

I

"To-day, in France and all of Europe, as in the U.S.A. and Soviet Russia, the quest is for Security. But occidental man remains fettered to the evanescent and insecure"¹. These are the words of Evans-Wentz. He thinks that Western man can transcend the Illusory and enter upon the path of wisdom, only when "he has ascertained by bitter experience that his utilitarianism, his machines, his animal comforts, his technocracies, his various ideologies and schemes looking to social well-being and a Utopia here on Earth are no more than will-o'-the-wisps of the mundane world"². Evans-Wentz fears that this is becoming a problem for India and the Orient also who have "grown intoxicated with the wine of westernization" and have allowed "the perishable comforts and pleasures afforded by Western Science to become their tutelary deities"³. He believes that only if India remains faithful to her Masters of wisdom can she "retain the spiritual leadership of the World"; otherwise "shall the whole Earth, as never before in the annals of time, be conquered by Ignorance and Darkness". If India "chooses knowledge and ceases to cherish wisdom", he predicts that barbarism will conquer the whole world⁴. While all this may be flattering to the vanity of an Indian, it is nonsense to think that any particular nation or country like the Aryan or the Hebrew, India or Germany, is the chosen one and that all mankind's salvation depends only on the history of the chosen nation or country.

Men are just men everywhere in all lands and times, who are moved by the same instincts, desires and aspirations. There is no clear-cut fundamental difference between Eastern and Western thinking. The Vedic religion which first developed in Central Asian steppes was able to spread all over

India. Buddhism which arose in the Gangetic valley was adopted and appropriated not only by all parts of India, but China and Central and South East Asia, and so was Christianity that arose in the Middle East by all of Europe. The faith of the Arabs became the religion of thousands of people from Spain to India and Indonesia. Some of the best Islamic thinkers were Spaniards. Marxism which arose in Western Europe is now the ideology of millions not only in Russia and Eastern Europe, but in Asia and Latin America too. Japan and to some extent India and other eastern countries have not only appropriated science, technology and the forms of social and political organization of the West, but are becoming at home in them and are even making contributions to their development. There are of course some differences between the thinking of one people and another, just as even within the same culture, religion, race and country too there are differences. It may be said that the thinking of the French differs from that of the English and the Germans, and that of the Welsh from the English, the Scotch and the Irish, even as there are differences between the thinking of the Japanese and the Indians, and in India itself among the Punjabis, the Bengalis and the Tamils. Ways of emotion and thinking differ to some extent from individual to individual and from one region to another in the same country too. The differences between eastern and western thinking are not more innate and fundamental than these. Those who find such differences do so because they take a few world-negating philosophies, and certain types of mysticism and asceticism as the typical representations of the Eastern, especially Indian, spirit and contrast them with the secular and scientific trends of modern West. I do not understand why the Vedic sages, Kautilya, Manu, the Cārvākas, the Mīmāṃsakas, Rāmānuja, Vallabha, Vātsyāyana of the Kāma Sūtra and the Tāntrikas do not represent the Indian spirit, and why only Māyāvāda, non-dualism and asceticism represent the Indian spirit. This is as silly as saying that only Ramana Maharshi and Gandhi are truly Indian while Tagore and Nehru

are not. India is no more spiritual or religious than others. Running after will-o'-the-wisps, attachment to the evanescent and subjection to desire, ambition and greed,—these have been common human characteristics at all times and places. Very few either in the East or the West have discriminated between the eternal and the temporal, between the spirit and the flesh, and acquired the illumination that liberates. As Śankara said, it is natural for men to be ignorant and to identify themselves with the bodies, and to base all their experience and behaviour on this nescience. They do not differ from animals in this respect. Man in every age and clime has been a slave of desires, doubts, perplexities and fears. The *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* says:

“I know that all these creatures
Have failed in previous lives,
Are firmly attached to base desires
And, infatuated, are in trouble.

... ..

They suffer the utmost misery.
Received into the womb in embryo,
They pass from generation to generation,
Poor in virtue and of little happiness,
Oppressed by all the sorrows
And dwelling in the thickets of debate,
Such as, Existence? or Non-Existence?
Relying on their propositions,
Sixty-two in number,
They become rooted in false philosophy,
Tenacious and unyielding,
Self-sufficient and self-inflated,
Suspicious, warped, without faith”.⁵

Salvation is a state of consciousness in which man experiences with certainty that he has nothing to fear in life or after death. It is consequently an awareness of peace, security

and contentment. There is a sense of achievement and power in it, as it has to be won and is not natural to man. He who has won the certitude of salvation leads a way of life different from others, not in externals but inwardly. The saved man may be a yogin in the Himalayas, a warrior, a fisherman, a peasant, or a butcher. Only in his goal and motivation, and in his dispassion and detachment does he differ from other human beings.

There can be no salvation without freedom in all matters, from material wants, from the dread of evil powers or Karma and transmigration, and from the sense of guilt. Tibetan Yoga or Vedānta cannot give liberation to men who have nothing to wear and eat. Salvation has to first come to them in the form of freedom from basic material wants. Man can win this freedom only by developing appropriate tactics of living whereby he develops the capacity and the efficiency that enable him to conquer nature. Puruṣa must conquer prakṛti, otherwise he would be dominated by it. This is what technology achieves to some extent. Technics are the result of deliberate and unconscious human choices to measure, adapt, alter and reconstruct nature so that it becomes a tool of man, a means of his happy carefree life, and not his master. Every culture is to some extent based on technology. All means of production of food and comfort and devices of protection are the results of technology. The wheel, the water-mill, the grinding stone, the loom and lathe, the compass and the clock, gunpowder and paper are all devices which are necessities to man if he is not to lapse into an animal form of life subject to chance and nature's vagaries. The machine represents man's will to win freedom from nature and adapt it and reconstruct it. Man as a rational purposive being plans and orders his life and social relationships. Without the will to order, the State, the caste system, the Buddhist Sangha and the trade guilds could not have come into existence. The Parivṛājakas and the Pythagoreans too need some regimentation. Crete, Egypt and Rome had great engineering feats to their credit. The temples of Mahābalipuram, Konārak

and the Qutub Minar were the results of technology. Man has always been trying to be technological to win a certain type of freedom. Modern technology is so successful because it has combined mechanization and regimentation not unknown in the past with greater efficiency than in the past. The threat which modern technology poses is that instead of its remaining a means for achieving the good and the free life, a life which allows man time for culture, privacy, meditation and worship, it tends to dominate all life and adapt it to the speed and capacities of the machine.

Eastern peoples who are more and more avidly adopting technology and industrialization are doing a wise thing, for in this they see a way of creating new sources of power and wealth. They are learning that it is more practicable to create a heaven on earth than to pray for the coming dawn of the kingdom of heaven. The Vedic forefathers of Indians were very much interested in cattle and horses, in the good things of the earth. They sacrificed for getting them, for them sacrifice was *īṣṭakāma dhuk*. The magic of technology now rightly takes the place which once was occupied by Ātharvanic magic and mantra-tantras. The interdependence of the world and the physical proximity of all nations with each other brought about by the revolution in communications makes it necessary that all nations take to science and technology. Otherwise the militarily superior nations may wipe out or subjugate the others. We have seen that the Yoga of the Tibetans and all their esotericism and spirituality could not save them, as much earlier Vedānta, Yoga and Tantra could not save India, from falling a prey to external aggression. Superiority in weapons and military organization is the result of social organization, based on law and order, sound public finance, productive capacity and scientific development. Without development in agriculture and the industrial techniques capable of manufacturing armaments, a people cannot retain the freedom to lead the good lives they ought to. Without the good life, a pure mind and a spiritual disposition so necessary for the saving insight, salvation is impossible. A destitute

or a slave cannot have complete salvation. The conquest of the material, the aesthetic and the ethical must precede the spiritual quest. For salvation knowledge is as important as wisdom, and morals as important as mechanics and medicine. The fruit of knowledge, as the Īśa Upaniṣad said, is different from that of wisdom, only he who grasps both is able to conquer death and win immortality. Those who stick to knowledge only enter into darkness, while those who cling to wisdom only plunge into greater darkness.⁶ Wisdom along with knowledge, *jñānam vijñānasahitam*, is the means of salvation.

What has been said above should not be misunderstood. In the poor countries intolerable living conditions exist, in them human living conditions must be created. There is a reasonable chance of doing this by means of technology. Improvement in living conditions has to be achieved by mastery over nature, which is possible through technology. But technology while improving man's power over nature makes him more and more powerless over his own contrivances. The form of enslavement in the pre-technological era is transformed into enslavement to technical contrivances in the technological society. While these contrivances increase productivity and change intolerable living conditions of existence, they make man submit to themselves, restricting and even depriving him of the freedom to determine his own life. Man becomes less autonomous, because in one form of the technological society it is a group or groups who tend to become omnipotent and in another it is the State and the central Plan which become omnipotent. Development through subjection to a dominant group or through the State continues the 'schemata of subjection'. (Gilbert Simondon) Such development is only a progress in enslavement. If this is the dialectic of industrialization, it may be asked, should technology and rapid industrialization be introduced into poor countries? The answer must be 'Yes', because the intolerable living conditions and the primary form of enslavement in them must be eliminated, and for this a practicable alternative way has not yet been conceived.⁷

The affluent society is as far away from being a free society as a poor society. Hence there arises the need for what Marcuse has called "the metaphysics of liberation", i.e. "the reconciliation of Logos and Eros",⁸ which calls for changing the society as a whole, so that a free society may be constructed in which human needs and faculties may have an opportunity for free development. This is not the occasion for a discussion of how this could be brought about. The point which I now wish to make is while liberation from poverty is what is most needed in countries like India, liberation from affluence is very much needed in the new industrial states. The ultimate goal is a better and free life. History could be the story of liberty if the unfreedom which prevails in the world in one form or other could be eliminated.

II

In the remaining part of this lecture I will be concerned only with salvation in the transcendental sense. Salvation presupposes that someone or something has to be saved, either by oneself or itself, or by another, and saving must be from something, someone, a condition or state; and, finally, the saved becomes someone or something or enters into another condition or state. It would be interesting to recall whether the concept of salvation was entertained by all major cultures and religions or only by some.

A From some time before 700 B.C., when the Greek view of man and his destiny found definitive literary form to the age of the Stoics and the Epicureans, in spite of the various ways in which it was expressed, it was predominantly characterized by an absence of eschatology, for it tacitly conceived that human life did not extend beyond its present existence. The Greeks did not believe that anything not substantiated by the evidence of the senses could be a fact, and as the human being appeared to disintegrate at death, they concluded that

must be the end of his existence. A Greek epigram summarizes this:

"I was not, I became; I was, I am not — just this!
And if any man asserts the contrary, he will lie; I shall not be".⁹
Aristotle held that man is a composite being of body and soul. When the body is destroyed, intuitive thought and contemplation 'die away', while memory and love perish when he to whom they belong 'perishes'. The soul cannot exist without body. But there also exists in some sense in the human soul an element, the active reason, which, however, goes beyond the individual, of which we are not conscious except in moments of illumination, and this is immortal and eternal. As pointed out by W. D. Ross, Aristotle did not think of the self as a being distinct from the body. Soul and body form a complete union, they being only aspects distinguished by philosophic analysis.¹⁰ For this kind of thought there was no question of personal immortality, afterlife or salvation.

The cult of Eleusis and Orphism were important exceptions to this general Greek view. The precise doctrine on which the cult of Eleusis was based is not known; but it was an impressive ritual, initiation into which assured 'good things' after death, while the uninitiated could not have them after death. Orphism taught that the soul is divine and immortal, that it comes to be repeatedly imprisoned in bodies to undergo a penalty, and that it has to go through a cycle of births and deaths involving much suffering, till by its own efforts of purification and the grace of the Saviour (Dionysos, son of Zeus), it frees itself from 'the sorrowful weary wheel' and attains everlasting peace and bliss. The Orphic belief regarding the divine origin of the soul, its involvement in transmigration and consequent need for purification, and its salvation, are based on myths. There is no doubt all such myths were attempts to express and interpret what was experienced by some.

Among the Greek philosophers, Pythagoras and Empedocles believed in metempsychosis. Pherecydes of Syros (6th century B.C.) was credited to be the first who pronounced souls of men to be eternal. The first definite reference in Greek

literature to metempsychosis is found in Pindar, who too asserted the soul's divine origin and immortality. In Socrates and Plato this doctrine found its philosophic expression. The *Phaedo* seeks to prove the immortality of the soul, and the *Phaedrus*, under Orphic influence, tries to make out that the soul is preexistent, divine and immortal. Those souls which are unable to maintain their primordial elevation sink down till they find solid resting-places, i.e. bodies, and become incarnated. This leads to metempsychosis which contaminates them. So they have to atone for this and free themselves from bondage to the body to regain their original blessedness.

The Orphic-Platonic tradition did not represent the dominant Greek tradition; the doctrine of metempsychosis was perhaps borrowed from Egypt, as Herodotus wrote, or India, though it is possible that some Greek minds evolved it out of primitive eschatology, as Nilsson conjectured. Stoicism the most integrated and consistent philosophy of life evolved by the ancient Mediterranean world, Epicureanism and Aristotle constitute the philosophic expressions of the dominant Greek view of man and his destiny.

B I now come to the Hebrew world. It may not be altogether unjustifiable to say that orthodox Judaism is Yahwism. This did not distinguish between body and soul as two independent substances and did not believe in survival after death. All who die depart to the underworld (sheol) from which there is no return. It is a place of darkness, forgetfulness and destruction. There is virtually no existence there. *The Ecclesiastes* takes the Yahwist view of life to its logical conclusion. All are dust and will again turn to dust: all come from one place and will go to one place. So, for man there is nothing better than to eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of his labour. To the question, if all men are of the same origin and go to the same end, why do some suffer and others are happy? the answer of another book *The Ecclesiasticus* is that Divine Omnipotence blessed or cursed some according to his will.

The first clear mention of bodily resurrection is found in Judas Macabaeus (165-161 B.C.), and it is first stated as a dogma in Daniel and in it and Isaiah, both of the Greek period, the doctrines of resurrection and judgment are found. In I Ench we read of the three divisions of the sheol to which the dead were allocated according to their mortal deserts, and of Gehenna, the fiery pit of torment, from which was later born the Christian idea of Hell. In *The Wisdom of Solomon* we notice an excessive concern with the other world. The philosopher Philo made the first great open attempt to combine Hebrew and Greek thought.

In the first century there were three Jewish sects. Of these the Pharisees believed in resurrection, the Sadducees rejected it and held that there was no survival after death, while the Essenes maintained that the soul was immortal. It has only to be added that the Rabbinic doctrine accepted both immortality of the soul and bodily resurrection basing itself on later Hebrew eschatology, which was influenced by Greek and Iranian beliefs.

Jesus Christ is properly understood within the Jewish context. His teaching of God did not differ from that of the great Hebrew prophets, but along with God's transcendence he emphasized God's nearness to man. His eschatology was generally in line with the current Jewish one, but he comprehended resurrection, judgment and glory in the one idea of the coming reign of God. He asked men to prepare themselves for the imminent kingdom of God by cutting off all earthly connections and constant readiness to serve others out of love.

