit of power brings happiness to many. Some people thirst for fame. They want to be well known in society. They leave no stone unturned to attain their goals. I am not criticizing them. After all, they are pursuing happiness in this manner. I will cite no further examples. I want to drive home the point that we are all pursuing happiness, albeit in different ways. So happiness is an important ingredient of our lives. The point is whether our approaches to find happiness are well founded and whether the so called happiness is real or an illusion.
8. First let us examine the pursuit of wealth. Let us not deride wealth. Wealth has its place in life. In the Indian scheme of life, “Artha” which means wealth is one of the ends of life. But wealth has its limitations. One should not devote one's entire life in the pursuit of wealth and that does not guarantee unalloyed happiness. Let us examine the negative consequences of a relentless pursuit of wealth. One gets attached to wealth.

We are the proud owners of properties. It is not long before the attachment turns morbid. One is totally obsessed with his accumulations. Endless worries are the progeny of that morbid attachment. There is fear about the safety of your wealth. Your sleep is the victim.

All that wealth tells upon your health. When you construct a house for your need, indeed it is a need. None can fault you. But when you develop a mania for possessing more houses, It is no longer a need but becomes greed. What is the cost apart from the money? Your peace of mind. The torment to which you are subjected to in acquiring and safeguarding your wealth outweighs the happiness of possessions.

Moreover, pursuit of wealth beyond a limit is fraught with unethical practices. Your attachment to wealth is your undoing and surely it does not

lead to your happiness. This is sheer common sense and does not require the authority of a scripture. Attachment to wealth is but one of the several attachments which we have to unshackle. This sort of attachment makes you blind in a figurative sense. You fail to appreciate the consequences and become miserable. Whether you like it or not, an inordinate desire for wealth brings you misery.

9. As I already told you, pursuit of various activities in search of happiness results in our getting attached not only to wealth but also to persons, certain ideas and very many other things. All attachments are obstacles to our real happiness. Though we pursue many activities in search of happiness, what they yield finally is only a crop of miseries. It is easy to understand that attachments are our own creations. They are chains which bind us in various ways and bring us untold sufferings.

After committing many foolish things, we want to escape from their consequences. The simile of a prison is apt. Your unwise actions lead you to a prison of your own making and at some point of time, you would like to get out of the prison. In other words, you want release, which is total freedom. So real freedom is release from all attachments.

10. So dear friend, it is good that you are aware of your status of a prisoner. Are you not asking these questions? Has life no meaning? Is it just suffering? Where is the happiness that I yearned for? Why am I bound to a prison life? How can I get a release? When do I get a favorable judgment? What am I expected to do now? At the beginning of this article I mentioned, “the meaning of life” and “happiness”. Now, when you are suffering due to your attachment, the time is ripe for reflecting on the meaning of life.

Part-2

11. All cultures have produced sages, prophets, saints, yogis whose teachings hold the key for attainment of “Self Knowledge”. We need not get confused on account of a plethora of spiritual paths. Every religion teaches us the existence of a Supreme Being or Power. The words used may be different but they all indicate the same Supreme Being. The Holy Koran says, “There is no deity, but God” The oneness of God is emphasized. God is denoted by different religions. It does not mean the existence of plurality of Gods. Just as water is known by different names in different names in different languages, God has different names. The underlying unity of all religions have to be understood and appreciated. That puts an end to all quarrels in the name of religion and God.
12. All theistic religions insist on surrender to God. In Holy Bible, it is said, “The fear of The Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instructions. (The Proverbs Ch 1. Verse 7). Islam means

surrender to Allah. It is basic to Islam that every believer surrenders absolutely to God. When a person surrenders absolutely to God, all inessential things automatically drop away. All attachments are cut asunder. Such a person is really on the path of self knowledge. I find the following exhortations of Jesus Christ (St Mathew ch 6 verses 19 to 34) very illuminating. (6:19) Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (6:20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: (6:21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (6:22) The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. (6:23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness! (6:24) No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (6:25) Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? (6:26) Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? (6:27) Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? (6:28) And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: (6:29) And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (6:30) Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith? (6:31) Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (6:32) (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.. (6:33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

(6:34) Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. What beautiful verses! Elsewhere Jesus says, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the gates of Heaven.

13. Now I am reminded of a young boy Nachiketha and his encounter with Yama, the god of death. This is narrated in Katha Upanishad. Narration of the story in its entirety is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that Yama grants Nachiketha three wishes. The first two wishes are granted easily. But the third wish poses problem. What is the third wish? "Give me knowledge of life after death" Yama does not grant the third wish so easily.

He wants to test if the receiver of Knowledge is worthy of it. He tempts Nachiketha with offer of all worldly pleasures instead of teachings on Immortality. The boy, was very steadfast in attaining his goal. Nothing could stand in the way of his quest for self Knowledge. Worldly pleasures cannot bind him. He rejects all such offers and insists only on the teaching on Immortality. Nachiketha chose what is beneficial rather than what is pleasant. (Wikipedia entry on Katha Upanishad)

14. Listen to what Ramakrishna Paramahansa says, “Utter the word Gita in quick succession, a number of times.” GiTagi-Tagi-Tagi. “It is virtually pronounced as Tagi, Tagi which means one who has renounced the world for the sake of God. Thus in one word Gita teaches, ” Renounce ye world bound man. Renounce everything and fix the mind on The Lord.
15. Wealth and Family may be an obstacle to spiritual life. The following extract from, “The Gospel of Islam” by Duncan Greenlees published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar page 154 is very relevant. Woe to every slanderous backbiter who has gathered wealth and stored it up, thinking that his wealth will give him security. Avarice distracts him until he reaches the tomb. (102:1-2). And as for one who hoards and thinks himself independent and denies the good, we shall hurry him on to adversity and his wealth will not save him when he is perishing. (92:8-11).

But as for the one who gives away and is righteous and admits the good, we shall hurry him on to ease. (92:5-7). And the raiment of righteousness that is good. (7:26).

16. Prasannotra Ratna Malika which means a Garland of Questions and Answers is a small beautiful Sanskrit work of Sri Sankaracharya. Let me quote four of these questions with the answers. Very relevant for all spiritual seekers. 6. Who is the blindest among the blind? One who is subject to attachments. 12. What is happiness? The state of complete non-attachment to everything. 41. What makes a man fearless? The state of non-attachment. What causes fear? Wealth indeed. 51. Who is endowed with abundance? A Sannyasi or one who has renounced everything. (source: Prasnotara-Ratna - Malika translated by Swami Tapasyananda Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras)
17. The Ancient Tamil Classic Thirukkural has a lot to say about giving up attachments and embracing a life of renunciation. Let me quote some couplets from that immortal Classic.

Renunciation

341. From whatever, aye, whatever man gets free From whatever, aye, from that no more of pain hath he. (whatever thing a man has renounced by that thing he can not suffer pain) 346. Who kills conceit that utters “I” and

“mine” Shall enter realms above the power divine. (He who destroys the pride which says “I”, “mine” will enter a world which is difficult even for Gods to attain) 347. Who cling to things that cling and eager clasp, Grievs cling to them with unrelaxing grasp. (Sorrows will never let go their hold of those who give not up their hold of desire)

Knowledge of the True

360 When lust and wrath and error's triple tyranny is o'er, Their very names for aye extinct, then pain shall be no more. (If the very names of these three things, desire, anger, and confusion of mind, be destroyed, then will also perish evils (which flow from them)

The Extirpation of Desire

363 45 No glorious wealth is here like freedom from desire; To bliss like this not even there can soul aspire. (There is in this world no excellence equal to freedom from desire; and even in that world, there is nothing like it.) (source: Project Madurai online translation of Thirukkural by G U Pope) Remember that in the Indian scheme of life, renunciation is an important stage for all. How long you can cling to desires which lead you to a bottomless pit of sorrows?

18. Let us reflect on what Thomas a Kempis says in his remarkable work, “Imitation of Christ” Jesus has many who love His kingdom in Heaven, but few who bear His cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share His feast, but few His fasting. There is no other way to life and to true inner peace than the way of the Cross and of daily self-denial.
19. Now I give an extract of chapter 2 Sufism and Sufi literature authored by AA HATAM. Sufism is the mystical branch of Islam. It has its roots in Koran and the Islamic tradition, but at the same time encompasses the universal mysticism that we see in other spiritual traditions. The essence of Sufism is the simple path of loving God. The Sufi Masters sing of all pervading love which inundates their being when they become one with their “Beloved”.

If there is just one goal of Sufism, it is to overcome the binding ego and attain liberation through one's identity with God. And thus the Sufi poets speak of dying to be born again, a concept similar to other mystical traditions such as transmigration in Hinduism.

20. The nineteenth century mystic Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa dedicated his whole life to God. He inspired millions of seekers all over the world. The most remarkable thing about him is that he practiced various forms of worship / religious system and found that all paths are equally valid and

lead to the same goal. During conversations with seekers, he used to warn them of “lust and gold” which are enemies of self-knowledge. He would never be comfortable with material wealth. It is said that once he could never sleep and the reason was that there was a coin under his bed. Ramakrishna, by telling simple parables as we find them in the Holy Bible instructed his followers.

21. Another remarkable figure in the religious history of the world is Sri Ramana Maharshi. At the age of ten, he enacted a death scene which enabled him to attain Self Knowledge. Even as a boy, he renounced everything and sat in rapt contemplation of The Lord. A great teacher of Non – Dualism, he emphasized on Self Inquiry or Surrender for attainment of Self Knowledge. While concluding this article, let me share some of his teachings with the readers.

a) Realization of Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity. A self realized being cannot help benefiting the world. His very existence is the highest good.

b) The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts arise because there is a thinker.

The thinker is the ego. The ego if sought will vanish automatically. The ego is the root thought from which all other thoughts arise.

c) Happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realize Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.

d) It is wise to drop the sense of responsibility and free will by regarding ourselves as the ordained instruments of the all wise and all powerful and to do and suffer as He pleases. He carries all burden and gives us peace. (Source: Daily quotes from Talks with Ramana Maharshi – compiled by Sanjay Lohia – Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore)

Conclusion

Man does not live by bread alone. When we pursue wealth, power, fame and other worldly things, real happiness eludes us. Great prophets and sages have shown the way of release from sufferings by removal of all attachments. Their teachings show us the way. It is for us to live the teachings.

Fakirs

The word 'Fakir' signifies – fasting in the name of the persistence and perseverance in prayers with fortitude of the beloved persistence and perseverance in prayers with fortitude and patience, subjugation of despicable elements, total faith in the will of Supreme Being-Allah and to practice pure thoughts and lead a life of Truth, to achieve a blissful life.

One who practices regularly these four qualities can rightly call himself a 'fakir'. To become a fakir, a person has to become first a true and pious Momin and should practice austerity, humility and should develop in oneself sincerity and love for humanity. Fakir's way of life began with the advent of Islam. The lovers of Hedrat Ali (radiallahu t'ala 'anhu) resolved themselves to persistently and with firmness, to follow the tenets of Islam and to live a spiritual way of life, to reach higher realms of consciousness, acquire knowledge and to evolve themselves as a refined human beings. These fakirs live in a most humblest of ways and eat the most simplest of foods. Every breath in them is charged with the zeal and love of their beloved, Allah. The mundane existence is pondered upon and by simple living and high thinking understood and realized the true ideals of love, truth and beauty.

The inner qualities of man are reflected upon and every quality and feelings is analyzed and self-realization is achieved. The animal feelings are subjugated and the higher ideals and qualities evolved. Day in and day out, they put in efforts to fight against low desires of the self. By this practice, the self, becomes 'Allah imposed' self or a purified self. The soul achieves enlightenment. Thus, they reach 'Wilayat' or Sainthood, and they come to be recognized as 'Peers'.

Years of practice of self-control and self-analysis, by prayers, by correcting and polishing their behavior, they achieve true understanding of their consciousness. These saints become true personification of all virtues and saviors of humanity. They teach people ways to achieve mastery over the lower self, and instruct their followers to achieve true love. In all their actions, the followers, are able to see the light of their Beloved and in their every thought, they feel the greatness of their Lord. The followers subject themselves humbly to these saints. The 'Peers' guide their followers to revive spiritual succor, enlightenment, joy and supreme bliss. In the glory and

brilliance of the light, – ‘noor’ their followers are able to feel the insignificance, total helplessness and despondency of man.

The understanding of human nature, enable, a disciple, ‘Mureed’ to achieve the ability to guide their fellow beings. These Saints and fakirs become succors of peace. By their nobility of mind and qualities of head and heart, they endear themselves to one and all of their fellow beings.

Patience is the “Mother of Virtue”

Now, we are living in an advance age of our civilization, with advancement in every field. The door of communication has opened up to new vistas of knowledge and learning. The march of time has quickened its pace, so much so, that the vitals of the modern life are being devoured by new viruses, which are threatening to end the very existence of Man on this beautiful planet. From the time a child is born, he is being prepared to face the fast life. From the age of two or even less, a child is admitted to a play school. No longer do the nannies and grannies, aunts and uncles play with the child. There is a cultural breakdown and due to shortage of space of living, cramped living, living in concrete jungles, children are bereft of the beauty of nature and to watch the pleasantness the fauna and flora provides to thrill the senses and the opportunities it provides for observation and learning.

The masses and so also the privileged class are no longer in a position to spare time to learn the nuances of music, language and various other aspects of culture. They have to be content with watching films on the screen and be content with entertainment provided to appease the cheap senses of mind and heart. Today, more importance is given to that type of entertainment which satisfies the baser elements in man. This has been the major cause for breakdown of one's personality and a person to become 'egocentric', 'selfish', 'self-centered'; 'spend thrift', 'greedy', 'jealous' and such other weaknesses that robs a person of peace and solace.

Mankind has realized now that the advancement achieved with scientific and medical inventions besides great progress in the art of living has at the same time robbed man of the happiness of joint family system and age old traditions. Every age has found this loss around it in its time and tenure. Holy Quran in Sura C-III has referred to man being in a state of loss and points out that only those who are believers (in Almighty God, and in eternal goodness) and do good works and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance (patience) are saved from loss. Loss means loss of every good aspect of living, culture and civilization. Thus patience has been considered as a mother of virtue. Every human being has to have endurance and develop patience in every walk of life so that the baser elements in man do not strike him like a poisonous snake to death. The disturbing elements in mind and heart are required to be curbed. The multiple desires erupting like fountain

constantly require controlling and checking and one has to set limits of tolerance. The living needs to be cultivated and it can be done only by exerting in endurance and patience. A seed takes its own time to sprout to a sapling and to a tree then to reach the flowering stage before it can bear sweet fruits for us to relish. So also all good deeds need and require time, patience and endurance to bear sweet fruits.

Loss of patience is a sure way to defeat and it ruins all the good that is likely to happen in our life. Self-control can be cultivated only through patience. Just as a mother exhibits enormous patience in the upbringing of a child; so also virtues and good deeds requires at its root level patience.

God praised those who adopt patience and mentioned more than several times in the Holy Quran. He kept most good deeds and merits linked with patience. God Says:

“When they kept patience, I created leaders from amongst them who showed guidance according to my instructions” Sura 32.V.24.

God says owing to the patience of Bani Israel, the words of your Lord were perfected well over them. God Says:

“I will reward those for their goods works and who are patient.”

“They will be given double rewards for their patience.”

“The patient will be given rewards fully without accounts.”

“Fasting is only for Me and I will give its rewards.”

He kept connection with those having patience with Him and promised that He is with the patient.

“Take to patience, God is with the patient” Sura 2: V 249.

“If you keep patience and fear God... your Lord will help you with five thousand well-armed angels”

“These are blessings and mercy upon them from their Lord and they are those who are guided” Sura 2 V 58.

The Prophet (SAS) said patience is half of faith. He said: The lowest measure of what you have been given is sure faith and firm determination of patience. He who has been given a portion of those two qualities has got no fear even if he prays little at night and fasts little during day time. If you can stand with firm foot with patience just as you are now and do not turn away from this way, it is dear to me. If anybody does divine service equal to all of you after turning away from patience, it will not be dear to me. I fear the world will be opened to you after me. You will then cherish hatred for one another and the dwellers of heaven will then be dissatisfied with you. He, who keeps patience and expects rewards, will get full reward. Then he recited this verse:

“What is near you will come to an end and what is near God will only remain. I will give full rewards to those who being patient do good works” Sura 16 V 96

The Prophet (SAS) once said that patience is a jewel among the jewels of paradise. The Prophet (SAS) was once asked: ‘What is faith? He said: Patience. The Prophet said: To say what patience dictates is the best act.

Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH) said: You cannot earn what you love till you keep patience at what you do not love.

The Prophet (SAS) said: Had patience been given the form of a man, it would have been kind. God loves the patient.

(For more reading on “Patience and Gratefulness” See Chapter II of Volume IV of Ihya Ulum-id-din by Hazret Imam Ghazali (RAA)).

Art of Good Living

This topic is as old as human life itself and there are great Sages and Saints who have given the tips for very good living. All the religions deal with moral and spiritual aspect of human life, only to lead man to develop the art of good living so that life can be smooth, happy with solace, tranquility and peace.

One's healthy and charming personality is built by very good upbringing in a happy home. Those who are unfortunate to have a broken home with quarrelling parents and parents who are separated and those who lost their parents find life very miserable, as their memory gets spoilt with strains and the healthy aspects of personality is lost.

It is these people who require to work very hard with extraordinary efforts to purify their mind and heart from all these strains, bad memories, to make their personality healthy and pure. For a good and comfortable living, besides developing a healthy personality, one is required to maintain the goodness in one's mind and heart throughout one's life under all circumstances. The life is beset with storms and tsunamis and there are periods when life becomes very difficult and nothing good happens and one starts blaming God and nature as to why He has chosen him for all the troubles to visit his house and him.

The personality at such period becomes very disturbed and the art of good living is lost. So it is the innate goodness in one's mind and heart that has to sustain under all circumstances and for which lot of good virtues are required to be acquired and practiced daily. The major and minor sins which are mentioned in the ten commandments and in major religions and the abrasions which get developed in one's personality are required to be avoided and removed from mind and heart.

For this one requires to have a large heart to forget and forgive the mistakes of others; to develop equanimity of mind and heart with very healthy thinking. One is required to develop nobility, simplicity, humility and dignity. One has to live a dignified life and that can be done when one is calm and peaceful with a pure heart and a sweet tongue. One has to be very calm and peaceful in their dealing with humanity and avoid harsh and vengeful nature.

The art of living and that to a good one is in acquiring as I mentioned in very good virtues of truth, beauty, love and cheerfulness. One should have very good

humor and to develop good humor one should take things which happen in their life in its own stride and not carry bitterness but should also know as to how to manage their affairs in a smooth way for which one needs to win friends and influence people with their innate goodness and that can happen when one is charitable and one develops the art of sharing. One should know how much to share and how much to spend for their simple and humble living. One should not be extravagant in their spending but save for the rainy day.

There are people and friends who approach you when you are in very happy circumstance with full of comfort and pleasure, they come to beg for money for their needs with evil intensions and they betray your confidence and never return your borrowed sums. You should be extraordinary careful in avoiding such type of people and you should be in a very intelligent position to handle such type of matters to avoid without losing their friendship. It is an art by itself to avoid people who like to take advantage of you and betray your confidence. You should develop such type of art which would avoid making your friends your bitter enemies.

The good qualities which are nurtured by you with good intention should be to live a very healthy life. The art of good living cannot be learned through books but one can learn by being in the company of wise Saintly people. One has to be very prayful, meditative and practice silence in the mind and heart.

One should know as to how to manage their finances. If one does not know how to handle their finances, then the trouble visits them very quickly and they will fall in the trap of poverty. Poverty is always waiting at the door to enter at your weak moments. All your seven deadly sins in the mind and heart have to be controlled and they should be reined in, so that they don't take a better part and take over your mind and heart to destroy you.

If you allow the anger, jealousy, lust, greed, gluttony sloth and slumber and all these type of major sins to play a role in your mind and heart then you are sure to be in troubled waters. The devil and your inner animalistic nature are waiting to drown you in the sea of woes and in sorrows and pain and trouble. The trouble always visits only those who are in bad moods and lose their patience. Therefore, patience is the mother of virtue.

To develop patience one has to have absolute inner control of one's emotions and should not lose heart. One has to bear in mind that the bad days are not forever. But one who withstands the storms and evil period that one sees in their life then they will always be joyful, full of happiness. Happiness does not come just like that and it is not a thing which is available in stores of life, in the bazaars of life, in the market of life. Happiness is a virtue by itself and it is gained through practice of truth and beauty.

If you give up truth and you become a person of easy virtue then you will lose everything in life. You should avoid all circumstances which are slippery and which

may take away your peace of mind. You have to be always calm and cool and develop equanimity in mind and heart and be abreast with knowledge and wisdom.

Knowledge is a light which shows the way to victory. The path of life has to be enlightened with knowledge and wisdom for that one has to develop skills to acquire the same.

You have to be perfect in the profession which you profess, which you carry. The art of good living is when you are having perfection in the profession which you follow and you should be in a position to handle any new thing which comes with your knowledge and any new trouble which visits your profession, you should have skills to handle the same and come out victorious.

All this can be achieved only when you become a man of love; to become a man of love, one should be pure in mind, soul and heart.

The victory is only for those who practice the virtue of love. Love is greatest. Love is God. Ultimate aim of life is to love and to be loved as love and affection are the most beautiful flowers in the garden of life. If one wants to enter the garden of bliss, then one needs to nurture and purify the mind, heart and soul by becoming prayful, meditative and acquire silence in the mind and soul.

The human life is beset with ever continuous troubles and everyday is not a day of joy and bliss. Everyday a new problem may arise as now today the whole nation is observing curfew because of the onset of a deadly corona virus. In circumstance like this it is our goodness; it is our good heart to remain in unity with all our relatives, friends and our people that will give innate strength in mind and heart. We need to remove all impure things which are there in our personality and that can happen only with have strong faith; faith in God, faith in virtues, faith in good living. The art of good living can be achieved only through sustained hard work.

It is hope that our good virtues are bound to take us to the pinnacle and heights of glory and lead us to the garden of bliss. I thank you all for coming to this meeting and heard me on this aspect. There are very great people who have spoken about this subject and they have achieved greatness by their virtues and it is only good virtues which can help us to withstand all the difficulties in life and we can sail through the troubled waters of life.

Is God a “Dhobi” (Washerman)

Is God “Dhobi” (Washer man”) to put most expensive clothes of a King and of a pauper, of prostitute, of workers in a “bhatti” (cauldron) for washing and cleaning. Does not God distinguish between expensive clothes which require special dry cleaning and those of ordinary clothes which are required to be washed separately. The answer is yes. Likewise all human beings are separate and are graded as per their virtues and possessions of qualities of good, evil and bad ones.

In holy scriptures it is stated that “Do not throw pearls to swine’s for they not know its value” Pearls of wisdom can be understood only by intellectuals and wise persons and not by duffers, muffs, and dullards.

Coins may be of same size but of different values, gold and silver coins may be of same size of aluminum, copper or nickel coins but would be more valuable. Likewise each individual is valued based on his moral, spiritual and intellectual standing, capacity and sagacity they bare.

Therefore to say that God looks upon all men equally may not sound correct.

Prophets, Saints, truthful persons cannot be equated with sinners, wrongdoers and impious persons.

One is valued more by the halo they carry and one needs to struggle hard in life to elevate oneself morally and spiritually. The more one elevates the soul the more value one acquires.

God helps those who help themselves. Those who strive in God’s path get help from God to reach the straight path of guidance to reach eternal peace (As Sakina).

Ishwar-Allah

Show Thy Glimpse

My heart's pangs, sighs and grieving
My million throbs and sleepless nights
My sunken eyes and hallow cheeks
My sorrows and pathos are proof of thy love.
My tears turned red
They fell on sand and lo they turned into rubies
I wept and wept for ages and ages
I burnt and burnt in love of my beloved.
O my beloved! My throat is now sore
I no longer can sing Thy praise
My yearning soul is now ready to soar
Let my flickering candle have thy grace.
O praised one! O the glory of Heaven!
Light of everlasting soul, bless me, bless me
My last dying wish and yearning
Is to heave and leave this coil, with Thy glimpse.

Lead me to Light

Lead me to the light, O Lord –
For deep darkness surrounds me
Blinded with none to show me the way.
That leads me to safety and your gardens.
With thorny paths, marshy lands, shallow pits
Bitterness, cruel ways of tricky world
O Lord! I seek Thy beaming light.
For I am desolate and I yearn for Thee.
Storms and tempests, cyclones and lightning
Thunder, tornadoes, with grave situations
Fears abounding with enemies surrounding
Without any protection or help from anyone
O Lord! The Merciful and Beneficent
Show clemency, protect me, and love me!

As we grow, we are made to learn prayers and in our hearts and mind it is inculcated that there is God and we need to fear Him. There is devil, which causes harm and we should avoid all evil. In school we are made to sing “Ishwar Allah tere nam.” Each child is brought up in their traditions and we have two sets of it, one is what is practiced at home and the other is the outside, the secular world. The mind gets used to the regimentation and the set rules and regulations, we are required to follow. It is our common knowledge that the belief, customs and traditions are for creating social order, social control and social action lest humanity goes astray. Policing by itself is not enough and sufficient to bring law and order. Everyone needs to develop consciously respect for law both Divine and manmade so that man lives in peace, solace and contentment.

The religion, I inherited spoke of unseen Divine personality Allah, who hears, sees and answers our prayers and takes care of our needs. The religion preached that the Divine Allah should not be picturized into any images and He is not personified in any form, matter and thing. He is other than all imaginary ‘gods’ of worship, not a terror but Compassionate and Merciful Being. As a child, we were to practice prayers by repeating the passage from the Holy Book, being the Allah’s message to our Prophet. Besides the history connected to the religion, we were to strictly follow the commandments and never to worship other ‘gods’ of fiction, imagination, mythology and stories but adhere to that Divine Being, who is the Lord of the Universe.. Associated with the belief in One Divine Being was also about the belief in the Creation of first man and woman. Adam and Eve. And how the Satan lured them to disobey God’s commandments and they were banished to Earth and later on their repentance God forgives them but the life on the earth is transient, a test of conduct and those with good conduct would be awarded with heaven and those evil doings would be punished in Hell. Thousands of Prophets were sent to correct the erring humanity and last one to be sent was our Prophet. We were made to believe in Saints and virtuous people to be adored and respected but not worshipped.

As we grew, we were made conscious of our soul and that of inner consciousness being of three level-animal, moral and spiritual. All mundane and earthly qualities were associated to animal consciousness like anger, lust, greed, jealousy, hatred, niggardliness and like such evil and negative traits. While moral consciousness pertained to goodness, charity, compassion, forgiveness, humility, patience, kindness, generosity and all such positive traits. The spiritual consciousness dealt with divine feelings of love, contentment, sincerity, which elevated the soul to raise itself to heavenly feelings of joining itself with the Divine; also by completely annihilating ego, selfishness and selfish desires.

Our growth and development had its own psychological stages. It was not easy to grasp the higher moorings. We felt more with mundane feelings, yet we were conscious that we needed to practice goodness or else harm will result in our daily life. We became morally conscious of maintaining correct conduct. As we reached

adolescent stage and teenage, we observed our elders, who were personification of good conduct, virtuous and morally sound. Our teachers made us conscious of secular ideals that governed humanity. But the attractions and desires to achieve something better than others would always nib us. Desires are inherent and part of human psychology and personality. When we grew up, we discovered that non-fulfillment of desires lead to frustration and sorrows. The scriptures always made us aware that desires are required to be controlled and weaned and we needed to develop a sound personality unwavering by attractions, glamour and glitter of the world. The negative traits in man would always attempt to have a better say and try to overcome the positive traits. The glitter of the world would overwhelm the consciousness and the positive traits. It is here we realize that there is something devilish negative force which always makes man to err and leads to ruination. The crime, wars and destruction exposes the evil nature of man and moral turpitude. It became imperative for society to strengthen the moral fiber and in this circumstance; religion played a great role to hold on to God.

It required in later period of my life to take to austerities for self-realization. Once this was achieved, I needed to hold to strong moral fiber and moral consciousness. This led to spirituality and to our fore bearer's practice of Sufism, which is nothing but a way to achieve perfection in manners, conduct and to lead a life that would elevate the soul to higher consciousness and divine feelings of love. To nurture love and divine feelings, the Sufis would take to meditation, music and composing divine songs. The Sufis would shun the glamour and glitter of the world and would live a life of austerities, contentment, indulge in charity and practice everlasting goodness. For Sufis, the manmade barriers of caste, creed and color would have absolutely no meaning. For them the search of Divine and to achieve the feelings of divineness is imperative. I, having realized the essence of the religion was attracted to my forbearers search for truth, love and ahimsa. We may inherit the traits and find an environment but ultimately it is for the individual person to search for truth himself and achieve self-realization. In the Buddhist religion, it is referred to as 'Nirvana' and 'Moksha' in Hinduism. While in Sufism, the term used is 'Fana' and 'Baqha'-to merge in the Divine consciousness, which is not apart from the 'self' but is deep inside one's own soul and heart. By constant practice and meditation and by shunning the ego and the evil nature of man; by elevating the soul to love and everlasting goodness, a Sufi merges with the Divine consciousness.

Several meditative practices are advised in Yoga, Sufism and Mysticism to enable the soul to reach to the divine consciousness. The higher elevated Masters and adepts in all these fields help the initiates to pass through various levels and stages of consciousness. It is of highest importance for both the initiate and the adept to hold to the moral consciousness at all times; to be morally sound and be of impeccable honesty and character.

**Poems from Divani Shamsi Tabriz.
Moulana Rumi from Divani Shamsi by Hazrath
Moulana Tabriz Rumi (RAA)**

XXXII

I am that supplicant who make supplication to thee;
The anguish inspired by a charmer like thee hath for me a
thousand charms.
Thou art the sun of mine eyes – they are radiant with thy beauty
If I draw them away from thee, to whom shall I look again?
I will not become inconstant to thee on account of thy cruel
treatment;
By remaining constant myself I will restrain thee from cruelty.
I complained of thee, thou saidst: Provide thine own remedy.’
I am one whose heart provides a remedy for Divine affliction.
I will not tell thee my heart’s grief, for it would weary thee
I will shorten this tale, for mine is a long grief.

XXXIV

I am a painter, a maker of pictures; every moment
I shape a beauteous form,
And then in thy presence I melt them all away.
I call up a hundred phantoms and indue them with a spirit;
When I behold thy phantom, I cast them in the fire.
Art thou the Vintner’s cup-bearer or the enemy of him who
is sober,
Or is it thou who mak’st ruin of every house I build?
In thee the soul is dissolved, with thee it is mingled,
Lo! I will cherish the soul, because it has a perfume of thee.
Every drop of blood which proceeds from me is saying to thy
dust.
I am one colour with thy love, I am the partner of thy affection.’

the house of water and clay this heart is desolate without thee;
O Beloved, enter the house, or I will leave it.

XXXV.

This is Love: to fly heavenward,
To rend, every instant, a hundred veils.
The first moment, to renounce life;
The last step, to fare without feet.
To regard this world as invisible,
Not to see what appears to one's self.
O heart, ' I said, may it bless thee
To have entered the circle of lovers,
To look beyond the range of the eye,
To penetrate the windings of the bosom!
Whence did this breath come to thee, O my soul,
Whence this throbbing, O my heart?
O bird, speak the language of birds
I can understand thy hidden meaning.'
The soul answered: I was in the (divine) Factory
While the house of water and clay was a-baking.
I was flying away from the (material) workshop
While the workshop was being created.
When I could resist no more, they dragged me
To mould me into shape like a ball.'

XXXVI.

