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PRAYER IN ASIAN TRADITIONS

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The Second Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences convened in the Morning Star College, Barrackpore, India, 19th-25th November. 1978, with the theme: "Prayer—the Life of the Church of Asia." Father Ignatius Hirudayam, S.J. of India, presented this study of Asia's gift of prayer to Christianity as one of the two position papers of the Plenary Assembly.

I. PROLEGOMENA: TEXTS AND CRITERIA

Acts 6:2: "Convocantes autem duodecim multitudinem dixerunt: Non est aequum nos derelinquere verbum Dei et ministrare mensis ... 4: Nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus. 5: Et placuit sermo coram omni multitudine ..."

Lumen Gentium (L.G.), a.26, par.4: "By thus praying for the people, bishops channel the fulness of Christ's holiness in many ways and abundantly (Rom 1:16)."

L.G., a.41, par.4: "A priest's task is to pray and offer sacrifice for his own people and indeed the entire people of God, realizing what he does and reproducing in himself the holiness of things he handles."

L.G., a.51, par.3: "...As long as all of us ... remain in communion with one another in mutual charity and in one praise of the Most Holy Trinity, we are responding to the deepest vocation of the Church and partaking in a foretaste of the liturgy of consummate glory."

Christus Dominus (On the Bishops' Pastoral Office) :a.15, par.2: "Intent upon prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4), they (bishops) should devote their labour to this end, that all those committed to their care may be of one mind in prayer (Acts 1:14 and 2:46) ... and be faithful witness to the Lord."

De Accommodata Renovatione (Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life), a.3, par.1: "The manner of living, praying and working should be suitably adapted to the physical and psychological conditions of today's religious and also to ... the requirements of a given culture ... especially in missionary territories."

Ad Gentes (A.G.) (Decree on the Missionary Activity on the Church) a.9, par.3: "Missionary activity is nothing else and nothing less than a manifestation or epiphany of God's will and the fulfillment of that will in the world and world history ... Whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations as a sort of secret presence of God, this (missionary) activity frees from all taints of evil and restores to Christ its maker ... and so whatever good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost. More than that, it is ennobled and perfected for the glory of God, the shame of the demon and the bliss of men."

L.G., a.17, par.3: "Through her (Church's) work, whatever good is in the minds and hearts of men, whatever good life latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is not only saved from destruction, but is also healed, ennobled and perfected unto the glory of God, the confusion of the devil and the happiness of man."

N.B. A.G., a.19, par.1: "Considerably adapted to the local culture..."

A.G.,a.19, par.4: "The bishop ... together with his own college of priests ... must think and live in union with the universal Church ... They should embed her traditions in their own culture, thereby increasing the life of the Mystical Body by a certain mutual exchange of energies."

A.G., a.21, par.4: "The laity ... must give expression to this newness of life in the social and cultural frame work of their own homeland according to their own national traditions. They must be acquainted with this culture. They must heal it and preserve it ... in according with modern conditions."

A.G., a.22, par.1: "Thus in imitation of the plan of the Incarnation, the young Churches take to themselves in a wonderful exchange, the riches of the nations which were given to Christ as an inheritance (cf.Ps 2:8). From the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and sciences these Churches borrow all those things which can contribute to the glory of their Creator, the revelation of the Saviour's grace or the proper arrangement of Christian life."

L.G., a.13, par.2: "This characteristic of universality which adorns the People of God is a gift from the Lord Himself. By reason of it, the Catholic Church strives energetically and constantly to bring all humanity with all its riches back to Christ its Head in the unity of His Spirit."

A.G., a.22, par.2,3,4, and 5: "If this goal is to be achieved, theological investigation must necessarily be stirred up in each major socio-cultural area ... Thus it will be seen more clearly in what ways faith can seek for understanding in the philosophy and wisdom of these peoples ... Particular traditions, together with the individual patrimony of each family of nations, can be illumined by the light of the Gospel and then be taken up into Catholic unity ... And so, it is to be hoped and is altogether fitting that Episcopal Conferences within the limits of each major socio-cultural territory will be so united among themselves that

they will be able to pursue this programme of adaptation with one mind and with a common plan."

Gaudium et Spes (G.S.), a.11, par.1: "The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the earth."

G.S, a.16, par.2: "Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God."

II. POINT OF DEPARTURE

Since this meeting is held in India, this survey of Prayer in Asian Traditions may be permitted to start by considering Prayer in Indian Tradition and then to widen to cover the traditions of the other countries of Asia. A broad definition of prayer may be accepted as a starting point for this wider survey, viz., prayer as "the individual and collective reaction of the religious soul when confronted with the cosmos."[1]

The most ancient literature of India which we have today is indeed a prayer book. The Rig Veda consists of 10,552 laudatory stanzas or Riks, forming 1028 hymns or suktas, which have been arranged either under ten books called Mandalas, or under eight books called Ashthakas. They were composed by the Aryans and the pre-Aryan Indian population as they encountered each other, confronted and mingled and spread out.

III. PRAYER IN THE KARMA TRADITION

These hymns or psalms were centred around the Karman of Yajna, act of Vedic sacrifice. The opening line of the Rig Veda invokes Agni as a mediator and priest: Agnim ile' purohitam: We adore Agni the Priest. This priest is conceived as a divine, human, earthly, reality in one (theanthropocosmic), mediating between the sacrificer and the Brhad Devatas he addresses.[2]

The prayers addressed to these Gods were mostly arthárthin, i.e., petitions for terrestrial benefits, viz., protection against evil forces in nature and in the human community, abundance of wealth and of harvest, cattle increase and strong steed, and health, strength and long life to enjoy these good things; long, full and complete life, gift of strong and healthy children, wedded happiness and peace. Then these petitions ascend to more spiritual benefits, viz., the will to pursue goodness, righteousness (dharma), loyalty, truth, chastity, unity, peace and, finally, divine grace.[3] "May we listen with our ears to what is good; may

we see with our eyes what is good."

The style in which these petitions are phrased may be persuasive, insinuating, imploring, broken, weeping, contrite. At times they may be harsh and demanding or joyous and exuberant. They reflect every human mood and vicissitude of human life. Hence the collection on exorcism, etc., as found in the Atharva Veda. Rarely these prayers ascend to metaphysical and mystical heights in the Rig Veda and also in the Sama Veda and Yajur Veda. Every one of the 15 Riks of R.V. III.55 ends with: "Mahad Devánám Asuratvam Ekam" : "Great is the single Godhead of the Devas."[4]

The opening line of the Rig Vedas, as it has been commented, "contains in a nutshell the whole of man's sanátana dharma or primordial righteousness: praise, mediation, sacrifice, commerce with the divine and also remuneration for man."[5]

The Yajnas, round which these Vedic prayers were centred, have practically ceased to be celebrated. But the Vedic hymns are still in use, accompanying other cultic practices. The transition from personal prayer to liturgical prayer is said to be the work of prophets and Rishis. These seem still to be available in India.

Common Ethical Basis

The ethical basis, not only of the Karma Marga, way of action, but of all religious paths of India is the Vedic concept of Rita or cosmic Law and Order, and of Dharma or universal righteousness (R.V. X.67.2; R.V.VIII.25.1; R.V.V.68.1; R.V.X.85.1). And in the Sivasamkalpa hymn of the Yajur Veda (34.1—6), every stanza ends with "manah Sivasankalpam astu" : "May my mind resolve on what is good." A fundamental belief was that "as the atman does, as it acts, so it becomes" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV.4,5). "By good acts it becomes good and by sinful acts it becomes sinful" (*ibid.*, III.2,13). In the Vedas, the God Varuna is the omnipresent upholder of Rita or Cosmic Law and Order and his friendship is lost and punishment is incurred by transgressing this Law and Order. The Upanishads indulged in psychosomatic theorising about the roots of deeds and affirmed that "desire" was the tap root of all deeds (Brhad.Up.IV.4,5). Others affirmed that the mind is of two kinds, pure and impure; it is impure from contact with desire. "And by freeing the mind from sloth and distraction and making it motionless, one becomes delivered from his mind, i.e., reaches mindlessness (amanibhavam)" (Maitri.Up.VI.34). "When all desires that dwell in the heart (i.e., mind) are gone, then, he having been

mortal becomes immortal and attains Brahman in this very body" (Brhad.Up.IV.4,7). This Vedic concept is developed in the Bhagavad Gita as the doctrine of Nishkáma Karma, desireless action, action without attachment, and enjoined Svadharma or caste duties. Dharma Sastras, therefore, lay down the ethical basis for all spiritual margas.

The Griha Sutras governed for centuries the Indian people's worship of God and prayer through secular and sacred actions, cultic rites performed at home. The Samskaras, sacraments or sacramentals prescribed by them have gone out of use long ago, except Upanayana, Vivaka and funeral rites. They have been replaced by local and racial cults, each caste following its own liturgical rules, even for marriage, funeral, etc.

Cultic Karma

A new form of liturgical worship, the Puja, was developed not from the Vedic traditions of Yajnas, but on the pre-Vedic Agamic traditions. The Jains and Buddhists in India speak of their Agamas. The Saktas, the Vaishnavites and Saivites possess their Agamas and follow them. These Agamas usually teach four Padas or parts, i.e., the Charya, pre-liturgical activities, Kriya, liturgical cultic rites and ceremonies, Yoga and Jnana which propounds the peculiar doctrines of particular sects. The Charya and Kriya padas correspond to the Karma Marga of these sects. Their prayer and worship have a doctrinal background, including cosmology and human psychology which are expatiated in the Jnana Pada of the Agama. The spiritual techniques or sadhanas are dealt with in the Yoga Pada of the Agamas. Their cosmological fancy posits seven hells for depraved souls and seven heavens or lokas for spiritually developing souls, viz. Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Suvarloka, Maharloka, Janoloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka. Beyond these seven heavens, the Vaishnavites posit Vaikunta the dwelling place of Hari or Vishnu, and the Saivites will speak of Kailas where Diva dwells. Mystics and philosophers have been identifying these lokas with the Kosas of the microcosm, which consists of seven sheaths, one more subtle than and acting as the Atman for the previous one. They are Anna maya, Prem maya, Van maya, Prana maya, mano maya, Vijnana maya and Ananda maya Kosas. So that when you speak of ascending through the lokas to Vaikunta or Kailasa to meet your God, you are only on an inner exploration through your Kosas to the Cave of the Heart where the Great Mystery that sustains you dwells and guides you, and waits for you. This synchronisation of the macrocosmic and

microcosmic structure is represented by the layout and architecture of the Hindu temple as prescribed by the Vaikhanasa Agamas, followed by all especially in South India. An ideal temple is expected to consist of seven avaranás or compound walls and seven perambulatories running between them on all four sides of the central shine of the Deity.

Visiting the temple and offering archana and receiving the darshana of the Deity installed in the central shrine (Garbhagriha) is, even for the uninitiated Hindu, a process of catechesis, of interiorisation and of communion with God, if he follows the prescribed rules. "Understand what you do," he is told as he passes through the first gate of the first compound wall under the Gopura or tower. He is expected to leave behind all terrestrial attachments and worries and proceed inside only with the desire to save his soul. The circumambulation along the perambulatories between the avaranas or compound walls is itself considered an act of worship of the Deity in the central shrine, Moolasthan. The sculptures and paintings of the Deity in the central shrine, he is told, are the theophanies of the Deity in the central shrine. Thus Bhairava in the north-east corner of the innermost compound wall is, we are told, only the Providence-protection-aspect of the Deity. Ganapathy is only the Bhakti-aspect of the worship of the Deity. In front of the latter's shrine the worshipper administers three knocks on his own head and performs a self-humiliating gesture reciting the prayer "Om Vijneswara (Remover of obstacles), Maha Ganapathi, Vinayaka Murti": "may my mind, speech and bodily actions be knocked and restrained and turned to concentrate on the worship. Help me." The central shrine is kept dark except for the small sanctuary lamp. When the priest receives the offering of the devotee, offers it to the Deity and waves the lighted camphor, the Deity is seen by the bodily eyes of the worshipper and illumines his soul to see Him in faith.

An ideal temple is expected to celebrate seven pujas (worship) a day, the main puja being at midday. The puja mainly consists of invoking the lDeitys presence and offering the Deity certain royal homages called upacaras. The puja performed in the temple is called pararthа puja, i.e., meant for the temporal benefits of all living beings within the jurisdictionary area around the temple.

Besides, initiates, or those who have received the required diksha, perform the atmartha puja at home for the benefit of the souls of the worshippers. It consists of elaborate purificatory rites, then preparation of the thrones for the Deity and preparation of the gifts to be

offered. Then the Deity is invoked on the throne and offered the upácáras. This is followed by japa, meditation and communion with the Deity.

There is, besides, what is called atma puja or atma nivedana, which is a pure mental meditative process of offering and surrendering one's soul to the Deity.

Living Temple

Since man is considered as the living temple of God, with the Ultimate Reality Itself dwelling in his innermost shrine and sustaining him and guiding every act of his, every act of a man's daily life is considered as a cultic act and regulated by agamic prescriptions. The Nitya Anushthana begins with the waking breath itself: the Vaishnavite pronouncing the name Hari seven times with his first waking breath; the Saivite pronouncing the sacred Panchákshara Namasivaya or Sivayanamah. Especially must be mentioned along with the bath three acts, viz., Ácamanam, Arghyam and Sakalikaranam. Ácamanam is sipping of the purificatory water three times, meditating on the inner purification it effects. Arghyam is the oblation of water offered in worship. Sakalikaranam consists of Kara Nyasam and Anga Nyasam, i.e., touching the joints of one's hands and of one's whole body with fingers held in significant poses or mudras, meditating how the various murtis (theophanies) of the Deity are installed in these parts. Thus the whole living temple of man is purified and prepared to celebrate the puja for the Deity. These three actions come again in the Samdhyavandana and again in the puja proper.