C The 'Mystery Religions' (e.g. cults of Isis, Adonis etc.) which invaded the Roman world are important for a study of the idea of salvation. These came from Asia Minor, Phrygia, Egypt and Syria and acquired new forms in the Roman world. Admission to anyone of these religions, open to all, was by a solemn consecration, an initiation rite held in secret, after the person seeking admission was purified physically

and mentally. The rite consisted of the imparting of a sacred formula and culminated in the vision of the deity, in which, it was believed, union with the deity was attained. Thereby the mystes (the initiate who had the secret) became immortal. The *essentia* of a Mystery Religion was direct communion with the deity, considered to be the Saviour. Salvation was imparted by such communion. Salvation, it was thought, conferred on the mystes deliverance from all suffering and misfortune as well as freedom of the soul from the evil and pain in the world, and immortality. The deity was generally a youthful god who died and rose again. Through the cult the mystes achieved identity with the god, sharing his death as well as his rising to immortal life. As the god was saved so was the mystes from all suffering. The mystes was reborn and deified by his consecration.

D Another Oriental religion which for a time competed with Christianity in the Roman world was Gnosticism. This too was a religion of salvation based on dualism. The world is alien, a prison, a dark cave into which man is flung. The world was not created by God, but came into being through the sin, negligence and ignorance of some spiritual beings. Gnosticism distinguished man into self, soul and body. The self is a preexistent spark of heavenly light. It was brought down into the world by demonic powers. God is what is not the world, utter transcendence. The self imprisoned in the world must be liberated—from the body, the soul as well as the hostile world. This redemption cannot take place in the world where only worldly events can take place. It can be only eschatological. The true self is known through revelation brought from the world of light by God's Divine Son, his emissary. In meditation and ecstasy redemption is anticipated. When revelation makes the Self aware that it is not of this world, it becomes conscious of its 'calling', realizes it is superior to this world and detaches itself from it. When a man knows that his true Self is a transcendent entity, the world ceases to be of importance to him. When

such a man dies, his Self escapes to God from the world in which it has been imprisoned. It becomes whole in God's truth and holy in his righteousness. When all the Selves are freed and ascend to Heaven, the world will come to an end.

E Jesus claimed that the Reign of God was (in a trice) in the midst of men and that the Redeemer was nigh, even at the doors. This was himself and men's destiny, he declared, was determined by their inward response to his words and works. The early Christian Church proclaimed him as the Messiah. Under the influence of the Oriental religions in the Roman world, a redemptive significance was seen in his death and it was described using their terminology. Christians, like the mystes of those religions, participated in their Lord's death and resurrection. His person was interpreted on the analogy of the emissary of the supreme deity in Gnosticism. Jesus came to be understood and believed as the Saviour and Son of God. Retaining these beliefs, later Christian thought developed in various ways under diverse influences.

F Islam, so far as the Quran alone is taken into account, is Semitic in its eschatology. There is no division of man into body and soul, but resurrection, the last judgment, heaven and hell are accepted.¹¹ Allah's breathing his spirit into man whom he created from "potter's clay of mud ground down",¹² or his calling in "souls" at the time of their death,¹³ do not seem to imply the conception of an immortal soul dwelling in a mortal body. Those who believe, submit to God's will and do works of righteousness, says the Quran, will go to heaven.

G Zarathustra's eschatology assumes survival after death in some way, in fact he seems to have spoken about man's survival along with his body. Since man is created by Ahura Mazda, he owes his allegiance to him; so, if man aligns himself with Ahura, the Supreme Principle of Good, as against

his adversary, the Principle of Evil, he will have his reward in this life, and also in the life to come after death, for the Good will be victorious over Evil. The individual has to work out his own salvation by resolving to follow the Good, but he receives help and succour from the sovereign lord of the universe in his struggle with evil.

H Two other probably Iranian religions, also based on dualism, deserve mention, because both were soteriologies: (1) In Mithraism there are two principles: Temporality and Eternity, Finitude and Infinity, Ahriman and Ahura Mazda, the source of all decay and death on the one hand and that of growth, well-being and eternity on the other hand. To one had to be offered, as Plutarch noted, averting and mourning offerings and to the other votive and thanksgiving offerings. Between these two gods, Mithra, the Indo-Iranian deity, was the mediator. Apparently by a number of acts culminating in a mighty archetypal one in which a bull was slain as a sacrificial victim, Mithra achieved this mediation. This sacrifice ensured for all victory of Life over Death, of Light over Darkness. He thus became the heroic saviour of mankind from decay and death through this perpetually efficacious sacrifice made once and for the sake of all. Through initiation into the Mithraic mysteries, the initiates were assimilated to the deity and shared in his triumph over evanescence and passing away. Mithraism, unlike Gnostic dualism, was of two cosmic principles and it was a religion of hope. It was a formidable rival to Christianity in the Graeco-Roman world. (2) Manichaeism, founded by the Babylonian prophet Mani, who was killed by an order of the Sassanian King Bahram I, derived its basic idea of the dualism of good and evil from Iranian thought, asceticism from Buddhism and was also influenced by Christianity. By ascetic living and by faith in Mani as the Holy Spirit who had come to aid men, one attains salvation. Manichaeism had a great vogue in the West and East, and was for centuries prevalent in a way in Eastern Europe.

A comment on these two religions may be in order. These dualistic religions were universal religions for some time and thereby testified that the postulation of good and evil as coeval powers and principles in the universe could appeal to something in human experience. The terrible struggle between good and evil, the battle of Armageddon, has Biblical sanction (to wit, The Revelation of St. John the Divine). Augustine, who was for nine years a Manichee, for some time thought Manichaeism provided a satisfactory theory of evil. Later Platonism and Christianity were found by him to have provided the right solution to the problem of evil. Evil is what man does (sin) and suffers (punishment) and arises out of the free will of man's rational nature. Man's nature was created good by God, but as man does not partake of God's nature, but only of his workmanship, man has the possibility, not the necessity, of sinning. But Mani erroneously taught that man was of God's nature. This was the Augustinian doctrine.¹⁴

I Lastly, we come to China. The dominant tradition in China, like that of Greece, held that birth was the beginning of man and death his end.¹⁵ Life and death were just incidents in the natural process.¹⁶ Man was superior to animals not because he possessed a soul or reason, for his mind was the same as that found in plants, birds and beasts, but because in the constitution of his nature a perfect balance of the elements was achieved.¹⁷ Thus for the Chinese there was no soul and no question of personal immortality and no problem of salvation from evil or sin. They knew the ills of life but these were held to be natural; as there was no God there was no question of justifying his ways with men, or of reconciling the sinful man with an offended God. The highest good was a long life in this world, led in conformity with Tao, which exerted an everlasting influence on society through its worth, work and words.¹⁸

What does this cursory survey of a number of non-Indian beliefs and theories indicate? Some great cultures and very

powerful minds* were not led to question or deny personal annihilation at death. Some of the highest expressions of man's religious consciousness also accepted this: for example, the idea of anything in man being immortal is not found in the Old Testament. It was possible for many to lead a balanced and good life, and for some even a joyous life, while having such an understanding of the human situation, while it led only some to a tragic view and a few to the idea that life had no meaning. Others considered that this in no way rendered human existence meaningless, as, according to them, it did not also become more meaningful by postulating a post-mortem existence of everlasting suffering or happiness as a result of what was done, not done or could not be done on earth within a short span of time; nor, according to them, did the postulation of a wearisome cycle of repeated births and deaths make life more intelligible or significant, for it did not make sense to think that an invisible and indemonstrable pure and divine entity got itself into this mess. From this a possible and justifiable conclusion is that for the good life or for a religious life it is not necessary that there should be an afterlife or a soul. (For more discussion see Annexe I to Chapter IV.)

Other minds and cultures found it necessary to postulate or believe that man survived death in some form or other so that the innocent who suffered on earth or the deserving who could not be happy here, or the faithful who could not be vindicated here, could have another life or existence according to their deserts. Those who could not conceive a disembodied existence of man thought that the body also had to survive, or that at death man entered into a kind of oblivion or shadowy existence to be brought back to a new life in the other world, or that at death the body-soul complex just disintegrated but was reconstituted later. These were alternatives. Either a single final judgment or two — one interim immediately following death and another last — were

*Not all of these were materialistic.

imagined. Modes of existence and different sorts of worlds suitable for these — heaven, hell, purgatory — to accommodate men according to their deserts were imagined. Personal survival after death, judgment and allotment to heaven and hell were consequences of a belief in a sovereign and beneficent, moral and personal power which created and ruled the universe and governed human destiny, and secured justice to everyone if not here on earth, at least in another world.

The third group of beliefs and theories considered the human being as compounded of a spiritual entity and a material body, the former having an existence even prior to the origination of the human being and surviving even after death.* This was the immortal element or entity in the human being — the real man, or his true Self, the soul. On this conception, the body is not an essential constituent of the human being. Such a view led to the mortal body being considered as alien to the immortal self, as a corrupting prison. If the body itself was alien, it is no wonder what surrounded it — the world — was considered much more alien. Myths were made to explain why the soul came to be entrapped in the body and live in the world of suffering and evil. The substance of them all is that in some way the soul lost its primordial purity and freedom and became incarnated. So, it became an important preoccupation to devise a way to liberate the soul from the body and the world and restore it to its original condition. Death would not automatically liberate it, for it would pass into another body, unless what led to its contamination, its fall from its original and natural state, was eradicated. The idea of salvation thus arose. It was thought salvation could be imparted to the soul by magical or mystical assimilation to a divine being who became subject to death, but triumphed over it and regained eternal life for the sake of all, or by the soul's effort to purify itself, or by divine grace, or by enlightenment, a saving knowledge which brought home

*A trichotomous conception — spirit (self), soul and body — was also formulated by some, but the logical implication is the same: the spirit is man's true self.

to the soul its reality. These were alternatives, but two or more of them were sometimes combined. The logic of this required that the soul be considered as eternally existent, or at least as pre-existent to its incarnation, and divine. So, it was either like God or was a spark from him.

In some cases beliefs of these various types coalesced and formed a syncretistic faith. Christianity is a classic example of this. Thus from the Hebrew tradition it inherited the conception of man as an integral unity in which the body was an essential element, and from the Orphic-Platonic tradition a dichotomous conception of man, modified by the doctrine that the soul was created by God before it was incarnated, that it had only one embodied existence and that it would never be reembodyed though it would be immortal. Probably from Egypt and Iran came ideas of judgment of the dead by the Great God and of physical resurrection, which through later Hebrew tradition came to be embedded in Christianity. So, at resurrection the immortal soul would have to be again incarnated. The concepts of the dead and risen god and the Divine Son were derived from mystery religions and gnosticism. That was how Christian eschatology and soteriology were formed. Analysis will show that any other great religion, Hinduism or Buddhism, is likewise a complex pattern of beliefs, theories and practices derived from different sources, not all of them mutually consistent.

Let us now have a look at Indian phenomena.

III

Generations of scholars with the aim of objectively determining what the Old and the New Testaments taught have to a large extent succeeded in doing so, though the conclusions reached by Biblical scholarship are constantly modified and corrected by further investigations. The vast Vedic literature including the Upanishads has not been

subjected to such intensive philological and historical inquiry, nor has it been studied in depth by competent scholars who have mastered the tools of sociology, anthropology and archaeology and are well acquainted with the kind of Sanskrit in which it was written. Higher criticism of these Indian scriptures in the real sense has not yet been undertaken and completed. The great indigenous interpreters of the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta schools are not unanimous regarding the teaching of these scriptures. So, as their views cannot be summarized in a definitive and non-controversial way, I will concern myself with the developed philosophies.

From very early times three different kinds of thinking were developed in India. The two basic are: the static view and the dynamic view, or the ontological view and the phenomenal view, the *dravyārthika naya* and the *paryāyārthika naya*.¹⁹ One maintains that reality has to be understood in terms of the concept of 'substance' or 'entity' (*dravya*) and the other that reality has to be understood in terms of the concept of the manner (*paryāya*) in which things are found to be in experience, i.e. as phenomena. The *dravyārthika naya* emphasizes being and the *paryāyārthika* emphasizes becoming; the first tends to ignore the particular, the different and the unique, and the other tends to ignore the universal, the common and the uniform. Brahman philosophy may be considered as the development of the ontological view and flux-philosophy of the phenomenal view. The first holds that Entity without action and change is more real or the only real, and the other that Occurrence is the more real or the only real. *Sattāivam tattvam*, that is the first view; *Paryāyamātram eva tattvam*, that is the second view. But on the ground that an entity without particularity, attributes and action is not found anywhere and as the latter devoid of the former are also not found anywhere, the view that maintains that they are inseparable and together constitute reality is the third view. *Dravyaparyāyātmakam Vastu*, that is the third view. Depending upon which of these three views is accepted, conceptions of man and salvation differ.

Soul Philosophies

Philosophies which accept the first view make a hard and fast distinction between soul and body. They conceive the soul as a substance. They yearn for freedom from all sorts of constraint or suffering. (*Duhkha* is *bādhanā lakṣanā*). The soul has responsibilities and duties, desires and fears, ignorance and unhappiness. Why? because it is embodied and has mind and senses. When it is freed from them, it is saved, liberated. Death cannot do this, for the soul is an eternal entity and will again and again be reborn to experience the fruits of its actions. The soul by nature must be a pure principle which is consciousness itself, or has consciousness as an attribute. If it is not so, nothing can make it wholly and permanently pure. Only what is intrinsic to a thing, that which is its real nature, is inseparable from it. What has a beginning, or what is acquired at some time or other, must end. So freedom and purity, must be the very essence of the eternal soul; so that they can never be parted from it. They can, however, be obscured, or veiled, but when by knowledge the soul becomes aware of its true nature, it is forthwith revealed and shines forth. This is like someone adopted from infancy by another family discovering later his true parentage and thus coming to oneself. Some of these philosophies hold that in salvation the soul has awareness. Others deny this for they cannot understand how it can be aware of anything without body and mind. To say it enjoys itself or is aware of itself is to deprive it of absolute unity, and to admit that it becomes an object for itself to some extent. To say that it is just consciousness and bliss and that this cannot be understood on the analogy of our living experience is mystification. So, for example, the Nyāya maintains that in liberation the soul is just freed from everything, endures like a rock, shorn of its attributes. The Sāṃkhya maintains that self awareness is the essence of the soul, for experience shows these two are inseparable, whereas it is not bliss. So in liberation, says Sāṃkhya, there is no bliss.