O lovers, O lovers, it is time to abandon the world;
The drum of departure reaches my spiritual ear from heaven.
Behold, the driver has risen and made ready the files of camels,
And begged us to acquit him of blame: why, O travellers, are you
asleep?
These sounds before and behind are the din of departure and of
the camel-bells;
With each moment a soul and a spirit is setting off into the Void.
From these (stars like) inverted candles, from these blue
awnings (of the sky)
There has come forth a wondrous people, that the mysteries may
be revealed.
A heavy slumber fell upon thee from the circling spheres
Alas for this life so light, beware of this slumber so heavy
O soul, seek the Beloved, O friend, seek the Friend,
O watchman, be wakeful: it behooves not a watchman
to sleep.

On every side is clamour and tumult, in every street
 are candles and torches,
 For to-night the teeming world gives birth to the world
 everlasting.
 Thou wert dust and art spirit, thou wert ignorant and
 art wise;
 He who has led thee thus far will lead thee further also.
 How pleasant are the pains he makes thee suffer while
 he gently draws thee to himself!
 His flames are as water: do not frown upon him.
 To dwell in the soul is his task, to break vows of penitence is his task;
 By his manifold artifice these atoms are trembling at
 their core.
 O ridiculous puppet that leapest out of thy hole, as if
 to say, I am the lord of the land, '
 How long wilt thou leap? Abase thyself, or they will
 bend thee, like a bow.
 Thou didst sow the seed of deceit, thou didst indulge
 in derision,
 Thou didst regard God as nothing: see now, O miscreant!
 O ass, thou wert best with straw; thou art a caldron
 thou wert best black;
 Thou wert best at the bottom of a well, O disgrace of
 thy house and family

XXXVII

I have heard that thou dost intend to travel: do not so.
 That thou bestowest thy love on a new friend and companion: do not so.
 Tho' in the world thou art strange, thou hest never
 known estrangement;
 What heart-stricken wretch art thou attempting? do not so.
 Steal not thyself away from me, go not to aliens;
 Thou art stealthily glancing at another do not so.
 O moon for whose sake the heavens are bewildered,
 Thou makest me distraught and bewildered: do not so.
 Where is the pledge and where the compact thou didst
 make with me?
 Thou departest from thy word and pledge do not so.
 Why give promises and why utter protestations,
 Why make a shield of vows and blandishments? do not so.
 O thou whose vestibule is above existence and nonexistence,

At this moment thou art passing from existence do not so.
O thou whose command Hell and Paradise obey,
Thou art making Paradise like Hell-fire to me do not so.

In thy plot of sugar-canes I am secure from poison;
Thou minglest the poison with the sugar: do not so,
My soul is like a fiery furnace, yet it sufficed thee not;
By absence thou art making my face pale as gold: do not so.
When thou withdrawest thy countenance, the moon is
darkened with grief;
Thou art intending the eclipse of the moon's orb do not so.
Our lips become dry when thou bringest a drought;
Why art thou moistening mine eye with tears? do not so.
Since thou must not endure the reasoning faculty of
lovers, Then why dost thou dazzle the eye of reason? do not
so.

Thou art denying sweetmeats to one sick of abstinence;
Thou art making thy patient worse: do not so.
My lawless eye is a thief of thy beauty;
O Beloved, thou tak'st vengeance on my thievish sight do not
so.

Withdraw, comrade, 'tis no time for speech;
In love's bewilderment why dost thou intrude thyself? do
not so.

Except the beauty of Shamsi Din, the pride of Tabriz,
If so be that thou throwest a glance upon (aught in) the two
worlds, do not so.

XXXVIII

Happy the moment when we are seated in the palace,
thou and I,
With two forms and with two figures but with one soul,
thou and I.
The colours of the grove and the voice of the birds will bestow
immortality
At the time when we come into the garden, thou and I.
The stars of heaven will come to gaze upon us;
We shall show them the moon itself, thou and I. Thou and I,
individuals no more, shall be mingled in ecstasy,
Joyful, and secure from foolish babble, thou and I.
All the bright-plumed birds of heaven will devour their hearts
with envy

In the place where we shall laugh in such a fashion, thou and I.
 This is the greatest wonder, that thou and I, sitting here in the
 same nook,
 Are at this moment both in 'Iraq and Khorasan, thou and I.

XL

O my soul, who is this, stationed in the house of the heart?
 Who may occupy the royal seat save the King and the
 Prince?
 He beckoned with his hand: 'Say, what do you desire of me?'
 What does a drunken man desire except sweetmeats and a
 cup of wine?
 Sweetmeats derived from the soul, a cup of the Absolute
 Light,
 An eternal banquet laid in the privacy of "He 'is the Truth".
 How many deceivers are there at the wine-drinkers' feast!
 Take heed lest thou fall, O easy simple man!
 Beware! do not keep, in a circle of reprobates,
 Thine eye shut like a bud, thy mouth open like the rose. The
 world resembles a mirror: thy Love is the perfect image;
 O people, who has ever seen a part greater than the whole?
 Go on foot, like the grass, because in this garden
 The Beloved, like the rose, is riding, all the rest are on
 foot.
 He is both the sword and the swordsman, both the slain
 and the slayer,
 He is at once all Reason and brings Reason to nought.
 That King is Salahu'ddin – may he endure forever,
 May his bounteous hand perpetually be a necklace on my
 neck!

XLI.

I saw my Beloved wandering about the house:
 He had taken up a rebeck and was playing a tune.
 With a touch like fire he was playing a sweet melody,
 Drunken and distraught and bewitching from the night's
 carouse.
 He was invoking the cup-bearer in the mode of 'Iraq
 Wine was his object, the cup-bearer was only an excuse.
 The beauteous cup-bearer, pitcher in hand,
 Stepped forth from a recess and placed it in the middle.
 He filled the first cup with that sparkling wine –

Didst thou ever see water set on fire?
For the sake of those in love he passed it from hand to hand,
Then bowed and kissed the lintel.
My Beloved received it from him, and quaffed the wine.
Instantly o'er his face and head ran flashes of flame.
Meanwhile he was regarding his own beauty and saying
to the evil eye,
“There has not been nor will be in this age another like me.
I am the Divine Sun of the world, I am the Beloved of lovers,
Soul and spirit are continually moving before me.’

Sufism, Reflections and Poems by SL Peeran

1.

Law and Holy Scriptures require proper interpretation in most wise way, in proper perspective. Each verse has multidimensional view. Only learned, wise and experienced who have fully studied life from all angles should interpret our Holy Scriptures. Raw half cooked students passed out from Madrasas cannot be said to be matured and fully grown to interpret scriptural laws and its wise imports.

2.

All previous religions and their books, their cultures have to be studied and absorbed. Islam is a continuation of Abrahamic religions, hence previous scriptures have to be fully studied and learnt. The evils that have cropped up in pure Islam of heaven which on dropping on earth got polluted. Hence Allah swt through pure light of Prophet Mohammed (sas) again purified Islam of heaven to enable mankind to realize Truth and practice Truth which is nothing but Pure Love. Pure Love is nothing but surrender for supreme sacrifice on the altar of Almighty Lord, the Merciful, Gracious and Magnificent.

3

Man basically is a marauder and a fighter. Only those are saved who follow the message of peace, ahimsa and surrender given by Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus and Prophet Mohammed (sas).

4

Main slogan of Sufism is “one who knows his self knows God” Know thy self if the slogan in Greek Philosophy One need to know one’s weaknesses and strengths besides ones eccentricities, whimsicalities and one’s positive and negative nature. Gautama Buddha, Mahavira and our Nabi sat in deep meditation to seek answers to the ever puzzling mind. It is our desires, expectations, aspirations and ambitions which create frustrations in us. To achieve peace, solace and tranquility in life we need to harmonize our outer and inner life and give up our expectations from others.

To achieve gold medal in Olympics we need to train from primary level and keep winning at every level by constant training.

5

Our attachments, expectations and desires are the main basic source for distraction, we need to drown ourselves deeply in His love. That is possible when we think we are totally dedicated and die in His cause. Just forget the world and burn your candle of life in His love. Sit in deep meditation and think you are free from all problems. One day you will be enlightened and illuminated. Be in company of Saints and enlightened people of all religions.

Show compassion and mercy to all His creatures every moment then compassion and mercy will be shown to you. Do good every moment, the locked doors of heart will automatically open. This is my experience.

6

There is only one message of Holy Quran e Shariff and that is TAQWA. The entire Kalam Allah and Hadees e Shariff is mere explanation and elucidation of it. Please acquire TAQWA to ease your life and join Muqarabeens, TAQWA means purification of mind, heart and soul, awe, wonder and fear of Allah swt, living a pure and life of obedience to laws of Allah swt and Prophet sas Taqwa Is Acquiring A Truthful Heart, A Sacred Heart, A Divine Heart And Practice Love And Affection To The Hilt, Forget And Forgive And Adjust With Life By Compromise And Shun Evil And Practise Goodness To The Hilt.

7

Our Prophet sas is alive so also all our Saints hence seek blessings and Duas for welfare and well-being for your wife and children by sending Darood e Shariff and doing small acts of charity like

- 1) putting 5 or 10 gms daily for ants
- 2) feed birds or crows with small pieces of roti
- 3) place water for birds in your balcony
- 4) Attend Janaza prayers
- 5) visit mausoleums of Saints regularly on Mondays, Thursday and Fridays
- 6) feed fakirs or give them bread and jam regularly
- 7) visit the grave of parents and pray for their souls daily
- 8) Recite Sura waqiya and Sura jumma ten times daily
- 9) Do tasbi of Ya basitu ya wahabu ya fatah at least thousand times daily
- 10) Do tasbi of Ya muqniyu Ya mutiyu ya wasiyu atleast thousand times every day

11) Recite naat e shariff and Qasida burda morning or in the evening

12) Recite astaqfar atleast 500 or 1000 times every day.

13) Recite Sura Fathiha atleast 41 times every day in morning

14) Recite 33 times Sura Alam Nashra in morning every day.

Allah swt will remove all hurdles and bless you immensely I do it every day regularly from last forty years and Allah swt has blessed me and my family and now I can give away all my pension in charity.

Please have full faith and hope in Allah swt with pure heart mind and soul with good intentions Allah swt will certainly bless you.

Devotee: Inshallah, I shall try but you should remember me (special mention) in all your prayers

Me: Assalam o alaikum

May Allah swt bless you ever and grant you health, wealth and happiness and prosperity Ameen summa Ameen

Devotee: Roohani taraqi ke liye Aap mere liye dua karen

Me: Walekum salaam wrwb

Jab tek peer mai fana nahi hootae roohani taraqi nahi hoti. Peer and mureed aak hona hai

Devotee: Vo kaise karna hai

Peer ke tassavur se?

Me: Tassavur se nahee bulke inke personaliy mai zam huna hai. Is ke lambi tafseer hai

Devotee: Can you please send the tafseer?

Me: Please read my Sufi books on my website www.slpeeran.com.

Read all 74 issues of our Sufi World

Devotee: In the contents of the book tafseer is not mentioned. If you don't mind just give me a clue 'ke kaise zam hona hai

Me: I mentioned that mureed merges in the personality of his Master-Peer Saheb in deep love

You need to conquer your nafs e ammara and shun your animalistic nature, adopt pure angelic nature and purify your heart, mind and soul and become godly. These are requirements for merger in Murshid with deep love, sacrifice, humility sublimity and ninety nine prophetic qualities

Devotee: Hmm, jab tak nazre karam nahi hoti mushkil hai,

Me: Issee leyaee murshid Peeran Saheb sae ishq karna hai

Devotee: Peeran Saheb? Mai to Hazrath Anwar Shah Saheb ki mureed hun?

- Me: Plz tell me whom you referred to when you said ‘peeran Saheb ‘
 Haan mujee ilm hai Peer o murshid marta nahee hai, I was referring to your peer o murshid
 He has merged in Prophet sas and Prophet sas has merged in Allah swt
 Allah swt and peer o murshid is one
 These Sufi teachings are sacred and secret to be divulged in total confidence step by step
 First lesson is you need to give up seven sins of anger, jealousy, greed, lust, pride, sloth and slumber, gluttony and covetousness
- Devotee: Yes I had known all this & to be frank let me tell you I have no jealousy, greed, lust or pride but anger I should overcome. I’m eating only because I have to work, I take non veg quite less & sleep about 6 hrs otherwise I can’t work. Now tell me what should I do?
- Me: Yes but nafs and Shaitan are our sworn enemies.
 The seven sins are very subtle and fine thinner than hair and sharper than sword. Those are deceptive, sly and cunning. Only your Peer can help you polish it to fineness. You need to develop extra ordinary love for Allah swt and His Prophet and Saints and your Peer.
- Devotee: How to fight with the enemies, what to read?
- Me: Please read my book Fundamentals of Islam and Sufism available with amazon.
 It is by jihad e Akbar, your nafs e ammara turns to nafs e lawwamma and to nafs e mutmaena and goes on till it reaches to nafs e mulhima and payghbaran and reach infinity. It is a constant struggle and worship, silence and meditation etc etc. You need to educate yourself in ilm e tassawwuff
- Devotee: I have read about these 3 nafs but how to overcome this?
- Me: By Grace of Allah swt, Prophet sas and your Peer O Murshid
 Your junglee nafs has to die; by reaching zenith of purification of mind, heart and soul, you need to achieve enlightenment and illumination of soul. It is a lifelong effort of sacrifice, love and dedication
- Devotee: Hmm ok
- Me: Insane kamil banna caheyae Jis Kaae liyae tarbiyat Peer se laynahae
 All Saints recommend to mureeds to read thoroughly the following monumental and classical works:
- 1) Masnawee e Moulana Rummi
 - 2) Tazkirat e awaliya by Hazrath Fareeduddin Attar ra

- 3) Insan e kamil by Hazrath Abdul Kareem gili ra
- 4) Fawwad ul Fawwad by Hazrath Nizamuddin Awaliya ra
- 5) Works of Shaikh Sadi Boostan and Gulistan
- 6) Works of Hazrath Jami ra.

We have extracted most of these and many more works in our Sufi World

Please bind all copies of these issues and carefully read part by part to reach perfection in your heart, mind and soul.

In absence of Murshid these books acts as pillars of guidance.

Devotee: Aapke paas ye books hain kya?

Me: Sufi Centre library has it not for loaning

Please buy on line English translations available on Amazon so also Urdu one's in Islamic book stores.

8

Most of us or everyone is neither enlightened nor illuminated and we live in illusionary false world. We need to break and come out of it to reach peace, solace, tranquility and enlightenment.

9

To achieve Olympic gold medal you need to defeat many and all competitors in the world one after till you reach finals and come out triumphantly. It is a hard and sustain struggle. One cannot expect to reach final of Olympics without series of victories from the lowest primary level. It requires sustained regular training and victories throughout. You need to develop best of skills, tactics and wonderful strength.

10

Let Humanity combinedly win the war against covid19. We need to win the love of God with humility, surrender, love and affection, simplicity and sublimity. Feed the poor and hungry and help all your poor relatives.

This month and next three months are crucial for Humanity, much worst in economic recession is expected, be prepared for it. Now is the time to pray forget and forgive, be charitable and serve your neighbor friends and relatives

11

A devotee went to a renowned saint and sought advice to lead a good life without tension, frustration, debts without enemies

The Saint replied that he had no new panacea for solving problems of life as every thing had been uttered by Vishnu Avatar in 18 chapters of Gita and all holy books of all religions

On persistent enquiry the Holy Saint gave the following advice

- 1) follow the Ten Commandments of Prophet Moses
- 2) follow the sermon on the mount delivered by Lord Jesus
- 3) follow the last sermon of Holy Prophet Mohammed
- 4) lead a Satvik life by not harming anyone including plants and animals
- 5) Give up hate prejudices against members of mankind
- 6) do not follow your desires and temptations
- 7) Maintain your words and promises
- 8) Maintain the sanctity of Marriage and respect women
- 9) Love one and all
- 10) Live within your means and accept the providence of destiny
- 11) Be self reliant and Trust God

Following these golden principles the disciple turned out to be a Saint himself.

12

Let love beauty and love captivate our mind heart and soul
Let Lord release us from the wrath of this deadly virus
Please pray for me

I mentioned to you that my Saturn Dasa and sub dasas of Sun, moon, mars, Rahu and Jupiter will be critical and days months and years will be full of pain.

Please pray for me, my daily suffering is acute as I suffer along with humanity that is how I am made up of. O Lord forgive my sins and bless humanity.

13

Humanity is bound to suffer for two to three years or more. As long as hate and killing and wars are there then there will be no redemption.

We have to rebuild our heavenly conscience and remove devil from our heart mind and soul.

O Lord save us from this calamity and more to come.

14

Please do lots of charity and prayers this is only way to save ourselves. The position of planets till next year is not at all good, there will be suffering and loss of very high extent. We can save ourselves with charity and prayers and seva.

Good luck to all.

15

I heard a Saint say that by merely seeking pardon by lip movement will not bring forgiveness, you need to do good to the person whom you have hurt and do charity and seek pardon from Allah swt. You need to compensate with goodness for wrongs done by you. This is the command of Allah swt and Prophet sas.

16

Quran e Shariff and Hadees has laid down Huduud Allah prescribing punishments for wrongs and sins like freeing a slave, feeding sixty poor people; fasting for sixty days so on and so forth, if Zakat has not paid lifelong then that has to be calculated and paid.

In these case merely reciting tauba is not accepted. If Namaz has not been recited in life then Qazaeh umari has to be recited and that is what is recited in Shab barat.

We need to compensate the missed fast by nafil rooza.

There is no lip 'tauba' in all cases. Although it is recommended for one's soul satisfaction.

We need to clear all our debts.

Show mercy then mercy will be shown to you is what Quran says.

17

Social distancing doesn't mean being away from love and affection

Let love capture your heart mind and soul.

18

Let every moment of your life shower blessings

Please do not worry of loss of wealth

Health is wealth

Loving family is wealth

Company of saints is wealth

Goodness is wealth

Learning and knowledge is wealth

Clean atmosphere is wealth

Healthy food is wealth

Wishing you and family all these gift of Nature amidst the present crisis

May happiness surround and encapsulate you and your family

Love alone is the winner

Many million thanks for your love and affection

My love and prayers to you always ever

Let love and Grace shower on you and your family for ever
With abundant love

19

Silently we should show our obedience to Allah swt and think that we are humble than corona virus and not blame or speak ill or think ill of Allah swt creation This is the gist of Allah swt message in Quran e shariff besides the Divine law promulgated in Quran e sheriff.

We need just to realise ourself and realise Allah swt Mercy love and magnificance by constant Zikr. This is what I have been made to understand by my holy teachers.

20

As per Quran e shariff most obedient and most humble, most sincere and most truthful are 'Muqlaseens' like our Prophet sas and all Nabis, awaliyas are friends of Allah swt.

This repeatedly said in Quran e sheriff.

In Sura 'Saad' Iblis says that I shall not go near 'Muqlaseens'.

Allah swt repeatedly says in Quran e shariff that His Divine laws are not burden on Muqlaseens.

21

Humility is the first lesson of wisdom

Humility makes a person soft, kind, affectionate, affable and loving. He is the very best person among the list in humanity.

Lack of humility makes a person short temper, arrogant ill tempered and ill mannered and uncivilized.

If you are in tension and lose your temper very often and starts shouting on others regardless of relationship it means you have lost totally humility and have no regard for Divine laws and State made laws. You will be booked for your behavior and considered as having broken the laws and severe consequences will fallow. You will be left with no defenses.

Your prayers fasting Haj and good deeds will wash away and you are considered as lawbreaker

All those acts which strengthen humility should be adopted in daily life so as to make you soft kind affable and humorous.

22

As I understand religion is to unite man and man into one bind of humanity.

Qur'an calls upon mankind to surrender to the Creator in all humility, sublimity and lead a simple truthful life with abundant love and affection. Qur'an speaks of original Man Adam and Eve and thousands of Prophets, Nabies, Saints, truthful, virtuous people and speaks about their life of virtue, truthfulness and peace. It specifically names all prophets known to people of Middle Eastern countries and all of them bringing same religion of peace. Qur'an has been revealed to unite mankind with common Divine law. This is my understanding of Qur'an which I sincerely and piteously recite every day. I have spent enormous time of my life to understand Truth of all religions.

All speak the same Truth and all routes lead to same source of Truth.

We have brought out a book "Sufism, Vedanta, Guru Granth Saheb, Theosophy and Western Philosophy" authored by four eminent experts. All the four authors are learned in their field. I pray all humanity submit to the call of all religions to unite and live in peace.

Man basically is a marauder and a fighter. Only those are saved who follow the message of peace, ahimsa and surrender given by Buddha, Mahavira Jesus and Prophet Mohammed.

23

Remembrance of God every moment by Zikr of Kalma and His Names is THE only road for salvation. Zikr will solve all your problems. Give up the thought of this murky world, just forget. This is my sincere advice to you. Take it or leave it.

24

This universe does not belong to us nor the Earth Moon Sun oceans seas mountains
rivers
Nor the plants animals Nor the human population
Nor our body and soul

It belongs to the Great Being whose breath and light guides us. Then who is this I, we speak about. Let us remove this I then all veils will disappear and we will see the Being. All His signs will be visible. We belong to that Great soul We are His particle. We are a hole of the flute and He plays His tunes through the holes of His flute. Please pray and dissolve your being. This is the only remedy to the daily Maya surrounding us.

25

The teachings of Great religions and great masters is to polish your heart to a mirror so that the light of the Lord reflects in the heart.

Purification of heart from all compunction, and of evils is the recommendation and convert the heart to a golden heart, a sacred heart and a purified heart and look upon whole mankind as one. Another most important teaching is to be most

humblest of all beings, simple and dignified. Further teaching is colour yourself in the colour of Lord that is become compassionate, merciful and forgiving. And bear all difficulties of life with patience cheerfully by developing strong faith and certitude.

26

Unburden your past and throw away the baggage on your shoulder
 Silence is a golden means to salvation both inner and outer
 Be content in the present position your are in or else you may be placed in still worst position
 Security of home and its comfort is million times better than desertion and living in poverty as it's painful and horrible
 Compromise with one and all
 Let others have their way
 Resignation from
 Inner and outer turmoils brings peace comfort
 Keep others happiness as paramount then being self centered
 Love and love alone is the ultimate winner
 Patience is the mother of virtue
 Anger discontentment jealousy are twin sisters of inner tsunami
 Love and affection are the most beautiful flowers in the garden of life
 Love God your Guru and Nature then you will attain peace and happiness
 Give up desires and attachments and past regrets and future fears
 Trust God. He will take care of everything Just surrender to Him as a humble slave by accepting your fate cheerfully
 Be content and grateful for all gifs you have received from Lord the merciful in this beautiful life.
 Stop cringing and complaining on life and past events and losses
 Be cheerful always and ever.

27

Death is not the cessation of life. It is a grand invitation to beautiful future great spiritual life with Lord of immense love, mercy and truth.

There is joyous celebration and the soul and spirits dwell in garden of bliss forever. Humanity should aim to live a pure and dharmic life to make the passage to permanent abode of peace, happiness and joys to live in the company of Prophets, Avarars, Saints and virtuous ones.

28

Peace, happiness, joys and ecstasy are the other side of coin of frustration, dejection, sorrows, deprivation and privation. To avoid one or the other side of the coin or gain one by avoiding the other requires a Guru a good teacher and grooming by parents. Attitudes make or mar a life. You need enormous patience, skill, talent and very

good humour to deal with life. Life is like going to war with full preparedness knowing the enemy well, fully armed with well-trained soldiers with strategy and tactics. If you fail in one department of warfare you lose the battle of life. Hence all religions and great Prophets and Avatars and Gurus have recommended that you need to become your own policeman to check your evil tendencies and weaknesses. Life can be rosy if you mind your business by being thrifty and saving for the rainy day.

29

Do not say bad about waqt (Time-zamana) for that is God, so said a Great Prophet. This saying has a great import. It is common phenomenon to blame destiny and fate, being oblivious of the fact that destiny is created by the Great Master, the design is His, the wheel of life moves with His will and we are just required to surrender as an obedient servant without grouse, grievance and complains. It is total surrender that brings peace and not being a complainant, cynical and a truant. This view may be not palatable to the atheists, agnostics and disbelievers, who believe in fighting the powerful forces and move against the currents set by the Great Power. It is only obedience, submission, prayers and accepting the Divine will and Divine and moral laws cheerfully brings in peace and tranquility. Law breakers ultimately suffer and always have a bad end. Be always cheerful, happy and smile under all the circumstances as we lack that will and power to change the course of destiny.

30

“Throw not pearls before swines for they know not its value” is a biblical saying reminding mankind that valuable knowledge and wisdom cannot be shared with fools, idiots, moron, wayward souls and sinners. Wisdom can be absorbed only by wise, humble, sincere, obedient and loving persons in whose heart light of Lord is shining. These wise one’s strive to be on straight path of justice, love and beauty. They strive hard for purification of heart, mind and soul. Only pious can absorb Divine knowledge to become enlightened and illumined and to carry a halo. One needs to strive very hard with sustained training under Gurus to reach enlightenment and illumination by self realisation. The Divine scriptures are true guidance in absence of Gurus to guide us towards Truth, love, and beauty, Satya, Prema and Sundaram. Therefore “Truth is beauty and beauty is Truth.” O Lord show us the straight path and illumine our heart and mind!

31

Humility is the first lesson of wisdom Satan has promised God that he will not disturb and go near humble ones. Example of humble, sincere and noble ones are all Prophets, Saints, and obedient servants of God. The honest and truthful ones are bound to succeed in life. Bear all the difficulties of life with fortitude and patience as

patience is the mother of virtue. Always be courteous with sweet tongue however bad the circumstances are. O Lord help us in all walks of life.

32

Golden, Sacred and purified heart

The main aim of all holy scriptures is to direct mankind to develop a soft buttered golden sacred, purified heart and make a person a most humble and obedient servant of Lord of Mercy and compassion. When you acquire compassion to the fullest extent then you are really angelic and worthy of being in Lord's presence. You are enlightened and illumined person.

Hard hearted are filled with gall, poison and are confused, cunning and terror filled persons. They lack compassion and are inhuman and animalistic. They have no idea of 'Sanatana Dharma' and fail to see the presence of the Divine around them. Their hearts are sealed, so also their eyes and ears and their brain seizes to see reason. They become sinful, wayward and unguided ones. These inhuman individuals indulge in all sorts of crimes, civil wrongs and immoral acts defying all Divine, moral and social laws causing misery to mankind.

33

Forgiveness is a Jewel Among the Virtues of Mankind

"To err is human to forgive is divine" is an old adage. If men start taking revenge for each and every small mistakes and wrongs done by others to them, then peace, love and affection and harmony of the world would be lost forever. It is in the nature of man to commit mistakes but to repent in leisure is also second nature of man. Since it is human to fall in error and commit a folly therefore it becomes incumbent on every individual to forgive by overlooking the mistakes and wrongs of others. Patience and fortitude should be exercised to a great extent to achieve the desired goal of peace of mind and happiness in life. If we keep harboring grudge against our fellowmen for wrongs committed by them against us, then it is sure way to lose peace of mind and happiness forever. Instead we need to develop magnanimity and large heartedness to forgive all and their silly mistakes and wrongs of others.

34

Just as a crocodile with its sharp long teeth's is ever ready to devour its innocent defenceless victim, the evil with its unsheathed sharp sword is ever ready to kill the goody goody goodness in man.

The ruffians, robbers, cheats, the looters, murderers, the rogues are round the corner ever present to rob the wealth of a hard working good natured gullible person. And they succeed with their tricks, threats, clever sweet tongue and sheer power of stratagem, tricks, black mailing tactics and muscle power. It is only the combined will

of goodness, nervous recks, who can safe guard themselves with the help of muscle power, technology, police and military power supported by tight security; whose loyalty is also questionable, for they succumb to the money power of evil doers to rob the venerable rich and destroy them as it so happens in our daily life. That is how a powerful military displaces a weak democratically elected government.

It is seen that good people are vulnerable, weak and helpless against the crooked evil doers who with their powerful tyranny, strategy, cunningness and muscle brute power destroy good people or create trouble.

35

Hazrat Bi Mastani Ma, Harebhare Ma, Jhatpat Ma (Ra)

(Chittor, Andhra Pradesh; Died 17/11/2017)

This narrative is of a centurion old frail Muslim fakira, a celibate, who lived all her life in total submission to Lord, the Rub, the Cherisher and Merciful. She came to be known in Chittor Town of Andhra Pradesh as “Mastani Ma, Harebhare Ma, Jhatpat Ma.” She is almost dark in complexion with phenomenal memory, bright sharp eyes with tremendous energy and gifted with psychical and mystical powers to read the destiny, characteristics of a person by merely keeping her fingers on the pulse. She would be wearing green apparels and for which she has come to be known as Harebhare Ma, the greened one; a recluse having sat in meditation all her life on 360 hillocks in various places and mountains of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. She has come to be known as miraculous lady for blessing poor, wretched and shattered people. She attends to all the ‘Urs’ festivals of Sufis and Saints. An ardent female devotee was so much enamored by her that she has built a stone mausoleum in the main thoroughfare of Chittoor town A.P. There are three chambers, in one she has preserved all ‘Chaders’ she has received from Sufi mausoleums of Saint Abdul Qader Jilani (ra) of Baghdad, from Khwaja Ajmere (ra) and various dargas of India. In one another chamber she has got fixed on a small mount all the pebbles collected by her from each hillocks where she has sat for meditation.

I had the good fortune to get her blessings. I accompanied my highly place friend, her devotee in a car to Chittoor. It was noon time; she was seated in a corner of the mausoleum, which was being laid with flooring. She received us with smiles with gentleness and all love. She showed us around the three rooms. The masons were chiseling the stones. She opened a Tiffin carrier and offered her devotee, my friend and me with rice, sambar, vegetables and pickles. She sat watching us eat. We asked her as to why she was not partaking with us. She gently and slowly mentioned that she has been fasting for half a century and has given up eating anything. This was quite astonishing. She has been living miraculously on her spiritual powers and strength of her soul.

My friend requested her to check my pulse and say something about me. Gently she held my hand and placed her fingers on my pulse and said that I should not partake sugar, potatoes as I suffer from ailments, which hither to I was not aware. She narrated stories of Prophet pbuh and his most closest companions of preserving secrets and maintaining virtuous conduct. She was full of love and advised me to bear the hardships of life and not to complain, raise grouse and grievances nor grudge or bear spite and forgive the wrongs done by others and remain patient. She prayed for me and advised me to recite God's names in the manner she recommended and wished me well in life. She asked me to remember her and call out for her help when required. Sudden peace, solace and tranquility dawned on me. I was overwhelmed with her compassion, love and kindness. It moved me and I noticed after a period of time changes occurring in me. It is now 14 years that I got her blessings. I cherish her memory every moment. She was hale and healthy blessing large multitudes of devotees, who seek her blessings and help till her peacefully passing away on 17th November 2017. Our country, an ancient land of spirituality is blessed with such elated and attained souls. Multitudes sustain their lives on the strength of faith on such attained Saints, avatars, yogis and Sufis, who bring universal peace and happiness. They bring heavenly joys and the hardship of life eases and smoothens. They blow our sails to take our ship on turbulent waters to safe shores.

We feel the presence of the Divine and the soul brightens and lightens, with hopes to cherish with never ending joys and peace.

