THE REALM OF BETWEEN

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THE REALM OF BETWEEN

Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion

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TO

MY WIFE VEDAVATI DEVI

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Tasmin sandhye sthāne tiṣṭhan, ubhe sthāne paśyati, idam ca paralokasthānam ca. "Standing in this intermediate condition", says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* "one sees both those conditions, namely being in this world and being in the other world" (IV 3.9). By putting himself in such a situation, it adds, man sees both evils and joys: *Pāpmana ānandāmś ca paśyati.* The purport of this text is it is possible for man to become aware of both immanence and transcendence, of evil and the good, of suffering and delight. Man sometimes can find himself in a marginal situation in which he can realize the transience of things and develop a notion of the Truth of things (*dharmānām Dharmatā* as the Buddhist thinkers said). He then can have an intimation of a sphere which invites and yet repels him to attempt at transcendence. At the frontiers of human existence both the Unconditioned and the Nihil confront him and beckon him to choose. Is Reality *insano indegno mistero delle cose* (the insane ignoble mystery of things) as Leopardi said in a wonderful line, or is it *tad ajātam abhūtam asamskṛtam* (that unborn, not become and unconditioned), *śāntam prapancair aprapancitam* (tranquil and incapable of being elaborated conceptually and verbally) as the Buddha and Nāgārjuna proclaimed?

Alexander Pope, noting that man is not blest but hopes to be, because none could suffer being here below, described thus the middle state in which man *hangs between*:

> "Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
> A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
> With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
> With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
> He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
> In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast;
> In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
> Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;

Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Still by himself abused or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!"

(*An Essay on Man*, Epistle II)

Another great poet who, according to George Santayana, was a "spokesman of the a priori" and "a finished child of nature, not a joint product, like most of us, of nature, history and society" (*Winds of Doctrine*, p. 159), described man's peculiar situation as follows: "Man is a being of high aspirations, 'looking both before and after', whose 'thoughts wander through eternity', disclaiming alliance with transience and decay; incapable of imagining to himself annihilation; existing but in the future and past; being, not what he is, but what he has been and shall be" (*Types, On Life*). Pascal described man as "a mean" between nothing and everything; he was made from Nothing and he is swallowed up in the Infinite (*Pensées*, 72). Buber has spoken of the double nature of man,† as one brought forth from 'below' as well as sent from 'above'— as an I in an I-It relation and also as an I in an I-Thou relation (*Eclipse of God*, pp. 164-5). Man's sphere is a hovering *between* the object world and the subject world, the world of things and the world of spirit, the world of facts and the world of ideals. "Man", wrote Nietzsche, "is a rope, tied between beast and overman*— a rope over

†Cp. N. Berdyaev: "Man is a tragic being for the simple reason that he finds himself placed on the frontier between two worlds, a higher and a lower, and he includes both worlds in himself". (*Truth and Revelation*, London 1953, p. 16.)

*Nietzsche's Overman is "an 'idealistic' type of a higher kind of man, half 'saint', half 'genius'." (*Ecce Homo*, III. 1.) He would be someone like Socrates or Goethe become truly perfect. But there had been no overman, wrote Nietzsche. (*Zarathustra*, II. 4.)

an abyss" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, v. 3). Earlier a great Muslim mystic said: "Midway between, and struggling — Such a predicament is man's!" (A. J. Arberry, *Discourses of Rūmī*, London, 1961, p. 90.) For Rūmī man is between beasts and angels.

One of the foremost contemporary metaphysicians wrote: "...That Between, between gods and men. But only and for the first time in this Between is it decided, who man is and where he is settling his existence" (*Existence and Being*, p. 312). The Between, it may be understood, is that middle state between What-is and the holy. The holy is what is serene and most joyous; it is the medium for the manifestation of the Divine, the open space for the coming of the Divine. It is the unmediated to which only the poets could be mediators. In the holy dwells the high and joyous One, who is who he is. But the holy may appear and yet God may remain far off; and a poet may even converse with God and yet be unable to name him, i.e. make his being and glory recognized by men. But, if at all, it is in the dawn of the holy that God may appear. It is only in the zone of holiness — the dimension of the holy — that the question of the relationship between men and God can be asked. The holy is present in human experience in a hazy and ill-defined way, and while it is not for man to make the holy appear, he can prepare himself for its possible appearance by the right kind of ontological thinking. This seems to be what Heidegger said in his commentaries on Hölderlin and in some other writings. I am not a Heideggerian, but I owe the term *The Realm of Between* to Heidegger, taking it perhaps to mean what was not intended by him.

This realm is the *sandhya sthāna*, the intermediate condition in which at least man can dream about eternity and God and weave myths about them. It is the realm in which earth and heaven, the human and the divine, may possibly enter into a relationship; or, maybe more correctly, that realm is the possibility of such interrelationship. In it man realizes what he is and becomes aware of what he ought to

be and can be. Man then comes to know that he is freedom and possibility. In that middle state he may become conscious of having a double nature — as one set amidst things and as one living among others and confronted by the Other. This presupposes that man can at least imagine or dream that he can — while remaining the same — tread in both the realms of transcendence and immanence, of eternity and transience. *Sa samānah sann ubhau lokav anusancarati, dhyāyatīva lelāyatīva, sa hi svapno bhūtvā imam lokam atikrāmati, mṛtyo rūpāṇi,* as the ancient *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* said (IV.3.7). That there is the Unconditioned, the Transcendent, and that man can enter into relationship with it, or more correctly, that he can become aware of himself as living in relationship with it, is perhaps only a dream and a myth. But it is a glorious risk — a great wager — to come to believe this. "Fair is the prize, and the hope great!" as Plato said (*Phaedo*). Cicero makes one of his debaters confess that when he was reading Plato's book on the soul (*Phaedo*) he found himself assenting to what Plato said, but as soon as he put aside the book and reflected in his own mind upon the immortality of souls, all his previous assent (*adsensio*) melted away (*Tusculan Disputations,* Bk. I, XI.25, J. E. King's Trans., Loeb Classical Library, p. 31). This is the human predicament: man feels he has caught a glimpse of the realm which transcends this world and the forms of death (*imam lokam mṛtyo rūpāṇi*) and endeavours to wander into it, but the vision vanishes. He hangs between. He drifts in the ocean having set sail for another shore; but is there really the other Shore and can he reach it? It is splendid to believe that it is there and can be reached.

* * *

The first chapter of this book, and in a way the second, is concerned with much of what Pascal put under the two following heads: "Description of man: dependency, desire for independence, need. Condition of man: inconstancy,

weariness, unrest" (*Pensées,* 126, 127). Suffering is tied up with contingency and passing-away. The second chapter deals with what men have imagined to be ways of escaping finitude, evanescence and mortality. In sum, probably no discussion of sorrow has made much great positive advance over the idea expressed in those surpassingly grand lines of Virgil: "What land, Achates, what tract on earth is now not full of our sorrow? Lo, Priam! Here, too, virtue has its due rewards; here, too, there are tears for misfortune and mortal sorrows touch the heart. Dismiss thy fears; this fame will bring thee some salvation" (*Aeneid,* Book I, Lines 459-63, H. R. Fairclough's Trans., in *Virgil,* Vol. I, Loeb Classical Library, p. 273). I assume this means whatever the extent and depth of man's suffering, however tragic his fate, the significance of his deeds,— what he has lived, struggled and died for and the manner he lived, struggled and died,— constitutes his salvation to some extent. We are saved by the meaning our acts and thoughts acquire for us and for others and by the sympathy and compassion we feel and evoke. Sri Aurobindo thought one of Virgil's above lines "here, too, there are tears for misfortune and mortal sorrows touch the heart" ("sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt") "suggests an almost direct descent from the Overmind consciousness" (*Savitri, Followed by the Author's Letters on the Poem,* Pondicherry, 1954, p. 921). But Aurobindo takes this line to be about "the touch of tears in mortal things".

Two of the basic forms of man's reaction towards the supersensuous are Yajna and Pūjā. The forms of the former and the philosophy underlying it, and in much less detail the latter, are discussed in the third chapter and its annexe. We may not be certain about the Divine, yet it is justifiable to sacrifice and worship. Was it not said, "By sacrifice they desire to know" (*Yajnena vividiṣanti*)? The last chapter attempts to grapple with the question of God. Its annexes expand some of the points touched upon in the chapter, besides containing fresh material. I seek to suggest there is

Transcendence and it has been conceived as Being, Law, Purpose, or Order. On how man arrives at an awareness of Being, I had something to say in a previous book, *Metaphysics, Man and Freedom.* Being may be revealed to some as a Person, but it is not given to all to receive the impact of Divine Presence. I have discussed this in an earlier work, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta.* As for those of us who neither become aware of Being nor confront the Supreme Person — the serene, most high and joyous One (to use Hölderlin's words) — we have to:

> "By faith, and faith alone embrace
> Believing where we cannot prove."
>
> (Tennyson, *In Memoriam*)

"To believe in God", wrote Unamuno, "is to long for His existence and, further, it is to act as if He existed; it is to live by this longing and to make it the inner spring of our action" (*The Tragic Sense of Life*, pp. 184-5). "Man is made up of faith", declared the Gītā long ago, "as is his faith, just so is he". *Yo Yachchraddhah sa eva sah.*

* * *

The germ of this book first took shape as four lectures, three of them delivered in Manchester College, Oxford, in late November 1963, and the fourth in the University of London in the first week of December that year. It was developed into a set of lectures I gave as Visiting Professor in May 1970 in the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. After expansion, rearrangement and revision it has reached its final form in this work. I thank these institutions for the opportunity they afforded me to study and lecture on these great themes.

The late Prof. Humayun Kabir and Mr. K. D. D. Henderson, Secretary of the Spalding Trust, were responsible for my visit to England in 1963. In Oxford I received the hospitality of Principal L. A. Garrard of Manchester College and much kindness from Professors R. C. Zaehner, I. T. Ramsey and H. H. Price; and in London Professor H. D. Lewis presided over my lecture and enabled me to have the pleasure of meeting many distinguished professors of philosophy, religion and Indian studies. To all these I owe thanks. I am grateful above all to Professor Niharranjan Ray, then Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, who invited me to be Visiting Professor at the Institute in 1970. But for this invitation I may not have again worked on these fundamental problems in the philosophy of religion and written this book. While in Simla I received much kindness from Professors Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar.