There is also the problem: if the essence of the soul is bliss, purity and freedom, why does this not manifest itself in life? A thing cannot ever lose its own essence. The Nyāya says due to contact with body, mind etc., the soul has acquired attributes; these must now be got rid of. Sāmkhya and Advaita Vedānta say that due to ignorance the soul is unaware of its own real nature, and when this is removed by knowledge, its original nature is restored. They claim that this ignorance is a principle without beginning, although it can end. The soul is eternal, ignorance is beginningless, and so is their relationship. True knowledge ends this and liberates the soul. But since anything caused by ignorance can only be an illusion, the world and bondage are an illusion. The soul is ever free: it only imagines itself to be bound, impure and suffering. Even this imagination is not a real occurrence, but is something like the redness reflected in a white crystal which is not affected by it. When the soul realizes this, the illusion vanishes. Liberation is thus only metaphorical, for the soul is eternally liberated. Bondage and liberation are alike illusion, as Kapila, Gauḍapāda and Śrī Harṣa assert. Such is the theory of Sāmkhya and Advaita Vedānta. Other philosophies do not accept this, for they admit that the soul is really bound because of its own beginningless karma due to beginningless ignorance. Past karma is exhausted by experience; and when desires are annihilated by knowledge, action loses the capacity to bind and cannot accumulate any karma. For such a man, the present life becomes the last. With death his soul is set free. Action binds only when it is done with desires, when it is motivated by aversion or attachment. The dispassionate and detached man is not bound by action. To develop dispassion and detachment and to know that the soul is or can be untouched by all sin, impurity and ignorance, makes one transcend karma. Such a person, it is claimed, is not re-born.

Contact with matter—with the senses and mind, which are the products of matter—never ceases till the soul regains

its true nature. Death does not sever the soul's connection with matter, for it continues to have a subtle body, viz., the psychic apparatus, i.e. the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa*), the ego-hood, or the individual personality. This is removed only when all desires and all clinging to are annihilated, and the soul realizes itself to be an entity absolutely independent and pure. Those who do not admit the reality of bondage would say that as it is a chimera created by ignorance, wisdom just removes it. Some Yogins would say that by the practice of arresting the mental activities and making the mind blank, it loses its potency and will have no cause to continue after death. Thus the soul is set free from both body and mind, which are forms or modifications of prakṛti. When mind has no seeds in it, when it has no contents and is free from desires or illusions, it ceases to be, having no reason to be. This, according to them, is liberation.

Most of these philosophies declare that salvation can be achieved through knowledge only. *Jñānān muktih*. They presuppose that salvation must be what is unending, what is not compounded and what is not made. That which has a beginning, that which is made up of parts, i.e. that which is composite, cannot be permanent. So salvation cannot be something that can be produced by someone's work; it is not an achievement, but an eternally existing reality. Whatever is produced or achieved must be evanescent. If the soul is to be in salvation for ever, that must be its intrinsic natural state, for nothing can remain permanently in a state which is not its own true one. There can be no change, movement or action in salvation, for all this can be only towards some end, for achieving something more perfect, for all action is for removing some impediment, some constraint, or for producing something desirable. In salvation the soul attains its supreme end, is perfect, so it remains for ever changeless; and as then it will have nothing to limit it or sully it, it remains actionless. Such is the logical conclusion of theories which hold that the soul is a substance and that salvation is through knowledge.

Advaita Vedānta says that since there is only one self, realization of one's identity with it is liberation. The multiplicity and difference one experiences have to be sublated because the Upaniṣads, which are infallible, intrinsically valid and coherent, teach that Brahman is the one Reality, the individual self being that itself. Vedāntins who cannot reject the living experience of man and so do not subscribe to the illusion theory, affirm that the Upaniṣads nowhere teach this sort of thing, and that they only speak of the Transcendent Other, a Supreme Self, which is the source, the goal, as well as the foundation of all being. They think salvation comes by knowing that Great Person (*puruṣam mahāntam*), by entering into communion with him and by surrendering unto him. Bondage which is real has to be destroyed by his cooperative grace.

In theistic Vedānta, there is an interesting discussion whether absolute liberation is attained by merely experiencing one's self as entirely separate and distinct from matter, or whether it is also necessary in addition to this to realize oneself as related to the Supreme person. To put it in other words, is mere true knowledge of the nature of the self (*ātmanah svarūpa yāthātmya vedanam*) sufficient for obtaining the ultimate end, or is it also necessary to know the Supreme Person too? Vedānta Deśika says that the former only leads to isolation (*kaivalya*) from matter, and inasmuch as one in that state still does not know God and one's relation to him, there is still some sort of bondage involved. One is not completely free from *māyā* and karma until one realizes oneself essentially and fully, and this cannot be done until one's relationship to God is also known. As *Śrīvacana Bhūṣana* says, the soul's relation to God is its essence, its internal situation (*antaranga*): Liberation or Mukti is possible only when the Supreme Person is known.²⁰ Others like Śrī Rangasūri maintain that mere self-knowledge too liberates, though the liberation obtained by knowing oneself, God and one's relation with him is a richer and greater experience of bliss. Since a liberation which is not as full and rich as is possible cannot be absolute

liberation, if theism is accepted, Vedānta Deśika's would appear to be the sounder position.

In Sāṃkhya-Yoga, to a large extent in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and in Mīmāṃsā, it does not seem necessary to know God to achieve liberation; it is enough to have self-realization. Some of these systems, of course, deny both God and the Absolute (Brahman), and in some God does not enter into the process of salvation, which man achieves by his own efforts or knowledge. In Śankara self-realization is liberation, but this means knowledge of the self as the one Brahman. According to him, he who finds plurality and the difference between himself and God to be real and worships him, cannot get absolute liberation, but can only go to heaven and become like God in every way except one, viz., creatorship. In course of time by gradually obtaining perfect knowledge he achieves liberation.²¹ In some places, however, Śankara says that by knowledge the self attains its own real nature, namely that of God, characterized by holiness etc.²² (*apahata pāpmādi-guṇakam pārameśvaram svarūpam vidyā partipadyate*). Then liberation would be the attainment of the being of the personal God (*saguṇeśvarabhāva āpattiḥ*, Appayya).

From one point of view, knowledge of one's real nature and situation may liberate one from many fears, prejudices and desires, and, if one's birth and life are the results of one's own ignorance and doings, from future births. If birth and life are mere illusions, such knowledge may forthwith fully liberate one. But from the point of view of a philosophy which admits the Transcendent, this is not liberation, but only isolation. Thereby *Viveka* has been won, but not yet *Jñāna*. Realization of one's relationship (*sambandhajñānitvam*, as the Vaiṣnavas call it) with the unconditioned Absolute — be it an abode or a state, the Transcendent or God — is true liberation. In this enlightening experience the relationship is so intimate that one may cognize oneself as having not only become like it, but feel that one has also entered into it, or got merged in it, from which arises the conviction that one has always been identical with it. This leads to the negation

of the empirically lived reality and the dismissal of this world as real in a fit of God-intoxication. Liberation, according to this view, would be full and complete when it is recognized that Reality reveals itself as personal, encountering man and entering into a reciprocal relationship with him. Salvation is the realization that one belongs to Him, and a life in which one's will has attained atonement with the Divine Will. One then abides in a state of spiritual peace, freedom and fearlessness.

Non-Soul Philosophy

In the Indian world Buddha was the only sage and philosopher who denied the existence of the soul and yet talked about salvation. *Anyah śāstā jagati ca yato nāsti nairātmyavādī*.²³ So, claimed a Buddhist philosopher Śāntarakṣita, he stands at the head of all "ford-makers". *Nairātmyakīrtanāt, sarvatīrthakṛtām tasmāt sthito mūrdhni tathāgatah*. All composite things, Buddha taught, are impermanent, their nature is to be produced, to grow, decay and dissolve: declining and disintegration is the nature of composite things. *Aniccā vata sankhārā: vayadhammā sankhārā*.²⁴ There is no doer of action, but there are action and the fruit of action. Buddha taught: *Asti karma, asti karmaphalam, kāraṅkaṣṭu nopalabhyate*.²⁵ There is only suffering, but there is no sufferer; there is action, but there is no agent; there is redemption, but there is no person redeemed; and there is a way to redemption, but there is no wayfarer.²⁶ (*Dukkham eva hit na koci dukkhitō — atthi nibbuti, na nibbuto pumā*.) Buddha does not find anything eternal and permanent either in the human being or in the universe: he rejects eternalism. But he accepts the validity of spiritual life and its efficacy and fruit: thus he is not a nihilist. He is neither a *śāsvatavādī*, nor an *ucchedavādī*. The momentary states [feeling, sensation, intellection and conation (*upādāna-skandhas*)] constitute the 'burden', attachment to them is carrying the burden, detachment from them is laying down

of the burden, but the burden-bearer is only an empirical individual — a conventional name for the series of these states.²⁷ Amidst them, underlying them or beyond them there is no entity, nor can these together or separately constitute an entity. Thus the ātman is not the *upādāna*, for they are just a configuration of events, nor is the ātman an eternal entity apart from them, for no such thing is apprehended.²⁸ The soul is just a conceptual fabrication (*vikalpa*), a useful linguistic tool. Besides, what is self for one is not-self for another.²⁹ My 'I' is not 'I' for him; so it is not a real entity which is always the same. A uniform changeless soul cannot will and act differently at different times nor can it become better or worse. Such a conception of the soul does not allow us to think of moral responsibility and progress. But if we postulate only a series of states, the nature of which is governed by a causal law, it is possible to think of each state (good or bad) conditioning the succeeding one and being conditioned by its preceding one. Such continuity makes karma and its fruits intelligible within the same series of states (one life) and a new series of states succeeding it (another life). So, Buddha taught there is no entity which migrates from this to the other world, but there is only a recognition of the fruit of action because of non-cessation of causes and conditions. "*Atra na kascid dharmo'-smāt lokāt paralokam samkramati. . .*"³⁰ The agent and enjoyer is spoken of taking into account the continuity of succession (*samtānasyaikatvam*).³¹ We will now proceed to see how a no-soul philosophy conceives the way to salvation and salvation.

The way to *Nirvāṇa*, freedom from suffering or *samsāra*, consists of cultivation of virtues, and also the practice of meditation (*dhyāna*), which is a sort of interior examination of oneself and one's situation, after detachment and serenity have been obtained. Starting from the stage where the aspirer after wisdom is able to 'watch' the functionings of the body and mind with detachment and serenity, and passing through the stages of *ekodibhāva*, a state free from perceptions and images, and the next one in which a felicity is enjoyed

with evenmindedness, one enters the last stage of equanimity, purity and illumination. It is here that one transcends the *samsāric* world of name and form, and comes to the threshold of the *nirvānic* mode of being. After further meditations the aspirer reaches the cessation of the conditioned and obtains an insight into the nature of reality and fully comprehends the nature of the *samsāric* world, its cause, the way it is destroyed, and the transcendental reality of *nirvāna* — the unconditioned. This enlightenment which liberates comes as a flash of lightening, it is a sort of vertical break-through which transfigures man into another sort of being, and enables him to participate in a mode of transtemporal and non-spatial existence. Primordial anguish, agitation and ignorance are entirely destroyed then, so that for one who has reached this stage the conditioned form of existence becomes impossible. Just as the ending of an illusion, an intoxication, or a mania is not the end of existence, the destruction of ignorance and thirst is not an extinction, but a positive mode of being which however is best described negatively. It is "deep, limitless, immeasurable and inscrutable like the ocean". It is a transformation of the ordinary human nature, a state of immortality, radically different from the *samsāric* mode of existence, and is not a continuation of it.³²

There are differences among Buddhists themselves as to how to appropriately describe *nirvāna*. But perhaps it may not be wrong to coordinate and reconcile them in the following way. Firstly, it is an insight which gives wisdom — a vision of the Suchness of Being. *Yathābhūtārthasthāna darśanam*, *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* says, or "penetration into the dharmas", as Buddhaghōṣa says. It is not a transic state which does not in any way increase wisdom. It is a liberation from the ordinary mode of consciousness (*vimokṣastasya cetasah*, Candrakīrti), for in it the intellect is purified (*muktīrīrimalatā dhīyah*, Śāntarakṣita), and so discursive understanding ceases to operate (*vikalpasya manovijñānasya vyāvṛttih nirvānam*, *Lankāvatāra*). It is a transformation (*parāvṛtti*) of consciousness and mind, and in it the mind stands in a transcendental awareness

(*stītam vijñānamātratve*, *Trimsīkā*) without any outside support (*ālambana*). It is no doubt a reality, an unconditioned uncompounded *dhātu*, but since it is characterized by the extinction of passions and desires, doubts and alternative standpoints, it is the death of ordinary consciousness. It is immortality (*amṛtapada*), peace and the supreme good, as Nagārjuna says.³³ In *Nirvāna* there is an ending of the considerations of existence and non-existence (*bhāvābhāva parāmarśakṣayo nirvānam ucyate*). In a way it is an existence where there are no more causes and conditions, while *samsāra* is what is caused and conditioned.³⁴ All these attempts at descriptions are intended to achieve only one thing — to evoke a situation wherein a man may have a lightening glimpse, a saving flash of intuition of the *nirvānic* reality, which is wholly unlike anything in our *samsāric* experience and is so really not describable.

The *Udāna* describes *nirvāna* as the "unborn, unoriginated, uncreated and uncompounded".³⁵ To enter into *nirvāna* is to plunge into it or going beyond to it, as *Samyutta Nikāya* puts it.³⁶ It is what is over against the *samsāric* mode of existence, utterly and radically different from it and surpassing it. In Mahāyāna this is spoken of more positively, almost in the same terms in which Brahman is spoken of in Vedānta. In all genuine religion the liberated enters into a total relationship with an unconditioned Reality which may or may not be experienced as personal. It may be spoken of as the "Isle of No-beyond" as the *Suttanipāta* does, or as the eternal Tathāgata Principle which is the foundation of everything as in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, or as the real and original Buddha who is the self-existent and the saviour as in the *Saddharma-pundarīka* and other scriptures.

It is now time to ask these questions: Is no-soul philosophy more comprehensive and consistent than soul-philosophies? Can it provide a better rationale for spiritual life and moral endeavour than them? We have to answer these questions in the negative, keeping in mind the effective criticisms of it made by Nyāya, Vedānta and other schools, although they

have not also been able to demonstrate their own metaphysics, ethics and soteriologies, and because there is evidence that the highest type of life has been possible within both Hinduism and Buddhism. It is impossible to say, for example, between Nāgārjuna and Śāṅkara, or between Śānti Deva and Vedānta Deśika, who is spiritually greater, just as it would be invidious to say that Caitanya led a holier life than St. Francis of Assisi, or vice versa. Another important question that can be raised is: Is the Buddhist analysis of experience—their rational metaphysics, let us say—consistent with Buddhist talk about *Nirvāṇa*? The answer has to be that it is not always, just as the Vedāntic analysis of experience is not wholly consistent with Vedāntic talk about *Mukti*.

The Buddhist and Vedāntic conceptions of *Mukti* and *Nirvāṇa* are not based on logic, but on scripture. In the case of the Vedāntins this is widely known, but that similar is the case with Buddhism is not widely known. Logic is uncertain, not fully comprehensive of reality, empirical and wearisome and is for the worldly only, says the *Sutrālamkāra* (I. 12). The great logician Dingnāga declared that he who wants to comprehend Buddha's teaching by logic will be very far from it, for, he said, Doctrine is not the object of logic. Logic, according to him, is useful only as a polemical instrument against non-Buddhist views, and for probing the essence of Doctrine by the faithful.³⁷ The role of logic in Vedānta is similar.

The Complete View?

