

The Meeting Points of All in Christ:

ON THE MYSTIC WAYS: “NADA”

AND “NETI”

IN AN UPANISHAD :

BRIHADARANYAKA

AND

IN A SPANISH MYSTIC: ST. JOHN

OF THE CROSS:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Transferred to another mission field in 1970. There I received the license from the collector of the district as a homeopathic doctor. During four years of service, treated 10,000 patients. Out of this, 500 non-Christians were converted because of their miraculous healing through the gospel, medical mission; there.

I got a transfer with promotion to another district, Pathanamthitta, to start a new medical mission, a monastery, a charitable society, a trust, under which a retreat and a counseling center was started in 1979. Then I was ordained as a missionary priest. In 1997, I was promoted to the post of director of the counseling center in Mylapra.

I was selected to take the perfect vow of celibacy at the age of 53. From that day onwards, I wear a cloth on my head symbolizing the vow of Nazirite, mentioned in Numbers 6:1-5, and the thorny crown worn by Jesus on the day of his crucifixion. From June 21, 1997, I received the license to be known as Remban Paul and the license to conduct retreats as a retreat father.

B. Ordination papers enclosed separately

C. Other Certificates are enclosed.

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5. Employment Background: Past 20-year frame

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- B. Appointed vicar of St. Thomas Orthodox Church in Rajasthan, India in 1989 to 1991, combined with duties in Lucknow, Dehradun, Haridwar, Ajmer, Kethady Nagar, Bikaner, New Delhi, and West Bengal. I was then appointed vicar of St. Anthony's Church in Thannithodu, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India in 1992.
- C. From 1993 to 1995 I was appointed vicar of St. Mary's Orthodox Church in Thaloor, Vyanad, Kerala, together with study in Mysore as a research scholar and visiting missionary priest in different churches there.
- D. From 1995 to 1999, I have been appointed by the head of the church as director of retreat center and supervisor of training center in Mylapra, Pathanamthitta, Kerala.

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- B. Dr. John K. Abraham; 9491 Century Ct.#204; Troy, MI 48083 USA Phone # 1-248-680-9182.
- C. Abraham Thomas(Retired Legal Advisor of Hospitals); 111 Rose Dale Road; Yonkers, New York,10710, USA Phone # 914-961-0625

7. Plans for the Future

- A. The vision of my future ministry is reflected in my thesis, the unfulfilled plan of God in Ephesians 1:10. " That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven,

and which are on earth - in Him.” To achieve this aim, I am doing inter-religious dialogue: preaching, house visiting, counseling, and retreat all over the world.

- B. **Unique talents:** Preaching, Singing, and composing new songs, which convey gospel truths, painting episodes from the gospels. Christian Yoga: coordinating body, soul and spirit. Coordination of believers and non-believers in the mission field through gardening, cooking, and digging ground works. Drawing plans of buildings useful for missionary and monasteries. Writing new scientific parables taken from electronic mechanisms: computer, email, technology of flight and electricity to convey biblical truths in modern languages using Malayalam, English, Tamil, Hindi, Syriac, and Greek. (Sanskrit and Spanish study as a beginner only)
- C. **Wish to provide Services:** In Orthodox Church, general public, and all other denominations with ecumenical spirit, in all religions.
- D. **Major:** My major is biblical religious counseling for those who are wounded in spirit and soul. My vocational conviction through a vision that I am called and elected to continue the ministry of St. Paul. The same revelation was given to my superior at the time of my priestly ordination and I was named Paul. After that, as a missionary priest, the Holy Spirit led me to many cities of India, Malaysia, Middle East, and in America. Recently the Holy Spirit has led me to meet Dr. John T. Longworth the President of Cornerstone University.Louisiana.U.S.A on August 24,1999 at Maharajah’s Indian Restaurant in Houston.

8. Theme of Present Thesis:

- A. **OBJECTIVE:** To submit a Thesis and experiences in the Gospel field as a missionary priest, social worker, homeopathic Doctor, Counselor and retreat Father, toward fulfillment of requirements for Ph.D. at Cornerstone University; 607 Ryan St.; Lake Charles, LA 70601.

B. Title:

The Meeting Points of All in Christ:

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IN AN UPANISHAD: BRIHADARANYAKA

AND

IN A SPANISH MYSTIC: ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acts	The Acts of the Apostles
A. T. C	Asian Trading Corporation
B. G.	Bhagavad Gita
B. U.	Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
D. E.	Divine Emptiness
Dt	Deuteronomy
E. B.	The New Encyclopedia Britannia
Eph.	The letter of Paul to Ephesians
Ex.	Exodus
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Gal.	The letter of Paul to Galatians
Gen.	Genesis
Heb.	The letter to the Hebrews
Hos.	Hosea
I. Cor.	The First letter of Paul to the Corinthians
II. Cor.	The Second letter of Paul to the Corinthians
I. Jn.	First Letter of John
I. Kg.	The First Book of Kings
I. Pet.	The First letter of Peter
Is.	Isaiah
I. Sam.	The First book of Samuel
II. Sam.	The Second book of Samuel

I. Tim.	First Letter of Paul to Timothy
Jas.	The letter of James
J. B. C.	The Jerome Biblical Commentary
Jer.	Jeremiah
Jn.	The Gospel according to John
K. J. V.	King James Version
Lev.	Leviticus
Lk.	Gospel according to Luke
M. E.	Mystical Experience
Mic.	The Book of Micah
Mk.	The Gospel according to Mark
Mt.	The Gospel according to Mathew
M. W.	Mystic Way
M. W. Na.	Mystic Way of Nada
M. W. Ne.	Mystic Way of Neti
N.I.D.N.T.T	The new International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
P. A.	Point of Arrival
P. D.	Point of Departure
Phil.	The letter of Paul to Philippians
R	Renunciation
Rev.	The Revelation to John
RG.	Rigveda

Rm.	The letter of Paul to the Romans
SB.	Satapatha Brahmana
S. J. C.	St. John of the Cross
T. B.	Taittiriya Brahmana
TBM.	Tandya Brahmana Mata
T. P. I.	Theological Publication in India
YAJ.	Yajnavalkya.

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Doctor of Theology Research Scholars). I am grateful to my guide Dr. E. J. Lott at U. T. College. who helped me prepare the thesis proposal.

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There are many others (visible, invisible) who have directly or indirectly helped me in this laborious task for the last many years. May I thank the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Supreme University with hidden treasures of all wisdom (Col.: 2:2) who enlightened me during these studies. I finished this study of thirteen years, without any financial help from my parents, from the Ashram, or from anyone else by God's grace. The Father in heaven gave me an opportunity to use my talents all over the world in counseling,

conducting retreats, and preaching the gospel in India and abroad which was the source of money for this study. Thanks are due to the scholarship from Heaven.

Preface

This thesis is also an attempt to answer some unanswered questions of the prophecies in the Bible:

In my walk with Jesus from age 17, I was blessed to bear his yoke and learn from Him, in whom all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. (Mt: 11:29; Col.: 2:3)

That wisdom drew my attention to the following unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible.

Q.1) “Why is the prophecy of Ephesians 1: 9-10 not fulfilled yet?” “And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”

Q.2). It is said in John 10:16 “there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” Why don’t we see it in the world today?”

Q.3) St. John 17:20-23 we see “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one.” Why is this prayer of Jesus not fulfilled yet/ How can we overcome the obstacles of fulfilling the prophecy and the prayer/ What is my role in it/ What is the role of each Christian in this obstacle/ Why has the Omnipotent God not removed these obstacles?

St. John 12:32 “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.”

Q4.) Even though Jesus Christ was lifted up on the cross and resurrected 2000 years ago, it is still doubtful whether everyone has been drawn to Himself.

John 6: 44-45 “No one comes to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him on the last day. Every one who listens to my Father and learns from him, comes to me.”

John 6:65; No one can come to me unless it is granted by my Father.

Q.5) Why the Father not yet granted all people to be one with Jesus’?

Q.6) Why all people do not get the attraction and teaching of the Father to be attracted to Jesus?

These questions highlight the unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible about the unification of everything in Christ.

Historical evidence point out the obstacles of not fulfilling these prophecies resulting in clashes and misunderstanding among various religion. In this age of ecumenism we have to ignore the conflicting points to seek the meeting points.

An attempt has been made to find the meeting points in Christianity and Hinduism on the mystic ways and I sincerely believe that this approach can be applied to finding a communal harmony among all religions. This thesis proves that all men irrespective of religion can meet at the mystic level like all wells if dug deeper have a common source or spring of water which is the meeting point of all wells. The common well of salvation indicates the mystical union of human soul and the Absolute being. (Is: 12:3).

In Hinduism and Christianity we see such deeper spirituality with meeting points. The meeting points are on the concept of “neti” in Hindu mysticism and “nada” in Spanish Christian mysticism.

It is interesting to note that a Hindu mystic Yajnavalkya (B.C 600) who lived in India and a Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross (1600A.D) in Spain share similar mystical concept of nothingness (neti & nada) on the mystic way for the mystical union transcending time and space.

The Spanish word ‘nada’ denotes the Christian mystic way leading to the Christian mystical experience out of which Christian mysticism was developed by the Spanish Christian mystic St. John of the cross. The Sanskrit word, ‘neti’ express the Hindu mystical experience out of which Hindu mysticism evolved. The meaning of the two important words, ‘St. John of the cross and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad used in the title as follows: ‘Brihadaranyaka Upanishad’ is taken here as a primary sourcebook. It is the representative, leading complete scripture among the thirteen principal Upanishads, exposed by Yajnavalkya, a Sage. This book was translated from Sanskrit by Krishnananda. It was an interpretative exposition, published by the Divine Life Society, Shivanandnagar U.P., 1984.

Keeran Kouvangaugh and Otillo Rodriguez translated the Spanish poems of the poet St. John of the cross from Spanish to English. In another source book, the words ‘St. John of the cross’ stands for all his collected works. (AVP Publication, Adhyatma Vidya pith, Bangalore, 1981).

Declaration

I Sunnykutty P.N (a.k.a. Remban P.N Paul, Parayakulath Ninan Paul) hereby declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted in this University or any other University for any other purpose.

Photograph

Place:

Date :

Sunnykutty.P.N

Introduction

It is evident from the visible and invisible creatures, that there is an invisible being and power behind everything. That invisible creator was hidden in creatures and longing to reveal Himself to creatures, but no creatures were able to see Him. Only a small percentage of men have sought and found the Creator of everything, but it was the privilege of all human soul and spirit to seek and confront the Creator.

The Creator also was revealing Himself partially from the beginning of creation. The substance of all religions witnesses the history of men seeking to find the creator and the Creator's revelations through Prophets and religious leaders. The coming down of the Absolute spirit and the coming up of human soul to meet the source of everything had a union in the history of mankind. This must happen through the incarnation of the invisible Creator as a visible human being. The duty of every man is to seek and find the person who is the Perfect man and the Creator.

Religious scriptures and religious leaders together with daily events are helpful to achieve seeking and union with the Absolute spirit. This altered state of consciousness is the mystical experience. Mysticism is the science, which recorded systematically the experiences of the union of man with his Creator spirit. The characteristic of mysticism is this altered state of consciousness by the union of human soul with the Absolute spirit¹. The real link between religions lie in the universality of the inner life of the soul, in which religions have a quest for the Universal One who is the Creator of Human souls. The interest in this mystery and religious experiment led many to mysticism. Modern trends of mutual sharing of mystical experiences in different religions entailed development of the psychology of religion. Thus philosophy and theology of religions also developed simultaneously.

Why are religions divided by conflicting dogmas? How can all religions meet together? How does one reach that mystical realm?

These questions prompted curiosity in thinkers and entailed religious experiment and interest in mystery, which led many to mysticism and mystical claims. Therefore, taken both as proof of universality of the inner life of the soul and as the real link between religions, which may be divided by dogma, but are really united in their quest for the universal One². Mystical experience, as claimed, is not merely an example and inspiration from the few to the many, but is something that most people can share. These religious, theological, and psychological modern trends promoted this writer for deeper study in the Hindu-Christian Mysticism.

¹ cf. Woods, Richard. Understanding Mysticism, (ed.). The Athlone Press. London. 1980.

² cf. Ibid. p. 4.

Hindu Mysticism

According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "Hindu Upanishadic Mysticism is the self knowledge that is the highest wisdom. It is pure awareness, distinct from bodily state and mental happiness when self is more than ego. "³

What is Hindu Upanishadic self-knowledge?

It is pure awareness, distinct from bodily state and mental happiness. What is self of a mystic, which is more than ego? What is wrong with egocentric personality? Egocentric personality is the hiding place of evil. While ego is renounced and empties oneself that is the empty place of nothingness where creator Brahman can abide. That self-emptying path of enunciation makes the narrow mystic way of 'Neti'. Through this narrow mystic way, a Hindu mystic is led to the mystical experience of 'sat-chit-ananda'. It is supposed to be the merging union of Hindu souls with the Brahman. After this Hindu mystical union, there is no human self-remaining. Only the self of Brahman is there. The river of human self-consciousness is merged in the sea of Brahman's soul.

What is Hindu mysticism?

It is the systematic scientific articulation and recording of the merging experience of Hindu soul with the creator Brahman where she loses her individuality and identity just as river merges in the sea.

What is Christian mysticism and Christian mystic way?

³ cf. Radhakrishnan, S. Eastern Religions and Western Thought. Oxford, Clarendon Press, Great Britain, 193p. p. 123.

A Spanish Christian mystic, St. John of the Cross, wrote the mystical poem in the sixteenth century AD with Christian mystic way leading to the Christian mystic experience. Out of his writings Christian mysticism had developed. What is the general known concept of Christian mystical experience? It is the meeting of God and soul of a Christian. Before this union, human soul is led through a succession of state until she reaches her own self-being. Here also a Christian soul renounces self-centered ego and empties her. In that emptiness there is nothingness where Christ's wedding chamber is built for the mystical union of the soul of Christian and the soul of Christ. The empty reserved state of Christian soul is the mystic way of 'nada', which is explained in the Spanish mysticism by St. John of the Cross. In Christian mystical experience, a Christian can experience the touch of divinity and can feel the life of God. Christian mysticism is the systematic, scientific articulation and recording of the union of Christian soul with her bridegroom, Christ, in Christian mystical union, the individuality and identity of a Christian is maintained as bricks are hidden in a built wall. After the union of Christian with Christ soul, she is hidden in Christ as bricks are hidden in the pact's plastered wall. (Ephesians 2:20-22). St. John of the Cross, commends as follows:

"The soul is led through a succession of states until in the depths of it's own being, it experiences the touch of divinity and feels the life of God. It is the... meeting of God and Soul of St. John of the Cross"⁴

Therefore it was decided to take up the relation between Upanishadic mysticism (550 BC) and mysticism of the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross who lived in the 16th

⁴ Ibid. p. 29-34

century AD Meanwhile, the terms 'Nada' and 'Neti' found in both Mysticism are also introduced with their wider meanings to make the matter more clear to the ordinary people who are not in a position to understand the depth of mysticism

The Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute new insights' from the old scripture and the enrichment of wisdom by the increased knowledge of self and the Supreme Being as envisaged by the editor of an International Dictionary of New Testament Theology⁵. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is interpreted and exposed through the revelation of its hidden meaning and the ideas of the writer, after explaining the results of the exegesis of Spanish mystic's poems and the Indian sacred Hindu text of the Upanishads. Modern principles of exegesis and exposition are adopted here to achieve this goal of new insight and the enrichment of wisdom to all readers. The practical principles of the wisdom of Edwyn Hoskyns seem to be relevant here to achieve this goal through this proposed thesis. His experienced wisdom points out "Bury yourselves in a Dictionary and come up in the presence of God"⁶. Here the word 'Dictionary' means the knowledge recorded scientifically in Encyclopedia and Dictionary of scripture texts which is a source of insight and guidance to approach God,⁷ Old materials (550 BC) in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the poem of St. John of the Cross, (16th Century A. D) will be examined, and a new bridge of exegesis and exposition will take the readers to a richer appreciation

⁵ cf. BROWN COLIN. ,(ed.) The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, the Paternoster Press, Ltd. , Exeter, Devon, UK, 1978. Vol. 1. P. 7.

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 69, 573, 580. Vol. I, Vol. 2, Vol. 3. Preface

⁷ cf. Ibid

of the 'Neti' and 'Nada' mystic ways in them. It is achieved when we discuss the following four questions⁸. (Then we begin to see things in a new light. """)

What are the writers getting at?

Why did they say these?

Why did they put them like that?

What is behind those remarks?

This thesis is to show a stop signal to readers, (as advised by the editor Colin Brown) to ask themselves why should it be so in Upanishad, those 'Neti' - 'Neti' passages and the 'nada' 'nada' passages in the Spanish mystic literature⁹. Our predecessors and contemporaries have taken them for granted, without stopping to ask this question. We have to grasp something new from these passages.

Scope of this Research

The practical use of this work is to help the goal of communal harmony and peaceful welfare of the whole society as proper means, of union with the Creator. That experience is systematically and scientifically articulated in the discipline of mysticism. So this proposed thesis give a better understanding of the Hindu and Christian Mystic Ways through hermeneutic interpretation of the texts in accordance with the scientifically formulated rules and principles of exegesis which is the doctrine of understanding¹⁰. It involves making the message of the old scripture text comprehensible in the contemporary situation of conflicts and problems in society, as envisaged by DR. S.

⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 1337. Vol. 3

⁹ Ibid. p. 69, 573, 580. Vol. I

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 57. Vol. 1

Radhakrishnan: "The mystics have always stood for the fellowship of humanity. They are spiritual Kinsmen in the mystic traditions" ¹¹.

While ecumenical practices are at a very high level, this thesis appears at a crucial time in human history, recognizing the absolute necessity of world peace¹². According to St. Paul, peace is the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is a well-known natural law that fruits are the outcome of union of male and female factors. The fruit of world peace also is the product of the union of human soul with the Absolute Spirit. It is mysticism that deals with the experience of man's living communion with, the Absolute Creator¹³. The mystic way is the practical technique of liberating man from blind attachments to false doctrines and other created things, for the mystical union¹⁴. Without mystical insight, ordinary uneducated people have fueled divisions and communal conflicts¹⁵. All sacred mystical books contain the message of union and peace because they were written by mystics, illuminating the shared wisdom and light received from their mystical experiences¹⁶. This mystical exploration is an attempt to find new means and meaning of communion with the Absolute, in the light of Christian and Hindu mystical writings, accessible to ordinary people also¹⁷.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 57; RADHAKRISHNAN, S. , Eastern Religion and Western Thoughts. Op. cit. p. 8, 9

¹² WILSON. A. , (ed.) World Scripture. A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts., A Project of the International Religious Foundation, Paragon House, New York, 1991. (Front Flap).

¹³ FERUSON, JOHN., Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mysticism and Mystery Religions. The Seabury Press, New York, 1977. p. 6

¹⁴ WILSON. A. ,(ed.) , World Scripture, Op. cit. p. 27

¹⁵ Ibid. Front Flap

¹⁶ Ibid. P. 15

¹⁷ FERGUSON. J. , Illustrated encyclopedia of Mysticism and Mystery Religions, The Seabory Press,, New York, 1977 p. 6.

Importance of This Study

Religious studies in recent years have given great emphasis to mystical experiences in religious traditions. Dr. Radhakrishnan's group of mystics believe that at the mystical level all religions converge and meet as he puts it: "Mystical intuition is able to find out meeting points of all religions"¹⁸. "This fact points out the importance of the study of mysticism in a society where there are religions that differ greatly from one another. At present we live in a society, where religions not only differ from each other, but also occasionally conflict with each other. In such a context the study of mysticism would be not only relevant but also necessary. Many scholars see mysticism as a central phenomenon in religious life, though there is disagreement as to what 'mysticism' means, and how it is to be defined. Many scholars have tried to find answers to the following question: "What are the different types of mystical experiences, and how these interconnect with other spheres of religious life". The British author Aldous Huxley has stated, "a totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane"¹⁹. Elaborating on this quote to amplify the importance of the deeper studies in the field of mysticism, mystical experience seems to be important for the creation of a just society and the liberation of the poor and the oppressed. Mystical experience is obviously of great importance in Indian religious traditions, not only in upanishadic literature, but also in Christian literature. Since there is concern to develop more authentic Indian Christian faith and theology in the recent times, it is necessary to understand more thoroughly the mystical dimension of religious life. Especially Indian Scholars influenced by the

¹⁸ RADHAKRISHNAN. S. , The Hindu View of Life, C. Telling and co. Ltd. , Liver Pool, London and Prescott, 1927. P. 43, 44.

¹⁹ Op. cit. p. 786

Western Protestant Theological Traditions have often neglected this aspect, in Christian studies in India. It entails the development of the comparative study of Religions.

Thus comparative study of mysticism has always been an interdisciplinary art²⁰. Many of the scientific studies of mysticism in the recent past have concentrated on the altered state of consciousness which is characteristic of mysticism. Recent mystical formulations have greatly illuminated undeveloped areas of mysticism. Further psychological studies of mysticism will inevitably reflect their influences²¹. So there is a widespread modern interest in religious affairs in the broadest sense, from Harekrishna to the Jesus people and from Transcendental Meditation to the Charismatic Movement. Much of the religious concern does not stop at the traditional borders of religion but penetrates into the mysterious, occult supernatural, hidden and unfamiliar borders²². Thus scientific studies discovered a mystic way in mysticism. What is the mystic way?

The Mystic Way in Mysticism

JOHN FERGUSON, in his Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mysticism and Mystery Religions

' has defined the mystic way as follows:

"It is a common place of all mysticism, whether eastern or Western; it denotes the way of **mystical experience** of God through negation. "²³ explaining the meaning of the word, '**via**

²⁰ cf. WOODS RICHARD. , Understanding Mysticism, (ed.) , The Athlone Press, London, 1980. , p. 2. Introduction

²¹ cf.'. Ibid. p. 2

²² cf. PARRIENDER GEOFFR. , Mysticism in the World Religions Oxford University Press, New York, 1976_ p. 3.

²³ Ibid. p. 205

negativa'. JOHN FERGUSON points out the inner meaning of the mystic way:

"No predicates attach to God; no words may legitimately be used to describe Him. He is not this', not this". But in stripping from our mind its delusions about God, we prepare it for the truth, and in eliminating all that is not God, we begin to penetrate to the heart of the mystery"²⁴.

In the light of this meaning of the mystic way it is clear that the mystic way helps elimination of all that is not God and preparation of human mind for the mystical comprehension of the Absolute Truth. Thus, this mystical means and meaning of communion with the Absolute, is accessible to ordinary people also. Mysticism deals with different types of union between the Supreme Being and the human soul²⁵.

Here our area research is on the Hindu-Christian mysticism only. Out of the several mystical experiences in Hindu-Christian mysticism we are dealing with the mystic way of negation. The mystic way of negation is hidden as in a nutshell in the words "NETI & NADA" which is the central area of our research.