Every form of external action ends with pradakshina, circumambulation and prostration and taking worshipful leave of the Deity. In certain tantric forms of worship the Deity, if it was externalised for worship, is taken back into own manipuraka chakars, the plexus near the naval as its permanent dwelling. It is widely confessed that these and other cultic prescriptions are now-a-days performed in a very peremptory manner without mental attention. But it is at the same time affirmed that, if performed in a true yogic manner, they can lead one to the most intimate form of union with the Deity.

IV. PRAYER IN THE JŃÁNA MARGA

The Veda, which we have called the prayer book of ancient Indians,

prays sometimes also for wisdom and knowledge: "O God, give us wisdom as a father gives wisdom to his sons" (R.V.VII.32.26). The highest intellectual faculty of man was called dhi and the Vedic Rishis' prayer reached its zenith when he prayed for the illumination of this dhi. This prayer is enshrined in the Gayatri mantra (cf. R.V. III.62.10): "Tat Savitur varenyam, Bhargo Devasya dhimahi, Dhiyo yo nah pracodayat":"We contemplate that adorable glory of that God of Light. May He stimulate our mental power." The White Yajur Veda (36.3) added to this text three words: Bhur, Bhuvas and Suvah, meaning the earth, the sky and heaven. The monosyllabic name of the Ultimate Reality, the all-pervading Eternal Spirit, is prefixed and we have the complete mantra, the Gayatri (i.e., that which saves those who chant it), which is claimed to contain the essence of all the Vedas and has been sung through the millenia till today:

Aum, Bhur, Bhuvas, Suvah.
Tat Savitur varenyam.
Bhargo Devasya dhimahi,
Dhiyo yo nah pracodayat.

The oldest meaning of the well-known Hindu word Brahman (neuter gender with accent on the first syllable) seems to be "Holy Knowledge,"[6] or its concrete expression or "Sacred word," and holy mystic utterance or prayer. The feminine word "Vak"—"Holy Utterance"—is virtually synonymous with the neuter Brahman. The masculine personifications, Vácas-pati (R.V.X.81.7) and Brahmanaspati (R.V.X.72.2) are also identical. Gradually Brahman develops as the primal cosmic principle and the ruling and guiding spirit of the universe, and Vák into the Spirit that reveals and saves the universe. Brahmacharya originally means the knowledge of Brahman and secondarily the celibacy and asceticism required in the brahmachari or seeker after the knowledge of Brahman.[7]

The Upanishads, therefore, are called the Jnana Kanda of the Vedas. The basis of this kind of approach to Ultimate Reality is the dictum: "The Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman" (Brhad. Up. IV.iv,25). The greatest proponent of this Vedantic path, Sri Sankaracharya, wrote his great commentaries on the Prasthana Traia or the threefold source of the Vedanta, viz., the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita. To him also are attributed the practical guide books like Aparoksha Anubhuti, Upadesasáhasri and Viveka Chudamani. We summarise here various prescriptions given in these works, as well as in the Pancadasi by Vidyaranyaswami.

Sádhana Chatushtaya

Four preliminary qualifications are required in the disciple who aspires to Brahman-knowledge:

(1) Viveka: Discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the permanent and the transitory (nitya anitya vastu viveka), between the Atma and the anatma. This discernment dawns in the soul, it is clearly affirmed, through the grace of the Lord.

(2) Vairagya: From this discernment appears the desire to give up all transitory benefits for the sake of attaining the Imperishable Eternal Reality or Brahman.

(3) The third requisite is, in fact, a group of virtues: Shama damádhi sampatti. Shama is the resting of the mind steadfastly on its goal, i.e., Brahman, detached from all limited things. This calmness is Shama. Dama or self-control is restraining the jnanendriyas and karmendriyas, (organs of knowledge and of action), from their objects (corresponding to Pratyáhára of Ashtanga Yoga). Uparatti is the result of the practice of Shama and Dama. It is self-withdrawal which makes the mind cease to be affected by external objects. Titiksha reaches further and bears all afflictions and attains freedom from fear or anxiety on their score. Shraddha: the foregoing virtues are made possible by an unshakable faith or shraddha in Brahman, in the truth of the Scriptures, in the Guru and in one's own capacity.

(4) Mumukshutva: It is the last and most important prerequisite. It is an irrepressible and fervent longing for liberation or Moksha. Without this ardent yearning for salvation, no applicant should be accepted as a disciple.

Rarely, a mumukshu or aspirant may be directly taught by God. But for the vast majority of beginners in the spiritual path, a competent Guru is indispensable.[8] The Sadguru is said to tear the veil of ignorance from the mind of the disciple, drive away his lower diabolical nature and render him immortal and divine. His very company is self-illumination and education. The Guru is Moksha-dvara, gate of heaven. When an aspirant has found a Mahatma possessed of all the lakshanas (attributes) of a sadguru, he is asked to serve the guru humbly, willingly, unquestioningly, untiringly and lovingly, and to show unflinching obedience. Only on this condition, he is told, he will acquire

command over his lower self. The Guru teaches both by personal examples as well as through Upadesha according to the maturity of the disciple.[9]

Vedantic Sadhana

Under the guidance of the Guru the mumukshu or aspirant proceeds in his life of prayer and meditation in three stages: Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana.

A. Sravana

Sravana is hearing continually the repetition of the same great truths of the Upanishadic Mahavakyas, the chosen apophtegms, e.g:

(1) Prajńánam Brahma: Brahman is Pure Consciousness (Aitareya Up., III.3). This teaches the identity of the knower and the known in the Ultimate Reality.
(2) Ayam Atma brahma: This Self is the Brahman (Brhad. Up.,II. last line).
(3) Aham brahma asmi: I am Brahman (Brhad. Up., I. iv.10).
(4) Tat tvam asi: That thou art (Chandogya Up.,VI.8).

Dr. Hendrick Kraemer asserted that these declarations only repeat the original sin of the creature against the Creator. Fr. Johanns, Fr.Monchanin, Swami Abhishiktananda, Fr.Bede Griffiths, Fr. R. Panikkar, Fr. De Smet and Sr. Sara Grant have explained the Christian and Trinitarian understanding of these Advaitic formulations.

This kind of Sravana or continual repetition of the great formulations goes along with Swadhyaya or the study of the Scriptures and the commentaries of the great Acharyas on the Prasthana Traiya. This study will bring into consideration those texts of the Vedas and Upanishads that attribute infinite freedom to Brahman and affirm the necessity of grace for us to attain the salvific knowledge of the Brahman. Sincere thought has also recognized that the constant repetition of this kind of well-chosen and pre-determined formulations is bound to act as a kind of self-hypnosis. Swami Sivananda, who admits this, argues that it is only the health-giving counter-hypnosis to remedy the evil hypnosis performed on our mind by the continual hearing of the

world's false jargons.

Indian theists, however, have tried to correct this hypnosis of the Mahavakyas by including other texts of the Vedas and of the later mystic literature of the various Bhakti religions of India which are as profound as the Mahavakyas. A Christian, therefore, who wishes to make use of this technique of meditation may make use of mantras taken from his Scriptures or the great Fathers of the Church and other great mystics.

B. Manana

Basing himself on the reasoned study of the Vedas (Swadhyaya), an aspirant after Brahman-knowledge will apply his one-pointed attention to the great truth fixed in his mind by the Sravana. This one-pointedness or Ekagrata is the result of the first six limbs of the Ashtánga Yoga, which we shall now briefly expose.

(1) Yama: the pre-requisite virtues required in an aspirant for contemplation are:

-ahimsa (literally: non-violence) or universal love;
-satya or unwavering fidelity to truth;
-asteya or avoidance of illegal acquisitions;
-aparigraha or full freedom from any kind of greed;
-brahmacharya or celibacy and chastity.

(2) Niyama or positive rules of:

-sauca or outer cleanliness and inner cleanliness;
-santosha or contentment;
-tapas or austerity of mind and body for strengthening the power of the will;
-swadhyaya or study of the Scriptures (which has been mentioned above);
-iswarapranidhana or the worship of God and surrender of one's self and all one's deeds to Him is the fifth and last practice comprised under Nyama. Yoga Sutra II.1.32 mentions it under Jnana Yoga, and in v. 45 it is classified under Kriya yoga. The Jains too make use of the practice but only as a temporary technique to attain Kaivalya, autonomy. But in the Saivite and Vaishnavite traditions it forms the centre and heart of all religious practices.

The Sadhana chatushtaya of the Vedantins and the Yama and Nyama of the Ashtánga Yoga constitute an unexceptionable pre-requisite for the life of prayer and meditation; these are what Christian

writers in the West call remote preparation for meditation. They are neglected by the Hatha Yogins who direct their attention only to the four following limbs of the Ashtánga Yoga, viz., Ásana, Pránáyáma, Pratyáhára and Dhárana, and display the preternatural powers or siddhis which they claim to have achieved by these techniques. But the theistic religions of India warn us against going after siddhis and missing the main goal, viz., union with God.

(3) Asana: The third limb of Ashtánga Yoga is asana or bodily posture. We are concerned only with those postures that are utilized for prayer and meditation.

Swami Sivananda would warn us: "Physical fitness, a diseaseless healthy body is essential for spiritual practices. Without good health, you cannot fight against the turbulent senses and the boisterous mind ..."[10] Yoga Sutra defines: Stiram sukham ásanam: firmness and comfort are the main characteristics of the posture required for prayer and meditation. Padmasana, Siddhasana, Virasana and Sukhasana are recommended in Yoga for meditation. The Burmese Satipatthána method emphasises the need of these postures. The Tibetan methods, the Chinese Ch'an techniques,as well as the Pure Land School, the Japanese Zen, etc., adapt these postures to their requirements. But they all insist on the backbone being held erect. For example, the Japanese Suwari posture of Za-Zen, which may replace the Lotus posture, Kekka, or the Hero postures, Hanka,[11] is the same as the Hatha Yoga posture given by Dechanet,[12] except that the heels are slightly dove-tailed under the buttocks, the toes of each foot crossing each other. From this posture, making of panchangapranam and the folded-leaf posture are very easy to perform.

J.M.Dechanet calls the asana technique the redemption of the body towards balance and peace of the senses.[13] I redeem the body "if, in order to make my prayer purer, I carry out some exercises beforehand, or if I adopt for meditation one of the postures well known in the East for promoting concentration of the spirit and inner recollectedness. In doing so, my intention is not to compel the supernatural, any more than it is to put all manner of acrobatics in the place of dispositions of the heart. Nor is it to obtain by mechanical and artificial means what can only be the fruit of a sincere piety and a generosity of soul that appeals to divine love. On the contrary, it is simply to create around me and in me an atmosphere of calm, peace and silence and especially to establish harmony between body, soul and spirit so that nothing in me shall hinder the working of grace."[14]

Anthony de Mello who has integrated in himself several prayer techniques of various traditions declares: "Another help in dealing with distractions is, believe it or not, having your back erect! I have as yet discovered no scientific reason for this. But I am convinced from my own and others' experience that it is so ... I have it on good authority that some Zen masters are able to walk into a meditation hall and tell, merely from the positon of a meditator's back, whether he is distracted or not. This seems a somewhat exaggerated claim to me because I can certainly recall times when my back was far from erect and I wasn't distracted."[15]

The techniques of self-cultivation according to the Taoist School in China prescribes "The chest should bend slightly forward ... straighten the spine ... the backbone curved like a bow ..."[16]

The Hesychast posture could not have been with the backbone held erect, sitting on a low stool, etc.[17]

A Sivayogi who initiated me into an esoteric technique of contemplation did it seated in his 'easy chair' with me seated on a chair by his side.

What is called Sowmyasana is that posture which helps each one to sit firmly and at ease and concentrate his mind while breathing freely.

All this notwithstanding, the great usefulness of the erectness of the merutanda (spine) cannot be gainsaid. The bodily posture itself is a kind of Ekagrata, one-pointedness. Mercia Eliade would go further and declare that the padmasana is an iconographic representation of the Ultimate Reality, symbolising Its eternal interior peace as well as its infinite creative consciousness. It has a cultic value in itself. Hence Vyasa Sutra (IV.sect.1) declares: "It is possible to worship in the seated posture because of the meditations : Asinah sambhavát dhyanáscha."

(4) Pránáyáma: The fourth limb of the Ashtánga Yoga is the regularisation of breathing called Pránáyáma.[18] Even in the Hesychast prayer rhythmic breathing is recommended and the Jesus Prayer is synchronized with the breathing. The inhalation, puraka, and exhalation, rechaka, are easier to regularise. But the Kumbhaka, retention of breath between puraka and rechaka and keeping the lungs empty between rechaka and puraka, are acknowledged as dangerous techniques requiring expert guidance. The Hesychasts too warned about the limitations of this techique, as well as about its dangers.[19]

Breathing is considered very important in Buddhist meditation techniques and in Za-Zen, though it is not so much insisted on as in Yoga.[20] "Moreover, each posture, asana, goes with a definite rhythm of breathing which comes of its own accord once the pose has been correctly assumed and gradually becomes more firmly fixed ... There are two ways of breathing: one for men and the other for women."[21] The Chinese Taoist School also prescribes rules of correct breathing.[22]

(5) Pratyáhára: The fifth limb of the Ashtanga Yoga is Pratyáhára, the retreat or withdrawal especially of the senses from their objects. This sadhana aims at correcting the three temparaments: chittabhumis declared unsuitable for yogic meditation, viz., Klipta or wandering state swayed by passionate or rajasic minds; Mudha or confused, infatuated minds overcome by inertia and a prey to low tamasic emotions; Vikshipta mind momentarily sharp and intuitive but soon unsteady and distracted. This sadhana renders such minds gradually restrained and suitable for one-pointed, ekagrata meditation.