Reality is manifold; it is substance and mode (*dravya* and *pariyāya*), universal and particular (*sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*), and origination, change and permanence (*utpādavyayadharṃyayuktam sat*). All is permanent as well as momentary, identity as well as difference. Such is the Jaina view, which Jainas think is superior to the other two views: ontological and phenomenal. So judgment about reality must take it in its manifold unity, in its togetherness of the disparate. Such

a judgment is complete judgment (*sakalādeśa*). It does not select any one attribute, relation or aspect of a thing, or only some of these, from a particular point of view or from some selected points of view, but remembers that everything has infinite characteristics and can be seen from many points of view. It does not seek to abstract, but tries to be integral. Comprehension of anything from all points of view and with all its infinite characteristics is not possible; so it must be remembered that all judgments are relative. Thus, to say that the soul is an unity and an entity is correct from one point of view, and to say that the soul is only the states of consciousness is also correct from another point of view.

The soul, Jainas maintain, is not identical with the body, its defining characteristic is consciousness, it has different forms or states (intuition, knowledge etc.), it is impartite and it is equal in extent to the body it occupies. It is a real causal agent. Although by nature pure, from beginningless time it is infected by imperceptible particles of very subtle matter called karma. The inflow of karma into the soul leads to its bondage. Dissociation of the soul from the karma which has already penetrated it and stoppage into it of further inflow of karma will lead to the soul's liberation. Annihilation of all karma and absolute separation of the soul from the body is liberation. For achieving this the soul has to purify itself by leading an ethical and ascetic life based on faith and knowledge. In liberation the soul's innate attributes shine forth and it enjoys infinite, eternal and incomparable knowledge, happiness and power. The extent of a liberated soul will remain the same as it was just before liberation. Each liberated soul will maintain its own individuality, but there will be perfect equality among the liberated. Some Jaina scriptures like *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* describe liberation as an indescribable unconditioned state beyond time and causality.

The Jaina conception of soul as a spiritual substance with attributes, capable of change, and having extension, has been scoffed at by thinkers of idealistic and theistic persuasion. Jaina logicians have attempted to rebut these criticisms. An

attributeless inactive substance—spiritual or otherwise—is not more easy of comprehension than one with them. A changeless soul cannot be a real agent of action: he who has done or thought something will not remain the same as he was before doing or thinking, and he who has been thinking or doing things in one way will change when he begins to think or do differently. Otherwise moral transformation and intellectual development will be illusions. That spirit and extension are mutually contradictory is a presupposition. The presence of the soul throughout the body in which it is incarnated is understandable as the light of a lamp placed in a small room or a big room occupies and illumines the whole space, or as a ruby in a cup of milk imparts its colour or lustre to the milk. If bondage is real it must somehow affect or change the soul, and can be removed only by an activity which rids the soul of it. What can be more purifying or spiritualizing than austerity, penance and reverence for all life, based on right knowledge? Only if bondage is imagined, in which case the whole world is also imagined, it can vanish by knowing that it is not. Finally, a religion which has produced great thinkers like Umasvāti, Siddhasena, Samantabhadra, Hari-bhadra and Hemacandra, kings like Khāravēla and Kumārapāla, sublime artistic creations like Gommatesvara at Sravana Belgola, the temples at Satrunjaya, Khajuraho, Dilwara, Girnar and Ranakpur, and commercial magnates known for their enterprise and integrity, deserves utmost reverence, and must be held to be in possession of truth no less valid and valuable than that accessible to other religions.

All these Indian philosophies we have considered accept transmigration and to some extent eschatology. All these more or less agree that transmigration is due to wrong knowledge, and, therefore, right knowledge is the primary means to salvation and such knowledge has to be grounded in an ethical life. To think that there is a real thing called soul, Buddhism teaches, is the cause of all bondage, and unless we get rid of this false notion, we cannot be free. Nyāya, Sāṃkhya, Vedānta and others teach exactly the contradictory of

this. Although they all admit the existence of the soul, their conceptions of it differ, except so far as they consider it to be uncreated and immortal. So, what one of them considers as right knowledge is not so for the others. As not merely a moral life and dispassion, but right knowledge is the *sine qua non* of salvation, not one of these philosophies holds that salvation can be obtained through any one of them. Each considers itself to be *the* truth, and emphasizes that others cannot lead to salvation. It is interesting that except theistic Vedānta, the other philosophies do not attach any importance to God in the scheme of salvation. Some deny him, and even those who admit him do not think that faith in him and worship of him are necessary for salvation. Even in theistic Vedānta, some thinkers are of the opinion that salvation can be obtained either by just right knowledge of the soul or by worship of God. It is also interesting that although the idea that god sacrificed himself to give rise to the world, that he died so that the world may be born, is found in the Veda, the concept of a dead and risen God, of a saviour who sacrifices himself for the sake of all and faith in whom saves, which gripped the Middle East with such force, was not formulated and developed by any Indian religious philosophy.

It is possible to reflect as follows: If one has a deep and agonizing conviction that man is in the grip of evil, suffering and sin, the great problem is how to liberate oneself from this human condition. All Indian philosophy is optimistic in the sense it believes such a liberation is possible. Three ways of achieving it can be hit upon. (1) Is it possible that we are really free and that we are only having a delusion, a nightmare, that we are not free? If we are not already free or if we did not know freedom, how are we able to think of it? If freedom is not our real estate, our authentic nature, our true condition, may we not be separated from it again even if we attain it? Thought somewhat along these lines made Sāṃkhya and Advaita Vedānta declare that we are already free and that bondage is imaginary. (2) What is it that binds us—limits us, worries us and, so to say, gnaws at us? The idea

that I am a hard and fast entity, a real being, separate in existence from others, that I can possess this or that, that I have not this or that, that I can become or have not become something else,—this is the root of all trouble. But am I an entity, a real being? No, because when this idea is dissected, it is found it refers to nothing: it's like peeling off an onion layer after layer and finally nothing is found underneath. So, one becomes free when one gets rid of the notion that one is a real being (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*), that one can enter into relations with others and that one can possess. Buddhism taught that was the way to *Nirvāṇa*. (3) In the midst of the diversity of experiences one finds a unity; actions and thoughts have to originate from and be guided by a core or a centre; recognition, memory, dreams, trance and extrasensory perception indicate that there can be experiencer even in the absence of the body, and in thought and language one finds the body to be something distinct from oneself. This unity, core, centre, agent and subject is the soul. When we discriminate it from the body and thereafter act on the basis of this insight we become free. We cannot be involved in *samsāra* if we know we can keep ourselves away from it and accordingly take effective steps. This is what the realistic philosophies taught.

Epilogue

Regarding these many conceptions of salvation and ways of attaining it, at least seven attitudes are possible: (1) rejection of all of them, because not one of them is entirely based on evident or inferable grounds and each of them can be shown to be either self-contradictory or incoherent; (2) acceptance of all of them on the ground that each of them is a partial truth and that together they help us to have complete truth; (3) selecting from all of them the common points on which they agree and considering those points to be true; (4) picking upon one of them as the highest truth and others as approximations to it or as steps leading to it, each suitable for a particular

mentality; (5) declaring that they are all meaningless and hence neither true nor false; (6) acceptance of the one which one inherits from one's tradition; or (7) choosing that which appeals to one because of its rationality, emotional appeal, or the consequences that can follow from it.

SALVATION: NOTES

- 1 *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, p. 254.
- 2 Op. cit.
- 3 Ibid., p. 19.
- 4 Ibid., p. 19-20.
- 5 W. E. Soothill, *The Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, p. 74.
- 6 *Īśa*, 9-11.
- 7 Rene Dumont, *Terres Vivantes*; Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Beacon, 1964, pp. 45-8.
- 8 Marcuse, op. cit., p. 167.
- 9 J. W. Mackail, *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology*, p. 161.
- 10 W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*, Meridian Books, New York, 1959, p. 130-1, p. 149.
- 11 Surah XXIII, 12-16.
- 12 Surah XV, 28-9.
- 13 Surah XXXIV, 43.
- 14 *Confessions*, Everyman, 1949, p. 121-2 note.
- 15 Dubs, *The Works of Hsuntze*, p. 227.
- 16 *Chuang Tzu*, Chs. 6, 18.
- 17 J. P. Bruce, *The Philosophy of Human Nature of Chu Hsi*, p. 61.
- 18 W. T. Chan in *The Concept of Man*, ed. Radhakrishnan and Raju, p. 190-1.
- 19 *Sanmati Tarika*, p. 272: "Parasparaviviktasāmānyaviseṣaviṣayatvād dravyārthikaparyāyārthikav eva nayau."
- 20 Vedānta Deśika, *Nyāya Siddhānjana*, p. 82-4. Though some Ālvārs are supposed to have favoured a contrary view, Pillai Lokācārya also in *Tattvatraya* rejects *Kaipālya* as the ultimate liberation.
- 21 *Bhāṣya* ou *Sūtras*, IV. 2.13, 16; IV. 17, 21; I. 3.13; III. 2-21.
- 22 Ibid., I. 3.19; III. 4.8.
- 23 Quoted by Yaśomitra, *Abhidharmakośa Vyākhyā*.
- 24 *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, VI. 7 & 10.
- 25 Quoted by Prajñākaramati, *Bodhicaryāvatāra Panjikā*, p. 474.
- 26 *Viśuddhimagga*, Harvard edition, p. 436.
- 27 *Samyutta Nikāya*, XXII. 22.
- 28 *Mādhyamika Kārikā*, XXVII, 6-7.
- 29 *Catuhśatakam*, X. 3.
- 30 *Śālistamba Sūtra*, quoted in *Prasannapadā*, p. 568.
- 31 *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, p. 471.
- 32 For details regarding Buddhist dhyāna and its goal, the excellent books of Evola (*The Doctrine of Awakening*) and Conze (*Buddhist Meditation*) may be consulted. Besides other texts, Pe Maung Tin's translation of "Viśuddhimagga" (*The Path of Purity*) and

Barnett's incomplete translation of "Bodhicaryāvatāra" (*The Path of Light*) are the source books.

- 33 *Mādhyamika Kārikā*. XVIII. 19; XXV. 24.
- 34 Ibid., XXV. 9.
- 35 *Udāna*, 80-1.
- 36 III. 189.
- 37 *Pramāṇa Samuccaya*, quoted by Bu-ston, *History of Buddhism*, Pt. I, p. 46.

RELIGIOUS ACTION

"The ideal of the religious man is, of course, that everything he does should be done ritually, should in other words, be a *sacrifice*."

— M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, London, 1958, p. 460.

Responsive action towards the supernatural is religious action. Action through which conscious life aware of the Sacred seeks to attain its complete truth and full satisfaction is religious action. It is the right way of doing things, as well as an order in which everything is in its ordained place. It is custom and good taste, as well as ritual and propriety. It trains one's emotions and feelings and inculcates the right ways of expressing them. It develops an individual's personality and brings about a community of peoples' aspirations, by constituting the spirit of a community. It educates an individual to become a man, member of a community, by making him accept restrictions which enable him to overcome his ego. Its nature can be known from religious history and tradition, but not through pure reason, for thought operating on nothing becomes futile. One learns it by the study and methodical investigation of religious tradition and by thinking over it, so that the wisdom of the past may be transformed by reflection into principles for guidance of action. That is how Confucius thought *Li* could be learnt and the Mimāṃsā conceived Dharma could be known. Religious action is what conforms to *Tao* or *Ṛta*. Such action is undertaken for promoting and realizing what is considered to be right, and its reward is the satisfaction of doing so and the peace of mind that results from doing what ought to be done. At the same time *Tao* or *Ṛta* is not attained solely by action, as it is transcended by the former, which cannot be determined by utilitarian and pragmatic considerations.

The universe is a perpetual repetitive purposive process: the cosmos is a rite. Man by his very living in the world anyhow participates in the cosmic rite. But conscious human action in conformity with the harmonic pattern of the universe, as divined by religion, is ritual. When the sacred is not separated from the profane, all action becomes ritual. When the

Sacred is experienced as a Person, all action becomes worship. *Karma* is *abhyarcanā*¹.

In Hindudom there are two principal forms of ritual: *Pūjā* and *Yajna*, worship and sacrifice.

Pūjā is worship of a Divine Symbol according to traditional technique (ritual). In *Pūjā* the human spirit constructs or selects for itself a shape in which the Divine Being becomes an object for its consciousness, by postulating the special descent of the Divine Being from its transcendence into this shape, and thereby the Divine Being which is supramundane and suprasensuous manifests itself for the invoking human spirit as a mundane and sensuous existence, and continues to be so for its worshippers, as the object of the ritualized expressions of their piety and faith. Thus inasmuch as the Divine Being is not regarded as the Transcendent, but as a particularized existence, it comes to be conditioned by holy imagination, and it is such conditioned Being which is worshipped. But, though for the consciousness of the faithful the Divine Being manifests itself mundanely and sensuously, the mundane and the sensuous are not its substance, but are only the aspects of its manifestation to them. In other words, faith and holy imagination charge an object or individual with absolute import or numinous significance, but nothing in the world and nothing that is sensuous can completely embody or perfectly express, or wholly accord with, the Absolute Being or the Divine Spirit. *Pūjā* is authentically spiritual to the extent the worshipper recognizes and remembers that no manifestation or representation constitutes the totality and essence of the Divine Being, or even its highest mode.

The universe is nothing but the giving up of one's life to another life, the devouring of one being by another and the victimization and enjoyment of one creature by another, "This whole world is just food and food eater": *Idam sarvān annam annādasca*.² "I am food and I am a food eater": *Aham annam — aham annādah*.³ Existence is constituted by this dualism of food and food eater; to exist is to devour and

be devoured. Every being makes another its food and in turn becomes yet another's food. Devouring is the world activity in which the devoured and devourer, the enjoyed and the enjoyer, the used and the user, are transient phases. The cosmos is a perpetual sacrifice — everyone in it being made to give up what one has or oneself to another. Fire (*agni*) symbolizes the devourer and offering (*soma*) the devoured. As devouring and being devoured are states of every being, *agni* and *soma* which constitute the universe alternate becoming each other. *Agnisomamayam sarvān jagad etat carācaram*.⁴

The relation between God and the world may be conceived in one of these alternate ways: He brings the world into existence out of himself; he transforms himself into the world; he creates it and enters into it; or he dies in order to be reborn as this world of the living and non-living. Consequently, God has to be conceived as suffering a change in himself, or delimiting himself into or involving himself in finite existence, or dying for the sake of the world. Then he has to be also conceived as having sacrificed himself for the world. Even if God only created the world out of something or nothing and continues to express his active concern for it by preserving and guiding it and devotes himself to its salvation, it constitutes his sacrifice. The Absolute by becoming the finite, by giving itself particular existence, sacrificed itself. By his creation of, concern for and involvement in the world and its history, God has sacrificed himself.⁵ The finite by losing its individuality or particularity in the infinite, or man by surrendering his self-will and ego to God performs a sacrifice. By making of his actions, possessions, thoughts, personality and life an oblation to Deity, man sacrifices himself. Thus, God verily is a sacrifice (*Yajno vai Viṣṇuh*);⁶ and, man, indeed, is also a sacrifice (*Puruṣo vāva yajnah*).⁷

In what follows the thinking about sacrifice embodied in the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads and Gītā will be expounded and illuminated by reference to the doctrines of Mīmāṃsā and two modern philosophers.