The Focus: (The relevant useful Mystic way for ordinary people)

The mystic way of negation leading to the affirmative²⁶, mystical experience is the focus at which a deeper research work is hereby proposed. The mystic way of a Spanish mystic, and an Indian Upanishadic mystic, are compared and contrasted in this thesis to

²⁴ Ibid. p. 205

²⁵ D' SOUZA GREGORY., REV. DR. O. C. D., Teresian Mysticism and Yoga, Carmel Hill, Mangalore, India, 1931. p. 231

²⁶ Affirmative. The Positive Affirming Position of a Mystic who experiences mystical union.

find out the meeting point between Hindu and Christian mystical experiences, at the deeper mystical level. The meeting point at the mystical level, will be, hopefully, a new achievement in the field of inter-religious dialogue and communal harmony. The old mystics were extraordinary pious ascetics²⁷. According to the Encyclopedia, "mysticism is a quest for a hidden truth or wisdom ('the treasure hidden in the center of our souls') .²⁸ The 20th century is experiencing a renewed mystical interest. "Put down as the religion of the elite, mysticism is said by many to belong to all men, though few use it"²⁹.

So this work explores the possibility of a new mystic way, for the use of ordinary

people also. Though mysticism is said by many to belong to all men, why few use it?

The narrow mystic way to mystical experience is hidden to a majority of the people because of its subtlety, and world's spiritual darkness³⁰. In spite of the light of the Sun and the Moon, the spiritual sphere of the world was dark, in which all evil tendencies were hidden. Mystics of all religions have illuminated the dark spiritual sphere of the whole humanity. Similarly, living mystics can bring about a revival in modern religious life. According to Swamy Parama Arupi Ananda, "An authentic encounter between Christianity and Hinduism takes place only at the level of contemplation or GOD EXPERIENCE. " That will create more communal harmony and peace among all religions. In this context, a research study on the mystic way to mystical experience, seems to be relevant and useful today.

²⁷ MATHEW. ST. , The Holy Bible, Published by The John A. Hertel Co. , Chicago, USA, 1965, Serial Chapter 1000 (3:17)

²⁸ S. K. G. , Mysticism in Encyclopedia Britannica, London, 1978. Vol. 12. p. 786

²⁹ Ibid. p. 786

³⁰ JOHN. ST. , Op. cit. 1. 5

The Problem: (Why ordinary people are not benefited by the mystic way of negation?)

The central question, to which this research is addressed, concerns the secret of the achievement of affirmative mystical experience through the way of negation, on the mystic way. God has created everything good, for the welfare of mankind. Then why should anything be renounced through asceticism and negation in the narrow mystic way? Those who do not know the answer to these questions see only the negative bitter aspects of negation. But sweet positive affirmative mystical experience is awaiting a mystic but only after the point of departure and at the point of arrival on the mystic way. For answering this question, the intrinsic nature of mystical experience within religious traditions is to be examined. Here other questions that arise are: Is this way of negation typical of all mysticism? Is there a self-transcending thrust intrinsic to religion itself? A general survey of mysticism both in the East and in the West reveals that mystical experience, and the mystic way are closely related to each other. This is clearly seen in the most ancient and famous writing of the Upanishads on the one hand and, in the writings of St. John of the Cross of the 16th century in Spain on the other. This similarity is conspicuous in their mystic ways which in the Upanishads is called 'Neti-Marga', and in the writings of St. John of the Cross, '**The Way of Nada**', or the **Way of Nothingness**. How did the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross (16th century AD) get the same idea of the way of negation as Upanishadic Sages (BC 550) wrote in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad? Is there any uniqueness hidden in both ways of negation? To answer these questions, this research work makes a comparative study of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishadic mystic way of the 'Neti Marga' and the way of 'Nada' of St. John of the Cross. In particular, how does this way of negation which apparently negate, connect with the God-affirming aspects of

the same traditions, where God is affirmed by those who worship and love. (Especially the love-devotion path typical of both later Upanishads and St. John of the Cross). Are there difficult tensions set up within the tradition because of this way of negation? Or is an integral way quite possible? Why man is attached to creatures rather than the creator? How can we overcome the boredom mood of loneliness? Is mystical experience a better substitute for drug addiction and terrorism?

By the possible Integral way, are both negative and affirmative thoughts experienced? On the other hand, are we to assume priorities between these two ways? While there has been much study of both the Upanishads and St. John of the Cross, as well as mysticism in general, there has not been a rigorous examination from the perspective suggested above. Nor has there been a comparative study of Upanishadic and Spanish mysticism of this kind. Such a comparison should necessarily yield insights regarding the role of mysticism within religious traditions, which the study of a single tradition alone might not give.

Procedure

Much of this study would be exegetical. "The concerned 'Neti Neti'" passages in 'The BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD' and 'St. John of the Cross' writings (Nada - Indicating a way of negations) will be examined seeking to discover more exactly what is meant by these. After exploring the factors that influenced Upanishadic sages and St. John of the Cross in the understanding of the Mystic way, an analysis of the mystic way is presented.

Attempt will be made to show how 'Neti Marga' and way of 'Nada' are adequate not only for a peculiar kind of mystical experience, but also, in a sense, necessary for authentic experience of God, for God is necessarily beyond every name and form.

Following a rigorous exegetical approach, an attempted comparison would provide the particular conceptual work frame in which the exegesis and comparison would be carried through.

Exegetic Methodology:

The goal of exegesis is to discern the subject matter of the scripture texts. According to the New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology, exegesis is the interpretive explanation of a text, as the author understood it. It involves several methodologies from which six are adopted for this study.

1. Word study of the language of Sanskrit and Spanish in English medium.
2. Literary criticism of the text which is concerned with the source of the writings.
3. Investigation of historical background.
4. Historical criticism, which is seeing events and ideas in the historical perspectives of what happened in history.
5. Hermeneutics, which makes the message of the old text comprehensible, in the contemporary situation, through interpretation of the text in accordance with the scientifically formulated rules and principles of exegesis which is, the doctrine of understanding. It involves historical setting and traditions, and points out the related subject matter of the text.

6. Comparative study of Hindu mystic way and the Christian mystic way (cf. D. N. T. T. P. 57).

(By the exposition explanation, of the intention of the writer is discovered through the exegesis.) In the exegetical exposition we go deep into hidden meanings of the text, reaching out to the heart and spirit of the authors and see things in a new light. For this purpose, primary source book of Upanishads and writings of St. John of the Cross are heavily depended on their English translations. After a comparative study of ‘Way of Nada’ and ‘Neti Marga’, some indications of the contributions of St. John of the Cross and Upanishads in the field of mysticism will be discussed. This comparative study will contribute new insight of practical techniques useful for the solution of personal problems of boredom in loneliness and social problems like communal conflicts and modern terrorism. This research will be a special contribution in the field of mystical theology and philosophy of comparative study of religions. It would possibly demonstrate that religions have more in common with each other than their points of differences. The unique claim of Christianity in the mystical fields will be critically evaluated in this research. Hence, this study would show that, while becoming authentically faithful to one's own religion, one would necessarily learn from and respect other religions. If people of all religions accept and appreciate the good aspects of other religions and people through mystical insight and inter-religious dialogues all people can be mutually enriched and enlightened. It is already mentioned under the heading, ‘The, background of this thesis work’, that the present author's M. A. Degree thesis is a preliminary study of this vast subject. This comparative study and evaluation of Upanishadic Hindu mystic

way and Spanish Christian mystic way starts where the above mentioned thesis concluded as follows:

"Now it is clear out of this comparative study of **Rigveda** and **The Bible**' that every man can naturally state that God inspired not only the prophets of Israel but also the Sages of Hinduism. But in the light of the Biblical revelation and Christ's revelation in human history, one can find out an order and priority. This would mean that though God had the plan of saving all people, he did not accomplish it all of a sudden throughout the world. He first selected the Jewish Tribe. When (Yahweh) the God came down on the top of the Mount Sinai, the radiance of that revelation could not be shared (Heb. 1:1) by the whole humanity, though its intensity may differ. Hence it could be said that Rigvedic Sages had also some flashes of divine revelation as regards the salvation and liberation of man. This revelation, however, is perfectly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. Ibid. p. 81, 82).

Hence it follows from this that the teacher of B. U. Yajnavalkya also had flashes of divine revelation as regards the salvation and liberation of man through the mystic way of 'Neti.' He had it in his deepest mystical level of spirit. He experienced mystical union in his conscious mind only after the pilgrimage through the mystic way of 'Neti' as St. John of the Cross had it through the mystic way of 'Nada.' This hypothesis is going to prove through the exegesis and expositions in the following five chapters, after noting the

background of personal mystical experiences, experiments, reading and study tour all over the world of this writer.

The Background of this Thesis Work:

The new insight into Christianity which he received from the prestigious University of Mysore in 1986, was an eye-opener to him, plunging him into the stream of comparative study of religions, in a new inspiring perspective and prompted him to practice silence and contemplation in a room for eight months to experiment the mystical stages of 'dark right' on the mystic way. As Yajnavalkya (the teacher of B. U.) had influential insight: and basis from the Vedic Rishis and their Vedas, this writer also is doing this thesis work as the continuation of the Rigveda, already finished in 1986 for M. A. thesis³¹.

The author's practical experience for 33 years in the inter religious dialogue, social work as priest, field work for many years in the laboratory of a mystical 'dark night' have prompted him to do this work.

The advice, useful to research workers, put down by EDWIN HOSKYNS³² and the practical application of it by this author, prompted him to spend many years for this study. Research materials were collected from the libraries in New York, Notre Dame, and Philadelphia, in USA, and from Indian libraries in Bangalore, Delhi, Jaipur, Dehradun, Rajpur, in U. P. , and Kottayam, in Kerala. After in-depth searching and researching, this author was 'burying' himself in the Dictionaries and mystical writings, as EDWIN HOSKYNS puts it. With this awareness in mind, this author will try to present this thesis proposal objectively.

³¹ SUNNYKUTTY, P. N. , Rgvedic Soteriology. University of Mysore, 1986. p. I - 82

³² cf. Preface of The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. , by Colin Brown.

1. MYSTICISM IN GENERAL

What is Mysticism

1.1 Historical Survey of Mysticism

1.2 Nature and Relevance of Mysticism

1.3 Modern Phenomenon of Mysticism

1.1.1 Asceticism as the Historical Background of Mysticism (1st to 7th Centuries)

- i) Origin of asceticism and its goal
- ii) History of Hindu mysticism in asceticism
- iii) Jewish ascetic mystical background of mysticism
- iv) Ascetic mystical aspect of primitive Christianity
- v) Ascetic Persian mysticism
- vi) Ascetic desert saints as Mystics
- vii) Ascetic Syrian Orthodox Mystics

The human quest to know the depth of divine mystery led many people to mystical experiences. This religious phenomenon indicates that there is a genuine and serious quest to maintain a union with the universal soul, who is the source of all souls. Through this unique experience, a soul is elevated to a higher altitude of consciousness. This altered state of consciousness is the essential character of mysticism¹.

¹ cf. Wood, Richard. Understanding Mysticism 9ed). The Althone Press, London, 1980. P. 2, Introduction

So general mysticism is an approach denoting a spiritual quest for hidden truth or wisdom, the goal of which is union with the Divine or sacred (the transcendent realm)². In other words, mysticism indicates a form of living in depth, where there is a meeting ground for various levels of reality. It is more than one dimension and a mystic way progresses to his spiritual goal by various stages, usually designated as: **Purgation, Purification, Illumination and Unification**³. There are many known mystics in the history of mysticism; they have recorded their experiences. Mystical experience of sages and prophets have been scientifically examined and systematically analyzed by scholars since four centuries. Mystical experience has been observed as related to other kinds of experiences. In the context of universal type of mystical experience, many scholars have tried to formulate different definitions of mysticism and point out the goal of mystical experience and mysticism⁴. The latest authors of Mysticism have considered mysticism as a social factor and observed the Influence of the mystically oriented persons in the modern world. The old Mystics were pious extraordinary ascetics, (according to the Encyclopedia Britannica). But ordinary people also can enjoy mystical experience. "Put down as a religion of the elite, mysticism is said by many to belong to all men, though a few use it. The Mystical faculty of perceiving transcendental reality is "the treasure hidden in the centers of our souls. "⁵ The Indian Poet Rabindranath Tagore has stated that, "Man has a feeling that He is truly represented in something which exceeds

² S.K.G., *Mysticism in Encyclopedia Britannica*, Hellen Hemmingway Benton, London, 1978, Vol. 7 p. 153

³ cf. *Ibid.* p. 153

⁴ cf. *Ibid.* p. 786 - 793

⁵ cf. *Ibid.* p. Vol. 12. P. 786

himself"⁶. Here the mystic poet Tagore has conveyed the vague mystical notion of the whole humanity who feels mystical inspirations from the source of all creation. So the British author Aldous Huxley has stated that "a totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane". He points out that the root cause of the insanity and ignorance of ordinary people is that they ignore their communication with the divine. So it is worthwhile to have a historical survey of the mysticism where we can observe. "Mysticism has expressed itself in adverse backgrounds and flourished during dark periods of history. "⁷ After the survey of the general concept of mysticism, we can observe the nature, relevance, and phenomena of mysticism today.

1.1 Historical Survey of Mysticism

Before starting the historical survey of the study of mysticism, as a starting background of this study, it seems to be relevant to have a glimpse of the pre-historic mystical experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden where they were created as the first man and woman in the world⁸. The mystic writer records in the Old Testament the experience of Adam who could talk and walk with his creator God, enjoying the glory and communication with his Creator⁹.

The historical incidents of the mystical experience of Abraham is recorded in the Bible from the book of Genesis Chapter 12 onwards. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as pioneers of the Hebrew religion had mystical revelations of God who guided them in their life of

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. Vol. 12. P. 786

⁷ cf. Ibid. p. Vol. 12. P. 786

⁸ cf.Gen:1:27(Bible)

⁹ cf. Ibid. Gen. 2;;16 of Blue Ribbon Bible, Published by John A Hertel Co. , Chicago 1965. p. 12.

pilgrimage¹⁰. Moses had the encounter with his creator on the Mount Sinai¹¹. After the life of Moses, Joshua, Judges' Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the other Minor Prophets had mystical revelations with mystical experiences¹².

St. Mary was the first ideal mystic in the New Testament period. She got her mystical experience on the day of annunciation¹³. She had the mystical betrothal and mystical marriage with the Holy Spirit, resulting in the birth of JESUS, THE UNIQUE MYSTIC¹⁴. St. Paul had mystical revelation of the risen Christ while he was persecuting the Christians¹⁵. St. John had the *apocalyptic* mystical revelations of the mystery of God 's future plans as are recorded in the Book of Revelation¹⁶. Christian mysticism is referred to the human soul's direct experience of oneness with God in Christ in the context of Christian faith¹⁷.

"Mysticism has played an important role in the history of religions.

. . . In the religion of St. Paul and St. John, Christ-Mysticism is fundamental; in the life of the Eastern Church, mystical aims and methods have been pursued from an early period. In the West, Mysticism was of vital importance during the middle age... and it

¹⁰ cf. Ibid. Genesis 12:1, 2; 26:24; 8:13.

¹¹ cf. Ibid. Exodus, 3; 6

¹² cf. Ibid. Joshua 1:1 Judges 13; 9 Samuel 3:10,11. I Chronicles 2; II. Isaiah 6:8. Jeremiah 1:5. Ezekiel 2:1.

¹³ cf. Ibid. Luke 1:28

¹⁴ cf. Ibid. Luke 2:7

¹⁵ cf. Ibid. Acts 9: 4

¹⁶ cf. Ibid. Revelations Chapter I - 22.

¹⁷ cf. S. Sp., Christian Mysticism, in Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 4. P. 545

has once again become a noticeably living influence in the recent times"¹⁸

From the first century AD till 20th century there were known and unknown mystics who led the church through her developments in 'the lights and shade developments in 'lights and shades of Christendom' as described by Bishop Pakenham Walsh¹⁹

¹⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 545

¹⁹ WALSH. H. PAKENHAM, D. D., Lights and Shares of Christendom S. P. C. K; C. L. C; Madras. 1950. Vol. II. Preface

1.1.1 Asceticism as the Historical Background of Mysticism

Asceticism is a means to mystical experience" as the way of negation is the mystic way. Asceticism, in religion, is practice of the denial of physical or (mental) desires in order to attain spiritual goals which is the union with the Absolute cognates are meant to manufacture, technically or artificially and later to exercise or to train (derived from the Greek word 'askeo')¹. In the history of religions and mysticism, it was evident that the practice of asceticism, had enabled many people to develop their inner spiritual powers over their instinctive urges and the influences of the external world².

i. The Origin of Asceticism and its Goal.

The origin of asceticism lies in man's attempts to achieve various ultimate goals or ideals. The goals of asceticism in athletics, intellectual endeavors, were development of the intellectual endeavors, were development of the "whole person, human creativity, ideas, the 'self' ", or skills demanding technical proficiency. Plato believed that it is necessary to suppress bodily desires so that the soul can be free to search for knowledge. One of the founders of the Neoplatonism, (Plotinus) of the 3rd century A. D I also propounded the same view³. According to Neoplatonism, asceticism is described as the ground for mystical experience. "Religion also gained by the Neoplatonic insistence on the infinity of God... the universalizing of religious experience as a reasonable demonstration of

¹ cf. Ibid. Asceticism in Encyclopedia - Britannica Helen Hemingway Benton, Published London, 1978, Vol. p. 135 - 137

² cf. Ibid. p. 135 - 137

³ cf. Ibid. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 2. p. 135-137

God's existence and the doctrine of divine immanence as the ground for mystical experience"⁴

Neoplatonism is the Platonic philosophy, systematized in the *Enneads* by Plotinus (205 - 270). Origen regarded Plato, and his philosophy, as Christianity's most powerful allies⁵. According to Neoplatonism 'One God,' was the object of religious aspiration. It was conceived as transcendent, infinite productive goodness and freedom attainable through mystical experience.

"The God distributes love to all souls; this love in turn leads each soul back with necessary attendant intellectual and moral effort on the part of the soul towards mystical union with the God"⁶.

Plotinus and Origen greatly influenced the Cappadocian fathers-- Basil of Caesaria, Gregory of Nasianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa-- who interpreted Christianity and its Mission as the fulfillment of the system of education proposed by the Greeks of the classical period. For the Cappadocians Platonism was the prologue to Christianity⁷. Bishop Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios has exposed the mystical theology of GREGORY of NYSSA, as universal and humanist in the best sense⁸.

All writers on Gregory of Nyssa, give credit to him as the first systematic expounder of Christian mysticism. His theory of knowledge has a transition from Platonic to

⁴ Mary T. Clark, R. S. C. J. , (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Religion- Vol. X.* Macmillan Publishing Co. , New York, 1987, p. 367

⁵ cf. *Ibid.* p. 365

⁶ cf. *Ibid.* p. 365-367

⁷ cf. *Ibid.* p. 367

⁸ cf. GREGORIOS PAULOS MAR. DR. , *Cosmic Man, The Divine Presence.* The New Era Book Paragon House, New York,1980. p. XIV.

Aristotalian categories as a neo-scholastic⁹. In similar manner, the value of asceticism in strengthening man's will and his deeper spiritual powers has been a part of many and his deeper spiritual powers has been a part of many religious philosophies and mysticism throughout history¹⁰.

ii. The History of Hindu Mysticism in Asceticism

In India, in the later Vedic Period (1500-200 BC) meditation and Yoga, inspired by the idea the 'tapas' kills sin. These practices were embedded in the Brahmanic religions in Upanishads¹¹ (Philosophical Treaties).

Mysticism is defined as union, or desire for union, of the self, whether it be defined as a principle that pervades the universe or as a personal God. Hindu mysticism includes both these definitions. At one extreme is the realization of the identity of the individual self (Atman) with the impersonal principle called Brahman, and at the other is the intensive devotionalism to a personal God. According to the Advaita Vedanta School of Philosophy, the realization of the identity of the individual self is with the impersonal principle, called Brahman. According to Bhakti devotional sects, there is intensive devotionalism to a personal God.¹² This is the understanding of the special strivings of the religious mind. The standard work on mysticism is the standard history of philosophy. In most cases Hindu mysticism is treated as integral part of philosophy as a

⁹ cf. Ibid. p 88-89

¹⁰ Op. cit. Asceticism in E. B. Vol. 2. n. 135 – 137

¹¹ cf. Ibid. E. B. Vol. 8. P. 923

¹² E. C. O. , HINDU MYSTICISM, in Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 8. Helen Hemingway Benton, Publisher USA. , 1978, Vol. 8. P. 923 - 926.

whole. The classic work among these, are of S. N. DASGUPTA,¹³ Dr. S. RADHAKRISHNAN¹⁴ And R. C ZAEHNER.¹⁵ Dasgupta S.N, an outstanding exponent of Hindu philosophy elucidates the ideas of Hindu mysticism very well in his book 'Hind mysticism'. The Upanishads¹⁶ are the records of experienced wisdom of Hindu mystic who sat secretly in mystical contemplation and got secret instructions imparted from the Supreme Being. Some of the Upanishads are theistic (Isa and Kena) and used as authority for later theistic thoughts. The Upanishads became the foundation of principal Hindu Philosophical School; the Vedanta.¹⁷

iii. Jewish Ascetical Background of Mysticism

There was a monastic sect associated with the Dead Sea scrolls, which represented a kind of religious order practicing celibacy, poverty and obedience. The archeological discovery in the 1940s about the community at Qumran with the urge of mystical experience has thrown new light on such movement in Judaism towards the end of B.C¹⁸. "It is clear from the gospels that there was a luminous spiritual dimension in the life of Jesus, in whom the experience of the Hebrew prophets was renewed"¹⁹.

¹³ DASGUPTA SWRENDRANATH, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. 1. London; Cambridge University Press, 1922, p. 55

¹⁴ RADHAKRISHNAN. S. , Indian Philosophy. Vol. 2. London; George Allen and University 2nd ed. 1956.

¹⁵ ZAEHNER, Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, 1960.

¹⁶ cf. Op. cit. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 8. P. 924

¹⁷ RADHAKRISHNAN. S. DR. , The Hindu View of Life, C. Tilling and Co. Ltd. , Liverpool, 1960. p. 122.

¹⁸ cf. Op. Cit. Ascetism in EB, Vol 2, p. 137

¹⁹ cf. Ibid. Vol 4. P. 546

iv. Ascetic Mystical Aspect of Primitive Christianity

" The mystical aspect of primitive Christianity finds its fullest expression in the letters of Paul and the Fourth Gospel (John)"²⁰.

"The recurring phrase of St. Paul, 'in Christ ' implies personal union, a participation in suffering, resurrection and destiny of Christ"²¹. The Christian mysticism finds renewed embodiment in gospel according to St. John, particularly in the farewell discourse (Chapters 14-16), where Jesus spoke of his impending death, (which his 'glorification') and of his return in spirit to unite himself with his followers. In the prayer of Jesus in Chapter 17 there is the vision of an interpenetrating union of souls. In this vision all: Who is one with Christ share his perfect union with the Father"²².

Ascetic and mystic view of Christian life is found in the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians in his use of the image of the spiritual athlete who must constantly discipline and train himself in order to win the race.

Dionysius Areopagite, a disciple of St. Paul and a contemporary of Boethius in his book 'The Mystical Theology' deals with the names that can be applied to God, exemplifies his negative theology. No appropriate name can be given to God at all, unless he reveals it. Every affirmative statement about God requires at once the corrective of the coordinate negation²³.