We notice here that while the Hindus emphasise the nature of the soul and tend to devaluate and neglect its faculties—since they consider means, buddhi and chitta as evolutes of Prakrit—and seek in their prayer methods to reach the state of amanibhava or mindlessness, the Buddhists on account of their doctrine of anatta (anátma) or soullessness came to focus on the mind for their meditation. Thus they came to develop their Jhána (dhyána) as a Satipatthana or "Way of Mindfulness,"[23] though at the final stage of enlightenment the mind also is done away with.

Christianity in dialogue with all the Asian religions stands to gain by garnering all that is good and useful for its growth in prayer, meditation and worship. It is already integrating the techniques of mindfulness or awareness. "In the Buddhist doctrine, mind is the starting point, the focal point, and also, as the liberated and purified mind of the Saint, the culminating point."[24] By mindfulness the Buddhist does not understand any "mystical" state; it means only "attention," "taking notice," turning towards." Right Mindfulness or Right Attention is called "sammá-sati," and it leads to one-pointed attention which the Ashtánga Yoga called Dhárana and the Buddhist calls Samádhi. "Bare attention is the clear single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us, at the successive moments of perception,"[25] and it leads to clear comprehension. The objects of this mindfulness are four: body, feeling, state of mind and mental contents. The contemplation of the body, Kayánupassana, begins with

mindfulness of breathing, anapanasati; then proceeds by way of mindfulness of bodily postures to clear comprehension: the contemplation of feeling, Vedanánupassana, and contemplation of the state of mind, cittánupassana, and then the contemplation of mental contents, dhammanupassana.

The Burmese Satipatthána method insists on the preliminaries, i.e., physical: padmásana, sukhásana; eating schedule of Theravada Buddhists; and mental attitude. Then it proposes touch consciousness, Káyavinnána, being deliberately conscious of each and every one of the movements of our body, mindfulness of breathing, ánápánasati, with attention to the regular rising and falling movement of the abdomen. Then comes the contemplation of the state of mind. "In that way, the disturbances of the meditative practice can be transformed into useful objects of the practice."[26]

Mindfulness And Respiration

Buddhist Vimuttimagga mentions sixteen way of training mindfulness by teaching attention and awareness of breathing in and breathing out. It includes experiencing the whole body ... experiencing joy through the object. I breathe in ... experiencing mental formations ... calming the mental formations. I breathe in ... experiencing the mind. I breathe in ... gladdening the mind. I breathe in ... concentrating the mind. I breathe in ... freeing the mind. I breathe in ... etc., etc.[27] Anthony de Mello has integrated these, as well as the Burmese Satipattána techniques, in his book *Sadhana, Way to God.*

Though apparently at variance with the process of Pratyáhara of the Ashtánga Yoga, these Buddhist techniques help us to appreciate the fact that when we withdraw the senses and the mind from their objects we are only sharpening and not deadening their awareness and thus we are proceeding to the next stage.

(6) Dharana is the sixth Anga of the Ashtánga Yoga. The Yoga Sutra (II.52.53) declares: "Through Pránáyáma the veil of darkness is rent and the mind becomes yogyata, capable of concentration, dharana."[28] "The point of departure of Yoga meditation is concentration on a single object ... whether this is a physical object, like, for example, the space between the eye-brows, the tip of the nose, something luminous, etc., or a thought, a metaphysical truth, or God makes no difference. This determined and continued concentration, called Ekagrata or a single point, is obtained by integrating the psycho-mental flux: sar-

vartha = variously directed, discontinuous, diffused attention. This is precisely the definition of yogic technique: Yogah chittavrtti nirodhah" (Y.S., I.2).[29] Again, "the practice of ekagrata tends to control the two generators of mental fluidity: sense activity, indriya, and the activity of the subconscious, samskara."[30] Some would say: "In these days of laxity in everything under the names of continuity and sublimation attempting to parade as spirituality, the yogic technique is a call back to the 'agere contra' technique ... to react against the 'secular' and finally 'human' inclination. The polarity between the sacred and the profane is universal." Others would play down this polarity and present the technique as continuity after all.

Some of the Manana methods used in Vedantic meditation are of the type of reasoning based on certain truths accepted on faith. For example, what is called the Anuvaya Vyatireka method proceeds as follows in its reasoning: Every object has five parts, viz., nama, name; rupa, form; asti, existence; bhati, knowledge; priya, bliss. Name and form are illusory. The rest asti-bhati-priya are only Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The Bhaga-Tyaga-Lakshana method proceeds in a somewhat similar manner. Taking the mahavakya Tatvamasi on faith, it notes that Tat stands for Isvara and Tvam stands for the Jiva. The common part in these two, the Lakshana, i.e., the essence of Isvara and the essence of the Jiva are contemplated in their identity. This is something of a computer method; you get the results according to the data you put into the machine.

What is called the Laya-Chintana method is made use of both in the Vedantic and Theistic traditions as well as in the esoteric Sakta, Tantra and Kundalini techniques. It involves the acceptance on faith of a whole structure of categories like that of the Samkya Tattvas and elaborating them, and then in meditation visualising the involution or the absorption of the lower Tattvas into higher ones till at last the Ultimate Reality alone is left as the residue. It resembles somewhat the method of St. Ignatius who asks us to contemplate how all the effects flow from One First Cause and return to One Final Cause which is identical with the First Cause. Laya means the involution of the effect into its cause, e.g., the external organs into manas, manas into buddhi, buddhi into Avyaktam or unmanifested First Principle, and Avyaktam into Brahman. Similarly the gross elements, bhutas, involve into the subtle elements, tanmatras, the latter into buddhi, and buddhi into Avyaktam, and this into Brahman. Similarly, the Saiva-Siddhantin takes for granted the structure of the 36 or 96 tattvas and proceeds in his medita-

tion of himself as Tattva-rupam. Then he tries to get Tattva-darsanam. Then by Tattva-suddhi he obtains the concept of himself as Atma-rupam, which he follows up with Atma-darsanam and Atma-suddhi. He obtains the understanding of himself as Siva-rupam. And now he tries to obtain Siva-darsanam. Then he proeeds to Siva-yogam; and finally he obtains Siva-bhogam or enjoyment in identification of Siva, his Lord and All. Both the Vedantins and Saiva-Siddhantins have recourse also in their Manana process to the neti-neti method like the Greek apophatic theology. Mano buddhi ahamkara chittani na aham: I am not mind, nor buddhi, nor ahamkara, nor chitta, nor any such faculty. After negating all superimpositions, what is left at the depth is Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is, I am That. The Saiva Siddhantin will add: "I am That by Its free merciful grace," for this Sivoham bhavana, though he further tries through Siva Yogam to obtain Siva Bhogam.

Techniques of Dharana

Besides these purely reasoning processes, we have various techiques of acquiring Ekagrata, one-pointedness:

(1) Parthiva Dharana or concentration on Earth element: to fix the mind on something concrete and solid, a picture, an idol, etc.

(2) Jaliya Dharana or concentration on the Water element, e.g., to gaze from the bank of a river on the waveless, silent, runing water.

(3) Agneya Dharana is concentration on Fire element, e.g., on a steadily burning wick of an oil lamp or candle, etc.

(4) Vayaveya Dharana is concentration on Air element, e.g., on the gentle breeze caressing the body, or the feeling of heat and cold, or by concentrating on the going in and coming out of the breath. The Buddhist technique of "Awareness of Breathing" may be included under this heading.

(5) Sabdika Dharana is concentration on Sound element: to try to be silently aware, while others are chanting litanies or softly singing bhajans; you will experience this if your constitution is tempered for it.

Mantra Technique

Here we may place the universal technique of using Mantra for one-pointed concentration and meditation. This seems to be related to the Sabdika Dharana mentioned above. Most of the Eastern techniques include the use of the Kriune syllable AUM. The Theistic religions of India have, besides, their own Mantra or Mantras. The Panchakshara or Five-syllable Mantra of the Saivites consists of many variations. The main Mantras are two: the Sthula Panchákskara, Namassivaya, which is given by the Guru to the beginners at initiation, and the Sukshma Panchákshara, Sivayanamah, given to mature souls. The Ashtákshara or Eight-syllabled Mantra of the Vaishnavites is Om Namo Narayanaya. Then there is the Six-syllabled Mantra of Subramania, and so forth. It is positively certain that when these Mantras are correctly related to breathing and postures, they induce the one-pointedness required for meditation, in addition to their cultic value. Therefore, the claim of uniqueness by each sect for its own mantra may be ignored here. The Jain Navakar Mantra as it is chanted in meditative prayer seems to have the purpose of Dharana: Om namo Arihantanam; Om namo Siddhanam; Om namo Ayariyanam; Om namo Uvvajjahayanam; Om namo Lóye Savva Sahunam.

The Tibetan Mantra "Aum Mani Padme Hum: Adoration to the Jewel in the Lotus, Amen,"[31] may be explained as the universal worship of the Cosmic Wheel. But it can serve the purpose of Dharana. In China the living Buddhist Amidisin or Pure Land School, Chin T'u Tsung, works for salvation by faith in Amitabha Buddha by repeating from 50,000 to 500,000 times a day the Mantra "Hail Amita Buddha," in Chinese: "Nan-wu, A-mi 'to Fo." In Japan, Nembutsu is the shortened form of Namu-Amida-Butsu, which in turn goes back to Sanskrit: Namo Amitá-bháya Buddháya. Some sects claim that a single pronouncement of Nembutsu is sufficient for salvation, and especially meritorious if repeated on behalf of others. Nembutsu is itself treated as the name of Amita Buddha, and it is affirmed that "the Buddha name and the Buddha essence are one and the same."

Now, the Jesus Prayer in West Syriac, we are told, is "Jesu a Misiho bre' dalaho Rahem alai hatoyo," and in East Syriac it is said as "Isho Mishiha Bredalaha Rahemalai hataya." These, and their Greek or Latin equivalents, perhaps could be synchronised with the rhythm of breathing of the meditator. But it is not so easy to synchronise with one's breathing the translation of this mantra into English or any of the modern languages. We should also remember that the Fathers of the

Philokalia, who spoke so much of the "prayer of the mind in the heart," warned us that "the prayer 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me' is an oral prayer like any other. There is nothing special about it in itself, but it receives all its power from the state of mind in which it is made."[32] And again: "The Jesus Prayer is not some talisman. Its power comes from the faith in the Lord and from a deep union of the mind and heart with Him."[33] "He who prays with the lips," says Dorotheus, the Russian ascetic, "but neglects his soul and does not guard his heart, prays to the air and not to God; and he labours in vain, because God attends to the mind and fervour and not to prolixity."[34] We could quote scores of stanzas from Hindu Bhakti poets and mystics, especially in Tamil, which gives the same corrective and warning. This agrees perfectly with the definition ofJapa given in the yoga Sutra: Tad Japah tad arthabhavana. We have to remember this when we evaluate not only the Mantra Yoga of the Kundalini Tradition,[35] or the Bija Mantra used in Transcendental Meditation, but even our advocation of litanies and rosaries.

However, the hypostatisation of Sabda, Sound, and of Vák, Word, forms the basis of Mantra Sadhana. "Verbum Supernum nec Patris linquens dexteram" is the Para Vák; "Prodiens, ad opus suum exiens" is the Pasyanti Vák; "Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia venit Sermo Tuus" is the Madhyama Vák, received as the ineffable anáhata sabda, to be expressed as best we can through our organs of speech as Vaikari Vák. It is the salvific Sakti of God which operates in all these ways. Some such Indian theologizing will give the basis of the Mantra sadhana of all these religions. Indian Mantra Sastra conceives Mantra as Power, Saki in the form of Sound, Sabda. There are a few Hindu Yogis who accept Christians, and even Christian priests, who go to them to learn the Yoga techniques, and help them to find their own Christian Mantra effective for their contemplation. One very holy Hindu scholar and ascetic composed for us the following mantra in Trishtub metre: Namah Sri Christa Devaya; Divya pavitriya rupine; Prasanna Prema rupaya; Santi rupaya Te namah!

Yantra Technique

A yantra is a diagram engraved or drawn on metal, paper or other material. In its most general use the word yantra is an instrument by which anything is accomplished. Here it stands for an instrument that helps concentration or worship. It is that by which the mind gets fixed on its object. Modern science has studied this technique and has invented its own modern yantras to help concentration, to strengthen memory, etc.

A mandala is a diagram or drawing in various colours, used also for helping the mind to get one-pointed attention.

A pratima is a picture or idol helping the mind to concentrate on its object. One can point out many yantras, mandalas and pratimas in Christian Churches.

Chakra Dharana

Internal Dharana in esoteric schools develops into various systems of internal chakras or plexuses and modes of concentrating on them.[36] We have mentioned how the seven chakras of the Kundalini Yoga serve as vital places in the layout of the Hindu temple according to the Agamas. While the vast elaborations about these chakras with the shapes, colours, petals of the lotuses and the Aksharas (letters) and bija mantras and the complicated techniques of concentrating on them may perhaps be controverted, there seems to be some undeniable psychosomatic basis for the consciousness these techniques develop. Modern science is busy with it.