36

Notes and Diary on Sufi Masters as Narrated to S L Peeran by Hazreth Dost Shah Warsi (1905-2000) of Barabanki and Gorakpur Near Nepal

I like to recall now in the evening of my life incidents that should inspire my pupils and instil faith in the Divine and in the eternal powers of Saints, Avatars, Sufis, Rishes and Sants. Every initiate and disciple, the mureed who yearns to seek the Baraka of the Lord the Cherisher should undergo severe tests in the path of Truth. The tests are severe but the awards and fruits are multiple and delicious leading to spiritual enlightenment and wisdom. The doors of Divine wisdom open up to allow the flood of supreme knowledge to dawn on the being. Love the celestial gift from the Supreme Being gushes in the heart. The bud of fragrant roses and lotuses blossoms in the being. The eyes, mind and heart sparkle with Divine light. The purified soul gets wings to fly to the oblivion and to discover realms of Divine kingdom. Divine light floods every nerve and cell of the Being. Lord's presence is felt through the light of our most beloved holy Prophet Syedana Mohammad Mustafa peace and prayer be upon him. All the sacred souls of Prophets, Nabis and Saints, Avatars would welcome the attained pupil, the mureed. The spiritual stations are reached; light upon light floods in, on cherishing hope, on total reliance on Rubul

Alameen, the mother of mercy, from whose bosom milk of compassion, kindness, magnificence and beneficence flows and oozes out. Patience, the mother of virtue, should be the wheels on which the pupil, the mureed, should move with perseverance and hard work, performing countless supplications and zikrs.

The trials and tests are severe and great indeed. Every success in the examination brings advancement in the spiritual state of the pupil, the mureed. See the life of avatars, Saints, Nabis and Prophets. They were required to prove their unflinching love to the Ever living Lord, who keeps a steady watch on His creation, who is Transcendent and Cherisher. The pupil, the mureed is required to place every sacrifice on the threshold of the Sustainer and Creator, the ever Present, Rub, the Malik, whose fierce and benign presence consoles the yearning and suffering soul. Melancholy, grief, tears of love of separation and repentance from the Lord, the Merciful shatters the being of the lover, who wishes to mingle in the sweet and nourishing melody of the Great Soul. Every nerve and vessel in the body would turn into a string to play the tunes for the Lord, the Beloved. Neither the storms nor the tempests nor tsunamis nor earth quake nor cyclones nor hunger or poverty nor privation would ever deter the yearning and suffering soul from the goal of the pupil, the mureed, the Shaikh, the Murshid, Nabi the Prophet, the Avatar, the Sufi, the Sadhu, the Saint. Every cell in the being cries for the Blessed Being; the river yearns to join the sea, the sea in the ocean. The dry throat of the yearner seeks the Divine intoxicating drink to quench the thirst to make the soul to take to wings to join the Ever Great Ever Existing Divine Being.

(The narrator is Hazreth Dost Shah Warsi (d 2000) of Barabanki and Gorakpur near Nepal)

Poems

Holy Shaiwaite Saint of Kolimuth

O Muse granter of lovely verses
 Bless me with your boon
 To enable me to pen down
 My experiences, my emotions
 To stir my fellow being's
 Emotions for delectation.
 For wisdom, for elevation.
 For deep reflection!

On a cool month of winter
 I visited my native
 Salubriousgarden city,
 A pensioner's paradise;
 From sultry weather beaten

Coastal city of Madras
 Where I was presiding
 In temple of Justice
 To deliver with even hands
 Just rulings to dissatisfied
 Grumbling tax laden litigants.
 My benign high placed friend
 Heard my long grievance
 Of harassment in my work place.
 Denied of my lawful rights
 Of elevation to higher Judiciary.
 He was friendly with a Shaivaite Sage
 In Kolimuth in Arsikere, Hassan Dist.
 Took me in his revolving red light car
 To seek his guidance and blessings.

It was a pleasant day
 Reaching the temple and Muth
 At Sunset, a dozen young 'pujaaries'
 Were reciting Holy Geeta nonstop.
 The benign Sage welcomed us.
 Made us sit on the carpeted floor.
 Took out his ancient weather beaten
 Leaves, where was written the destiny
 Of fellow men in distress and grief.

Lo my destiny rolled before his eyes.
 I was in a grip of black hooded
 Magic and I need to dip in the holy river.
 Visit a mausoleum of a holy Saint
 For five Fridays with 'prasadam'.
 Seek help from Divine to relieve
 From the evil doings of a lady Justice.
 Who would undo all my good work,
 With vengeance, wreck my career.
 The Swamy told the evil to befall me
 If I do not vacate the Sea city
 By the Ides of March two thousand four.

My kind high placed friend
 Took me to Makedatu river
 For a holy dip to follow the advice of the Sage.

I returned to Sea city, visited holy Sufi mausoleum
For five Fridays with 'prasadams'.

Lo and behold by fax I received
Order to move to my Salubrious city
On fourteen of March two thousand four.
I left the black magic ridden Sea city
By flight on same day never to return
Or face it or visit it; left behind
The evil and its consequences.
I was afflicted by brain tumor
And umpteen evils for six years of my stay there.
The holy Shaivaite Sage's golden words
Ring in my ears of apathy of high powers,
Of moral degradation of lady Justice;
Of evil gripping the minds of people;
Of suffering of holy men in their hands;
Of heaping of injustices on benign persons.

The Sage's healing touch saved me
From his prediction of paralysis,
Insomnia, loss of memory and
Evil of every sort to surround me.

O Holy Sages and Saints of this ancient land!
You are all beacon of peace and good will;
To assuage the wounded feelings
Of sufferers and suffering humanity.

Pining for Thee

My adversaries are jealous of me.
They are many and everywhere.
My Beloved has blessed me
With scores of talents and goodness.
When I am gone into nothingness.
There will be nothing for them,
To quarrel about, to fight with me.
They will sit in a corner to lament.
Life is short, Time is fleeting.
Nature's beauty is enormous.
Every morn, every evening
Brings forth something new to marvel.

O Beloved! Show me the path of love.
 Let me lay down my life pining for Thee.
 Glory for Thee
 Ah! Thy Glory is much praised.
 Much more is for thy beauty to pine.
 Time is fleeting, so also my age,
 Withering my youth let Your love be?
 The fire that is kindled in my heart,
 Burns my eyes, my body, self,
 Pining for Thee all the time.
 Yearning for illumination of every part.
 My bones are creaking and shaky.
 My eyes have now become blurred.
 My voice has become choked.
 Your signs around are amazing.
 My spirit yearns to join Thee.
 To shed this mortal coil for Thee.
 Million praises
 The burnt out ashes are immersed.
 In the free flowing rivers,
 The Ganges and in the Cauvery.
 In the belief of merger in Thee.
 My dead body would be consigned.
 To the dust forever and ever,
 To mingle and to turn to dust.
 In the belief – of rebirth in “Qiyamat”.
 O! The Tremendous and the Mighty
 The Gracious and the Merciful
 Millions are created every time.
 To pine for Thee, for Your Glory.
 Grant me that eye, that heart.
 To see and feel for Thy praise.

“Qiyamat” – doomsday

Burnt the Candle

I dug and dug in parching deserts
 Till I reached the streams below
 I filled my bucket of love
 With cool waters to quench my Beloved's thirst.

I cultivated dry and parching lands
Irrigated them with my sweat and tears
I picked the choicest fragrant roses
The sweetest fruits for my Beloved to taste

I wove and wove a finest cloth,
With designs and decorations of various hues.
Bedecked with jewels and precious stones
To present as gifts for my Beloved to wear.

I yearned and yearned with hopes and longings.
Burnt my candle of life for my Beloved's grace

Beauty of Praised One

The life's clock is ticking fast
The age of my life is wearing out
The light of the day is being spent
The gloom of darkness is about to dawn.

The birds and butterflies are returning home
Cattle and herds have stopped grazing
Crickets and grasshoppers are now silent
Stars in the sky have begun to twinkle.

My heart's yearning have grown heavier
Longing and sighs are deeper and deeper
Flow of tears is unabated and clear
My love's treasures are pure and simple.

My praised one's grace is about to gleam
Beauty and effulgence to shine for ever

Intoxicating Wine

Each one of us is reflection of love and beauty
But our shadows create fears
Isn't it our unreal darker side?
Not a mirror image nor reflection!
Spreading of fragrance of rose, lotus
Refreshing for the love to cherish
Yearning increases for mingling
O my Beloved show Thy lovely face

To put yearning seekers to swoon
 Like bright round shining sun
 Drives away the darkness forever
 Let's sing songs of love to thrill and cheer

Love's many facets mesmerizes seekers
 Like old intoxicating wine.

Can I Find a Way out?

My five senses are not sufficient
 To realize, feel and capture
 Your glory O my Lord!
 I feel Your silent presence
 Your beauty, Your Excellence,
 O my Lord! Can I still view
 With these eyes Your Effulgence?
 Can You bless me Your grace?
 To sustain my last stage!
 Slowly the candle of light is burning out.
 My soul mate gone in a flash,
 Leaving me stunned in grief.
 Feeling like a destitute
 Friendless; like flightless bird
 Unable to perch from tree to tree.
 Like a blind man finding a way out
 In a dark night in eerie silence.
 My only hope lies in You, in You
 O Unseen One, Unfathomable.
 What good is candle for a blind?
 Crutches for a crippled, music for deaf?
 For long I prayed for my beloved
 To walk along side till my end.
 Alas! She has flown away in a flash
 Dashing all my yearnings, hopes
 How can I crawl on slippery ground?
 Where do I find solace, bliss?
 When pathos, grief is burning in my bosom!
 O Love! Bless me silence in my mind, heart.
 Let this muttering, chattering leave me alone.
 My dear soul mate is mingled in soil,
 Let her soul rest in peace!

Ameen

His Grace

With His Grace I could have a glance
At His effulgence, which left me in a trance.

His face radiates His divine glory,
His beneficence, His might and mercy.

My being is enveloped with his compassion,
Every particle in me is His creation.

He dwells in me serenely,
Life glows in me sweetly & calmly.

Songs flow from my lips in praise of His love,
Which He showers on us from Heaven above.

Total Surrender

I love HIM, respect HIM and honour HIM;
Each breath of mine is spent in His service.
Day and night merge and I slave forever
Out of dedication, Love of Labour.
Neither vagaries of weather, ill health
Nor desires, nor slumber can deter me.
With deep devotion, I burn the Candle
Of my life at His feet in total surrender.
I have no complains, demands, compulsions,
No grievances, grief, or pain.
Undoubtedly, I am captured by HIM;
I am now left with no will of my own.
My Master's service is my main motto
I wish I were a dog to befriend HIM

Blessme

Oh! if only I could dream of Thee
And see Thy beauty and effulgence,
Thy charm, Thy benign look, Thy smile,
To relieve me of my pain and anguish,
My despondency and perplexity,
That have left my life so shattered!
O sweet one; O Thou deliverer
From all miseries and calamities!

O Thou most compassionate one,
 O haven of peace and tranquility!
 Bless me, enlighten my dark soul,
 Redeem me from all vicissitudes,
 Guide me to a life of bliss,
 Of solace and contentment.
 I have heard, O Eternal Lord,
 Thou showerest Thy choicest blessings
 Upon all Thy chosen ones.
 Let me, then, be one of them.

Soul Outpourings

When the soul gets entangled
 In webs of sharp wires, in tenterhooks
 In pangs of conscience
 When the soul gets caught
 Between the evil's delight
 And body's pleasures
 When the soul gets entrapped
 In the guilt of grave sins
 And in the troubled mind
 When the soul gets anguished
 At the sorrows and pains
 At the destruction of good
 It is the time for the soul
 To sing, pray and meditate
 On the Higher Being for solace and grace.

A Walia is Born

A pure soul from oblivion and heaven
 Descends down on this hassling world
 Where cruelty cohabits with callousness
 Where darkness prevails in hearts
 Where self-interest persists menacingly
 Where intellect is at its lowest ebb
 Where man cannot live in harmony
 Where peace has escaped to ethereal world
 Where passions over powers wisdom.
 A Divine light burning in devoted hearts
 To bear a fruit of heaven on Earth
 A savitri, a fathima is born in unholy land
 To bless and purify the decaying world.

Showers the wretched with gold, silver,
 With milk of human kindness
 To soften the human heart.
 To sow seeds of love in barren land
 Transforms to Durga to punish wicked
 To revive true spirituality
 A goddess born in a deserted land.
 In a family of virtuous worshipful devotees.
 Raised in an environ of purity
 Protected from shamefulness, lewdness.
 Nectar of Divine knowledge poured in heart.
 Compassion and mercy twin sisters of Grace
 Protecting like canopy creating a halo.
 Goddess of learning sharing pearls of wisdom.
 The new born, a child of virtue
 Slowly and gradually raised among truthful.
 Assumes into a multicolored personality.
 A lotus in marshy shallow waters.
 A fragrant rose among thorns,
 Love and grace illuminating the being.
 A purified mind, body and soul.
 Serving each and every one around.
 Blessing the wretched down trodden.
 Sings Divine songs for divinity to dawn.
 A soul mate to join hand in hand.
 To spread message of love affection.
 Fulfills all divine duties on earth
 A Divine call summons her to heaven.
 Cheerfully surrenders to reach lotus feet.
 Leaving scores of tiny sun flowers
 To shed tears; to perpetuate her memory.
 A divine soul fulfills karmic samskara.
 Filling the humanity with love and truth.
 Sowing seeds of Divinity
 To sprout into Garden of Bliss.

My Last Wish

When my time comes to shed this mortal coil
 To close my eyes forever and to breathe the last
 To straighten the body, hands and legs
 Then, let me sigh with thy name on my lips.

I yearn for thy glance and a glimpse
For a reflection of thy effulgence
For your sweet fragrance and sweetness
Let me place my soul at thy holy feet.

O praised one, the deliverer of all souls
Let my tears of love be my humble gift
Let me present thee, with my stricken heart
With its wounds and pangs of separation.

O my beloved! I yearned for thee all my life
Now, I lie immersed deep in your thoughts.

My Beloved's Grace

My eyes gleamed, my heart throbbed
I found my lost hopes, my grieves waned
My soul soared, my spirits enlivened
I was a lost sheep, now I found my way.

The lightning and thunder, the storms and wind
Have now cleared, the bright sun is up
The buds have bloomed and petals spread
The rainbows are clear on the horizon of love.

My thoughts are gripped, my lips mutter
With the glimpse and name of my beloved
O my beloved! Let Heavens choicest blessings
Peace and grace fall million times on thee.

Let thy glory be sung by all for ever
Let all thy seekers receive thy grace.

Zeros Gain Value

We are all millions of zeros
But, all of us lining together
Besides that GREAT ONLY ONE
Have gained a great value.

That GREAT ONE is all ALONE
But we millions of zeros
By praising and singing paeans
For THAT ONE has gained glory.

Many petals are held by a SINGLE
Stalk, to form a beautiful flower
For nectar and fragrance
To delight everyone with its beauty.

Love emits sweet scent
For everyone to enjoy its bliss.

Inner Peace

Look to the inner voice
Its light is eternal
Its joys are multiple
Its grace is divine
It is soothing and pleasing
Its voice is melodious
It has motherly concern and care
It knows your anguish and pain
Listen to it
Sit in silence
In meditation
In calm stillness
Close your eyes
In your heart – recite –
“La illaha illAllah
Mohammadur Rasool Allah
Allah hu hu Allah, hu hu
Allah hu hu Allah hu hu

Heaven of Unknown

Why do I think always of oblivion?
Like a reed to sing sad songs!
Of separation from some unknown
Source, of Deity of antiquity.
My pain of living, desertion of love
Of missing goals, hurt and sorrow
Create an urge to dissolve my being.
To fly to some unknown destination.
Where my forgotten aliens live
In a lost paradise of “hurries”.
With Moon eyed beauty of rare kind.
Where milk and honey flows always.

Where joys never fade or diminish.
 Where sensuousness flows like a stream.
 Oh! Why these urges of a flute's songs.
 Beckoning me to a long lost love.
 Tickling in me flames of love.
 That enflames me to zest and zeal.
 Frenzy gripping my whole being.
 To whirl like a dancing dervish.
 To bleed my heart with aches & throbs.
 O far away love, flown away from me.
 Return to me on wings of poesy.
 To carry me to heaven of unknown.

From Mother's Womb

Love is from mother's womb and lap,
 Sucking milk, clinging to her.
 Lispering numbers, every moment, eternal
 Adding to learning, learning every moment.
 Consciousness growing slowly, steadily.
 All elements awakening gradually
 Stored in the deep spaces of mind.
 Day by day adding to knowledge,
 Skills and information stored.
 Memory acts as a gift of Divine.
 Every era creates a new man.
 With new actions, new thinking, new ideas.
 Growth of man is evolution.
 Imagination going berserk,
 To let out dreams into reality,
 Soaring higher and higher in infinity.
 Singly or collectively actions combined
 Collective consciousness in society,
 Moving in space but grounded on Earth.
 Whole cosmos moving in unison.
 Mind exposed to nature and space,
 Absorbing elements from nature.
 Focal and central is the force of love.
 A supreme feeling, an urge
 To mingle, to cling to another.
 Like mother holding a child in arms.
 Man is a child of nature.
 Mother Earth protecting, caring,

Producing food and wealth,
Medicine and panacea to illness,
Joys, mirth and pleasures.
Love is supreme, love is all.

Dance of Love

The spark of individuality of a person
To sustain him forever, to remain in him
Till death does him apart and thereafter.
Affection in relationships,
Of love to give and share.
To sacrifice and humble oneself.
To be compassionate and merciful.
To let go of vengeful feelings,
Of revenge and let blood or to harm.
To be always calm, cool, forgiving.
To remove in oneself feeling of remorse,
Of pain and suffering,
Of boisterousness, vehemence,
Of stubbornness, heedlessness,
Of callousness of lethargy,
Of greed, aggrandizement.
Mind to remain at peace.
Then love flowers into fragrance,
To bear sweet fruits to enjoy.
Then the music of Divine flows.

Immersion

All my self-seek is self-delusion.
I hear the songs of my own defeat.
I am like a silent sea sans storms.
The silence around reminds of You.
Oh! I wish I were a flower.
To set fragrance all around.
For infatuate lovers to pluck,
And adorn the head or vase
I bow before You all the time.
Hoping for Your Grace, Your Love,
With which, I am surrounded.
May my love for You never wane.
O My Lord! Have pity on me.
For I am immersed in Your love.

Love Forever and Ever

When Eve found the elixir
And Adam fell in love.
Lord, you were angry.
To banish him from your presence.
But your Mercy saved Adam.
Eve too was forgiven, yet was
To carry the stigma and
Humiliation forever and ever.
O My Lord I Save me from
The temptations of this world.
From its guilt and glamour.
From its slippery path.
O My Lord I Bless me
With love forever and ever.

Reach The Goal

O! my life, my soul Mate
Leave a design, a decoration
A motif, with gem of a fate
For my pangs and sorrows, a consolation.
O! my Peerless Creator of time
Enlighten my being and lighten my soul
To take wings, for I have crossed my prime
Let the sails flow smoothly to my goal.
O! my Director of inner being
Show Mercy and Grace, on day of Judgment
Grant me that eye for Your seeing
Let me place my love on Heaven's pavement.
O! my Everlasting Love
My every breath is for Thee
Now my soul is a peaceful dove
Accept me O love, accept me.

Join Hands Together

Let us build barriers
Bridges, dams, to prevent
The tumultuous rivers
Overpowering, the populace.
Let us work together

Join hand in hand
In chorus, in harmony
To face the violent storms.
Let us all gather
During grief and loss
To mourn our departed
And pray for their souls.
Let us all sing songs
Of love and affection
Oneness and brotherhood
To maintain our lovely gardens.

Endless Love

Love, a celestial gift
Hidden in the bottom of the heart
Oozes out through eyes,
Face and body actions.
Lips quiver, body embraces.
Time loses moments.
Stillness surrounds.
Solace, peace dawns.
Life is charming
Twinkling stars throwing
Spears of love matched
By full Moon spreading
light to envelop the beings.
Red Rose spreading fragrance.

Pied Pipers Song

Let me blow my flute's songs
To thrill the sweet singing nightingale
To gather all the gay drug smitten ones.
The polluted ones, the way wards
The dirty dozens, "the Chaiwallas".

Let me march with them like Pied Piper
To a deserted darkest ancient cave
And with the power of Alauddin
Command the cave to shut them in.

Let the benign Earth become free
Of Mallayas, bandit Veerappans
Chambal Queen Phoolam devies,
Looters, scam creators, dirty lotuses.

Let the heavenly Grace befall again.
Let milk and honey flow again'

Temptation

The temptations created in my mind
To seize the beauty, to possess it
To enthrall me to the beating of drums,
The symphony of orchestra, flutes songs
To cherish forever the glittering jewelry
To behold gold, silver, pearls
To built an empire, to possess wealth
To seize bewitching beauties
To create a 'harem' for myself.
To drown in mirth and pleasure.
To eat the fruit of knowledge
Forever living eternally
Was the beginning of my miseries.
In this treacherous world.
Only buddhas, mahaviras, yogis
Sufis and worldly renounced ones
Can free themselves from this coiling
Cobras around their neck to poison the mind
It can happen only with Divine Grace
I need to move heaven and Earth to achieve it.

Lover's Stab

My lover carries a dagger
And a scornful squint eye
Looking down upon me with contempt
Eager to get rid of my presence.

But she does not know my burning heat.
My chest and heart is a cauldron
And I am aflame in love
Let my lover stab me multiple times.

Each stroke gives me immense joy and glory
I write my lover's name with my blood.

Agony of Separation

O my Beloved! Give me the cup of honeyed drink
That shall put me to eternal deep sleep.
Neither the sounds of trumpets on the day of reckoning;
Nor the genie of the ring and lamp of Aladdin;
Shall be able to wake me up from the slumber.
I have no deeds to plead for heaven.
Nor I played with evil to walk into abyss.
I have moved all through in straight lines.
While my adversaries have paced parallels.
Never to meet, to shake hands or for bear hugs.
Like Brutus, I have been stabbed several times.
My lips quiver, my heart bleeds, now I look up
To Thee, to relieve me from pangs of separation.
O Beloved! Merge in me now here, here!

**A POPULAR INTRODUCTION TO
WESTERN PHILOSOPHY FROM
DESCARTES TO SARTRE
BY T.K.JAYARAMAN**

René Descartes (1596-1650)



René Descartes

Whenever anyone has offended me, I try to raise my soul so high that the offence cannot reach it.

– Descartes

Note the life period of Descartes. He was born at the end of 16th century and died at the middle of the 17th century. This is the beginning of modern western philosophy. The thinkers prior to him belonged to the medieval period. In this article, I am not covering them. Neither the ancient philosophers. Pronounce his name like Ranay Daycarth. As you know French pronunciation is totally different from English pronunciation.

His Life in Brief

He was born in La Haye in France in 1596. A sickly boy, he lost his mother when he was only 3 years. He had a good classical education in Jesuit schools. He did law. Though a French, he served in the catholic army of Bavaria in the 30 years' war. He was very brilliant in mathematics. His three dreams in Bavaria gave an indication about his future life. He wrote his rules for the direction of his mind. He returned to Paris in 1621. He travelled widely. He invented a new form of geometry using algebra. This geometry is known as Cartesian Geometry. He contributed to Optics, physiology and meteorology. He left for Netherlands in 1628 and stayed there for 20 years. He was a close friend of the Queen of Sweden. She invited him to tutor her in

philosophy. He went there but unfortunately he died in 1650, unable to bear the extreme cold of that country.

His Philosophy

Descartes wanted to put Science and Philosophy on a very strong foundation. His method of philosophising is known as the method of doubt. He starts doubting everything including his senses. He arrives at a point where he cannot doubt the doubter. Therefore his first certainty is the existence of the doubter. His words, “I think, therefore I am” (Cogito ergo sum) are very famous. He talks about certain innate ideas in our minds. He argued that if there are clear and distinct ideas about anything, that must exist. Hence he arrived at the existence of external world and God after attaining certainty about his own existence. He postulated that mind is a thinking substance. The attribute of a body is extension in space. Thus he made a clear distinction between mind and body. Mind is different from body. This is known as Mind-Body dualism. By separating mind and matter, he liberated physical sciences from the stranglehold of theology. Matter occupies space meaning it has extension with length, breadth, depth, size and motion which are measurable. Thus he laid the foundation for mathematical physics. His universe is a mechanistic universe which can be explained with the help of mathematics. With the help of certain innate ideas, things can be explained using reason. Thus Descartes is the father of Continental Rationalism.

Descartes mind-body dualism has been subjected to lots of criticism, especially by Gilbert Ryle. He is accused of reasoning in circle. However, his ideas are subject matters of intense study by other thinkers. Noam Chomsky is indebted to Descartes for his theory of grammatical structures according to which certain grammatical structures are innate.

Important works of Descartes

- 1 Discourse on Method (1637)
- 2 Meditations (1641)
- 3 Principles of Philosophy (1644)
- 4 Passions of the soul (1649)

Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677)



Baruch Spinoza

The greatest pride or the greatest despondency is the greatest ignorance of one's self.

– Spinoza

His Life in Brief

He was born in Amsterdam in 1632 to Jewish parents who traced their origin to Portugal. His ancestors fled from Portugal due to persecution by the Christians. His first name was Baruch which means blessed. A brilliant boy, he was groomed to be a rabbi. However he did not accept the Jewish and Christian dogmas unquestioningly. He mastered Cartesian philosophy, started teaching it though he never accepted it. He earned the wrath of Jewish Community by his strict scrutiny of Bible. He questioned the authorship of the Scriptures. He said that the Jewish religion was riddled with superstitions and unnecessary rituals. Consequently, he was excommunicated in 1646 just when he was 21. He left Amsterdam and finally settled in The Hague. He earned his life as a lens grinder. After his excommunication, he adopted his first name as Benedict. He was totally indifferent to wealth. Even he gave away his share of inheritance to his sister. He pursued his philosophical quest with single minded devotion. He was visited by Leibniz. When one of his admirers left him a pension, he rejected it. He truly lived the life of a philosopher. Due to inhalation of glass particles in the course of his work, he died of consumption in 1677.

His Philosophy

His entire philosophy is contained in the master piece “Ethics”. Spinoza adopted the style of Euclidean Geometry while writing this work. Just as in a Geometry book, in Ethics, he has definitions, axioms, theorems and propositions along with proofs. In other words, he gives proofs for all the propositions which he makes. Now let us turn to the subject matter of Ethics. The book is divided into five parts with the following headings seriatim. 1. Concerning God. 2. Concerning the nature and the origin of mind. 3. Concerning the nature and the origin of the emotions 4. Of human servitude or the strength of emotions 5. Concerning the power of the intellect or human freedom. Each proposition has a proof. He relies on reasoning only to establish his views. Hence he is considered as an important philosopher of the continental rationalism.

The principle of sufficient reason is an important principle used to build the philosophical structure by Spinoza. In layman’s language, everything has a reason. Put it differently, everything has a cause. The fundamental concept in his philosophy is SUBSTANCE. The essence of a SUBSTANCE as perceived by the intellect is an ATTRIBUTE. MODE is defined as the modifications of a SUBSTANCE. GOD is defined as a SUBSTANCE consisting of infinite ATTRIBUTES, each of which expresses infinite and eternal essence. A thing is said to be FREE which exists by the mere necessity of its own nature and is determined in its actions by itself alone. A thing is said to be NECESSARY or rather COMPELLED, when it is determined in its existence and actions by something else in a fixed ratio. After giving his definitions of the above terms, he states 8 axioms. An axiom is a self-evident truth which requires no proof. For example, Axiom 3 states, “From a given determined cause an effect follows of necessity, and on the other hand, if no determined cause is granted, it is impossible that an effect should follow.”

From his definitions and axioms, Spinoza arrives at the proposition, that there is only one SUBSTANCE and that is GOD. What about all the other things that we perceive? They are all MODES or modifications of the one SUBSTANCE called God. God has infinite ATTRIBUTES of which we are aware of two. Extension is an attribute of God pertaining to bodies and which is a subject matter of physical sciences. Thought is an attribute of God pertaining to mind. In other words, mind and body are not separate substances as conceived by Descartes but different attributes of the same and only one Substance called God. This is known as SUBSTANCE MONISM. God has infinite attributes but Spinoza mentions only two. God is infinite and eternal. Everything else exists in God. It is a mode of God. Therefore as such is dependent on God. Since God is defined as a being with infinite attributes, nothing exists which could limit or take away his being; in every respect he is without limits. Since non-existence is privation, it cannot be predicated of God. Everything in the Universe is a mode of God. Thus God embraces everything in the universe The one Substance is both God and Nature. God is the only being Free and

determines his own nature. Everything else is bound in the chain of causation, whole ultimate ground is God. Spinoza's God is immanent in nature. He rejects a transcendent God and the anthropomorphic God of certain religions. He does not hold that God sits in judgment over the actions of human beings. Everything happens by necessity. The doctrine of necessity is central to Spinoza's philosophy. He does not believe in whimsical God. His God acts by necessity and has no will. There is no teleology or purpose in the scheme of Spinoza's God as he acts out of necessity. There is no question of praying to God to obtain his favour. According to Spinoza, organised religions are riddled with meaningless rituals and superstitions. God is not separate from Nature. This view of Spinoza is called Pantheism. There is no personal God.

Spinoza deals in Part 2 with the concept of Adequate Ideas. An adequate idea has all the properties of a true idea. A true idea must agree with its object. With our sense perception, we do not have always true ideas. Our ideas are always inadequate or confused. We can obtain knowledge only through adequate ideas which guarantee truth. Mathematics is an example for adequate knowledge. According to Spinoza, God who contains the whole of reality has only adequate ideas. However, human beings, wanting in adequate ideas must strive to replace our inadequate ideas and confused perceptions with more adequate notions of reality. There are three types of knowledge. First type is knowledge obtained through opinion or imagination. The second type is obtained through reasoning. The third type of knowledge is Intuition. The principle of self-preservation of an organism is called Conatus by Spinoza. He deals elaborately with Emotions in Part 3. In Part 4, he deals with human slavery to emotions. The gist of his findings is that a life of reason leads to happiness. In the final part of his work, Spinoza speaks of the Intellectual Love of God. It is the power of reason which can lead us to the intellectual love of God. A free man understands the doctrine of necessity. He is conscious of the necessities that compel him. Such a man understands himself, his emotions and also loves God. In loving God, we participate more fully in the divine intellect. This eternal love constitutes our salvation, blessedness or liberty. In proposition 23, he gives a singular proof of our immortality. "The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the human body, but something of it remains which is eternal." The proof depends on his view that through adequate ideas, our minds come to see the world under a species of eternity and therefore without reference to time. The eternity that we achieve is like an escape from time to another dimension. The blessed state is not a reward of virtue but virtue itself.

The renowned scientist Albert Einstein stated that his God is the God of Spinoza. Bertrand Russell says, "Spinoza is the noblest and most loveable of the great philosophers." While rejecting his metaphysics, he speaks very high of his ethics which has some influence of Stoicism.

G.W. Leibniz (1646-1716)



G. W. Leibniz

To love is to find pleasure in the happiness of others.
– Leibniz

His Life in Brief

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was born in Leipzig in 1646. His father was a university professor. He died when Leibniz was six. He was very brilliant and at the age of 17, he passed his Baccalaureate. He took up job as a secretary to an important statesman. He was sent on a diplomatic mission to France to prevail on Louis XIV to invade Egypt so that German States would be safe. The mission was a failure but Leibniz could meet eminent French thinkers like Malebranche and Arnauld. He made a lasting impression there. He went to England and demonstrated before the Royal Society his invention, a mechanical calculator. Impressed with him, the society made him a Fellow. He met Oldenburg who was the secretary of the Royal Society. In Netherlands, he made friends with Huygens and revived his interest in mathematics.

Leibniz was the discover of differential and Integral Calculus. Isaac Newton was also credited with the discovery of the Calculus. Unfortunately, a bitter dispute between them as to who discovered it first arose. Leibniz was accused of plagiarism

by Newton. Finally it was established that each of them independently discovered the Calculus. But the notation of Leibniz is used even today.

Leibniz was a polymath. He dabbled in many things. He devised a pump to draw out water from mines. He invented binary arithmetic which is used in computers even today. He was working on a universal language to convey ideas and sowed the seeds of modern mathematical logic. He was interested in linguistics. He was an indefatigable correspondent. He corresponded with 600 people regularly. He wrote all his works in French. He never married. Most of his works were published after his death in 1716.