²⁰ Ibid Vol. 4. P. 540

²¹ Ibid. Vol 4. P. 546

²² Ibid. Vol 4. P. 546

²³ cf. E.B. Vol 16. P. 354

The metaphysical dualism; which separates the material from the spiritual (eg. the body from the soul) is contained in the thought of Plotinus, in Neoplatonism and in Gnosticism, a Christian movement that taught that matter is evil and the spirit is good. It is also found in the teachings of Marcion, a 2nd century Christian who was attempting to be a mystic²⁴.

v. Ascetic Persian Mysticism

In the third century in Persia, Mani, founder of Manichaeism a dualistic school of thought that bears his name tried to get mystical union with God, through Christian asceticism and hated human body mortification²⁵. He saw two principles of light and darkness as in perpetual conflict, but he recognized the supreme deity as the source of all things. In the end all souls in darkness will be redeemed by the victorious light²⁶.

vi. Ascetic Desert Saints as Mystics

In the growth of mysticism a contributory factor is found in the lives of the desert saints, who, under the stress of persecution and in an anticipation of becoming the Vanguard of God's army against the spiritual forces that were contacted in the waterless wastes fled from the inhabited world, devoted themselves to meditation and prayer in the 3rd and 4th centuries. Among Eastern teachers who followed the mystic way was Gregory of Nyssa (4th century). In the 5th century, John Cassian gave systematic exposition of the 'degree of prayer' in his book, 'Conferences'.

²⁴ cf. E.B. Vol 12 p. 136

²⁵ cf. Ibid. Vol2. P. 136

²⁶ cf. Ibid. vol. 4. P. 546

St. Ephrem (Syrian) John of Nycopolis, Makarius, Issac of Nineveh and Maximus the Confessor, were the other Eastern teachers who followed the mystic way up to 7th century. The divinization of man is fundamental to eastern mysticism²⁷.

vii. Ascetic Christian Mystics_(3rd to 7th Century)

From third to seventh centuries, Christian mystical asceticism was aimed at the goal of union with the divine mystical experience. Among the Syrian Christians there were a group of ascetic mystics like Gregory of Nyssa, St. Antony, St. Ephrem who greatly influenced Sufism, an Islamic form of mysticism. Mystical asceticism is graphically described 'in a work' by Stephanos bar Sudaile, a monk from Edessa²⁸.

In Egyptian monasticism there were ascetic mystics. Ascetic men and women who abstained from marriage. They were exercising asceticism by themselves ill fasting and prayers, in the hope of union with God. About the year 270, such a group of ascetics compelled St. Antony to come out from solitude and rule over them. Thus monasticism began with the goal of mystical experience²⁹.

In the 5th century the knowledge of the theory of spiritual life and mystical contemplation was brought to the west by Cassian from eastern Mediterranean lands. Then Cassian was asked by neighboring bishop to write an account of Egyptian monasticism. He performed his task in two works, 'The Institutes' in twelve books and 'Conferences' in twenty-four books: of mystical theology. St. Benedict continued the works of Cassian who gave the mystical inspiration to eleventh century Benedictine

²⁷ cf. Ibid. vol. 4. P. 546

²⁸ cf. Ibid. vol. 4. P. 546

²⁹ cf. Ibid.. P. 136

spirituality. John of Fecamp wrote as a representative of this spirituality and mysticism in that age³⁰.

³⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 14-21

1.1.2 Systematic Exposition of Mystical Experience From 8th to 19th Centuries AD

- I Recording of Mysticism Philosophical and Practical Mysticism (8th to 9th centuries AD)
- II Writings on Contemplative Spirituality in the Middle Ages (11th-15th century)
- III Writings on Spirituality of Dominicans and Franciscans (13th century)
- IV Mystic Movements and Writings on Speculative Contemplation (14th century)
- V The writing of 'The Imitation of Christ' (15th century)
- VI Writings of Spanish Mystics (16th century)
- VII Writers on Protestant Mysticism (17th century to 19th Century)

i. Recording of Mysticism; Philosophical and Practical Mysticism 8th to 9th centuries

Attempt of mystics to record the nature of their experience had been done in India in the 8th to 9th Century AD. Sankara wrote his mystical experience. According to Sisir Kumar Ghosh, the theory of interpretation of mysticism is not mysticism. Generally, there are two sides to the theory Philosophical and Practical. There may be another: conception and justificatory. Though some mystics have been content to record what happened, others have worked out manuals of praxis (Techniques), or Sadhana. As a rule, mystical method, experience, and exegesis cannot be sharply set apart from one another. However ineffable, raids on the inarticulate mystical experience and expositions of the same, have not ceased. The expositions have formed part of particular framework

of culture, tradition, and temperament. ¹ St. Rornuald (950 -1027) at Canaldoli and St. John Gualbert (990-1073) at Vallombrasa, and St. Peter Damian (1007-72), all established groups of disciples who led lives of great austerity with perpetual silence, strict enclosure and no manual labor. They led their life in great simplicity, desirous of cutting themselves from the world, and devoting themselves to God for mystical communion. Thus St. John Gualbert enjoyed mystical union with God through the devotion to Christ. ² The Cistersian Order was founded at Cintanx in the year 1098 by St. Robert of Molosme. ³

ii. Writings on Contemplative Spirituality in Middle Ages (11th to 15th centuries)

There were beggar-monks, stemming from the desire to experience the sufferings of Christ. In this instance, asceticism has taken on a new meaning - i. e. To serve Christ by becoming united with all whose lives are filled with pains and sorrow and by entering the service of compassion and redemption. In the midst of such ascetical pains they enjoyed mystical union with Christ. ⁴ According to DOM GERARD SITWELL, the Middle ages start in from 1000, and provide a guide to the different movements and trends among writers on the 'Spiritual Science' during this Period. Spirituality is in effect that branch of Christian theology that deals with man's relation to God (Spiritual Science) in all its aspects. ⁵ The Middle Ages witnessed a great flowering of the spiritual life. After the writing of Cassian and the 'Rule' of St. Benedict, D. G. Sitvell goes on to analyze the

¹ cf. Ibid. E. B. Vol. 12. p. 792

² cf. Ibid. p. 33-34

³ cf. Ibid. p. 42.

⁴ cf. Ibid. E. B Vol. 2. p. 136

⁵ cf. Dom GERARD SITWELL, *Medeval Spiritual, Writer Faith and Facts Books: 40 Burns and Oates*, London, 1961 p. 7, Cover page.

Contemplative Spirituality, developed by monastic writers from John of Fecamp through St. Bernard and William of St. Thierry and the German nuns such as St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde to the new trends which became discernible in Dominican and Franciscan Spirituality. The mystical movement of the fourteenth century and the growth of Speculative Contemplation were examined as they appeared in the works of Rhinslend mystics and the English group represented by Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich and the author of 'The Cloud of Unknowing'. D. G. Sitwell had written about the famous 'Imitation of Christ' and the other writings of Thomas a Kempis, Gerson and Denis the Carthusian and the emergence of "Spiritual Exercises" in Manburnus and Gracia de Cisnaros.⁶ Eleventh Century was remarkable with the writings on Benedictine spirituality. There was the idea of the contemplative life, the effort to conform the soul to the simplicity of God. That effort demanded mystics to withdraw from the world and human relationship of any kind.⁷ St. Bernard was the mystical figure, who towers over the whole of the first half of the twelfth century. He consciously set himself to supply the mystical element that was lacking in the Rule of St. Benedict.⁸ St. Aelred, born in 1110 became in Bernard's time the most influential figure among the strong body of English Cistercians. The list of his mystical writings are considerable. William of St. Thierry, born in 1085, became a black monk. Between 1135 and 1148 he wrote much on mysticism in monasticism. Carthusians, the German nuns S. S. Hildegarde, Elizabeth, Gertrude, and Mechtilde were all recipients of extraordinary mystical graces.⁹

⁶ cf. Ibid. Back cover page

⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 22

⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 44

⁹ cf. Ibid. p. 53 - 62

The Victorians were the first medieval writers to become really interested in the speculative aspect of mysticism.¹⁰

iii. Writings on the Spirituality of Dominicans and Franciscans (13th - 14th Centuries)

St. Dominic and his follower St. Thomas combined contemplation and preaching as the life of their order. The original idea of St. Francis had been simply the imitation of Christ and all its simplicity and poverty. They enjoyed mystical union with Christ through their balanced life of contemplation and services.¹¹ Franciscan way of life harmonized very easily with the old spirituality, reproducing all its features to some extent varying the emphasis. The original idea of Francis had been simply the imitation of the life of Christ in all its simplicity and poverty and it remained the ideal of a large number of his followers. The Franciscans were still drawing freely from the famous books on the monastic sources of the twelfth century for their spirituality.¹²

iv. Mystical Movements and Writings on Speculative Contemplation (14th Century)

Veritably a flowering of mysticism took place in the 14th century. The known writers who gave expression to this very distinctive spirituality are four in number. Three of them were Germans and Dominicans, Eckhart (C. 1260 - C. 1327), was a deep thinker like the Indian mystic Sankara. Tauler (C. 1300 - C. 1350) was a famous German Philosopher. Suso (C. 1300 - 66), was also very popular and famous. The fourth is

¹⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 63 - 64

¹¹ cf. Ibid. p. 64 - 70

¹² cf. Ibid. p. 64- 70

Ruysbroeck,¹³ who lived from 1293 to 1381. They described the union between God and the Soul the birth of the "Word in the ground" or "spark of the soul", and in order that this might take place, the soul had to renounce all created things, to practice complete detachment or abandonment. The spark or ground of the so was an idea about which these writers, and particularly, Eckhart, speculated deeply. It was the union of the simple essence of the soul with the essential Being of God, and when they spoke of the birth of Word in the ground of soul, they meant the penetration of God into it, his communication with the essence of the soul. ¹⁴

THE ENGLISH MYSTICS

During this same fourteen the century a group of spiritual writers in the Vernacular arose in English who are generally known as the fourteenth century English mystics. ¹⁵ Richard Rolle's life was a pilgrimage of mystical experiences. After 5 years crematical career he was the recipient of various mystical experiences, which were recorded, in the 15th chapter of his book, 'Incendium Amoris'. 'The Cloud of Unknowing' in Neoplatonic background recommended to close eyes and to shut mouth for mystical contemplation. The author of this book is still unidentified who is a notable exponent of the pure Dionysiain doctrine. He introduced Neoplatonic ideas into Christian mysticism. It is an example of the new attitude, the cult of contemplation of Walter Hillon, who died in 1395, his work '**The Scale of Perfection**' explains this philosophy. Julian of Norwich played an important part in the history of Christian mysticism. She wrote 'the

¹³ Dom GERARD SITWELL, Medieval Spiritual Writers, Faith and Fact Books; 40, Burns and Dates, London, 1961 p. 1- 14

¹⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 76 -77

¹⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 88-92

Revelations of Divine Love, in the background of her humble, wise mystical claims of experiences. ¹⁶

v. The Writing of 'The Imitation of Christ' (15th Century)

It is attributed to Thomas A Kempis (1380 - 1471). It is one of the greatest books of mystical spirituality. The lasting demand for the book shows that it is never inappropriate. Gerson wrote his book, 'Mystical Theology' (1363 - 1429) in two parts, which he calls speculative and practical. ¹⁷ **Denis the Carthusian** (1402 - 71) Notable both as an ascetic and a mystic, Denis the Carthusian is said to have had frequent ecstasies. He was also a philosopher, commentator on scripture and the writer of a number of treaties on the spiritual life. ¹⁸

vi. Writings of Spanish Mystics (16th Century)

16th Century Spanish Mysticism flourished at the time of the Catholic Counter Reformation. Its leading exponents were St. Teresa of Avila, and St. John of the Cross. Both have contributed notable writings in which secrets of contemplative mystical life are expounded. ¹⁹ Molinos was the author of the book **The Spiritual Guide** (1675), which enjoyed immense popularity in Italy and France. Antoinette Bourignon (died in 1680) rejected all ecclesiastical authority, and all set forms of worship and all set forms of worship. So there was a reaction against mysticism in the 17th and 18th centuries, which sometimes denied the very possibility of mystical experiences.

¹⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 93

¹⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 107 - 120

¹⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 121 - 129

¹⁹ cf. Ibid. E. B. Vol. 4. Op. cit. p. 547. (We are going to conduct a deeper study on the collected works St. John of the Cross in the next chapter).

vii. Writers on Protestant Mysticism (17th to 19th Century)

The chief representatives of Protestant mysticism are continental 'spirituals'. Sebastian Franck (died in 1542) Valentin Weigel (died in 1588), Jacob Boehme (died in 1624) They are noteworthy. The cardinal feature of Protestant mysticism is the emphasis laid on the divine element in man, variously known as the 'spark' or 'center' or 'ground' of the soul, the 'divine image' the 'holy self' the 'inner light' the 'principle of God in man' the 'Christ within'. Boehme took over the Gnostic belief that the physical world arose from a primeval fall, renewed with the historic fall of Adam. His teaching was the main formative influence on the developed outlook of William Law, who died in 1761 and William Blake who died in 1827.²⁰

The mystical view of sin which necessitated the ascetic way of mysticism by way of negation:

For Protestant as well as for Catholic mystics, sin is essentially the assertion of the self in its separation from God. A perfect mystic renounces all his selfish motives in his life and dedicates his soul for the word of God. For the mystic, supreme authority lies in the word of God. But for a sinner supreme authority lies in himself, not in the written word of scripture.²¹ Though asceticism was rejected by Protestant Reformation, from 16th century onwards, certain forms of mystical asceticism did emerge in Calvinism, Puritanism Pietism, Methodism, and the Oxford Movement. They demanded strict renunciation of the enjoyment of material gain acquired legitimately.²²

²⁰ cf. Ibid. E. B Vol. 4. p. 54

²¹ cf. Ibid. Vol. , 4. p. 548

²² cf. Ibid. E. B. Vol. 2. n. IT

1.1.3 Deeper Understanding of the Phases of Mysticism(20th Century)

Mystical experiences emerged from the ascetic background, have been recorded.

Scientifically and systematically, they were studied in the 20th Century by many Scholars in the East and in the West. (Development of Mysticism in the 20th Century)

- I Mystical discipline: Introversion and Purgation.
- II Asceticism in Modern Societies
- III Modern Hindu Asceticism
- IV Mysticism in 20th Century
- V Major phase of Mysticism
- VI New phases of Mysticism
- VII New understanding of Mysticism by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and R. Wood.

i. Mystical discipline ; Introversion and Purgation.

As Dionysius emphasized, the exercise of discursive thought must be transcended, all images and memories of outer things must be set aside, in order to receive the inward vision of God. Such introversion leads to ecstasy in which "the mind of man is ravished into the abyss of divine light."²³

The goal of mysticism is not mere ecstasy but the transformation of nature of the mystic. "The self must be annihilated, so that the will of God may become our will".²⁴

It is often assumed that the mystical life must be one of going thorough asceticism.

According to Meister Eckhart, "the more a man flees from the created, the more creator Protestant mystics are even more emphatic in this regard. In the words of William Law

²³ Ibid. Vol. 4. p. 548

²⁴ Ibid. p. 548

hastens to him".²⁵ "The one true way of dying to self wants no cells, no monasteries, or pilgrimages. It is the way of patience, humility and resignation from self to God"²⁶

ii. Asceticism in Modern Societies

In the 20th Century society, critics, such as Roman Catholic Theologian Romano Guardini, have advocated asceticism as a means of reserving human existence from the bondage of the mechanical, commercial and technological equipment of modern life.

Operative Factors of Asceticism in Religion

Many factors were operative in the rise and cultivation of religious asceticism. There are seven operative factors:

- (1) The fear of hostile influences from the demons;
- (2) For entering into communion with the supernatural with the ritual purity as a necessary condition;
- (3) The desire to invite the attention of divine or sacred being to the self-denial being practiced by their suppliants;
- (4) The idea of earning piety, compassion, and salvation by merit because of self-inflicted acts of ascetical practices;
- (5) The sense of guilt and sin that prompts the need for atonement;
- (6) The view that asceticism is a means to gain access to supernatural powers; and
- (7) The powers of dualistic concepts that have been at the soul of effects to free the spiritual part of man from the defilement of the body and physically oriented living.²⁷ These are not the only factors to be considered.

²⁵ cf. Op. cit. E. B. p. 548. (Sermon on sanctification)

²⁶ Ibid. p. 548 The Spirit of Love

²⁷ cf. Ibid. Vol. 2. p. 136

iii. Modern Hindu Asceticism

Among the major religions (e. g. Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity) still other factors became significant in the rise and cultivation of asceticism through mysticism.

The modern reaction against secularization is often coupled with a belief that spirituality can be preserved by simplifying one's mode of life. The realization of the transitioness of earthly life prompts a desire to anchor one's hope in otherworldliness through ascetic mystic way to obtain mystic experience. ' The hidden Upanishadic mysticism had

emphasis on asceticism that is still relevant.

The very meaning of the word 'Upanishad' points out the ascetical Upanishadic mysticism.²⁸ The word 'Upa' means 'nearby'; 'ni' means 'devotedly'; and 'shad' means 'sitting'. It is evident from this that Upanishadic sages renounced their freedom to be elsewhere and sat with the Nirguna Brahman.

Modern Hindu Asceticism emerged from the Upanishadic Mysticism

There is an ascetical element in the renunciation of all thoughts for contemplation. The real mystical experience is received when a mystic is in intercourse with the Nirguna Brahman through contemplation of the God beyond.

The Trinitarian dimension. That is achieved by the contemplation.²⁹

iv. Mysticism in the 20th Century

In 1902 William James articulated his ineffable mystical experiences through his well-known book, 'The Varieties of Religious Experience'. It marked the beginning of intelligent general interest in the subject, the reality of this experience is established and its four characteristics (freely adapted by later writers) are clearly brought out by Richard M. Bucke in his book 'Cosmic Consciousness', a study of the evolution of the human mind he introduced two important ideas as one, ideas that would recur, with modification in later writings. This book was published in 1905 and there were many later editions.³⁰

Rufus M. Jones wrote his mystical ideas in the book 'Studies in Mystical Religion' in 1908, which was reprinted in 1970. He provided a balanced and liberal attitude that emphasized its experiential quality, its value as a practical guide and the

²⁸ RADIIAKRISHNAN. S. DR. , The Hindu View of Life. GA. and Ltd. , London. 1960. p. 24.

²⁹ (Class notes on Christianity by DR. GREGORY D'SOUZA)

presence of a mystical brotherhood through the centuries. Evelyn Underhill in her book, 'MYSTICISM' has defined mysticism as the art of union with the REALITY. She has been a pioneer in this field though her insistence on the mystic way has been questioned. Reynold .A. Nicholson in his book, ' The Mystics of Islam' recorded his earliest studies in Sufism that still holds interest.

Sri. Aurobindo wrote his book, in the Synthesis of Yoga which was originally published serially and later in book explains the idea of integral Yoga. James Bissett Pratt's book 'Religious Consciousness: A Psychological Study' was published in 1920. Henri Bergson's ' Las Deux Sources De La Morale Et De Religion', formed part of a general thesis on creative evolution and paradoxically, the need for mysticism in an age of mechanization. This book appeared in 1932, was translated into English in 1935; "Two Sources of Morality and Religion".³¹

v. Other Major Trends

Gershop G. Seholem's book, 'Major trends in Jewish Mysticism' 1954 clearly brings out the distinction that the concept of Union is not an essential of mystical experience. The book Perennial Philosophy was written by Aldous Huxley in 1946, which was an anthology with sophisticated, sometimes cynical, commentary and with an ascetic bias. In 1947 Pierre Lecormte Du Nouy, wrote his book, 'Human Destiny'. It was an attempt to mediate between science and faith and it appeals to modern man to act as responsible cooperator in evolution. In the book, 'Introduction to Comparative Mysticism', Jacques De Marquette, pointed out a fair and forward straight survey in which its relevance to modern life and thought is brought out. An awareness of possibilities hinted in R. C.

³⁰ cf. Ibid. E. V. Vol. 12. p. 788 - 92

Zaehner's book, 'Mysticism profane', beginning as a caveat against the use of drugs for transcendental experience, goes on to make critical distinctions between four types of mysticism. D. T. Suzuki, in his book on Mysticism: 'Christian and Buddhist' (1957), offers a sympathetic study of contrasts as well as some resemblances between two traditions. According to some mysticism Rudolf Otto, in his book, 'Das Heilige', (8th edition, 1922; English Translation the Idea of Holy 1479 has overemphasized the 'Otherness' and ambiguity of the sacred.³²

vi. New Phases of Mysticism

The book of Radhakamal Mukherjee; 'The Theory and Art of Mysticism' (1960) is an overall study particularly good with regard to the Eastern material. Walter. T. Stace, in his book, 'Mysticism and Philosophy' balanced and analyzed mysticism' but singles out introvertive mysticism as more genuine and superior. The book, 'Mysticism in World Religion', was written in 1963 by Sidney Spencer. It was a helpful anthology with a reliable introduction to the field of comparative mysticism. In 1959 Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, in his book, 'Le Phenomene Humain', wrote his modern mystical idea. We can see indications of change in attitude and emphasis, in the writings of Indian Mystic Philosopher Sri. Aurobindo. He represented something totally new but allied to R. C. Zaehner, who has explained both attitude and emphasis, though unknown to each other.

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It is commented in the Encyclopedia Britannica as follows:

³¹ cf. Ibid. p. 788 -792

³² cf. Ibid p. 788 - 792

³³ cf. Ibid p. 788 -792

"They not only accepted the theory of evolution, but enthusiastically acclaimed it, indeed were almost obsessed with it. Both were profoundly influenced by Bergson; both were deeply dissatisfied with organized religion and both were vitally concerned not only with individual's salvation or 'liberation', but also with collective salvation of mankind".³⁴

Teilhard de Chardin's book, 'The Phenomenon of Man' was translated into English in 1959. Though its scientific accuracy has been questioned, its poetic and impassioned attempt to mediate between religious insights and a hope for man and future have made it the object of much attention.

vii. New Understanding of Mysticism by S. Radhakrishnan and R. Wood.

After admitting, the existence of false mystical experience as an advaitin S.

Radhakrishnan tried to prove that all pure mystical experiences are essentially the same.

He has emphasized the intuitive experience in mysticism³⁵ and spirituality-centered mysticism. He wrote many books on mysticism in the long duration of forty years.

Modern theologians have criticized his concept of the identification of Brahman with the universal self, which regards all other experiences as lower. It is from a

phenomenological point of view. Further more, it can be seen that Hindu thinkers bring

out the sense of otherness of the divine by the use of negatives. The 'Neti' (not this) of

Yajnavalkya reminds us of the 'nescio' of Bernad, of the negative descriptions of

Dionysius the Areopagite, Eckhart, and Boehme.³⁶

³⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 788- 793

³⁵ RADHAKRISHNAN. S, The Hindu View of Life, (Op. cit.) p. 9

³⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 20

In addition, it can be seen in his book 'Eastern Religion and Western thought' that mystical knowledge is superior to intellectual knowledge, inferring the meaning of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (IV. 4' 10).³⁷ He has discovered similar texts in Upanishads and St. John of the Cross.³⁸ Unknown between God and human soul is the Keynote of one kind of mystical experience pointed out by R. C. Zehner in his book 'Mysticism Sacred and Profane'.³⁹ According to RICHARD WOODS, Christian mysticism is 'highly a original Phenomena'.⁴⁰ He could illuminate the latest mystical thoughts through his book.

³⁷ RADHAKRISHNAN. S. DR. , Eastern Religion and Western thoughts, Oxford Press, Great Britain, 1935 p. 23.

³⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 132

³⁹ ZEHNER. R. C. , Mysticism Sacred and Profane, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1957. p. 32

⁴⁰ WOODS. RICHARD, (ed.) Understanding Mysticism, Athoe Press, London, 1981. p. 9

1.2 Nature and Relevance of Mysticism

1.2.1 Extrinsic Nature of Mysticism

- I 'God - Intoxication' in mysticism
- II God - Consequences of - Intoxication in Mysticism
- III The Ineffability of Mystical Experience
- IV The Relational Mystical Experience in Epistemology
- V Nature of Mysticism observed in the Old Definitions
- VI Spiritual apprehension of truth in Mystics through Introvertive Mystical Experience.
- VII Nature of Mysticism in the Multi-religious World

1.2.1 Extrinsic Nature of Mysticism.

There is a creative useful God-intoxication in mysticism.⁴¹ It has been interpreted as a penchant (inclination) for the Beyond (God). All aspirants of mysticism are inclined to go through the mystic way, leading to a God-intoxication that may be a better substitute for drug addiction and other poisonous intoxication's today.⁴² Showing extrinsic nature of mysticism, mystics are returning to the source of being with the quest for equilibrium, and deeper consciousness of the self.

i. 'God - Intoxication' in mysticism

We can observe this experience of God-intoxication in the Old Testament (1Sam: 1:13-14). Hanna the mother of Samuel enjoyed mystical union with God while praying in spirit. A similar case can be seen in the New Testament in the Bible. (Acts 2:13). In both

⁴¹ cf. Ibid. Encyclopedia Britannica , Vol. 12. p. 792.

⁴² cf. Ibid. p. 792

these cases they were judged externally as drunk with wine, but it is evident that they were intoxicated with the wine of Holy Spirit. This was the experience of God-intoxication which removed sorrow, boredom and depression of mind which are the causes of worldly intoxication like drug addiction, alcoholism etc.

Quest for equilibrium

Mysticism is a part of the way of returning to the source of real joy. It is a way of acting counter to the experience of alienation and having a companionship with God. Para psychologist suggests that mysticism is an attempt to discover a non-physical element in man's personality, which is significant in man's quest for equilibrium in a world of apparent chaos.⁴³

Mysticism is not insanity

Mysticism and insanity have a slight difference. In mysticism there is a legal normal mystical union of human soul with the Divine Spirit. Insanity is lunatic confusion by the illegal abnormal union of human soul with evil spirits. There is obviously something non-mental, illogical, paradoxical, and unpredictable about the mystical phenomenon, but it is not irrational antirational or "religion without thought".⁴⁴

Meeting ground of various levels

According to Zen masters, it is knowledge of the most adequate kind. There is a mystery about mystical experience. It is something it shares with life and consciousness. Mysticism is a form of living in depth. It is a meeting ground of various levels of reality. It is more than one-dimensional.⁴⁵

⁴³ cf. Ibid. p. 786

⁴⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 786

⁴⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 786

ii. Consequences of ‘God – intoxication’ in Mysticism

Though Mysticism claims to be a guarantee for order and reconciliation, it does not take away mystery from the world, nor it is essentially irrational. Through their penchant (inclination) for the beyond or God-intoxication⁴⁶ some mystics have inclined to reject the world. The mature variety of mysticism has not divided the world of spirit and matter with the help of emanations, correspondence, and hierarchy of the real. As a giver of life, mysticism is meant to fulfill and not to destroy.⁴⁷ Thus, it need not be fully world negating: as Jesus loved sinners and hated sins, mystics renounce only sinful aspects of the world.

Consequences of 'God-intoxication'- Seeing unity in multiplicity is a consequence of God-intoxication

Pointing to a scale of sense and levels of mind, mysticism provides an escape from a life of uninspired existence. A mystic can see beyond what primary senses register. It magnifies man and gives him a hope and destiny to fulfill. With its abiding sense of the "more"; mysticism may be called the religion of man or the religion of maturity. It offers not irrational developments or inducements but the working out of the inherent potentials. The mature mystic can see unity in multiplicity. Evolution, according to mystics, is not yet ended.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ cf. Ibid. Encyclopedia Britanica Vol. 12 p. 792

⁴⁷ cf. Ibid. Vol. 12 p. 792

⁴⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 792

**Another useful consequence of God-intoxication in mysticism is mystical
charisma and consecration of life to God**

The mystical life is not for those who are well adjusted to the evil world of attachments. In Ramakrishan's homely phrase, at some point or other one has to 'take the plunge' (do something decisive as the response to the call). A change so radical calls for a kind of attention other than what most people seem prepared to give. To make it his Supreme business, one must have a call to holy living. Founders of congregations had such sense of vocation with mystical charisma. He who seeks the divine must consecrate himself to God and God only.⁴⁹ These extrinsic natures of mysticism are notable which entail deeper study of mystical experiences as follows. There is a problem of communication and difficulty of understanding the mystical experience. This is the next extrinsic nature of mysticism.

iii. The Ineffability of Mystical Experience

The dialogue between the mystical and other pursuits is an unsolved problem. After he had undergone a spiritual experience, 13th century Christian Philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas is reported, to have said, "I have seen that which makes all that I have written and taught, look small to me. My writing days are over".⁵⁰ This, from the author of the Voluminous Summa Theological, (Summary of Theology), is not without its importance. In support of this

⁴⁹ cf. Ibid. p. 792

⁵⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 792

statement may I quote Paulos Mar Gregorios; "But the mystic, concept of ineffability does not arise from lack of knowledge. He knows God and therefore he cannot speak".⁵¹

The ineffability of mystical experience in mysticism demands the need of clarification of the world mysticism by a joint effort of the union of mystics and scientists. In 1921, Bertrand Russell said, "The great men who have been philosophers, have felt the need both of science and of mysticism. Mysticism is the inspirer of whatever is best in man".

⁵² These are not the only factors to be considered. However, mysticism has been considered by many as a 'misnomer'. Some of the great authorities on mysticism have given expression to this.

The reproach of mysticism

"The term mystical and 'mysticism' are often used as terms of mere reproach, to throw at any opinion which we regard as vague, vast, sentimental, and without basis in either facts or logic. There are too many ambiguous synonyms".⁵³ According to Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism is one of the most abused words in the English language. It has been used in different and often mutually exclusive sense by religion, poetry and philosophy. "It has been claimed as an excuse for every kind of occultism, dilute transcendentalism, religious or aesthetic sentimentality and bad metaphysics".⁵⁴

⁵¹ GREGORIOS PAULOS MAR DR. , The Joy of Freedom, Eastern Worship and Modern Man, C. L. S. , Madras, 1986. p. 23.

⁵² RUSSEL,BERTRAND,, Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays, Longmans Green and Co. , London, 1921. p. 1, 4, 12.

⁵³ JAMES WILLIAM, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Fontana Library, Callins Clear Type-Press, London and Glazgow, 1926. p. 366.

⁵⁴ UNDERHILL, EVELYN, Mysticism, New York, 1926. p. XIV - XV

Even if it is difficult to describe visions and dangerous to systematize mystical experience, the direction to which mysticism points is clear. It is relational transcendence. So great men have the need of mysticism and science.

iv. The Relational Mystical Experience in Epistemology

According to Jaques J. Martain, epistemology, the highest degree of knowledge of mysticism is based on the other four basic lower degrees of Knowledge.⁵⁵

- (1) Theological knowledge of faith and divine revelations.
- (2) Metaphysical knowledge of thinking based on rational abstraction, which is third degree of knowledge.
- (3) Mathematical knowledge of numbers.
- (4) Empirical knowledge out of the observation and experiments, e. g. touching and learning.

The Secret of mystical knowledge

The creative originality and attractiveness of the founders of religion and other famous institutions are inspiring. Mysticism is supersensuous and super rational. It is the intuitive knowledge and the supreme reality of direct experience in self awareness. It is incommunicable and ineffable.

The tragedy of mysticism is the insufficiency of human language to communicate fully the mystic experience. So a mystic uses poems, parables, to convey certain aspects of mystical experience and says that his experience is beyond words.

v. Nature of Mysticism observed in the old definitions

Mystics' direct union with God

"Mystic is one who seeks divine spiritual knowledge by prayer and contemplation".⁵⁶

"Mystic is one who seeks or attains direct intercourse with God in elevated religious feeling or ecstasy".⁵⁷ "Mysticism is the habit or tendency of religious thought, and feelings of those who seek direct communication with God or the divine with the suggestion of the word 'mystic' mysticism indicates a fogginess of thought and experience".

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Old definitions of mysticism in W. R. ING'S book, 'Christian Mysticism' contains 28 definitions of mysticism in the background of the following main ideas in that book.

- (1) General characteristics of mysticism
- (2) The mystical elements in the Bible
- (3) Christian Platonism and Speculative Mysticism In the East and in the West.
- (4) Practical and Devotional Mysticism
- (5) Nature Mysticism and Symbolism
- (6) (Appendix) A Definition of Mysticism and Mystical Theology
- (7) The Greek Mysteries and Mysticism
- (8) The Doctrine of Deification
- (9) The mystical interpretation of the Song of Solomon.

All definitions have pointed out certain aspects of mysticism. However, they seem to be insufficient. Therefore, we have to observe the other aspects of mysticism also.

⁵⁵ D'SOUZA GREGORY. DR. , (Class notes on Mysticism MA Christianity)

⁵⁶ W. M. , English Dictionary Callins. GEM Pupa & Co. , New Delhi. 1986. p. 350.

⁵⁷ KIRKPATRICK. , E M. , ed. Chambers 20th Century Dictionary.

⁵⁸ ALLEN. R. E. , Ed. The Concise OXFORD Dictionary of Current English, p. 784

vi. Spiritual apprehension of truth in Mysticism through Introversive Mystical Experience

Introversive mystical experience is by closing external senses and trying to be in contact with the Inner Being. The last stage of mystical experience is 'sushupti' or turia dreamless state. The mystics try to obliterate multiplicity of sensations. (Supernatural experience is the Supreme.) The closing of the eye is to open the inner eye. In darkness, the mystic sees the Inner Light. In the real contemplation, there is no vision.

Unitary consciousness is explained in Mandukya Upanishad with acquired and infused mystical experiences. Back to the womb, experience is the variance of the nature experience.⁵⁹ Mystics are able to face persecution because they have the courage and freedom to live according to their conviction. He has genuine life. The 99% hypocrites persecute 1-% minority mystic in the society in all ages with super ego.) There are theological but non-ethical people. There are non-theological but ethical mystics. So mysticism contributes to genuine personality. With this perspective St. Augustin says, 'love God and do anything.'⁶⁰

On the other hand, mysticism consists of a way of discipline, with praxis (technique) and a gnosis (esoteric knowledge). We can observe a unique role of mystics in religions.

Nature of Mysticism in Religions

The relationship of the religion of faith to mysticism is ambiguous, a mixture of respect and misgivings. Mysticism may associate with religion. However, it need not be so

⁵⁹ D'SOUZA GREGORY. DR. , (Class notes on Mysticism

always. The mystic often represents a type that the religious institution (e. g. Church) neither produces nor knows.

The Disturbing Element in Mysticism

As William Ralph Inge, an English theologian commented, "institutionalism and mysticism have been uneasy bed fellows" Although mysticism has been the core of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, it has been frequently, a disturbing element as St. Francis and St. Dominic (13th Century monastic Christian mystic leaders) have held that it saved religion but destroyed the deteriorated nominal church. The dialogue between mystics and conventional religionists has been far from happy.

Mysticism tends to escape the fetters of organized religion. There are religions of authority and the religion of the spirit. Thus, there is a paradox; if the mystic minority is distrusted, or maltreated, religious life loses its Sap; on the other hand these "peculiar people" (mystic) do not easily fit into society. ⁶¹

vii. Nature of Mysticism in the Multi-religious world

According to Sankara's views of Nirguna Brahman self and the ultimate is merged in the mystical union. **Ruysbroek defined mysticism** in the context of 4 types of mystical experience. (Ref. Philosophical Encyclopedia by Paul Edward).

- (1). Ascetical practice
- (2) Spontaneously from above
- (3) Drug addiction
- (4) Mental illness.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Mysticism is 1:the scientific systematic articulation of 'God and God alone' (which must be the cause of mystical experience), as the transcendence of Mystical Experience: It comes and goes.

Hindu Mysticism has been defined in the context of Indian Mystical Experience through Four Stages.

- (1) Salokya = God and I in the same world
- (2) Samipya = God is close to me
- (3) Sarupya = God's form (rupa) is with me
- (4) Sayugya = God and I merge together.

(Satshata Sidhanta = Seven stages of Mystical Experiences.)

Indian Bhakti Schools put it in another way.

- (1) Kinkara - Current attitude
- (2) Sadharna - Surrendering
- (3) Samajasa - Self passive, under the divine influence
- (4) Samastha - Perfect union with God.

According to Upanishads, mysticism is the recorded experience of Satchit Ananda which is the forth stage of consciousness. This study is a comparative study of 'Satchit Ananda' and St. John's concept of 'Nada', in the Christian Spanish Mysticism. ⁶²

Special kind of union with God

Evelyn Underhill defines Mysticism, as the art of Union with Reality the mystic is one who obtains this union. We can observe this in her book “ Mysticism” * “ the

⁶¹ Op. cit. E. B. Vol. 12. p. 786

⁶² D'SOUZA, GREGORY. DR. , (Class Notes)

* Underhill Evelyn, Mysticism, Methuen & Co.ltd. 36 Essex street.W.C London 1926,p 443-444

forgetfulness of the self is in a measure is a transformation in God; who then in a certain manner becomes all things to the soul. In this rapture the soul acquires certain qualities of the divine. The soul is rapt by the divine power of the resplendent Being above its natural faculties into the nakedness of nothing". This rapture is the sign of God`s love and mystics response to this love. So the element of love is the most important element in mysticism

1.2.2 Intrinsic Nature of Mysticism

- I Mysticism as a recognized Science
- II Mystical experience in this scientific age
- III Healing powers in Mysticism.
- IV Subjective certainty of Objective Reality in Mysticism
- V Mystics guided by the Holy Spirit.
- VI Summary of Definitions
- VII The Mystical Creative Concept of 'Nothing'

i. Mysticism as a recognized Science

Eugene G. D'Aquili, is a scientist who had scientific research to explain the mystical state of human mind. He used-neuro-epistemology to explain the mystical state of mind which is called the experience of 'Absolute Unitary Being' (A. U. B). Epistemology is a relatively new discipline that considers questions of the theory of knowledge in terms of what has been learned about the structure and function of the Brain. In his research, he considered the neuro-epistemological status of the experience of the Absolute.⁶³

Consequently, he could recognize mysticism as a science of the mystical experience of the Absolute (God) where there is a union of human soul with the Absolute. The word 'Being' denotes the existence of the reality of intrinsic nature of mystical union.⁶⁴

Mystical Experience in This Scientific Age

Analysis of the experience of the "Absolute Unitary Being" (A. U. B)

⁶³ cf. D'AQUILI, EUGEN G. , Neuro-epistemology, in Encyclopedia of Religion, Mac Millan Publishing Co. , London 1987. p. 375 - 379

⁶⁴ cf. URDANG LAURENC (ed) Roget's Thesaurus, Thomas Nelson Inc. U. S. A. , 1990. p. 5

The limitation of scientific realism is analyzing this experience. Before his analysis, he reviewed the principle of the Brain's organization of knowledge. In the concept of cognitive operator. There are other six operators.⁶⁵ They are

- (1) the casual operator
- (2) Abstractive operator
- (3) the binary operator
- (4) formal quantitative operator
- (5) the value operator and
- (6) the holistic operator.

It permits reality to be viewed as a whole (or as a gestalt). It is responsible for the generation of absolute unitary being discussed in the second part of article in the Encyclopedia of Religion by Eugene Aquili. He concluded his work as follows:

What is Knowledge? Human brain organizes sensory input and constructs the subjective representation of reality; it is knowledge.

Glossary of Mystical Neuro-epistemology

The word cognitive operator is used here analogously to the way it is used in mathematics cognitive operator represents a probable neutral structure that process sensory input by relating various elements in ways specific to that operator. A cognitive operator represents a probable neutral structure that processes sensory inputs by relating various elements in ways specific to that operator. For the purpose of this discussion, he described six other operators.

⁶⁵ D'AQUILI EUGENE,G. , Op. cit. p. 375, 376. (For further details of I to 5th operators we can read his another book Sense of Reality in Science and Religion. A Neuro- Epistemological Perspective, Zygon 17, 1982. p. 36. 1 - 364

- (1) The casual operator permits reality to be viewed in terms of casual sequences of abstract elements.
- (2) The obstructive operator permits the formation of a general concept from the perception of empirical individuals.
- (3) The binary operator permits the extraction of meaning by ordering abstract elements into dyads involving varying degrees of polarity so that each pole of the dyad derives meaning from contrast with the other pole.
- (4) The formal quantitative operator permits the abstraction of quantity from the perception of empirical individuals, generating arithmetic and mathematics.
- (5) The value operator permits an affective valence to be assigned to various elements of perception and cognition.
- (6) The holistic operator permits reality to be viewed as a whole.

It is responsible for the generation of AUB discussed in the second part of this article.

(Ibid. P. 375, 376) Operators one to five are responsible for our organization of sensory input into the world of daily experience. In this article this words of base line reality is juxtaposed with the experience of AUB. To understand the experience of AUB it is necessary to go into a little more detail concerning the neuroanatomy and neuroanatomy of operator six, that is, the holistic operator.

ii. Healing Power in Mysticism

The healing power of Holy Spirit operates through the holistic operator in the brain, it is provided by scientific researched as follows:

"Absolute Unitary Being", whatever its significance may be in "post hoc" religious description, has in itself an epistemological status. It is equivalent to baseline everyday reality and, at least from a neuro-epistemological perspective, it must be dealt with accordingly".⁶⁶

After the scientific research of Eugene G. D'Aquili, mysticism has been raised to the level of a recognized science that deals with the experience of mystic's 'Absolute unitary being'. In the light of the neuro-epistemology of the mystical experience, we can formulate a new definition to mysticism. Although the 'Absolute Unitary Being' is a mystical state that is ineffable, neuro-epistemology has tried to analyze and convey the mystical experience, through its latest scientific models. Accordingly, the human brain has the capacity to structure ordinary experience and AUB model.

That will then present a model that helps to explain the mystical state. That is the experience of AUB, with the help of the 6th sensitive operator in the brain.⁶⁷ What is that Model? That is holistic operator

iii. Healing Power in Mysticism

Neuroanatomy and neurophysiology deal's" with the holistic operator in the brain. Recent experiments have strongly supported the early clinical observations of neurologists that the parietal lobe on the non-dominant side of the brain is intimately involved in the perception of spatial relations.⁶⁸ This precept of a "holistic" or "gestalt" nature (Epileptic patient's brain has sensitive area through which some kind of unknown spirits can influence the mind and body of the patient in having the symptoms of

⁶⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 379

⁶⁷cf. Ibid. p. 375, 576

epilepsy. The corpus collosum and anterior commissure of the brain have been sectioned to prevent the inter hemispheric spread of epilepsy).⁶⁹ Through the same area, mystical healing power of Holy Spirit also can be operated in mystical experience. The evidence of scientist SPEERY led EUGENE to localize the holistic operator, which is the parietal region of the non-dominant side of the brain. Thus the function of the holistic operator: (Parietal lobe on the non-dominant side) becomes, of crucial importance in the generation of the sense of the Absolute Unitary Being, central to metaphysics and mystical religion.

The scientific explanation of mystical experience in neuro-epistemology under normal circumstances is that each cognitive operator functions on material, derived from the environment. Under special and somewhat rare circumstances, a cognitive operator can be experienced subjectively in its pure functioning unrelated to content derived from the environment. When this occurs by altered physiological state, the holistic operator can function briefly in an absolute sense, so that the world is perceived as a unit. When the self-other polarity is dissolved, this experience is obtained which is so often described by mystics of both East and West. This experience represents subjective awareness of a cortical operator functioning the pure way that is devoid of individuated content. This mystical awareness is ineffable as to be affirmed after the fact as representing unquestionable and ultimate reality. The experience of AUB can be explained in terms of the evolution of the present structure and functions of the central nervous system. Here

⁶⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 76

⁶⁹ cf. Ibid. D. 376

something objectively real has been experienced and examined scientifically by research scholars. There are scientists who have experienced both realities.⁷⁰

iv. Subjective certainty of Objective Reality in Mysticism

In an attempt to reconcile the sense of baseline reality with the certainty of the reality of the transcendent, a number of models have been put forward 'like Mayavada'. In the Vedantic thought of 'Mayavada', here reality of every day experience is denied and reality of the transcendent is over emphasized.⁷¹ A different view of Christian mystics is that realities are alike, in terms of certainty of their existence, but priority is given to transcendent experience. Two worlds are parallel to one another. The world of AUB is the ground and foundation or the cause of the other world.⁷²

A third model is also possible that reconciles these seemingly contradictory realities, a model that respects subjective certainty of the objective reality of the AUB as reported by the people who claim to have had the experience of God as nirvana of the "Void".⁷³

v. New Creative History making Mystical Experience of the Present Mystics.

Mystics Guided by Holy Spirit

We can identify the perfect paradigm of Christian Mystical experience in life of St. Mary on the day of annunciation to her by the Angel Gabriel. St. Mary by the fullness of God's grace, unexpectedly saw the Angel, heard the living word of God, that first hand experience of the living word of God, gave her a new conviction to respond positively,

⁷⁰ Reality of the day-to-day world and objective science the one hand and the reality of transcendent unitary being on the other hand. it is a problem of reconciling the two distinctly and seemingly contradictory perceptions of reality.

⁷¹ cf. Ibid. p. 377

⁷² cf. Ibid. p. 378

⁷³cf. Ibid. p. 378, 379

with transforming consequences in her body, mind and spirit and in the whole history of the world. That mystical experience was the real starting point of the whole history of AD. So the twentieth century Christian Mystical experience can be continuation of the incarnation of the living word of God in human life. Thus, Christian Mystical Experience is the first-hand or direct confrontation of a human soul with the living soul of the resurrected Jesus Christ, as St. Paul met Jesus on the way to Damascus.

A mystic is a living portable television set with a personality, who can hear and see the living word of God; that Portable Living Television is disposed to respond, positively, with creative consequences in history. Modern Christian living mystics are to create new history after having the real mystical experience. To back up this statement, famous mystics were quoted here. They were guided by the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of mystical experience of Love. That love transformed them as the Temple of God.⁷⁴

vi. Summary of Definitions and the Intrinsic Nature of Mysticism

Eugene D' Aquili's new concept of AUB has raised mysticism as a recognized science. He pointed out the healing power of a mystic in the mystical atmosphere of union with Christ through the sixth sense, in the mystical magnetic field of Holy Spirit, automatically all types of disordered elements of human personality, are put in order. After the healing of body, soul and spirit, a mystic gets subjective certainty of the objective reality in mysticism.

Summary of Definitions and Intrinsic Nature of Mystical Experience can be written as follows:

- (1) It is the union with experience of God.

⁷⁴ Corinthians 3:16

(2) This Union can be different.

(3) This experience must be connected to all faculties.

Cognitive, locomotive, affective and faculties are all called to mystical experience but only few get the clear sensitivity.

What is the essence of the Intrinsic Nature of Mystical Experience:

Mystical experience has some common characteristics, which are valuable natural qualities in it. Dr. Gregory D'Souza in his book 'Teresian Mysticism and Yoga' considered twelve characteristics.