The Chinese Taoist Yoga speaks of "gathering the microcosmic inner alchemical agent," of "plunging the spirit into the lower Tan T'ien cavity," of "the immortal breathing or the self-winding wheel of the law," and of "driving the Elixir of Immortality into the cauldron."[37]

Techniques of Meditation in Buddhism

Buddhism in India was not only a rationalistic revolt against the intuitive method of enquiry adopted by the Upanishadic sages. Theravada Buddhism develops Jhána (Dhyana) as a process of mindfulness by an intellectual logical enquiry. It divides Jhána into four types or stages and speaks of a Higher Jhána. It also analyses Samadhi and divides it into Ekavidha, Duvidha, Tividha, Chatubbidha and Pancavidha Samadhi, with elaborate subdivisions. But its Visuddhi Magga or Path of Purity, with its sila visuddhi, citta visuddhi, purity of views, purity of overcoming doubt, purity of knowledge and insight into right and wrong paths, etc., etc., makes a Christian believe that it will see God according to the Sermon on the Mount.[38]

The Buddhist Samadhi is defined as "citassa ekagrata," one-pointedness of mind, and this is the regular definition given in the

Nikayas.[39] That seems to correspond to the Dharanas of the Ashtanga Yoga. Tantric Buddhism has its Shadanga Yoga with six limbs, and changes both the order and content of these limbs. Its Dharana corresponds to that of the Ashtanga Yoga, and its Samadhi is the final and total absorption with the Mahasukha of the Sūnyata.

The two parts of Buddhistic Meditation, viz., (a) the Development of Tranquility (samatha—bhavana), and (b) the Development of Insight (Vipassana bhavana), act together in combination for the development of "Absorption," in which the mind is said to reach deep down into the subconscious sources of intuition.[40]

Chinese and Japanese Buddhist Techniques

China, when it received Buddhism, which had already developed into Mahāyāna in India, is said to have reacted against its extreme intellectualism and corrected and adapted it to its own national genius. Japan did the same in its turn when it received the Ch'an Buddhism from China. The Kung-an technique is peculiar to the Chinese genius. And the Japanese accepted it as their Koan technique. But we are told that when the five Ch'an sects of China found that there were situations and conditions when the Kung-an technique was not enough, they devised the hua t'ou technique. This hua t'ou technique "consists in closing all the six sense-organs so as not to allow them to be in contact with sense-data by concentration on the mind itself."[41] Is this not going back to the Indian Pratyahara of the Ashtanga Yoga?

The Koan, says D.T.Suzuki, is a kind of problem which is given by the master to his disciples to solve. "Problem" is not a good term, however, and I prefer the original Japanese Kō-an (Kung-an in Chinese). Ko literally means "public" and an is "a document." But "a public document" has nothing to do with Zen. The Zen "document" is the one each one of us brings along to this world at birth and tries to decipher before he passes away.

Nonsensical though all this (the Koans) may sound, it is only from our habit of conceptualisation that we miss facing the ultimate reality as it stands nakedly by itself. What is "nonsensical" indeed has a great deal of meaning and makes us penetrate the veil that exists as far as we stay on this side of relativity.

The disciple is told to concentrate on the meaningless sound "mu," regardless of whether it means "yes" or "no," or anything else. Just

"mu," "mu," "mu," leads to "Consciously Unconscious" or "Unconsciously conscious." "The truth," Zuzuki continues, "is that what involves the totality of human existence is not a matter of intellection but of the will in its most primary sense of the word. The will is more basic than the intellect because it is the principle that lies at the root of all existences and unites them all in the oneness of being.. The Mu is linked to the unconscious by working on the conative plane of consciousness."[42]

"According to the Chinese Buddhist terminology," says Lu K'uang Yu, " 'Ting' is an abbreviation of 'Ch'an ting' which means: Ch'an, the unstirred mind, and 'ting' its imperturbable condition which causes prajna or wisdom (Chinese 'hui') to manifest itself. In other words, one should practise dhyana (abstract meditation) in order to attain samadhi without which wisdom cannot appear."[43]

C. Nididhyasana: Dhyana

Of the three Vedantic steps, viz., Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana, the last is the highest mental stage of contemplation. It corresponds to the seventh and eighth limbs of the Ashtanga Yoga, viz., Dhyana and Samadhi.

This is how Pancadasi puts it:

Pancadasi I.53: The discovery of the true significance of the identity of the individual self and the Supreme with the aid of the mahávakyas is known as Sravana. To arrive at the possibility of its validity through logical reasoning is what is called Manana.

v.54: When by Sravana and Manana the mind develops a firm and undoubted conviction and dwells constantly on the thus - ascertained Self alone, it is unbroken meditation: Nididhyasana.

Now the Yoga Sutra III.29 says: dhyana pratyaya ekatánatá. Dhyana is unbroken knowledge of the object of meditation.

Pancadasi, again in I.55, says: When the mind leaves off ideas of meditator and the act of meditation and is merged in the sole object of meditation, i.e., the Self. it is called Samadhi or superconscious state. III.28 affirms: Though the Self cannot be made the object of Knowledge, the Self is still felt directly. So It must be self-revealing: Svayamprakasa. Satyam Jnanam anantam chétyastika brahma lakshanam. v.43: He who knows Brahman thus becomes

himself Brahman: Ya evam brahma vedaisha brahmaiva bhavati svayam.

This state is called Atmasákshátkara or Brahmasákshátkara and renders a man a Jivan-mukta. Aparokshanubhuti has attained its goal which its very name indicates, viz., non-indirect experience or direct transcendental experience. The goal of the Vedantic quest is Vidya. The aspirant approached the Acharya begging: "Give me Brahmavidya."[44] Kaivalya Upanishad I.2 declared that "the Vidyas are different kinds of meditation." Perhaps ultimately one of these several Vidyas may remain as the perennial state of Nididhyasana, Aparokshanubhuti and the Samadhi realisation of the Ashtanga Yoga, i.e., Dahara Vidya. This is the realisation of the actual presence and activity of God in the minutest of the minutest of all manifestations of the world. It practically corresponds to the Ignatian final contemplation of Love.

The Jain Cult Meditation

In Jainism, as in Buddhism, there is apparently no place for prayer. Yet the Navakar Mantra is solemnly chanted as a prayer of adoration: Om namo Arihantanam: Adoration to the destroyer of evil forces, etc. Jainism, rejecting the gods of Brahminism, substituted its categories in their place, viz., Jiva, Ajiva, Punya, Pápa; Asrava or channels through which Karma flows into the Jiva; Samvara or ways in which the flow of Karma can be impeded; Bandha or bondage; Nirjara or the burning up of Karma in the glow of austerities; Moksha or liberation. Though Jainism calls them its philosophical categories, they are accepted on faith. And the Jaina life includes temple worship with various pujas, viz., Jala puja, Chandana puja, Akshata puja (with dry fruits), Naivedya puja. In the evening the worship consists of Arati puja whan a five-fold lamp is solemnly waved in front of the idol.

The Sthánakavási Jains reject idol-worship and have no temple and pay more attention to meditation. This meditation, after the preliminary requisites of sila, is divided into three stages, viz., Apunarbandhaka, Samyagdrshti and Caritri.[45] They have also private worship using the rosary with 108 beads. They recite the Navakara Mantra, saluting Arihanta, Siddha, Acharya, Upadhyaya and Sadhu, and also Knowledge, Faith, Character and Austerity. The Siddha Chakra or Wheel of holiness is kept in every temple to remind the worshipper of the states he must pass to reach liberation.

This brief summary may raise the question on the justifiability of the title of Chapter XVI: "The Empty Heart of Jainism" in "*The Heart of Jainism*,"[46] which ends, however, with these words: "There is a strange mystery in Jainism; for though it acknowledges no personal God, knowing Him neither as Creator, Father or Friend, yet it will never allow itself to be called an atheistic system. Indeed there is no more deadly insult one could level at a Jain than to call him a nástika or atheist."

V. PRAYER IN BHAKTI TRADITION

"The doctrine of bhakti," says A. Grierson, "is the foundation of modern Vishnuite Hinduism and is professed by at least 150 million inhabitants of India...Several Saiva sects teach the doctrine of bhaki as directed to Siva."[47] A little later he says, "the use of the word bhakti as a religious technical term is comparatively late in Indian literature. This was to be expected, for faith requires a personal deity as its object, and for many centuries after the Vedic times all Indian religious literature was confined to one form of thought which was incompatible with the belief in the existence of such a God. This was the pantheistic Brahmanism of the earliest Upanishads and of the works based on them (Vedanta)."

This is what we hear from Western and westernized Indian orientalists. But it is neither true to the facts of Indian history nor true to human nature. We have pointed out that the Rig Veda contains rare stanzas expressing bhakti or intense experience of devotion to God. The pathetic outpourings of the repentant sinner begging pardon, mercy and reconciliation are addressed to the Supreme Deity Varuna, sometimes also to Agni and Indra who are identified with Varuna.[48] "The Rig Veda hymns," says a modern scholar, "constitute not only the profoundest expression of the feeling of devotion to a personal Deity, but the wealth of devotional mood and attitude here, as well as their literary expression, far outshine anything in the best examples of later devotional poetry. Not only did the Vedic poets approach their deities as friends, as sons, as servants, i.e., sakhya, vátsalya and dásya, as the later devotional schools would say, but they gave expression also to what has been considered as later development, the Madhura bhava, the approach in which God is the lover and the devotee the beloved."[49]

The great epics were told and retold for generations before they were committed to writing and the great puranas grew in the same way. The vast majority of the inhabitants of India lived by the theism they in-

culcated and the bhakti marga they pointed out. It is therefore in the great Epics and Puranas of India that we look for the source of spirituality of over 90% of the religious people of India.

The Ramayana

The Rama Nama is the panacea for all diseases and distresses of millions of Indians. When felled by an assassin's gun, Mahatma Gandhi breathed the Rama Nama to the last. The myths and symbols of India defy any intellectualisation. They go straight to the hearer's heart by a logical sharpness of their own. Thet saturate the Indian mind and create the Indian mentality which gives the speciality to Indian spirituality.[50] "Valmiki's epic gives a concrete picture of the mysterious link that connects man and the world with God the Creator...God is both transcendent and immanent. To love Him as transcendent alone would be an error, for the universe is the self-revelation of God...Nor are we to make the mistake of disregarding the transcendent and dropping into a pantheistic view of considering the visible universe alone as a complete manifestation of Reality. The Ramayana pays due respect to the physical, the vital, the mental, the moral and spiritual values of life ..." (Swami Sivananda). The Adhyatma Ramayana is good for the mystical interpretation of the characters and events of the Ramayana.

The Mahabharata

The message of the Mahabharata is the message of Truth and Righteousness. The four aspects of the Purushartha or human values, viz., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha were inculcated down the centuries by these two great Epics, as well as by the Puranas and other Ithihasas. The Bhagavata Purana built up the bhakti and cult around the figure of Sri Krishna.

> One who is capable of discriminative knowledge (viveka) must restrain his mind (Chitta vritti Nirodha) from all objects of senses and meditate upon the supreme Being who is identical with the self within, in order to obtain liberation. For that Supreme Spirit attracts to Itself him who meditates upon It and who is of the same nature, as the lodestone attracts iron. Contemplative devotion is the union with Brahman effected by that condition of mind which has attained perfection... (Vishnu Puranam).

Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita may be called the primitive encyclopaedia of the Indian spiritualities. To begin with, in Chapter I: The Lord begins with "Wise men do not sorrow for the living or the dead," and teaches the truth of the undying self, the duty of the practice of contemplation as well as of action.

Chapter III teaches the soul to act without attachment as God does. The only enemy to be feared: "Desire it is, Anger it is; arising from the constituent of passion, all devouring, mightily wicked; know that this is (your) enemy on earth."

Chapter IV affirms that to know God is to share in His mode of Being. "In whatever way devoted men approach Me, in that same way do I return their love ..." "A man must understand ... (the nature) of work; (the nature) of work ill done; and (the nature) of worklessness. The man who sees worklessness in work (itself) and work in worklessness, is wise among his fellows, integrated (yuktah), performing every work. A man of faith intent on wisdom, his senses restrained, wins wisdom (jnanam) and wisdom won, he will come high soon to perfect peace (santi)."

Chapter V teaches how to transcend works by purifying the self through Yoga. "His self detached from contacts with the outside world, in himself he finds joy. His self in Brahman integrated (Brahma yoga-yukt'atma) by spiritual exercises he finds unfailing joy."

Chapter VI further elaborates the same theme. It distinguishes the two selves in man, i.e., the spiritual self and the secular self. "Self's friend is self indeed, so too is self self's enemy .... Self is the friend to self of him whose self is by self subdued; but for the man bereft of a self, self will act as enemy indeed. The higher self of the self subdued, quietened, is rapt in ecstasy in cold as in heat, in pleasure as in pain, likewise in honour and disgrace," (echoing the principle and foundation of Ignatius). "To purify the self (atma visuddhaya), his mind controlled, his thoughts on Me integrated (yet) intent on Me ... That is the utmost joy which transcends (all things of) sense and which soul (alone) can grasp. When he knows this and knowing it stands still, moving not an inch from the reality (he sees), attains unbounded joy, Brahman's (saving) touch (sukhena brahma-samsparsam). With self integrated by spiritual exercises now he sees the self in all beings standing, all beings in the self; the same in everything he sees (sarvatra sama-darsanah)."

Chapter VIII teaches man to direct his thought to God at death; that beyond the Unmanifest there is another Unmanifest (masculine: Purusha).[51] That highest Person is to be won by love and worship. In Him do all things subsist; by Him this universe is spun (pervaded).