His Philosophy

The basic metaphysical category in philosophy is SUBSTANCE. For Descartes, the substances are mind and matter (dualism). For Spinoza, there is only one Substance which is God. (Substance Monism). However for Leibniz, the metaphysical entity is Monad. What is a Monad? It is a metaphysical entity. It is indivisible. Monads are infinite in number. Monads are neither created nor destroyed. They are entities endowed with apperception which means consciousness of varying degrees. Each Monad is a perceiving entity. Strangely, every monad is independent of all the other monads. There is a hierarchy of monads. The highest monad is no doubt God. Each monad is windowless. It cannot be affected by other monads. The destiny of every monad is already programmed in it. The phenomenal world of space and time in which we feel that one thing affects the other is just imaginary. Each state of a monad is caused by its preceding state. In other words, there is a pre-established harmony. There is no absolute space and time as Newton thought. Each monad is a centre of Force. By Force, Leibniz means Energy. No two monads would be the same. Every monad is unique. Each monad mirrors the entire universe. The universe being full of monads, there is no empty space. Monads are self propelling. They are not inert matter. Monads can be classified in the following manner. 1. Perceiving monads 2. Rational monads 3. Supreme Monad.

Logic

His metaphysics is based on logic. Propositions are of two types. One is a statement of reason. Example: All bachelors are unmarried. In such a statement, the subject contains the truth of the predicate. Such a statement is a necessary statement. The second type of statement is a statement of fact. Example: All bachelors in this apartment are graduates. This is a contingent statement. This may be true or false. Using the Principle of Sufficient Reason, Leibniz would say that the so-called contingent statements are also necessary. So everything happens out of necessity. The notion of Napoleon contains everything about him. His entire course of life is programmed by the Supreme Monad, God. In other words, there is no freewill and sin. This is contrary to Christian belief.

This is the Best Possible World

According to Leibniz, out of several possible worlds, God has created the best one. Then how to explain evil? Leibniz says that our views are narrow but not God's. Good is appreciated in the face of evil. The French thinker Voltaire in his work "Candide" had caricatured Leibniz for his view that this world is the best of all possible worlds. Leibniz proves the existence of God in the following manner. Everything in the world must have a cause in terms of the principle of sufficient reason. The world itself must have a sufficient cause. It must be something external to it. The sufficient reason is God.

Following are his Important Works

1. Meditations of Cognition, Truth and Ideas (1684)
2. New System of Nature (1695)
3. New Essays on Human Understanding in reply to Locke's Essay (1765)
4. Theodicy (1710)
5. Monadologie (1714)

It was already mentioned that Leibniz was a polymath. His contributions to various fields of knowledge make a very long list. He maintained that Space and Time are not absolute anticipating Einstein. He laid the foundation for Topology. He proposed that earth has a molten core. He studied comparative anatomy and fossils. In psychology, he anticipated the unconscious. In economic policy, he proposed tax reforms and insurance. He advocated establishment of medical administrative authority. He anticipated aspects of Universal Turing Machine. He designed a book indexing system. He advocated formation of national scientific societies on the lines of British Royal Society. He made tremendous efforts to unite the warring Christian sects. He took interest in Chinese language. He was much influenced by Confucianism in his ideas of monads and pre-established harmony. He anticipated analytic and linguistic philosophy of the 20th century. He was a foremost philosopher of Continental Rationalism.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)



Francis Bacon

If we do not maintain justice, justice will not maintain us.

– Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and the Scientific Revolution

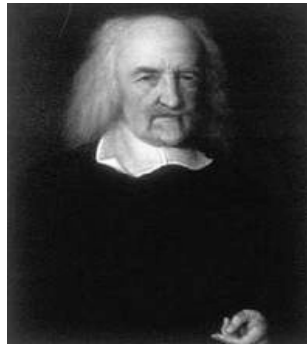
Francis Bacon (1561-1636) is an important name in the history of Western Philosophy. He is associated with the founding of inductive method in scientific procedure. His father was Sir Nicolas Bacon. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He wore many hats as lawyer, courtier, statesman, philosopher and master of the English tongue. His interests were wide ranging. He considered all knowledge as his province. He was an original thinker.

Intellectual climate of late 16th century England was dominated by Aristotelian Scholasticism. Francis Bacon was opposed to it. He emphasised the importance of collection of empirical facts in the advancement of scientific knowledge. Based on the facts, it is possible to make a generalisation. That can be further verified from the facts. Thus he showed the way for the induction method in scientific research. He authored “Novum Organum” which gives “true direction concerning the interpretation of nature and the” correct method of acquiring knowledge.” The

natural facts collected are raw materials for the induction method. He compares scientific method to the collection of materials by the bees to erect a structure contrasted to ants which amass a disordered heap (empiricism) and spiders who spin webs (speculative metaphysician) that have no contact with reality.

He called the psychological causes of human error as Idols. First Idol is the Idols of the tribe universal to mankind. Assuming oversimplification for tidiness. Existence of Order is influenced by a particular event and generalisation therefrom. The second one is the Idol of the cave. It is about individual intellectual peculiarities. One person concentrates on likeness, another difference, another details, another totality. Idol of the market place is the error due to imperfect language. Idol of the theatre is error due to mistaken systems of philosophy. He also made an elaborate system of classification of sciences.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)



Thomas Hobbes

The secret thoughts of men run over all things, holy, profane, clean, obscene, grave and light without shame or blame.

– Thomas Hobbes

He was born on 5 April 1588 in, Malmesbury, England. His father was a vicar. Due to some fight with some powerful person, he left his home abandoning the family. Thomas Hobbes studied in Oxford. He had an elder brother and sister. His elder brother Francis was a wealthy merchant. Like Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes did not like scholastic education. He was tutor to William Cavendish later earl of Devonshire. In 1610, he toured Europe and there he was exposed to scientific thought. In 1628, he translated Thucydides “History of Peloponnesian War” into English. He worked under Francis Bacon.

He lived during a period of civil unrest in England. In 1640, he fled to Paris. He stayed there for 11 years. He wrote a critique of Descartes Meditations of the First philosophy. In 1641 he authored, De Cive dealing with his political philosophy. He was interested in mathematics especially geometry. In 1645, he was involved in a controversy over the problem of squaring the circle. In 1642, there was civil war in England. In 1652, he returned to London.

His magnum opus, *Leviathan* was written during English Civil War. He describes the State of Nature of human beings where there is war of all against all. So there is a need of a strong central authority to avoid the evil of discord and civil war. Such authority is the Sovereign. A social contract among the people creates the Sovereign with absolute power. He describes the human society in a state of Nature in the following manner: "In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, no use of the commodities that can be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no society; which is the worst of all continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Only a Sovereign authority with absolute power can maintain a civil society. So each member of the civil society has to sacrifice some of his rights so that the Sovereign can keep law and order. There was no doctrine of separation of powers. Sovereign must control civil, military, judicial and ecclesiastical power. His metaphysical views favour materialism. Everything is matter. Or matter and motion can explain everything in the universe.

Following are his Important works.

- 1 The elements of law
- 2 De cive
- 3 *Leviathan*
- 4 De corpore
- 5 De homine

John Locke (1632-1704)



John Locke (1632-1704)

I have always thought that the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts

– John Locke

He was born in Somerset on 16 August 1632. He belonged of a family of Puritans. He had distaste for Scholastic Education. He preferred Experimental Science and medicine. He was a friend of Robert Boyle, the scientist. He had close association with Lord Ashley, later Earl of Shaftesbury and was personal physician to him. He became a member of the Royal Society. He was in France from 1692 to 1679). He was influenced by Pierre Gassendi who advocated Epicureanism. Locke involved himself in politics and was exiled to Holland in 1684. He returned to England in 1688 at the time of the Glorious Revolution when King James II was overthrown by a union of English Parliamentarians.

Let me briefly explain his contributions to philosophy. He was opposed to the concept of innate ideas propounded by Rene Descartes. According to him, when we are born, our mind is a Tabula Rasa which means a clean slate. It is our experience which gives us knowledge. Hence sense perception plays a very vital role in knowledge. So he was a foremost philosopher of empiricism. He reflected on the

origin, ceremony and extent of human knowledge together with the grounds of knowledge, degrees of beliefs, opinions and assent.

He authored the book “An Essay concerning Human Understanding in 1690. Book I of the Essay deals with Innate Ideas and its rejection. Sensation and Reflection are the origins of Ideas in our mind. Idea means object of understanding. Certain ideas represent actual qualities of objects. (such as size, shape or weight). Certain Ideas represent the perceived qualities such as colour. Ideas can be simple. Simple ideas can be grouped together to form Complex Ideas. We may call it as the Atomic Theory of Ideas. The axiom of the empiricist is that there is nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the senses. According to him, the knowledge of our own existence is intuitive, our knowledge of God’s existence is demonstrative and our knowledge of things present to our senses is sensitive.

He treated the concept of Personal Identity elaborately. Personal identity depends on self-consciousness. Memory is a necessary condition for self-identity. He deals with this in Book 2. In book 3 he deals with Language. Book 4 deals with certainty regarding knowledge. All our knowledge is probable except the knowledge of God, our own existence and mathematics.

Locke is more remembered for his political philosophy. He wrote two treatises on Government. In the first, he refuted the then prevalent theory of Divine Right of Kings. The second treatise refutes the absolutist theory of Government as such. Government is a trust. People have a right to withdraw support to a government. When people relinquish their natural rights in favour of a Government, it is Social Contract. Separation of legislative and executive power is important. Right to property is an inviolable natural right. He is known as the first philosopher of enlightenment. His political views influenced the makers of the American Constitution. Voltaire was a great admirer of Locke. He disliked religious fanaticism. He favoured liberal views. He wrote, among other things, “A letter concerning Toleration.”

Select Quotes of John Locke

- 1 No man’s knowledge can go beyond his experience.
- 2 Government has no other end than the preservation of property.
- 3 The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom. For in all states of created beings capable of law, where there is no law, there is no freedom.
- 4 All wealth is the product of labour.
- 5 Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company and reflection must finish him.

Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753)



Bishop Berkeley

We have raised a dust and complain that we cannot see.

– Bishop Berkeley

Biographical Note

He was an Irish Philosopher. He was born in 1685. He studied in Trinity College, in Dublin from the age of 15. He graduated after 3 years. He was ordained in the Anglican Church. He was exposed to the new science and philosophy of the late 17th century, which was characterised by its hostility towards Aristotelianism. He began his philosophical studies quite early in his 20s. His philosophy is also known as Immaterialism. He is considered as one of the three British Empirical philosophers. (Locke, Berkeley and Hume). His philosophy was a critical response to Descartes, Locke, Malebranche, Newton, Hobbes and others. He travelled quite a bit in Europe. He went to America to found a college in Bermuda. But his project was not successful. In 1734, he was made bishop of Cloyne. In his later years, he was propagating the virtues of tar water as a medical panacea. He died in 1753.

Berkeley's Works

1. An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision (1709)
2. Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge (1710)

3. Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous (1713)
4. De Motu (1720)
5. Alciphron – directed against Free Thinkers
6. The Theory of Vision, vindicated and Explained
7. The Analyst
8. Siris (1744)

Critique Of Materialism

He is a strong critic of materialism in his two important philosophical works Principles and Dialogues. His philosophy is known as Idealism. Materialism means “the doctrine that material things exist”. According to Berkeley, no material things exist Hence his philosophy is also known as Immaterialism. Hobbes held that only material things exist. Both Descartes and Locke held the view that both mind and matter exist. What is it that Berkeley rejects in the views of these philosophers? The view that Material things are mind-independent is not acceptable to Berkeley. He is of the view that materialism promotes scepticism and atheism.

Esse Est Percipi (To be is to be perceived)

We all think that houses, mountains, rivers and other objects exist independent of our perception of them. Our common sense view is that these objects do not need our perception of them to exist. In other words, whether anybody perceives them or not, they exist. However, Berkeley denies this view and presents elaborate arguments to show that these things do not have any existence independent of our mind’s perception of them. “To be is to be perceived”. Their existence depends on our perception of them.

- a) We perceive ordinary objects (houses, mountains etc.)
- b) We perceive only ideas.

Therefore,

- c) Ordinary objects are ideas.

He comes to the conclusion that ordinary objects are only ideas in our mind and we cannot conclude that they exist. Both Descartes and Locke are in agreement with the view that we perceive ideas which represent external objects. This may be called a REPRESENTATIONAL THEORY OF PERCEPTION, according to which we indirectly perceive material things, by directly perceiving ideas, which are mind-dependent items. The ideas represent external objects, and thereby allow us to perceive them.

The Representationist view that the ideas are copies of the external things is not acceptable to Berkeley. He maintains that one idea can resemble another IDEA but not another THING. Two things cannot be said to be alike or unlike till they have

been compared. As the mind can compare nothing but its own ideas, which by hypothesis are the only things immediately perceivable, the representationalist cannot assert a likeness between an idea and a non-ideal mind-independent material object. Thus representationalist materialism is in serious trouble. Many passages in *Principles* and *Dialogues* drive home the point, that matter is, if not an incoherent notion, at best a completely empty one.

According to the materialist, to explain our ideas we need matter. My idea of a chair is due to an object called chair. But Berkeley holds that materialists do not know how our ideas are produced by the external bodies. He maintains that production of ideas or sensations in our minds can be no reason why we should suppose matter or corporeal substances. Berkeley contends that we can have our ideas without there being any external objects causing them as in dreams.

He differs with Locke's views on Primary qualities and secondary qualities of substances. Locke is of the view that the primary qualities inhere in the objects and the ideas of them represent the objects whereas the secondary qualities like colour /taste etc. are merely ideas in our mind. Berkeley puts both the Primary Qualities and Secondary qualities on the same footing and holds that both these qualities are only ideas in our mind which we perceive. The sensible objects are nothing more than collection of sensible qualities, so they are complex ideas in the minds of those perceiving them.

Locke's reference to an "unknown substratum" in which material substances in here is a pointless assumption, according to Berkeley. Since it is the very nature of sensible object to be perceived, on his view, it would be absurd to suppose that their reality depends in anyway upon an imperceptible core. This gives rise to a general argument against even the possibility of material substance.

Is it possible to conceive of a sensible object existing independently of any perceiver? The challenge seems easy enough at first. All I have to think is think of something so remote – a tree in the middle of a forest, perhaps – that no one has it in mind. But if I conceive of this thing, then it is present in my mind as I think of it, so it is truly independent of all perception. According to Berkeley, this argument shows irrefutably that the very concept of material substance as a sensible object existing independently of any perception is incoherent. No wonder the representationalist philosophy leads to skepticism; it introduces as necessary element in our knowledge of the natural world a concept that is literally inconceivable. To the question, as to what happens when no one is perceiving an object, does it not exist? For this Berkeley would say that such object would exist as an idea in God's mind. The permanence of things is explained in this manner. Berkeley was closer to the Rationalist Malebranche who maintained that the cause for everything is only God.

Religion

The affinity between immaterialism and traditional religion is somewhat easier to understand. Materialism leads to atheism no less than to skepticism, Berkeley believed, since its belief that bodies exist outside the mind encourages the notion that the physical realm may always have existed independently of any spiritual influence. Immaterialism by contrast restores God to a role of central importance, not only as the chief among active thinking substances but also as the source of all sensible objects. God's existence is made evident by everyday instances of perception, according to Berkeley. Since sensible objects are mind-dependent yet exhibit a persistence and regularity that transcends our perception of them, it follows that there must be a master-perceiver, God, in whose mind they always are. Thus, in the *Dialogues*, Philonus extols the beauty and majesty of the natural world.

David Hume (1711-1776)



The law always limits every power it gives.

– David Hume

Life of David Hume

Born in Edinburgh in Scotland in 1711. He grew up at the Hume Family estate called Ninewells in the Scottish Lowlands, a few miles from the Scottish Border. He attended the University of Edinburgh for three or four years, leaving before he was sixteen years old without taking a degree. His family wanted him to become a lawyer but he had a distaste for law and concentrated on philosophy. In his own words, “A New Scene of Thought” opened up to him. He had a sense of discovery and breakthrough. He was inspired by the works of Francis Hutcheson, a Scottish Moral Philosopher at the University of Glasgow. He was a founding father of Scottish Enlightenment. According to Hutcheson, our moral principles are not based on Bible as Christianity says, nor are they based on reason, as Plato and Socrates had said. Our moral beliefs rest only on our feelings, our sentiments of approval or disapproval. Why not extend this view to all our beliefs? Combining thoughts of Locke and Berkeley with those of Hutcheson, he arrives at the position that all our knowledge is based on sensation and feelings only. He demolished the claim of REASON. This is his biggest contribution to Philosophy.

In 1729 he had a severe nervous breakdown. He suffered for 5 years. He went to La Flèche in France. At the end of three years, he wrote his first book A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE in 1737. He said of the book, it fell dead-born from the press. He failed to get professorship at University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow. He was a tutor for some time. He worked as Secretary to the Ambassador to France for some time. He became undersecretary. He impressed the Parisian Society. He also wrote the History of England, a monumental work. He was a multifaceted genius. He was a friend of Adam Smith, the economist.

Works of David Hume

1. A treatise on human nature
2. An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding (1748)
3. Essays, Moral, Political and Literary (1741)
4. An Enquiry concerning principles of Morals (1751)
5. The History of Great Britain
6. The Natural History of Religion
7. My Own Life
8. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

Theory of Knowledge

His purpose is to study the science of man and to explain the principles of human nature. His inspiration is Newton who reduced physics to few principles. All other sciences are based upon the science of man. The basic questions 1) How do you know? What is the origin of this knowledge? 2) What are the limits of human knowledge. He ends up showing that we have no knowledge but only beliefs. ATTACK ON THE DOCTRINE OF TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE. Refer to Plato and Descartes who talked of lower level of Knowledge. Plato: True opinion, world of senses, world of flux. Descartes: The confused ideas of the senses. A superior type of knowledge which has reason as its source and which provides certainty. Rational Truth, the truth of clear and distinct ideas. To Hume, there is only one type of knowledge, KNOWLEDGE BY PERCEPTION. Plato's theory of Forms is the basis of his metaphysics. Descartes's metaphysics is centered on his theory of mental and physical substances. Uses strong words against metaphysics fraud, total illusion, deceit, rash arrogance, lofty pretensions, superstitious credulity. To HUME, we can never know the nature of ultimate reality.

Sense Perception: Impressions and Ideas

His theory of sense perception. Contents of consciousness in general, he calls PERCEPTIONS. (Descartes calls them Ideas). What are Impressions? They are immediate sensations, passions and emotions immediate data of seeing, touching,

hearing, desiring, loving, hating. Ideas are copies or faint images of impressions, such as we have in thinking about or recalling any of our immediate impressions. Impressions have greater force and liveliness than ideas.

Simple Ideas and Complex Ideas. For every simple idea, there is a simple impression. Complex Ideas can be broken down into simple ideas which can be traced to a simple impression. So there is a pixelated view of the world. So whatever we know can be traced to a prior impression of a sensory experience.

Empiricist Principle

All our simple ideas in their first appearance are derived from simple impressions which are correspondent to them and which they exactly represent. Using this principle, he demolishes the idea of SUBSTANCE used by the Scholastic Philosophers. Substance, mind, self have no meaning. His rule is very powerful and simple. (Where there is no impression, the idea is worthless)

Association of Ideas

Atoms of experience. Distinct separable impressions and ideas. There are three laws of the association of ideas. 1. RESEMBLANCE. 2. CONTIGUITY 3. CAUSE AND EFFECT. Of the three laws of association of ideas, the association or connection of ideas by cause and effect, is the most powerful connection between our ideas.

Causation

All our reasoning about MATTERS OF FACT, says Hume, is causal reasoning. And our most important reasoning about matters of fact is scientific reasoning, with its causal laws of nature. He puts the following question. FROM WHAT IMPRESSION THE IDEA OF CAUSE COME? He is using the empiricist principle. 1. Contiguity 2. Temporal Priority 3. Necessary Connection Billiard ball example. Cause should be prior to the effect.

Analysis of Necessary Connection

From what impression the idea of a necessary connection do we derive? Hume is not able to find such an impression. Why do we believe in the causal principle itself? Hume concludes that there is no rational proof whatsoever of the causal principle. If we believe in the causal principle, it is only through habit or custom that we do so, there is no rational basis for it. Reason is restricted to the areas of mathematics and logic. Explain constant conjunction. Repeated instances. The idea of the necessary connection between causes and effects is not in the objects we observe, but only in the mind. He concludes that the idea of necessary connection between particular causes and effects is derived not from rational self-evidence and not from any empirical sense impression, but only from the psychological association of our ideas.

As an extreme, radical empiricist he has demolished the claims of science to have discovered causal laws of nature such as the laws of mechanics, gravity, and the circulation of the blood. Causal necessity is not an objective relationship between things which scientists can observe, but is a subjective compulsion to relate things by the psychological laws of association.

Hume's Definition of Causality

A cause is an object in constant spatial and temporal conjunction with another such that the experience of the one compels the mind to expect another.

Two Kinds of Propositions

There are two types of propositions. 1. Matters of Fact 2. Relations of Ideas. The factual propositions are of the first type. Mathematical truths and analytic propositions like three plus two equals five and all bachelors are unmarried males come under the second type.

The Limits of Knowledge

Our knowledge is limited to our sensory impressions and their images as ideas. Metaphysics is impossible. Science is impossible. The causal laws of science have been reduced by Hume to the psychological laws of association of ideas.

Hume's Rejection of the Idea of the Soul and the Self

“When I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself. He denies the idea of the self. Man is a bundle of perceptions. On the basis of the empiricist principle, we cannot claim to have any knowledge of the self as a unity, as permanent and continuous, but only as a bundle of perceptions.

Immanuel Kant, Logical positivists and Albert Einstein were greatly influenced by Hume.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)



Immanuel Kant

Two things awe me most, the starry sky above and the moral laws within me.

– Kant

His Life in Brief

Immanuel Kant was born in Königsberg, Prussia in 1724. His ancestors emigrated to Germany from Scotland. He belonged to a Protestant sect called Pietists. He started his life as a private tutor and became a professor in 1770. He was a polymath who taught logic, ethics, maths, metaphysics, cosmography and geography. It is interesting to know that he never left his native place till the end of his life. He was known for his punctuality. There is a story that people would set their watch when he went for his daily walk. He never married. He was totally devoted to intellectual pursuits. He was a very friendly man. He enjoyed good health. He died in 1804.

His Seminal Works

1. Critique of Pure Reason (1781; revised in 1787)
2. Critique of Practical Reason
3. Critique of Judgement
4. Foundations of the Metaphysics of Ethics. Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason

Critique of Pure Reason

Immanuel Kant examines the very tool of philosophy which is REASON. There are two phases in his intellectual development. In the earlier phase, he was influenced by Leibniz and Wolff. It is his dogmatic period. However, according to his own words, he was awakened from his dogmatic slumber by Hume and therefore he effected a Copernican Revolution in philosophy during the second phase (1770-1804). There were mainly two schools of philosophy with which we are already acquainted. Empiricism holds that all our knowledge is based on experiences of our senses whereas Rationalism maintains that Reason is the basis of all our knowledge. Kant wants to go beyond these two extreme positions. He succeeds in reaching a higher point by transcending the extreme positions. Hence he calls his philosophy transcendental. In its examination of reason, criticism separates the different elements of this faculty, and true to the critical spirit whence it springs, distinguishes between the theoretical order, the practical order and the aesthetical order. In the theoretical sphere, Reason manifests itself as the faculty of knowing, or the sense of truth; in the practical sphere, as the active faculty, or the sense of goodness; in the aesthetical sphere, as the sense of beauty and teleological fitness.

In examining the question, "What is knowledge?", Kant makes two crucial distinction between a priori and a posteriori and between analytic and synthetic judgments. A posteriori knowledge is knowledge gained from experience and a priori knowledge is universal knowledge, independent of our experience, such as our knowledge of mathematics. In analytical statement, the predicate is contained in the concept in the subject, as for example, in the Analytic Judgment, "a bachelor is an unmarried man". This is also a priori. However, in Synthetic Judgements, the predicate contains information not included in the concept of the subject. For example, "All the bachelors in this locality are graduates." This is a synthetic judgement purely based on experience. This is also a posteriori. Kant's project is the possibility of Synthetic a priori knowledge. He argues that maths and science principles are synthetic a priori knowledge. For example, the ruling $7+5=12$ is a priori because it is a necessary and universal truth, and it is synthetic because the concept of 12 is not contained in the concept of "7+5". How can we form synthetic judgements a priori? In other words: Under what conditions is knowledge possible? This is the fundamental problem which Kantian criticism undertakes to solve. It is possible, Kant answers, provided the senses furnish the materials for a judgment and reason the cement needed to unite them. Take the proposition: Heat expands bodies. The proposition contains two distinct elements: (1) The elements furnished by sensation: heat, expansion, bodies (2) an element not given by sensation but derived solely from the intellect: the causal relation which the sentence in question establishes between heat and expansion of bodies. What is true of this example is true of every scientific judgment. Every scientific judgement necessarily contains sensible elements and purely rational elements. In denying the former, idealism

ignores the fact that persons born blind have no idea of colour, and consequently no notion of light; in denying the rational, innate, a priori element sensationalism forgets that the most refined senses of the idiot are incapable of suggesting a notion to him. The critical philosophy occupies a place between these two extreme theories, and recognises both the role of sensibility and that of pure reason in the formation of our judgments.

Critique of Sensibility or Transcendental Aesthetic

Kant asks the question, " what are the conditions of sense perception?" (to use his language intuition), there are two elements in perception. The first is matter or raw material which comes from outside and the form which is supplied by the mind. In other words sensibility is not purely passive. It is not that the mind is a blank paper which receives the sense impressions. A priori element is form. A posteriori element is matter. What are the a priori elements which our sensibility does not receive, but draws from its own nature and adds to each intuitions, just as the digestive apparatus adds its juices to the swallowed food, in order to transform it into chyle? These a priori intuitions which sensationalism denies, and whose existence the Critique of Pure Reason proves are SPACE, the form of the outer sense and TIME, the form of the inner sense. Space and Time are the original intuitions of reason, prior to all experience: this is the immortal discovery of KANT, and one of the fundamental teachings of the critical philosophy. Infants have a priori knowledge of space and time. The decisive proof of the a-priori of the ideas of space and time is furnished by mathematics. Arithmetic is the science of duration, the successive moments of which constitute number. Geometry is the science of space. Arithmetical and Geometrical truths possess the character of absolute necessity. We see all things in space, but we cannot see space itself, nor perceive duration independently of its contents. All perception presupposes the ideas of space and time; and unless we had these ideas a priori, unless reason created them prior to all its intuitions, unless they pre-existed as original and inalienable forms, sense-perception could never take place. Time and space are not objects of perception, but modes of perceiving objects, instinctive habits, inhering in the thinking subject. It looks as though we are wearing spectacles of which one glass is SPACE and the other TIME. So we perceive only things as they appear to us, and not THING-IN – ITSELF. Therefore understanding is always of the PHENOMENA, thing as it appears to us. What is behind the phenomena, the thing-in-itself, we do not know.

Critique of the Understanding or Transcendental Logic

Kant distinguishes, in the general faculty of knowledge, between sensibility, which produces intuitions or sensible ideas, and the understanding which elaborates them. In the understanding he again distinguishes between the faculty of judgment; i.e., the faculty of connecting the intuitions with each other according to certain a priori laws and the faculty of arranging our judgements under series of universal Ideas (reason

in the narrowest sense of the word). In Kant's language, Critique of the faculty of Judgment is Transcendental Analytic and the Critique of Reason proper is Transcendental Dialectic.

Transcendental Analytic

The Pure Concepts of Understanding

Quantity	Quality	Relation	Modality
unity	affirmation	substance-accidents	possibility
plurality	negation	cause-effect	actuality
totality	limitation	causal reciprocity	necessity

Categories are the forms according to which we judge. Hence there are as many categories as there are kinds of judgments. Logic enumerates twelve of them: (1) Universal Judgment (All men are mortal) (2) the particular judgment (Some men are philosophers) (3) the singular judgment (Peter is a mathematician) (4) the affirmative judgment (Man is mortal) (5) The negative judgment (the soul is not mortal) (6) The limiting judgment (The soul is immortal) (7) the categorical judgment (God is just) (8) the hypothetical judgment (if God is just, he will punish the wicked) (9) the disjunctive judgment (Either the Greeks or the Romans are the leading nation of antiquity) (10) the problematical judgment (the planets are perhaps inhabited) (11) the assertory judgment (the earth is round) (12) the apodictic judgment (God must be just).

The first three express totality, plurality and unity. (idea of quantity). The fourth, fifth and sixth express reality, negation and limitation (the idea of quality). The seventh, eighth and ninth express substantiality and inherence, causality and dependence, reciprocity in short relation; finally the tenth, eleventh and twelfth express possibility and impossibility, being and non-being, necessity and contingency, the idea of modality. There are therefore twelve categories, arranged in three, under four groups or fundamental groups or categories: quantity, quality, relation and modality. One of these, relation, governs and embraces all the rest. It is the highest category, since every judgment whatever it may be expresses a relation. From these four cardinal categories four rules or principles necessarily follow, which are therefore a priori. From the standpoint of quantity, every phenomenon, i.e, everything presented by the intuitive faculty as existing in space and time is a quantity, a fixed extent and a fixed duration. This principle excludes the principle of atom. From the standpoint of quality, every phenomenon has a certain content, a certain degree of intensity. This principle excludes the hypothesis of void. From the standpoint of relation, all phenomena are united by the tie of causality, which excludes the hypothesis of chance; there is moreover, a reciprocal action between the effects and their causes; which excludes the idea of *fatum* (fate). From the standpoint

of modality, every phenomenon is possible that conforms to the laws of space and time and every phenomenon is necessary, the absence of which would imply the suspension of these laws; which excludes miracles.

Transcendental Dialectic

In the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant demonstrates the incompetence of theoretical reason beyond the domain of experience, and the futility of metaphysics considered as the science of the absolute. The concepts of “reason”, or Ideas, are: the thing-in-itself, or the absolute, the universe, the soul and God. Just as space and time are not perceived objects, but modes of perceiving objects; just as the categories of quantity, quality and relation are means and not objects of knowledge, so too the universe, the soul, and God are a priori synthesis of reason and not beings existing independently of thinking subject. At least, it is impossible for reason to demonstrate their objective existence. Reason, as he insists, really knows nothing but phenomena, and receives the matter of all its operations from sensibility alone. Now the Universe, as absolute totality, the soul, and God are not phenomena; the Ideas – in this says Kant, they differ from the categories – do not receive any content from sensibility; they are supreme norms, regulative points of view, no more, no less. Old metaphysics erred in regarding them as anything else. Rational psychology, as Descartes, Leibniz and Wolff conceived it, rests on a paralogism. “I think”, says Descartes, “therefore I am” – and mentally adds; a substance. He has no right to do that. I think means: I am the logical subject of my thought. But have I the right to infer from this that I am a substance in the sense in which the Cartesian Metaphysics attaches to the term? A logical subject is one thing, a metaphysical subject is another. I cannot judge metaphysically concerning the ego because it is I who am judging; one cannot be both judge and litigant, as they say in law; or the subject of the discourse and the real subject, as they say in logic. If it is not possible to prove that ego exists as a substance, the doctrines of simplicity, immateriality, and immortality of the human soul cannot stand.

Four Antinomies

A large part of the Critique of Pure Reason is occupied in showing the fallacies that arise from applying space and time or the categories of things to things which are not experienced. When this is done, we find ourselves troubled by “antinomies” – that is to say mutually contradictory propositions each of which can be apparently proved. He gives four such antinomies, each consisting of thesis and antithesis.