(1) Noetic quality of intuitive insight.

(2) Immediacy Mystical experience seems to spring from the very center of mystic is being. There is a feeling of interiority because God who is experienced is within.

(3) Unitary consciousness

(4) Conviction of objectivity

(5) Conviction that the Beyond is holy

(6) Feeling of peace, happiness and bliss

(7) Love for the beyond

(8) Passivity

(9) Transience by which mystic may lose contact with the world.

(10) Moral transformation

(11) Paradoxicality: The inadequacy of human language to express mystical experience compels a mystic to translate it into human language of paradoxes.

(12) Ineffability: Though mystic may try to express his experience, we find it incommunicable. It is beyond every precept and concept. Because of this difficulty, mystics often resort to allegories, comparisons and poetical expressions. Even then, they hold that their experience is incommunicable.⁷⁵

vii. Intrinsic Nature of the Mystical Creative Concept of 'Nothing' ('nada or Neti')

This model begins with the everyday world in which we usually live. It is not "nothing" as understood in everyday parlance, but rather "nothing" in the sense that it cannot be conceptualized outside the constraints of the mind. The mind that is brain physiology has only two ways of interpreting this "nothing", as absolute, unitary, transcendent being or as the discrete world of everyday living the base line world of chance and causality.⁷⁶ Science is product of every day world, but the experience of absolute unitary being is another world, and is essentially cut off from the world of discrete reality (unlike hallucinations and delusions which are epistemically part of the world of discrete, transient being). Therefore, it is concluded that AUB has in itself an epistemological status, equivalent to baseline everyday reality.⁷⁷

In support of this view, New Mysticism of TEILHARD is pointed out here. New mysticism of Teilhard in this context is interesting to observe. The French author Teilhard's new interpretation of mysticism is exposed by a German scholar⁷⁸ Dr.

⁷⁵ D'SOUZA, GREGORY, J. C. D. , Teresian Mysticism and Yoga, Carmel Hill, Mangalore, 1981. p. 238 - 241

⁷⁶ D' AQILI EUGUNE, G. , Op. Cit. P. 379

⁷⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 379

⁷⁸ cf. URSULA KING . DR. , Towards a New Mysticism ,Teilhard De Chardin and Eastern Religions, the Seabury Press, New York. 1980

URSULA KING. She draws an unpublished source of great interest as well as recently published works and personal contacts with Teilhard's own milieu in France.

"She presents the material in a way, that will excite those who are looking for a 'new' mysticism. A mysticism which will 'surpass' Christianity as we know it but not surrender to any Pantheism, there may be in the East. What he later called 'Neo Christianity' would lead to a new type of mysticism enriched by valuable insights from the East."⁷⁹ She concludes her work as follows:

"Teilhard's choice lies with a new mysticism. A mysticism of action and convergence which to him alone holds the promise of a future for religion. Such a new mysticism can only become a reality in so far as others go beyond him in exploring this new path".⁸⁰

⁷⁹ cf. Ibid. Flaps

⁸⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 218

1.2.3 Relevance of Mysticism Today (In the light of Old Definitions)

- I The relation of Mystical Experience with other kinds of experience
- II Mysticism relevant to spiritual apprehension of truth
- III Mystical experience relevant to knowledge of God
- IV Relevance of Mysticism in the light of new definitions: The mystic way for 20th century crises.
- V The demand of mysticism as a social factor
- VI The status of the mystic as a man of action
- VII The present need of an Advance of all together

Relevance of Mysticism today in the light of old definitions

i. The Relation of Mystical Experience with other kinds of experience

Mysticism shares a common world with magic, thourgy (power of persuading the supernatural) Prayer, Worship, Religion, Metaphysics (transcendent levels of reality) and-even Science.⁸¹ However, approach and emphasis of mysticism are different. It is not to be equated with a Science of the unseen or with voices and visions. Genuine mature mystics, are aware of the dangerous misuse of the occult (or Sidhis), mystical visions and locutions. Prayer and worship are part of mysticism, but they are viewed as means and not as essence. Where mysticism is a pure unitary consciousness or a union with God. Mysticism, like poetry, depends more on paradoxes and unusual use of language philosophies may lead to or follow from mysticism, but they are not the same. Mysticism among the many forms of experiences confirms the claims of religion and is

⁸¹ cf. S. K. G. , Mysticism in E. B. Op. cit. p. 786

viewed as providing a foretaste of the life after death.⁸² Thus, mysticism enables man to enjoy the happiness of the kingdom of God even from this world. These facts point out the relevance of mystical experience today.

ii. Mysticism relevant to spiritual apprehension of truth.

According to the concise OXFORD DICTIONARY "mystic is a person who seeks by contemplation and Self surrender, to obtain unity or identity with or absorption into the Deity or the ultimate reality, or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths that are beyond the understanding".⁸³ Etimologically the word 'mysticism' is derived from the Greek word 'Mustes', which means initiation of a person who closes the eyes or lips.⁸⁴

Mysticism relevant to that gives spiritual goal. Generally the word 'Mystic' is to denote the spiritual goal of a religious man.⁸⁵

iii. Mystical 'experience relevant to knowledge of God

According to the New Catholic Encyclopedia, "Mystical theology is knowledge of God by experience, arrived at through the embrace of unifying love".⁸⁶ Jean Gerson points

⁸² cf. Ibid. p. 786.

* Relevance means connection with what is happening, discussed and done.

⁸³ R. E. ALLEN, ed. The Concise OXFORD DICTIONARY of Current English, Oxford University Press, Walton Street Oxford, 1991. 0. 784

⁸⁴ E. M. KIRKPATRICK. , (ed.) Chambers 20th Century Dictionary, Allied Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1983. p. 838

⁸⁵ W. M, English Dictionary, Collins GEM Rupa & Co. , New Delhi, 1986. p. 350. (Page 838 in Chambers 20th Century Dictionary)

⁸⁶ CORBISHLEY. T. , Mysticism, in Catholic Encyclopedia, Morgan Hill Book Co. , New York, 1976. p. 175

out that 'mysticism is a term used to cover a literally bewildering variety of states of mind.⁸⁷ Mystical state of mind relevant to a special kind of union with God

According to the Encyclopedia Dictionary of Religion,

'Mysticism' is the experience in which the believer arrives at a special kind of union with God.⁸⁸ In this sense, Gerson defines mystical theology as a "knowledge of God by experience, arrived at through the embrace of unifying love".⁸⁹

"Mystic is the one who seeks to attain union with the Deity by contemplation and self surrender" or "Mystic Believes the spiritual apprehension of truth beyond understanding".⁹⁰ Immersed in the oneness of nature.

Rudolf Otto defined 'Nature of Mysticism' "as the sense of being immersed in the oneness of nature, so that man feels all the individuality, all the peculiarity of natural things in himself".⁹¹

In the light of these old definitions, we could see the relevant Absolute relations in mystical experience because the Absolute Reality and the human quest for union is ever present in all ages and in all people. These are not the only factors to be considered, however, we have to expose the new insights of the relevance of mysticism in the light of the new definitions also.

⁸⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 175

⁸⁸ cf. MCFADEEN. T. M. , Mysticism in encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion, (ed.)* by PAUL KEVIN, M. O. P. S. T. M. C. Publication Washington D. C. , 1979. p. 2476

⁸⁹ cf. Ibid. p. 2476

⁹⁰ Illustrated Dictionary, English English Malayalam prepared by the Trivandrum Arts and Literature Society, Desabandhu Publication, Trivandrum, 1983. p. 515

iv. Relevance of Mysticism in the light of New definitions; The mystic way for 20th century crisis

The mystic way for the 20th century crisis is the contribution of Hermeneutics of Mysticism through this exercise. "The 20th century crisis and the mass media suggest the possibility of a mysticism brought up to date which will serve, the creative intention that past ages have called God". Whether it comes through symbols, systems, paradigmatic examples, or extreme situations, there will be always some response to the call of the real".⁹²

v. The demand of mysticism as a social factor

Even though mystical experience is a solo, the experience of a single person ("a flight of the alone to the Alone"), it could also be redemption of solitude, not less than of society. Jacob Boehme said that in the mystical experience, the world is not destroyed but remade.⁹³ At times, mystics had prophetic protest against heteronym (i. e. External authority and ecclesiastical machinery).⁹⁴

"A mystic who is not of supreme services to society is not a mystic at all". This statement is from the preface of the book; Mysticism in Maharastra; by R. D. Ramade.⁹⁵

vi. The status of the mystic as a man of action

According to Zen Buddhism, the great contemplative even when "sitting quietly, doing nothing" has been a man of action, perhaps the only kind of action that leaves no bitter

⁹¹ cf. Otto Rudolf, 'Nature Mysticism' Op. cit. 130

⁹² Op. cit. Mysticism, in Encyclopedia Britannica. Vol. 12. p. 792

⁹³ cf. Ibid. Vol. 12

⁹⁴ cf. JOHN WIJNGAARDS. , GOD WITHIN US, A FOUNT ORIGINAL. U. K. 1973. p. 75

⁹⁵ cf. Op. cit. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 12. p. 792

residue behind. The less extravagant forms of mysticism represent attitudes and principles of charity, detachment, and dedication, which should guide the relation of the individual to the group. The mystics have fought the inner battle and won, creating themselves and their world. If the attempts by the mystics to create a new order or a better society has failed, the incapacity or defection of the majority may be the reason for the failure. With a hidden and potent force, mystics have tried, to mind the universal enlightenment (Bodhisatva: "buddho-to-be").

Mysticism proves the individuals capacity to rise above the conditioning factors of nature, and society, and to transform collective life. Though this has not been generally recognized.⁹⁶

According to mystics, the individuals who will most help the future of humanity will be those who recognize the unfinished and ultimate revolution the evolution of consciousness as the destiny and therefore the great need of all men and of society.

Mystics insist on a change of consciousness a slower and difficult process, which is also on scrupulous equation between ends and means. Impatience, deviations, and subterfuges in this respect can be costly, ironic and instinctive.⁹⁷

In the modern era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.

Many with a mystical frame of mind look beyond what mystics call quasi-revolutions to a great life - an entire civilization, the civilization of consciousness. The need of synthesis places its stake on the future and the all. Holiness does not mean *a* retreat from or a rejection of the world. To be a mystic or a seer is not the same thing as to be a mere spectator on the fence of the world. This principle has been proceeded with the life of the

⁹⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 793

Swedish Secretary General of United Nations.⁹⁸ (Dag Hammrshold) Teilhard de Chardin in his book. The Phenomenon of man, pointed out.

vii. The present need of an Advance of all together

"The outcome of the world, the gate of the future, the entry-into Super-human- these are not thrown open to a few of the privileged nor to chosen people to the exclusion of all others. They open only to an Advance of all together".⁹⁹

According to mystics, here may be the outline of revolution whose message has reached but a few. He can see the hope of a Kingdom of Heaven with in man and a city of God around. This hope is one of the final gifts to the life of what many mystics' view as an evolving humanity.¹⁰⁰

This study of general mysticism, observation of the different aspects of the old definitions of mysticism, the historical survey of the experiences and works of mystics from the prehistoric period, till this 20th century, were to achieve a systematic exegetical research for the contribution of the proposed insight and enrichment of wisdom to see the old mysticism in a new light and perspective, to be prompted to creative actions today.

The proposed new insight and dynamic wisdom of the present mystic as a man of action is presented here. It is pointed out as the contribution of the exegesis and impositions through the hermeneutics of mysticism, mystic, mystic way and mystical experiences in the following chapter. The new insight and a dynamic wisdom is emerging from the deeper study of the texts of 'nada' and 'Neti' in Spanish and Indian mystical literature's, in

⁹⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 793

⁹⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 793

⁹⁹ cf. Ibid. Vol. 12. p. 793

¹⁰⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 793

chapter two and three. So, let us enter chapter two after the review of the Modern Phenomenon of Mysticism.

1.3.1 MODERN PHENOMENA OF MYSTICISM:

- (a) Concomitant Mystical Phenomena
- (b) Charismatic Mystical Phenomena
- (c) Validity of Mystical Phenomena

(a) Concomitant Mystical Phenomena

- I Intuition
- II Experimental Knowledge of God
- III Passive Purification of Senses
- IV Awareness of the Presence of God
- V Passive Purification of Spirit
- VI Ego Slaying and Joy in Persecution
- VII Heroism in the Practice of Virtue

What Is Mystical Phenomena?

J. Aurnann has defined mystical phenomena as he puts it in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

"In popular usage, the term mystical phenomena is some time used to embrace all those unusual and mysterious phenomena that surpass the known, normal powers of the human soul and imply the operation of some being superior to the soul or of some unfamiliar factor within the human soul".¹⁰¹

This subject would belong to the field of parapsychology, which investigates phenomena of this kind in religion and mysticism, spiritualism, occultism, diabolism, psychology,

¹⁰¹ ALLMANN. J. , Mystical Phenomena in Catholic Encyclopedia M. H. B. C. , New York, 1976. Vol. X.
p. 171

physiology, physics and chemistry.¹⁰² In Christian spirituality, however, this term is taken in a strict sense and includes only two things:

- (a) Those internal and external manifestations that ordinarily proceed from the authentic mystical activity of a soul (Concomitant Mystical Phenomena); and
- (b) the extraordinary graces, charisma's, or miracles that sometimes accompany mystical activity but are not essentially related to mystical operations as such (Charismatic Mystical Phenomena).¹⁰³

(a) Concomitant Mystical Phenomena:

This mystical activity is the work of God who can lead soul, as He will. Concomitant mystical phenomena are called ordinary phenomena and are supernatural. This term includes those internal and external manifestations that ordinarily proceed from the authentic mystical activity of a soul and the extraordinary graces, charisma's, or miracles that sometimes accompany mystical activity.¹⁰⁴

Most theologians (p have adopted the definition of concomitant mystical phenomena given by St. Teresa of Avila. 172). St. John of the Cross uses the same approach. The following are the concomitant mystical phenomena from the beginning to the end of the mystical state.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 171

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 171

¹⁰⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 171, 172

¹⁰⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 172

i. Intuition:

A mystic gets immediate apprehension of facts that are hidden, sometimes he can sense things happening far away. In these concomitant modern phenomena of mysticism, a mystic can sense the coming of another vehicle hidden behind a hairpin bend in a hilly road. A mechanic finds the root cause of the breakdown of an engine by this mystical insight. All brilliant export leaders work successfully with quick and ready insight to take decisions of critical moments. Prophets used to get divine cognition through this mystical phenomenon. It is distinct from discursive knowledge, which is passing from one topic to another. In this accompanying mystical state there is a profound penetration of divine mysteries.¹⁰⁶ Both St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross had such intuitions.

ii. Experimental Knowledge of God

Another collateral modern phenomenon of mysticism is experimental knowledge of God. When a mystic proceeds through the dark ways of life with intuition he gets similar knowledge after performing experiments in the new field of the life... with the desire of greater perfection a mystic acquires new wisdom from practical life of purgation. This usually accompanied by spiritual joy, interior absorption in God and feeling of contempt of worldly evil pleasure.¹⁰⁷ This disdain prompts her to renounce all things, which were obstacles to get mystical experience.

iii. Passive Purification of Senses

In the life of a mystic, passive purification of the bodily senses accompanied by the renunciation of worldly pleasures. It presupposes active purgation of senses by the

¹⁰⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 172

¹⁰⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 172

proper reorientation of life. The target mystical experience prompts the senses to be purified for the higher state of a union. It is passive purification, because God takes intuitive and active role in the process (Leviticus 19:1-2). This is the well known concept of spiritual purification of the senses.¹⁰⁸

iv. Awareness of the Presence of God

It is accompanied by 'sleep' or suspension of the faculties.¹⁰⁹ There is a filial fear of God. Then love of suffering, divine touches, spiritual sensations, and flights of the spirit leading to ecstasy, wounds of love, and interior communications are realized in life. King David had this experience when he had passive purification of senses. . He witnesses it in Psalms 46:10.

v. Passive Purification of Spirit

St. John of the Cross experienced this mystical phenomenon. He recorded it in his book 'Dark Night'.¹¹⁰ (We will deal with this in Chapter Two).

vi. Ego Slaying and Joy in Persecution

"It is total death to self and joy in persecution".¹¹¹ This phenomenon is notable in St. John of the Cross and he has recorded this experience. We will examine it in the next Chapter.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 172

¹⁰⁹ cf. Teresa, St. , Interior Castle, 5th-6th Mansions

¹¹⁰ Aurnann, J. , Mystical Phenomena, in New Catholic Encyclopedia, M. H. B. C. , New York, 1976. Vol. X. p. 171-174

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 172

vii. Heroism in the Practice of Virtue

It has zeal for the salvation of souls and relative confirmation in grace.¹¹² Spiritual leaders and evangelists have been prompted by this mystical phenomena. It is a modern phenomenon in mysticism.

¹¹² Ibid. p. 172

1.3.2 Charismatic Mystical Phenomena

- i What is Charisma-tic Phenomena?
- ii Sources of Mystical Phenomena.
- iii Six rules for Discerning Mystical Phenomena.
- iv Three questions in discerning.
- v Who are Prone to Mystical Phenomena
- vi Nine Principal Charismatic Phenomena
- vii Ten rare Mystical Phenomena.

What is Charismatic Phenomena in Mysticism?

The word 'Charismatic' derived its meaning of spiritual grace from the Greek word 'Charis'¹.

i. What is Charismatic Phenomena?

It is extraordinary mystical phenomena, which proceeds from a supernatural cause distinct from sanctifying grace, the virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they are classified as charismas. They are no proof of the sanctity of the individual since charisma neither presuppose grace in the soul of the individual nor flow from sanctifying grace². (1 Corinthians. 12, 4). In support of this fact, H. H. Esser defines the meaning of the grace, which indicated all things producing well being³.

ii. Sources of Mystical Phenomena

There are three possible sources of these extraordinary phenomena.

1. God

¹ Ibid. p. 172.

² Ibid. p. 172

2. Occult natural powers
3. Diabolical influence

The difficulty involved in discerning the cause of paranormal phenomena is that sometimes hysteric mental patients also get visions, locutions and revelations. This danger entails proper discernment concerning these paranormal phenomena with the help of the following rules⁴. According to J. Aumann there are six rules for discerning the source of mystical phenomena.

iii. Six rules for Discerning Mystical Phenomena.

When natural or diabolic explanation is possible by the evil consequences, no extraordinary phenomena may be attributed to a supernatural (divine) cause.

The investigator should consider primarily the good effects of the phenomena on the life of the individual who has experienced them.

The extraordinary phenomenon is not of itself an indication of the sanctity of the individual, for God could grant charisma to a person in mortal sin and even work miracles through such persons.

Never be tempted to petition God for charisma or miracles, since privileges of this kind can be damaging to the spiritual life of an individual.

No extraordinary phenomenon is necessary for attainment of the sanctity.

³ Esser, H. H. Grace, Spiritual Gifts in the N. D. T Theology. Op. cit. Vol. 2. p. 115.

⁴ Aumann, J. Op. cit. p. 172

Extraordinary phenomena are primarily for the good of the faithful and for the one who receives them. (Be neutral and hidden in Holy Spirit obeying the words in Psalms 32 and Romans 12)⁵.

iv. Three questions in discerning.

(1) It is possible that a person could be subject to the influence of several of these spirits at the same time? Yes. It is possible that a true mystic may be given over to the influence and power of devil (diabolical obsession), with God's permission.

(2) Is it possible for a person to be acted upon by a gift of Holy Spirit and the same time suffer from a pathological mental or organic condition? Yes. Any phenomenon that flows from the weakness of the Individual or from another cause that is not deliberately willed may co-exist with mystical phenomena, so that a genuine mystic may exhibit truly neurotic or psychotic symptoms. Any person, even one in mortal sin, could be the recipient of any of the charisma or be the instrument of God in working a miracle.

(3) Could a true mystic be subject to diabolical influences and at the same time act under the impulse of the gift of the Holy Ghost? Any deliberately willed phenomenon that involves a defect in any virtue is incompatible with the perfection of charity that constitutes Christian perfection and sanctity⁶.

v. Who are Prone to Mystical Phenomena.

The history of spirituality shows that women are more prone to illusion than men, and more women among the saints have been remarkable for extraordinary phenomena.

Other factors that dispose for extraordinary phenomena are:

⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 172

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 172-173

- (1) A vivid imagination,
- (2) Uncontrolled emotions,
- (3) Badly regulated mental prayer,
- (4) Exhausting mental labor, and
- (5) Excessive austerities.

vi. Nine Principal Charismatic Phenomena.

- (1) Visions
 - (2) Locutions
 - (3) Revelations
 - (4) Reading of hearts
 - (5) Hierognosis. (Ability to recognize a person or object as holy or blessed).
 - (6) Flames of Love. (Burning sensation in the body without apparent cause)
 - (7) Stigmata. (Spontaneous appearance of wounds bleeding that resembles the wounds of Christ).
 - (8) Tears of Blood and Bloody Sweats (Could be caused by the devil: Hermatidrosis).
- Exchange of Hearts. (Mystical Marriage)⁷.

vii. Ten Rare Mystical Phenomena.

- (1) Bilocation: Simultaneous presence of a material body in two distant places at the same time.
- (2) Agility: It is instantaneous movement of a material body from one place to another without passing through the intervening space.

⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 173

(3) Levitation; This is the elevation of the human body above the ground without visible cause and its suspension in the air without natural support.

(4) Compenetration of Bodies; This occurs when one material body appears to pass through another material body. It is possible that a body might enjoy the anticipated quality of subtlety that is characteristic of glorified body.

(5) Bodily Incombustibility; This is the ability of bodies to withstand the natural laws of combustibility. It may be due to some occult natural cause or to the devil. If mystical, it could be interpreted as a testimony of the holiness of the individual, or, in case of a test by fire, of the truth of doctrine.

(6) Bodily Elongation or Shrinking; Sudden reduction or increase in size of the body may occur for no apparent reason. This is said to have occurred in spiritualistic seances and could also be caused by occult natural powers or by the intervention of the devil. It is not generally accepted as a mystical phenomenon because of its morbidity and apparent lack of purpose.

(7) Inedia; Absolute and total abstinence from all nourishment beyond the limits of nature.

(8) Mystical Aureoles and Illuminations; Light may emanate from the body of an individual during contemplation.

(9) Sweet Odors; It could be caused by devil or by autosuggestion. If it is a true mystical phenomenon. If it is a sign of glory and holiness of a mystic.

Blood Prodigies, Bodily Incorruptibility and Absence of Rigormortis (absence of stiffening of muscles); These Phenomena are well attested in the lives of saintly mystics⁸.

⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 173-174

In the light of concomitant mystical and charismatic phenomena of mysticism; a critical evaluation of the validity of mystical experience may be useful to find out the relevance of mysticism today.

1.3.3 Validity of Mystical Phenomena

- I Skeptic comments' on mysticism: By R. A. Vaughan
- II Defense of mysticism: By William James
- III The guarantee of the mystic's claim
- IV Mystical union as the crowning point of human destiny
- V Authentic mystical state and 'mystical adultery'
- VI Mysticism for Communal Harmony
- VII Relevant validity of mystical phenomena

While we are closing the discussion on mysticism in general as the main heading of this first chapter, it seems to be interesting to note the skeptic comments on mysticism and its phenomena. (A skeptic is a person who doubts the truth of a particular claim or theory).

i. Skeptic Comments on Mysticism

By R. A. Vaughan

There are certain skeptics who have questioned the claims of mystics. It is evident from the Historical Survey, and from Nature of Mysticism, that mystical experience is ineffable. Therefore, mystics were criticized and misunderstood as inconsistent lunatic patients. Only after 400 years now the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross is recognized as a saintly mystic. Mystical experiences have been misunderstood as self-induced trance and sheer hallucinations.