Chapter IX teaches how: "By Me Unmanifest in form, all this universe was spun; in Me subsist all beings, I do not subsist in them"; and teaches the reward of loving devotion: "Be it a leaf or flower or fruit or water that a devout soul may offer Me, with love's devotion that do I willingly accept, for it was love that made the offering. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice or give away in alms, whatever penance you may perform, offer it up to Me ... Whoever makes Me his haven, baseborn though he may be, women too and artisans, even serfs, theirs it is to tread the highest way." (There is no difference between Jew and Gentile). "On Me your mind, on Me your loving service, for Me your sacrifice, to Me your prostrations ... to Me you will (surely) come."

Chapter X teaches how God is the Origin of all ... "I am the Self established in the heart of all contingent beings. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all contingent beings too".

And the humble disciple prays in Chapter XI: "Even as You described (Your) self to be so must it be, O Lord, Most High; But fain would I see the form of You as Lord, O (all) highest Person: Drashtum ichami te rupam aishvaram, Purushothama." The Lord answers: "Not by the Vedas, or grim ascetic practices, not by giving of alms or sacrifices can I be seen in such a form as you did see Me. But by worship of love addressed to Me, no other, can I be known and seen in such a form and as I really am (so can my lovers) enter into Me. Do works for Me, make Me your highest goal, be loyal in love to Me, cut off all (other) attachments ... for all who do thus shall come to Me."

Chapter XII develops the exclusive devotion to the personal God. "Let a man feel hatred for no contingent being, let him be friendly and compassionate; let him be done with thoughts of "I" and "mine," the same in pleasure as in pain; content and ever integrated, his self restrained, his purpose firm, let his mind and soul be steeped in Me. Let him worship Me with love; then will I love him (in return)."

Chapter XIII teaches the real object of knowledge, and Chapter XIV ends with the clear affirmation that the personal God is the very

support of Brahman "which knows no change, (supporting) too the eternal law of righteousness and absolute beatitude."

Chapter XV speaks of the Cosmic Fig tree, the Asvatta, the figure of samsara, which has to be cut down to reach the One, so that "I make My dwelling in the hearts of all."

Chapter XVI teaches the cardinal virtues and deadly sins.

Chapter XVII teaches the mystic syllable OM,OM—tat-sat.

The last chapter teaches renunciation and self-surrender and then, summarizing all that has been said in the preceding seventeen chapters, culminates in the love of man for God and God's answering love for man.

The History of The Vaishnavite Bhakti

The Bhagavad Gita has placed bhakti in a position higher than the Vedic sacrifices and the Upanishadic Jnana Yoga Sadhana. It paved the way for systems of bhakti religions to multiply and fill the whole of the Indian subcontinent.. From the 6th century B.C. to the 4th century B.C. this bhakti developed round the Krishna cult that was developing through the Bhagavatas and the Bhagavata literature. Gradually identifying Krishna with Vasudeva and then with Narayana and Vishnu, it produced the immortal Bhagavad Gita.

The early Pancharatra literature of Vaishnavism and the Narayaneeyam took shape. Then on, up to 500, A.D., early Krishna Puranas, like the Harivamsa, Agni Purana on the one side, and on the other the Vishnu Purana and the Pancharatras, were developed, 108 in number. In Tamil Nadu the Vaishnavites always sung their heart's love for Krishna.

At the same time the Rama Cult also was spreading side by side. About 900 A.D. the Bhagavata Purana took final shape and the greatest Tamil Vaishnavite mystic poet Nammalwar sang out his theology and his devotion together. About 1000 A.D. appeared the Narada Bhakti Sutras as well as Sandilya's Bhakti Sutras. In the line of Narada's Bhakti Sutras came Sridhara about 1400 A.D., and the Bhagavata about 1600 A.D. In the line of Sandilya's Sutras came Madhva (1278 A.D.), Vishnuswami a little later, and Nimbarkar still

later. In the line of Madhva appeared Bhaktaratna Vali by Vishnu Puri, later on Ishvara Puri and the Madhvas of today. Under the influence of Ishvara Puri, Vishnu Swami and Nimbarka, the Chaitanya Movement (1533) started and is lived by the Chaitanyas of today. Vallabha and Surdas came in a similar tradition and are represented by the Vallabacaryas. In Maharashtra this tradition of Bhakti gave rise to a Jnanesvar (1299), Nama Dev, Banu Das Eknath, Tukaram (1649), and the other Maratha Bhaktas of today.

Independently, about 900 A.D. appeared the Radha-Krishna piety and Jayadeva's Gita Govinda. In this tradition came Chandi Das, Vidyapati, Umpati and Mirabhai. In the tradition of the Tamil Alvars came Nathamuni, the grandson of Nammalwar and Yamunacharya, alias Alavandar, and finally the great Ramanuja. His great movement too split into two great sects: the Vadakalai and Thenkalai.

The Vadakalai School of Sri Vaishnavas, founded by Venkata Vedanta Desikachary (1218-1319), gives more emphasis to"works" of man in his cooperation with God's grace in working out his salvation (the monkey theory). God enters the soul and the soul merges with God. Yet the soul retains its own separate existence. The Vadakalais also use the Tamil scriptures, but give slightly greater weight to Sanskrit books as foundation of doctrine. Thus they insist on following swadharma even after complete surrender, Saranagati, to God. God's grace must be earned and preserved. For them Radha is no mere soul created by God but is His eternal consort and Equal, inseparable from Him, One in Two and Two in One, Radha-Krishna, Sita-Rama, Gauri-Sankara: a Divine Bi-unity. Devotion and surrender are really the causes of God's grace and not, as the Thenkalais hold, its effects. But the Carama-sloka of the Bhagavad Gita (18:66) "Give up all things of law to Me, your only refuge, (for) I will deliver you from all evils; have no care" is the motto of all Vaishnavites. Prabatti is for all who can offer these to God; there is no distinction of caste or creed here. One who surrenders to Him through one Name surrenders to Him through every Name which is loved and honoured as the Lord. Mukti is a union with God which preserves the dual relationship of love.

The Thenkalai School, founded by Pillai Lokacharya (1264-1327), places the emphasis on the complete surrender of the soul to the all-powerful saving grace of God (the Cat theory). It loves to quote Kathopanishad (1.2.22): "Whom the Self chooses, by him It is attained." It gives greater value to Tamil scriptures than to the Vedas

and Upanishads. It puts on a low key the obligation for the surrendered one (prapanna) to cooperate with God's inspirations and goes sometimes to the length of saying that the Lord in His extreme sympathy takes even delight in the soul's frailities and defects. Finally, the Thenkalai teaches that Sri (Radha) is herself a soul created by the Lord, but that her grace is essential for liberation, because the Lord loves her and has raised her to that position.

The Rama Sect was vivified greatly by the appearance of the Adhyatma Ramayana (13th-14th century A.D.), giving the mystical, symbolical interpretation of the characters and events of the great epic. Ramananda was imbued with it, though he was influenced also by Pillai Lokacharya. From Ramananda through Tulsidas (1532-1623) and Nanaji who wrote the Bhaktamala come the Ramanander of today. From Ramananda also inspiration came to Kabir. From Kabir came three sects: the Dadu sect, the Kabir Panthis, and through Guru Nanak, the Sikhs.

This accounts for the spiritual life of a vast portion of the Indian population.

What is Bhakti?

The two classical text books on the subject are: Narada's Bhakti Sutras and Sandilya's Bhakti Sutras, mentioned above. Sandilya defines Parabhakti as anuraktir Isvare. Anurakti means affection, rakti is attachment of the heart. This affection fixed upon (anu) God alone is Parabhakti. It is exclusive of everything else except God. It is distinct from faith (sraddah), and from cult. It makes the bhakta take his secure refuge in the Lord alone. Bhakti may be born out of knowledge or may not, being directly infused by God. Bhakti does not produce learned wisdom about God. It gives one the capacity to taste things internally (sapere gustare res interne). Bhaki makes the bhakta praise God, serve Him alone to the forgetfulness of everything else.

Narada defines bhakti as "parama-prema-rupa," which is indeed sweet as amrta. "Sweet indeed and most high and intense love." It is ineffable: anirvacanya. You have to taste to know how sweet it is. It is purely spiritual love, pure and limpid and flowing incessantly. It is an existential experience, anubhava rupam. It calls for complete self-surrender to God. And when the beloved withdraws Himself, it is agony to the poor devout soul. And when He returns, it is all peace (santi) and ineffable bliss (paramananda). The soul must take care that familiarity

with the Lord does not lead to liberties or negligence. For bhakti can be obtained only through the pure mercy and generosity of the Lord.

There are eleven rungs in this ladder of bhakti along which the devout soul climbs to perfect union with the Lord.

(1) One contemplates the attributes of God.
(2) One's imagination is ravished by the beauty of God.
(3) One finds joy in worshipping and praising Him alone.
(4) One fixes one's memory unceasingly on God.
(5) One considers oneself as the bond slave of God.
(6) One begins to greet God as a Friend.
(7) One fondles God as a mother fondles her babe.
(8) One grows, blossoms, into a bride of God.
(9) One surrenders oneself unreservedly into His hands.
(10) One is absorbed into God.
(11) One's self being effaced, one lives by God alone.

"This is true bhakti which springs from no effort, and discernment of Spirit is the spontaneous longing of the soul for God. It has no motive, the heart seeks nothing, but the Beloved, prays for no temporal blessings, there is not even the prayer for salvation. All that the heart desires is His dear Self alone."[52]

"O Deus ego amo te; nec amo te ut salves me; aut quia non amantes te aeterno punis igne" (St. Francis Xavier).

Bhakti is divided into two levels: primary bhakti that is spontaneous and motiveless; secondary bhakti founded on a motive, following the law. The secondary bhakti in its turn is of three grades: Satviki: Pure and Enlightened; Rajasi: Impassioned and Egoistic; Tamasi: Darkened or Deluded bhakti. From Tamasi one climbs to Rajasi and finally to Satviki. To be a bhakta one must occasionally, if not always, be inclined Godward.

There is no distinction of caste or colour to be qualified for bhakti.[53] Great learning is not a *sine qua non* for obtaining bhakti. Bhakti is obtained by a pure and free gift of God. Yet we may obtain it by humble and ardent prayer to God (Kath.Up., Valli.2,Sloka 23).

Obstacles to the attainment of true bhakti are:

(1) Bad company, because it brings a train of all vices. (2) Lust. (3) Anger. (4) Greed. (5) Infatuation. "As the ignorant act from attachment to attachment so should the wise without attachment desiring the welfare of the world."[54] (6) Vanity which never bears the test of self-examination. "He is the ear of our ears, the mind of our minds, the speech of our speeches. He is the Soul of our souls and the eye of our eyes."[55] (7) Envy, a narrow heart fosters envy. Love is the best antidote to envy. (8) Desultoriness. (9) Worldly anxiety.[56] (10) Worldly craft, i.e, the vice of temporising with God. (11) Loquacity which brings in levity. It is to counteract this Yogis take a vow of silence.[57] (12) Disputatiousness. "How can you apprehend Him, save only by saying that He exists."[58] (13) Pharisaism is one of the chief obstacles; and (14) Moral Cowardice.

The aids to bhakti are: self-examination, good company, service of God, study of the Scriptures and Japa, Nama Japa and Sankirtans.

Japa Method of Prayer

We have mentioned the mantra technique of Dharana in the Ashtanga Yoga. The basis of that technique is the belief that creation proceeds from the Divine as Sound, Nada Brahman. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra I.28 says: Tad Japah tad artha-bhavanam: It is repetition of a mantra and understanding of its meaning, and being transformed into that meaning.

Japa is of three kinds:

(1) Vácika or Vaikari: the mantra is pronounced in a clear, distinct and loud manner, so that those around hear it clearly.

(2) Upámsu (Low): words are pronounced distinctly but in a low tone so that only the person repeating them hears them. Only the lips move.

(3) Manasa or Mental Japa: there is no movement of any of the vocal organs or the lips, but there is continuous meditation on the meaning of the Japa Mantra, syllable by syllable, word by word.

Nama Upasana is the chanting of the Names of God incessantly. Various Sahasranamas, or thousand Names of the God, of each sect are chanted as a litany. Islam speaks of ninety-nine Names of Allah.

Nama-Sadhana is the method of worshipping God through the chanting of His names. The power of the Name is ineffable. The efficacy and inherent Sakti of the Name is unfathomable. The Name and the Nami (the Possessor of the Name) are one and the same.

OM

"The Hindu contemplation of Saccidánanda comes to rest in the secret utterance of the pranava, OM, the sacred syllable which stands for the whole mystery of Being, the movement from fullness in fullness."

OM, Fullness here, fullness there;
From fullness fullness proceeds;
Take fullness from fullness
Fullness ever remains! (Isa Up.)

VI. PRAYER IN ISLAMIC TRADITION

Islam is said to be one of the prophetic religions. It is preeminently a bhakti religion in which prayer takes the lion's share. Of the five principles of Islam, the first is Imaan (Faith) and the second is Namaaz or Salát, prayer and worship.

Since Imaan is an internal fact, the Muslim believes Allah has fixed forever through his great Prophet this special way of worship and prayer, namely Namaaz, from which no one may ever swerve. Allah is believed to have given the rules of the Shariat, fixing forever the legal levels of obligation and freedom in the manner of observing the Shariat.

Some prayers are called Fard, i.e., compulsory; some are called Wajib or obligatory; others are Sunnat, i.e., the laws of the Shariat; others are Mustahab or allowable; others, however, are Haraan, forbidden; others again are MakroohTahreemi, i.e., hated with prevention; and others are Makrooh Tanzeehi, hated with probity; and, finally, some are called Mubah or legal. This legal structure of duties and worship is confessed to be unchangeable.