I

Not being a composition of one man or of one period, the Rgveda contains somewhat different doctrines about sacrifice, though they could all be reconciled by distinguishing between the higher spiritual and lower religious viewpoints. The mere orientalist or the historian of religion who is interested in classifying the Vedic as a polytheistic religion is naturally either blind to the former or ignores it.

The gods of the Veda were extremely real, great and powerful beings to their worshippers.⁸ Their worshippers confronted by them experienced themselves to be dependent and insignificant. Existence to them was precarious and insecure without gods' help, as it was felt the universe was governed by these superhuman numinous powers. Of course, it must be remembered that while all the Vedic people did not venerate the same being as god, whoever venerated a particular deity believed him to be the highest God. Thus worshippers of Indra believed he was the supreme being, and of Varuṇa that he was the supreme being, while all the rest were subordinate to him. In a few hymns two or more gods are together praised, and some hymns are definitely polytheistic; while there are a number of hymns which by any criterion can be understood as monotheistic if only one gets rid of the prejudice that this could not have been possible for such ancient peoples of the East. Anyway the Sacred was a living personal reality to the Vedic man, without the favour and goodwill of whom man could not live and prosper. So conceived it is natural that the Vedic man should have made offerings to his Deity, for gaining his goodwill, favours and indulgences. It was believed that by casting one's offerings into water or fire, one made them reach the gods. The essence of the idea was to choose from one's possessions what was considered to be dear and priceless,—a horse or an ox, or *soma*, melted butter, or cakes,—and give it up for one's Deity. If the thing offered is allowed to continue to exist, it may be put to use by other men. That would be pro-

fanation of a sacred thing, for whatever is offered to gods becomes sacred. So it was ceremonially and reverently destroyed, or given as a gift to holy men, the brāhmaṇas, who participated in the power of gods by their knowledge and devotion. Offering to God of something considered to be valuable, and destroying the object thus consecrated is sacrifice. The more valuable a thing the greater the act of sacrifice, offering of oneself being the highest sacrifice. We find this exemplified in the Biblical story of Abraham and in the Purāṇic stories of devotees offering their own eyes or even heads as oblations to God.

Sacrifice is an act of worship, a sign of subjection and honour to a tremendous numinous power one confronts, the external action being only a symbol of this submission. Sacrifice may also be a result of the belief that man is dependent on God, that it is from him that all things are received, and that unless this fact is acknowledged both inwardly and in an external act, when something given by God himself is offered to him, one is not truthful to facts (in tune with *ṛta*) and God is not also pleased till then. In every religion there are persons who attempt to mediate between God and man, who interpret God's will to men and teach men how to pray. These holy men—the priests—who live for the service of people and the glorification of God only, need to be fed and clothed. Thus offerings to them become a part of sacrifice, for without them worship and sacrifice may become extinct.

Some Vedic hymns speak of gods waxing on man's offerings, their becoming strong and prosperous by them. Since the Vedic people knew that their existence and well being depended upon the gods, this only means that man's prayers and worship bless and glorify God. Men are created to worship and sacrifice, while God exists from eternity, upholds the cosmic order, takes care of all beings, governing them and rewarding and punishing them in accordance with *ṛta*. Thus in a way the world is God's offering to beings, it is his sacrifice. He creates it to enable us all to exist and enjoy.⁹

The *Dīkṣā* (initiation or consecration) and *avabhyta* (concluding bath) ceremonies show that sacrifice was conceived as producing a holy effect in the sacrificer, for in and through a sacrifice he established a live connection with transcendental power. Whatever was offered in the sacrifice also became holy, so that eating or touching of it removed one's sins and filled one with the spirit. Whatever one eats without sacrificing is sinful food.

Sacrifices also were mediatory; one could not approach the transcendental powers direct or emptyhanded. The offerings burnt up or dissolved in their honour were believed to be instrumental in making them look upon the worshippers benignly, as thereby one honoured them and submitted oneself to their will consciously. Also, only through a sacrifice man understood the meaning of his existence — his dependence on the divine. Sacrifice is thus a growing living organism which enlightened man by revealing divine reality, and a ladder by which man ascended to the supreme.¹⁰

In some of the Vedic hymns magic is an obvious fact. They show that their authors believed that by magical power itself, and not by gods' favour, man can achieve much. The view that priests can control gods making them do what they want is only a way of speaking, just as a Vaiṣṇava devotee claimed: "O God, you are now firmly imprisoned in my thought, how can you escape me?" By this he only meant that he had established a conscious inseparable relationship with God. The magical element is found frequently in the Brāhmaṇas, but there too it does not suppress the religious element. When, for example, Aquinas claims a sacrament is effective, that baptism for instance "does expel sin from the soul of the person baptized", "imprinting on it an indelible character", and that the sacraments do not depend upon the personal virtues of the priests, it should not be called a magical view.¹¹ Similarly, when it is believed that in the mass the bread and wine are transubstantiated into Christ's body and blood immediately, wholly and substantially as soon as an ordained priest pronounces Christ's words uttered at the last

supper, there is no magic in that. To the faithful, the sacraments were established by God and are efficacious. The Vedic people too believed that gods, the promoters of *ṛta*, the law of righteousness and cosmic order, pondering over the source of *ṛta*, created sacrifice, in order to aid *ṛta*.¹² Through sacrifices gods brought into existence *dharma*.¹³ In this connection we would do well to remember the wise words of Evelyn Underhill, "Religion can never entirely divorce herself from magic: for her rituals and sacraments, whatever explanations of their efficacy may be offered by their official apologists, have, and must have if they are to be successful in their appeal to the mind, a magical character. All persons who are naturally drawn towards the ceremonial aspect of religion, are really devotees of the higher magic: are acknowledging the strange power of subtle rhythms, symbolic words and movements, over the human will".¹⁴

The Vedic people mostly thought of sacrifices as acts of pleasing the Deity, the means for getting the favours of gods — welfare and material prosperity — along the path of *ṛta*.¹⁵ They were gift offerings for favours without any consciousness of sin. Some hymns, of course, contain prayers for the death of enemies or their subjugation, and there are sacrifices for this and other sordid purposes. This practice still continues, all civilized nations pray for their own victory in wars. Vedic sacrifices were sometimes propitiatory sin offerings to avert a god's wrath (e.g. Varuṇa) or his dangerous presence (e.g. Rudra), and get reconciled with him. But as the Nirtti and Varuṇapraghāsa rituals show, confession and self-humiliation of the sinner should accompany an expiatory sacrifice.¹⁶ Sacrifices remove evil (*duritāni*), and confer sinlessness and freedom.¹⁷

A sacrificer must be an upholder of truth (*satyadhṛt*); sacrifices are a binding force between men and gods;¹⁸ they are for the good of all,¹⁹ hence a social duty. Not to sacrifice is, therefore, a social calamity, an inhuman thing. Hymns, oblations, fire²⁰—praise and laudation of the deity, offering something to him to express one's submission and veneration,

and destroyal of this gift by casting it into fire — such is the essence of Vedic sacrifice.

In the Veda we do not come across the idea that sacrifice originated from communion, by the direct eating together of devotees with their gods, or by eating something supposed to be containing the deity, which causes the death of that god. In the Veda animals or objects offered and consecrated to gods are conceived to become holy thereby, but they do not become god; neither their offering nor consumption causes god's death. Communion is based on the idea that sharing the same good confers similarity of nature; it becomes a symbol of participation in divine life. The idea of the death of god probably arose from the idea of the holiness of the offering from which one could have concluded that not only divine power but divinity itself comes to inhabit the offering. However, in the Veda we do not find such concepts and practices. There is also no basis in the Veda for the idea that all sacrifice is intended to propagate a species of animal or corn by a regular periodic ceremonial killing of a representative animal or the corn spirit. A Vedic sacrifice like that in which a goat is offered to Pūṣan is only an act to please that god by a gift. Lastly, the Vedic sacrifice did not also make the performers believe they had entered into a union with the deity, for Vedic gods were too real and superhuman for such a conception to arise. We only find some hymns describing the inebriation and elation which drinking of soma produced, but that is a different matter.*

There is, however, an important exception. In the *Puruṣa Sūkta*,²¹ after saying that Puruṣa (the Person) is all this as well as what has been and shall be, and that one-fourth of him are all the creatures, three-fourths of him is eternal life, it is said the gods sacrificed with Puruṣa as the oblation. His limbs were torn and scattered. From that all came, for Puruṣa divided is everything. Gods sacrificing sacrificed the Puruṣa (*yajnena yajnam ayajanta devāh*); these were the first

*Regarding what is said in this paragraph, see, however, the annexe.

dharmas; by them did the mighty ones gain heaven. It is difficult to understand what the hymn means. Sāyaṇa says the gods performed this sacrifice mentally with Puruṣa as the victim. This means that they meditated upon the whole world as being made from the body of the great Puruṣa. If everything is Puruṣa, anything sacrificed becomes the Puruṣa. Radhakrishnan thinks it is a crude allegorization of the idea that the world is "one to the self-diremption of the Absolute into subject and an object".²² Puruṣa is the Absolute, while Virāj who came out of him is the self-conscious individual, in whose consciousness again the Absolute is born.

But interpreting this verse on the analogy of a somewhat similar verse in the *Gītā*²³ (IV. 24), it may be understood to say that as everything depends upon Puruṣa for its existence who is also their end, all is Puruṣa — whether the oblation, the fire, or the sacrificer. Everything belongs to Puruṣa, the one Supreme being, and is an effect of him; so in offering anything we offer to him what is his own. Puruṣa ensouls everything, so he is everything (*puruṣātmakam sarvam*). Creation is God's sacrifice for he brings forth out of himself all beings and offers them what is his for their enjoyment. He is the source of all things and their support. So meditated the world becomes a *viaticum*, a way to win the vision of God, and a communion because it consciously unites all beings by an inalienable bond, for they all live in him and on him, fed by him.

II

In the later Vedic books, the Brāhmaṇas, two tendencies become obvious. On the one hand sacrifice is sought to be converted into a rigid mechanical ritual, into almost magic; and on the other hand sacrifice takes on a deeper spiritual significance. Evidently the Brāhmaṇas contain the writings of men of different times with different viewpoints, whose spiritual development was not uniform. We are here concerned only with the more valuable of these strands of thinking.

The *Brāhmaṇas* emphasize the importance of faith in sacrifice. Without faith no one will undertake to engage himself in the elaborate sacrificial rituals of the Veda; so faith is the abiding source of them.²⁴ A sacrificer must have the conviction that gods receive his offerings and that his wellbeing and prosperity is a result of their blessings.²⁵ This view leads to the position that faith is itself the deity,²⁶ with the implication there is no other deity. Consequently, there is no hesitation sometimes to proclaim that since man's faith is all-powerful, it itself produces the results without needing any gods; so Faith is the god.²⁷ It is a short step from this to conclude that there are really no gods, but man's faith and actions done in a certain way have the power to produce their own inevitable results. This has an interesting development in Pūrva Mīmāṃsā.

The mystical interpretation of sacrifice in an elaborate way is given in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. We may take this as the most developed in view of its importance, especially as the last chapters of this Brāhmaṇa form one of the most famous ancient Upaniṣads, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. As was already said, in the Ṛgveda the primal Spirit or Puruṣa is offered as the victim and out of this sacrifice everything is born. Time itself perpetually reproduces this sacrifice, the seasons of each year constituting the offerings. In the place of the word Puruṣa, the *Śatapatha* prefers the word Prajāpati, lord of beings. The archetypal sacrifice had Prajāpati as its victim, and out of his dismembered parts the universe was constructed.²⁸ After giving himself up, Prajāpati recreated himself in and as sacrifice and redeemed himself.²⁹ He was the first to win the reward of sacrifice. Every sacrifice is a repetition of this. If we take Prajāpati to be a symbol of the cosmic personality, the universe conceived as an organism, the world process is a sacrifice, a dying and rebirth or renewal of everything. Sacrifice symbolically repeats this, each sacrificer being Prajāpati for his own sacrifice. As in every mass Christ's sacrifice is repeated, in the Brāhmaṇical sacrifice Prajāpati's is repeated mystically. In the place of

himself, the Brāhmaṇical sacrificer offers a victim, an animal, soma, or melted butter. With the burning of the offering, the sacrificer's old body perishes and he takes a new birth which entitles him to go to heaven, where he takes on a suitable new body. Agni and the altar (*vedī*) together refashion the sacrificer and he acquires a new self. In every sacrifice Prajāpati who offered himself in sacrifice at the beginning of time, is resurrected, only to offer himself up again to be reborn again and again. The cosmos is an eternal dying and regeneration of the cosmic spirit, the *Viśvātmā*, and sacrifice a sacrament of this process.

The tenth book (*kānda*) of the *Śatapatha* called the mystery of the fire (*agnirahasya*) makes this clear. The fire altar is a symbol of the universe, its layers representing the different worlds. *Ayam vāva loka eṣo'gniscitah*.³⁰ Prajāpati is the universe as well as what is beyond. He gives birth to Agni, the fire, as well as to everything else including the sacrificer. But as in the sacrifice Agni restores Prajāpati, he is also the latter's father.³¹ From Prajāpati comes Agni, and from him again the former, the spirit being the same in both. So they are both one. Prajāpati is the sacrifice as well as the food of gods, he is the soma, the oblation,³² and also the altar, usually constructed to resemble the garuda, an eagle, flying heavenwards, to the east. He is the animating spirit in the moon and the sun, as well as the sacrificer himself. It is the sacrificer who must sacrifice himself and rise up as a reborn person to the realm of eternal life beyond this universe, and to represent this a gold image of the sacrificer is laid under the layers of the altar and burnt. Agni generated and nursed by the sacrificer is his child, as well as of Time which brings into existence everything and also carries it off. Time is Death. The sacrificer who like Time brings forth some things into existence and causes some to be destroyed is Time and Death. However, he fully becomes Death when his own existence ends. But of all things, it is as Mind that the original reality can be most properly conceived, for in the beginning the world was neither non-existent nor existent;

it was and yet it was not. It was then only Mind (*Tatdhā tanmana evāsa*).³³ Mind cannot be said to be either existing or non-existing like material things. Mind wished to manifest and define itself and become tangible. Accordingly it meditated and split itself up into many (*pramūrchat*, i.e. *samuchrītam babhūva*) and thus became vast. It performed a sacrifice, brought forth speech, which similarly produced life. Thus the whole universe was constructed out of Mind. This is all due to the Mind's desire to seek the Absolute or its own true nature (*Tadātmānam anvaicchat*).³⁴ The world is thus a manifestation of Mind. Idealism in India whether Buddhist or Hindu has thus a long ancestry. Mind bringing forth everything out of itself as a result of its desire to realize itself is a kind of primitive Hegelianism clothed in mythopoeic imagery.