I should have made the typescript of this book available to the Institute in June-July 1970, but that was not possible. I have to thank the authorities of the Institute for their kindness in putting up with this delay and for their sustained interest in its publication.

I have great pleasure in inscribing this book to the person who for over twenty years now has enabled me to be free from all domestic cares, as earlier I was kept free from them thanks to another person, my father.

September 1971 K. SATCHIDANANDA MURTY

SUFFERING

"The inseparability of desire and suffering from selfhood is attested by the universal experience of Mankind, and all the higher religions agree in taking the fact of this experience for granted."

— A Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, London, 1956, p. 289

I

"Only one thing I always teach", declared the Buddha, "suffering and the cessation of suffering."[1] In effect the whole of Indian philosophy can make the same claim, for freedom from suffering (*leidlosigkeit*) is its goal. In his *Early Theological Writings*, Hegel declared that philosophy has to establish "a new religion in which the infinite grief and the whole gravity of its discord is acknowledged, but is at the same time serenely and purely dissolved.— To embrace the whole energy of the suffering and discord that has enrolled the world and all its forms of culture for some thousand years, and also to rise above it — this can be done by philosophy alone."[2] It is not wrong to say that since the time of the Upaniṣads, Indian philosophy has been making a continuous attempt to establish and foster this type of religion based on the comprehension and cessation of suffering.

The insight, as Lucretius said, that "all life is a struggle in the dark", that "burning fevers", "fears and anxieties — dog the human breast", and that "this dread and darkness of mind" can be dispelled only by "understanding" is not peculiar to India. To quote him further: "O joyless hearts of men! O minds without vision! How dark and dangerous the life in which this tiny span is lived away! Do you not see that nature is clamouring for two things only, a body free from pain, a mind released from worry and fear?"[3] The great requirement, as he says, is to banish pain, and its cause is "this deplorable lust of life" which "holds us trembling in bondage".[4] Here we have the enunciation of the truths of *duhkha* and *tṛṣṇā*, suffering and its cause, craving. Human history, as Hegel said, is a 'highway of despair', a 'slaughter-

bench' at which peoples' happiness is sacrificed; the world is not a theatre of happiness.[5]

The *Samyutta Nikāya* picturesquely says that more tears have been shed by suffering beings from eternity than the water contained in the four great oceans.[6] Birth, old age, disease and death are the leading forms which Indian philosophy uses for depicting suffering. *Janmamṛtyujarāvyādhi duhkhadoṣānudarśanam.*[7]

Although in Indian philosophy *duhkha* or suffering covers evil and unhappiness of all sorts, i.e. sickness, old age, grief, trouble, misery, woe, anxiety, fear, dread and frustration, it principally means bodily pain and despair. It is rooted in desires and actions based on ignorance, *avidyākāma karma.* Pain and despair can be, of course, of several types and due to several causes, but their ultimate ground is always *avidyā*, nescience, of some form or other.

There is much justification for taking freedom from suffering as an ultimate end, as Hume too admitted. He says: "If you — inquire, why (anyone) desires health, he will readily reply, because sickness is painful. If you push your inquiries further and desire a reason why he hates pain, it is impossible to give any. This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to by any other object."[8] The experience of pain is ultimate because it is most direct, independent and intimate. It is the most intense one can have and the most private because it cannot be communicated to others, even if one wants. This is because it is so acute and intense that no adequate idea can be formed of it, and is almost blotted out of memory, while as long as it lasts it blots out all other experience. One cannot, for example, precisely describe or recall exactly a toothache one previously experienced. It is therefore impossible to share pain with others. Moreover its experience is independent of all objects, while pleasure requires a consciousness of the object enjoyed. As Descartes noticed, in the sensation of pain one may not be aware of the object that causes it. Supposing a man is being cut by a sword, he can feel the sensation of pain without becoming

aware of the sword's figure or movement.[9] Similarly, with great insight Kierkegaard in his analysis of despair showed that it is a terrible torment in which one is not aware of the thing over which one is in true despair.[10] The pangs of separation from one's beloved, and unrequited or unobtainable love, although maddening torments and acute types of suffering, are not forms of true despair, as in the first one knows whom one loves and there is always a hope of reunion and in the latter too the inaccessibility of the object of the passion is realized from the beginning or at some later stage and a substitute to alleviate if not abolish the passion may be found, as the Tristan and Iseult myth shows.[11] In dread too one is not afraid of this or that thing; it is a nameless benumbing fear which plagues one.[12] These are the most acute forms of suffering man can experience, and they are all ultimate for they are independent of objects; in them one is aware of these experiences only. The only other experience which is as intense as suffering is release from it, and this is felt in its most acute form when a man is just released from it. No experience except suffering can equal the sense of relief and euphrasy which one feels immediately after it is got rid of. The delight of lovers when they meet after a long separation or after overcoming formidable obstacles is doubly greater. Long ago Plato observed that release from pain is more intense than pure pleasure.[13] The Hindu and Buddhist aspirants have testified to the volcanic rapturous feeling that gripped them when they were suddenly and abruptly freed from the despair and dread that previously tormented them. They called this experience which breaks forth like a sudden flash of lightning, *sambodhi.*[14] To conclude, freedom from suffering, relief from pain and sorrow, is an ultimate end, as can be demonstrated by introspection.

There is no life without pain and labour, for they constitute the human condition. Without labour one cannot keep oneself alive, for it is what produces the necessities of life. As the etymology and associated connotation of 'labour' in European languages shows (Greek: *ponon*, Latin: *laborare*,

French: *travailler*, German: *arbeiten*) it is painful and troublesome. It is an evil that came out of Pandora's box and is a punishment inflicted by Zeus (Hesiod).

It is a punishment for original sin. "All work that is wrought under the sun is grievous" for it vexes one and passes away. Aquinas considers it to be a painful duty for keeping oneself alive.[15] The Christian desert monks and some monasteries conceived it as a punishment and a mortification. The *Majjhima Nikāya* worked this out at length. To live one needs things — food, shelter, clothes etc. To obtain them one must undergo hardships; then when one gets them, they have to be guarded with trouble and anxiety. Further, they do not last. Thus possession of things coveted causes suffering, and if they are not at all available, one cannot live. If all the desired things are not obtained, one laments and grieves about one's vain efforts.[16] One is united with what one dislikes, one is separated from what one likes.[17] Things go against our desires, and our desires are often thwarted; and when we do get some things, either "the appetite is not filled", or we have "not the power to eat thereof". This is life, this is suffering.

The Upaniṣads use two terms *duhkha* and *śoka*, suffering and despair, to describe the human condition. *Duhkha* occurs only in one major Upaniṣad, the *Kaṭha*, but in an expressive phrase: *lokaduhkha*, which can mean either the suffering of the world, or the world that is suffering. The inner self in all beings, it says, is one, but is not touched by the suffering that is the world, which is external to it, just as the sun is not touched by the evil of the world though it shines upon it and illuminates.[18] This text implies that the world is suffering, because there is outside it, towering above it, but also immanent in it, an inner Self, distinct from that which is experienced by one as one's self. The analogy of the sun which is away and aloof from the terrestrial world, but whose light and energy are present in it, sustaining its life and activity, and yet without being affected by all this, may be interpreted as indicating the relation between God and this

world. In contrast to and because of this Holy Being (*śuddha, apagatapāpma*), this world is suffering. For, aught else than Him is wretched or perishable, as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says.[19] We shall postpone the question, How can we be certain that there is a Holy Being and how can we understand suffering if such a Being is not?

The other concept *śoka*, despair, receives more attention in the Upaniṣads. He who does not know the self despairs, the *Chāndogya* declares.[20] As Kierkegaard said, "not being conscious of oneself as spirit" is despair.[21] It is a sickness in which one has no hope and would like to die, but is not able to die. In it one dies the death, i.e. one confronts contingency and mortality, would like to escape from them, but cannot. To crave to be other than what one is and to refuse to be oneself is despair. The despairing man experiences an agonizing contradiction; he is lured by something which he is not conscious of clearly, yet which seems to hold out a hope, but he does not find it. When one is in despair and does not know it, his bewilderment is greater. He is in delusion, *śocati muhyamānah*.[22] Unaware of himself as spirit, overpowered by ignorance, desires and the results of his own actions, sunk in mundane existence, identifying himself with the body and perishable things, and buffeted by the ups and downs of life, man is deluded by several false notions. He consequently suffers from anguish (*santapyate*) and grieves (*cintām āpadyamānah*) (Śankara). All this is due to his not knowing himself as a self, and not having a sense of God (*īśabhāva*). When the *sensus divinitatis* of which Calvin speaks is impaired and lost due to *avidyākāmakarma*, delusion and desires, and man does not "apprehend God as he offers himself",[23] he despairs. But when he discovers himself as a self and then sees God, the worshipped, and his glory, he loses this despair.[24] *Śoka* is not to know the self and not to see God. Despair is to be not aware of oneself as a self in the presence of Another, God, *anyam īśam*, the Creator, the Person, who is the foundation of the Absolute (*brahmayoni*).[25] But this is possible only through the grace (*prasāda*) of God;[26]

he reveals his personality (*tanūm*) to those only whom he chooses,[27] for the inward knowledge of a person's true nature and will is possible only through his own self-disclosure. Such an account as this raises questions: By what means can it be known that one is spirit? How does it happen that spirit does not know it is spirit? From where comes this knowledge? The lost sense of God raises similar questions.

The Upanisad says that fear and despair are the results of man's separation from God, and are removed when man, "this person", is "fully embraced" by God, the Supreme Self. That is the state of the soul wherein all its desires are fulfilled, and it has no fear, no further yearning and no despair.[28] On the analogy of sleep and ecstasy, this rapture can be understood to some extent. But a rapture cannot annul the reality of the world and the persons and things in it, and the suffering in it, even as the oblivion of everything else in ecstasy or acute pain does not prove the unreality of everything else. Moreover, can we justifiably interpret suffering and the world from the standpoint of a rapture or a pain?