The Prescribed Method of Offering Namaaz. The Call from The Minaret: Adhan

The Muazzin: the caller (Arabic: Mu'adhdhin) calls Muslims to Allah. Standing facing the Qiblah, he says the Adhán: "Allah is the Greatest, etc, ... I bear witness that there is none worthy of being worshipped but Allah ... Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah. Come to Prayer." The Namaazis, offerers of Namaaz, turn their attention to

prayer.

To the Muslim Namaaz means five things which must be kept together: (1) To pray to God for oneself; (2) To honour Allah; (3) To burn in the fire of love of Allah; (4) Burning of the sins of the worshippers; (5) Correction of the bad habits of the worshippers. Namaaz is therefore more important than any other act of the Shariat.

There are five prayer worships daily:

(1) Morning Prayer: Namaaz-e-Fajar. In the light before dawn, i.e., before sunrise.

(2) Noon Prayer: Namaaz-e-Zohar. The time of this Namaaz is from the noon, when the sun is on the zenith till the shadow of anything becomes double its original size, i.e., Sayah-asli.

(3) Late Afternoon Prayer: Asar Namaaz. From the time when the shadow of anything is double its size till sunset. But note that to offer Namaaz-e-Asar when the sunlight becomes yellowish is makrooh (hated).

(4) Evening Prayer: Namaaz-e-Maghrib. Just after sunset, till the reddish light remains on the horizon but before the stars begin to appear. It is makrooh to delay this Namaaz till the stars begin to appear. It is mustahab to offer Maghrib immediately after sunset.

(5) Night Prayer: Namaaz-e-Ishaa. When the reddishness of the Western horizon (Shafaque-Ahmar) vanishes, the time for Namaaz Ishaa commences and remains till morning. But it becomes makrooh after midnight.

All such minutiae are studied by the Fiqah or learned people of Muslim jurisprudence. The late night is considered "Mash-hood," i.e., the time when the angels of blessing descend from the heaven with lights and blessings. Therefore the Namaaz offered at late night is called Namaaz-e-Vitar. It has been commanded that Namaaz-e-Vitar should be offered as a mass prayer (after Taraweeh Namaaz) during the month of Ramadan.

Friday Prayers: Jumoa Namaaz

The companions of the Prophet fixed Friday (the day the Prophet came to Medina from Mecca) as the most auspicious day for prayer and worship. They gave it the name Abrooh. It is the weekly I'D.

For conditions for the validity of Namaaz:

(1) The body must be pure.

(2) Purity of clothes.

(3) Purity of the place of Namaaz.
(4) Covering of Satar (private parts of the body).

Namaaz must be preceded by Wuzoo (wudú), Ablutions.

(1) The water must be clean.

(2) Be seated facing the Qiblah (i.e., Ka'bah in Mecca).

(3) Niyyat (intention) of performing Wuzoo. "O Allah, I hereby intend to perform for Thy sake 2 or 4, or etc., Rakats of Salát-i-Fajr, etc., etc., of this day while I turn my face towards Qiblah. Render it auspicious unto me and grant it a ready reception."

(4) Recite Bismillah (Tasmiyah): "Bism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim." "I begin in the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

(5) Wash both hands up to the wrist.

(6) Brush teeth.

(7) Gargle three times.

(8) Clean nostrils.

(9) Clean beard, forehead, ear to ear.

(10) Mash, i.e., brush hair with wet hands.

(11) Wash feet, ankles, i.e., khilal of the toes. (Avoid what makes Wuzoo mustahab or markrooh.)

(12) Recite Du'á-í-Wudu. "O Allah, make me among those who repent for their sins and make me among those who keep themselves pure in heart and body." When water is not available, there is a substitute ceremony called Tayammum.

Namaaz proper consists of the following items:

(1) Stand facing the Qiblah, with heart and attention turned towards Qiblah and repeat the Niyyat (intention).

(2) Takbir-e-Tahreema means to say: "Allaho-akbar: Allah is the Greatest," with attention to the greatness and majesty of Allah and conscious of one's own humility and helplessness. While uttering the Takbir, stand, the distance between the feet must be 2½ inches; raise both hands up to the ears; keep palm toward Qiblah, thumbs beside the ears, all fingers spread.

(3) Then fold both hands at navel in such a way that the palm of the right hand is placed on the back of the left hand. Hold the wrist with the thumb and the last finger. The remaining three fingers must be on the hand; the eyes fixed on the place of the Sijdah. With such folded hands, utter the praise for Allah, Sana: "O my Allah, Thou art holy. All praise is for Thyself and Thy name is blessed. Thy majes-

ty is very high and there is no Allah except Thou." After Sana say Aoozo: "I seek protection of Allah from the discarded shaitan." Then say the Bismillah (Tasmiyah): "Bism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim: I begin with the name of Allah Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

(4) Then recite the Sura-e-fateha with complete attention and understanding: "Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher, the Sustainer of the Worlds, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgement. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight way, the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy grace, those whose portion is not wrath and who go not astray. Amen."

(5) Immediately follow up this by reciting at least three small verses of the Holy Qur'án or any of the small Surahs.

(6) Then saying Takbir: Allaho Akbar, bow down for Ruku (inclination), saying: "Subhana-rabbiul-azeem: My Lord is pure and majestic." Place the palms of the hands on the knees, keep fingers spread, keep the back straight and hold the head in a straight line with the back. Keep arms away from the ribs (women hold arms touching ribs, etc.), the ankles erect and eyes tixed on the feet. In this posture say at least three times: Tasbih-i-Rukr: How glorious is my Lord, the Great."

(7) Now reverting to the standing position with both hands loosely on both sides, say Tasmí: "Allah has listened to him who has praised Him," and Tahmid: "O our Lord, praise be to Thee." This standing posture is called Qawmah.

(8) Sijdah (Sajdah): Then saying Takbir: Allaho Akbar, kneel down gently, knees, then hands on the ground, nose, then forehead on the ground. The hands in such position that the thumbs are with the earlobes, fingers kept together, pointing to the Qiblah, the arms held away from the body, the abdomen away from the thighs (for women, the arms near the body, abdomen on the thighs). Say at least three times in this posture Tasbin-i-Sujud: "All glory be to my Lord, the Highest of all."

(9) Jalsah: Then saying Takbir: Allaho-Akbar, get up raising forehead first, then nose, then hands from the ground and sit still for a while in a reverential posture, sitting on the left foot which is flat on the ground, the right foot bent erect with toes pointing to Qiblah as far as possible, hands on the thighs near the knees. This posture is called Jalsah.

(10) Then saying Takbir: Allaho Akbar, make the second sidjah exactly as the first. With these ten items one unit of Salát, i.e., Rak'at, is now complete.

(11) Then saying Takbir raise head, stand up as for the first

Rak'at. The second Rak'at has a few minor differences.

(12) Raising head from second Sijdah, do not stand up as at the end of the first Rak'at, but sit in Jalsah. This posture is called Qa'dah. Recite Tashahhud: "All reverence, all worship, all sanctity are due to Allah, etc."

(13) Something of a "mudra" is made.

(14) Recite Salawt.

(15) Then recite Du'a (Prayer).

(16) Salaam. Two units are over. Finish it with Taslim (final greeting): Turn face to the right, say Tuslim and then to the left and say Tuslim, i.e., Assalamo-alikum, etc.: "May safety and mercy of Allah descend upon you." Recite Du'a after Salaam.

Private Prayer

Prayer in Islam is not exhausted by the official Salaat or Namaaz. Indeed when the five-a-day Namaaz has been reduced to a once-weekly Friday, early-afternoon Namaaz and sermon, private prayer has developed among the devout Muslims, and the mystical tradition of Sufism has flourished.

A brief summary of the work *Islaam and the Muslim Prayer*[59] may be found useful. The central rite of Namaaz is alquirá'a, or a brief recital of the Qur'an. It is introduced by the Bismillah: In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. The constant naming of the Name is a great act of confidence but its use borders on the superstitious, as it is prescribed before eating, on entering the market place or the house, on putting the right foot on the threshold of the mosque, etc. Shi'a books sometimes use the form "Bismi' llahi' l-mu'izzi' l-muta'al. The Bismillah is used as a committal prayer on going to bed, as well as saining against evil forces of the night: twently times reciting Bismillah.

The Name of God as the Power of God is a universal Semitic belief. It is, along with esoteric meanings given to the letters of the alphabet, common also to Indian religious thought since the time of the Brahmanas. We have mentioned the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet appropriated to each petal of the lotus of various chakras in the Kundalini Yoga. "In the name of" in the New Testament (Col 3:17, etc.) means "in full accord with and surrender to God's character and purpose." It is natural therefore that it finds the central place in Islam, which literally means surrender.

The use of the 99 names of Moral Beauty attributed to Allah leads

the Muslim devotee to meditate on his Allah. "Allah has beautiful names or attributes; so invoke Him by them," enjoins the Qur'an (7:179). Maulana Abul Kalam Azad[60] analyses the special style of word formation in the Semitic group of languages and declares that Allah was used exclusively for the Creator of the Universe. Hence: Allah Al Hamdu Lilla: Praise is for Allah only. Rubúbiyat or Divine Providence comes out forcefully because Allah is the Lord of all being. Rahmat or Divine Benevolence comes next and the believer sings Al-Rahman Al-Rahim, The Benevolent, The Merciful. "And my Rahmat encompasseth everything in the universe" (Q.7:155), and fills the believer with confidence.

But Adalat or divine justice is not forgotten and Allah is called the Master of the Day of Judgement. But "Call upon Allah, or call upon the God of Mercy, Al Rahman; by whichsoever ye will invoke Him He hath most excellent and most beautiful names" (Q.17:110;59:23;7:180). Allah is One who gives divine guidance (Hidayat) to us.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad concludes his first volume saying that the Súrat-ul-Fatiha recited, understood and rerecited "depicts a type of mind which reflects the beauty and mercy of God or universal humanity, the mind which the Qu'ran aims to build."[61] And Al Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din continues to show[62] how the recitation of the names of Allah leads the believing devotee to the "worship of stillness," because it is also the worship of penitence, and the salaam which is exchanged at the close of the Namaaz is really the communication of that divine peace which the devotee has received.

Sufi Mystic Experience

This worship of stillness in Islam leads us to consider Islam's vast Sufi mystical tradition.

"Send me no more messengers ... You yourself teach me," cries St. John of the Cross' spouse to the Divine lover. Muslim mystic experience has recognized the presence of Khidr. In the Quran Khidr (Sura XVIII, vv 59-81) is a divine messenger revealing the mystic truth (haqiqua), the secret that transcends the Shari'a.

In the life of Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Arabi, commonly known as Ibn Arabi, we find experiences which challenge a Christian student of mystic experience. At the age of eight, he had a vision of beauty putting to flight diabolical figures. When he asked this beauty the

question "Who are you?" the answer was "I am the Súra Yasín" (i.e., 36th of the Quran). In 1198 A.D. (Al Hejira 595), at the death of the great Peripatetic of Cordova, Abu'l Wahid Ibn Rushd (known to the Scholastics as Averroes), Ibn Arabi encountered the theophanic figure of Sophia Aeterna. We see Ibn Arabi encountering Khidr, who sends him back to his master with whom he had had a little disagreement.

Then again the presence of the Inner Imaam in the mystics, and the theory of the "seven prophets of thy being," including the "Jesus of thy being" and the "Muhammad of thy being," are peculiar to Muslim mystic experience. The stages in the course of which the Sufi is initiated into the la'wál, the symbolic exegesis, interpreting the external rites of the Muslim prayer and worship in their mystic esoteric sense round off the corners of the Islamic Shariat.[63]

VII. CHRISTIAN PRAYER AND ASIAN MEDITATION

Winston L. King, in his book on Buddhism and Christianity, touches on this point of comparison. He points out initial contrasts: the initial meaning of Christian prayer is petition and thanksgiving. There seems to be logically no place for these in Buddhism. But he points out: "There is one other form of prayer that is not necessarily anti-personalistic, yet that strains at the boundaries of at least a narrowly conceived personalism, and that is adoration. Adoration is, in some sense, of course the heart of all worship: the rejoicing of the worshipper in the presence, goodness and love of God. Yet it may become a wordless regard of an intense order that reaches toward contemplation and the mystic vision and therefore is on the edge of something else than prayer."[64]

This observation may be also applied to Jain cult and meditation. In this paper we may pass over the vocal and mental Prayer (meditational Prayer) in Christianity, and briefly mention only a few points about Mystical Prayer.

Mystical Prayer starts with recollection which is fed by formal meditation and may be transformed, even without our being aware of it, into the Prayer of Simplicity. Then comes Prayer of Quiet. "The prayer seems to speak itself, as it were," says King, "almost without the pray-er's effort. A wordless breathing of love in the immediate presence of God."[65]

King gives the fourth stage of Christian prayer as the Prayer of Union and quotes Madame Guyon's words: "Union with God represents the ultimate mystical goal. That sense of separation between finite and infinite, subject and object, prayed-to and pray-er is overcome. In prayer of union there is no need of any words whatsoever. The prayer of union is not an act but the essential state in which the soul lives."

Poulain places "Ecstasy" as the third stage of the mystic union,[66] between the Prayer of Quiet and the Mystical Marriage (the fourth and the last stage of the mystical union). According to Poulain the first three stages are non-transforming mystical union, consummated union, deification.[67] St. Teresa of Avila will further distinguish this Prayer of Union as Mystical Espousal, i.e., non-permanent union, and Mystical Marriage or Permanent Union which is the last and innermost of the Interior Castle.

Buddhist Meditation

Omitting consideration of Buddhist prayer to the spirits, pagoda prayers and Buddhist common prayer before the Buddha image, we compare only the Buddhist Meditation with its Christian counterpart.