Thesis: The world has a beginning in time, and is also limited as regards space.
 Antithesis: The world has no beginning in time and no limits in space; it is infinite as regards both time and space.

Every composite substance both is and is not made up of simple parts.

Thesis: There are two kinds of causality, one according to the law of nature and the other that of freedom. Antithesis: There is only causality according to the laws of nature. There is, and is not an absolutely necessary being.

Kant and Proofs for the Existence of God

In a famous section, Kant sets to work to demolish all the purely intellectual proofs for the existence of God. He makes it clear that he has other reasons for believing in God; these he was to set forth later in the Critique of Practical Reason. The Ontological proof defines God as the most real being; the subject of all predicates that belong to being absolutely. It is contended, by those who believe the proof valid, that since, 'existence' is such a predicate, this subject must have the predicate 'existence', i.e. must exist. Kant objects that existence is not a predicate. A hundred thalers that I imagine may, he says, have all the same predicates as a hundred real thalers. The Cosmological proof says: If anything exists, then an absolute necessary being must exist; now I know that I exist; therefore an absolutely necessary Being exists, and this must be the most real being. Kant maintains that the last step in this argument is the ontological argument over again, and that is therefore refuted by what has already been said. The Argument from design maintains that the universe exhibits an order which is evidence of purpose. Kant points out that at best it proves only an Architect, and not a Creator and therefore cannot give an adequate conception of God.

Kantian Ethics

God, Freedom and immortality are the three ideas of reason. Though pure reason leads us to form these ideas, it cannot itself prove their reality. The importance of these ideas is practical, i.e. connected with morals. The purely intellectual use of reasons leads to fallacies; its only right use is directed to moral ends. The practical use of reason is developed briefly near the end of the Critique of Pure Reason, and more fully in the Critique of Practical Reason. The argument is that moral law demands justice, i.e. happiness proportional to virtue. Only Providence can insure this and evidently not insured it in this life. Therefore there is a God and a future life; and there must be freedom, since otherwise there would be no such thing as virtue.

All moral concepts have their seat and origin wholly a priori in the reason. Moral worth exists only when a man acts from a sense of duty; it is not enough that the act should be such as duty might have prescribed. The tradesman who is honest from self-interest or the man who is kind from benevolent impulse, is not virtuous. The essence of morality is to be derived from the concept of law; for, though everything in nature acts according to laws, only a rational being has the power of acting according to the idea of law; i.e. Will. The idea of an objective principle in so far as it is compelling to the will is called a command of the reason, and the formula of the command is called an imperative.

There are two sorts of imperative: the hypothetical imperative which says, ' You must do so-and-so if you wish to achieve such-and-such an end'; and the categorical imperative, which says that a certain kind of action is objectively necessary, without regard to any end. The categorical imperative is synthetic and a priori. Its character is deduced by Kant from the concept of Law:

Act only according to a maxim by which you can at the same time will that it shall become a general law. Kant gives as an illustration of the working of the categorical imperative that it is wrong to borrow money, because if we all tried to do so there would be no money left to borrow. One can in like manner show that theft and murder are condemned by the categorical imperative. Further he says that we ought to act as to treat every man as an end in himself.

In his treatise on Perpetual Peace (1795), he advocates a federation of free States, bound together by a covenant forbidding war. Reason, he says, utterly condemns war, which only international government can prevent.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)



Arthur Schopenhauer

Compassion is the basis of morality

– Arthur Schopenhauer

His Life in Brief

Arthur Schopenhauer was born in 1788 in Danzig; his father was a wealthy banker and his mother a popular novelist of her day. Arthur disliked a career in business and after his father's death pursued philosophy, natural science and Sanskrit literature at Göttingen University. His favorite philosophers were Plato, Kant; though influenced by Fichte, he later condemned Fichte and Hegel as “windbags of philosophy.” He established himself as a private docent at the University of Berlin and lectured there intermittently from 1826 to 1831, the period of Hegel's greatest popularity, but met with little success as a teacher. He had a very bitter relationship with his mother. In 1831 he retired from the University, full of bitterness and hatred of all “philosophy professors”, and settled at Frankfurt, devoting himself to thinking and writing. His masterpiece is “The World as Will and Idea”. His fame was slow in coming, but it sweetened the last few years of his life. He was deeply interested in Hindu and Buddhist Philosophy. He died in 1860.

His Important Works

1. He wrote in German. Following are his important works:
2. World as Will and Idea (1819)
3. Fourfold Roots of Principle of Sufficient Reason (1813)
4. The Basis of Morality (1841)

The World as will and Idea

Schopenhauer thinks that he is the right heir to Kant. He accepts almost the major part of his philosophy. What we know through our senses is the world of phenomena. Kant maintained that we cannot know the “thing-in-itself” (Noumenon). Here is the departure. Schopenhauer holds that the thing-in-itself is the WILL. It is true, he says, that if I were merely an intellectual being, an outward – looking subject, I should perceive nothing but phenomena arranged in space and time, and in causal relation. In my own innermost consciousness, however, I come face to face with my true, real basal self; in the consciousness of activity I become aware of the thing-in-itself. The thing – in-itself is WILL; it is the primary timeless spaceless uncaused activity that expresses itself in me as impulse instinct striving, craving and yearning. I also become aware of myself as a phenomenon, as part of nature; I image myself as an extended organic body. I know myself in two ways, as will and as body; but it is the one will which, in self-consciousness, appears as the consciousness of activity and, in perception, as my material body. The WILL is my real self, the body the expression of the WILL.

Will in Nature and in Man

This duality is the key to the solution of the whole question of metaphysics. All things are interpreted by Schopenhauer in analogy with his conception of the human being; the world is will and idea; idea to the intellect, but in reality will. When I look inward, I come face to face with will; when I look outward, I perceive this will of mine as body. My will objectifies itself as body, expresses itself as a living organism. I am, therefore justified in inferring by analogy that other bodies are, like mine, the outward manifestation of will. In the stone, will manifests itself as blind force; in man, it becomes conscious of itself. The magnetic needle always points to the north; bodies always fall in vertical line; substances form crystals when acted on by other substances; and all such occurrences give evidence of the operation of forces in nature which are akin to the will in us. In the vegetable kingdom, too, we discover traces of unconscious striving or impulse. The tree desires light and strives upward; it also wants moisture and pushes its roots into soil. Will or impulse guides the growth of the animal and directs all its activities. The wild beast desiring to devour its prey develops teeth and claws and muscles; the will creates for itself an organism suitable

to its needs; function precedes organisation; the desire to butt is the cause of the appearance of the horns. The will to live is the basal principle of life.

In man and the higher animals this primitive impulse becomes conscious; it creates intelligence as its organ or instrument; intelligence is the lamp that illuminates the will's way through the world. The will makes for itself a brain; in this respect Schopenhauer agrees with the materialists. On the lower stages of existence, the will is blind craving, it works blindly, without consciousness; in man it becomes conscious; intelligence is grafted on the will and becomes the greatest of all instruments of self-preservation. But it always remains in the service of will; will is the master, intellect the servant.

Will controls perception, memory, imagination, judgment, and reasoning; we perceive, remember, imagine what will to perceive, remember, and imagine; and our arguments are always pleas of the will. Schopenhauer foreshadowed the modern psychological theory of rationalisation – reason's subservience to the will in devising reasons to justify conclusions accepted on volitional, emotional, and other non-rational grounds. As we pass down the scale of existence from man to the mineral, we observe intelligence falling to the background; the will, however, remains as the one, constant, persistent element. In the child and the savage, impulse predominates over intelligence; as we descend in the animal kingdom, instinct gradually becomes less and less conscious; in the plant, the will is unconscious; in the mineral, no trace of conscious intelligence remains.

This basal will, which manifests itself in mineral and in man, is not a person, not an intelligent God. It is a blind unconscious force that wills existence. It is neither spatial nor temporal, but expresses itself in individuals in space and time; that is, it acts in such a way that our mind perceives it in individual, i.e. temporal and spatial, form. It manifests itself in eternal, immutable types, which Plato calls Ideas. The different organic species, for example, are eternal types. The species do not change; individuals belonging to the species grow and die, but the will – type or the species endures. These types form in an ascending scale, a graduated series or hierarchy, rising from the lowest stages of matter to man. Individuals may come and individuals may go, but will goes on forever. Hence, the fundamental part of the will, is immortal; the particular, individual form in which it expresses itself is mortal. Suicide, therefore, means the destruction of a particular expression of the will, but not of the will itself.

Pessimism

The will to be, the will to live, is the cause of all struggle, sorrow, and evil in the world. A world of ceaseless striving and battle, in which the different forms of the blind will to exist struggle with one another, a world in which the little fishes are devoured by the larger ones, is not a good world, but an evil one, indeed the worst of all possible worlds. The life of man is not worth living, because it is full of misery; it

follows from the very nature of human will that man's life is one of pain and misery. Life consists of blind craving, which is painful so long as it is not satisfied, and which when satisfied is followed by new painful desires ad nauseum. We are never permanently satisfied, there is a worm in every flower. We are like shipwrecked mariners who struggle and struggle to save their wearied bodies from terrible waves, only to be engulfed at last.

Another reason why life is evil is because it is selfish and base; and it follows from the very nature of the will that it should be so. *L'homme est l'animal méchant*, (man is a wicked animal) a heartless and cowardly egoist, whom fear makes vanity sociable, and the only way to succeed in the world is to be as grasping and dishonest as the rest. The progress of knowledge and civilisation does not mend matters; it simply brings with it new needs and, with them, new sufferings and new forms of selfishness and immorality. The so-called virtues, love of labour, perseverance, temperance, frugality, are merely a refined egoism. "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." "History is an interminable series of murders, robberies, intrigues, and lies; if you know one page of it, you know them all."

Ethics of Pity and Self-Denial

Schopenhauer teaches that sympathy, or pity, is the actual basis and standard of morality, and that the human race is wicked because it is selfish. To be good, an act must be prompted by pure sympathy; if the motive is my own welfare, the act has no moral worth at all; if the motive is the harm of others, it is wicked. The empirical character of man is wholly determined, but the fact of remorse suggests that the will is free. My will must therefore be ultimately responsible for my character; the intelligible ego has fashioned the empirical ego.

Since the selfish will is the root of all evil and the source of all sorrow, man must negate the will and suppress his selfish desires, in order to enjoy happiness or at least to be at peace. This is possible in several ways. The artistic and philosophical genius may be delivered from the selfish will, forget himself, lose himself in artistic contemplation or philosophical thought, a method that affords only temporary relief though it offers a foretaste of deliverance. The individual can also free himself from his selfish will by contemplating the wickedness of the world, the futility of all desire, and the illusoriness of individual existence. If he will think of these things and remember that all individuals are one in essence, that they are all manifestations of the same primal will, he will feel sympathy or pity for all creation; he will see himself in others and feel the sorrows of others as his own. This is the moral way, but it likewise furnishes only temporary relief. The best way is total negation of the will in an ascetic life, such as is practised by Christian ascetics and Buddhist saints. Resignation and will-lessness ensue, the will is dead. The saint finds deliverance from his own will, from the impulses which bind the natural man to the world; the will dies as soon as, through knowledge of life, it becomes aware of what it is.

Schopenhauer's Influence

Schopenhauer has had a massive influence upon later thinkers, though more so in the arts (especially literature and music) and psychology than in philosophy. His thought is being explored by some modern philosophers as a precursor to evolutionary theory and modern evolutionary psychology. Russian writer Leo Tolstoy was greatly influenced by Schopenhauer's classic, "World as Will and Idea". This book was responsible for Tolstoy's ascetic way of life. Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (a musical composition) was inspired after he read Schopenhauer's classic. Frederick Nietzsche respected Schopenhauer very much and dedicated an essay for him. Jorge Luis Borges, Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle were also influenced by him.

Georg Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831)



Education is the art of making man ethical.

– G.W.Hegel

Brief Life-Sketch

He was born in Stuttgart in a middle class family, the oldest of three children. His father was a minor civil servant. He graduated from the Stuttgart Gymnasium and thereafter in 1788, he entered the famous theological seminary at the university of Tübingen to study theology. He was a contemporary of the German poet Hölderlin and the philosopher Schelling. He struggled much to earn a living and eventually became a professor first at Jena and later at Heidelberg and Berlin. In 1831, he died of cholera.

Important Works of Hegel

His important works are given below:

Logic

1. The Phenomenology of Spirit
2. The Philosophy of Nature
3. The Philosophy of Right

4. The Philosophy of History

The Real is the Rational

As a student, Hegel was acquainted well with the prevailing philosophical currents of British Empiricism, Continental Rationalism and the Kantian Critical Philosophy. In addition, there was a newer philosophy which appeared in Germany known as Romanticism. Romanticism is characterised by its Inward Path, the quest for the totality of experience, the primacy of the Will, viewing Nature as Spirit and the Romantic Polarity (experiencing both sides).

Hegel was a great system builder in Philosophy. He had a very holistic approach to philosophy. His philosophy is known as Absolute Idealism. He takes up the entire world history and explains it in terms of a process. It is a movement of the Absolute. It is a purposive movement propelled by 'Reason'. Nothing which happens, happens by caprice. There is a reason behind everything. Reality is a rational process. The Absolute is realising itself through Reason. Hegel looks for a philosophy encompassing all human experience, all knowledge such as science history, religion, politics, art, literature, architecture. He will do this with his concept of Absolute Mind or Spirit. The totality of concepts used in the vast stretches of all knowledge are unified in the absolute mind or absolute spirit or God. Reality is thus a vast and complex totality of rational concepts and this totality constitutes absolute mind or absolute spirit or God. The real, says Hegel, is the rational, and the rational is real. This totality of thought is absolute, and characterises absolute spirit, in contrast to finite minds such as ours; it is objective mind in contrast to the subjectivity of human minds.

Absolute Idealism is the claim that reality is rational conceptual totality, the reality is an absolute mind, or the mind of God, an integrated and total structure of conceptual truths. Absolute mind reveals itself in all areas of human experience and knowledge, from logic to physics to biology, from history and politics to art, religion and philosophy. Reality is this vast structure of rational concepts. Like Plato, Hegel claims that the rational, the concept, the idea – that is what is real. His famous words are: "The Real is the rational and the rational is the real." For Hegel the reality of rational concepts is not another object than existence, it is the same object more deeply understood. Absolute idealism claims to penetrate existence to find the rational, conceptual truth which is its core or kernel. Unlike the Forms of Plato, the rational concepts have no separate independent existence apart from the concrete world of things but constitute their rational core. Hegel denies the claims of Hume and Kant that reality is unknowable. He is as confident a rationalist as Plato had been. To Hegel, "Whatever is rational". Every aspect of human experience is knowable through its underlying rational structure. Absolute mind is a unified totality of all rational truth – a unity in diversity. It is the task of metaphysics to show the diversity of components of Reality, their limits and interconnections in a unified

totality. The breathtaking vision of the Absolute total reality is linked to the method by which it is known. This is the famous method of Dialectic.

Theory of Dialectic

The concept of dialectic dates back to very ancient Greek Thought. This is the “four elements theory” that reality is composed of earth and air, in constant opposition, as are also fire and water. Heraclitus wrote that all is strife, everything turns into its opposite. Socrates made the opponent contradict himself and then he would resolve the contradiction. In the Republic, Plato meant by Dialectic the highest level of knowledge, a stage in which opposition or contradiction has been overcome.

Dialectic is a process which consists of three stages, or moments: for this reason, Hegel’s theory of dialectic is called triadic. The process of dialectic moves from a first stage or moment (thesis) to a second stage or moment which negates, opposes, or contradicts the first (antithesis) ; and this opposition is overcome by a third stage in which a new concept (the synthesis) emerges as a higher truth which transcends them. Synthesis has these three functions:

1. It cancels the conflict between thesis and antithesis.
2. It preserves or retains the element of truth within the thesis and the antithesis.
3. It transcends the opposition and raises up or sublimates the conflict into a higher truth. (Example Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato).

The triadic process is not restricted to the history of philosophy. It is the rhythm of all reality. The rational conceptual truths which underlie all areas of human experience and knowledge are not static, but in dialectical movement from thesis to opposing antithesis to reconciling synthesis. Absolute mind which is the totality of these concepts, is thus itself a process, revealing its truths dialectically, unfolding them by stage, from thesis to antithesis to synthesis, to our finite minds. We, in turn, grasp these unfolding truths in our developing knowledge. The whole of what is known at any historical period is what absolute mind has dialectically revealed or manifested at that point.

The Phenomenology of Spirit

The Phenomenology of Spirit presents a biography, not of a particular person, but of the spirit of humanity over the long centuries as it develops, grows, matures in its striving, valuing and philosophizing. The history of philosophy is a crucial part of the biography of human spirit. Differing philosophic systems should not be seen as at war with one another but as “elements of an organic unity. Philosophy, like all of reality, is organic in character, a functional interdependence of parts, as is the case with a living, growing organism. The history of philosophy may be compared to a living, growing, fruitful tree, and that different philosophies are like the stages of growth of the bud, the blossom, and the fruit. Each philosophy may in this way be

seen as having significance as a stage in the growth of philosophy, as bud or blossom or fruit. The bud and the blossom disappear to make way for the fruit; we don't think of them as false, but as part of an organic process. So also no philosophy is false. Each is a necessary part of the organic growth and unity of all of philosophy. In his adherence to the concept of Organicism, Hegel had been influenced by the fundamental concepts of the organism as a hierarchical, interdependent unity of parts (like the heart, the liver, the lungs in the human organism) plays a necessary role in maintaining the life of the whole.

Historicism

The view of the significance of history in Hegel's metaphysics is known as Historicism. Historicism is the claim that the understanding of any aspect of human life must be concerned primarily with its history, its evolution, its genesis, or its roots, rather than with empirical observation of it as it is now. Historicism is of the view that adequate knowledge of any human phenomena must be historical.

Development of Self-Consciousness

Hegel deals with the development of human self-consciousness indicating the various stages. At an early stage of human development, the self is conscious of objects. Through desire, human self relates to objects. The self desires objects for its own gratification, in order to satisfy its bodily needs, through mastery of objects. We dominate the animals also. We overcome, master and annul their existence by destroying them. Such mastering actions, Hegel sees in them the principle of negation. The negative death dealing attitude leads the self to master another self. Hence the master – slave relationship. The slave labours for the master. The slave discovers his own independent existence as consciousness with a mind and will and power of his own. Marx was much influenced by the chapter on Master-Slave relationship in the book and used it to develop his philosophy. The next stage in the development of consciousness is Stoicism. The next stage is Scepticism. The further stage is “the Unhappy Consciousness” and Hegel identifies it as the religious consciousness of medieval Christianity. The self is divided and there is a conflict between the part of the self which longs of God and the part which clings to the world. Finally Religious consciousness passes over into the realm of Reason and Philosophy. The profound truth which the religious world view expressed in pictures and symbols must now be grasped by the rational concepts of philosophy. The self must learn that the true Absolute is not a personal God but it is absolute mind, the totality of truth, which manifests dialectically in finite minds in human history. The self must learn that a free human being should be a slave to none, not even to God.

Philosophy of History

Hegel deals with the question as to the meaning of history. Is human history teleological? Is there any pattern in human history? Hegel applies the philosophy of

Absolute Idealism to history to find the answer. The rational concepts which are the core of history do not challenge the existence of the facts of history, nor do they constitute separate set of objects superior to the facts; instead these rational concepts which underlies the facts of history are the only facts themselves 'more deeply understood.'

World History is the scene in which the truth of the Absolute unfolding, becoming manifest, being revealed in time to finite spirit. And as this rational structure reveals itself dialectically in time, it exhibits God's plan for the world. In this way, he argues that history has an underlying rational structure and that it is teleological, it has a purpose; history is a purposeful movement toward God's goal for humanity. And so history is rational, purposeful and good. In Hegel's words, reason, which is unfolding, developing truth of the Absolute, rules the world. What about the evils of history? The terrors? Where is evidence of rationality in the bloody centuries of human history? He acknowledges the evils of history saying, "History is the slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, wisdom of states, and the virtue of individuals have been victimised."

Philosophy of History as Theodicy

Hegel claims that his philosophy of history is a theodicy, a theory which justifies God, vindicates God against the charge that He has permitted evil to overrun the world. What is latent in Spirit, the Absolute; and the essence of Spirit is freedom. The whole sweep of human history is the process in which Spirit manifests to finite human beings the meaning of their own freedom. History may thus be said to be the progress of humanity in the consciousness of its own freedom.

The Absolute works with human passions and desire to bring about in finite minds a consciousness of their own freedom. Human beings are driven to action by their own private, subjective wills to satisfy their natural instincts, needs, inclinations and interests. The Absolute uses the human desires to accomplish its end, its goal in history. How is this done? By the Cunning of Reason, in his words. The Cunning of Reason utilises (1) the great nation-states which appear successively in history and (2) the great historical individuals who bring about profound changes in history.

The Absolute unfolds and manifests in the spirit of an entire people. The Spirit of a People (*Volkgeist*) means something very close to what we today call culture which consists of language, religion, art, music, poetry, architecture, morality, philosophy, science, and law. The Spirit of a People is embodied in all these elements of the culture of a people; it pervades them all and unifies them into an organic totality. For example in ancient Athens, the unique spirit of the Athenian people, expressive of cheerful, youthful freshness, freedom, intellectual vitality, harmony with nature, and 'beautiful individuality' can be seen in its characteristic style of art, religion, politics, and philosophy.

The Spirit of a People is embodied in the life of the Nation-State. The Nation-State is an organic totality which includes the government and other institutions of a nation as well as the whole of its culture. It is the State which is the true Individual of History. The Individuals of World-History are nations. Cunning of Reason uses these important individuals who will bring humanity to consciousness of its freedom. Each nation – state has a specific and limited role to play in the unfolding of the consciousness of freedom in the great theatre of history. This is the way in which the Cunning of Reason uses nation-states to achieve God's purpose in history.

Human Individuals are part of Nation-State; they are dependent like the cells of an organism. The Cunning of Reason uses individual human desires as means to its own end. The actions of the individuals prompted by their desires and passions have unintended consequences in the industrial, financial, and educational functions of their society which they do not recognise. The individual is a carrier of the culture, the spirit of the people. The Cunning of Reason uses the great heroes of history to bring about historical changes, so that the consciousness of freedom will progress. Who are these figures? They include Alexander, the Great, Julius Caesar and Napoleon. These individuals destroy many things. Cunning of Reason uses them for these purposes and when they had served their purposes, they are discarded. Evils are the instrumentalities used by God to increase good.

History as Progress in the Consciousness of Freedom

The progress through World-History of the consciousness of freedom takes the form of the great triadic dialectic of history. China is an example in the Oriental World, where only one is free, the Oriental Despot. Consequently China is left to live out its life in slow stagnation. The Spirit moves on through the intermediary stages of India and Persia to the rise of Ancient Greece. The consciousness of a new development of freedom is reached in the awareness of Athens that some are free, namely the citizens. Slaves are not free. And finally, through the intermediary stages of feudalism and the Enlightenment, Spirit moves on to the development of the complete consciousness of freedom in the Modern Christian – Germanic World. It remained for Germany, not yet unified as a nation – to have the role of embodying the most complete consciousness of freedom, because it lifted up the thesis of the Oriental monarch as free, with the antithesis of Enlightenment, constitutional freedom of all, into a new synthesis, fusing with them the Lutheran Christian sense of the spiritual freedom of all human souls. It is in the constitutional monarchy of the (Protestant) Christian – Germanic people that progress in the consciousness of freedom reaches a dialectical synthesis and fulfilment. And so the Germanic peoples emerge as the pinnacle of the consciousness of freedom and as the pinnacle of World-History.

Moral Philosophy of Hegel

There is no moral authority above the State. Ethical life, the moral life, is life lived in society. The individual can live the moral life only by acting in accordance with the moral principles expressed in his/her society in its own institutions. The moral life

has its source only in the Nation-State and can be fulfilled only in the Nation-State. Everything that man is, he owes it to the state; only in it can he find its essence. All value that a man has, all spiritual reality, he has only through the state. No individual can separate from the Spirit of the People. In participating in the life of our nation and its culture, we live beyond ourselves in the larger life of developing truth. By participating in the ongoing public life of politics, religion, art, education and work, the individual can enter into the truth for his time, into the truth of the Absolute as it is manifested in his nation.

The family is the initial social group which one experiences. In the family, there is a sense of unity; a unity of feeling, a bond of love unites the family members. When it happens that the family members relate to each other through insisting upon their individual rights, the right of the children against parents, or husbands and wives against each other, rather than through their unity of feeling, the family is in a process of dissolution, and decay. In the next stage, the child outgrows family and passes over into a new stage of the moral life of the nation, which is that of civil society. In the transition to the new stage of life, the young adult becomes a self-conscious individual personality, with his own will, aspirations, life plans, and social connections. Hegel describes the polarisation within industrial society of two groups, the small, the wealthy capitalist class and the constantly growing proletarian class of labourers similar to how Marx would describe later. The developed political State is the synthesis of the unity of the family and the separateness or individuality of life in civil society. The individual who internalises the ethics embodied in the ongoing life of the state has acquired the ethical substance of his society.

Political Philosophy

Hegel distinguishes Negative Freedom from Substantial Freedom. The freedom of the individual inspired by the Enlightenment, rights of life, liberty and property is negative freedom according to Hegel. It is freedom from an oppressive authority. For Hegel, the ideals of substantial freedom are derived from the spiritual life of the particular society. A fully developed nation-state is one which clearly embodies in its laws and institutions the ethical ideals and the fundamental beliefs of the spirit of the people. The members of such a society will have internalised these same ideals of the culture. An individual member of the society will have substantial freedom insofar as the ideals of his society, embodied in the laws are his own chosen ideals for directing his life. As ethics is social ethics, so freedom is social freedom. Substantial freedom consists in the identification of personal ideals with the ideals of the state, which embody the ethical substance of the society. According to him, substantial freedom is the condition of human happiness.

Alienation

If an individual is not reconciled to the ideals and institutions of his society, he will be in a state of alienation. Alienation as Hegel understands it is the failure of the will of the individual to identify with the larger will of the society. You as an individual are in a state of alienation when you find that the ideals and institutions by which

your society defines itself appear to you as meaningless and false. Alienation is the opposite to social identification. Alienation breaks up the organic unity of society into nonparticipating atoms. It is of great significance that Hegel views political and social individualism as a serious form of alienation. Individualism is a solvent, a destroyer of national and community unity.

Rejection of Political Individualism

Political individualism holds that the State is made for man and not the other way. The Revolutions inspired by the Age of Enlightenment are for political individualism. For Hegel, State is superior to individual. He rejects political individualism. His political philosophy must therefore be called statism or political absolutism. It affirms subordination of the individual to the state. The individual exists for the state and not vice versa.

Rejection of Political Democracy

He is of the view that the constitution of a state must establish three powers: a legislative branch which determines the laws; an executive which carries out the laws in respect to particular cases; and a monarch, a king who has the power of personal decision and who embodies in his own person the will of the state. He is opposed to universal franchise. The legislators would be from three classes: agriculture, business and civil service. They will hold office by appointment or by birth and not at all by election. His political philosophy rejects the twin pillars of political liberalism: individualism and democracy.

Philosophy and Politics

Hegel denies that philosophy has the power to change the course of a nation or of the world. Philosophy can grasp the truth of a culture, however, only when the culture has revealed to it has finally become clear. But by this time, says, Hegel, it is too late for the society to change. He makes this point in a famous line in which he refers to the owl which was a symbol of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom. His famous line:

The owl of Minerva spreads its wings and takes flight only when the shades of night are falling.

But Karl Marx retorts,

The philosophers hitherto only interpreted the world; however they have to change the world.

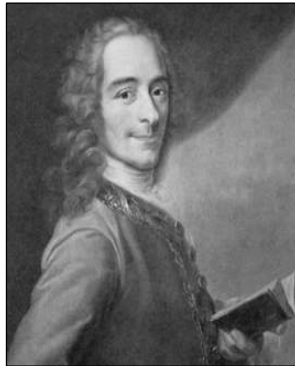
Influences

The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty stated Hegel's influence with these words: "All the great philosophical ideas of the past century, the philosophies of Marx, Nietzsche, Existentialism and Psycho – analysis had their beginning in Hegel." Hegel's greatest influence was on Marx.

French Enlightenment

In the history of philosophy, eighteenth century is known as the period of Enlightenment. Many great thinkers appeared on the scene in European Countries. However, the French thinkers played a very important role in the philosophy of Enlightenment. Hence, I decided to devote this chapter exclusively to the seminal French thinkers of this period. We will cover the contributions of the following thinkers.

1. Voltaire (1694-1778)
2. Montesquieu (1689-1755)
3. Denis Diderot (1713-1784)
4. Marquis De Condorcet (1743-1794)



Voltaire

Love truth but pardon error.

– Voltaire

The leading thinkers of the Enlightenment period were known as *philosophes*, a French word meaning philosophers. However, they were not philosophers in the accepted sense of the term, the likes of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. They were the thinkers who were critiques of the society which they lived in. They were eager to

reform their societies with their critical thinking. By common consent, the prince of the *philosophes* was the Frenchman François Marie Arouet, who called himself Voltaire. He was born in Paris, the youngest of the five children of a lawyer and minor official. He claimed that he was actually an illegitimate son of a nobleman. He was educated in a Jesuits College and received the traditional education in classics. He had great literary talent and started to write. He commented on an enormous range of subjects in a wide variety of literary forms. He was always having trouble with authorities because of his writings. He suffered two imprisonments and an exile to England for the crime of insulting a pompous French Nobleman. During the three years of exile in England, he came under the influence of John Locke, Bacon and other British thinkers. He was highly impressed with the achievements of Isaac Newton and his methods and considered them superior to those of his own countryman Descartes whose abstract thinking did not appeal to him. Throughout the eighteenth century France's intellectual world remained more rationalistic than England's, but Voltaire's lifelong campaign on behalf of empiricism had a very salutary effect in making French thinkers more practically oriented than before.

He was an ardent spokesman for civil liberties. In this regard his battlecry was *Écrasez l'infâme* – crush infamy – meaning by infamy all forms of repression, fanaticism and bigotry. He says, “the individual who persecutes another because he is not of the same opinion is nothing less than a monster. “Even though, he did not say it, the following words are attributed to him – ” “I do not agree with a word you say, but I will defend to death your right to say it.” Of all forms of intolerance, Voltaire hated religious bigotry most of all because it seemed to be based on silly superstitions. Further he criticised the exercise of arbitrary powers by secular states. In particular, he thought that the English parliamentary system was preferable to French absolutism and all states acted criminally when their policies resulted in senseless wars. “It is forbidden to kill, therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.” – he maintained sardonically. His “Lettres Philosophiques (Letters concerning the English Nation) was published without royal permission and his views praising British Constitutional Monarchy created a huge scandal. The book was publicly burnt and banned. He was forced again to flee Paris.”

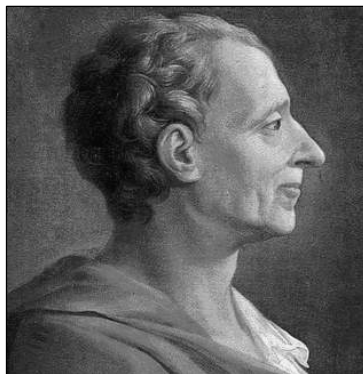
In 1733, Voltaire met Émilie du Châtelet, a married mother of three who was 12 years his junior and with whom he would have an affair for 16 years. To avoid arrest after publication of his “Lettres”, he took refuge at her husband's chateau at Cirey-sur-Blaise. The Marquise was also a great intellectual. She translated Newton's Principia into French.