III

Suffering, Buddhism maintains, is the rising and vanishing of something.[29] All that is transitory is painful. All things are made up of *dharmas*, elements, which constantly change and perish, and which are neither material nor spiritual. They originate depending on each other, they condition each other, and giving rise to new ones die out. They are the constituents (*samskāras*) out of which all things are compounded; so things are impermanent, unstable and insecure.[30] Both mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*) are compounded of these, and are therefore fleeting, transient, and so are suffering.[31] The constant changing of the body and mind are evident to us. *Nāma-rūpa* constitute man, depending on each other, like a blind man and a cripple who cooperate with each other, one getting on another's shoulders and showing the way.[32] Sensation, perception, thinking, consciousness — all these are *nāma*, mind, which is more mutable than the body and so it is much better to mistake the body rather than the mind as a permanent entity,[33] for it is more persistent and continuous throughout a man's life than the mind. Both these are subject to change, decay and destruction. All experience arises from sense-object contact, but whatever the senses apprehend arises and passes away; so they cannot cling to anything as a stable foundation. Every sense-object contact ends in a parting, a passing away; it is, as the *Milindapanha* says, like two rams fighting with each other, whose heads clash and separate jerkily and momentarily.

Vasubandhu and Buddhaghoṣa explain the four aspects of the truth of suffering in the following way. (a) All things are impermanent. This means they are caused and conditioned; so they are dependent and contingent. Sometime or other they become extinct. (b) Things oppress us by their very nature; they are a burden and enslave us and are sources of anxiety and fear. So holy men hate them. (c) All things are empty, for they have no essence or self of their own, and cannot act freely of themselves. They cannot remain themselves with a power of their own. (d) As all things are compounded, they are doomed to decay and extinction. None of them is a self.[34] What all this means is that no sooner is a thing born and reaches some stability, it starts declining worn out by decay and when it fully decays it dies; everything is assaulted by rise and fall and is in a flux without any claim to an autonomous nature, for all things are like the stem of a plantain tree devoid of an inner core.[35] We live for the sake of things; as we covet them, they become our masters. Only by much effort and pain we get them and then we have to bestow much care in safeguarding our possessions. This binds us to them, causing us anxiety. In spite of all this, their enjoyment is like a dream not lasting long enough to satisfy us. Above all, however much we may enjoy we thirst for more, and what we enjoy does not satisfy us, yet we do not leave it, like a dog which goes on gnawing a bone though it gives no satisfaction.[36] Thus in every way all things are suffering.

This teaching has a striking resemblance to that of that remarkable book *Ecclesiastes*. All is vanity, for whatever one may do it does not profit, as all things pass away. Nothing is new, whatever one achieves is a repetition. So many in the past did what we do now, and many will do so hereafter too, but of none of these will there be any remembrance. There is oppression and evil all around us, and no justice. Man's moments of enjoyment are brief. Whether wise or foolish, great or small, all die in the same way and go to the same place and are forgotten. So nothing we do or achieve matters, all labour is grievous and vexatious. All is vanity. It is interesting to note that "Vanity" (from Latin *Vanus*, empty) has the same connotation which the Buddhists have in mind when they say the world is empty, suffering and not-self. Vanity, according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, means futility, unsubstantiality, unreality and emptiness. *Ecclesiastes* also makes another most interesting point. The more wisdom one has, the more is one's grief; increase of knowledge increases sorrow; because what is it one knows however much he may know? The Vanity of the World and man's madness and folly. Thus knowledge in-increases one's suffering. Mere experience of suffering is not wisdom, for all suffer. It bears fruit only when through it insubstantiality and emptiness are perceived and experienced as suffering. One can feel sorrow and pain without understanding suffering, and one can understand suffering without ever having experienced pain, distress and despair. The *Majjhima Nikāya* says, one cannot understand suffering and keep clear of it, if one succumbs to it and gives oneself over to it.[37] One has to detach oneself from it and meditate on it to develop an insight into it.

Everything, according to Buddhism, is what is sensed, perceived and thought,[38] for the world though composed of sensations, thoughts and volitions, is experienced as a unity just as a 'soup' is experienced as a unity although it consists of many ingredients. All this is mutable and so suffering. Now the Buddha had a curious formula. He used to ask,

Can anything which is mutable and suffering be called mine, "I", or my self?[39] The answer he approved was the negative. We can observe, consider, investigate and keep watch of all things[40] including our minds and bodies, and find that they all have a beginning and an end. So, being conditioned and mutable, all things are not-self (*anattā*).[41] We cannot also say something belongs to us, for nothing is in our power and control. Not to speak of other things, even "our own" bodies, sensations and thoughts cannot be controlled by us, as they follow their own laws and behave in their own ways. So nothing is ours or ourselves.[42] But there is also another important fact. Things emerge and become extinct, affecting someone, causing someone pain and despair. There is someone who experiences this flux, feels suffering, but can also stand back and reflect on it. Can it be said, someone suffers, therefore someone is? To say 'no' would be to land in annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*), while to say 'yes' would be to accept there is an enduring entity, a self, other than body and mind, which leads to a permanent ghost in the machine theory (*śāśvatavāda*). The Buddha says neither of these is his doctrine.[43] It may frighten fools (*bālānām trāsajanakam*), but nothing in the world is mine, "I", or my self. To realize this is to get rid of suffering.

One of the great virtues of Buddhism is that it is existential, close to lived reality. It does not tear man away from nature and talk of him as the soul or spirit, as some idealistic and religious philosophies are wont to do. It takes the human being concretely. Man is a sensuous and thinking being of flesh and blood. The soul apart from the body, Candrakīrti says, is a metaphorical designation, a mere word.[44] Man is just *nāmārūpa*, nothing else. It may be recalled that according to the teaching of the Bible also, man is an indissoluble unity of soul and body and until it came under the influence of Greek thought, the Biblical tradition knew no duality of body and soul. Any philosophy which regards man as an inextricably compounded psychophysical organism considers death as a tremendous fact to be reckoned with, for it shatters

the unity of the real man and it is difficult to say what survives. So conceived, the law of human existence is, to use Heidegger's words, to be unto death (*zum tode sein*). Life is a suffering unto death and birth is the calvary of man. As the priest Manuel, a character in a story of Unamuno, says quoting a great doctor of the Spanish Apostolic Church, "man's greatest sin is having been born". This is an unbearable agonising truth with which the simple people cannot live, for whosoever looks upon the face of this truth is sick unto death. As the Epic of Gilgamesh picturesquely put it, mankind's days are numbered, whatever they do is like wind. Wherever one runs, one will not find the life one seeks, for death has been allotted to mankind.[45] Only in Buddhism nobody allotted death, birth brought it with itself.

Following Hans Ehrenberg, Karl Barth criticized Feuerbach as one who was a non-knower of death and a misknower of evil, and summed up the human being thus: "We men are evil from head to foot" and "we must die".[46] Anyone who reads a standard Buddhist book such as the *Viśuddhimagga* knows with what intensity and realism, the Buddhists meditate upon death and the human body from "the sole of the foot upwards and from the top of the head downwards, with a skin covering it and filled with many impurities".[47] Only a philosophy which considers man as a unified vital psychophysical organism, which will not preserve a substantial personal identity after death, can meditate on death and evil in this intense way. Buddhism, it could be said, does admit rebirth but not transmigration. If without postulating an unchanging entitative soul, the phenomena of life, especially the evident continuity in spite of amnesia, sleep, dreams, delirium, delusions, etc., can be explained, it is also possible similarly to explain the continuity of a series of lives. "I recall", the Buddha told Subhūti, "that in the past I had five hundred births, and as now even then I had no perception of an entity, a soul or a person."[48]

Like some thinkers of Western antiquity, Buddhism also says there is in all beings an impulse, a will or a desire to

preserve and perpetuate themselves. The Stoics called it *appetitionem*, Cicero *conatus* and Augustine *amor*. The Buddha called it *tanha*, thirst or craving. This is the cause of our births; it is the force which sustains us and makes us live. Spinoza, it may be recalled, recognized that *conatus* is identical with the actual existence of a thing and is indistinguishable from it.[49] But while for Spinoza, *conatus* is the external power of God itself by which things come to be and exist,[50] in Buddhism the ultimate cause of craving is ignorance. Ignorance is a hindrance (*nīvaraṇa*) which obstructs[51] us from comprehending things as vanity, and a perverted perception which is the root of the imagination which projects false things. It has itself no roots and support, yet on it are all things based.[52]

But is there a reality which is not mutable, not *nāmarūpa*? The Buddha says there is an abode (*āyatana*) where there is no suffering. Unless there is, says the Buddha, something which is absolutely unborn, unconditioned and undying, there is no possibility of getting out of conditioning, flux and suffering.[53] Suffering has an end, because one can attain that unconditioned reality. But as it is non-phenomenal, beyond discussion and understanding, and indescribable as this or the other world, as perceived or unperceived, it is inexplicable and unutterable. It is useless to talk about it.[54] It is immeasurable and unfathomable, so we cannot even say whether it exists or not.[55] It is without support, and is perfect, the transcendent, the other shore, the Refuge. It is also said that when the world is realized as vanity, craving is got rid of; and that is *nirvāṇa*,[56] an unchanging state where there is no suffering.[57]

Some comments on this teaching may be in order. It is not clear whether *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are both equally real, or whether only the latter is real, or whether they are both one and the same. (1) In the first alternative, *samsāra* cannot be destroyed, but from it one could enter into the other reality, state, mode of being, or world (*nirvāṇa*), whatever it is, or in a particular case one may be displaced by the other, i.e. the samsāric type of occurrence may be displaced by the

nirvāṇic type of occurrence, reality, or whatever it is. (2) To say that *samsāra*, the living world of suffering, is unreal like a magical show or a dream[58] is to make a mockery of the pain, anguish and despair of man and the saving efforts of the many bodhisattvas. It is also against perceptual experience and reason. (3) To say that *samsāra* is itself *nirvāṇa* may mean that while from one point of view this world is *samsāra*, from another point of view it is *nirvāṇa*, and so the latter should sublate the former as thereby we get peace and happiness. There is then no genuine transcendence and psychology determines ontology, and *nirvāṇa* becomes a noble fiction created to console people for having had to be born to die, an illusion which would comfort them in this world of suffering. But the sincerity and seriousness with which the Buddha spoke about the reality of *nirvāṇa* makes this improbable. Besides this, in Buddhism the ontological status of ignorance, the cause of *samsāra*, is left uncertain. Is it an impersonal objective cosmic principle? If so, it would be another reality, and if it is beginningless, there is no reason why it should end. If it belongs to individuals, is it one or many? In the former case as soon as anyone gets *nirvāṇa* all *samsāra* must end; while in the latter case since it is ignorance which produces *nāmarūpa* and man, it cannot belong to anyone.