The method of Buddhist Meditation is threefold: the process of withdrawal or retreat, then the process of concentration, and thirdly, the Insight Meditation.

The goal of Buddhist Meditation, the supreme and ultimate goal, is the attainment of Nibbana. Meditation strives to achieve Nirvana in its presently experienceable form. In the highest level meditation achieves a knowledge-experience which is characterized by: (1) a comprehensive self-unity moved and determined completely from within; (2) an absolute equanimity and detachment; and (3) a universalised feeling-knowledge (of Totality) and a glorious liberty. Nirvana is bliss unspeakable, Mahasuksham.

Dealing with the Buddhist rejection of grace and faith, King remarks: "Nirvana is one in essence with pure consciousness; it is the transcendent consciousness purely aware, but without objects—transcendent of all that we know or can express. But by the same token of its utter inexpressibility it is also utterly real according to all varieties of Buddhism. And because it is utterly real it is supremely full of grace ... and it can 'save' man. In fact, it saves man by thus existing. It is a 'gift

of grace' for there might have been a world without Nirvana, hence a world without the hope of salvation. But there it is absolute transcendence, complete reality, unutterable Grace."[68]

If this is said of Theravada Buddhism, what about Mahayana Buddhism, Amida Buddhism and Zen Buddhism?

The goal of the Japanese and Chinese Buddhists was the "Great Awakening," in Japanese called Satori and in Chinese Wu. It consists of the "Great Death," called in Chinese ta-ssu and in Japanese taishi, which is at one with the "Great Birth" or "Great Awakening," called in Chinese ta-wu and in Japanese daigo or taigo. It is indeed a radical cataclysmic turning by, of and at the root core of the ego, and the apprehending of the formless-form of the Self-Ego: Wu-hsiang and in Japanese Muso. It is realised Ec-stasis of the Ego. To attain this goal, the Masters demand the practice of the cardinal virtues: (1) Dana (charity), (2) Sila (precepts), (3) Kshanti (humility), (4) Virya (energy), (5) Dhyana (meditation), and (6) Prajna (wisdom).

Zen meditation is said to proceed to the ultimate realisation by five steps or stages. The "Go-i" are these five steps of Zen Buddhism; go means five, and 'i' means situation or a rung or step. "The first three are noetic,"says Daisetz T. Zuzuki, "and the last two are affective or conative. The middle one, the third step is the transition point at which the noetic begins to be conative and knowledge turns into life. Here the noetic comprehension of the Zen life becomes dynamic."[69]

For this purpose, alongside the Koan and Zasen, in the Lin-chi or Rinzai school, especially in Japan, there are what are known in Japanese as Sesshin and Sauzen. Sesshin (in Chinese; she-hsin, sometimes, chieh-hsin) means concentralisation of the heart-mind or "heart-mind concentralisation." We may remember the monks of Mount Athos speaking of prayer with the mind in the heart. Zazen (Chinese: ts'an-ch'an) means "to pursure the Zen-quest."

"A Zen monk once said to me," reports H.M.Enomiya-Lassalle, 'just the practice of Za-zen will help you to get a thorough understanding of your Catholicism.' I thought his words strange. I could not imagine, after all my philosophical and theological studies, not to mention the long years I had spent in the practice of the priestly life, what Zen could add to my understanding of Catholicism. And yet, now, I must confess that the monk was right. The method of Za-zen did help me, and it can help one to add a new dimension to his knowledge of his

religion."[70]

Father Lassalle's fellow Jesuit, Kakichi Kadowaki, gives us a report of his attempts at Ignatian sesshin. "An old teacher of mine was a devotee of Zen. Under his direction some of us students went to a temple and took park in Zen training for several days. After this I retained a strong respect for Zen which remained with me when I became a Catholic. No doubt it was partly this which gave birth to my feeling that somehow Zen would tie up with, and help Catholic faith".

Kadowaki continues: "From the very time of my entry into the Society of Jesus I had felt that the Zen methodology might be of value in driving the roots of Ignatian spirituality into the very depths of my being ... Gradually as my Zen experience deepened, my former faint hope grew into an unshakeable conviction." Thus he recounts how he prepared to give an Ignatian sesshin to a well-chosen group of fifteen religious in 1973. The preliminary exercises in the Zen posture were to hold the back straight. "I had to prepare myself for such a retreat, both practically and theoretically ... So I spent each day two periods in Zazen, experimenting concretely as to how the Exercises of St.Ignatius could be put into practice and experienced in a Zen way. Then I took part in three sesshin at Buddhist temples ... As I read the works of the Zen Master Dogen, I learned that in many ways I could use in a practical way the so-called 'Mumen Muso' (i.e., complete absence of thoughts and concepts) which is central to Zen. I discovered that the way of thinking described by this typical Zen phrase by no means foreign to Christian contemplation".

He applies the words of Dogen, viz., "Every word of the Scriptures is the body and heart of Buddha," and emphasises how we must read assiduously the Scriptures with conviction, avoiding abstract and conceptual study. The use of imagination and reasoning is only the starting point. Our prayer must soon become nothing but a looking into the self that is living the life of God.

A study of Zen and Meister Eckhart makes it evident that the process of asceticism in both cases is remarkably similar:

(1) The common principle: do not look outside, but return to your inmost self.

(2) A radical abandonment of the small self. Eckhart and the Zen Masters are at one in demanding a "great death."

(3) Abandonment of thoughts and ideas and images so that we become "naked"and "empty."

(4) A going beyond subject and object to an experience of unity.

(5) Both mystical experiences have a cognitional character.

(6) Both lead to an enlightenment which penetrates one's practical life and motivates one's daily activity. In Ignatian terminology this is seeking the actual "seeking God in all things."

Here Kadowaki affirms: "It is true, of course, that in the experience of 'Mu' or "nothingness" ordinary spiritual and intellectual activity ceases. But in its place a high, supraconceptual, cognitional activity comes to life. Furthermore, since this "nothingness," also called 'mindlessness' (in India called amnibhava) means that we accept the other just as he is without prejudice and without attachment, it includes a capacity for inter-personal communication at a deep level. In other words we can see that the experience of so-called 'nothingness' is eminently personal." (In India we speak of a deeper trans-advaitic experience.)

Kadowaki gives a most interesting account of the time schedule of the various meditations, the vegetarian diet, the "dokusan" or private interview with the director.. The Ignatian sesshin lasted for exactly seven days with seven or eight hours of meditation each day, in addition to the liturgical services and the Divine Office. "On the night before we began ... the retreatant was asked to offer himself totally to the Lord ... The Ignatian way of life formulated in the words 'to seek only the glory of God in all things.' It is not something to be grasped in a cerebral way through intellectual activity. Rather it is something to be lived, with one's whole body and soul—with one's whole person....rational explanations are not only superfluous—they are positively useless and a waste of time. What such people need is to deepen the Christian commitment they have already made."

Hence the method of offering one's body to God: "sitting absolutely erect in the correct posture, one regulates the breathing and directs both body and soul to the glory of God alone, in the Zazen manner. The Koan "Shu" is substituted in the place of the Zen "Mu" for Christian usage. If a person without thinking intellectually about God at all recites with each breath the word shu in total emptiness, keeping his back taut and stretching his body up towards God, then indeed does the Christian spirit penetrate his whole being from the pit of his stomach to the crown of his head.... Then the whole body begins to face the Lord God ... Thus the meditator faces God with the totality of his being, and his very sitting is nothing other than an existential living out of the principle and foundation and the Ignatian indifference

towards all created things."

In this manner Kadowaki goes through the whole of the Ignatian Exercises in a Zen manner. Experiencing Christ's Kenosis as making Himself "Mu" and the Resurrection as "Shuuuuuu," or the "Great Rebirth," the retreatant has deep experience of communal prayer and of community life in Christ.

Kadowaki concludes saying: "If you come to practise this method of prayer in a radical way, even when not thinking about God with your head you can live in His presence. This is because when you adopt the correct posture and regulate your breathing, your heart is naturally placed in the presence of God. Or, to put it in other words, the presence of God pervades your mind and heart and body."[71]

Indian Meditation

Under the heading "Prayer in Jnana Marga" we briefly exposed the Vedantic process towards Aparokshanubhuti or Brahmasákshátkára. Along with its process of Manana we gave the limbs of the Indian Ashtanga Yoga. It included techniques of psychological house-cleaning, activisation of the centres of consciousness, mechanical and logical concentration and the practice of mantra and japa techniques to attain one-pointed attention called Dharana, which when it continues is called Dhyana, the seventh limb of Ashtanga Yoga. The classical text book of Indian Yoga, the Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, however, begins with the Samádhi Páda and only then proceeds to expose the Sádhana Páda, Vibhuti Páda and Kaivalya Páda. The goal of Yoga (literally meaning "union") is Samádhi. Yoga Sutra I.19 acknowledges that there are persons (called Videhas and Prakrtilayas) who by nature and temperament are such that they can enter into the stage of Samádhi without any effort or self discipline. Yoga Sutra II.19 also deals with this type. Yoga Sutra I.23 declares that the attainment of Samadhi is possible by a simple surrender of oneself to the will of Isvara. What is Isvara Pranidhana and how it leads to Samadhi are explained in Yoga Sutra II.32,45. The theistic religions of India in their Bhakti Marga have made use of this method of attaining the union with God which they desired. The Vaishnavite Saranágati and the Saivite Adaikalam have been mentioned under the Bhakti tradition.

Those who follow the seven limbs of Ashtanga Yoga attain the

eighth step, Samadhi, which itself consists of several levels: first, two big levels of Sabija Samadhi and Nirbija Samadhi. In Sabija Samadhi, the vrttis of the mind are removed by replacing them with one "seed" (bija) of truth. A thorn is made use of to remove many other thorns, as Anthony de Mello puts it.

On the level of Manomaya Kosa (which the Theosophists call lower mental body) are experienced the Samprajnata Savitarka and Samprajnata Nirvitarka Samadhis, as well as Asamprajnata Samadhi. This is accompanied by reasoning reflection, bliss and a sense of pure being (according to Y.S. I—17). On the level of Vijnanamaya Kosa (called causal body by the Theosophists) are experienced the Samprajnata Savicára and Samprajnata Nirvicára Samadhis, as well as Asamprajnata Samadhi.

On the level of the Anandamaya Kosa (called Buddhic Vehicle by the Theosophists) is experienced the stage of Samprajnata Sánanda, as well as Asamprajnata Samadhi. And in the Atma (called the Atmic Vehicle by the Theosophists) is experienced the Samprajnata Sasmita Samadhi. The consciousness of pure existence which is denoted by Asmita swallows up the consciousness of objects.

Then comes the stage of Nirbija Samadhi. The thorn which pushed out all other thorns is itself pushed out, and not a seed of the truth but the whole Truth shines in its Self-illuminating Svayamprakasa. The last stage is called Dharma-Mega-Samadhi. This stage of existence seems to be the intent and purpose of Zen Meditation with its Koan techniques, whether it is the simple Koan "Mu" or other types of Koans.

An old Zen Master sings:

> Do not think
> The moon appears when the clouds are gone,
> All the time it has been there in the sky
> So perfectly clear.

The problem is not the problems of the ego, either for Indian Yoga or for Zen Meditation. The ego itself is the problem. When it is wiped away, Truth shines in its Svayamprakasa.[72] And this is expressed by the ecstatic cry of the Zen practitioner:

> Am totally at peace at peace ...
> I've totally disappeared. Buddha is![73]

This seems to be the summit and converging point of the Indian Yogic Samadhi, the Buddhist Nirvana, and Zen Satori: called "The Great Awakening."

Islamic Experience

The blinding light of "the Great Awakening" in Samadhi or Nirvana or Satori seems to stun the mystic when he returns to the market place to report his experience in the form of an abstract Unity. But the Sufi Jalaluddin Rumi will put a tongue to this light and make it address Mary, as spoke the Archangel:

> O Maryam! Look well ...
> I am like the true dawn, I am the Light of Your Lord.[74]

And the words of Sahl Tustari, quoted by Ibn Arabi, are as follows:

> The Divine suzerainty has a secret, and it is Thou—and this is the being to whom one speaks and if (this Thou) should disappear the suzerainty ceases to be.[75]

The apparent monism of Ibn Arabi rises to a dialogue, in the final canto of the Book of Theophanies:

> Listen, O dearly beloved!
> I am the reality of the world, the centre of the circumference.
> I am the parts and the whole.
> I have created perception in you only in order to be the object of my perception.
> If then you perceive me, you perceive yourself.
> But you cannot perceive me through yourself.
> It is through my eyes that see me and see yourself.
> Through your eyes you cannot see me.[76]

Ibn Arabi continues:

> Love me, love me alone,
> Love yourself in me alone.
> Attach yourself to me,
> No one is more inward than I.

Has any Christian mystic heard anything different from the Voice Divine?

This path of love leads Ibn Arabi to a stage which in the terminology

of Indian Jainism may be called Samyagdrsti:

> O marvel! a garden among flames ...
> My heart has become capable of all forms.
> It is a meadow for gazelles and a monastery for Christian monks,
> A temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'aba,
> The Table of the Law and the Book of the Koran.
> I profess the religion of love and whatever direction
> Its steed may take, Love is my religion and my faith.[77]

Is this religious indifferentism?