His satirical novel *Candide* is widely read. The work is a satire on the philosophy of Leibniz who said, “This is the best of all possible worlds” and held a certain type of theodicy. Dr Pangloss and his disciple Candide go through hell in their journey of life. This novel was written after the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 in which over 20000

people perished. Dr Pangloss is a caricature of Leibniz. Lulled into false security concerning what life has in store for him by the fatuous optimism of his tutor, Dr Pangloss, the hero of the story, Candide, journeys through the world only to experience one outrageous misfortune after another. Storms and earthquakes are bad enough, but worse still are wars and rapacity caused by uncontrollable human passions. Only in the golden never-never land of Eldorado, where there are no priests, law courts, or prisons, but unlimited wealth and a “palace of sciences...filled with instruments of mathematics and physics, ” does Candide find temporary respite from disaster. Being a naturally restless mortal, however, he quickly becomes bored with Eldorado’s placid perfection and leaves for the renewed buffetings of the real world. After many more lessons in “the school of hard knocks”, he finally learns one basic truth by the end of the story: settling down on a modest farm with his once beautiful but now hideously disfigured wife, he shrugs when Dr.Pangloss repeats for the hundredth time that “this is the best of all possible worlds, ” and replies: “that’s as may be, but we must cultivate our garden.” In other words, according to Voltaire, life is not perfect and probably never will be, but humans will succeed best if they ignore vapid theorising and buckle down to unglamorous but productive hard work.

Montesquieu

The baron de Montesquieu was primarily a political thinker. In his major work, the *Spirit of Laws* (1748), he sought to discover the ways in which differing environments and historical and religious traditions influence governmental institutions. Finding that unalterable differences in climates and geographic terrains affect human behaviour, and hence governmental forms. Montesquieu throughout much of *The Spirit of Laws* seems to be saying that external conditions force humans to behave in different ways and that there is nothing they can do about this. But ultimately he was an idealist who preferred one particular political system, the English Constitution, and hoped that all nations might overcome whatever environmental handicaps they faced to imitate it.



Montesquieu

For him, the greatest strength of the English system was that it consisted of separate and balanced powers-executive, legislative, and judicial: thus it guaranteed liberty inasmuch as no absolute sovereignty was given to any single governing individual or group. The idealisation of checks and balances subsequently influenced many other Enlightenment political theorists and played a particularly dominant role in the shaping of the United States Constitution in 1787.

Denis Diderot

We swallow greedily any lie that flatters us, but sip only little by little a truth that is bitter to us.

– Diderot.

Denis Diderot was known for his attacks on religion and went to jail several times. He was always under threat of censorship and imprisonment. Like Voltaire, he wrote on a variety of subjects in different literary forms. He is best known as the organiser and main contributor to an extremely ambitious publishing venture, the *Encyclopedia*. Conceived as a summation and means for dissemination of all the most advanced contemporary philosophical, scientific, and technical knowledge, with articles written by all the leading *philosophes* of the day (including Voltaire and Montesquieu), the *Encyclopedia* first appeared between 1751 and 1772 in instalments totalling 17 large volumes and eleven more of illustrative plates. Whereas modern encyclopedias serve primarily as reference works, Diderot thought of his *Encyclopedia* as a set of volumes that people would read at length rather than merely using to look up to facts. Therefore he hoped that he would change the general way of thinking. Above all, by popularising the most recent achievements in science and technology, Diderot intended to combat superstition on the broadest front, and further advance science, and thereby alleviate human misery. Dedicated to the proposition that all traditional beliefs had to be reexamined “without sparing anyone’s sensibilities, ” he certainly would have excoriated all irrational religious dogmas openly left to himself. But strict censorship made explicitly anti-religious articles impossible, Diderot thumbed his nose at religion in such oblique ways as offering the laconic cross-reference for the entry on “Eucharist”: “see cannibalism.” Not surprisingly, gibes like this aroused storms of controversy when early volumes of the *Encyclopedia* appeared. Nonetheless, the project was not only completed in the face of prominent opposition, but as time went on the complete work became so popular that it was printed several times and helped the ideas of the *philosophes* not just in France but all over Europe.



Denis Diderot

The truth belongs to those who seek it, not to those who claim to own it.

– Marquis de Condorcet.

He was one of the youngest contributors to the *Encyclopedia*, he is customarily termed “the last of the *philosophes*”, because his career, and the *philosophe’s* activities in general were cut short by the excess of the French Revolution. In his early career, he gained prominence as a brilliant mathematician, but he is best known as the most extreme advocate for the Enlightenment idea of progress. Already in the late 17th century, particularly as the result of triumphs of science, several thinkers began arguing that the intellectual accomplishments of their own day were superior to any of the past and that greater intellectual progress in future was inevitable. In the 18th century, the conviction grew that the present had advanced in all aspects of human endeavour beyond the accomplishments of any earlier time, and that the future was bound to see unlimited further progress on all fronts. Condorcet’s *Outline of the Progress the Human Mind* (1794) was the ultimate expression of this point of view. According to him, progress in the past had not been uninterrupted – the Middle Ages had been an especially retrogressive era – but, given the victories of the scientific revolution and Enlightenment, infinite and uninterrupted progress in the future was assured. Venturing into prophecy, Condorcet confidently stated not only, “as preventive medicine improves..... the average human life-span will be increased and a more healthy and stronger physical constitution guaranteed, ” but that, “the moment will come.....when tyrants and slaves.....will exist only in history or on the stage.” Ironically, even while Condorcet was writing such optimistic passages he was hiding out from the agents of the French Revolution, who in fact soon counted him among the numerous victims of their “reign of terror”.

Condorcet remains influential in the social sciences because he applied mathematical ideas to social and political problems. He became famous for now what is known as Condorcet’s paradox, first presented in his *Essay on the Application of Analysis to the Probability of Majority Decisions* (1785), which describes intransitivity majority preferences in electoral politics. An election can

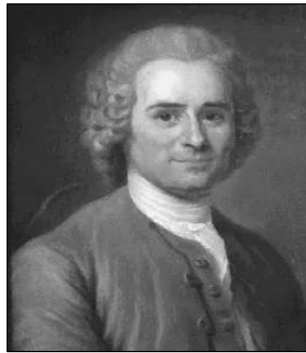
occur even when there is no clear candidate whom the voters prefer to all the other candidates. In such a situation, known as a majority rule cycle or circular tie, one majority prefers candidate A over B, another majority B over C, and a final majority C over A. To break such electoral circles, Condorcet invented a method in which voters rank candidates in order of preference; these electoral procedures are known as the Condorcet method, which is designed to secure a definite Condorcet winner.



Marquis De Condorcet

In 1791, he was elected to represent Paris in the legislative assembly where he presented plans for the creation of a state education system and drafted a new constitution for France. He also campaigned for the abolition of slavery and advocated female suffrage, publishing a pamphlet titled, “On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship” in 1790. Although he was a revolutionary, he did not support the execution of the French king, and aligned himself with the more moderate Girondist Party. He was regarded as a traitor and was issued with an arrest warrant. In March 1795, he attempted to escape from Paris, but he was arrested and imprisoned, and was later found dead in his cell; the cause of his death has never been determined. Condorcet was interred in 1989 in the Pantheon in Paris in honour of the bicentennial of the French Revolution.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)



Jean Jacques Rousseau

Falsehood has infinity of combinations but truth has only one mode of being.

– Rousseau

His Life in Brief

Jean Jacques Rousseau was born to Isaac Rousseau and Suzanne Bernard in Geneva on June 28, 1712. Few days after his birth, he lost his mother. His father had to leave Geneva after a quarrel with a French captain to avoid imprisonment. Therefore, Rousseau was brought up by his uncle. He was apprenticed to be an engraver. Since his master was violent, he left Geneva in 1728 and fled to Annecy. He met a lady Louise de Warens who was instrumental in his conversion from Calvinism to Catholicism. The relationship later turned romantic. In 1742, he went to Paris to become a musician and composer. He served in French Embassy at Venice for sometime and returned to Paris. He met one Therese Levasseur whom he married in 1768. They had five children together whom he abandoned in a Paris orphanage. During this period, he became friendly with Condillac and Diderot. He contributed articles on music to Diderot's Encyclopedie. He won the first prize in a competition for his essay, "Discourse on the Arts and Sciences". The question raised was, "Has the restoration of the sciences and arts tended to purify morals?". In the essay, Rousseau condemned arts and sciences contrary to the spirit of Enlightenment. In

another Essay contest, the question posed was, “What is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorised by the natural law?”. The title of the second essay which did not win the prize was, “Discourse on the Origin of Inequality among Men.” Like the first discourse, this was also widely read and discussed. He had several affairs which need not concern us. He became very friendly with David Hume and visited England. Later he quarrelled with him. In 1754, when he returned to Geneva, he reconverted to Calvinism. He returned to Paris in 1770 and died in 1778. His Confessions were published several years after his death; and his later political writings, in the nineteenth century.

His Important Works

1. Discours sur les sciences et les arts. (1750)
2. Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes (1753)
3. Contrat Social (1762)
4. Emile (1762)
5. The Confessions

Conception of Human Nature

Rousseau characterised arts and sciences as fruits of luxury and indolence and the sources of moral decay, contrary to the views of the other Enlightenment thinkers. His romantic conception of human nature is perhaps his most distinctive, original and influential achievement. Man is by nature innocent and good; he possesses an impulse to preserve himself and to develop his capacities, but he is also prompted by sympathy for others and inspired by religious feeling, gratitude and reverence. Morality and religion are not matters of reasoned thinking, but of natural feeling. Man’s worth depends not on his intelligence, but on his moral nature, which consists essentially of feeling. The good will alone has absolute value. Rousseau emphasises the importance of sentiments in our mental life and denies that development of reason brings with it the perfection of man. Men are equal by nature; society, through the institution of property, has made them unequal, so that we now have masters and slaves, cultured and uncultured, rich and poor. Civilisation, with its culture and inequalities resulting from it, has corrupted our natural inclinations, producing the slavish and the lordly vices – servility, envy, hatred, on the one hand, contempt, arrogance, and cruelty on the other – and has made life artificial and mechanical. The origin of vices and virtues of mankind is sought in social and political institutions, and thus the only hope for the perfecting of man lies in the improvement of society.

In his two Discourses, he portrayed in idyllic terms the original state of nature and he pictured the life of the “noble savage” as one governed by free impulse, and one in which he displays pity and sympathy for his fellows. This is in contrast to

Thomas Hobbes's view which is "war of all against all". It is a social and political fiction rather than an historical actuality, the function of which is to enable us to understand one aspect of human nature which is operative at all times. Emphasis on feeling as opposed to intellect and its attendant cultural manifestations, is the core of Rousseau's romantic conception of human nature.

Rousseau's primitivism contained in the injunction, "return to nature" is not a demand to return to nature in its naïveté and simplicity. He firmly believed that man cannot go back to nature in the sense of completely renouncing civilisation with its attendant evils. It is rather an injunction to man, within the framework of civilised society, to remake himself by cultivating those feelings and sentiments which promote equality and social justice. His insistence that, "man is naturally good, and only by institutions is he made bad, " does not mean that man must abandon social institutions altogether – this, he cannot do; he can, however, remould them in such a way as to realise a just and democratic society.

Political Philosophy

Rousseau prefers direct government by people, and not representative government. His political theory is the theory of the Swiss republican, as Locke's, which Voltaire followed, was that of the English constitutional monarchist. Among the people, Rousseau included not only the third estate, or the prosperous bourgeoisie, but the fourth estate, or the labouring and peasant class to which he himself belonged and for which he demanded equal rights and deliverance from social bondage, as Voltaire had demanded equal political rights and liberty of thought and conscience for the middle class. Rousseau takes the Lockian ideal of democracy seriously; if all men are created free and equal and have the same natural rights and capacities, there is no reason why they should be ruled or deprived of their inheritance by a privileged class, be it an aristocracy or an industrial bourgeoisie. It was Rousseau's ideas that found their way into the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 and 1793.

The return to nature can be accomplished only by the creation of natural social conditions and a natural method of education. (*Contrat Social, Emile*). Natural society is based on a contract in which the individual surrenders his freedom for the liberty of citizenship, which is limited by the General will, or the moral will of the people. Freedom is the obedience to self-imposed law. Sovereignty lies with the people; the general will – that is, the will of the people in so far as it aims at the common good – is the highest law. Rousseau's doctrine of the general will constitutes in large measure his solution to the problem of the corruption of man by society; his formula for amelioration of social evils requires the conformity of the individual will to the general will of the society. The private interests of the individual frequently conflict with common interest, but the individual finds his true freedom and satisfaction in obedience to that part of his will which he has as a citizen and which is conducive to the welfare of the society to which he belongs. In obeying that part of

his will which is in conformity with the interests of society, the individual realises his true freedom.

Educational Philosophy

Rousseau's theory of education is a plea for natural education for the free development of the child's natural and unspoiled impulses. Instruction should not begin until the desire for knowledge arises. Hence education must be largely negative, consisting in the removal of unfavourable conditions, a task that requires the greatest care. The individuality of the child should be studied and nature assisted in distinguishing between bad and good impulses. It is wise, therefore, to isolate the child from its social environment in order that this development may follow its natural course under the guidance of private teachers. Rousseau's theory exercised great influence on modern education: Basedow, Pestalozzi, and Froebel are those among those who have put it to the practical use.

These educational ideas are compatible with Locke's empirical principles. If the soul is at birth an empty tablet, then men are by nature equal, and the differences between them are the result of external influences, as Helvetius had already taught. Education and the social environment become the most important instruments for the perfection of the human race.

Rousseau, like Voltaire, combats materialism and atheism, accepting the tenets of natural religion; in this sense he is a deist. But with him religion is rooted in feeling, is a matter of heart and not of head, though its truth may be demonstrated by reason. The soul is immaterial, free and immortal; a future life is made necessary for the triumph of good in this life.

Rousseau's Influence

Rousseau exercised a deep influence in Germany, on Kant, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller. His greatest directly philosophical influence is on the ethical thought of Immanuel Kant. This may seem puzzling at first glance. For Kant, the moral law is based on rationality, whereas in Rousseau, there is a constant theme of nature and even the emotional faculty of pity described in the second Discourse. This theme in Rousseau's thought is not to be ignored, and it would be a mistake to understand Rousseau's ethics merely as a precursor to Kant; certainly Rousseau is unique and significant in his own respect. But despite these differences, the influence on Kant is undeniable. The Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar is one text in particular that illustrates this influence. The Vicar claims that the correct view of the universe is to see oneself not at the centre of things, but rather on the circumference, with all people realising that we have a common centre. This same notion is expressed in Rousseau's political theory, particularly in the concept of the general will. In Kant's ethics, one of the major themes is the claim that moral actions are those that can be

universalised. Morality is something separate from individual happiness; a view that Rousseau undoubtedly expressed as well.

Rousseau is one of the most important figures in the history of political philosophy. According to the Dictionary of Philosophy edited by I. Frelon, “Marx, Engels and Lenin thought highly of the historical role of Rousseau., noting at the same time his idealism and bourgeois limitations.” His works were also championed by the leaders of the French Revolution. His Philosophy was largely instrumental in the late 18th century Romantic Naturalism movement in Europe thanks in large part to Julie or the New Eloise and the Reveries of the Solitary walker.

The tension in his political thought between individual liberty and totalitarianism continues to be an issue of controversy among scholars. Bertrand Russell in his, “A History of Western Philosophy”, says, “Ever since his (Rousseau’s) time, those who considered themselves as reformers have been divided into two groups, those who followed him and those who followed Locke. Sometimes they cooperated, and many individuals saw no incompatibility. But gradually the incompatibility has become increasingly evident. At the present time (1945), Hitler is an outcome of Rousseau; Roosevelt and Churchill of Locke.” Hegel was also influenced by Rousseau.

Women, Marriage, and Family

In his book, Emile, he discusses in great detail how the young pupil Emile is to be brought up to regard women and sexuality. He introduces the character of Sophie, and explains how her education differs from Emile’s. Hers is not as focussed on theoretical matters, as men’s minds are more suited to that type of thinking. His view on the nature of the relationship between men and women is rooted in the notion that men are stronger and therefore more independent. They depend on women only because they desire them. By contrast, women both need and desire men. Sophie is educated in such a way that she will fill what Rousseau takes to be her natural role as a wife. She is to be submissive to Emile. And although Rousseau advocates these very specific gender roles, it would be a mistake to take the view that Rousseau regards men as simply superior to women. Women have particular talents that men do not; women are cleverer than men and they excel more in matters of practical reason. These views are continuously discussed among both feminist and Rousseau scholars.

Selected Quotes from Rousseau

Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains.

What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?

You forget that the fruits belong to all and that the land to no one. Happiness: a good bank account, a good cook and a good digestion. Our greatest evils flow from ourselves.

The English think that they are free. They are free only during the election of the members of the parliament.

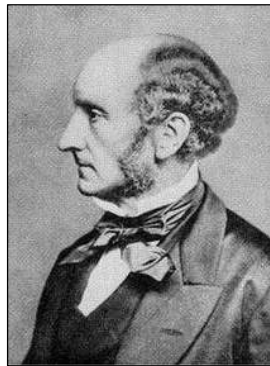
Nature never deceives us; it is we who deceive ourselves.

Every man has the right to risk it for its own preservation.

Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.

A feeble body weakens the mind.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)



John Stuart Mill

The disease which inflicts bureaucracy and what they die from is routine.

– JS Mill

His Life in Brief

John Stuart Mill was the son of an equally distinguished thinker James Stuart Mill. He was the eldest son and given an extremely rigorous upbringing. His father was a strict disciplinarian. He started learning Greek at the age of three. By his eighth year he had read in Greek Original Aesop's Fables, Xenophon's Anabasis and the whole of the historian Herodotus. He was acquainted with several Greek Classics including the six Dialogues of Plato. He had also read a great deal of history in English. At the age of eight he started Latin, the geometry of Euclid and algebra and began to teach the younger children of the family. By the age of ten, he could read the Athenian statesman Demosthenes with ease. About the age of 12, he began a thorough study of Scholastic logic, at the same time reading Aristotle's logical treatises in original. In the following year, he studied the political economy of Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

This type of rigorous training evoked both criticism and admiration. In any case, he was very strongly influenced by his father's way of thinking. From his earliest

days he spent much of his time in his father's study and habitually accompanied him on his walks. To his credit, he did not receive his father's opinions and views passively and mechanically. The duty of collecting and weighing evidence for himself was at every turn impressed upon the boy. But the fact remains that this sort of rigorous training in childhood was a strain on his constitution.

From May 1820 until July 1821, Mill was in France with the family of Sir Samuel Bentham, brother of Jeremy Bentham, the English Utilitarian philosopher, economist and theoretical jurist. Copious extracts from a diary kept at this time show how methodically he read and wrote, studied chemistry and botany, tackled advanced mathematical problems and made notes on the scenery and the people and customs of the country. He also gained a thorough acquaintance with the French language. On his return in 1821, he added to his work the study of psychology and Roman Law. In 1823, when he had just completed his 17th year, he entered the examiner's office of the India House. He was promoted in 1823 to Assistant Examiner. For 20 years from 1836 (when his father died) to 1856, Mill had the charge of the British East India Company's relations with the Indian States and in 1856 he became chief of the examiner's office.

He started contributing articles to newspapers. After reading an exposition of Jeremy Bentham, he was much influenced by his philosophy of Utilitarianism. He also studied English Psychologists and two French Philosophers Etienne Bonnet de Condillac and Claude-Adrien Helvétius. In 1822, he established the Utilitarian Society. He took part eagerly in discussions with many men of distinction who came to his father's house. He also participated in the debates of the London Debating Society.

John Stuart Mill had a life-long association with Mrs Harriet Taylor who was already married. This raised eyebrows in the then British Society. But it is said that the relationship was platonic. Harriet in her own right was a highly intellectual person. After her husband's death, Mill married her in 1851. She died in Avignon in France and thereafter Mill settled in a house near her grave, He died at Avignon on May 8, 1873.

Following are the seminal works of John Stuart Mill:

Philosophy and Religion:

1. A System of Logic (1843)
2. Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy (1865)
3. Auguste Comte and Positivism (1865)
4. Three Essays on Religion (1874)

Politics and Economics

1. Essays on Some Unsettled Questions in Political Economy (1844)

2. Principles of Political Economy, 2 volumes (1848)
3. On Liberty (1859)
4. Considerations on Representative Government (1861)
5. Utilitarianism (1863)
6. On The Subjection of Women (1869) Autobiography (1873)

Utilitarianism

John Stuart Mill was influenced by Jeremy Bentham in his ethical theories which can be called as Utilitarianism. The fundamental principle of Utilitarianism is that an action is right if it tends to promote happiness and wrong if it tends to produce the reverse of happiness – not just the happiness of the performer but that of everyone affected by it. Such a theory is in opposition to egoism, the view that a man should pursue his own self-interest, even at the expense of others and to any ethical theory that regards some act or types of acts as right or wrong independently of their consequences. Utilitarianism also differs from ethical theories that make the rightness or wrongness of an act dependent on the motive of the agent; for, according to the Utilitarian, it is possible for the right thing to be done from a bad motive.

In his Utilitarianism, Mill agrees with Bentham that happiness, or the greatest good of the greatest number is the summum bonum and the criterion of morality. He differs from his master, however, on several important points. According to Bentham, the value of pleasures is to be measured by their intensity, duration, certainty, or uncertainty, propinquity or remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent (the number of persons affected by them). No difference is made in quality; other things being equal. “push-pin is as good as poetry.” Mill teaches that pleasures also differ in quality, that those which go with the exercise of intellectual capacities are higher, than sensuous pleasures, and the persons who have experienced both prefer the higher ones. No intelligent person would consent to be a fool; no instructed person would be an ignoramus; no person of feeling or conscience would consent to be selfish or base. You would not exchange your lot for that of a fool, dunce, or rascal, even if you were convinced that a fool, dunce, or rascal is better satisfied with his lot than yours. It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; It is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. The fool and the pig may think otherwise, but that is because they know only one side of the question, the fool’s and the pig’s. Bentham and Mill also agree that we ought to strive for the greatest happiness of the greatest number; but Bentham justifies this on the ground of self-interest while Mill bases it on social feelings of mankind, the desire to be in unity with our fellow-creatures. As between the agent’s own happiness and that of others, he tells us, Utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator. “In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as one would be done by, and love one’s neighbour as oneself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality.”

The theory of the greatest happiness of the greatest number has tended to improve human conduct and character; it has helped men to fill up their ideals in a manner beneficial to a wider range of persons. And it has done this, we may add, not because of its hedonistic elements, but because of the emphasis which it placed on universalism; for, after all, what the Utilitarians were aiming at was the realisation of a better social life, in which each man should count for one and no one for more than one. Mill, particularly, became the philosophical spokesman of liberalism in England, and fought the intellectual battles of democracy.

On Liberty

“On Liberty” is a very popular work of John Stuart Mill, published in 1859. Here he applies the ethical system of Utilitarianism to society and the states. Mill attempts to establish standards for the relationship between authority and liberty. He emphasises the importance of individuality which he conceived as a prerequisite to the higher pleasures – the summum bonum of Utilitarianism. Among the standards established in this work are Mill’s three basic liberties of individuals, his three legitimate objects to government intervention and his two maxims regarding relationship of individual society which together form the entire Essay. While discussing the struggle between authority and liberty, he feels that the tyranny of the government needs to be controlled by the liberty of the citizens. Even in a democracy, there is a risk of the tyranny of the majority. In Mill’s view, tyranny of the majority is worse than the tyranny of government because it is not limited to a political function. The majority opinion may not be the correct opinion. The only justification for a person’s preference for a particular moral belief is that it is that person’s preference. On a particular issue, people will align themselves either for or against this issue; the side of the greatest volume will prevail, but it is not necessarily the correct. Mill proposes a single standard for which a person’s liberty may be restricted.

“That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant... Over himself, over his body and mind, the individual is sovereign.” (HARM PRINCIPLE)

Mill clarifies that this standard is solely based on utility. Therefore, when it is not useful, it may be ignored. For example, according to Mill, children and “barbarian” nations are benefitted by limited freedom. The following are the three basic liberties in order of importance.

- A. The freedom of thought and emotion. This includes the freedom to act on such thought, i.e. freedom of speech
- B. The freedom to pursue tastes (provided they do no harm to others), even if they are deemed immoral.
- C. The freedom to unite so long as the involved members are of age, the involved members are not forced, and no harm is done to others.

He attempts to prove that opinions ought never to be suppressed. He claims that there are three sorts of beliefs that can be had – wholly false, partly true, and wholly true – all of which, according to Mill, benefit the common good.

In the third chapter of “On Liberty”, Mill points out the inherent value of individuality since individuality (by definition) is the thriving of the human person through higher pleasures. He argues that a society ought to attempt to promote individuality as it is a prerequisite for creativity and diversity. He believes that conformity is dangerous. “*Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing.*”

In the fourth chapter, JS Mill explains a system in which a person can discern what aspects of life should be governed by the individual and which by the society. Generally, he holds that a person should be left as free to pursue his own interests as long as this does not harm the interests of others.

In the last chapter, he summarises the principles already stated in the earlier sections:

“The maxims are, first that the individual is not accountable to society for his actions, in so far as these concern the interests of no person but himself. Advice, instruction, persuasion, and avoidance by other people if thought necessary by them for their own good, are the only measures by which society can justifiably express its dislike or disapprobation of his conduct. Secondly, that for such actions as are prejudicial to the interests of others, the individual is accountable, and may be subjected either to social or legal punishment, if society is of opinion that one or other is requisite for its protection.”

Mill applies these principles to the economy. He concludes that free markets are preferable to those controlled by governments. While it may seem, because “trade is a social act”, that government ought to intervene in the economy, Mill argues that economies function best when left to their own devices. Therefore, government intervention, though theoretically permissible, would be counterproductive. Later, he attacks government run economies as despotic. He believes that if the government ran the economy, then all the people would aspire to be part of bureaucracy which had no incentive to further the interests of any but itself.

Positivism, Empiricism, Logic, Induction, Scientific Method

JS Mill was influenced by English Empiricists as well as Positivism of Auguste Comte, a French thinker. According to him, we cannot acquire any knowledge *a priori*. He holds that knowledge can be obtained only by empirical observation, and by reasoning which takes place on the ground of such observations. This principle stands at the heart of his radical empiricism. Sense perceptions are the “original data, or ultimate premises of our knowledge.” (System of Logic, VII:7) – Knowledge of greater levels of complexity is arrived at solely by inference from the original data.

Mill grants the validity of only one kind of inference. “Inference, consequently all Proof and all discovery of truths not self-evident, consists of inductions, and the interpretations of Inductions.” (System, VII: 283)

Induction properly so called be summarily defined as Generalization from Experience. It consists in inferring from some individual instances in which a phenomenon is observed to occur, that it occurs in all instances of a certain class; namely, in all which resemble the former, in what are regarded as the material circumstances. (System, VII: 306) Upon seeing ten swans, all white, for instance, we tend to believe that an eleventh unseen swan is also white. But, Mill holds that such inferences are not something we are merely disposed to believe, but something we have reason to believe – inferences of this general form are warranted. We are warranted in believing enumerative inductions, because the universe, so far as known to us, is so constituted, that whatever is true in any one case is true in cases of a certain description. We know by an act of induction, that inductive generalisations tend to be true and that induction is therefore a good way of reasoning. Further according to Mill, amongst the Laws of Nature learnt by way of inductive reasoning are the laws of geometry and arithmetic. He holds that mathematical propositions assert genuine facts. Mill’s account of mathematics raises many issues. Amongst the most pressing questions pertain to the status of the objects which mathematicians talk about. The Platonists can characterise mathematics as claims about abstract objects – but as a naturalist, no such option is open to Mill. “All numbers must be numbers of something; there are no such things as numbers in the abstract.” That Mill holds that even mathematics is founded upon inductive reasoning is perhaps most interesting because it demonstrates the radical and thoroughgoing nature of his empiricism.

Subjection of Women

JS Mill was a champion of women’s rights. According to him the most pressing need for reform was the removal of structures of discrimination and oppression against women. He held that human character is wholly a product of upbringing. As such, he was suspicious of the then common claim that women had a different nature from men – and that the sexes were naturally suited for different roles within the family and society more broadly.

“No one can safely pronounce that if women’s nature were left to choose its direction as freely as men’s and if no artificial bent were attempted to be given to it except that required by the conditions of human society, and given to both sexes alike, there would be any material difference at all in the character and capacities that would unfold themselves. (Subjection, XXI:305) ”

To the extent that the sexes in general exhibit different character traits, these traits are the product of upbringing into stereotypes, rather than justification for such stereotypes. So too for the differences that are claimed to exist naturally

between the races, and to justify the authority of one set of individuals over another (The Negro Question

XII: 93) With the growth of equality that came with a dominant middle class, Mill held these oppression stood out all the more clearly, and the time was therefore ripe to dismantle such practices of discrimination. He was very critical of the denial of vote to women. He was also critical of the institution of marriage which deprived the wife of property and legal personhood and forced total obedience to a husband, akin to slavery.

JS Mill's Influences

Mill was not an ivory tower philosopher. He wrestled with problems relevant to all human beings. His work is of enduring interest in several areas. He stands at the intersection of conflicts between enlightenment and romanticism, liberalism and conservatism, and historicism and rationalism. Whether or not one agrees with his answers, Mill serves as a model for thinking about human problems in a serious and civilised way.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)



Soren Kierkegaard

Prayer does not change God but changes him who prays.

– S.Kierkegaard

Life in Brief

Soren Aabye Kierkegaard was born in 1813 in Copenhagen. He was the seventh and last child of a wealthy hosier, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard and Ane Lund, a former household servant and distant cousin of Michael Kierkegaard. This was the second marriage of Michael, after his first wife's death and four months into Ane Lund's pregnancy. Michael was a deeply melancholic man, sternly religious and carried a heavy burden of guilt, which he imposed on his children. Soren often lamented that he had never had a childhood of carefree spontaneity, but that he had been "born old". His surname derived from the fact that his family was indentured to the parish priest, who provided a piece of church (Kierke) farm (Gaard) to the family's use. The name more commonly means "Churchyard" or "Cemetery". A sense of doom and death seemed to hover around Michael for most of his 82 years. Though his material fortunes improved a great deal, he was convinced that he had

brought a curse on his family and that all his children were doomed to die by the age attained by Jesus Christ (33). Of Michael's seven children, only Peter and Soren survived beyond this age.

Soren was sent to one of Copenhagen's best schools, The School of Civic Virtue, to receive a classical education. He distinguished himself in Latin. Ironically, he struggled to master his own mother – tongue Danish. Eventually, he mastered it and became one of the two great stylists of Danish along with Hans Christian Andersen. Soren had great aptitude for a literary career. His father is a constant presence in his authorship. He appears in stories of sacrifice, of inherited melancholy and guilt, as the archetypal patriarch. Soren studied theology at the University of Copenhagen. Later he broadened his study to include philosophy and literature. Before joining the Pastoral Seminary, he got engaged to Regina Olsen but later broke the engagement and sacrificed his love. This is a recurrent theme in all his writings. His dissertation for Master's degree was, "On the Concept of Irony: with constant references to Socrates (1841). This was converted to a doctorate. (1854). His only trip abroad was to Berlin and Sweden. During his lifetime, he authored several literary works under various pen-names. He was deeply religious. He died in 1855.