IV

There is no document in theistic literature which has grappled with the problem of suffering with as much profundity as the Book of Job. According to Maimonides, Job, Eliphaz, Bilad and Zophar, respectively express the Aristotelian, the Biblical, the Mutazilite and the Asharian theories.[59] Whether this is so or not, it would be rewarding briefly to review these four important theories.

(1) Aristotle denies the existence of any evil principle in the world. Things in the world are endeavouring to reach as much perfection as is open to them and to approximate as much as possible the divine. They are unable to do this

to a large extent because matter is unable to reach up to perfection. This is neither an evil nor a good principle, but only the necessary inability of things to realize their potentiality and become good. Thus while the eternal or pure form is the good, evil is the inability of particular things to actualize their own forms. Evil is inherent in particularity. Since in God there is no potentiality, he is entirely free from evil, and is realized perfection. All matter is trying to become good inasmuch as it is striving after form.[60] A man is good in so far as he realizes a life of contemplation,[61] and suffers to the extent he falls short of it.

(2) The Biblical theory, if it is represented by Eliphaz, presupposes as an unquestioned fact that there is only one God, omnipotent and just. In his divine government, the innocent do not perish and the righteous are not cut off. Those who plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same, consumed by God's anger. A mortal cannot be more just or more pure than God, his maker. Man is born into trouble as the sparks fly upward. Suffering is the Almighty's correction and chastening. He who accepts divine justice without questioning and with faith will participate in divine providence.[62] In the presence of the omniscient and omnipotent righteous Lord, the man of faith does not question divine justice and providence, but can only declare that he is vile if he suffers, and abhorring himself repent. Man cannot contend with the Almighty, nor condemn him so that he himself may be righteous.[63] It is important to notice that it follows from this that there is no such thing as the suffering of the innocent, for it is God alone who can properly judge who is innocent and who is not and dispense justice, nor does this theodicy believe that man survives death and that vindication of innocent suffering will come in after life.[64] The teaching of this book is supplemented by what Psalm 22 says. God is holy, he brings some into dust and forsakes them, and man cannot know why; but if he without losing faith and fear — cries unto him, God will not despise his afflictions, but will hear him.[65]

(3) The Mutazilites maintain that God is one, omnipotent as well as just. From this it follows man has both freedom and responsibility. He is free to choose and do what he wills, so he is rewarded and punished by God depending upon whether he obeys God's commands or not. Man is entirely the author of his own actions. God is bound by his own justice and does not transgress it; as he is also wise, he is compassionate towards his creatures and never wills them to do what is wrong or what is impossible for them, and never harms any of them arbitrarily. Things are good or bad according to their natures, not because God created them good or bad. God's commands are in tune with these natures.

(4) The Asharians emphasize God's absoluteness and omnipotence. Man's capacity to choose and to do are also created by God. All action is dependent upon God's will, which is unknowable. He can elect some of his creatures and make them happy or make them do good, or damn others as he pleases.

These four views represent four typical classical solutions to this problem, but, as Spinoza pointed out, ultimately they are all reducible to a single axiom, to wit, "God's judgments far transcend human understanding".[66] This is rooted in what Spinoza calls the "prejudice", but others the faith, that God directs all things to a definite goal and that the world has a definite end, to wit, all things are made for man, and man to worship God.[67] If the teleological conception of the universe is given up, if whatever happens has no final meaning, suffering becomes just a brute fact which has no cause and meaning. Even as it is silly to ask why grass is green and not of some other colour, it becomes foolish to ask why man suffers. For a theist the problem arises only when he conceives God as omnipotent, omniscient as well as good and just.

This applies to Leibniz's theodicy also. Supreme wisdom united to infinite goodness, he says, chose the best of possible worlds. To think a better world is possible is to deny this.

The possible worlds without sin and suffering which we can imagine would be inferior to ours in goodness, for surely God would have chosen one of them if it could have been better than this. Also the evil we find in the world, we have to conclude, has brought forth good which could not have been attained without that evil. All creatures are from the start imperfect because they are limited in their essence, so not knowing all they deceive themselves and commit errors. Evil is privation, its origin is the essential nature of things — their necessity, as Plato says. Metaphysically the finitude of things their limitation — or as Aristotle said, their particularity — is the source of evil. Any finite world has to be evil, and God in choosing the best world has only permitted moral evil involved in the necessity of the nature of creatures. It is 'a hypothetical necessity which connects it with the best", a consequence of God's indispensable will to create the best world. This means all possible worlds contain a measure of evil, and this the least possible evil, for though God wills the good only, since he also wills to create the best world possible and since that too necessarily contains some evil, it has to be permitted. Suffering, sorrow and misery are, says Leibniz, the results of moral evil. "One suffers because one has acted; one suffers evil because one does evil." When one suffers through others' actions, it is certain, says Leibniz, that it is a preparation for greater happiness. Suffering is willed by God as a penalty for sin both as punishment and example, or to make one savour good the more, or to contribute to the greater perfection of the sufferer.[68] Such is Leibniz's teaching in summary. It would appear that it is the last word a theist oriented by Greek and Christian thought can say in justification of suffering.

It would follow from the above that there could be no actual world without evil, which is a consequence of finitude, creatureliness or particularity. By equating evil with finitude the problem is not solved. What is the explanation for finitude? Why was it brought into existence by God? The problem is less intense for those who accept God without

considering him to be the creator, and those who accept him only as omnipotence, but not as good and just.

A finite being of flesh and blood cannot but sin, for he cannot always know what is right because of natural passions and appetites, and sometimes he does not act as he wills. The good one would, one does not; the evil one would not, one does. This elemental human situation is superbly dramatized in some of Racine's plays. A theist would interpret suffering as the result of sin, of what is contrary to the eternal law, as both Augustine and Aquinas say.

But as against such theists the argument of Ivan Karamazov, a character of Dostoevsky, is unanswerable. Ivan's difficulty is not God, whom he accepts, but this world which he does not and cannot accept. The sufferings of the innocent, especially of children,— how to understand them? he asks. If they "go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth", then truth, he protests, "is not worth such a price." "Eternal harmony", Ivan declares, is not worth the unexpiated and unatoned for tears of even one tortured child in an outhouse or a slum, who invoking the dear kind God is praying and crying for fulfilment of its basic needs and alleviation of its misery. Those tears, Ivan demands, must be atoned for not "in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth". If we suffer only "to manure the soil of the future harmony for somebody else", this is an outrageous world. So, Ivan concludes: "I renounce the higher harmony altogether." Theodicy is shattered by this logic, anguish and rebellion.

Another consideration can also arise. If sin is caused by ignorance of and incapacity to do what is right, and sometimes by even a compulsion to do what is wrong, since ignorance, incapacity and such compulsion are natural to a human being, to sin is natural and unavoidable. Then what is the sense in man's being punished? for it is not his fault that he is finite and cannot but be what he is. If suffering is the result of sin, it has no meaning. Also, if a man does not know what is right and hence does not do it or does what is contradictory

to it, then also he cannot be at fault, for he is not responsible for his own ignorance. Thus the concept of sin as the cause of suffering is not fully intelligible.

Some contemporary Christian thinkers have complicated the matter further. Stating that man is mortal and he is also fated to be so, Reinhold Niebuhr says man's pretension not to be mortal is sin.[69] "The temptation to sin", according to Niebuhr, "lies in the human situation itself", which is "that man as spirit transcends the natural and temporal process in which he is involved and transcends himself". Man's creativity based on his freedom, he says, is man's temptation.[70] Somewhat in the same way Thelen thinks that sin arises from man's pretension to deny his own finitude, by his forgetting the dominion of the eternal over the finite and by claiming to be the centre of existence.[71] I think these accounts cannot explain what is generally understood to be sin. Very few men care to deny their mortality or finitude, firstly, because most men do not realize this, and, secondly, because many who know this accept this, just as embodiment is accepted by those who believe themselves to be souls. The majority of mankind accept their limitations and death without any fuss, and they do not seek to overcome them and become infinite and immortal, nor do many claim to be the centre of the universe. So they cannot be held to be sinning. Only an Ivan, a Shigalyov or a Verkhovensky can be a sinner in that sense. Theirs is not the common human situation, and any concept of sin developed on the basis of such examples or of historical ones like that of Hitler, need not be of universal relevance.

V

The human situation if dramatized in certain ways may lead to different kinds of suffering. One of these is alienation. Kant started with the idea that man has a conception of absolute perfection, which is the basis of all moral theory.[72] Man is aware that he is related to Perfection in some way, that he ought to become like it and that only then will he

realize his ideal self. There can be no moral obligation, no call to a higher life, if man were not conscious of himself as potentially a holy being. But if a man thinks that this ideal self is his real self which is already a fact, and looks down upon his empirical self as an appearance of the former, as something alien to oneself, there results a conflict in the soul. To think that one is in reality pure spirit, and that one has fallen from that high state and to distress over this loss of one's own nature leads to a schism in the soul — alienation. Alternately, to think that the ideal self is what one can here and now forthwith actualize and to find by experience that this is impossible for actual man, who is a finite imperfect corporeal being in this mundane world, leads also to alienation. Sāmkhya and Advaita also seem to be obsessed by ideas of this kind. To distinguish sharply the ideal noumenal self from the phenomenal and to identify oneself with the former only leads to alienation. There are passages in Kant where he seems to support the duality of the two selves, makes one an "appearance" of the other, and calls the *homo noumenon*, or man as a holy being, an actual fact.[73] At the same time he maintains this cannot be in this life, so moral life is a continuous progress from the lower to higher degrees of moral perfection.[74] It is difficult to understand how anyone can believe himself to be a pure spirit, holy being, or God, unless one is a pathological case. While one can however have that sort of ideal and attempt to mould oneself after that pattern, it is difficult to imagine that a normal man can identify himself with the ideal, the so-called *homo noumenon*, and give rise to a conflict between the two. This means there is a third self, the witness of the war between the real and phenomenal selves!