To back up this Skeptic views of the critics on mystical experience, R. A. Vaughan can be quoted here.

"Mysticism is that form of error which mistakes for divine manifestation operations of a merely human faculty. How can the

mystic be said to 'know' something that cannot be expressed in words and communicated to others, or rendered explicit by the mystics to the mystics themselves?"¹¹³ Perhaps it must be admitted that mystical experience cannot be 'justified' or authenticated by themselves. But there is answer to this question.

ii. Defense of Mysticism

By William James

There is danger of concentrating too closely on mystical experience as an isolated phenomenon, dissecting the statements of this or that mystic R. A. Vaughan seems to be fallen into this dangerous skeptical pit, so losing sight of the whole history of the mysticism. For in the words of William James,

"There is an eternal unanimity about mystical utterances which ought to make a critic stop and think"¹¹⁴

The long time of the general background of the mystics is to be considered here. The intellectual equipment, temperamental qualities, and educational opportunities of such men and women as S. S. John, Paul, Augustine, the Pseudo-Dionysius, S. S. Gregory, Bernard, Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross, (to say nothing of the English and German mystics), were so vastly different that one might expect differing approaches to mystical activity and widely dissimilar consequences.¹¹⁵ Yet, despite immense difference in detail, there is a monotonous sameness about their general attitudes to the basic matters of moral conduct and religious beliefs.

¹¹³ GARDINER. H. C. , LARKING. E. E. , *Mysticism in Catholic Encyclopedia*. Op. cit. p. 178

¹¹⁴ cf. *Ibid.* p. 178

If mystical experience were, no more than a self-induced trance and if, the alleged intuition of a divine reality, then it were sheer hallucination. It is remarkable that these baseless and purely subjective phenomena should be under the control of a persisting framework of ideas and beliefs. ¹¹⁶

R. A. Vaughan might have come across diabolic non-authentic mystical experiences. He might have overlooked the scientific systematic articulations of the ineffable authentic mystical experience. All mystical phenomena and charismatic gifts are to be tested in the light of written scripture (the Bible) and good traditions of the Orthodox, Catholic churches. For getting for the moment the specific problems of the authenticity of mystical experience, one might look at normal Christian belief and practice. We believe that this world of material substance, rational and moral activity is but the surface of an unfathomed abyss of mystical energy, internally operative and effective. ¹¹⁷ Therefore, mysticism has a history of experience in which the mystic claims have been immediate contact with the Ground of Being. Mystics are the connecting links of the creator and the whole creatures. It is achieved through the unique phenomenon of 'mystical marriage'.¹¹⁸

iii. The guarantee of the mystic's claim

In an authentic mystic, we have a man or woman who is distinguished for integrity, candor, (sincerity) and sensitivity of conscience. Recalling Gerson's definition-

"Knowledge of God arrived at through the embrace of unifying love" we might suggest that in the mystic's experience, there is a

¹¹⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 178

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 178

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 178

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 178

complete coordination of both intellect and will, directed towards God, who is the perfect and adequate end in their activity. So mystical contemplation is the deepening of the whole personality, an enriching of character, a development of virtue. It is this fact that, in the end, is the guarantee of the mystic's claim. At the state of ordinary awareness mystic shares the ideals, beliefs, and principles of social conduct. But it is conceivable that, in some cases mystic's alleging of his experience of God is a piece of self-deception, hallucination, hysteria, megalomania and the like (Megalomania is a form of madness in which a person has exaggerated ideas of his importance, power and wealth). But it is absurd to suggest that all the mystics are so deceived all the time. Once it is admitted that some of the mystics may be right some times, that some of them genuinely "experienced God". Thus, there is sufficient ground for claiming the mystics as witness, to the ultimate truth, after which the rest of the society are dimly groping.¹¹⁹

iv. Mystical union as the crowning point of human destiny

In the Encyclopedia of Religion, mystical union is commented as the crowning point of human destiny in its spiritual aspect. It is the return of the isolated creature to the unified and resplendent glory of all that is envisaged in the Bible.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 178

¹²⁰ MIRCEA ELIADE. , (ed), Mystical Un3. on, in the Encyclopedia of Religion, Macmillan Publishing Co. , New York. 1987. Vol. 10. p. 239

It is the immediate transforming experience of the unification of man or man's soul with the highest reality. While mystical union is arrived at in different ways in different religious traditions, it is always and everywhere accompanied by an enlightened sense of release, ineffable joy, and peace. Hence, mystical union is known in other synonymous words: ecstasy, beatific union, deification, samadhi, sanctification, bliss, face to face vision, satori, nirvana, and so forth.¹²¹ Mystical union is associated either with prayer in theopathic religions, or with stable illumination in non theistic ones, and has little to do with hallucinatory experiences or any other illusions of the senses.

v. Authentic mystical state and 'mystical Adultery'

Most mystics and philosophers of mysticism would warn against, infatuation with the occult, frenetic states extraordinary visions and search for magical powers or easy claims access to the supernatural. Here infatuation with the occult is filling with a wild and foolish life for deceptive union with evil spirits; frenetic state wildly excited condition of mind by the influence of deceptive spirits. So not all of altered consciousness (no matter how much extraordinary) can be equated with the mystical union. Seldom can the sensory phenomena - seeing, hearing, smelling, touching - or extraordinary perceptions, telepathy, clairvoyance, and the like, may accompany mystical experience and qualify them as the Highest stage of human awareness.¹²²

The legal mystical union of human soul with the Supreme Reality is the authentic mystical state. It is recognizable more by its transcendent contents, than by the subjective feeling of well being. The beatitude experienced by a mystic may be superficial. It may bear superficial resemblance to the state of trance induced by the use of psychedelic

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 239

drugs. All such illegal ways mystical union may be called 'mystical adultery' which is punishable as warned in the Bible (Psalms 73 : 27). Authentic mystical union is the legal mystical marriage as envisaged in Ephesians 5: 32 (Bible).

In the authentic mystical state of awareness, it abolished all oppositions in the superficial level. Therefore, deepest authentic mystical state is the ideal condition for the harmony among religions and churches in the world. ¹²³

vi. Mysticism for Communal Harmony

The increasing demand for deeper mutual understanding and peace in the modern society increases the relevant role of mystic now. The increasing need of a better substitute for drug and evil-intoxication calls the help of mysticism today. The great need of spiritual directors still waits upon the door of mysticism. Modern charismatic movement and the increasing mystic phenomena have increased the demand of mystics who are mature enough to discern the deceptive mystical phenomena.

vii. Relevant Validity of Mystical Phenomena

Thus as a result of these evidences it can be seen with the famous author of the book 'understanding mysticism' (Richard Wood) the relevance of mysticism. He started his book with this relevant remark:

"Mysticism clearly became a significant factor in the lives of millions of people weary of war, racism, political corruption and religious institutionalism"¹²⁴

¹²² Ibid. p. 239

¹²³ Ibid. p. 240

¹²⁴ WOODS RICHARD. , Understanding Mysticism. Op. cit. p. 1

Hence Modern Phenomena of charismatic mysticism an increasing demand for spiritual directors with the gifts and fruits of Holy Spirit (Gal 5: 22, 23; 1. Corinthians 12, 13) have highlighted the relevance of mysticism today.

The new insights emerging from the new definitions of mysticism have exposed the intrinsic nature of mystical experience. The extrinsic nature of mysticism observed in the old definitions seemed to be helpful to remove the mist of mysticism. Thus, we have discussed the whole aspects of the nature and relevance of mysticism today. In the new light and background of the historical survey of mysticism and its nature. We can evaluate the life and mystical experiences of the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross who lived in 16th Century AD We are going to study the deeper meaning of the Spanish word 'Nada' (nothing). It is indicating the nature of the Christian mystic way to mystical experience. With this presentation entering into the chapter two. "

2. THE MYSTIC WAY OF "NADA" IN ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

- 2.1 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS IN HIS MYSTIC WAY OF 'NADA'
- 2.2 RENUNCIATION - THE POINT OF DEPARTURE ON THE WAY OF 'NADA '.
- 2.3 DIVINE EMPTINESS - THE POINT OF ARRIVAL ON THE WAY OF 'NADA '.

2.1. Factors That Influenced St. John of the Cross in His mystic Way of 'Nada'

2.1.1 Family Background

2.1.2 Mental Background: John's Concept of the 'Dark Night' of the Soul

2.1.3 Spiritual Background; St. John's Concept of this Dark Night of the Spirit

After observing the new light emerged from the exegesis and exposition of the study of general mysticism and the new definitions proposed, we are going deeper into the word study, and translation of the Spanish word '**Nada**' according to the rules of exegesis. The purpose of this hermeneutics is to see the negative and positive aspects of the meaning of 'Nada'. In the light of the meaning, four questions are to be answered.

Who *is a* mystic?

What is the intention of St. John of the Cross when he used the word 'Nada'?

What is meant by mystic way of 'Nada'?

What is the relevance of 16th century Spanish mystic in India today?

The mystic St. John of the Cross is introduced to readers in the 'A' section of this chapter analyzing, the influence of family, mental and spiritual factors on him to mold him as a

mystic who providentially exploits all his inborn gifts of talents and adversities to mold him as a saintly poet in Spain. The natural and hereditary bondage's of human soul in lust of flesh, eyes and pride of life, are broken in his life by the prayerful confrontation of famine, poverty, mental conflicts and personal spiritual weakness. His loneliness was not boredom to him. He started meditation, development of his philosophical mind and developed to the higher level of mystical contemplation while his jealous coworkers imprisoned him. St. John's experience in the jail and on his mystic way is critically examined with the investigation of his historical, political and religious background. The message of the 'nada' text of St. John of the Cross is going to be made more comprehensible in the contemporary situation through the interpretation of the word 'Nada' in accordance with rules of the exegesis.

Methodological Guidance:

Specify the adopted aspects of exegesis and expositions written in the glossary of the D. N. T. T. p. 7 of Vol. 1, 2, 3 and pages of expositions - prove it through the scholastic way of handling those principles in 3.1.2 & 3.1.3 & 3.2.3, 2.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2 & 2.3

The Definition of the Word 'Nada':

(Exegetical word study and translation of the Spanish word)

'NADA' is a Spanish word, which means "nothing".¹²⁵ The etymological meanings of this word 'Nothing' are naught, nil, nullity, zero, shadow, phantom, apparition, dream illusion, fallacy, insanity, frivolity, hollowness, blank, void, flimsiness thinness and slightness, in the context of abstract relations. To denote nonexistence, the word

¹²⁵ WILSON SEARLYN. N. , Teach yourself Spanish, Hodder and Stoughton Lefcd, Mill Road, London, 1980. p. 235

emptiness and nothingness have been used.¹²⁶ 'Nothing' has been used in the Bible with different theological meanings. (Job. 6:18 - 21; 8:9, Pro. 13:4; 13:7; Isa. 40:7; 41:29; John. 15:5; 1. Cor. 3:2; 2. Cor. 6:10) Jesus Christ said "Without me you can do nothing" in the context of his statement that He is the vine and his disciples are branches which are expected to abide in Him for bearing much fruit.¹²⁷ (John. 15:5). William Barclay in his Biblical commentary points out.

"The wood of the vine has the curious characteristic that it is good for nothing" (when it is cut from the vine).¹²⁸ Theological meaning of the word 'nothing' denotes the negative aspect of the nothingness, which indicates a condition of good for nothing, without Christ and His fruitful abiding. According to Jesus Christ, all acts without Him are nothing. However, in the secular world there are many people who act without Christ and still they seem to be something, instead of nothing. That seeming something is nothing but a temporary phenomena in the light of the Christ, who is the Truth (John 14:6). All acts and possessions without God is something which hinder the union of human soul and spirit with the Absolute (God). All achievements of the prodigal son, (mentioned in the parable Luke 15:24-32) without his father's consent and fellowship, were nothing. It will be like death. This negative aspect of the nothingness is expressed here figuratively. St. Paul uses this word in the sacramental language of death (Romans 8:10).¹²⁹

¹²⁶ NELSON, THOMAS. , Roget's Thesaurus, Madarasa Road, Kashmere Gate, Delhi, 1990. p. 23

¹²⁷ HERTEL, THE JOHN. A. , The Holy Bible, Published by Blue Ribbon, Bible Publishers, Chicago, 1953. p. 1462

¹²⁸ BARCLAY, WILLIAM. , The Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of John, Vol. 2. p. 174

¹²⁹ BROWN, COLIN. , The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, The Zondervan Corporation, Grand rapids, Michigan, USA, 1980, Vol. 1. p. 446

Who is a Mystic?

In the mystical theology, the word 'nothing' has a positive meaning which is exposed by the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross of 16th century. E. Allison Peers introduces St. John of the Cross through his Book. A Spanish Carmelite friar, born just four hundred years ago, an outstanding figure of the counter reformation and companion and fellow worker to one of the greatest women, the world has known, St. Teresa. He was a writer as well of the first Rank both in poetry and in prose. And, most important of all, he was one of Christendom's greatest mystics... A mystic is a person who has fallen in love with God... That is the whole secret of the amazing power of his life his character" and his writings".¹³⁰ The positive meaning of the Spanish word 'Nada' (Nothing) denotes a blessed, naked, and poor condition of human soul and spirit in which mystic is able to have union with the Absolute (God). The Prodigal Son in the parable of Jesus reached this blessed positive aspect of nothingness while he lost everything and became poor and naked in his body. Soul and Spirit (Luke 15: 16, 24). Then he came to his senses and returned to his loving father and received the blissful mystical union with him. The prodigal son's departure until his utter poverty is the negative mystic way. His going back to his father is the positive aspect of his nothingness.

' Nada' used by the Spanish Mystic St. John of the Cross

St. John of the Cross has presented the way of negation to the level of emptiness and nothingness to have enough space for the dwelling of God in man through mystical union. So this way of negation is a way to the experience of real affirmation which is the positive aspect of nothingness. Thus his frequent use of such phrases as "Desire to

possess nothing" (Ascent I, XIII, The Collected works 1, 63), "Blessed is that nothingness" (Letters, XV, Works, III, 286) has gained him the title of 'Doctor de la Nada' (Doctor of Nothingness, as though his doctrine were entirely negative. But if those sentences are completed, so that they read:

"In order to arrive at possessing everything, desire to possess nothing", and "Blessed is that nothingness and blessed is that secret place of the heart that is of such great price that it possess every thing, it will be seen that a more appropriate title would be 'Doctor del Todo': (Doctor of the all). "¹³¹

Richard P. Hardy after his deep research on St. John of the Cross, released some new insights into the authentic Fray Juan, and his approach to the Christian mystical life. ¹³² Thus, a new figure emerged; "a man, a human being who has fallen in love with God in the world. I discovered a man who is indeed a saint, but not because he fled from the world; I found a man who had discovered in his life that Sanctity searching for, and finding God in this world of ours. Here was a man for whom the incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus meant the consecration of the world and its history. Fray Juan, God is one who speaks in time, in life, in the world". ¹³³

Before the research work of R. P. Hardy, St. John of the Cross was misunderstood as only the Doctor of nothingness of its negative aspect. Those who have seen him and his

¹³⁰ PEERS. E. ALLISON. , Spirit of Flame, A Study of St. John of the Cross, S. C. M. Press Ltd. 56, Bloomsbury Street, London, W. C. I, p. 5

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 96, 97

¹³² HARDY, RICHARD. P. , Search for Nothing, The Life of St. John of the Cross, Cross Road, New York, 1982. p. 3, 4

¹³³ Ibid. p. 3

way to NO - Thing (Nada) as being aloof and despising the world have totally missed the significance of St. John of the Cross. ¹³⁴

While the prodigal son reached the positive aspect of nothingness through foolish sinful life in the world, St. John of the Cross-reached there through his narrow mystic way of voluntary ascetic renunciation. "The way of denial which Fray Juan (St. John of the Cross) teaches in his works is but a technique to free the lover in each human being. By learning to let go and to allow the world and fellow human beings to be what and who they truly are, a disciple frees himself to love - to the death". ¹³⁵

What is meant by the mystic way of 'Nada'

John Ferguson in his *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mysticism and Mystery Religions* has defined the mystic way as follows: It is common place of all mysticism, whether Eastern or Western; it denotes the way of mystical experience of God through negation. ¹³⁶

Explaining the meaning of the world, Via negativa J. Ferguson points out the inner meaning of the mystic way of Nada.

"No predicate attach to God; no words may legitimately be used to describe Him. 'He is not this, not this'. But stripping from our mind its delusions about God, we prepare it for the truth, in eliminating all that is not God, we begin to penetrate to the heart of the mystery". ¹³⁷ It is evident from this fact that the mystic way helps elimination of all that is not God and preparation of human

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 129

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 129

¹³⁶ JOHN FERGUSON. , Illustrated Encyclopedia. of Mysticism and Mystery Religions, the Seabury Press, New York, 1977. p. 205

mind for the mystical comprehension of the Absolute truth.¹³⁸ As a mystic St. Paul's witness about his mystic way of nothingness with negative and positive aspect of 'Nada' is in the Bible; (2. Cor. 6:10).

"In everything commending ourselves as servants of God, as having nothing yet possessing all things". There are three words often repeated on this mystic way; **negation, emptiness, nothing**. Do these words mean that the soul should shrink from all the realities that are around her, thus reducing herself to an annihilating nihilism? No, there is no question of denying realities: the negation of which we speak here is the negation of inordinate affections and emptiness of earthly things that defile the soul, and a forgetfulness of illusions that lead us astray.¹³⁹

What is the Relevance of 16th Century Spanish Mystic Today?

1991 was the 400th year of his physical death in Spain. His teachings and mystical insights are revealed and being appreciated only in this century.

Now his flame of love is penetrating to every corner of human life.¹⁴⁰ What is his main contribution to the whole world? Witness of secular society, Comments of Encyclopedias, and research works of many scholars have pointed out the uniqueness of St. John of the Cross as a mystic, spiritual director, and a light house for pilgrims who are traveling through the dark sea of life.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 205

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 6

¹³⁹ cf. CHRYSOGONUS, Fr. O. C. D. , St. John of the Cross, His Life and Doctrine, Teresian Press, Vemsur, 1985 p. 44.

¹⁴⁰ cf. PEERS. E. A. , Spirit of Flame, S. C. M. Press Ltd. 56 Blooms Burg Street, London, W. C. I, p. 96

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 94-117

J. D. Dechanet, in his book, *Christian Yoga*, points out the need of a spiritual guide on the mystic way.¹⁴² We can see that practical guide in the mystical theology of St. John of the Cross. He has saved many mystics from the aberrations on the mystic way. Therefore, it is useful and relevant to have a deeper study of the mystic way of nothingness (Nada) today.

Why was this Mystic known as St. John of the Cross?

Theologians and philosophers to denote, Physical, Mental and Spiritual painfulness in the background of personal affections have used the word 'cross'. We can see cross in St. John's daily life even from his birth till his death. His life was full of troubles, trials, afflictions, burdens, misfortunes, and adversities. He utilized them to mortify his sinful self and flesh. His creative responses of counteractions prompted his admirers to call him St. John of 'the Cross (cf. Nelson's *New Compact Roget's Thesaurus* Pages 48, 120). Margaret Smith in her book has pointed out the reason of the attribution of the 'cross' to his name.

"It was not without reason that he was called St. John of the Cross; he had borne his cross unflinchingly, and so at last he won his crown, the attainment of the mystic quest, the goal of his efforts, that perfect union of the loving soul with God, She (his soul) loved".¹⁴³

¹⁴² DECHANET, J. M. O. S. B. , *Christian Yoga*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1960. p. 24

¹⁴³ SMITH MARGARET. , *An Introduction to Mysticism*, Sheldom Press, London, 1977. p. 104

2. 1. 1 Family Background:

- I Short Biography of St. John of the Cross
- II Spiritual Fellowship with St. Teresa
- III Persecution from his Community
- IV Personal Vision and Experiences
- V Spanish Background: Historical, Political
- VI Spanish Christian Background
- VII Final Suffering and Death

i. Short Biography of St. John of the Cross¹⁴⁴

The Spanish boy, John de Yepes was born on June 24th 1542 as the son of Gonsalo. Shortly after his birth his father died and his family was in great poverty. His mother Catalina Alvarez, had known nothing other than extreme poverty ever since her marriage to the noble man who had been disinherited when he married Catalina. John had been placed in the orphanage by his mother when he was 9 years old. He lived there for 8 years. His life was full of trials, failure and adversities. The director of the orphanage finally sent him to beg when he failed to become a carpenter, tailor, wood carver or a painter. He was however, an intelligent boy and he learned to read and write well. About 1559, when he was 17, John became a male-nurse in a hospital. There he began to collect alms for the poor patients in the hospital where he got a heart of charity in midst of suffering poor patients. He completed 4 years course with the Jesuits and was accepted in the Carmelite Community.

¹⁴⁴ cf. CHRYSOGONUS. , Op. cit. p. 1 - 22

In 1564, he was sent to university study. Three years later he was ordained as priest. The desire for solitude in him with the true love of god, resulted in the quest for intimacy with God to the exclusion of everything else. The background of his family life was first basic factor, which paved the mystic way of 'Nada' in him.

ii. Spiritual Fellowship with St. Teresa

Father John met providentially Teresa of Avila, who was a Carmelite nun about 27 years older than John. God brought together these two great figures that He had raised up for the double purpose of reforming the Carmelite order and reviving the spirit of prayer in the church. Both of them were outstanding spiritual guides. The book they wrote were for the practical purpose of guiding souls of good will to the height of Divine union.

John's **pure fellowship** and **cooperation** with **Teresa** was another factor, which **influenced him**. John wrote the "**Ascent of Mount Carmel which shows the** spiritual attitude necessary for one who would arrive promptly at the summit of the Christian life. His 'spiritual canticle', celebrates the part taken by grace in the soul's search for God. And the '**Living Flame**' sings final victory. Father John was growing steadily to maturity, spiritual and mentally. St.Teresa felt very happy about him. As a confession father and spiritual guide. Father John remained at convent of the incarnation for 5 years. His stay ended abruptly with kidnapping and imprisonment".¹⁴⁵

iii. Persecution from his Community

Dissension's had arisen between the friars of the mitigated rules and those of the strict observance. Because he refused to abandon the 'Reform' the friars of the mitigated rule shut Father John up in their monastery in Toledo. John realized later that this

imprisonment also was a blessing in disguise from the loving God. He had mystical experience in the persecuted community.

His prison was a tiny cell ten feet by six. It had no window, only a hole high up in the wall. He had to stand on a bench to get light enough to read his Breviary. For the whole eight and a half months of his imprisonment, he had no change of clothing. His food was bread and water with occasional scraps of salt fish. **This prison was the spiritual factory** from which St. John of the Cross produced precious products of his mystical poems which contain the mystical theology of the mystic way of '**nada**' and the experience of mystical union. The poems he wrote placed him in the very first rank of Spanish poets. His prose writings are actually extensive commentaries on his three great mystical poems.¹⁴⁶

iv. Personal Vision and Experience

1578 He had felt strong impulses in prayer urging him to get away. His new gaoler a kind hearted man had prepared the way for his escape. John escaped from the prison on the night of August 16th 1578. He lived and worked 14 years after his escape from the Prison. He was appointed superior of Monte Calverio. There he began his great prose work. '**The Ascent of Mount Carmel**', in the solitude of 3 months. In 1581 The Pope Gregory XIII, had signed the long desired brief, separating the two groups of Carmelites, "calced and discalced, into independent branches.