Man is a symbol of Vaiśvānara (the cosmic man), Prajāpati, or the Mind, which by their sacrifice brought forth out of themselves the universe. Not only man, but everything is a symbol, a reflection, a part of Prajāpati, but more so self-conscious man. However, the highest wisdom is to conceive the true sacrifice as meditation upon Brahman. The essence of a person is his will, his conviction and commitment (*kratuh*, i.e. *vyavasāya, niscaya*). A man's conviction constitutes his being and shapes his destiny, so if one meditates upon the supreme Reality as Brahman, he attains Brahman. Brahman is not only the transcendent source of all being, but also the resplendent person in the core of the soul (*antarātman puruṣah*). He is like a flame of smokeless light smaller than a grain of rice or barley, or a millet seed, but greater than heaven and earth and all beings. He is the animating force of life; he is the Self of man, his inner essence (*eṣame atmā*). This in other words means Brahman is transcendent as well as immanent. He who understands thus attains the ultimate end.³⁵ True faith is the clear vision of reality,³⁶ and not the belief that through rituals we get rewards. The essence of sacrifice is the essence of truth, which is also the essence of gods.³⁷

The perfection (*sampadam*) of sacrifice, therefore, is not the ritual performed for gods with fire, melted butter, and chantings, but the sacrifice of the self. The sacrifice of the self is to know that by selfgiving one's being is purified and remade. *Sa ha vā ātmayājī, yo veda idam me anena angam samskriyate, idam me anena angam upādhiyata*.³⁸ The self-sacrificer or ātmayājī is one who by knowing this gets out of this sinful mortal body as a snake out of its slough and obtains heaven. In contrast to this, the sacrificer for the gods makes offerings to them or worships them, as an inferior man offers tributes to his superior to propitiate him, as for example, a merchant bringing a tribute to his sovereign.³⁹

We may now sum up this teaching of the *Brāhmaṇas* in the following way. Prajāpati, the primal person, was the original sacrificer who sacrificed himself, and thus regained himself. Sacrifice is a universal principle of life.⁴⁰ It lives on all creatures, and by it are creatures perpetuated.⁴¹ What is offered is the life of gods, men and fathers. He who voluntarily offers becomes immortal. The gods owe their immortality to sacrifice.⁴² In sacrifice man imitates gods and adopts their habits.⁴³ Sacrifice is commensurate with man and the true sacrifice is that of oneself.⁴⁴ Man is reborn by consecration, for his old being is burnt up as an offering to gods, and he gains a new divine life.⁴⁵ The oblations of horses, sheep and rice are only meant to be substitutes, symbols of self-giving.⁴⁶ By sacrifice one escapes death in the other life one has to live after the death on earth; for in the other world one has to repeatedly die till immortality is gained. Sacrifice confers immortality by making man born into an eternal life. The highest type of sacrifice is meditation on the Supreme Being and realization of one's own nature. Thus ideas of "poena vicaris", substitution, propitiation, and mystical repetition of an archetypal sacrifice are transcended in the speculations of Śāṅdilya and Āruṇi who rise to this high conception.

Although the *Brāhmaṇas* speak of a bewildering variety of rituals and gods, they emphatically assert that the Supreme self is the one that is worshipped by different names in

different ways. He unites all (*eṣah hi idam sarvam yunakti*), in him all is the same (*etasmīn hi idam sarvam samānam*), for he only gives rise to everything (*eṣah hi idam sarvam utdāpayati*). As whatever object he is worshipped, he becomes that, and protects (or saves) the worshippers accordingly. He assumes the forms men need and becomes accessible by whatsoever way that suits them*. (*Tam yathā yathā upāsate, tadeva bhavati — avati*).⁴⁷ That one only is called Brahman in all beings, as the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* says⁴⁸ (*Sarveṣu bhūteṣu tameva brahmetyācakṣate*). Offering of oneself to Brahman is sacrifice, that is the gist and the sum-total of Brāhmaṇa Wisdom.

The *Brāhmaṇas* in some passages seek to understand the sacrificial ritual as a practical expression of some theological ideas and the *agnicayana* (building of the fire-altar) ritual is especially elaborated on the lines of the cosmogony found in the Puruṣa-Prajāpati myth. All sacrificial acts have a sacramental purpose. In developing their symbolism, the *Brāhmaṇas* assume that everything is a microcosm, while man mirrors in himself the universe and its creator in a specially eminent way. As they also conceived the universe as an organism created by Prajāpati out of himself, into which moreover he entered, they seek to find an affinity between the sacrificer, the sacrificial objects and acts, the world around and the creator. They look for correspondences and connections to confirm that in man is reflected the whole universe and develop a symbolism to explain this. Since all is sustained and came out of Puruṣa, man can be understood in terms of the universe, and the universe in terms of man. This also implies the epistemological principle that a knower always understands anything after his own manner. There can be no knowledge unless there is some sort of likeness between the knower and the known.

In these days when the tendency is to reduce religion to ethics, and dismiss communion and cultus, thus impoverishing religion, it is difficult to understand sympathetically Brāh-

*It has not been noticed by the commentators that in language and thought as well the *Gītā* (IV. II) echoes this *Brāhmaṇa*.

manical sacrifice. As Christ told the Pharisees so interested only in their tithe-offerings, "these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone",⁴⁹ for "it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve".⁵⁰ And what is the other thing which Christ speaks of? "Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice".⁵¹ The *Brāhmaṇas* made a great attempt to learn "what this meaneth", and this came to fruition in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*.

III

In the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas*, we also find another beautiful conception which instead of distinguishing sacrifice from mercy, transforms sacrifice into acts of mercy. There are five sacrifices, they say, which a man must continuously perform throughout his life, which are not only great sacrifices, but great sacrificial sessions (*sattras*).⁵² That which is performed for the good of oneself only is just a sacrifice, whereas that which is performed for the good of all beings and for one's enlightenment is a great sacrifice, a great *sattra*.⁵³ In this sense sacrifice ceases to be a ritual, and becomes, as Bhāradvāja said, skill in action *Yajnah Karmasu Kauśalam*. The *Gītā* later adopted this by substituting *Yogah* for *Yajnah*.⁵⁴

These five great sacrifices are 'brahmayaajna', 'devayaajna', 'pitryayaajna', 'manuṣyayaajna' and 'bhūtayaajna'. Brahmayaajna is sacrifice to Brahman, the study and teaching of the Veda. The texts studied are the oblations offered to Brahman and the results of scriptural study are mental concentration and peace, control of the senses, steadfastness, growth in spiritual insight and fame. Scriptural study makes one a physician of souls, who can perfect the people. *Parama cikitsaka ātmano bhavati. Prajnavṛddhiḥ; yaśolokaḥ paktiḥ*.⁵⁵ The spiritual truths in the scriptures must be studied and known, and taught to all those who want them, for to do otherwise would be to close for oneself the doors to God.⁵⁶ Worship of God and offering to him what one has, symbolized by the Vedic daily

sacrificial rituals, is devayajna, sacrifice to God. Holding one's progenitors and ancestors with reverence and gratitude in one's memory, daily prayers for their welfare in the other world and offerings in honour of them, is pitryajna, the sacrifice for the ancestors. To offer what one has to the needy and the poor who approach one, to go to the succour of one's fellows, service of man — this is manuṣyayajna, sacrifice to men. He who cooks for himself, says Manu, eats sin.⁵⁷ What we earn and cook must be for the sake of anyone who needs and approaches us for help. Care of animals and birds, in short all non-human beings, and offering of food for them is bhūtayajna, sacrifice for beings. Maintenance and furthering of all life — an ideal so dear to Schweitzer — is bhūtayajna. This is symbolized in the compulsory daily offering of food to dogs, crows and pariahs.⁵⁸ Man is indebted to gods, ancestors and sages, for the first two are responsible for his existence and well-being, while it is the writings of sages which awaken him to his situation and enable him to work for his salvation. He discharges these debts by performing these sacrifices to them. All life is one, all men and living beings are kin; so it is every man's duty to do what he can to serve them by caring for them and by sharing with them what he has.

Moreover, everyone's life is struggle for existence, one injures the interests of others constantly by one's own actions and speech knowingly or unknowingly. Everyone lives to some extent on others' toil and life, and the very content, preparation and eating of our food is achieved by the knowing and unknowing slaughter of countless animals, organisms and plant life.⁵⁹ Redemption from all this sin is secured by sharing with other men and beings what one has, by performing manuṣya and bhūta yajnas. True sacrifice is mercy, compassion, *bhūta-dayā*, not only for men, but for all beings, the experience of kinship with all life, and the action that is motivated by this feeling. Only by living for others can one redeem oneself from sin; to toil and struggle, cook and eat merely for oneself is sinful.⁶⁰

Implicit in the conception of the five mahāyajnas as the means of redemption for man is the assumption that man is in spiritual and physical union with all existence; he is a part of the cosmos, he is related to infinite Being. A philosophy which only concerns itself with man and society is blind to this truth, and, on the other hand, a mysticism which emphasizes only man's relationship with the transcendent eternal Being ignores what is all around us and denies significance to action. Man stands in relation not only to the transcendent and the eternal, but also to the existent and the finite; he is related to all being, all existence. To recognize this unity and interdependence of all existence and especially of all life, and to manifest this in action by living not only for ourselves but for all creatures and for God, is the highest type of sacrifice. Awareness of our relationship with the primal source of all being must be expressed in sacrifice — in our compassionate devotion to the welfare of all men and creatures, of all beings (*sarva bhūta hita*). To do so is to find Truth, for the absolute good of all beings is Truth. *Yad bhūta hitam atyantam tat satyam iti dhāraṇā*.⁶¹ Those who do not realize this are, as the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* says, infatuated with rites performed with the help of fire, and choked by smoke, they neither know the world in which they live, nor the Spirit.⁶²

IV

In the Upaniṣads we find three attitudes towards sacrifices and rituals: (1) Strict and correct performance of them purifies the mind and makes one fit for the knowledge of Brahman.⁶³ (2) One need not perform the sacrifices physically; it is not only enough but better to engage oneself in meditations concerning the sacrifices as given in the scriptures.⁶⁴ (3) The fruits of sacrifices are impermanent, the wise man discards them and seeks only saving knowledge.⁶⁵ I will now develop these three themes.

(1) When actions such as the daily study of the Veda and sacrifices prescribed by the scriptures are performed as duties

which one ought to do and not because of the rewards they confer, they serve to purify the mind and make it fit for the reception of saving truth. A man of this type will not engage himself in rituals and sacrifices which are intended only for obtaining special benefits. He will concern himself only with "regular rites", such as prayer, charity, the five great sacrifices and askesis, i.e. dispassionate enjoyment of sense-objects.⁶⁶ Duty performed as duty without motivated by the good that results therefrom purifies the mind. Any action that purifies is a sacrifice. *Eṣa vai yajno yo'yam pavate.*⁶⁷

(2) A better way of performing a sacrifice than to do it physically is to undertake a particular type of meditation concerning it.⁶⁸ Thus, for example, instead of performing the horse-sacrifice, one can meditate upon the universe as a sacrificial horse. The dawn is its head, the sun its eye, time its body, and so on everything in the universe is meditated upon as a limb of the horse sacrificed for Prajāpati. Prajāpati imagined himself in the beginning as a great sacrificial animal, and sacrificed it to himself, because he wanted to make a sacrifice. In a similar way now one can imagine oneself as well as the whole world as a sacrificial animal and meditate thus: While being sanctified with mantras I am dedicated to the gods, and while being killed for myself, all animals are sacrificed to me, for I represent Prajāpati, of whom the gods are parts.⁶⁹ Or, to take another example, a person's whole life may symbolically be meditated upon as a Soma sacrifice. Dividing one's life into three portions, each can be imagined as a soma libation. Whenever a man suffers privations, hungers or thirsts, he is undergoing the initiatory consecration; whenever he eats and drinks, laughs and enjoys he joins in the Upasada and stuta-śastra ceremonies in which these are allowed; when he procreates, he is reborn; when he dies he takes the final bath after the sacrifice. Practice of austerity, charity and truthfulness are the gifts he makes in this life-long soma sacrifice.⁷⁰ Or, to give another example, this world is fire, earth its fuel, fire its smoke, night its flame, moon its cinder, and the stars its sparks. In this fire gods offer

rain and thereby food is produced. Man is fire, in whom the gods offer food, from which arises further life.⁷¹ And the last example: The Supreme Self is in oneself, all that one eats is an offering to that. To meditate so is to perform the agnihotra sacrifice.⁷² Any kind of offering, and all self-restraint (*samyamana*) are unending and immortal sacrifices. He who knows this, says the *Kauṣītaki*, is sacrificing continuously and uninterruptedly, whether waking or sleeping.⁷³

The meditation the Upaniṣads prescribe, it is argued, is based on correct understanding, it is not like regarding a post as a man. It is similar to meditating upon an image as God, knowing that the image is not God, but that it could be an aid to meditation. In other words, the image is a symbol of God and by meditation on it we rise to a fuller knowledge of God. It is just a means, a ladder for our spiritual ascent. Similarly, by meditating upon the world as a sacrificial animal, or human life as one continuous sacrifice, one gains access to spiritual truth. Also, for those who take the scriptures to be true and infallible, such meditations take on a sacramental character. They are interior symbolizations of something sacred, efficacious of wellbeing. Only in a figurative sense is an image God, and when we say that God has that or this attribute, we are then too indulging in metaphorical statements, for the true God "has" nothing, but is infinite and perfect Being. So though the world is not a sacrificial horse, yet such a meditation is conducive to well-being, giving the same fruit which is got by an actual sacrifice, and moreover it enables one to apprehend through this symbol a spiritual truth.⁷⁴

(3) Finally, the Upaniṣads disparage the actual ritualistic sacrifices, not because they do not confer upon the sacrificer the fruits promised by the Veda, but because these are impermanent. They can give us only prosperity in this world or happiness in the other world, but cannot give us liberation. One may go to heaven as a result of the merit acquired by good deeds and sacrifices, but when that merit is exhausted, one has to be reborn in this world. There is a higher end for man than the acquisition of merit and enjoyment in heaven, and

that is union with the Imperishable Person. This true salvation is to be gained by askesis, faith and renunciation; there is no salvation through works. By what one does one cannot attain Brahman; only by what one knows and believes can one win the Immortal.⁷⁵

The Upaniṣadic teaching may be summed up thus. Actual sacrifices and rituals have no great spiritual value, although they do give the results which scriptures speak of. So they should be discarded. But there are some actions, e.g. the five mahāyajnas and daily duties, which are not for selfish individual ends, but for the good of all. Performance of them as duty which is an end in itself purifies a man and makes him a worthy vessel of salvation. Meditation concerning the sacrifices, to conceive the world or life as a sacrificial act, is of greater value than actual performance of them. It takes on a sacramental character, and develops spiritual insight. This prepares the way for the vision of Brahman, which is the ultimate end of human life.

V

Action done otherwise than for and as sacrifice binds the soul, while sacrificial action frees it. *Yajñārthāt karmano'nyatra lokoyam karma bandhanah*. This is the teaching of the Gītā. Sacrificial action is action done for the sake of God, the Lord and enjoyer of all sacrifice and askesis (*bhoktāram yajnatapasām*). The gods are but the forms and powers of this one Supreme Person; those who worship them gain prosperity and paradise, whereas sacrifice offered to God leads to liberation. To do everything only for one's own pleasure is the lowest type of action; such a life is futile. *Mogham pārtha sa jīvati*. To offer to the gods what one can, to sacrifice for obtaining enjoyments, and to enjoy everything with the consciousness that all men's possessions are gods' gifts is to lead a consecrated life. Superior to this is to work without any personal desire and to do everything as an offering to God. By so doing one

neither follows the law nor the flesh, but the Spirit. Thus one enters into divine life.