His Important Works

1. Either/ Or
2. Fear and Trembling
3. The Concept of Anxiety
4. The Concept of Irony
5. Edifying Discourses in Diverse Spirits Judge for yourself
6. The Sickness unto Death
7. Stages on Life's way
8. Works of Love

His Philosophy

Kierkegaard is considered as the father of Existentialism. His philosophy is theological in motivation, aesthetic in its literary and poetic form, and ethical in its import. According to him, the great insight of Protestant Christianity is the freedom and value of the human individual. His entire philosophy is an elaboration of the Christian conception of man as an individual, confronted with basic choices who, in his commitments, is aware of himself and his inner freedom. His radically individualistic Protestantism brought late in his life into open conflict with the established Danish Church. However, through Karl Barth, it exerted a far reaching influence on later Protestant theology. He thought himself as a poet and described by a biographer as "the poet of religion". Though he propounds no system of ethics, a spirit of moral earnestness pervades his entire philosophy. His ethical philosophy is

individualistic in its insistence that each individual is confronted with ethical choices which he alone can make and for which he assumes sole responsibility. Every decision an individual makes is irrevocable and presents him with the necessity for subsequent decisions.

Anxiety pervades the works of Kierkegaard. He says, “I stick my finger into existence – it smells of nothing. Where am I? What is this thing called the World? Who is it who has lured me into the thing, and now leaves me here? Who am I? How did I come into the world? Why was I not consulted?” For him, the meaninglessness of my existence fills me with anxiety and with despair, a sense of hopelessness and deep depression. The life of modern man is lived in despair, he says, and there is no one who does not have anxiety in the face of his existence. A year before he died, Kierkegaard summed up the agony of the beginning and end of life:

Hear the cry of the... mother at the hour of giving birth, see the struggle of the dying at the last moment: and say whether that which begins and that which ends like this can be designed for pleasure.

Human life is not designed for pleasure, Kierkegaard tells us, yet in the time given to each of us for our own existence, we strive for happiness in order to escape anxiety and the deep hopeless depression which is despair. But there is no escape – no matter how pleasurable and comfortable we make our lives in order to hide from truth. For the truth is, he insists, that all of us live in anxiety and despair. This is the universal human condition. We suffer from anxiety even when we are not aware of it, even when there is nothing to fear, nothing in the objective world to feel anxious about. This is because at bottom, says Kierkegaard, our anxiety is not objective at all, it is subjective anxiety – it is the universal fear of something that is nothing, it is the fear of the nothingness of human existence.

In one of his early works, *Either/Or, A Fragment of Life* (1843), Kierkegaard tells the story of an ordinary young man who lives for pleasure, but although he experiences the various forms of enjoyment, sensual aesthetic, which are available to him, he keeps falling into depression. But he pulls himself together, and decides to make something of himself, to give up the hedonistic life for the life of duty and responsibility. He gets ahead in his career, he makes friends, and soon acquires a wife and family, social status in his community. But then the old forgotten depression comes back, “more dreadful than ever”.

This man has made something of himself, says Kierkegaard, but he is a stranger to himself. He does not know that the way to overcome despair is to choose, to sink so deep into despair that you give up all the satisfactions and comforts of life, you lose all commitment to family, friends, community, you surrender reason and all belief in the truth of science and philosophy, and all moral principles. When all these are lost, with nothing left, you will be in a total crisis, at the edge of abyss, and you will be prepared for faith in God, you will choose God, and make the leap of faith to God. For Kierkegaard only absolute faith and the leap to God can overcome the

meaninglessness of your existence; only the restoration of orthodox Christianity, and the surrender of reason, can overcome the sense of anxiety and hopeless despair for the solitary individuals of the modern world.

We may summarise the philosophy of Kierkegaard in the following manner. The three principal conceptions of his philosophy are truth, choice and God. (1) Kierkegaard's conception of the nature of philosophical truth is essentially Socratic. "Truth is not introduced into the individual from without, but was within him all the time." He sharply contrasts existentialist thinking with abstract speculation; whereas abstract thinking explores the realm of possibilities by means of logical techniques and achieves only hypothetical knowledge, existentialist thinking achieves truth about the actual, concrete individual. Existentialist truth is a passionate, inner commitment to something which is objectively and theoretically uncertain, and is the highest truth attainable by an individual. Kierkegaard is well aware that truth, according to his definition is equivalent to faith. (2) The central concept of Kierkegaard's philosophy is choice – a concept which is expounded in an early work "Either /Or" and persists through his entire later philosophy. In "Either /Or choice is presented as a decision between two ways of life: (a) the esthetic life, devoted to art, music, the drama (b) the ethical life which seeks happiness in marriage, business and a profession. According to Kierkegaard, no adequate psychological description of the phenomenon of choice is possible; it must be experienced in order to be understood. The character of choice can only be adumbrated by such epithets as individual, subjective momentary, absolute, free, irrevocable. The choice by an individual of a way of life is a, "leap over the abyss". (3) The culmination of existentialist thinking is the knowledge of God. The individual in his inner experience of choice may achieve, at least momentarily, knowledge of the eternal God. Kierkegaard believed in the possibility of the individual's union with God, a union which does not obliterate the individual. The individual, even when he establishes rapport with God, preserves his individuality and God remains an "Absolute Other". Kierkegaard was a Christian Mystic in his conviction that Christ mediates man's self-transcendence; Christ is described as the "invitor" who draws the individual man to God.

His Influence

He was a precursor to the 20th Century Existentialism in philosophy. The concepts of angst, despair and importance of the individual are due to him. He was commemorated as a teacher in the calendar of saints of the Lutheran Church on 11 November with a feast day on 8th September. Many theologians and philosophers were inspired by him. Ludwig Wittgenstein stated, "Kierkegaard is too deep for me." Karl Popper considered him as a great reformer of Christian Ethics. Literary figures influenced by his works are WH AUDEN, HERMANN HESSE, FRANK KAFKA, JD SALINGER, and JOHN UPDIKE. He had a profound influence on psychology. He is widely regarded as the founder of existential psychology and therapy.

Frederich Nietzsche (1844-1900)



Frederich Nietzsche

Whenever I climb, I am followed by a dog called 'Ego'

– Nietzsche

His Life in Brief

Frederich Nietzsche was born in 1844, the son of a Protestant Minister. He attended the universities of Bonn and Leipzig and, in 1869, was appointed professor of classical philology at the University of Basel, Switzerland. He became a Swiss subject, but during the Franco – Prussian War of 1870 he took leave from the university to serve with the Prussian armies as a medical orderly. After brief military service, he returned to Basel in a badly shattered state of health. He offered courses on subjects as, “The Pre-Platonic philosophers”, “Introduction to the study of Platonic Dialogues”, and “The History of Greek Literature”. First he was close to Richard Wagner, the famous composer. Later he broke up with him as Wagner in his Parsifal, according to Nietzsche, insincerely paid obeisance to Christianity. In 1879, he resigned from the university for health reasons and spent the next ten years in great loneliness in various places in Switzerland and Italy. His books were largely ignored by the public until Brandes, in 1888 offered lectures on Nietzsche, in Copenhagen. After this his fame spread like wildfire. But he did not know it for, early

in 1889, he had suffered a complete mental breakdown, and he remained insane until his death in 1900.

His Important Works

- A. The Birth of Tragedy (1872)
- B. Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks (1873)
- C. Untimely Meditations (1876)
- D. Human, All Too Human (1878)
- E. Thus Spake Zarathustra (1883)
- F. Beyond Good and Evil (1886)
- G. On the Genealogy of Morality (1887)
- H. Twilight of the Idols (1888)
- I. The Antichrist (1888)
- J. Ecce Homo (1888)
- K. The Will to Power (unpublished manuscripts edited by Elisabeth)

His Philosophy

The young Nietzsche greatly admired Schopenhauer, and under his influence found the clue to the, “the birth of tragedy” among the ancient Greeks in the distinction between the Dionysian” and “Apollonian” – two conceptions which reflect the notion of the world as will and as idea respectively. The Dionysian is associated with music and refers more generally to the passionate aspects of human nature, which found an outlet in the Dionysian festivals; while the Apollonian is developed associated with the visual arts, especially sculpture, and designates more generally the disciplinary and form-giving principle in man. Tragedy, which developed out of the Dionysian chorus, owes its birth to the fusion of both principles. The central contention of the book, however, is directed against Schopenhauer. the Greeks, while no less sensitive than Schopenhauer to the misery of life, did not respond with the Buddhistic negation of the will, as he did; rather, they had recourse to art, and in their tragedies they celebrated life, “at bottom, in spite of all the alterations of appearances, indestructibly powerful and joyous.” Later Nietzsche developed the theme that great power consists in the ability to withstand great suffering, to respond creatively to great challenges and to transform into advantages what seemed harmful; this ability he called “Dionysian”. Thus the term changes its meaning in his later works, where it designates the synthesis of what had earlier been called the Dionysian and the Apollonian.

In the middle period of his creative output, from *HUMAN, ALL TOO HUMAN* upto *THE GAY SCIENCE*, his writings in the tradition of French aphorisms, extols reason and science and experiments with literary genres, and expresses his

emancipation from his earlier Romanticism and from Schopenhauer and Wagner. His mature philosophy emerged after *THE GAY SCIENCE*.

The Will to Power

What man desires is not mere preservation, but an enhancement, of his state of being – i.e., greater power. Triumph in competition (which was a prominent element in Greek education and culture), the ability to impress others, artistic creation, and the philosopher's intellectual conquest of cosmos are all instances of such power, as are also the ascetic's self-conquest, and immortality as conceived by the martyr. This view is in accord with an explicit repudiation of the pleasure principle. What men desire ultimately is not pleasure – if this term is taken to imply the absence of pain. Men willingly sacrifice pleasures and incur suffering for the sake of greater power; and the power which finds expression in creative activity offers the ultimate happiness which all men desire, although it involves a large measure of pain and discomfort. Happiness – in the sense of that state which is desired ultimately – does not consist of a preponderance of pleasurable moments which are free from pain, but in the possession and creative exercise of power. Pursuit of this happiness involves a higher degree of self-discipline, for we lack great power as long as we are dominated by animal passions. By sublimating his impulses and employing them creatively, man can yet raise himself above the beasts and attain that unique dignity which former philosophers considered man's birthright. Those who attain this state are *Übermenschen* (supermen), and Nietzsche believed that such supermen had actually existed from time to time in the past – Goethe was perhaps the most recent example. Their superiority was not a function of race, but examples can be found in widely different cultures.

The Eternal Recurrence

In connection with the conception of the superman, Nietzsche developed the doctrine of the eternal recurrence. He first encountered this notion in the Pythagoreans, and later concluded that it followed logically from purely scientific considerations. On the supposition that the universe has existed for an infinite period of time, but consists of a finite number of atoms or "power quanta" and a finite amount of energy, it would seem that only a finite number of different combinations would be possible; hence, there would have to be an eternal configuration of events. This conception, which deprives history of all end or purpose, holds no terror for the superman. His undeservedly joyous affirmation of his own creative existence and of every moment of his life makes him welcome the eternal recurrence. Only those whose lives are aimless and essentially not satisfying require faith in a cosmic purpose which would redeem them, in a heaven which would bring them satisfaction, and in a hell for those whom they secretly envy and hate.

Attack on Christianity

This is the background of Nietzsche's notorious attack against Christianity. Christian meekness, forgiveness, patience, and love are no more than the mimicry of impotent

hatred which dares not be anything but meek and patient, or seem anything but loving, though it dreams of heaven and hell. This attitude is associated particularly with the slaves in the Roman Empire who early adopted Christianity, and Nietzsche thus speaks of a “slaves’ revolt” in morals and of a “slave morality”. He contrasts this with the “master morality” of other civilisations, but his own ethics is clearly distinguished from both types. It differs from “master morality” by vehemently condemning any such disregard for less favoured human beings as one finds, in the treatment of the outcasts in the Laws of Manu. Nietzsche’s critique of Christian morals, on the other hand, revolves around the state of mind which he associates with it, namely *ressentiment*. By this he means the secret hatred and envy of all those more favoured than oneself, and that kind of renunciation of revenge which is inseparable from the faith that “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith Lord.” (Romans 12:19) Nietzsche’s “revaluation of all values” thus does not involve a new table of virtues. It consists in an internal criticism of what he considers Christian ethics, and he tries to show that what usually passes for Christian moral is immoral when judged by its own professed standards.

Some forms of pity and neighbourly love are also condemned for other reasons. Instead of perfecting oneself, which would involve hardness against oneself, one “flees” to one’s neighbour “and would fain make a virtue of that.” And pity, in the sense in which Nietzsche opposes it, rests on the assumption that suffering is necessarily an evil. If what men desire most is “power”, then some suffering is required both as a means to the requisite self-control and as an ingredient of the creative life. We should show our love of our fellows not by commiserating with them, but by aiding them to attain a higher state of being, by sometimes being hard with them to this end and by vying with them in a competitive effort. Thus we should be educators and spurs to each other. Inasmuch as the ends of morals is here found in a state which men are held to desire by virtue of their human nature, Nietzsche’s ethics may be considered naturalistic.

Concept of the Death Of God

In his book *THE JOYFUL WISDOM* (1882) Nietzsche presents the shocking story of the madman who on a bright morning lighted a lantern and ran to a marketplace looking for God and then announced to the jeering crowd that God is dead.

“We have killed him – you and I! We are all his murders..... Whither are we moving now?..... Do we not now wander through endless nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker?”

By the concept of the death of God Nietzsche does not mean that God, who is defined as an eternal being can nevertheless die; to say that would of course be illogical. By death of God, he means the death of our belief in God. It is our belief in God that is dead; it has finally succumbed to multiple injuries, including the savage

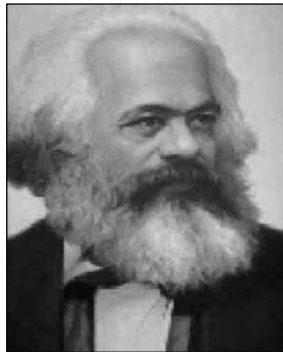
beating it received from the empiricists led by David Hume, and continued by his successors.

However, says Nietzsche, although man has lost belief in God, this will enable him to lose his childlike dependency on God. Human beings must now find the courage in themselves to become gods in a world without God. The greatest need of civilisation now is to develop a new type of individual, supermen, who will be hard, strong, courageous, and who will be intellectually and morally independent. They will break the stone slabs on which the old Judeo-Christian moral laws are inscribed, the old life-denying moral laws to which the masses are still enslaved. The only morality of the Supermen will be to affirm life: to be powerful, creative, joyous, and free.

Nietzsche's Influence

His influence, though tremendous, has been frequently harmful. His sister published, after his death, *The Will to Power* which was not only objectionable from a scholarly point of view, but misleading in the extreme. As a result, not only his critics, but also many of his admirers, including some of Nazis, have ignored his crucial insistence on sublimation and construed his conception of the will to power and his opposition to Christianity in terms of wantonness and brutality. According to Sigmund Freud, Nietzsche's psychological insights agree in the most amazing manner with the laborious results of psychoanalysis. The German philosophers Max Scheler, Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger were influenced by him. As also the French Philosophers Albert Camus, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Martin Buber, Judaism's greatest 20th century thinker counted Nietzsche among the three most important influences in his life. The psychologists Alfred Adler and Carl Jung were deeply influenced as was Sigmund Freud, who said of Nietzsche that he had a more penetrating analysis of himself than any man who ever lived or was ever likely to live. Novelists like Thomas Mann, Herman Hesse, André Malraux, André Gide, and John Gardner were inspired by him and wrote about him, as did the poets and playwrights George Bernard Shaw, Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan George, and William Butler Yeats among others. Nietzsche is certainly one of the most influential philosophers who ever lived; and this is not only due to his originality but also to the fact that he was the German language's most brilliant prose writer.

Karl Marx (1818-1883)



Karl Marx

From each according to his abilities but each according to his needs.

– Karl Marx

His Life in Brief

Karl Marx was born in 1818 in Trier (Prussia) to a middle-class family. His ancestors were Jewish. To escape the constraints of anti-semitic legislation his father converted from Judaism to Lutheranism. He attended the local schools and later studied at the University of Bonn. Later he pursued his studies in the University of Berlin. When Karl Marx came to the University of Berlin in 1836, the great philosopher Hegel had been dead for five years, but his influence in the university and in all of Germany was at its peak. The followers of Hegel were now split into right-wing conservative, and left-wing, radical, groups. Marx soon immersed in the works of Hegel, forgot about studying law, and became one of the leaders of the radical, or the left-wing group called the Young Hegelian. He became engaged to Jenny von Westphalen, an educated baroness of the ruling class. Marx was close to her father, a liberal aristocrat, Ludwig von Westphalen and later dedicated his doctoral thesis to him. In 1843, Marx married Jenny. His doctoral thesis was “The Difference between the

Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature.” He set out to show that theology must yield to the superior wisdom of philosophy. He moved to Cologne in 1842, where he became a journalist writing for the radical newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung* (Rhineland News), expressing his early views on socialism and his developing interest in economics. Marx and his wife moved to Paris in 1843. He became the co-editor of a new radical leftist Parisian Newspaper, the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French Annals), then being set up by the German socialist Arnold Ruge to bring together German and French radicals. In 1844, Marx met the German socialist Friedrich Engels beginning a lifelong friendship. They collaborated on a radical pamphlet which turned into a 300 page book called *The Holy Family*. Before the book was finished, Marx was expelled from Paris and he moved to Brussels. Engels soon moved into the house next door, and both began to work in September 1845 on a criticism of the Young Hegelian which was to become the important work entitled *The German Ideology*. He had a very chequered life on account of his radical activities. He lived in London from 1883.

His Important Works

- A. Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right (1843)
- B. On the Jewish Question (1843)
- C. Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844
- D. *The Holy Family* (1845)
- E. Theses on Feuerbach (1845)
- F. *The German Ideology* (1845)
- G. *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847)
- H. *Wage Labour and Capital* (1847)
- I. *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848)
- J. *The Class Struggles in France* (1850)
- K. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852)
- L. *Theories of Surplus Value*, 3 volumes (1862)
- M. *Das Capital* (1867)
- N. *Critique of Gotha Program* (1875)

Essentials of Marxism

Marxism is an economic and social system derived from the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1829-1895). It is a theoretical-practical framework based on the analysis of “the conflicts between the powerful and the subjugated” with working class self-emancipation as its goal. It asserts that the Capitalist mode of production enables the bourgeoisie (or owners of capital) to exploit the proletariat (or workers) and that class struggle by the proletariat must be the central element in social and

historical change. According to Marx, a socialist revolution must occur, in order to establish a “dictatorship of the proletariat” with the ultimate goal of public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Classical Marxism is a variety of Socialism and provides the intellectual base for various forms of Communism. It was conceived (as to some extent was Anarchism) as a reaction against rampant Capitalism and Liberalism of the 19th Century Europe. It is grounded in Materialism and it is committed to political practice as the end goal of all thought. The defining document of Marxism and Communism is “The Communist Manifesto” published jointly by Marx and Engels in 1848. The first volume of “Das Capital” (Marx’s ambitious treatise on political economy and critical analysis of Capitalism and its practical application) was published in 1867, with two more volumes published after his death by Engels. For the most part these works were collaborations and, while Marx is the more famous of the two, he was strongly influenced by Engel’s earlier works, and Engels was also responsible for much interpretation and editing of Marx’s work.

Some of the basic ideas of Marxism are as under:

- A. **Exploitation and Alienation:** Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the workers by the owners of capital, due to the fact that the workers’ labour power generates a surplus value greater than the workers’ wages. This exploitation of surpluses leads to increasing alienation and resentment of workers, because they have no control over the labour or product which they produce. (a systematic result of the Capitalist system, it is argued.)
- B. **Labour Theory of Value:** The value of a commodity can be objectively measured by the average amount of labour hours that are required to produce that commodity. This is similar to the value theory established by classical economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo (1772-1823), although for Marx it is socially necessary labour which is important. (i, e, the amount needed to produce and reproduce, a commodity under average working conditions.)
- C. **Base and Superstructure:** Relations are established among people as they produce and reproduce the material requirements of life, and these form the economic basis of society. On this “base” arises a “Superstructure” of political and legal institutions and a social consciousness of religious, philosophical, ideological and other ideas. Any social revolution (caused by conflict between the development of material productive forces and relations of production) will result in a change in the economic basis and thence the transformation of the superstructure.
- D. **Class Consciousness:** Any Social class possesses an awareness of itself, of the conditions of life, and of the social world around it) and its capacity to act in its own rational interests is based on this awareness. Thus Class

Consciousness must be attained before any class may mount a successful revolution.

- E. *Ideology*: The ruling class foists the dominant ideology on all members in order to make its own interests appear to be the interests of all. Therefore the ideology of a society can be used to confuse alienated groups and create false consciousness.
- F. *Historical and Dialectical Materialism*: This refers to the adaptation by Marx and Engels of Hegel's theory of Dialectics, the concept that any idea or event (the thesis) generates its opposite (the antithesis), eventually leading to a reconciliation of the opposites (a new, more advanced synthesis). Marx realized that this could be applied to material matters like Economics, and hence the label Dialectical Materialism. The application of the principle of Dialectical Materialism to history and sociology, the main context in which Marx used it is known as Historical Materialism. The resulting theory posits that history is the product of class struggle and obeys the general Hegelian principle of the development of thesis and antithesis.

Historical Materialism

Historical Materialism (or the Materialistic conception of History) is Marx's theory of history, his attempts to make history scientific and it underlies much of the rest of his work. It is based on the principle of Dialectical Materialism (a synthesis of Hegel's theory of Dialectics and the idea that social and other phenomena are essentially material in nature, rather than idea or spiritual as it applies to history and societies. The main thrust of the theory is that history is ultimately about economics. It holds that class struggle (the evolving conflict between classes with opposing interests) is the means of bringing about changes in societies modes of production and that it structures each historical period and drives historical change. Material conditions and social relations are therefore historically malleable because developments and changes in human societies are dependent on the way in which humans collectively produce the means to life.

Marx's argument is essentially that, human beings to survive, they need to produce and reproduce the material requirements of life and this production is carried out through division of labour based on the definite production relation between people. These relations form the economic base of society and are themselves determined by the mode of production which is in force (e.g. tribal society, feudalism, capitalism, socialism). Societies, and their cultural and institutional superstructures, naturally move from stage to stage as the dominant class is displaced by a new emerging class in a social and political upheaval.

Marx and Engels identified six successive stages (including one transitional stage) in a society's development:

- A. Primitive Communism, as seen in co-operative tribal societies.

- B. Slave Society, which develops when tribe becomes city-state and aristocracy is born.
- C. Feudalism, where aristocracy is the ruling class, and merchants develop into capitalists.
- D. Capitalism, where capitalists are the ruling class, and create and employ the true working class.
- E. Socialism (or “Dictatorship of the Proletariat”), where the workers gain class consciousness, overthrow the capitalists and take control over the state.
- F. Communism, where a classless and Stateless society has evolved.

Scottish Enlightenment

Broad Outline

This is an intellectual movement of the 18 century encompassing almost the entire Europe. We had already covered the thinkers of the French Enlightenment. In this chapter, I would like to take up the Scottish Enlightenment. Scotland is situated to the north of England. It is a quite small country having 32% of the area of UK. Its population is 8% of the population of UK. In 1707, Scotland united with England in the sense that the king and the parliament were common for both the countries. Scottish Enlightenment impacted the rest of the world, including the then nascent America. The galaxy of Scottish thinkers excelled themselves in Philosophy, Economics, Literature, Art, Architecture, Mathematics, Geology, Medicine etc. However, the emphasis here will be on four eminent thinkers and how their works influenced the rest of the world. The thinkers are 1. Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) 2. David Hume (1711-1776) 3. Thomas Reid (1710-1796) 4. Adam Smith (1723-1790).

Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) : He was the son of a Presbyterian Minister. He studied philosophy, classics and theology at the University of Glasgow (1710-16) and then founded a private academy in Dublin in 1719. In 1729, he returned to Glasgow as professor of moral philosophy, a position he held until his death. He was licensed as a preacher in 1719 by Irish Presbyterians in Ulster, but in 1738 the Glasgow presbytery challenged his belief that people can have a knowledge of good and evil without, and prior to a, knowledge of God. Hutcheson is best known for his moral philosophy propounded in his *Inquiry into the Origine of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), in *An essay on Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728) and in the posthumous *System of Moral Philosophy*, 2 vol (1755). Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (1651) held that human beings always act out of self-interest, which provoked a debate on the possibility of a genuine benevolence. Hutcheson was actually influenced by his more immediate predecessor Shaftesbury in developing his Moral Sense theory. Shaftesbury was against the views of Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) who opined that even vices have certain beneficial influence on human societies. Hutcheson asserts the existence of several “internal senses” – i.e. the capacities for perceptual responses to concepts

(such as one's idea of Nero's character), as opposed to perception of physical objects. Among internal senses are those of honour, sympathy, morality and beauty. Only the latter two, however are discussed in detail by Hutcheson, who develops his account of each within the framework of Locke's empiricist epistemology. For Hutcheson, the idea of beauty is produced in us when we experience pleasure on thinking of certain natural objects or artifacts, just as our of moral goodness is occasioned by the approval we feel towards an agent when we think of her actions, even if they in no way benefit us. Beauty and goodness are analogous to Lockean secondary qualities, such as colours, smells and sounds, in that their existence depends somehow on the minds of the perceivers. The quality the sense of beauty finds pleasure is a pattern of uniformity amidst variety while the quality the moral sense invariably approves is benevolence. A principal reason for thinking we possess a moral sense, according to Hutcheson, is that we approve of many actions unrelated to or even contrary to our interests – a fact which suggests not all approval is reason based. Further, he argues that attempts to explain our feelings of approval or disapproval without referring to moral sense are futile.

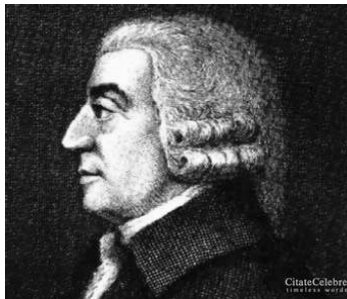
Our reasons are ultimately grounded in the fact that that we are constituted to care about others and take pleasure in benevolence (the quality of being concerned about others for their own sake.) For instance, we approve of temperance because overindulgence signifies selfishness, and selfishness is contrary to benevolence. Hutcheson also finds that the ends promoted by the benevolent person have a tendency to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Thus, since he regards being motivated by benevolence as what makes actions morally good. Hutcheson's theory is a version of motive utilitarianism. Hutcheson was a teacher of Adam Smith and Thomas Reid. He influenced Adam Smith in shaping his economic and moral theories. Hume sought the views of Hutcheson before publishing his, "A Treatise of Human Nature".

David Hume (1711-1776) : His philosophy has elaborately covered in a separate chapter. I want to avoid repetition.

Thomas Reid (1710-1796) : He rejected the sceptical empiricism of David Hume in favour of a "philosophy of common sense". Reid studied philosophy at Aberdeen, before serving as Presbyterian pastor at New Machar (1737-51). A lifelong interest in Hume dated from this period. His first critique of Hume's *An Inquiry into Human Mind* was on the *Principles of Common Sense* (1764) written during his tenure (1751-64) at King's College, Aberdeen was an amplification of four previous graduation addresses (first edited by W R Humphries as *Philosophical Orations* 1937). Lengthy studies convinced Reid that Hume's Scepticism was incompatible with common sense, for both human behaviour and the use of language provide overwhelming evidence to support such truths as existence of material world and the retention of personal identity in the midst of continuous change. Unable to find fault with Hume's argumentation, Reid settled on Hume's "theory of ideas" as the prime

source of error. Rejecting the notion that ideas are the direct object of mind's awareness, Reid substituted a view of perception in which sensations "suggest" material objects. For him the ambiguous assertion solved the problem. Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785) further extended his criticism of Hume's epistemology, and his *Essays on the Active Power of Man* (1788) defended rationalistic ethics against a current of subjectivism. Adam Ferguson and Dugald Stewart belonged to the Common Sense School of Philosophy. In the actual perception of the average, unsophisticated man, sensations are not mere ideas or subjective impression but carry with them the belief in corresponding qualities as belonging to external objects. Such beliefs, Reid insisted, "belong to the common sense and reason of mankind"; and in matters of common sense "the learned and the unlearned, the philosopher and the day labourer upon a level." The philosophy of common sense developed as a reaction against the skepticism of David Hume and the subjective idealism of George Berkeley, both of whom seemed to issue from an excessive stress on ideas. This provided what seemed to the common sense philosophers to be a false start leading from fundamental premises to absurdities. This false start stemmed from Rene Descartes and John Locke inasmuch as they gave to ideas an importance that inevitably made everything succumb to them. From 1816 to 1870 the Scottish Doctrine was adopted as the official philosophy of France and in the 20th Century the teaching of G E Moore, a founding father of analytic philosophy (especially in his, "Defence of Common Sense", 1925) convinced many British and American philosophers that it was not their business to question the common certainties but rather to analyse them.

Adam Smith (1723-90)



Adam Smith

The real tragedy of the poor is the poverty of their aspirations.

– Adam Smith

His father was a Comptroller of Customs at Kirkcaldy a small fishing village near Edinburgh. At the age of 14, Smith entered the University of Glasgow, already

remarkable as a centre of what was to become known as the Scottish Enlightenment. There he was deeply influenced by Francis Hutcheson, a famous professor of moral philosophy who influenced him greatly. He went to Oxford and studied philosophy. He returned to Scotland and gave a series of public lectures in Edinburgh over a wide variety of subjects ranging from rhetoric to history and economics. At the age of 27 in 1751, he was appointed as professor of logic at Glasgow, from which post he transferred in 1752 to the more remunerative professorship of moral philosophy, a subject that embraced the related fields of natural theology, ethics, jurisprudence and political economy. He had a wide circle of friends who were distinguished in their own fields. Joseph Black, a pioneer in the field of chemistry, James Watt of later steam engine fame, Robert Foulis, founder of the British Academy of Design, David Hume, a lifelong friend.

Theory of Moral Sentiments

In 1759, Smith published his first work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Didactic, exhortative and analytic by turns, it lays the psychological foundation on which *The Wealth of Nations* was later to be built. In it Smith described the principles of “human nature”, which together with Hume and the other leading philosophers of his time, he took as a universal and unchanging datum from which social institutions, as well as social behaviour, could be deduced. Smith examined the question of the source of the ability to form moral judgments in the face of seemingly overriding passions for self-preservation and self-interest. Smith’s answer, at considerable length is the presence within each of us of an “inner man” who plays the role of the “impartial spectator”, approving or condemning our own and others’ actions with a voice impossible to disregard. (Superego) The thesis of the impartial spectator, however, conceals a more important aspect of the book. Smith saw humans as creatures driven by passions and at the same time self-regulated by their ability to reason and no less important by their capacity for sympathy. This duality serves both to pit individuals against one another and to provide them with the rational and moral faculties to create institutions by which the internecine struggle can be mitigated and even turned to the common good. He wrote in his *Moral Sentiments* the famous observation that he was to repeat later in the *Wealth of Nations*: that self-seeking men are often “led by an invisible hand..... without knowing it, without intending it, (to) advance the interest of the society”.