Fr. John used to get mystical visions and locutions' One day while he was praying Christ said "Brother John ask me what you like, for I will give it you for this Service you have done " He replied "Lord what I wish you to give me are sufferings to be borne for your

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 9

sake, that I may be despised and' regarded as worthless". Father John was fully aware that suffering can be made the instrument of a higher and more intense life. It can change an earthly man into a heavenly man.

His request for suffering was answered. During the nine or ten months of life that remained to him, a shameful scandal was spread about him. He was deprived of all offices. John made the two hundred miles journey south. He arrived at the isolated monastery of La Penuela around the end of July 1591. His own rejection caused him no mental sufferings. Indeed it brought him relief and peace. In the solitude of La Penuela, Fr. John of the Cross resumed his life of prayer and mystical recollection.¹⁴⁷

v. Spanish Background; Historical, Political

As John's family background influenced his concept of the mystic way of 'nada' the Spanish historical background has another influential factor .

The poor John's adversities in his early life was kindling trials of fire in his life which finally made him a glittering golden Saint. Not only, his body passed through fiery trials, but also a fire destroyed his early parish registers, four years after his birth. John's birthday was supposed to be on June 24th 1542, mid-summer day being-also the Feast of St. John Baptist. As John wished to be hidden and unknown in God, his early childhood records were also destroyed. Thus on an unknown day of the year 1542, in the village of Fontiveros, that child was born, destined to become a Doctor of the Church universal and one of the greatest Christian mystics who have ever lived.

¹⁴⁶ cf. PEERS. E. A. , Op. Cit. P. 11

¹⁴⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 11

The geographical background of his native village had influenced his mystical thoughts and the life of pilgrimage to the top of the mountain of mystical union. That humble village had a mountain climate. ' The thrilling beauty of Castile, where John lived about 25 years of his primary life, influenced his mind to become a nature mystic. ¹⁴⁸

16th Century Spanish cultural and social background had an influential factor which added his adversities in the childhood poverty. On his father's side, he was well descended. He belonged to a prestigious noble family. Spanish history points out the high status of nobles with Catholic Kings who ruled Spain in 16th century. ¹⁴⁹

Thus his father had displeased his family by marrying out of his high class; and become poor and later became an orphan. "Because of the geographical diversity and the great variety of climates and vegetation, as well as for historical reason, regional differences are very important in Spain.. Even so, with the possible exception of the three Castilian regions, the inhabitants consider themselves essentially different from each other". ¹⁵⁰

This Castilian regional consciousness seems to have influenced John also, while he was living there. Historical origin of Spanish people, because of its position between the two continents and its relative accessibility from the Mediterranean man Spain had been invaded and inhabited by many different people. Eight centuries of Arab influence together with prolonged Roman colonization, have left a permanent imprint on the Spanish population. ¹⁵¹ Thus John also had that imprint on his life. All these factors

¹⁴⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 12

¹⁴⁹ cf. F-L. O. M. , SPAIN, in the New Encyclopedia Britannica, William Bention, Publisher, Chicago, Vol 17, 1978. p. 387, 422, 424, 451

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 388

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 388

consciously and unconsciously have paved his **mystic way of 'nada.'** All these factors had been coincided in the Christian church background of the Spain at that time.

vi. Spanish Christian background

Spain was spiritually backward. The official religion of the state was Roman Catholicism in Spain. But active participation in church work was very small, with a large percentage of the population alienated from church. Spanish mysticism reached its greatest heights in the 16th century by the revival of mystics who were painfully realizing the spiritual backwardness in the beginning of 16th century. Catholic rulers were controlling church matters also. In Spain mystics lived under the shadow of the inquisition, there was no place for any development not approved, by Holy church.¹⁵² This dark period of Spanish church was useful to St. John of the Cross, to keep the spiritual film of his soul as fresh and ready for the 'clicking' of the mystical imprinting of divine visions in him. He used the same darkness promptly to wash the mystical films of Christian background. In the solitude of his prison Fr. John was finishing his mystical recollection.

vii. Final Suffering and Death

He went to Ubeda for treatment because he was sick - by persecution from his jealous superiors. John did not return to La Penuela. Two weeks later he died at the Discalced monastery in Ubeda city.

Father John had been suffering on his arrival at Ubeda from inflammation of the right leg. He foretold the day and hour of his own death, in 1591 on Friday 13th December about half past eleven he was getting ready for his expected departure from his sick body. His face lit up with Joy. At midnight he said, "I shall be saying Matins in the presence of

God, Our Lord". Father John put his lips to the crucifix he was holding, slowly he uttered the words".

"Into thy hands O Lord, I commend my spirit". Then without a struggle he breathed his last. He was forty-nine. His incorrupt body was laid to rest in Segoria. He was recognized by Benedict XIII in 1726 and declared Doctor of the church by PIUS XI in 1926. We have observed John's family background and his persecutions from his community members, and the divine providence behind all his adversities with suffering and death, as factors influenced him in his mystic way of 'Nada'.

His sense of dedication to the Service of God was the Central feature of his life. He has been called, rightly, the doctor -of the absolute. From the abundance of his own experience he mapped out a direct safe way to the goal of Divine union". He is like one of those stars which suddenly appears and, after shedding its glory for a short while, disappears from our sight, yet continues to exist as the center of a constellation.¹⁵³ It is the comment of Father Chrisogonus who presented St. John of the Cross as mystical Doctor of the church, through this book.

St. John of the Cross (1542-1591) in his totality has to be viewed in connection with the previous authors; he is a channel of a terminology of a science previous to him. We need to know the previous mystical writers in order to appreciate his concept of 'Nada' on the mystic way.

John was influenced by the philosophical doctrines of Aristotle, by the theological principles of St. Thomas, and of John Baconthorp, and by the scripturalistic concepts of

¹⁵² cf. SMITH. M. I., Op. Cit. P. 99

¹⁵³ cf. CHRISOGONUS., Op. cit. p. 31

Gregory Gallo. He has quoted from the works of Aristotle. St. Denis the Areopagite, St. Gregory the Great, St. Augustian, St. Bernard, St. Thomas and Boethius.

Stephen Clissold in his book 'Wisdom of Spanish Mystic' wrote:

"Spain's great Catholic mystics flourished in the 16th and early 17th centuries, when their country was at the height of its military and political power and producing its greatest work of literature and art. The vital clan which led to the discovery and conquest of the New World seemed to have turned inwards to the mysterious world of the spirit".¹⁵⁴

The evaluation of the mystic St. John of the Cross is that he succeeded in conveying the essence of his teaching; the way of Negation.¹⁵⁵ The way of Negation involves discarding and stripping oneself bare of everything, a purging not only of the natural appetites but of the human affections which may be normal and good in themselves, but which clutter the void which the contemplative should leave for God alone to fill.¹⁵⁶ He taught that all creatures are crumbs dropped from God's table. And he who subsists only on them goes hungry like a dog, since the scraps they feed on never satisfy their hunger but only stimulate the appetite.¹⁵⁷ He was an ideal mystic who was an example to all mystics. It is proved by his own acts: One day he threw a bundle of precious papers into the fire and watched them burning. These letters were from St. Teresa and he treasured

¹⁵⁴ CLISSOLD STEPHEN. , Wisdom of Spanish Mystics , Shildon Press, London, 1977. p.

¹⁵⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 20

¹⁵⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 33

¹⁵⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 19

them dearly. But it was discovered that they were preventing his complete detachment from earthly affections. ¹⁵⁸ He expressed his teaching on 'nada' in paradoxes.

"To reach what you are not, you have to go where you are nothing". ¹⁵⁹ We have seen how St. John of the Cross reached this state of nothingness, by many influential factors in his family, geographical, political, social, historical and Christian background of Spain in the 16th century. Now we have to go deeper into his mental, theological background to find out the influencing factors there.

¹⁵⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 34

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 35

2. 1. 2 Mental Background John's Concept of the 'Dark Night' of the Soul.

- I His Concept of Adversities
- II His Final Goal of Life
- III John's Concept of Faith
- IV His Concept of Hope
- V His Concept of Love
- VI His Concept of Embracing Cross
- VII Critical Evaluation of the Concept of the Dark Night of the Soul

As family, backgrounds of adversities prompted St. John to kill the lust of the flesh, his mental background of the dark night of the soul led him to the meditation and God oriented philosophy of life which helped him to use all mental conflicts to kill the lust of eyes. The dark night in the jail prepared him to arrive at the point of departure on the mystic way. The mystic way of 'Nada' is going to be defined and interpreted according to the six disciplines of the scientific exegesis written in the Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Vol. 1,p. 7).

- (1) The discipline of word study and translation of the Spanish word 'Nada' have already been dealt in this Chapter 2.1. before (1).
- (2) The investigation of historical background has been dealt in 2.1. (1) 5, 6.
- (3) Historical criticism (seeing the events and ideas of St. John in the historical perspective of what happened in the history) is dealt with in this chapter.

- (4) The discipline of the Hermeneutics (which makes the message of the 'Nada' texts comprehensible in the contemporary situation through the interpretation of text) is used in this chapter.
- (5) Literary criticism is used here to examine the sources of St. John's writings. The concept of the dark night of the soul, before dealing on Christian mystic way.
- (6) Comparative study of the religions will be completed in chapter four.

While we are searching the mental background of St. John of the Cross, to find out the influential factors on his mystic way. We have to define the meaning of the word 'Night'. He has used this word 'Night' many times in his writings, which entail a deeper study of this word here. Night is a phenomenon in the absence of sunlight. Night is an organic matter according to Nelson's new compact Roget's Thesaurus.¹⁶⁰ Organic Chemistry deals with Carbon compounds. Organic night of the soul denotes something similar in the mental sphere where there is a seeming absence of the light of the presence of God. Really, this night is only a temporary eclipse. Jesus Christ on the Cross had such an eclipse while he was bearing the whole sin of mankind (Psalm 22:1; 2. Corinthians 5:21).

"At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours... Jesus cried out with a loud shout, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me" ¹

¹⁶⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 67, 74

¹(Mathew 27:45 - 47).

St. John of the Cross had the same experience of abandonment and darkness in his body and soul. It was a temporary phenomenon. Persecuted Father John's image was resurrected after the eclipse of his dark night of the soul.

John's concept of the dark night of the soul- John, as a mystic, uses the word 'night' with special meaning we can see it in his famous poem:

"One dark night. Fired with love's urgent longings - Ah - the sheer grace: - I went out unseen. " ²

He has interpreted the different aspects of this night on the mystic way.

"The soul sings in this first stanza of its good luck and the grace it had in departing from its inordinate appetites and imperfections... a soul must pass through two principal kinds of nights (which spiritual persons call purgation's or purification of the soul) in order to reach the state of perfection. We shall term these purgation's nights, because in both of them the soul journeys in darkness as through by night. " ³

The journey towards union with God is night for three reasons. First, the individual must deprive himself of his appetite for worldly possessions. This is the road of faith and for the intellect faith is like a dark night; God is also a dark night to man in this life. ⁴

² Kavanaugh, Kieran. (Trans), Collected Works of St. John of the Cross. AVP Publication, Adhyatma Vidya Pitha, Bangalore, 1981. p. 73.

³ cf. Ibid. p. 73

⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 74-75

The word Night therefore corresponds to a reality. The soul, in fact, journeys towards meeting God plunged in darkness like a blind man by faith, which is the only guide along this journey⁵. The night has two stages: active when the activity of the soul prevails, and passive when the action of God prevails⁶.

The active and passive night has thirteen stages of which there are

- (1) Prayer
- (2) Purification of active senses
- (3) Meditation
- (4) Active contemplation
- (5) Purification of the active spirit,
- (6) Purification of the passive senses,
- (7) Passive contemplation,
- (8) Passive transition
- (9) Purification of the passive spirit
- (10) Beginning of the union,
- (11) Spiritual betrothal,
- (12) Spiritual marriage, and
- (13) Transformation in the mystical union. Yet, passivity of the soul does not mean idleness but it implies docility to the divine action at its highest level. ⁷

St. John of the Cross drew a symbolic sketch of mount of perfection. Thus, summit of this mount symbolizes the dwelling places of God. He uses the word 'nothing' and 'Night'

⁵ cf. D'SOUZA GREGORY. , (ed.). The Spiritual Doctrine of St. John of the Cross. Carmal hitt, Mangalore. p. 27

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 28

on central way to the summit of mystical union. This central road taken by a mystic who loves NOTHING outside God; the narrow road of perfection of which Jesus speaks (Mt. 7:13). Its path is paved with desiring NOTHING that is not pure love of God, neither honors, nor tastes, nor security, nor joy, nor Science, nor glory, nor comfort, nor knowledge, but this road leads directly to the summit of the mount, even more than during its journey, the soul will be totally plunged into 'nothing'. Yet, it is precisely in this NOTHING that the soul is enriched with God: "Now that I no longer desire them. I have them all without desire. Because I wished to have nothing, all has been given to me without my asking for it. And this ALL is God." ⁸ St. John of the Cross having this concept of the dark night of the soul and spirit, presented the mystic way of 'nada'. The journey of soul through the active and passive nights passes the stages of negative and positive sides of nothingness. This Christian mystic way has its uniqueness' and common meeting points with Hindu mystic way, which we will see later.

i. His Concept of Adversities

John's outlook of seeing the good side of adversities is another source of his concept of 'Nada' as a literary criticism of exegesis. His nearness to God filled him with confidence and freed him in a remarkable way from all worry and anxiety. This complete trust in God gave him the habit of seeing the hand of God in all things. One feast day, the brother cooked a pot of rice and let it boil over and burn. Far from becoming angry, John quietly consoled the brother "Don't worry, my son, we can have whatever else you have got, our Lord does not mean us to have rice today". This was his way, in persecution too. He saw the hand of God there and exhorted others not to speak uncharitably or to grow

⁷. cf. Ibid. p. 29,30

disturbed about his persecutors but to think, "Only that God ordains all. The endurance of all with peaceful equanimity, he wrote, not only reaps many blessings but also helps a man in the midst of his adversity to make the proper judgment and apply the right remedy". This complete trust in God left him perfectly at Peace in his final illness.⁹ we can sense the fragrance of this Christian attitude on the mystic way of 'nada' with the active and passive night of the soul and spirit.

ii. His Final Goal of Life

John's conviction of the final goal of life and its means through the mystic way is notable. The life of union with God was the goal of John's life. St. John of the Cross is an enthusiast of our transformation in Trinity (S. C. 39:3). On account of the personal unity of the divine nature, the personal presence of the Holy Spirit brings also into us the two other persons, the Father and the Son, making this the whole Trinity present, according to the words of Jesus we will come to him and make our abode with him (John 14:23). John's goal of life and its means were good. His mystic way of 'nada' and the thirteen stages of the active and passive night of the soul and spirit are certain factors that influenced St. John of the Cross to formulate the mystical concept of the way of 'nada'. He had the wisdom from above as a gift of the Heavenly Father with His spirit of faith (Philip 1:29; James 3:17). He had the conviction that suffering for Christ is a privilege as believing.¹⁰

⁸. cf. Ibid. p. 23

⁹. cf. Kavanaugh, Kieran. Op. cit. p. 32, 33

¹⁰. cf. Philip 1:29

¹¹. cf. Ibid. p. 119

¹². cf. Ibid. p. 120

iii. John's Concept of Faith.

He sued other's unbelief for the achievement of the goal (Historical investigation of the background of his faith). John believed; "Faith, hope and charity are theological virtues which perfect the faculties of the soul and produce emptiness and darkness in them".¹¹

John discussed the method of leading the three faculties (intellect, memory, and will) into spiritual night, the means to divine union: faith in the intellect, hope in the memory, and charity in the will. Faith brings the intelligence to know God alone. Hope brings the memory to desire God alone. Charity brings the will to love God alone.¹²

By the theological virtue of faith, the night of the intelligence is established. Faith alone shows us God as He is in Himself. To know God and things divine, the soul must endeavor to set aside all that she has learnt about God by means of her intelligence and concentrate solely on what faith teaches about Him¹³. In this stage, the soul gets accustomed to interpret all created reality in the light of faith¹⁴

St. John of the Cross took initiative to lead the intelligence to darkness by the virtue of Faith. At the same time, he was wise to use the evil unbelief of worldly enemies also for deepening this darkness. In the light of faith even sufferings involved in life and death, hardship, temptations, sickness, and many kinds of trials are seen as willed by the Father and hence accepted with confidence. He believed that God sends these to those who want to rise to High perfection by trying them like gold in the fire¹⁵ He believed the word of God written in the Bible (Romans 5:3) and boasted in his troubles knowing that

¹³ cf. Ibid. p. 129

¹⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 462

¹⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 430

trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and His approval creates hope. Thus from faith he had grown to hope.

iv. His Concept of Hope

According to St. John of the Cross, in hope the emptiness of memory must be total. But there are things that we may not and should not forget, for they are part of the duties and obligations. John clearly points out his concept of hope and the dark night of the memory of soul as follows:

"She does not store up in the memory the object of hearing, sight, taste or touch, but forgets them as though they did not exist in this world.... This should be practiced in such a way that no former figure of any of these objects remain in the memory, as though one were not in the world, for in the things of God what is natural, instead of being a help, is an obstacle. "¹⁶

From these statements, it is evident that he obeyed the words in psalms 45. "Forget your people and relatives. "

In this night of all created things, Hope progresses in the certainty of reaching one day, the union with the beloved. Thus during prayer the saint proceeds: "The soul renders her memory silent and applies the hearing of the spirit to God in Silence, Saying with the prophet: Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.... The soul should remain closed, then without cares or afflictions". John could use the consequences of other's hopeless conditions, to be forgotten and to empty his memory to give enough room for Jesus.

¹⁶. cf. Ibid. p. 214-219

v. Concept of his Love

Hermeneutics of the message of Love. St. *John's* concept of Love compelled him to use others hatred for his mystic way of 'Nada'. Through the practice of the theological virtue of charity, John established his WILL in the NIGHT which renders him, capable of loving God one and Triune, who lives, within us and as well as within our brothers. In this dark night of will, he could love God with as much love with which God has loved us and loves us always. His Love of God was not for the sake of benefits and happiness. He believed that God is worthy of all the love of which we are capable. John's love of God was accepting and doing in all things HIS Holy Will.

In the exercise of love John paid attention not to stop at creatures, but love creatures only through God, and not to restrain the generosity, vivacity, enthusiasm that must accompany all acts of love for Him who has loved us without reserve and limits.¹⁸

St. John of the Cross used not only the exclusive love of God to lead the Will to night, but also the hatred of jealous coworkers. "The priestly life of Father John was a chain of trails and suffering. He was calumniated, imprisoned, jailed unjustly, and beaten up as a criminal."¹⁹

St. John used the intercession of St. Mary the blessed virgin, and the spiritual fellowship and cooperation of an elderly sister St. Teresa of Avila (About 27 years older than himself) to be influenced by them formulate the concept of 'Nada' on the mystic way²⁰

¹⁸. cf. D'Souza, Gregory. Op. cit. p. 42-48.

¹⁹. cf. Ibid. p. 8.

²⁰. cf. Ibid. p. 7

vi. His Concept of Embracing Cross

St. John's above mentioned love, hope, faith, sense of vocation, and his creative outlook were foundation stones of the basement of his Christian attitude of embracing Cross in his daily life till his last breath. In the beginning of this chapter, we have already discussed it as reason of his name 'St. John of the Cross'. He was purposefully accepting the way of cross as the answer of his prayers. He used his crucifix to convey the gospel of cross to all people. His Christian attitudes were molded and reconfirmed through mystical locutions and visions when he was praying before a crucifix, which was placed in the church. His mental background as a mystic and his concept of the dark night of the soul is evident from his words as follows:

"The most pure suffering leads to the most pure and deepest knowledge and highest joy. "²¹

His Christian life attitude of highest joy had been searched and researched by many scholars in Spain and in Rome. He could rejoice in the Lord always as written in the Bible (Philip 4:4). Richard P. Hardy published his book 'Search for Nothing' on St. John's concept of the dark night of the soul (1982). In his book, he tried to present St. John of the Cross as a human being who became a man of God, a saint. For him God was one who speaks in time, in life, in the world. ²²

²¹ cf. Richard P. , Hardy. Search for Nothing. Cross Road, New York, 1982. p. 1,2,3

²² cf. Ibid. p. 3

vii. Critical evaluation of the concept of the dark night of the soul

According to Richard P. Hardy, three biographers of St. John of the Cross up to 1967, try to be faithful witnesses of his time.²³ They could continue tradition of mere hagiography through which they created saint in their own image of what sanctity meant for them. They could portray only a dismal dark personality of St. John who seemed bent upon escaping this world and entering the next. They failed to see his human qualities:

According to Richard P. Hardy St. John possessed human qualities like:

sense of humor,
his love for his family,
his deep love of beauty,
concern for his neighbor, and
love of delightful things.

They did not really help us to understand his counsels to religious detachments.²⁴

Richard P. Hardy's research in 1982 on St. John of the Cross had succeeded in pointing out a new figure of St. John with new insights as he puts it:

"a man, a human being who had fallen in love with God in the world".²⁵ His careful research was out of the original sources of St. John's writings kept in the Vatican Secret Archives. His precious findings are useful for our critical evaluation of the concept of his dark night of the soul (p 2).

²³ cf. Ibid. p. 1-4

²⁴ cf. P. 2

²⁵ Ibid. p. 3

In prison he composed much of his poetry.²⁶ His period of greatest literary (prose) production was from 1578 - 1588, under the threats of the reaction against inner prayer. With the intensification of Inquisition in Spain around 1586 and the condemnation of 'illuministic' books, John of the Cross too, came under suspicion. Out of this mental background, he wrote his four books:

'The Ascent of Mt. Carmel', (1579 - 85 at Calvario),

'The Dark Night of the Soul', (1579 - 81)

'The Spiritual Canticle', (1578)

'The Living Flame of Love', plus counsels, letters and poems (1582).²⁷

The Ascent of Mount Carmel describes the path to perfection, via the renunciation of desires for both worlds by goods as well as the goods of heaven, e. g. Visions, prophecies, revelations, etc. He emphasizes the role of faith in leading the Christian to divine union. 'The Dark Night of the Soul 'goes further into the theme of purification'. In all his works, there is a constant emphasis upon detachment and mortification of desires as a pre-requirement for mystical progress. This absolute detachment is underlined by his insistence upon 'nada', i. e. Nothing, which indicates complete mortification of the will. The will should be attached to nothing, but God. This concept of the dark night of the soul in St. John was critically examined by DR. H. J. M. Hermans in 1977 and tried to make the teaching of St. John of the Cross more adapted to modern times.²⁸

Hermans pointed that:

²⁶ cf. Hermans H. J. M. Christian Mysticism. Amsterdam, 1997. P. 1-15

²⁷ cf. The collected works, Op. cit. p. 33

²⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 2,3

"Man's active ascetical practice is insufficient and needs to be supplemented by an intense period of passive purgation. St. John calls this as the dark night of the spirit, which is the passive counterpart of the active dark night of the senses. The dark night of the sense is the first dark night and the dark night of the spirit is the second dark night".²⁹

After this critical evaluation of the source of St. John's concept of the dark night of the soul, we have to go deeper into his spiritual background where we can see his concept of the dark night.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 2

2. 1. 3 Spiritual Background: St. John's Concept of the Dark Night of the Spirit.