To give and to receive, to be aware that the goods man enjoys are not something he has acquired by his own unaided power, and to be thankful to the gods, the supernatural powers that rule over the world and settle man's destiny, and render unto them what is theirs and is received from them — is the law of sacrifice. But the highest sacrifice is that which is for the one true God, which consists in submitting one's will to his divine will, merely becoming an instrument of the divine working (*nimitta mātram*) and giving up the sense of being the sufficient agent of actions. The world is not for the sake of man and what happens is not the result of man's will. The beginning and the end of the world is God, it is his will that nature is working out. To realize this truth, to be satisfied with whatever is one's portion in life and be equanimous always, knowing it is God's will that is ever being done, to surrender oneself and all one has to God, while doing what is conducive to the good of the world (*lokasamgraha*), — that is true sacrifice.⁷⁶ Work done in this spirit liberates one. Everything is of and from God, is dependent on him and belongs to him, is indwelt by him, is controlled by him and ensouled by him.⁷⁷ Not all have reached this knowledge and few can live and act in it. Such are the liberated souls. For those who know this, there is only one dharma — that of sacrifice, of offering whatever they do to God himself, to make their own wills instruments of the divine will and to surrender their beings to him.⁷⁸ Surrender of all that one is to God — *ātma samarpaṇa* — that is the highest sacrifice. To realize that all existence has its foundation in God, that in him we live and move and that, therefore, we are united with all that is, which implies that our true good is the good of all⁷⁹ — of the whole world — and to do works in the light of this knowledge, is *jnānayajna*, sacrifice of knowledge. There are many kinds, forms and means of sacrifices, and all sorts of oblations — material, physical and psychological — and various results ensue therefrom. All of them are good, for

they purify man, but the jñānayajna is the highest among them, for in it all sacrifices culminate.⁸⁰ In this doctrine the Gītā gives the last word of Hindu theism.

VI

The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā considers the highest good to be Heaven, by which it understands happiness totally free from pain and desired by all men, which is a positive quality of the soul.⁸¹ Heaven is obtained by practising Dharma, i.e. what is conducive to welfare. Dharma is what should be done and it produces desirable results.⁸² The Mīmāṃsā holds dharma is only the action indicated by Vedic commands. Whenever any action is done it brings into existence a force or potency in the agent, which continues to exist till the final result is obtained. Otherwise, we cannot conceive how an act can produce a definite result at some time or other, although all acts perish the moment one stops performing them. Some acts instantaneously produce their effects, but there are a number of empirical acts as well as religious acts which do not do so. Yet they are efficacious, because they set in motion a force in the soul which makes it capable of experiencing their results at the appropriate time. This force or potency is known as *Apūrva*, and it is directly instrumental in making the soul experience the results of its actions without fail either in this world or the other world.⁸³ The principle which secures that virtue results in happiness and sin in unhappiness in this or the next life is *Apūrva*, which is engendered by action, and is exhausted when the fruit of the action is enjoyed by the agent. Unless it is presumed Mīmāṃsā thinks, it is difficult to understand how actions done now can give results after death in another world or here on earth in another life.*

*The Prabhākara school of Mīmāṃsā admits *Apūrva*, but does not agree with the view that it is a power produced in the agent. Its conception is complex and not very intelligible.

Mīmāṃsā says there are three primary religious (dhārmic) acts — sacrifice (*Yajna*), offering in fire or water (*homa*), and beneficence (giving, *dāna*). All religious action consists in offering something to someone else. In offering, one's possession of a thing is relinquished and it is given away to someone else so that the latter's ownership is established over it.⁸⁴ In sacrifice one verbally abandons one's ownership of a thing and offers it to a deity, thus bringing about a connection between it and the deity.⁸⁵ In *homa* the thing is offered into a suitable receptacle like fire or water. In *dāna* a thing is actually given away to another. All these are primary acts of dharma.⁸⁶ Man must continuously renounce what he has and give it away. He must free himself from possessions. That is the essence of religious action. Since without postulating a deity, offerings of the first two types cannot be made, it is postulated.⁸⁷ Deities have no ontological reality, they are only hypothetical entities for whom offerings are made and invoked as existing in the dative case in *mantras*. The rewards of actions are secured by *Apūrva*, deities have nothing to do with this; and their actual existence, says Mīmāṃsā, is not necessary for religious action.

Mīmāṃsā also classifies religious action in another way. There are firstly actions undertaken to secure the ends desired by man, i.e. those which give him happiness. These are *puruṣārtha* acts. Secondly, there are acts done because the scriptures prescribe them. These help to fulfil sacrificial action, but are not done by man for his own ends. These are *kratvartha* acts.⁸⁸ Still, as they too help man to secure his ultimate end, Heaven, they are in a way *puruṣārtha*.@ Some Mīmāṃsakas believe that acts like scriptural study and the fire-installation ceremony fall under neither, whereas some acts like the *Visvajit* sacrifice bring about universally desired results without accomplishing any specific individual ends. A simpler classification would be: (1) regular daily acts which must be compulsorily performed such as morning and evening

@“*Darsaparnamāsa*” is an example of a *puruṣārtha* act; a “*Prayāga*” of a *Kratvartha* act.

prayers, *sandhyā vandana*, (2) actions which ought to be performed on special occasions, such as offerings to manes, *śrāddha*, and (3) actions to be performed only for the sake of desired results, but are not obligatory.

Performance of religious duty has nothing to do with the other world, for it either produces no fruits or produces fruits in this world itself.⁸⁹ The wise man practises religion because he ought to, without believing that gods actually exist and without desiring any results. Except to do his duty he has no other desire; fulfilment of duty is liberation⁹⁰. Or, as other Mīmāṃsakas say, understanding the nature of the soul, and by doing only what is one's duty for its own sake, the soul is able to sever its connection with the world and is liberated, when it has experienced the residue of its karma.⁹¹

All action, according to Mīmāṃsā, is intrinsically efficacious causing its own effects. Ritual itself produces its own results and not a god or gods. It is not prayer, worship, offering or propitiation to or of any god. So, in religion action is primary and gods secondary. Whatever we know about gods is from the Veda. It tells us they have no forms, so they cannot listen to man's prayers or eat his offerings; they are not the lords of material things, so they cannot bestow favours on their worshippers. Even if gods were lords, they cannot arbitrarily bestow gifts on men as they please, but only according to men's acts and wills. It is not gods who relate action with its fruit. It is evident, Mīmāṃsā teaches, that the cause of obtaining the fruits of any action is the will of the agent. So it is primary. Moreover, the reality of gods is merely verbal. Their existence is entirely limited to the Vedic universe of discourse.⁹² All this, Mīmāṃsā asserts, is known from the Veda. Whatever else might be said about this matter by other religious books (*smṛtis*), popular belief (*upacāra*) and apparent contrary evidence (*anyathādarśana*) is false, for nothing but the Veda (says Mīmāṃsā) can be the authority in religious matters.

The motive of all human action is desire and action binds; truly religious action is that which is done without desire and

does not bind. The source, the standard and the rule of religious action has to be found somewhere outside man. Then alone it can be objective. Mīmāṃsā says this is found in the eternal knowledge embodied in the Veda, which teaches only about what ought to be done and what is ancillary to the ought, and nothing as such about what is. What is can be known from perception, science and history. What ought to be can be known only from an impersonal, unchangeable and inerrant source of knowledge. Mīmāṃsā claims such is the Veda, which is eternal and uncreated like the world.

The Mīmāṃsā doctrine may be contrasted with the doctrines of Socrates, Epicurus and Kant in Europe and of Confucius and the Gītā in Asia.

In spite of his exalted ethical ideas and critical spirit, Socrates sacrificed and prayed to gods, participated in their festivals and scrupulously kept his vows. Even in his last moments he wanted to make a libation to a god from the draught of poison and drank it after praying to the gods, and just before dying remembered his vow of a cock to Asclepius and asked his friend to fulfil it. Socrates appears to have believed in the existence of gods, but certainly he considered it was man's duty to perform rituals as ancient tradition ordained whether or not gods existed. Socrates also believed in a God that directs and commands men, whom men have to serve. The example of Socrates shows that philosophic profundity, moral courage and critical ability are not contradictory to belief in gods and involvement in rituals. The case of Epicurus is of another type. He denied future life, taught there were gods, but that they had no power or interest in the world*, and that yet one should worship them through traditional rites including sacrifices. Epicurus himself worshipped and sacrificed. The difference in metaphysical outlook between Epicurus and Mīmāṃsā and their similar attitude to rituals is interesting. While Kant's categorical imperative is as

*A far greater philosopher, Aristotle, was beforehand with Epicurus on both these points: There is no afterlife; gods do not interfere with human affairs.

exacting as the Dharma of Mīmāṃsā, his principle that one must so act that the maxim of the act becomes by one's will a universal law and that each individual must determine his own ends for himself according to his own idea of duty, make it a very different type of ethics. Unlike him, Mīmāṃsā does not think that moral consciousness demands the postulation of God. According to it, the cosmos is so constituted that Virtue by its productive power brings about happiness. Kant appears to have believed in God, but does not seem to be certain that there was any purely rational justification for such faith.

We do not know whether Confucius believed in the existence of gods and ancestral spirits, but he insisted on performance of rituals and sacrifices for them. He, however, seems to have believed in Heaven, a purposeful Supreme Being, which though master of all things, merely reigned, leaving the moral law to operate itself. (Fung Yu-lan & Wing-tsit Chan). Rituals must be performed by all according to tradition, said Confucius, because they refine and civilize men and are wonderful settled ways of expressing our propriety, respect, gratitude, piety and awe. Flouting of tradition creates disorder, a breaking away from ancestral faith and a disruption of community spirit. There is poetry and beauty in well-regulated rituals coming from antiquity*, and whether we know their meaning or not and whether they are efficacious or not, they must, he said, be performed, for they discipline and purify men. It is futile to try to know what the supernatural order is or to try to understand death, because we neither yet completely know the natural order nor understand life. We are unable to serve fellowmen, how can we hope to serve supernatural beings? Let us respect them and be at a proper distance from them,† taught Confucius, but let us perform all rituals scrupulously, for by immemorial tradition

*Santayana had a similar attitude towards Catholic ritual: he loved it for its mystery and beauty.

†Let us not inquire too deeply into the origins of gods, they like to hide themselves, runs an ancient Hindu saying. *Parokṣa priyā vai devāh.*

they are recognized to be the means of establishing harmony between the human and supernatural orders. The points of similarity and difference between all this and the Mīmāṃsā position are obvious. Lastly, we come to the Gītā. What ought to be done and what ought not to be, for this scripture is the authority. Śāstra is *Pramāna* in *Kāryākāryavyavasthāu*. Only action done just because it is duty does not bind, on the other hand it purifies the agent. This with the knowledge of one's self will lead to salvation. So far the teaching of the Gītā and Mīmāṃsā agree. But, adds the Gītā, if something more is sought after, thought, passion and action have to be oriented towards the Supreme Person.

Righteousness has nothing to do with God; man's misery and happiness are also not related to gods or God; the moral law is an eternal natural cosmic law without a governor; and an action is religious insofar as it objectively presents itself to man as duty and is discharged because it ought to be without any other consideration. The creativity and merit of the great Mīmāṃsākas — Jaimini and Śābara, Kumārila and Prabhākara — lies in their elaborating this theory which is no less rational and credible than alternate theories in the domain of ethics and religion.

The influence of Mīmāṃsā on Hindu religious life has been profound. The multitudes who bathe in the Gangā and worship in temples like Tirumalai and carry on daily pūjā in their household shrines seem to hold that these acts by themselves will produce desirable results. The majority of them have no living faith in God and do not understand the meaning of the rituals which they perform or cause to be performed on their behalf and yet their pūjās, vows etc., are found to be efficacious. Mīmāṃsā is vindicated!

VII

I now wish to present brief summaries of what two modern philosophers said about sacrifice. Of these two, the Indian is very well acquainted with both Indian and European thought,

and besides being a thinker of high order, is believed by some to have had access to higher truth won through yoga. The other is a European who has a profound knowledge of European philosophy, but does not seem to know Eastern philosophy, except Japanese Buddhism to a slight extent; and he is one of the most important contemporary European thinkers.

Sri Aurobindo developed a concept of sacrifice from the *R̥gveda*.⁹³ He thought the spiritual meaning of the Veda hidden behind psychological symbolism was rediscovered by him through philological indications and his own experience. The force of man's upward aspiring will, says Aurobindo, is the fire, Agni, the living flame that burns in the soul, but has to be continually kindled by right decision and right choosing.

The divine will awakened and active in man is the inner flame, Agni, which is the priest of sacrifice. Man must cast into it his oblations, and it coming to the forefront, becoming the Purohita (priest), guides us on our ascent to the Divine, carries and offers to the Source of his being man's offerings and brings down in return spiritual riches. Man's ascent to the Divine and the Immortal is sacrifice; it is a progress, a journey, led by Agni up the spiritual path. It is also a battle against the forces of evil and untruth (*dasyus, panis*), in which we are aided by the luminous divine mind, Indra, the power of Truth, invoked by our sacrifice. All Godward aspiration, all action external and internal consecrated to God, is sacrifice. The true oblations are: the purified mind symbolized as melted butter; the vital power with all its impulses, desires and enjoyments symbolized as a horse; the replacing of ordinary sense enjoyments by delight in the Divine symbolized as cakes. The soul is the seat of all sacrifice, while all cosmic and individual activity become self-conscious, enlightened and aware of its goal is true sacrifice.

The condition of all effective sacrifice, according to Aurobindo, is that the human will should adore and submit to the Divine will, allow it to burn away all human egoism and hankering after the finite, and work in man towards his salvation by leading him on the right path. The goal of all

sacrifice is to enter into the home of Agni, the vast consciousness of Truth (*R̥ta*). The fruits of sacrifice are spiritual bounties, mental illumination and vital energy, symbolized as cows and horses. Sacrifice ushers in the Dawn of higher truth unveiling the Sun of spiritual truth; it brings down the rain of heavenly abundance; in it we are drunk with divine delight (*soma*) and transported into immortalizing ecstasy; and by it the enfolding coils of ignorance (*Vṛtra*) are cleft asunder by God's (Indra's) truth (flashing lightning). To surrender all human thoughts, activities and enjoyments, according to the law (*ṛta*) and ordainment (*vidhi*), to the Divine to whom they rightly belong: Man's offering of what he is and has to the Divine as the means of divine consumption — that is sacrifice.

Such is Aurobindo's concept of sacrifice. He believes it has been developed from what the Vedic hymns imply. It is immaterial whether all the hymns consistently and uniformly lend themselves to such an interpretation. Aurobindo's concept, as that of a mystic and thinker, can be judged on its merits. If his religious metaphysics and view of man's destiny be accepted, man's self-surrender (*ātma-arpana*) to the Supreme becomes the highest way to the Goal.