The Wealth of Nations

This book was published in 1776. It explains the role and purpose of free market. Why some nations are wealthier than the others? Answer is Free Trade. The concept of money (A medium of exchange). Disadvantages of barter system. The Concept of Invisible Hand. He explains the Market Mechanism. Demand and Supply. Inequality is inevitable. He was against Mercantilism. We owe to Adam Smith the clear exposition of economic concepts such as Division of Labour, Money, Capital,

Market Mechanism, Supply / Demand, Taxation, Role of Government, Laissez faire capitalism etc. In Book V, Smith outlines the four main stages of organisation through which society is impelled, unless blocked by wars, deficiencies of resources, or bad policies of government: the original “rude” state of hunters, a second stage of nomadic agriculture, the third stage of feudal, manorial” farming”, and a fourth and final stage of commercial interdependence. It should be noted that each of these stages is accompanied by institutions suited to its needs. For example, in the age of huntsman, “there is scarce any property; so there is seldom any established magistrate or any administration of justice”. With the advent of flocks there emerges a more complex form of social organisation, comprising not only formidable armies but the central institution of private property with its indispensable buttress of law and order as well. It is the very essence of Smith’s thought that he recognised this institution, whose social usefulness he never doubted, as an instrument for the protection of privilege, rather than one to be justified by natural law. “Civil government, ” he wrote, “so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is in reality instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have none at all.” Finally Smith describes the evolution through feudalism into a stage of society requiring new institutions, such as market-determined rather than guild determined wages and free rather than government constrained enterprise. This is known as Laissez faire capitalism. Smith called it the system of perfect liberty. Further in the system of perfect liberty, the competition among the entrepreneurs takes care of the price which will be closer to the cost of production. Obviously the INVISIBLE HAND is at work. Finally by explaining that wages and rents and profits (the constituent parts of the cost of production) are themselves subject to this same discipline of self-interest and competition, Smith not only provided an ultimate rationale for these “natural” prices but also revealed an underlying orderliness in the distribution of income itself among workers, whose recompense was their wages; landlords, whose income was their rents; and manufacturers, whose reward was their profits. The Wealth of Nation opens with a famous passage describing a pin factory in which 10 persons, by specialising in various tasks, turn out 48, 000 pins a day, compared with the few pins, perhaps only 1, that each could have produced alone. But this all important division of labour does not take place unaided. It can occur only after the prior accumulation of capital (or stock as Smith calls it), which is used to pay additional workers and to buy tools and machines.

Analytic Philosophy

1. What is Analytic Philosophy?
2. G.E. Moore (1873-1958)
3. Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)
5. Logical Positivism

What is Analytic Philosophy?

Since the beginnings of 20 century, Analytic Philosophy, has dominated the English speaking world. GE Moore and Bertrand Russell are considered as the founders of Analytic Philosophy. British Universities were dominated by the philosophy of Absolute Idealism of FH Bradley, Bosanquet and MacTaggart. GE Moore and Bertrand Russell moved away from the above trend. They wanted an alternative to Idealism. They were concerned with the meanings of terms and propositions. Russell was of the view that the grammar of natural language is philosophically misleading. In his view, the ideal language for philosophy would be Symbolic Logic which will reveal the true logical forms of propositions. Thus Analytic Philosophy was born with a linguistic turn. The linguistic conception of philosophy was rightly seen as novel in the history of philosophy. For this reason analytic philosophy is reputed to have originated in a philosophical revolution on the grand scale – not merely in a revolt against British Idealism, but against traditional philosophy on the whole.

There are five phases in the history of Analytic Philosophy. The first phase was from 1900-1910, characterised by the quasi-Platonic form of Realism endorsed by Moore and Russell as alternative to Idealism. There was no attempt to build grand systems but there was focus on issues with precision and attention to details. In the second phase, Moore developed his philosophy of Common sense and Russell along with Wittgenstein Logical Atomism. So from 1910-1930, in the second phase Logical Atomism and ideal – language analysis characterise Analytic Philosophy. The third phase, from 1930-1945, is characterised by the rise of Logical Positivism, a view developed by the members of the Vienna Circle and popularised by the British Philosopher A J Ayer. The Fourth phase, from 1945-1965, is characterised by

ordinary – language analysis, developed in various ways by the Cambridge philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Wisdom and the Oxford philosophers Gilbert Ryle, John Austin, Peter Strawson, and Paul Grice. In the fifth phase, beginning in the mid-1960, is characterised by eclecticism and pluralism. The post-linguistic analytic philosophy cannot be defined in terms of a common set of philosophical views or interests, but it can be loosely characterised in terms of its style, which tends to emphasise precision and thoroughness about a narrow topic and to de-emphasise the imprecise or cavalier discussion of broad topics.

Analytic Philosophy is difficult to define in terms of its intrinsic features or commitments. But we may say that its approaches can be contrasted with other approaches to philosophy. Initially, it was opposed to British Idealism, and then to “traditional philosophy” at large. It is opposed to classical Phenomenology and Existentialism. It is also opposed to “Postmodern” philosophy (Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida).



G.E Moore

Good then is ... indefinable.

– G.E Moore

Cambridge professor G.E. Moore was the single most influential British Philosopher of the 20 century. His critique of the idealism of his teachers helped to break its hold on Anglo-American thought. Moore studied philosophy at Cambridge and Oxford with the idealistic philosophers Mc Taggart and Bradley, but soon declared his independence from their influence. In an early paper on “The Nature of Judgment” (1899), he insisted that propositions have a quasi-Platonic existence independently of the mental judgments or beliefs they express. Truth, he argued, must be a simple, non-relational property that some of these propositions possess, again without respect for the minds that entertain them.

In “The Refutation of Idealism” (1903), Moore rejected the core principle of idealism and offered a distinctly realistic alternative. Every form of idealism, he noted, relies on the principle expressed by Berkeley in the Latin phrase, *esse est percipi*,

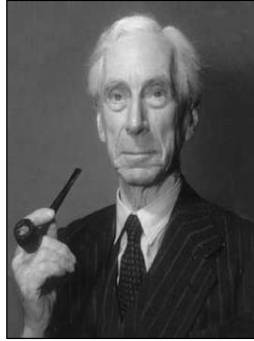
“to be is to be perceived”. This belief that everything is really an object of experience in some mind, Moore pointed out, must be necessarily true in order to have its intended consequences for the idealist scheme. Yet it seems clear that the belief is not analytic, since there is at least a conceptual difference between being on the one hand and being perceived on the other.

Thus, Moore claimed, idealists simply assume without evidence the truth of their most important principle. He maintained that the object of any experience must be clearly distinguished from the experience itself. Indeed, experience itself should be analysed as an irreducible relation between an external object and the perceiver’s conscious awareness of that object. If we begin with this view of the perceptual situation, Moore supposed, the reality of the object is beyond question. Of course this position is itself an assumption, for the truth of which he offered no proof other than the untenability of the idealistic alternative.

Defending Common-Sense: In his paper, “A Defence of Common Sense (1925), Moore maintains that the ordinary beliefs human beings hold are to be accepted at face value. He began with a simple list of “common-sense” beliefs that each of us holds about many things, including my own body, other human bodies, my own experiences, and experiences of other human beings. He then declared further that we all know that each of these simple beliefs is wholly true in just the sense in which they are commonly meant. Philosophers who hold opposing views Moore divided into two groups: Some of them deny the truth of the beliefs (as, for example, do idealists who reject the reality of time, space, or self). But this Moore took to be indefensible, self-defeating, and never consistently held as a basis for ordinary life.

Others deny only that we know the beliefs (as, for example, do skeptics about the external world). This position, Moore argued, is not only self-defeating and impractical but also logically inconsistent. Thus, Moore concluded that in fact we do really know all of these common-sense beliefs to be true.

Ethics: Although many philosophers of the Western tradition had claimed to define good in terms of some other feature of the world, Moore argued that such attempts typically confuse part with whole or cause with effect. That every attempt to define good by reference to something else fails is evident from the open question that invariably remains: “Is this really good?” (When a hedonism proposes that “Good is pleasure, ” for example, we naturally ask, “But is pleasure always good?”) The open question shows that each effort to identify good with something else is mistaken, Moore held, and since most of these attempts equate good with something else is mistaken, Moore held, and since most of these attempts equate good with a natural property, he labelled their erroneous procedure the “naturalistic fallacy.”



Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell was born in 1872 in the city of Trellech, in the county of Monmouthshire, now part of Wales. One of his grandfathers was Lord John Russell, who served twice as Prime Minister of Britain. He lost both his parents at a very young age and was brought up by his grandmother, a strict Presbyterian. His first encounter with philosophical problems came at the age of 11, when his older brother introduced him to Euclid: “This was one of the great events of my life, as dazzling as first love”. He demanded to know what grounds there were for accepting Euclid’s axioms, and received the unsatisfactory reply, “If you don’t accept them, we cannot go on.” “The doubt as to the premises of mathematics which I felt at the moment remained with me, and determined the course of my subsequent work”. He even claims that his only desire to know more mathematics prevented him from committing suicide while a schoolboy.

He began writing about religious and metaphysical questions in a journal at the age of 15, and he kept the journal secret from his relatives. In 1890, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge to study mathematics, but soon changed to philosophy. He was associated for much of his life with Cambridge University, first as a student, then as an instructor. He was an extremely prolific writer; published about 70 books, some dealing with technical areas (logic and mathematics, philosophy of science, metaphysics and epistemology) and others dealing with popular areas (social philosophy, ethics and religion). His book, “Marriage and Morals” was very controversial for its time. He was married four times. He contested unsuccessfully for parliament. The reason is his agnosticism. He authored a book, “Why I am not a Christian?”.

He became a pacifist in 1901 and was briefly imprisoned in England during World War II for writings critical of US Army. In 1949, he was awarded the Order of Merit and in 1950 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was engaged in political activism in the 1950s and 60s. He was a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and was arrested when he participated in one of their protests. He died in 1970, in Wales, at the age of 97.

Russell's Seminal Contribution to Philosophy

We have already noted that Russell and Moore abandoned Idealism and embraced the path of Realism. Russell believed that mathematics can be derived from logic. In this he was inspired by the German thinker Gottlob Frege (1848-1925). Russell along with his tutor Alfred North Whitehead, authored the *Principia Mathematica*, (PM) a three volume work published in 1910, 1912, and 1913. PM was an attempt to describe a set of axioms and inference rules in symbolic logic from which all mathematical truths could in principle be proven. As such, this ambitious project is of great importance in the history of mathematics and philosophy, being one of the foremost products of the belief that such an undertaking may be achievable. However, in 1931, Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem proved definitely that *Principia Mathematica*, and in fact any other attempt, could never achieve this lofty goal; that is, for any set of axioms and inference rules proposed to encapsulate mathematics, either the system must be inconsistent, or there must be in fact be some truths of mathematics which could not be deduced from them.

Russell's Paradox

Russell discovered that a contradiction can be derived from the axioms of Frege's system of logic. Frege's axioms implied that there is such a thing as the set of all sets that are not members of themselves. But in fact, there cannot be such a set. To see this, consider the question: is that set (the set of all sets that are not members of themselves) a member of itself? If it is a member of itself, then it is not a member of itself (because the only members of the set are not members of themselves). But this is contradictory. If it is not a member of itself, then it is a member of itself (because it has members all sets that are not members of themselves.) But this is contradictory, too. So no matter which is the case, there is a contradiction. So it is impossible for there to be a set of all sets that are not members of themselves. Sometimes, this paradox is explained using the following analogy: Suppose that there is a town in which everyman keeps himself clean-shaven, either by shaving himself or going to the town's only barber. If the barber shaves all and only men who do not shave themselves, does the barber shave himself? If he does shave himself, then he does not shave himself (since he shaves only men who do not shave themselves). But this is contradictory. If he does not shave himself, then he does shave himself (since he shaves all men who do not shave themselves.) But this is contradictory. So no matter which is the case, there is a contradiction. So it is impossible for there to be a barber who shaves all and only men who shave themselves. Frege eventually came to agree that the problem identified by Russell was fatal to his project. He never finished the projected third volume of *Basic Laws*; he spent his remaining years working on other projects.

Logical Atomism

It is theory formulated by Russell in *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914) and other works and by Wittgenstein in *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1921). According to this theory, the whole world is a totality of unconnected atomic facts. The philosophy of Logical Atomism is an extreme pluralism because it posits the existence of a multiplicity of individual things and denies them any unity or integrity. Historically, Logical Atomism was a reaction to the neo-Hegelianism of F. Bradley, who held that only the absolute, the whole was real and separate things were mere appearance. Logical Atomism seeks to analyse thought and discourse in terms of indivisible components. Atomic propositions consists of a subject term and a predicate term (John is clever), or a set of terms linked by a relational term (John hates Tom), and they are true if they correspond directly to Facts, which are all (for this theory, at least in its purest form) atomic. Molecular propositions are formed from atomic propositions.

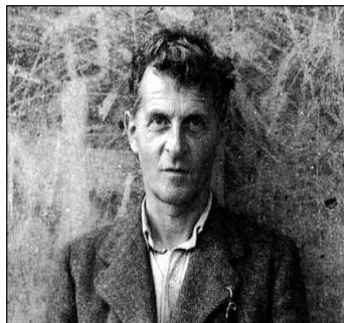
Theory of Descriptions

Russell developed the Theory of Descriptions in his seminal paper “On Denoting” (1905). It is an analysis of sentences containing descriptions. Descriptions, include indefinite descriptions such as, ‘an elephant’ and definite descriptions such as ‘the positive square root of four’. On Russell’s analysis, descriptions are “incomplete symbols” that are meaningful only in the context of other symbols.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

The world is the totality of facts, not of things.

– Ludwig Wittgenstein



Ludwig Wittgenstein

He was born in Austria. He was one of the most original and challenging philosophical writers of the 20th century. He was a student of Bertrand Russell and won his admiration. From an early date onward Wittgenstein was greatly influenced by the idea that philosophical problems can be resolved by paying attention to the working of language. Wittgenstein’s philosophy has two sharply distinct phases

separated by a prolonged period of dormancy. The philosophy of earlier Wittgenstein is found in his seminal work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) and that of Later Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigation* (1953) published posthumously.

Composed in a dauntingly severe and compressed style, the book (TLP) attempts to show that traditional philosophy rests entirely on a misunderstanding of “the logic of our language”. Following in Frege’s and Russell’s footsteps, Wittgenstein argued that every meaningful sentence must have a precise logical structure. That structure may, however be hidden beneath the clothing of the grammatical appearance of the sentence and may therefore require the most detailed analysis in order to be made evident. Such analysis, Wittgenstein was convinced would establish every meaningful sentence is either a truth-functional composite of another simpler sentence or an atomic sentence consisting of simple names. He argued further that every atomic sentence is as a result, logical picture of a possible state of affairs, which must to, as a result, have exactly the same formal structure as the atomic sentence that depicts it. He employed this “picture theory of meaning” – as it is usually called – to derive conclusions about the nature of the world from his observations about the structure of the atomic sentences. He postulated, in particular, that the world must itself have a precise logical structure, even though we may not be able to determine it. He also held that the world consists primarily of facts, corresponding to the true atomic sentences, rather than of things, and that those facts, in turn are concatenations of simple objects, corresponding to the simple names of which the atomic sentences are composed. Because he derived these metaphysical conclusions from his view of the nature of language, Wittgenstein did not consider it essential to describe what those simple objects, their concatenations and the facts consisting of them are actually like. As a result, there has been a great deal of uncertainty and disagreement among interpreters about their character.

At the end of his book, Wittgenstein reaches the conclusion that all sentences that are not atomic pictures of concatenations of objects or truth-functional composites of such are strictly speaking meaningless. Among these he included all the propositions of ethics and aesthetics, all propositions dealing with the meaning of life, all propositions of logic, indeed all philosophical propositions, and finally all the propositions of the *Tractatus* itself. These are all strictly meaningless; they aim at saying something important, but what they try to express in words can only show itself.

As a result, Wittgenstein concluded that anyone who understood what the *Tractatus* was saying would finally discard its propositions as senseless, that she would throw the ladder after climbing up on it. Someone who reached such a state would have no more temptation to pronounce philosophical propositions. She would see the world rightly and would then also recognise that only strictly meaningful propositions are those of natural science; but those could never touch what was

really important in human life, the mystical. That would have to be contemplated in silence. For “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent, ” as the last proposition of the Tractatus declared.

Later Wittgenstein: In the later period, Wittgenstein concerned himself with the actual working of ordinary language. This brought him close to the tradition of British common sense philosophy that was to flourish in Oxford in the 1950s. He concluded that his position in Tractatus was not correct. There were, in fact many different languages with many different structures that could meet quite different specific needs. Language was not strictly held together by logical structure, but consisted, in fact, of a multiplicity of simpler substructures or language games. We use language in many ways – to give orders, to greet people, to make jokes, to play chess, to tell stories, to solve problems, to pray. Historians, for example, use language differently from lawyers or from psychologists. Each is a different kind of language with its own rules. Each, he says, is a different language game, played by its own rules. For any activity, the words and actions involved in it may be considered to be a language game. The new view of the language carries a new view of meaning. Replacing the view that a proposition is meaningful because it pictures reality is the view that words gain their meaning from how they are used in a language game. We should not look to an ideal language which derives its meaning from facts and has a precise logical structure – as did Russell, the Tractatus, and the Vienna Circle – but, empirically, to the ways in which languages are actually used.

The task of philosophy is to analyse language in order to discover the many language games, and their rules for using words, and to remove the puzzles which arise when the rules of language games are misused. When one sticks to the rules, no problems arise. But there are no private language games, no private rules for using words, no private sensations which only I can know. Language games are social, and express some social group’s “form of life, ” its ways of doing things, its culture.

It is the philosophers, according to Wittgenstein, who persist in misusing language. The problems of philosophy are only linguistic problems, word puzzles which trap philosophers because they do not follow the ordinary English language game. Philosophers’ problems are not genuine problems but only the nonsense that results from not knowing how to handle language. What can be done? Philosophers must be given therapy for their philosophic anxieties about such matters as man, space, time, God and the world.

Logical Positivism

Logical positivism is the first stage in the development of linguistic philosophy and emerged in 1920s and 1930s in the University of Vienna (Vienna Circle) and in Cambridge University in England. Logical logical, Positivism developed as an attack upon all metaphysical systems such as Hegelian, and demanded a return to the empiricism of Hume.

Like Hume, Logical positivists argued that there are only two kinds of propositions, the propositions of logic and mathematics (which Hume had said “relations of ideas”) and propositions of common sense and science (which Hume had dealt with “matters of fact”). We have, they say, no other kind of knowledge than that which logic, mathematics, and science give us. And just as Hume proposed that since metaphysics contains neither metaphysics, mathematical, nor factual propositions, we should commit it to the flames, so logical positivism demands that metaphysics be destroyed. But the logical positivists are even more savage than Hume in their attack on metaphysics.

The goal of logical positivism was to establish in place of metaphysical speculation, a tough, empirical scientific mentality and to make the science of physics the model for all human knowledge. The final blow which the logical positivists delivered to metaphysics was to show not merely false but is actually meaningless. A principle was established to test the meaningfulness of statements. This is the logical positivism’s famous verifiability principle. It says that a factual statement (in contrast to a logical or mathematical proposition) is meaningful if and only if it is empirically verifiable. To be cognitively meaningful, that is, to be meaningful as factual or descriptive knowledge, a proposition must, at least in principle, be testable by empirical observation. But no metaphysical statements, such as Plato’s statements about the forms, Descartes’s statements about mental and physical substances, Hegel’s statements about finite and absolute spirit – none of these statements can possibly be proved empirically, by means of sensory observation or experimentation. Therefore, logical empiricism triumphantly concludes, metaphysical statements are meaningless, nonsensical. The verifiability principle has thus put an end to metaphysics.

Criticism of Logical Positivism: Its central doctrine, the verifiability principle, was subjected to devastating attack on several grounds. First of all the verifiability principle failed its own test, since it is not itself an empirically verifiable statement; it is therefore embarrassingly meaningless. Moreover, the verifiability principle as a test of the meaningfulness of statements places science itself (which it was designed to support) in danger, since scientific laws and other scientific construction are not completely verifiable. Also, the principle is unclear as to whether it requires actual verification or only possible verification, and if only possible verification what this relaxed requirement means. Logical Positivism is now dead, paving way for the second stage of linguistic philosophy to emerge. The meaningfulness can be tested by a variety of languages and that no language corresponds with the world.

Quotes of Bertrand Russell

- The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts.

- The first step in a fascist movement is the combination under an energetic leader of a number of men who possess more than the average share of leisure, brutality, and stupidity. The next step is to fascinate fools and muzzle the intelligent, by emotional excitement on the one hand and terrorism on the other.
- Love is wise; hatred is foolish. In this world, which is getting more and more closely interconnected, we have to learn to tolerate each other, we have to learn to put up with the fact that some people say things that we don't like. We can only live together in that way. But if we are to live together, and not die together, we must learn a kind of charity and a kind of tolerance, which is absolutely vital to the continuation of human life on this planet.

Religion is based... mainly upon fear... fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty, and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand. My own view on religion is that of Lucretius. I regard it as a disease born of fear and as a source of untold misery to the human race.

Existentialism / Jean Paul Sartre (1906-1980)



Jean Paul Sartre

Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world he is responsible for everything he does.

—Jean Paul Sartre

His Life in Brief

Jean Paul Sartre was born to Jean-Baptiste Sartre, an officer of the French navy, and Anne-Marie Schweitzer, cousin of Albert Schweitzer. When he was 15 months old, his father died of a fever. Anne-Marie raised him with the help from her father, Charles Schweitzer, who taught Sartre mathematics and introduced him to classical literature at an early age. As a teenager in the 1920s, Sartre became attracted to philosophy upon reading Henri Bergson's *Essay on the Immediate Data of consciousness*. He studied in Paris at the elite *École Normale Supérieure*. He was influenced by many aspects of Western Philosophy, particularly the ideas of the great German philosophers Immanuel Kant, GWF Hegel, Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger.

In 1929 at the École Normale Supérieure, Sartre met fellow student Simone de Beauvoir, who later became a noted thinker, writer, and feminist. From the start, the two were inseparable and throughout their lives they continued a romantic relationship, though one that was self-consciously anti-monogamous. Together Sartre and Beauvoir challenged many cultural and social assumptions, which they considered to be “bourgeois”, both in practice and thought. The conflict between oppressive conformity to other people or to established institutions and an authentic – self-determination based on free choice would become a dominant theme in Sartre’s later work.

He got a doctorate in 1929 and served as a conscript in the French Army. Afterward, he taught as a junior lecturer and began to work on his writing. In 1939, he was drafted into the French army, where he served as a meteorologist. He was captured and imprisoned by Germans. He escaped to Paris and got involved in the French Resistance. At that time, he met Albert Camus, the famous writer. Later both of them drifted away from each other as Camus moved away from Communism. Sartre was attracted to communist ideas. He took a prominent role in the struggle against French Colonialism in Algeria. In 1964, Sartre was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature; he declined the honour, stating that he had always refused official honours and didn’t wish to align himself with institutions of any sort. He was politically very active. He was involved in the 1968 Students’ Revolution in France. He was opposed to the Vietnam War. Along with Bertrand Russell and other intellectuals, he organised a War Tribunal to expose the war crimes of US. Sartre died on 15 April, 1980 in Paris from an edema of the lung. Sartre lies buried in Cimetière du Montparnasse in Paris. Approximately 50, 000 people attended his funeral.

His Important Works

Jean Paul Sartre was not only a philosopher but also a great author and through his literary works he spread his philosophy of Existentialism. The following are his important works:

1. Imagination: A Psychological Critique (1936)
2. Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions (1939)
3. The Psychology of Imagination (1940)
4. Being and Nothingness (1943)
5. Existentialism and Humanism (1946)
6. Nausea (1938)
7. Words (1963, His Autobiography)
8. The Flies (1943)
9. No Exit (1945)

10. Dirty Hands (1949)

11. *Le Diable et le bon dieu* (1951) *Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960)

The Philosophy of Existentialism

Sartre expounded his philosophy, apart from serious technical literature, through his literary works also. The saying, “Existence precedes Essence” has become very popular in expressing the gist of Existentialism. Another important quote from Sartre is, “Man is condemned to be free”.

What are the sources which influenced Sartre in developing his philosophy? Descartes stated, “I think, therefore I am”. His first certainty is “I” as a thinking substance. This is the first influence on Sartre. Descartes’s philosophical subjectivism of the Cogito and his insistence that philosophy begins with the absolute certainty of my consciousness of myself as a thinking being have a decisive influence on Sartre. However, like Husserl Sartre believed, not in the certainty of a thinking substance, but in the certainty of consciousness. Sartre takes from Husserl’s complex and formidable philosophy of consciousness only these elements: the denial of Descartes’s thinking substance; the view of consciousness as intentional, a consciousness of something other than itself which it intends, to which it refers; and the conception of consciousness as relating to the world through its intentionality. Thirdly, from Martin Heidegger, Sartre takes the concepts of conscious existence as beings-in-the world; the basic distinction between the world of conscious being and the world of things; the concept of being thrown absurdly into existence; anguish; nothingness; the distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence; the distinction between facticity and transcendence; and the concept of man as making himself by having projects into the future. Fourthly, from Hegel, Sartre takes the following concepts: the distinction between the object as it is “in itself” and the object as it is “for” a subject; the struggle unto death and the need for recognition; master-slave relationship; the unhappy consciousness and alienation; dialectic of being and nothingness and the principle of negation (but without synthesis). Fifthly, from Kierkegaard, Sartre takes the emphasis upon individual conscious existence and the distinction between objective fear and existential anguish. Sixthly, from Nietzsche, he takes the concept of the death of God. His originality lies in his reinterpreting, revising, and reworking these materials into a bold new integration which became the centre of French existentialism, in the form of philosophic treatises, novels, plays, and literary and political essays.

Existentialism and Humanism: In! 946, Sartre delivered a lecture for the public explaining his philosophy. It was entitled, “Existentialism is a Humanism”. It is easy to understand compared with his treatise, “Being and Nothingness”. A key idea of existentialism – and of the human condition – is that existence preceded essence. The essence of something is its meaning, its intended purpose. A paper cutter is made to cut paper; that is its essence. Humans, however, do not have an essence. Man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself. We have no

greater purpose, no pre-determined plan, no ultimate meaning. We have no human nature, since there is nothing (e.g, God) outside of us which would conceive of it for us. We are simply here, and it is up to define ourselves. RESPONSIBILITY: Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. We have choice, we have subjectivity, and we choose what we will make ourselves to be; we are entirely responsible for our existence. Thus, existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him. This thought is often not easily accepted. "Subjectivity" is a word that riles up many. "If everything is subjective then nothing is objective; nothing is absolute! Our values are nothing more than our whims! Nothing is right or wrong. Sartre replies, "it is impossible for man to transcend human subjectivity." He isn't saying "I prefer subjectivity over objectivity, " he's asking, "How can we possibly not be subjective?" Even the religious individual who believes that morality is absolute and comes from God must, at some point, choose to believe that this is the case. Our responsibility is a blessing and a curse. It leads us to feel things like anguish, forlornness, and despair. ANGUISH: We experience anguish in the face of our subjectivity, because by choosing what we are to do, we choose for everyone. When you make a decision you are saying "this is how anyone ought to behave given these circumstances." Many people don't feel anguish, but this is because they are "fleeing from it". If you don't feel a sense of anxiety when you make decisions, it's because you are forgetting about your "total and deep responsibility" toward yourself and all of humanity. FORLORNNESS: Forlornness is the idea that "God does not exist and we have to face all the consequences of this." There is no morality a priori. There is no absolute right or wrong. There is no ultimate judge. This is a very distressing idea. As Dostoyevsky said, "If God didn't exist, everything would be permissible". Without God, we have nothing to cling to. "There is no determinism, man is free, man is freedom. We have no values or commands to turn to legitimise our conduct." In other words, we have no excuses, and we are entirely responsible for our decisions. What are our values? The only way to determine them is to make a decision. At the end of the day, your ideals aren't what matter; what matters is, what you actually did. DESPAIR: Despair arises because we only have power to change and there is a lot we cannot change. Reality is impartial and out of your control, except for small aspects of it here and there. We despair because we can never have full control of the future. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WILL HAPPEN: Tomorrow, after my death, some men may decide to set up Fascism, and the others may be cowardly and muddled enough to let them do it. Fascism will then be the human reality, be so much the worse for us. Regardless of what is right or wrong, good or bad, and regardless of whether these are absolutes or not, "things will be as man will have decided they are to be." What will happen will happen and humanity will be entirely responsible for what it does. Does this mean that we ought to become passively accepting of what will happen? Sartre says the exact opposite – "Does that mean that I should abandon myself to quietism? No, Quietism is the attitude of people who say, "Let others do what I can't do." The doctrine I am presenting is the opposite of quietism, since it declares, "There is no

reality except in action.” Moreover, it goes further, since it adds, “Man is nothing else than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfils himself; he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing else than his life.” NO EXCUSES: This is why existentialism horrifies some people. It puts such a burden of responsibility squarely on their shoulders. They can’t stand to think they were at fault for not being a great or successful person, for having no great friendship or love. They think they are the victim of circumstances; they haven’t had the proper education, leisure, or incentives; they haven’t found the right person yet; they haven’t had the opportunity to show their greatness. Sartre, however says that “The coward makes himself cowardly, the hero makes himself heroic.” The artist is an artist because of the art he created, not because he could have created. The mathematician is famous for the math he did, not what he could have done. We find that this is “a harsh thought to someone whose life hasn’t been a success.” We are responsible for our successes and failures. But at the same time, this harshness forces us to face the incredibly important fact that: REALITY ALONE IS WHAT COUNTS. Sartre summarises his idea of optimism and action in the following passage: Thus, I think we have answered a number of the charges concerning existentialism. You see that it cannot be taken for a philosophy of quietism, since it defines man in terms of action; nor for a pessimistic description of man – there is no doctrine more optimistic, since man’s destiny is within himself; nor for an attempt to discourage man from acting, since it tells him that the only hope is in his acting and that action is the only thing that enables a man to live.

Summary

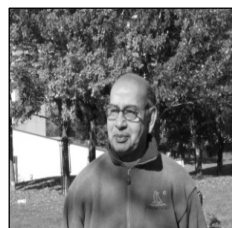
In summary, Sartre says that, “Existentialism is nothing else than an attempt to draw all the consequences of a coherent atheistic position. It isn’t trying to plunge man into despair at all.” Despite its atheistic position, existentialism doesn’t “wear itself out” arguing whether God exists or not. “Rather it declares that even if God did not exist, that would change nothing. There you’ve got our point of view. Not that we believe God exists, but we think that the problem of His existence is not the issue. In this sense existentialism is optimistic, a doctrine of action.” We are the rulers of our lives, we bear responsibility. Regardless what you believe, this cannot be any other way.

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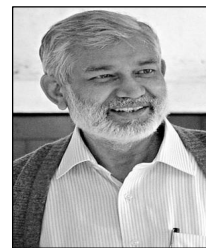
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Mr. Aju Mukhopadhyay is an award winning bilingual author of 37 books. He contributes to various journals in India and abroad. He is an award winning poet, critic, essayist and novelist. He received Laureate Award-Best Author- under non-fiction category and for his essays he received Albert Camus Centenary Writing Award. His work on Consciousness has already received attention of the Scholars and publishers. For this work he has highly depended on the most competent thinker on the subject and adventurer of Consciousness; Sri Aurobindo, his muse. He is co-author of *Discovery of Self Who am I?* (Authors press 2020)



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1. M.A, Political Science, Allahabad University, 1973
2. M.A, Hindi, 1991. Bangalore University.
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Joined IPS, July, 1974. Karnataka Cadre.

Published number of articles on professional Police subjects in various magazines and newspapers. Presented papers in National and International conferences.

Original short stories, poems, travelogue, articles etc., in Hindi published in various national magazines and newspapers. Books published:

- i. Two collections of poetry
- ii. Allama Prabhu, a short book in Hindi, Basava Samiti, Bangalore.
- iii. Allama Prabhu aur Kabir (The Ph.D dissertation)

- iv. Himalayavasi Guru Ke Saaye Men, 2012 (Hindi translation of 'Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master, Autobiography of an Yogi' by Sri Mumtaz Ali Khan, popularly known as Sri M)
- v. Mor Utara Tha, Hindi translation of poems of Kannada poet H. S. Shivaprakash, Professor, Dept. of Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi – Yash Publications, Delhi, 2015.

Translated to Hindi poems of leading Kannada poets like D.R. Bendre (Jnanapitha awardee), Gopalakrishna Adiga, Chandrashekara Kambara (Jnanapitha awardee), U.R. Ananthamurthy (Jnanapitha awardee), H.S.Shivaprakash, Dr. Ramachandra Sharma, Siddalingaiah, Chandrashekara Patil and others. Published in various national magazines.

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