Man may have a conception of absolute perfection, what Kant called the ontological conception. This could be the image of God in man, what Calvin calls the divine sense, or the seed of religion implanted in man's mind by God himself.[75] It is possible man also may have the picture of a holy man, a saint, which calls one to action and imitation. This

could be called the ideal self, which one can reasonably hope to become. But this is totally different from the sum of all perfection, absolute perfection. A sane man would not imagine himself to be that or to try to become that. Thinking one is separated from God, and that one ought not to be so, one may grope towards him or frantically endeavour to reach him. But we can be separated only from that with which we were or can be related. So anyone who knows he is separated from God would also know he is in relation to God or can be related to him: his effort will only be directed towards actualizing this relation. If God is believed as a Reality and a Person — otherwise a relation between him and man who is a person is not conceivable — who has grace and compassion and who seeks man, all God-separation is fundamentally optimistic and hopeful. It is never without a certitude of salvation. There can be also no alienation from one's ideal self for an ideal nowhere is. It is not yet achieved; so how can one rightly think himself to be separated from it? One can of course feel disappointed or frustrated by not becoming what one intensely longs to be, by not realizing one's ideal self. This is, however, not alienation. I may want to become like St. Francis or like Russell, whom I take as my ideal. Realizing that I cannot, I may become gloomy and miserable. How can this be alienation?

Again, since one is always really what one is, it is nonsense to talk of alienation from one's real self. It is, however, possible for a man not to have right knowledge about his own birth, situation and destiny, as for example a prince kidnapped by bandits in infancy may not know himself to be heir to a kingdom. This is just plain ignorance even as in the case when one does not know about the treasure trove buried by one's ancestor in one's own backyard. In neither case is there any alienation. There is alienation only when one finds that one has consciously or unawares rejected what one belongs to, or when one feels himself to be uprooted, or rejected by one to whom he belongs. When the prodigal returns home and realizes he is wanted and welcome at home, alienation ends.

But if God is believed to be so transcendentally holy that man, a pitiable wretched sinner, can never have any relation with him, or if God is believed to be an omnipotent infinite being between whom and insignificant, despicable and finite man, there is an unbridgeable gulf, an unhappy consciousness results. But this is not alienation — a separation, for between God believed in one of these two or similar ways and man, there never can be any relation in the real sense except the sort that prevails between a holy brahmin and an untouchable pariah, or an omnipotent sultan and his slave, or between a man and a crawling worm. Alienation is possible only when there is a relationship — either lost and so recoverable, or possible and so attainable.

On the other hand, dismissing what Kant called the real self as a fiction, Feuerbach said God is the idealized image of all reality and perfection set up by man himself. But, not knowing this, man in contrast with it finds himself worthless, wretched and abased. This suffering consciousness, he says, is self-alienation. It is for the scientific and philosophic study of religion to confirm or deny Feuerbach's hypothesis that God is an image set up by man. But assuming it to be true, why should man be unhappy if he believes God — the Perfect Being — exists? I know great genius in the form of an Einstein or vast power as expressed by Stalin exists. I know in genius and in power I am nothing before them. I know the moral grandeur existing in Schweitzer and Gandhi, and I know I am compared with them an utterly inferior moral person. But why should that make me wretched? On the contrary, knowledge of them and admiration or repugnance for one or the other of them may make me do things which are worthwhile, in doing which I feel fulfilment and find significance. This may make me go beyond what I would have been had I not known about them and had I not been stirred by them to be or to do something. If I know that the morally Perfect Being exists, that is a guarantee that perfection can exist in its plenitude, and that at least somewhere the several kinds and degrees of perfection could

coincide with reality, and striving could bring me nearer to that. This should make moral perfection a more significant idea. A Feuerbachian might say, since you will find you can never yourself become that Being or like him, that would make you miserable. This would not be true: as a philosopher I am overwhelmed and awed by the achievement of a Plato or a Kant but at the same time such a thinker stirs and inspires me, makes me emulate him by attempting to philosophize, but all the time I know my attempt is futile, for I cannot become a Plato or a Kant. But that does not make me miserable or unhappy or my attempt worthless. It is difficult to believe that God — whether as a mere idea or as a reality — could make man miserable. A pseudo-God or the Devil only can make man miserable.

Here a question may be asked, Why did Feuerbach consider God to be the result of man's first dualizing himself and then externalizing and objectifying one of his selves, raising it to infinity and deifying it? Feuerbach seems to have only two answers for this. (1) Truth lies in critically transforming Hegel's position, in turning speculative philosophy upside down.[76] The 'manifest' position of Hegel is that "man is the revealed God; in man the divine essence first realizes itself and unfolds itself"[77]. So the correct position must be God is the revealed man and in God man realizes and unfolds himself.[78] (2) The religious man judges himself by taking God as the standard, he is troubled by God's perfection. If God is really different from man, why should God's perfection trouble man and why should he take him as the standard? So God is nothing but man's ideal self.[79]

Of these the first argument is based on Feuerbach's assumption that sensationalism and materialism are true, and therefore, the contradictory of whatever idealism says is truth. So, the inversion of Hegelianism is truth. The second argument assumes that God bothers man in the sense man wants to be God, but cannot be and hence suffers, and from this it infers that since man cannot want to be what he is not, God is man. While some men may have longed to

become God or like him, and suffered because they could not, general human unhappiness did not arise from this. Also, those who wish to become God or like him, may suffer more if they find they are not and cannot become anything else than what they are, namely, miserable beings caught up in finitude and death. Lastly, if I want to be someone or something, it does not prove that he or it is my own projection or creation. Thus both his arguments are unsound. It follows from this that it is wrong to identify suffering consciousness with religious consciousness, and to equate emancipation of man from religion with escape from "the hellish torments of contradiction",[80] alienation and suffering.

Setting aside Feuerbach's anthropological theology, it may be useful to summarize very briefly his teaching about suffering. The pervasive fact which philosophy encounters, he says, is suffering, because this and not thought is primary in man's relation to the objective world. "Thought is preceded by suffering"[81]. It is found that in society there is an absence of freedom and reason, that man is enslaved, because in spite of all progress, he is still in need. Man's suffering is a 'natural' relation of the living subject to its objective environment, for the former is opposed and overwhelmed by the latter. From without nature shapes and determines the ego, making it essentially 'passive'. So, nature is the basis and medium for liberating mankind, and though this passivity of the ego cannot be eradicated, it can be transformed from a source of privation and pain to one of abundance and enjoyment.[82]

In understanding Feuerbach it would be helpful to recall that for him man is a real sensible being and the body in its totality is man's ego, his essence, while man's nature is contained in community alone. While the sensible alone is real and true, man arrives at concepts as a real being in relation to another such — as 'I' in relation to 'Thou', and his destiny and happiness consist in life with and for others. Some elements in Feuerbach's theory of suffering and his dialogical understanding of man may be accepted while rejecting his theory of religion.

Hegel understands suffering in a peculiar way. For Hegel the subject-object relation is a self-estrangement (*selbstentfremdung*). The self-conscious spirit apprehends the objective world as alien and hostile, for all that is external to it is experienced by it as directed against itself. This is because spirit having a "concept" (*begriff*) of itself as an absolute being, *das Ganze*, looks upon an object as something opposed and alien to its allness. An object negates the absoluteness of the subject, so it is a challenge to the latter's 'concept'. Whenever the self apprehends something, it becomes conscious of itself as not the whole of reality, i.e. it feels itself to be not absolute. In his *Phenomenology* Hegel calls this an "unhappy consciousness" of self-estrangement. The object apprehended constitutes a limit (*grenze*) to the spirit, making it conscious of itself as a finite being and contradicting its 'concept'.[83] Objects are thus barriers or fetters (*schranke*) to the spirit. Feeling thus bound and imprisoned by the objective world, alienated and estranged from its concept of itself, spirit suffers. Hegel calls this the "sorrow of finitude"[84]. The otherness or the objectivity of the world is for Hegel an illusion. To know is to pierce this illusion, strip the object of its objectivity and otherness, and know it as 'self-ish' (*selbstisch*). In thus recognizing itself in what previously appeared as something apart from it, the self transcends (*aufhebung*) the subject-object relation, or self-alienation, for the world came to be because of its own self-externalization. In transcendence, the object is destroyed as an object and preserved as a mental content, and the self becomes conscious of itself as unbounded and as having no limit, no not-self to oppose it. Freedom is to know the objective world as "selfish" (*selbstisch*), and to be not conscious of anything which is not oneself.[85]

The general agreement of this with Śankara's views is striking. For Śankara variety is the cause of particular consciousness, and ignorance is the cause of variety. To project something other than the self is ignorance, whereas freedom is to attain unity with all. The true form (*rūpam*)

of the self is identity with all, to comprise all. There is nothing else but the self, all objects are the self; the self is not separate from anything. Because of this unity, the self in its true form does not know itself as "I am this", or know things as external to itself. Since it is devoid of all relative attributes and there is no second besides itself, the self has no fear of anything. It has also no desires, because itself comprising everything and realizing everything as its own forms, and having lost the idea of difference, there remain no objects which can be desired. Śankara says this true form of the self which experiences identity with all is free from *śoka*.[86] Thus for both Śankara and Hegel, suffering is the consciousness that one is not everything, that there is something else beside oneself.

Direct empirical experience establishes the reality of the world, the plurality in it, and the self not being either the all, or the supreme being. Difference of things from one another and existence of other things and persons as over against the self which apprehends them, which are grasped in every act of cognition, disprove the philosophies of monism and identity. To see a thing, as Madhva said, is to apprehend its uniqueness and distinctness from everything else, for the nature (*svarūpa*) of a thing is constituted by its irreducible individuality — its difference from other things, which is a brute fact.[87] The philosophers of identity seek to prove the illusoriness of the world by maintaining the unintelligibility of the subject-object relationship or the indemonstrability of the knower-known relationship, reinforcing it by the argument that perception does not contradict identity.[88] Some of them argue that what is perceived is only undifferentiated being while all determination of it is a mental construction. They forget that whatever may be perceived or however it may be perceived, the very fact of perception implies that there is a perceiver apprehending what is not himself. Our inability logically to define perception or to understand this process cannot prove that perception does not take place and that in it a subject does not cognize the objects or confront other subjects.