In his later writings Heidegger has spoken about free sacrifice. In his somewhat queer language he expresses a valuable insight about sacrifice. Being, according to him, is other than everything that "is" as well as that which gives everything the warrant to be. Being bestowed a favour on all that is by causing its unique occurrence, and Being has endowed man's nature with grace so that he alone may be related to Being in such a way that he can become its guardian.* This has occasionally evoked in historical man the impulse to thank Being, and the original thinking about Being arose from this thanking in human heart. Being's favour is such that it enables man to have an open relationship with it, that is, he is free to respond to it in the way he

*This perhaps means a champion and upholder of the truth of Being (cp. a knight of God).

chooses. The hidden thanking (i.e. implicit gratitude) in man pays homage to Being's grace, and is expressed in sacrifice. Sacrifice is not necessitated or compelled, but is free; yet it is demanded by Being in the sense that a need for it is created. This need is to preserve the truth of Being irrespective of what may happen to all that which is and man. Our human being — man's historical being — has to be expended for preserving it. This truth is Being's special relationship with man and its favour. Sacrifice can be prepared for and performed in the midst of all that is, but it is consummated only in the inwardness out of which man dedicates his human reality — surrenders his historical being — to preserve the dignity of Being. Sacrifice requires man to bid farewell to and leave all individual things and solely devote himself to the truth of Being. The inwardness in which sacrifice is consummated is the calm which allows nothing to shake man's readiness to abandon everything. The happening through which Being claims man for its truth is the foundation of sacrifice. As such sacrifice has no purpose; it is spontaneous. The spirit of sacrifice is the readiness for dread*: the clear courage to endure 'Nothing'†. This is the clarity of awe. "Awe clears and enfolds that region of human being within which man endures, as at home, in the enduring".⁹⁴ The spirit of sacrifice, the clarity of awe "takes upon itself kinship with the imperishable". When the truth of Being is protected and vindicated thus by sacrifice, the Being of truth, says Heidegger, is enabled to find a place in man's history.⁹⁵

It is difficult to criticize such an account. Only one who has been awakened to the moods of dread and awe can say whether it is true, or how far it is true. And, what is the

*The mood which discloses something uncanny, in which the something is not definite: the experience of what is other than whatever is. In it all that which is slips away in totality, becoming untenable, and what is so radically different from everything shows itself as belonging to everything.

†Nothing is what is not anything that is and reveals all that which is as what is.

relevance of these Heideggerian insights to the man who has not felt the terror of the abyss? A similar question can arise for the religious man: to whom shall the man who has not felt the Divine sacrifice? This is not the same as the old Vedic question: *Kasmai Devāya haviṣā vidhema?* There it was to which god should one sacrifice, here it is where is any god to whom one could sacrifice?

Epilogue

If sacrifice is understood as ritual the exact performance of which accomplishes the desired end, it is easily intelligible. Use of pejorative terms such as magic and mechanical cannot demonstrate the falsity or error of this theory, while it is true it cannot also be demonstrated. Giving up of what one has or can have — material possessions or persons (e.g. as Kierkegaard did in the case of Regina, or Abraham or Agamemnon with their children) is also though difficult, practicable. But when one is asked to offer one's thoughts and actions, or when one is asked to surrender oneself or dedicate oneself to God, what does it mean? Does it mean leading a sort of life different from ordinary life? If so, wherein does this difference consist? Or, does it mean developing a different kind of outlook and attitude in all that one does, although what one does is no different from what others do? Also, surrender or dedication to a Person is more easily conceivable than to Being, Brahman or the Transcendent. Surrender or dedication can be made when one feels there is someone who demands and is justified in demanding it. Dedication to an idea, ideal or a cause is also understandable, but in such a case it is not to a reality which already is, but to something which has yet to be realized. It is also possible that one may dedicate or sacrifice oneself to preserve or uphold a state of affairs, a doctrine, or an intangible thing like honour, but only when there is a possibility of what is sought to be preserved or upheld being overthrown or destroyed. When one is asked to sacrifice to or for Brahman or Being, or even to the

Divine that is not a Person justifiably demanding it, it can only be a metaphorical and avoidable way of exhortation to develop a certain kind of outlook and attitude or lead a certain kind of life, felt to be the right kind of one. Sacrifice to a Person who is real, or to an ideal which has to be realized, makes sense and is possible. Sacrifice is also possible, if it is understood as performance of certain actions in a certain way, when it is believed such performance produces by itself what is held to be desirable, or when it is believed such performance is what ought to be done. In either case sacrifice is giving up of what one has, or transformation of one's life.

RELIGIOUS ACTION: NOTES

- 1 *Gītā*, XVIII. 46.
- 2 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I. 4.6.
- 3 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, III. 10.6
- 4 *Mahābhārata*, 'Śāntiparva', 338.52.
- 5 See *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XII. 3.4: "Nārāyaṇa by sacrificing Himself actually became the world".
- 6 *Taittirīya Samhitā & Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda*.
- 7 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III. 16.1.4.
- 8 For the following account, Macdonnell's article in Hasting's Encyclopaedia; A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, Vol. I, p. 257-278.
- 9 For the idea that creation is sacrifice: *Rg Veda*, X. 72, 81, 82, 90 etc.
- 10 *Rg Veda*, I. 170-4; X. 71-3.
- 11 Farrell & Healy, *My Way of Life, Pocket Edition of St. Thomas* (Brooklyn, 1952) p. 510-6, 523.
- 12 *Rg Veda*, X. 65.7.
- 13 *Rg Veda*, I. 164.50.
- 14 *Mysticism*, (1911), p. 197.
- 15 *Rg Veda*, X. 31.2.
- 16 *Rg Veda*, I. 185.8.
- 17 *Rg Veda*, IX. 97; IX. 110, VII. 51.1.
- 18 *Rg Veda*, VIII. 32.16.
- 19 *Rg*, II. 35.12.
- 19(a) *Rg*, X. 63.12; VIII. 70.11.
- 20 *Rg*, X. 88.8. Fire seems to be an ancient medium, VIII. 102.10. It is gods' tongue through which they taste oblations (X. 65).
- 21 *Rg*, X. 90.
- 22 *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 105.
- 23 IV. 24.
- 24 *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*, VII. 4.
- 25 *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II 3.4.5.
- 26 *Ibid.*, I. 8.1.
- 27 *Taittirīya Samhitā*, VII. 1.8.2.; *Satapatha*, I. 8.1.
- 28 *Satapatha*, XI. 1.8. 2-4; *Pancaviṃśa*, VII. 2.1.
- 29 *Satapatha*, X. 2.2. 2.1.
- 30 *Satapatha*, X. 5. 4.1.
- 31 *Ibid.*, VI. 1-2. 26.
- 32 *Ibid.*, V. i. 1.2; VI. 2-2.16; X. 4.21.
- 33 *Ibid.*, X 5. 3. 1.

- 34 Ibid., X. 5.3.3. See Sāyaṇa's commentary on this.
- 35 Ibid., X. 6.3.
- 36 Ibid., I. 3.1.27.
- 37 Ibid., V. 1.1.
- 38 Ibid., XI. 2.6. 13.
- 39 Op. cit., 14.
- 40 Op. cit., XIV. 3. 2. 1.
- 41 Op. cit., IX. 4.1. 11.
- 42 Cp. *Taittirīya Samhitā*, VII. 2.4.1.
- 43 *Śatapatha*, I. 2.2. 9; VII. 2.9.
- 44 Ibid., XI. 1.8.2-5; III. 6.2. 16; I. 7.2.1-6.
- 45 *Pancaviṃśa*, V. 6. 10; *Taittirīya Samhitā*, VI. I. 11.6.
- 46 *Śatapatha*, I. 2.3.6.
- 47 Ibid., X. 5. 2.20.
- 48 III. 2.3.9.
- 49 Luke, XI. 42.
- 50 Matthew, IV. 10.
- 51 Matthew, IX. 13.
- 52 *Śatapatha*, XI. 5.6.1. Cp. *Taittirīya Aranyaka*: "Panca vā ete mahāyajñāḥ satati pratayante". *Chāndoga Pariśiṣṭa*: "Mahāsattrāni jāniyāt ta eva hi mahāmakhāḥ". Also, *Manusmṛti*, III. 68-71.
- A *sattra* is a sacrificial session extending from twelve nights to a thousand years (usually a chain of soma sacrifices) intended to remove 'darkness'. "Na asya (tamasah) anyena sattrāt apaghāto'sti". (*Śatapatha*, XI. 5.5.1.)
- 53 "Yajna mahāyajnau vyaṣṭisamaṣṭi sambandhāt", says Angira. "Samaṣṭisambandhān mahāyajnāḥ", says Bhāradvāja.
- 54 *Gītā*, II. 50:—Yoga is skill in action.
- 55 *Śatapatha*, XI. 5.7.1. *Paktih=paripākah* (Sāyaṇa). *Loka* is either the "people" or "the world".
- 56 See the Vedic Texts: "Niṣkāraṇo vedo'chyeyo jneyasca; yo hi vidyām adhitya arthine nabruyāt sa kāryahā syāt śreyaso dvāram apāvṛṇuyāt".
- 57 II. 118.
- 58 "Annam bhūmau śvacandālavāyasebhyasca nikṣipet", says *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*.
- 59 *Manusmṛti*, III. 68 f. "Struggle for existence", "nature red in tooth and claw" are familiar ideas in Indian thought. All living beings are the food of each other, life thrives by consuming life (*Bṛhadāranyaka*, VI. 1.14). Since life feeds on life, all is food, says the *Chāndogya* (V. 2.1). This idea is repeated in *Mahābhārata*, *Śāntiparva*, 15.21, in *Manusmṛti*, V. 28, and in the *Bhāgavata*, I. 13.46. By our very existence, through breathing and the movement of our eye lids, every moment we kill or mutilate several microscopic

- organisms; says the *Mahābhārata*, *Śānti*, 15.26. So, "Jīvo jīvasya jīvanam, prāṇasya annam idam sarvam".
- 60 *R̥g Veda*, X. 117.6: "Kevalāgho bhavati kevalādi".
- 61 *Mahābhārata*, *Vana*, 208.4. Also, *Śānti*, 329.13; 28.19.
- 62 III. X. 2.1.
- 63 *Munḍaka*, 3.2.10; *Śvetāśvetara*, II. 6; *Bṛhadāranyaka*, IV. 4.22.
- 64 Meditation and rites are alternatives, say the *Śatapatha*, X. IV. 3.9; and the *Taittirīya Samhitā*, V. III. 12. 2.
- 65 *Munḍaka*, I. 2.7. 10.
- 66 *Bṛhadāranyaka*, IV. 4. 22, and Śankara's commentary on it. Also, *Munḍaka*, III. 1.8. Cp. *Śatapatha*, XI. II. VI. 13.
- 67 IV. 16. 1.
- 68 In his Bhāṣya on *Bṛhadāranyaka*, I. 1., Śankara makes it clear that meditation is not part of a rite, but an alternative to it. It produces a greater result than mere ritual.
- 69 *Bṛhadāranyaka*, I. 1 & 2. Śankara on Ibid., I. 2.7.
- 70 *Chāndogya*, III. 16.
- 71 *Bṛhadāranyaka*, VI. 2.11-12.
- 72 *Chāndogya*, V. 19-24.
- 73 *Kauṣītaki*, II. 5.
- 74 Śankara on *Bṛhadāranyaka*, I. 3.1.
- 75 *Munḍaka*, I. 2.
- 76 *Gītā*, III. 19, 20.
- 77 *Gītā*, IV. 24, 35; and commentaries of Rāmānuja and Madhva on this.
- 78 Ibid., XI. 33; XVIII. 66.
- 79 "Yena bhūtānyaśeṣena drakṣasyātmanyatho mayi", *Gītā*, IV. 35. See III. 19-20, 30: "Mayi sannyasya karmāṇi".
- 80 Ibid., IV. 23-33. A wide understanding of sacrifice in this sense and the sacrifice of knowledge are not concepts exclusive to the *Gītā*. *Manusmṛti*, IV. 21-24, too develops these ideas.
- 81 *Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya*, Jha's Trans., p. 967; *Prakarāṇa Pancikā*, p. 102-3, 149.
- 82 *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, 2.
- 83 *Bhāṣya*, Trans., p. 175; *Tantravārtika*, Jha's Trans., p. 504.
- 84 *Bhāṣya*, p. 785.
- 85 *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, IV. 2. 27.
- 86 *Bhāṣya*, p. 784.
- 87 *Sūtra*, IX. 1.6-10.
- 88 *Sūtra*, IV. 1.2.
- 89 *Vivaraṇaprameya sangraha*, (Andhra University edn.), p. 111.
- 90 "Niyogasiddhireva mokṣah", says the Prabhākara school. See *Prakarāṇa Pancikā*, p. 180-190.

- 91 *Śloka Vārtika*, "Sambandhākṣepaparihāra", 108-110. "Prapanca-sambandha vilayo mokṣah", says *Śāstra Dīpikā*, p. 357.
- 92 *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* and *Bhāṣya*, IX. 1.6-10; VII. 1.34 & X. 4.23.
- 93 For the following account, Aurobindo, *On the Veda*, Pondicherry, 1956.
- 94 Martin Heidegger, *Existence And Being*, Vision Press, London, p. 386.
- 95 *Ibid.*, p. 389-90. Postscript to *What Is Metaphysics?* Passim.

ANNEXE

PŪJĀ AND YAJNA

Pūjā first arose among non-Aryan peoples like Dravidians and Munda-speaking tribes, while Yajna had Aryan origins.* Pūjā is more personal than Yajna and sentiment (devotion) plays an important part in it, while Yajna is more communal and ritual has a central role in it. The forces or persons to whom Pūjā is offered are more concrete and images of them are made, while those in whose honour Yajna is performed are more abstract. Pūjā appeals to man's aesthetic sense, while Yajna is awe-inspiring. In the course of their development, both Pūjā and Yajna were more and more spiritualized, interpreted philosophically and assimilated to each other, so that in their higher forms they do not differ from each other or Yoga, and many of the characteristics of their primitive forms disappear.

Although Yāska and Pāṇini use the word "Pūjā" (=worship, adoration) a number of times, the hypothesis of Gundert, Kittel and Charpentier that it is derived from a Dravidian verbal root *pūcu*, which means "to paint, to daub, to smear", may be correct. One of the most common early ways of adoration was to smear, daub or paint sacred objects with oily, red or yellow-coloured stuffs. The most characteristic element of pūjā is to wash or pour water etc., on the sacred object or person and then to smear or daub it or him with certain ointments, powders or oily substances. The *abhiṣeka* of a *linga* or an image, of smearing these with oil, red ochre (e.g. of Hanumān images), turmeric powder (e.g. of Pārvatī images) and sandal paste (e.g. of Kṛṣṇa and Narasimha images), still occupies a central position in the worship of these symbols. It was pūjā which Mary performed when she anointed Jesus with

*From Yāmuna's *Āgamaprāmānya* we learn that Pūjā was not considered Vedic and those who professionally did Pūjā were debarred from learning Veda and sacrificing. The *Mahābhārata* (XII. 77.8.) says a devalaka (temple priest) is a brāhmaṇacāndāla (brāhmin-untouchable).