VIII. UNITAS AND UNIO

The "image of God in the depths of the human heart has been given in India the name of Saccidananda," says Abhishiktananda.[78] Being—Sat is self-luminous pure consciousness; Cit. It is an eternal generation of self-knowledge. The Son is the Knowledge of the Father. In this Logos Incarnate the world has been created. Hence the universe and world history is a Christophany. And as Abhishiktananda puts it, "By virtue of being a Christophany, and for no other reason, the world and all that it contains is a Theophany, a manifestation of God."[79] And "Ananada is the ultimate truth of Being, its inmost essence and complete revelation."[80] "It is bliss to arrive at the final secret of the self, at the very point where man returns again to his source and there discovers his own ultimate truth... When I awoke to the Real in the depth of my self-wareness all limits, all death, time itself are forever transcended."[81]

> He gazed at the image
> in himself;
> but the image vanished
> in the Self;
> nothing remained of my gazing
> only that which was gazed at ...

Is this a pure abstract Unitas?

Saiva Siddhanta reaches to a trans-advaitic experience in and through the experience of this Unitas to a further experience of an ineffable "Unio." The eighth of its dasa Karya meditation is Siva Darsanam. The ninth is Siva Yogam and the tenth is Siva Bhogam. Beyond the Vedantic Turiya state, Saiva Siddhanta reaches to

Turiyatita state to enjoy this Siva Bhogam.

This is how Thá́yumá́ńaver the Tamil mystic recounts this experience in his Ánandá-k-kalippu:

> The Light which is the beginning and without beginning
> Which shineth in me as Bliss, as Intelligence
> Appeared to me as the Silent One
> And spake, sister, words not to be spoken.

The rhythm of the melody is given in the following chorus:

> Sankara Sankara Sambhu, Siva
> Sankara Sankara Sankara Sambhu.
> Away with other clingings, cling to me within, He said,
> What I got as I clung to Him, how can I tell? He
> Spake things that should never be spoken, dear.
> To those who love Him, He is love. He is true, is my Lord.
> The blissful, silent One, the gracious Master. He placed
> On my head His foot. I knew myself. I died to thought.
> By grace behold all things, He said. Not understanding by my
> Intelligence, I beheld differentiating. I saw but darkness.
> I saw not even me, the seer. What is this, sister?

This seems after all the monistic experience.

> "Of me and thee think not in thy heart as two.
> Stand undifferentiating." This one word when He uttered,
> The bliss that straightway grew from the word,
> How can I tell, my dear?
> There thought was born, there thought died and became pure.
> All states are there. There, too, I the seer stand non-dual.[82]

This is the transadvaitic mystic experience of Saiva Siddhanta and of all true mystic experience everywhere in the world.

IX. CONCLUSION

William Johnston, in *Silent Music*, quotes Alfred North Whitehead: "The decay of Christianity and Buddhism as determinative influences in modern thought is partly due to the fact that each religion has unduly sheltered itself from the other. The self-suffi-

cient pedantry of learning and the confidence of ignorant zealots have combined to shut up each religion in its own forms of thought. Instead of looking at each other for deeper meanings, they have remained self-satisfied and unfertilized. Both have suffered from the rise of the third tradition, which is science, because neither of them had retained the requisite flexibility of adaptation." Johnston, however, adds: "A good deal has happened since Whitehead penned these lines; and in the course of this book I have tried to say that Christianity and Buddhism are at last beginning to talk, to dialogue, to help one another: a process of cross-fertilization has now begun."[83]

This assessment of Johnston may be confirmed by the official words of the Holy See's Secretariatus Pro Non-Christianis:

> This Guide has been able to provide only an introduction and to invite Christians of good will to begin a mutually fruitful dialogue with a Buddhism that is more respected now that it is better known. It has introduced us to men as conscious as ourselves of the sorrow and misery of their condition and conscious too of the bonds and fetters which seem to paralyse their efforts. But when they have seen the Law shining like a light on a darkened path, they have followed it generously and joyfully, successfully freeing themselves from their chains and advancing along paths which seem to follow and merge more and more with our own. Surely we must gain from the meetings to discuss our shared ideal and the object of our quest.
>
> The Law of Christ teaches us that these noble and generous men are our brothers, that they too are created by God, that they are destined to the same end—eternal light and peace. Let us look at them with brotherly love in our eyes to appreciate and admire their heritage, one of the greatest ideals that man has ever conceived and which sometimes seems to have an intuition of God's plan revealed in the Church. Like them we seek liberation, for by accepting the Church's message we have met Him Who is the Way and the Truth (John 14:6) and it is the Truth which sets us free (John 8:32), the truth which for them is true wisdom.
>
> Progressing in this Way, in the light of Him Who enlightens every man coming into the world (John 1:9) we cannot fail to understand and draw near to each other by degrees.[84]

The same may be said about our meetings with our brothers following the Islamic Tradition and with our brothers in India following the

various Hindu Traditions.

William Johnston in his book *Christian Zen* says:

> I confess that I would hate to go on record as stating that Zen is found in Christianity in exactly the same form as in Buddhism ... What I can safely say, is that there is a Christian *Samadhi* that has always occupied an honoured place in the spirituality of the West ... The author of The Cloud of Unknowing describes it beautifully as "the blind stirring of love" ... and again as "the naked intent of the will." Other authors speak of it as the silentium mysticum ... John of the Cross calls it "the living flame of love" referring to the dynamic nature of this samadhi ... and as the dark night ... In the technique of introducing people to samadhi, the Western tradition differed considerably from Zen ... It is the work of the great religious orders—Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits and so on—to rediscover the mystical tradition they have lost and enrich it with the spiritual insights that the East has to offer. ... Terminology about acquired and infused contemplation, about ordinary and extraordinary prayer, about gratia gratis data and gratia gratum faciens—all these complications can quietly and conveniently be dropped ... In my opinion we could even dispense with the word contemplation and put its place *Christian Samadhi.*[85]

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Footnotes

1 Alfonso M. Dinola, *The Prayer of Man*, Introduction.

2 Cf. *Brhad Devadas*.

3 R.V. I.89.2. Cf. also A.C. Bose, *The Call of the Vedas*.

4 Abinash Chandra Bose, *Hymns of the Vedas*, p.249.

5 R. Panikkar, *Mantramanjari*, p.36. Also cf.,v.g., R.V. VII.66.16; I.89.9: X.186.1; I.71.10; I.114.7.

6 F. Edgerton, *The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy*, pp.23-24.

7 Cf. quotation, given in A.C. Bose, "The Path of Kowledge," *The Call of the Vedas*, p.105 ff.

8 Cf. R.V. X.32.7.

9 Cf. *Aparokshánubhuti*, 20 ff.

10 Swami Sivananda, *Sadhana*, p.362.

11 Cf. pictures in *Zen; Way to Enlightenment*, by H.M. Enomiya-Lassalle (Burns Oates, 1967), pp.103-109.

12 *Yoga in Ten Lessons*, p.27, figures 3,4,2,

13 *Christian Yoga*, II, ch.II.

14 What Dechanet calls the "Perfect Posture" may be seen in B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on Yoga*, pp.89-92, Plate 84.

15 *Sadhana, A Way to God*, pp.19-20.

16 Cf. Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk), *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation* (London: Rider & Co., 1969), p.168.

17 Cf. *Early Fathers From the Philokalia* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd).

18 Some of the Agamas exaggerate the importance of pránayama, saying the prayer or puja is useless without pranayama.

19 Cf. *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology*, "Introduction," pp.35-36; and "Theophan the Recluse," 103ff.

20 Cf. H.M.Enomia-Lassalle, *Zen: Way to Enlightenment*.

21 Dechanet, *op. cit.*, pp.110-114.

22 Cf. Luk, *op. cit.*, p.172 ff.

23 Sanskrit: Smrti-Upasthana.

24 Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (London, Rider & Co., 1962), p.21.

25 *Ibid.*, p.30.

26 *Ibid.*, p.98.

27 *The Path of Freedom: Vimutimagga,* by the Aekant Upatissa who was called the Great Light in Ryo, trans. by Tipitika Sanghapala of Funan, ch.5,p.156. Cf. also V.F.Gunaratna, *Satipatthana Sutta and its Application to Modern Life,* and Soma Thera, *Vitakka-Santhana-Sutta, The Removal of Distracting Thoughts,* (Both published by the Wheel Publications, Nos.60 and 21).

28 Dharana from the root *dhr*: to hold fast, is in fact an ekagrata, a "fixing on a simgle point."

29 Mercia Eliade, *Yoga Techniques of Autonomy,* p.47.

30 *Ibid.*, p.48.

31 The Tibetans are said to pronounce it: *"Om mani peme hum";* and the Mongols occasionally pronounce the third word as *padme.* Cf. William Simpson, *The Buddhist Praying-Wheel,* p.265.

32 Theophan the Recluse. Cf. *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology,* pp.97-98; Also *Early Fathers from the Philokalia* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd., 1969).

33 *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology,* p.99.

34 Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, *On the Prayer of Jesus* (London, John M. Watkins, 1965), p.55.

35 Cf. Sir John Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power and Garland of Letters,* etc.

36 C.W.Leadbeater, *Chakras* (Madras, The Theosophical Publ., 1973); Sir John Woodroffe and Kundalini Yoga, *Introduction to Tantra Sastra* (Madras, Ganesh & Co.); M.P. Pandit, *A Brief Study of Sir John Woodroffe's The Serpent Power* (Madras, Ganesh & Co.).

37 Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk), *Taoist Yoga, Alchemy and Immortality,* with charts and figures.

38 Paravahera Vajirañána Mahathera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice* (Gunasena & Co, 1962).

39 *Ibid.*, p.43.

40 Cf. Nyanaponika Thera, *op. cit.*, p.102 ff.

41 Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk). *Ch'an and Zen Teaching, Second Series,* p.2.

42 E.Fromm, D.T.Zuzuki, R. de Martino, *Zen: Buddhism and Psychoanalysis.*

43 Cf. Lu K'uang Yu (Charles Luk), *Ch'an and Zen Teaching, Third Series* (London, Rider & Co., 1962), p.44, footnote 1.

44 The Vidyas are innumerable. V.S Agrawala in his *The Thousand Syllabled Speech,* vol. 1, p.ii, lists some 132 Vedic Vidyas. Thrity-two of these Vidyas have been described at some length by K. Narayanaswami Aiyar, *The Thirty-two Vidyas* (Madras, Adyar Theosophical Society, 1975).

45 Acarya Haribadrasuri, *Yogabindu* (Ahmedabad, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Bharatiya Sanskriti Vidyamandira, 1968).

46 Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism* (New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, Indian Edn., 1970), p.298.

47 A. Grierson, "Bhakti-Marga," *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,* ed. by James Hastings.

48 R.V. VII.26.86.87.88.89.

49 Dr.V.Raghavan, *The Indian Heritage,* p.xxxi, speaking, of course, of Sanskrit literature.

50 Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization,* ed. Joseph Campbell, (Bollingen Series VI), p.40.

51 Sic Zaehner, basing on Katha Up. 6:7-8; Brh. Up. 3:42n.

52 Aswin Kumar Datta, *Bhakti Yoga,* p.18.

53 Sandilya's Bhakti Sutra II.78; cf. Ramayana: Rama partakes of the fruits already tasted by Shabri, the Chandala girl, Aranyakanda, ch.74.

54 Bhagavad Gita III.25.

55 Kenopanishad I.2.

56 St. Matthew's Gospel 6: 25-34.

57 Cf. Swami Sivananda: Mowna Sadhana.

58 Kathopanishad II.12.

59 Al-Hajj Kwaaja Kamal-ud-din, *Islaam and the Muslim Prayer* (Woking, Surrey, The Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust Regtd; Bombay, Maktaba Jamia Ltd.).

60 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *The Tarjuman-al-Quran,* vol.I, *Surat-ul-Fatiha.*

61 *Ibid.,* p.194.

62 *Islaam and the Muslim Prayer, op. cit,* Ch.8, 9, 12, a, b, c , Cf. also Abdul Hai Hakim Sulaiman Kafletvi, *Guide to Namaaz* (Bombay, Falah Publications, 1974); Maulana Sadruddin Amir Ansari, *Salat, Daily Prayer of Muslim* (New Delhi, Idarah Bah-ul-Uloom), *Munajade Makbool* (Tamil), 1973.

63 I. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam;* Also Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi, Bollingen Series, XCI,* (Princeton).

64 *Some Bridges of Understanding* (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963), p.138.

65 Compare it with Poulain's definition of the Prayer of Quiet as the mystical union when the divine action is not strong enough to hinder distractions: or briefly when the imagination still preserves its liberty. P.Poulain, *The Graces of Interior Prayer,* ch.III and ch.XVI.

66 *Ibid.,* ch.XVIII.

67 *Ibid.,* ch.XIX.

68 King, *op.cit.*, pp.226-227.

69 *Lectures on Zen Buddhism.* Cf. also *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), pp.1-76.

70 *Zen Way to Enlightenment* (London, Burns & Oates, 1967), p.82.

71 All quotations are taken from an unpublished manuscript of Father Kakichi Kadowaki, S.J.

72 Zenkei Shibayama, *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* (New American Library, 1975). The Mumonkan is a 13th-century collection of the sayings and doings of Zen Masters.

73 Philip Kaplan, *Three Pillars of Zen* (Tokyo, John Weatherhill, 1965), p.207, as quoted by Douglas M.Burns. *Nirvana, Nihilism and Satori* (The Wheel Publ.), pp.117-119.

74 *Bollingen Series XCI* (Princeton), p.171.

75 *Ibid.*, p.121; and note 40.

76 Compare Bhagavad Gita ch.XI, vv.3 & 8, and the Tamil Nayanmars and Alwars.

77 *Bollingen Series, ibid.*, p.135.

78 *Saccidananda, A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience* (I.S.P.C.K.), p.167.

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80 *Ibid.*, p.171.

81 *Ibid.*, p.170.

82 Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalem, *Studies and Translations, Philosophical and Religious* (Colombo, The Colombo Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1937), p.181. ff.

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