While Advaita is based on the presumption that the authorless infallible Upaniṣads teach the oneness of the self and the falsity of the world of plurality and difference, and that therefore the knowledge given by them must sublate empirical experience, Hegelian philosophy is based on a Faustian urge, on *hybris*, and is also an attempt to overcome the Kantian duality of selfhood, and a revolt against the type of religion which sought to inculcate a "dull and killing belief in a superior Being altogether alien to man", which made man a miserable slave. Samādhi appeared to confirm Advaita, while a peculiar sort of dialectic confirmed Hegelianism.

Certain ideas of Hegel led to another kind of understanding of suffering. A particular mode of social labour originates a particular system of contradictory forces, and these constitute different social institutions and relations (*System der Sittlichkeit* in *Schriften Zur Politik*). The process of labour is responsible for integrating various individual activities and for conditioning the various forms of community, such as the family, civil society and state (*Jennenser Realphilosophie*). Being a master or being a servant also necessarily results from labour relationships. The essential nature of the master is to be for itself, while that of the servant is life or existence for another.[89]

It follows from Hegel's analysis that labour determines man's essential nature and the social form it takes. Now we find that in society some only are the actual performers and subjects of labour. These are the proletariat. They have originated from the mode of labour on which society is based. From this Marx argued as follows. If property is what constitutes the first endowment of a free person, the proletarian, who does not possesses property, is neither free, nor a person. If the exercise of the absolute mind, participation in art, religion and philosophy, is what constitutes man's essence, since the proletarian has no time for these, he is separated from his essence. Thus the lot of the proletariat is the reverse of the fulfilment of human potentialities, and their existence bears witness to "the complete loss of man". A

society in which they exist is vicious and irrational; such a society has realized only bondage, injustice and falsehood, and not freedom, justice and reason. The proletariat expresses a total negativity: "universal suffering" and "universal bondage", the negation of the reality of reason.[90] The "principle of suffering", Marx held, is rooted in the historic form of society and requires social action for its abolition.[91]

Marx's understanding of suffering seems to me much sounder than that of Hegel and Feuerbach, though his views are a development of Hegel's doctrine of labour. Much of man's suffering would seem to be due to the relationships prevailing in society — to its structure, and a radical transformation of society should be able to eradicate a good deal of suffering. One need not be a materialist or even a dialectician to believe and hope that concerted and rational human action can increase the sum of happiness in this world and also make it possible for human beings to be more free and capable of participating in the expressions of what Hegel called the absolute mind — art, religion and philosophy.

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"All the grand sources, in short, of human suffering are in a great degree, many of them almost entirely, conquerable by human care and effort".

— J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. II, Everyman, p. 14

SUFFERING: NOTES

1 *Majjhima Nikāya*, I, p. 40.
2 Knox's Trans., p. 38.
3 *The Nature of the Universe*, Latham's Trans., Book II, p. 60-61.
4 Op. cit., p. 129.
5 *Phenomenology*, p. 135. Also, *Philosophy of History*, p. 21, 26.
6 II, p. 187.
7 *Gītā*, XIII. 8, XIV. 20.
8 Quoted by Elie Halevy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (Beacon Press, 1955), p. 13.
9 *Principles*, Part IV, (Everyman's Library), 220.
10 *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, (ed. Bretall), *Sickness unto Death*, p. 342-3.
11 Denis De Rougemont, *Passion and Society*, Faber & Faber, London, 1956.
12 Freud showed this in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*.
13 *Republic*, 585 A.
14 In Zen Buddhism this became *Satori*.
15 *Contra Gentiles*, iii. 135.
16 *Mahāduhkhakhanḍa Suttānta*.
17 *Mahāvagga*, I. p. 9.
18 *Katha*, V. II.
19 III. 4. 2. *Ato'nyadārtam*.
20. VII. 1.3. *Tarati śokamātmavit*. Cp. *Munḍaka*, III. 2.9. Also, "(*Ajam*) —*anuṣthāya na śocati*", *Kaṭha*, V. I.
21 Ibid., p. 347.
22 *Munḍaka*, III 1.2.
23 *Institutes*, I. III. 1.f.
24 *Munḍaka*, III. 1.2.-3.
25 Op. cit.
26 *Śvetāśvetara*, IV. 20.
27 *Kaṭha*, 2. 23.
28 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, IV. 3. 21.
29 *Samyutta*, II, p. 17.
30 *Anguttara*, Vol. IV, p. 64.
31 *Samyutta*, IV. p. 1; *Majjhima*, I; p. 138; *Anguttara*.
32 *Viśuddhimagga*, XVIII.
33 *Samyutta*, Book II, p. 66; Ibid., XII. 62.
34 *Abhidharma Kośa*, VII. 13; *Viśuddhimagga*, XX.
35 *Lalita Vistara*, XIII. 103.

36 Aśvaghos'a, *Buddhacarita*, XI.

37 I. p. 233.

38 *Samyutta*, IV. p. 15; *Majjhima*, 147th Dialogue.

39 *Samyutta*, IV. p. 1; *Majjhima*, 148th Dialogue; *Mahāvagga*, I. 6. 38 et seq.

40 *Majjhima*, I. p. 57.

41 *Dhammapada*, "Maggavaggo", 279.

42 *Majjhima*, 35th Dialogue.

43 *Majjhima*, I. 140; *Mahāvagga*, VI. 31; *Samyutta*, IV. p. 400.

44 *Praṣannapadā*, XVIII, 344.

45 Heidel's Trans., (Chicago), p. 36, 70.

46 "Introductory Essay" in Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, p. XXVIII.

47 *Viśuddhimagga*, Chaps. VIII, XVI.

48 *Vajracchedikā*, 14.

49 *Ethics*, Book III, Prop. VI-VII; *Cogitata Metaphysica*, I. 6.

50 *Tractatus*, II. 2.

51 *Itivuttaka*, p. 8.

52 *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, "Vimalakīrtinirdeśa".

53 *Udāna*, VIII. 1-3.

54 Ibid., Also, *Anguttara*, II. p. 161; *Suttanipāta*, V. 1074, 4.

55 *Samyutta*, IV. p. 374; *Dīgha*, XV.

56 *Samyutta*, I. 39.

57 *Suttanipāta*, 204.

58 *Vajracchedikā*, 32, and Nāgārjuna's *Mahāprajnāpāramitopadeśa*.

59 Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, p. 431.

60 *Metaphysics*, 1051 A4-21; *Ethics*, 1177 B33; *Physics*, 192 A 16-23.

61 *Ethics*, 1095 B14 ff.

62 *Job*, Chaps., 4-5.

63 *Job*, Chaps., 40, 42.

64 *Job*, Chap. 14, where it says the dead man "lieth down and riseth not". Cf. however 19. 26-6, but that too does not talk of vindication after death, whatever it may mean.

65 It is not necessary to discuss the *Servant Sagas* in *Isaiah* because they are not concerned with God's justice, but put forward another concept, viz. that the sufferings of the innocent work for the salvation of others. Psalms 37, 73 and a number of other passages in the Bible, which touch the fringe of the problem make no further contribution.

66 *Ethics*, Part I, Appendix, Elves' Trans.

67 Op. cit.

68 *Theodicy*, (Huggard's Trans.), p. 128, 135-8, 276.
In Meditation IV, Descartes in discussing this problem anticipates Leibniz to some extent. He says evil has no positive existence with reference to God; whatever depends on God only is true and good. He adds that evil was made possible to secure the greater perfection of the universe, as otherwise there would have been no multiplicity in the world if all parts of the universe were exactly similar.

69 *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 28f.

70 *Nature and Destiny of Man*, p. 266.

71 M. F. Thelen, *Man As Sinner*, p. 80.

72 *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics*, p. 61, 62.

73 Ibid., p. 58, 77-8.

74 *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 219.

75 *Institutes*, I. V. I. Also, I. II. 2. & I. III. 1.

76 *Kleine Philosophische Schriften*, p. 56.

77 *Essence of Christianity*, p. 228.

78 Ibid., p. 230.

79 *Kleine*, p. 110; *Essence*, p. 33, 47.

80 *Kleine*, p. 159.

81 *Vorlaufige Thesen Zur Reform der Philosophie*, p. 253.

82 *Essence*, p. 127; Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, London, 1955, p. 270-71.

83 *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 62.

84 *Science of Logic*, Vol. I, p. 143.

85 *Phenomenology*, p. 97; *Philosophy of History*, p. 17.

86 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya*, IV. 3. 21.

87 *Telugu Encyclopaedia*, Vol. VII, p. 144, where I expounded Madhva's critique of *Advaita*.

88 Citsukha, *Tattvapradīpikā*, (Yogīndrānanda's edition), p. 75-6: *Dṛgdṛśyayoh sambandhānupapattisca — Viṣayaviṣayībhāvah — iti cet, na tadanirūpaṇāt.*. Also, p. 281ff. For a discussion of the Advaitic theory of perception and its critique, see my *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta*, p. 121 ff, & Book II, Part II.

89 *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 181-2, 186-7.

90 Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechsphilosophie" in *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* 1927, Vol. I, p. 619.

91 Marcuse, op. cit., p. 270.

ANNEXE
ON SUFFERING AND EXISTENCE

It may be worthwhile to refer to a few major thinkers and writers of the West who shared with the majority of Indian philosophers the view that life is suffering and existence is evil. It may be remembered that according to Udyotakara in all philosophies all great teachers are concerned with describing the nature of suffering, its causes, the way of getting rid of it and the cessation of it.[1] Birth (or life) (*janma*) itself, said Vātsyāyana, is nothing but suffering (*duhkha*);[2] Vācaspati explained suffering as body etc. "Duhkha śabdena sarve śarirādaya ucyante." Similarly, in Buddhism also, as Candrakīrti said, the five *Upādāna Skandhas* are suffering.

1. No one has reflected over the tragic more intensely than the Greek dramatists. The tragic assumes that while man has dignity, worth and meaning and possesses in some sense free will and is in some sense responsible for his actions, over and above him there exists some super-human power or force which partially determines his actions. With these assumptions, writes W. J. Oates, "tragedy is fundamentally oriented towards the problem of evil, either explicitly or implicitly."[3]

The Greek dramatists, Jaeger has shown us, took over and grappled with the problem first posed by Greek epic poetry and then developed by Solon. How are God's ways justified to man ? What are the reasons for God's power over human life ? On the one hand epic poetry expressed the belief that God sends unhappiness to man and on the other hand it also expressed the belief that man brings unhappiness on himself. There is a daemonic power which man cannot resist and sin which leads man to ruin is the effect of this power. Epic poetry also contained the idea that the divine government of the world cannot be blamed for the misfortune which becomes man's lot when he acts against the dictates of his better judgement. Solon developing this held that justice was the divine principle immanent in human life, which when

transgressed would avenge itself inevitably and independently of human justice. But, he also maintained, there is an "unpredictable misfortune" in the world. This is *até* (the madness of doom, the goddess Infatuation). It is closely connected with good fortune, for, as the latter leads man into *hybris**, good fortune quickly turns into deep misery. The daemonic danger lurks in greed which is never satisfied and always wants twice what it already has. Solon's faith in divine justice was based on the tragic realization that good fortune and prosperity do not remain the possession of any one individual or family, as it is their nature to change owners. Solon's faith in divine justice was based on this realization and in turn Aeschylus' philosophy presupposed this faith.

Aeschylus believed that highest knowledge can be reached only by suffering. There is a spiritual unity of suffering and knowledge. He also held that destiny, *até*, has a daemonic nature, cruel and perfidious, which leads man to violate the world-order and to be inevitably punished for his violation. Infatuated by it man goes to doom. Aeschylus had a deep faith in the ultimate blessing of pain and believed that in spite of all attacks order constantly reestablishes itself against chaos. Though we cannot understand it, that, Aeschylus thought, is the meaning of suffering. For Sophocles sublime knowledge is self-knowledge which comprehends that human strength and happiness are nothing. To know oneself is not only to know man's powerlessness, but also to know the indestructible and conquering majesty of suffering humanity.[4]

It would seem that the Greeks considered suffering to be the appointed lot of man.[5] "I am a man: sufficient reason for being miserable."[6] Cosmic order imposes life and death, suffering and misery, on man. The relation between cosmic order and man is that between power and powerlessness. We

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*This may be understood as: taking a part of reality as the whole of it, confusing partial with total truth, absolutizing the relative, attempting to introduce perfection into the imperfect world, trying to exceed human limits and capacities, or aspiring towards the infinite.

do not know on what sanction this relation rests, but obviously it does not rest on a moral purpose, for it does not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. The circumstances in which it places man — the circumstances of birth, of pain and of death — can neither be changed nor overridden. Cosmic order is ruthless, indifferent to human welfare, unapproachable and oppressive. Man is helpless in its grip. It is a power which cannot be understood, withstood or turned by prayer. Man cannot even hope to please the power that be by submission; because though "the wisdom of right counsel is to obey", how should he do it? How should he fulfil its demands? By being virtuous, by being pious? But we see impious men sprung from wicked parents prospering and good men of generous breed being unfortunate. One feels, "It is not right that heaven should deal so with men."[7] The man who suffers, who is sent to his doom, does not even know what for such a lot has befallen him. The innocent may well bewail, "What law of heaven have I transgressed? Why, hapless one, should I look to the gods any more,— what ally should I invoke,— when by piety I have earned the name of impious?" (Antigone), The inscrutable power that has man at its mercy deals with him inexplicably and unreasonably. Prometheus, the benignant, the servant of mankind, who helps man to civilize himself is made to suffer terribly. Zeus is malignant and omnipotent. Antigone unswervingly and magnificently devoted to her ideals suffers an undeserved fate. Kreüsa for no conscious fault of hers is treated cruelly and indifferently and met with a complete and baffling silence by Apollo. Maybe the Greek dramatists intend to teach us, as Matthaei says, that by human discontent, human rebellion, based on the right instincts, a better order would evolve. Human action can alter and inform divine action and reform deity; deity contemplates only such progress which man asks from it. The divine sins against the human, sending death and despair; nevertheless the divine, Matthaei writes, justifies itself, for the life of men goes on and on.[8]

Another interpretation is possible. Jaspers and Werblowsky have respectively pointed out that Greek tragedies imply that guilt is identical with existence and that culture is guilt. Werblowsky indicates that it is natural for man to seek to fulfil his creative powers: it is a part of human nature to aspire towards the infinite, and seek to break through the limits of individual existence. Human history is a record of man's efforts to master nature and mould the world to suit his purposes and serve his ends. If man had not tried to improve his condition in this world in every way, humanity would have perished, but by his creative efforts he has trespassed the limits imposed on him by the cosmic order. By becoming civilized he has offended against the gods. So, "*human* consciousness and its consequence *human* action, are as such sinful aspiration and rebellious trespass." "Civilization and culture, which are human consciousness, resourcefulness and power in action", Werblowsky writes, "inevitably take on the character of hybridic trespass."[9] Man, it follows, cannot refrain from exercising his creative capacities to the utmost extent possible, but this may in the end lead to a crash of the whole cultural structure in a cataclysmic *Götterdämmerung*. This may be compared to the views (previously referred to) of Christian thinkers like Niebuhr and Thelen who hold that there is a temptation to sin in the human situation itself. Man's creativity based on his freedom is his temptation. His "pretension" not to be mortal and not to be finite is his sin.[10]

Pessimism occupied a central position in Greek culture. The universe was described thus by Glycon: "All's nothingness, all ashes, all a jest, Made of Unreason and by it possessed." And, according to Palladas, this is human destiny: "All kept and fed for Death are we, like swine in shambles butchered wantonly."[11] The best fate for man, Silenus told Midas, is "unobtainable — not to be born, to be nothing. The second best is to die early." Yet the Greeks lived a sane and noble life, because their best minds believed that in spite of all the suffering and evil in the world and the

certainty of death, there was sense in man endeavouring to realize his "virtue" (ideal, perfection or excellence). Some instances will exemplify this. Odysseus even when all came to realize the hopelessness of the Greek attempt to take Troy was bent upon realizing what he considered to be "virtue", viz. to be brave and steadfast in war till "we perish, all of us". The insulted and injured Achilles knew of himself that "it was appointed for him to perish there far from his dear father and mother", but he did not refrain from giving the Trojans a "surfeit of war". Hector "took thought of all these things": his child would become an orphan and his wife, who already lost her father and all her brothers, a widow; but as he had ever "learnt to be valiant and to fight in the forefront of the Trojans winning glory", though he knew his doom he went into the battle. These heroes sacrificed everything else to their vision of "virtue", and sought to realize it for its own sake with singleminded devotion, without caring for anything else. "Virtue" for Homeric heroes was courage and steadfastness in war, for Heraclitus it was "thought" and for Phocylides it was "justice", while perhaps for most men, as Theognis said, it was "money".[12] The point is in whatsoever manner a Greek conceived "virtue", he went in pursuit of it with passion and singlemindedness, in spite of the tragic pessimism which pervaded his culture. The Greeks were able to do so, because, as Burckhardt and Nietzsche showed, their despair was reconciled to life through beauty.[13] Existence appeared justified to the Greeks as an object of their artistic contemplation, as an aesthetic phenomenon. They made drama out of suffering and created the sublime by artistically subjugating the awful.[14] (See Annexe I to Chapter IV.)

2. I would now like to refer to the views of some modern Western philosophers. One might begin with Schopenhauer, whose philosophy is a sort of adulterated Buddhism. He argues that suffering is the direct and immediate object of life, as otherwise the pain and misfortune that prevail make

no sense. Evil is positive and the good is negative, for happiness and satisfaction always imply a desire fulfilled and a state of pain brought to an end. Freedom from pain is the positive element of existence. All the torment and agony in the world are the outcome of the will to live which underlies and forms the world of phenomena. The world cannot be the successful work of an all-wise, all-good and all-powerful Being, because misery abounds everywhere in it and its highest product — man — is so obviously imperfect. Unrest characterizes existence, and in this world where all is unstable, happiness is inconceivable. "Human life must be some kind of mistake", because (1) man is a compound of needs and necessities hard to satisfy, and (2) when they are satisfied there results a state of painlessness which leads to boredom. If life had any real and positive value, there cannot be boredom; mere existence would satisfy us if it had any real value in itself. But we delight in existence only when we are struggling for something, and as soon we reach the goal, it fails to satisfy us. The human being is the most perfect manifestation of the will to live, but the human being "falls to the ground and is extinguished". If it were of value this would not happen. So, in its essence the struggle of this will to live is barren and unprofitable. The path of redemption from the evil of the world, writes Schopenhauer, is denial of the will to live, sacrifice of self — asceticism.[15]

Like his 'great educator', Schopenhauer, Nietzsche talks of Will as the ground of the world. World Will, he says, is the primal being, it is extravagantly fecund; so there is a constant proliferation of forms pushing into life, and because of this, the struggle, pain and destruction of appearances is necessary.[16] Existence is essentially pain, destruction and suffering. Existence, he writes, has no meaning or goal, but is inescapably recurrent, without a finale into nothingness.[17] As existence is suffering, absence of the latter would mean non-existence; and for Nietzsche non-existence is not happiness, nor does existence ever end for it is eternal recurrence. Happiness arises from accepting suffering and willing the

world with all its suffering. Suffering is conquered by seeking it out and accepting it and the greater the suffering thus taken on, the more intense the joy springing from its conquest. The greater the agony one wills, affirms and accepts, the greater would be his chance of ultimate bliss. By willing and accepting suffering, it is transformed into bliss. He writes: "You want, if possible — and there is not a more foolish 'if possible' — *to do away with suffering*; and we ?— it really seems that *we* would rather have it increased and made worse than it has ever been !"[18] According to him, it is the "discipline of *great* suffering" which has "produced all the elevations of humanity hitherto" and "whatever depth — or greatness has been bestowed upon the soul"; and the deeper one suffers, the more one knows. "Profound suffering makes noble: it separates."[19] Well-being, Nietzsche thinks, is an end and condition which renders man ludicrous and contemptible and makes his destruction desirable.[20]

3. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche should be understood in the European context. Throughout its history Western culture shows, writes Denis de Rougemont, the "love to suffer and to court suffering all the way from Augustine's *amabam amare* down to modern romanticism."[21] Europe, he notes, represses yet preserves "the longing for what sears us and annihilates us in its triumph". Saint Teresa says: "The soul — would fain have its anguish never end"; "Once the soul is put to this torture, it would fain pass thus the whole of the life remaining to it." She also spoke of "sweet-tasting suffering" (*dolor sabroso*). Saint John of the Cross talks of "sweet cautery". Petrarch liked to "feed on these particular pains and sufferings with a kind of delight so poignant that if I am snatched away from them it is against my will."[22] Faust exclaims: "Oh, what delight! What woe!" Rilke referred to the 'holy cunning of martyrs' who took 'the most concentrated dose of pain" to acquire the immunity of continual bliss.[23] Tasso's Olindo rejoiced in "dolci martiri" (sweet martyrdom). "A peculiar sense of painful pleasure", writes

Mario Praz, was the source of inspiration of many romantics. (*The Romantic Agony*, Fontana Library, Collins, p. 52) Dostoevsky spoke of the Russian soul's "thirst for suffering" (*Diary of an Author*), and A. C. Swinburne of the "hideous lust of pain" which he noticed in the early English dramatists. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought", said Shelley, and Keats in one of his odes established a close relation between melancholy and beauty; while for Leopardi love is death's brother. According to Flaubert Romantic sensibility achieved 'la grande synthèse' of joy and suffering. No one expressed this more clearly and effectively than Swinburne:

"Pain melted in tears, and was pleasure;
Death tingled with blood, and was life."

["Dolores" in *Poems & Ballads* (First Series), Heinemann, London, 1918, p. 160.]

It is authoritatively asserted that it is typical of the Western *psyche* that Western man reaches self-awareness in suffering and on the verge of death.[24] "Suffering and understanding are deeply connected" in that culture.[25] Sophocles says: Zeus "hath ruled Men shall learn wisdom, by affliction schooled" (Agamemnon). "There arises a pain", Saint Teresa vouches, "uplifting the soul above itself and above all created things." For Marquis de Sade "suffering is the sign of a redemption", for Dostoevsky salvation had to be won through suffering. Hegel, writes Denis de Rougemont, based his general explanation of the human mind and also of human history on the alliance between suffering and understanding and between death and self-awareness. In *Cain* Byron makes Lucifer say that grief is knowledge, that by suffering man learns to anticipate his immortality and that death may lead to the *highest* knowledge, and the *surest* science. Cain also realizes that quest for knowledge is not the road to happiness. Kierkegaard maintains that by suffering one can learn to know oneself as well as "that which is high above all else", for suffering directs a man to look within and "it is inwardness that wins eternity". "The school of sufferings", he says, "fits us

for eternity."[26] "Suffering", Unamuno informs us, "is the path of consciousness, and by it living beings arrive at the possession of self-consciousness. For to possess consciousness of oneself, to possess personality, is to know oneself." This, he continues, "is only reached — through suffering more or less severe". He asks, "How do we know that we exist if we do not suffer, little or much?" Reflective consciousness, according to him, is acquired only by suffering.[27] Karl Jaspers thinks that by facing the tragic and seeing through it, man sees "to the unspoken and unutterable depths of life" and this, according to him, is "one way of obtaining purification and redemption."[28] Denis de Rougemont says in the European liking for pain and boredom with happiness, in the longing for suffering and death, we find the root of Europe's war instinct.[29]

This European attitude to suffering is in such a glaring contrast to the Indian. Indian thinkers who recognize that life is suffering are concerned with overcoming it or eradicating it. Liberation from suffering is what they crave for and they generally think right knowledge is the means for this. A state in which there is absolutely no suffering or in which there is in addition positive bliss, is what they all consider as the supreme end. The sweetness of suffering, the "delectatio morosa", the delight of pain, knowledge through suffering and death, and knowledge of onself and one's destiny resulting in more unhappiness — these were not conceived by the Indian thinkers. Seeking an intensification of suffering would be considered to be madness by them. But in view of this, it cannot be said that Western culture is algolagniac. Maybe also, the desire to seek and inflict suffering is closely related to the desire to master, the tendency to be aggressive and be pugnacious and adventurous. If this be true to any degree, the dominance and success of the West is thereby explained to some extent.

4. Insights of deep significance regarding suffering are to be found in the writings of many modern Western poets, dramatists and novelists too. It has struck one that "Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark, And shares the nature of infinity";[30] and another that this world is a "dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate" and that we hear and see in all "Doubt, chance, and mutability." To act is to suffer, so yet another identifying action with suffering appears to fix it in an eternal action, which has been willed because all have consented to it and have suffered it. This happens, he thinks, because only thus 'the pattern', i.e. action and suffering, can subsist.[31] Such ideas recall to our mind the concept of *samsāra* cycle, which traditionally was conceived as beginningless though it may end for individuals who have attained salvation and may also altogether end when all attain salvation. Virtually it is a pattern which will persist for ever. I would, however, like to conclude this annexe with a brief mention of some views expressed by Samuel Beckett in a fascinating way through his characters.

"All roads were right for me", says Molloy, a character in one of Beckett's works, "a wrong road was an event for me." But all roads lead only to suffering, which is the one incontrovertible fact of life. Suffering is the proof that "something is taking its course"; it is existence. It may even be the evidence of the self: "Je souffire, donc je suis". The air is full of humanity's cries, man is born for trouble as the sparks fly upwards. The eyes of the Unnamable are open because of the tears that pour from them unceasingly; but what makes him weep from time to time? "There is nothing saddening here. Perhaps it is liquefied brain." Existence is suffering, so it would have been better not to have been born. Life — the procession from womb to refuse-dump — is a sordid, obscene calvary. Were it not for birth and the love which was responsible for it, much suffering, absurdity, futility and death might have been spared. There is nothing more obscene, disgusting and sinful than motherhood — conceiving and giving birth to a new being to endure suffering (*Molloy*; *The Unnamable*). But, perhaps in the fact of suffering one might realize oneself? There seems to be no

real relationship between that which suffers and that which "causes" to suffer; suffering springs from the uncausated Void and, so, belongs to the same order of reality as the self. If so, can suffering be actual, verifiable evidence of the reality of self? No, because all suffering is bearable, so its only evidence can be physical, and consequently temporal and irrelevant. So, by reflection on suffering which is gratuitous one cannot find oneself, one's inner reality. But, is it possible that suffering by its existence creates and determines something preceding it? The fact of it may create the necessity for it. It is the 'atonement' for a 'sin', but the relation between the two is not causal, it may be logical. But what exactly that sin is one cannot know; and one may feel that living is not a sufficient atonement for it and that this atonement is in itself a sin, calling for further atonement. For the living there can be nothing but life — neither sin nor atonement. Yet, if suffering which is irrational is a fact, may not there be other irrational things, "self" and "sin"? If so, life perhaps exists in order that suffering may exist: and because one suffers one is and one day one may no more suffer. One may become free one day!* (*Malone Dies*; *Endgame*).

"The being of human reality is suffering because it emerges in being as perpetually haunted by a totality which it is without being able to be it. . . .Human reality therefore is by nature an unhappy consciousness with no possibility of transcending its unhappy state."

— Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, selection in *The Philosophy of J-P Sartre*, ed. R. D. Cumming, pp. 170-2.

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*In these extraordinary reflections of Beckett on existence and suffering, one finds parallelisms with some of the ideas of Zen.

ON SUFFERING AND EXISTENCE: NOTES

1. *Nyāya Vārtika*, Bk. I, p. 13.
2. *Nyāya Bhāṣya*, I. 1.21.
3. W. J. Oates, "General Introduction" to *The Complete Greek Drama*, Vol. I, New York, 1938, pp. XXVII-XXVIII.
4. For this and above paragraph I depend on W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, Vol. I, Oxford 1946, pp. 255-8, 266-7, 284.
5. *The Ion of Euripides*, I. 39-1, 960-75.
6. Menander, Trans. by Thomas Gray.
7. Sophocles, Fragment 107. Cp. Habakkuk, I, 3-4: "O Lord, Why hast thou shewn me iniquity and grievance, to see rapine and injustice before me?— Because the wicked prevaileth against the just, therefore, wrong judgment goeth forth."
8. L. E. Matthaei, *Studies in Greek Tragedy*, Cambridge 1918.
9. R. J. Z. Werblowsky, *Lucifer and Prometheus*, London 1952, p. 61.
10. See *Suffering*: *Notes* 69, 70 and 71.
11. Anthology, XII. 33, 35 — cited by R. W. Livingstone, *Greek Ideals And Modern Life*, London 1935, p. 67.
12. For these definitions of 'Virtue', Livingstone, Ibid., pp. 77-8.
13. E. Heller, *The Disinherited Mind*, Penguin Books, 1961, p. 73. F. M. Cornford considered Nietzsche's interpretation "a work of profound imaginative insight." (*From Religion to Philosophy*, p. 111.)
14. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 62.
15. A. Schopenhauer, *Studies in Pessimism*, (Trans. Saunders), London 1937, pp. 1, 15, 22, 24, 35, 37-9, and 26.
16. *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 102-3.
17. *The Will to Power*, *Musarion-Ausgabe*, XVIII. 45.
18. *Beyond Good And Evil*, p. 146.
19. Op. cit., p. 147, 211-2.
20. Loc. cit.
21. Denis de Rougemont, *Passion And Society*, London 1956, p. 50. This book is about passion, but *passim* it asserts "passion means suffering." See pp. 15, 50, 243.
22. For Teresa, John and Petrarch: Op. cit., pp. 182, 183. For *dolor sabroso*: Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, London 1931, p. 210.
23. Heller, Ibid., p. 141.
24. Op. cit., p. 51.
25. loc. cit.
26. Kierkegaard, *Gospel of Sufferings* (Trans. Aldworth and Ferrie), London 1965, pp. 51, 57, 49.
27. Unamuno, Ibid., p. 140.

28 *Tragedy Is Not Enough*, pp. 39, 89.

29 Rougemont, Ibid., pp. 50, 243. He thinks Europe holds "a theory of the *fruitfulness of suffering*".

30 Wordsworth, *Borderers*, Act III. The next quotation is from Shelley.

31 T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*.

SALVATION

"There is a goal, but no way; what we call way is only wavering."
— Franz Kafka, *The Great Wall of China*, London, 1964, p. 145.