- I What" is meant by dark night of the spirit?
- II Concept of Meditation and Contemplation
- III Infused Contemplation
- IV Concept of spiritual direction
- V Fellowship and Cooperation of St. Teresa
- VI The usage of the word 'Nada' in S. J. C
- VII Spirit of the Mystic way of 'Nada'

His mature spirit in the dark night of the soul was led to enthused contemplation, which helped him to kill the pride of life. (First sin in Heaven which deprived angels of the mystical union with God in Heaven.)¹⁶¹ His weakness and poverty in spirit is the spiritual medicine to overcome the pride of life. These ideas are contained in the word dark night of the spirit and 'nada'.

i. What is meant by dark night of the spirit?

The insufficiency of man's ascetical practice entails an intense period of passive purgation. This is the dark night of the spirit. It is the passive counterpart of the active dark night of the senses. E. Allison Peers has articulated his understanding about the concept of St. John's dark night of the sense and spirit in his book "Spanish Mysticism".

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"This dark night which is the name we give to contemplation - causes in spiritual persons two kinds of darkness or purgation,

¹⁶¹ cf. Ezekiel. p. 28. (Bible)

corresponding to the parts of man, namely, sense and spirit... The night of spirit is the lot of very few; these are the advanced and the proficient... It is the purgation or night of the spirit, wherein the soul is purged and laid bare according to the spirit, and this night subdues and prepares it for the union of love with God"¹⁶³ This second dark night is an inflow of God into the soul which purges it of its ignorance's and imperfections, habitual, natural and spiritual. Contemplative calls this infused contemplation or 'mystical theology'.¹⁶⁴

It is evident from the above mentioned fact that the source of St. John's mystical theology is his dark night of the spirit and the infused contemplation. It was his dark night of the Spirit and the consequent infused contemplation, which enabled him to conduct practical spiritual direction to religious and all types of people. Therefore, it is worthwhile to have a clear study about his concept of infused contemplation and spiritual direction.

ii. Concept of Meditation and Contemplation.

What is the difference between meditation, contemplation and infused contemplation? Prayer and meditation are perseverance of beginners on the mystic way. But they are led by their own love of self and their inclinations. Through prayer and devotional thoughts of meditation they are led to a higher stage of Love for God, to free them from the low exercise of the senses and reasoning. When they gain sweetness and love together with some measure of spiritual strength in God, they withdraw affections from worldly things.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 109

¹⁶³ PEERSE, ALLISION. , Spanish Mysticism, Methuen and Co. Ltd. , 36 Essex Street, W. C. London, 1924. p. 109

When the son of divine favor shines through meditation and prayer, as they think more brightly upon them, God shuts from them that light, closing the door, or the fountain, of the sweet spiritual water. Now God leaves them in such darkness. Here they cannot take step in meditation. In such dryness, they find no pleasure in spiritual things. They find only insipidity and bitterness in this stage. Therefore, they have to walk alone. The dark night of sense and contemplation starts from here. This they feel to be very new and strange, for everything is the contrary of what it was. It is the blessed night of sense. This is the peculiar different experience of the dark night of the sense, which is called contemplation in the writings of St. John of the Cross. ¹⁶⁵

iii. Infused Contemplation

What is infused contemplation?

In the dark night of the spirit, St. John of the Cross used to get the mood of infused contemplation. In this mood God secretly teaches soul and instruct her in the perfection of love, hearing Him and receiving His light, without understanding that this is infused contemplation and the source of mystical theology. It is the loving wisdom of God that by illumination purifies the spirits of the blessed, which here purifies and illumines the soul. ¹⁶⁶

Why should the soul call this 'dark night of the spirit' that divine light as we say illumines her?

To this, the reply is that for two reasons the divine wisdom is not only night and darkness to the soul but also pains and torment. The first is the height of divine wisdom, which

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 111

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 109 - 111

exceeds all the capacity of the soul, and to soul, it is darkness. The second is meanness and impurity of the soul, due to which the wisdom of God is painful and affective to her, besides being dark. ¹⁶⁷

So this divine light of contemplation strikes the soul, which is not yet perfectly enlightened, it plunges into spiritual darkness, because it is not transcendent, but also blinds it and deprives it of the operation of its natural intelligence. For this cause St. Dionysius and other mystical theologians call this 'infused contemplation' a 'ray of darkness' - that is, to the soul not yet enlightened and it (the supernatural light) conquers the natural power of the reason, and deprives it of its natural means of understanding". ¹⁶⁸

iv. Concept of Spiritual Direction.

St. John of the Cross in 'The Living Flame of Love' discusses at length a problem of spiritual significance today, for there are now many who are interested in contemplation and spiritual direction. Many spiritual masters, he says, do much harm to souls because of their ignorance regarding the nature and properties of contemplation. ¹⁶⁹ These masters do a great injury to God by intruding with a rough hand where he is working, for "it costs God a great deal to bring these souls to this stage". ¹⁷⁰

The worst damage a master can do is to insist on the practice of meditation that is good for beginners but not for those souls already introduced by God into the state of

¹⁶⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 111

¹⁶⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 111

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 112

¹⁶⁹ cf. Stanza. 3. n. 43

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. n. 54

contemplation. Meditation should be led to contemplation to reach the high state of divine union.¹⁷¹

God often anoints contemplative souls with some delicate unction of loving and peaceful knowledge, far withdrawn from the sense and imaginations. Therefore, the spiritual person cannot meditate nor reflect on anything earthly. But this is exactly what the ordinary spiritual master does not know as St. John laments in his book.¹⁷²

Antonio Moreno, O. P, in his article on 'Contemplation According to St. Teresa and John of the Cross' concluded as follows:

"These principles and descriptions explain why, as St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa explain, after a certain period of meditation, God brings the soul gradually into contemplation. Meditation and discursive reasoning have been left behind, and from now on God himself takes special care of these souls in ways only known by his divine wisdom. A spiritual guide should not hinder this divine action, but he should encourage the soul to receive faith, docility, and trust".¹⁷³

It is evident from the above mentioned facts that St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa were well known and recognized spiritual directors who had grown from meditation to contemplation and infused contemplation of the dark night of the spirit. At the deepest

¹⁷¹ Stanza 3. n. 44

¹⁷² cf. Ibid. n. 43

¹⁷³ MORENO ANTONIO, O. P. ,Contemplation according to Teresa and St. John of the Cross, an article in the book. Spiritual Direction, (ed.) by CULLIGAN. K. G. , Living Flame, Press N. V. 1993. p. 153 - 165

level of the dark night of the spirit human spirits and Holy Spirit meet together and share love and wisdom.

St. John and St. Teresa met at this deepest level of spiritual dark night of the spirit. All religions and denominations of this world can also meet together at this deepest level of the dark night of the spirit. As a model of this meeting at the mystical level of the dark night of the spirit, we have to observe the spiritual fellowship and ministry of St. John with St. Teresa. Both had the same mental and spiritual mystical background where they had congenial concept of the dark night of the spirit and the nothings implied in it which is known as 'nada' in Spanish. Therefore, it is worthwhile to continue our detailed study of the concept of 'nada' in St. John of the Cross in his writings and in his life.

v. Fellowship and Cooperation of St. Teresa

Partnership of St. John with St. Teresa was an influential factor. St. John's mystical writings and concept of 'Nada' seems to be influenced by the spirit of St. Teresa. Father John had long interviews with Mother Teresa to learn about the new form of life he had decided to take up. He accompanied Mother Teresa to the new foundation in Valladolid as confessor and chaplain to the new community.¹⁷⁴ St. Teresa and her newly formed convents were fertile fields to cultivate the seeds of mystical experience of St. John. His new work as spiritual director at the incarnation convent includes the guidance of Mother Teresa herself, and under his expert direction she reached the highest state of intimacy with God possible in this earth, the spiritual marriage.¹⁷⁵ Both St. John and St. Teresa had the same fullness of Holy Spirit who gave them deep sense of vocation with well-balanced celibate passion, which was creative. Gustafson in his book 'Celibate

¹⁷⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 19

passion' commended the secret of both John's and Teresa's spiritual intimacy. Despite prohibitions from the church, for centuries men and women have continued to experience intimate friendship outside marriage. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross were quiet ardent and seemed to be sensual, as evidenced by their writings. They lived together for six years at the convent in Avila, Teresa serving as prioress there and John as spiritual director and confessor. While they were together, Teresa wrote her intensely passionate, interior castle, and St. John began writing his amorous Spiritual Canticle.¹⁷⁶

St. John of the Cross spirit was not at all attached to St. Teresa's spiritual cooperation. As the proof of his perfect spirit of detachment, one day he threw letters of St. Teresa into fire. John's struggle to be poor in spirit is evident in all his acts of detachment. His concept of the dark night of the spirit is the climax of his mystic way of 'Nada' where his soul and spirit are completely naked and empty and poor to be enriched by the union and fullness of God's spirit. While he was in the passive Night of the spirit, horribly all sensitive consolations were renounced¹⁷⁷ (DN. 1,8,2). In this dark contemplation or the Loving wisdom of God, he discovered his own ugliness, impurity and unworthiness¹⁷⁸ (D. N. IL, 5, 5). This dark night of the spirit purified the soul of all self-esteem and emptied all egotistical satisfaction. Then God penetrated ever more intimately in his soul and spirit, transforming her in Himself. In this stage he was satisfied, tranquil and contented with the presence of God¹⁷⁹ (DN. II, 17, 5). Thus, we have surveyed the background, and all factors that influenced St. John of the Cross in his mystic way of

¹⁷⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 20

¹⁷⁶ cf. GUSTAFSON JANIE. , Celibate Passion, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1978 p. 101

¹⁷⁷ cf. The collected works. Op. cit. p. 312

¹⁷⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 326

'Nada'. Now it is apt to have a deeper study of the special context of John's usage of the word 'Nada'.

What is the context of St. John's usage of the word 'Nada'?

St. John of the Cross used the Spanish word 'Nada' in his original drawing of the sketch of the Mount Carmel which was meant to serve as a Summary of his teachings, the doctrine contained in St. John's writings: *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *the Dark Night*. That sketch was the best means of reminding all main ideas of those books. The poem was written while the Saint was confessor to the nuns in Beas - some time, then, between 1579 -81. It consists of eight stanzas each having verses.

"THE ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL"

This treatise explains how to reach divine union quickly. It presents instruction and doctrine valuable, for beginners and proficient alike that they may learn how to unburden themselves of all earthly things, avoid spiritual obstacle, and live in that complete nakedness and freedom of spirit, necessary for divine union.

THEME

The following stanzas include all the doctrine I intend to discuss in this book, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*. They describe the way that leads to the summit of the mount that high state of perfection we call here union of soul with God. Since these stanzas will serve as a basis for all that shall be said, I want to cite them herein full that the reader may see in them a summary of the doctrine to be expounded.

STANZAS

A Song of the (AD 1579 -81) soul's happiness in having passed through the dark night

¹⁷⁹ cf. *Ibid.* p. 368 - 370

of faith, in nakedness and purgation, to union with its Beloved.

1. One dark night,
Fired with love's urgent longings
-Ah, the sheer grace-
I went out unseen,
My house being now all stilled;
2. In darkness, and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
-Ah, the sheer grace-
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now all stilled;
3. On that glad night,
In secret, for no one saw me,
3. Nor did I look at anything.
With no other light or guide
Than the one that burned in my heart;
4. This guided me
More surely than the light of noon
To where He waited for me
-Him I knew so well-
in a place where no one else appeared.

5. O guiding night!

O night more lovely than the dawn!

O night that has united

The Lover with His beloved,

Transforming the beloved in her Lover.

6. Upon my flowering breast

Which I kept wholly for Him alone,

There He lay sleeping,

And I caressing Him

There in a breeze from the fanning cedars.

7. When the breeze blew from the turret

Parting His hair,

He wounded my neck

With His gentle hand,

Suspending all my senses.

8. I abandoned and forgot myself,

Laying my face on my Beloved;

All things ceased; I went out from myself,

Leaving my cares

Forgotten among the lilies.

PROLOGUE

1. A deeper enlightenment and wider experience than mine is necessary to explain the dark night through which a soul journeys toward that divine light of perfect union with God which is achieved, insofar as possible in this life, through love. The darkness and trials, spiritual and temporal, that fortunate souls ordinarily encounter on their way to the high state of perfection are so numerous and profound that human science cannot understand them adequately. ¹⁸⁰

vi. The usage of the word 'Nada' in S. J. C.

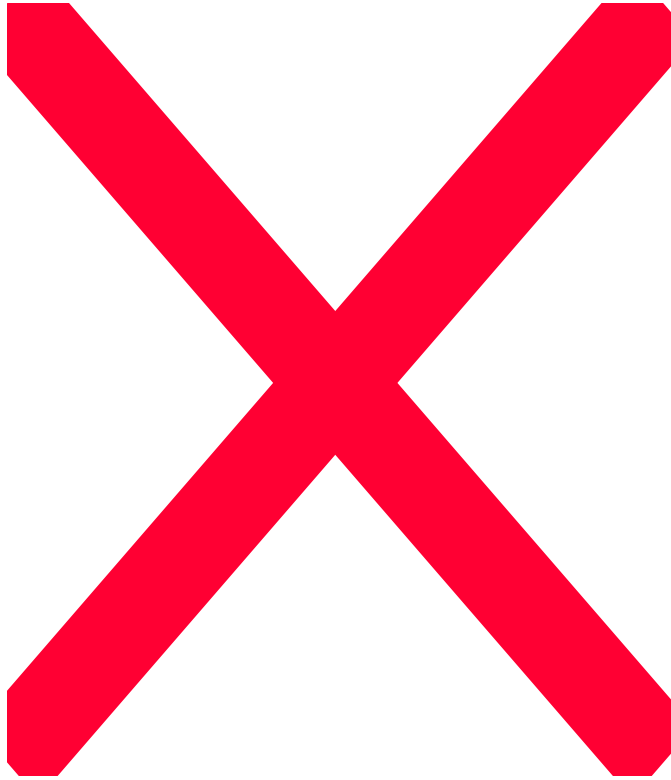
How many times he used this word 'Nada' ?

English translation of the terms used in St. John's original drawing, contain 16 times the word nothing (Nada). ¹⁸¹

English Translation of Terms Used in St. John's Original drawing.

¹⁸⁰ KAVANAUGH KIERAN, O-E-D. , (Trans), The Collected works of St. John of the Cross, AVP Publications Adyathma Vidya Pitha, Bangalore, 1981. P. 66 - 69

¹⁸¹ cf. Ibid. p. 66, 67



KAVANAUGH KIERAN, O-E-D. , (Trans), The Collected works of St. John of the Cross, AVP
Publications Adyathma Vidya Pitha, Bangalore, 1981. P. 66 - 69

cf. Ibid. p. 67

From the base of the mount there divide off three roads. One on the right is the road taken by one who loves the goods of this earth: he does not reach the summit, but is lost outside the mountain. The summit of this mount symbolizes the dwelling place of God. That is the goal to which the soul aspires and which she should never lose sight of, especially when the ascent demands harder sacrifices.

The second road on the left is taken by one who love goods of heaven and who, nevertheless, does not reach the summit, for he stops on the way because of some insurmountable rocks. The inscriptions warn us that any one who seeks and takes pleasure in the joys of the flesh will not attain to the summit of the higher love of God, i. e. Union with God. There are two inscriptions on the first road

(1)The more I sought them, the less I got them.

(2) You cannot reach the mount by this road. ¹⁸²

(3) The central road taken by one, who loves NOTHING outside of God, is the narrow road of perfection of which Jesus speaks (Mat. 7:15).

The three aspects of the meaning of the word 'Nada'.

St. John of the Cross uses the word 'Nada' to denote three aspects of nothingness on the mystic way of 'nada'

¹⁸² cf. I' SOUZA, GREGORY. , Op. Cit. P. 22, 23, 24

The first meaning of 'nada' used in the right side of the mount denotes the vanity of earthly goods that are obstacles, which deviate from the real path of mystical union. The sufferings in the absence of all earthly goods and consolations are nothing to a mystic who is on the narrow central path.

The second meaning of the word 'Nada' denotes insufficiency of heavenly goods on the way of the imperfect spirit. Glory of the heavenly goods matters Nothing to a mystic who is moving on the central path which is paved with the NOTHING.

At the foot of mount the Saint has placed some verses to stimulate the Soul to take up the road of NOTHING with courage:

"To reach satisfaction in all desire its possession in nothing, to come to possess all desire the possession of nothing. To arrive at being all, desire to be nothing (As. 1, 13. p. 11).

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In the way that is on the way to the summit of union with God, it happens that the higher she ascends, the more she is transformed in Him. Helped by the practice of the theological virtues, the more increased in herself the emptying of all, attachment to creatures, the more God fills this emptiness to the point that having arrived at the total nothing of self, the soul finds herself wholly filled with God and transformed in Him.

The journey towards union, then progresses through a progressive annihilation of ONESELF, to which there corresponds, on the part of God, a progressive taking possession of the soul, so that when he is brought to nothing, the highest degree of humility, the spiritual union between his soul and God will be effected (2 ASC. 7, p.

¹⁸³ cf. Ibid. p. 22 - 25

11). In this nakedness, the spirit finds its rest for when it covets nothing, nothing raises it up, and nothing weights it down, because it is in the center of its humility. ¹⁸⁴

In the path of Mount Carmel, the perfect spirit passes through 7 stages of nothingness.

They are represented by repeated word of 'Nada'. These stages of nothingness illustrated by the word 'night'. ¹⁸⁵

vii. Spirit of the Mystic Way of 'Nada'

Concerning the source of his teaching, St. John of the Cross indicates three subjects from which he drew his doctrine, the science; experience; and sacred scripture. The principal founding of his teaching is sacred scripture because he believed that the "Holy Spirit speaks to us through it". ¹⁸⁶

St. John of the Cross composed the poem. The Dark Night, after personally journeying the way of the active and passive purification of the nights and had attained state of perfection, the union with the divine Bridegroom. ¹⁸⁷

The path to union with God, this dark night, is

"the narrow way which leads to life". On it a man "denies himself", "takes up his cross", and "loses his soul; this path is the "hating of one's own life". "The Chalice of Christ, His "Yoke" and "burden"; It is Christ, the door", by which one enters; it is the

¹⁸⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 25

¹⁸⁵ cf. The collected work. Op. Cit. P. 27

¹⁸⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 45

¹⁸⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 45

imitation of the death of Christ, it is renouncing of all one's possessions" the stripping of self of the old man. "¹⁸⁸

This path culminates in life,

"the saving of one's soul"; "the sweetness of Christ", "the Kingdom of God", "poverty and purity of spirit", "the new man", the "resurrection in Christ", "evangelical perfection", being the "Sons of God". ¹⁸⁹

William Johnston, in his book. **The Inner Eye of Love** points out the dynamic power of mystical nothingness.

"Mysticism is the very center of religion and Theology. I discover that mysticism is the exquisitely beautiful Queen before whom the other branches of Theology bow down with awe and reverence like lowly hand maids. I also saw clearly that this queen is the lady Wisdom for whom all religions search in whose presence all religions meet". ¹⁹⁰

This mystical wisdom from above is hidden at the top of the mount of nothingness where all mystics of all religions can meet and worship the Absolute Creator (James 3:17).

William Johnston concludes his conviction of the creative power of mystical nothingness as follows:

¹⁸⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 59

¹⁸⁹ cf. Ibid. p. 59

¹⁹⁰ JOHNSTON, WILLIAM. , The Inner Eye of Love, Mysticism and Religion Harper and ROW, Inc. , USA, 1978

"I came to the conclusion that mystical nothingness (and in particular the apparently negative non-action) is dynamic. It is the power that moves the universe and creates revolutions in human minds and hearts. For mystical nothingness properly understood, paves the way for dynamic action of grace. When I am weak, then I am strong! Cried Paul. And he never said a truer word".¹⁹¹

It is from the mystical nothingness of solitude and silence that great prophets speak louder than works and shake universe.¹⁹² Thus, a theology of negation has developed from the revelations and mystical experiences of mystics.¹⁹³

While we are concluding the survey of searching the factors that influenced St. John of the Cross in his mystic way of 'Nada', after seeing the physical mental and spiritual influential backgrounds, the general message of St. John of the Cross can be summed up through the words of famous Geoffrey Parrinder, (His book *Mysticism in the World Religions*) as follows:

"John of the Cross as a young contemporary of Teresa, in Spain of the sixteenth century, is noted for his **doctrines of the ascent**' and the '**dark night**' of the soul. The soul is purified by the 'night' of the senses and becoming detached from the outward forms, it subsists in pure faith. Then there is a 'night of the spirit' a second purification usually with intense suffering. Finally, there is union, in the living flame of love'. John of the Cross is generally regarded

¹⁹¹ cf. Ibid. p. 10

¹⁹² cf. Ibid. p. 11 - 18

as an austere saint, teaching utter abandonment of forms and, helps in 'nothingness; nothingness, 'nothingness'. Yet his writings are classics of Spanish literature, and his poems in particular breathe both beauty and devotion. Here the unity of the soul with God is seen to follow the example of the divine unity in the Trinity, an important example for mystics of both East and West in Christianity.¹⁹⁴

Here we can see a meeting point of the Western Christian Mysticism and Eastern Hindu Mysticism. We will consider this point again in the chapter of comparative study.

The mystic way of 'NADA' in St. John of the Cross is to be critically evaluated in the light of the Christian Concepts of Renunciation and Emptiness. For that critical evaluation of the concept of renunciation in Christian mysticism, three aspects of renunciation is to be studied in depth which illumines the theological meaning of the word renunciation, the background of the need of renunciation and the mystical point of departure on the way of 'Nada'.

¹⁹³ cf. Ibid. p. 18

¹⁹⁴ PARRINDER GEOFFREY. , Mysticism in the World Religions Oxford University Press, New York, 1916. P. 153

2.2 Renunciation - The Point of Departure on the Way of 'Nada'

2.2.1 His Idea About Renunciation and 'Nada'.

2.2.2 What is the Relevance of Mystic Way and Renunciation today?

2.2.3 The Point of Departure on the Mystic way of 'Nada'

(a) His Idea About Renunciation and 'Nada'

I His concept of renunciation

II His conviction of non-possession

III Theological meaning of renunciation

IV Attachment as obstacle of renunciation

V Physical attachment as bondage

VI Mental obstacle of renunciation

VII Spiritual obstacle by hidden evil spirits

It is to explain the intention of St. John of the Cross' using the word 'Nada' in the light of the exegetical analysis done above. Here we go beyond 'Nada' and find out the hidden meaning and intention of his usage of that word by reading his heart and spirit.

Explanation of the result of the above exegesis is to help the readers to see adverse things in life in a new light by asking the questions.

(1) What is the writer St. John of the Cross getting at?

(2) Why did he put it like that?

(3) What lies behind that negative word 'Nada'?

Then readers are expected to grasp something that our predecessors and contemporaries have taken for granted, without stopping to ask

(4) Why it should be so?

The purpose of this exposition is to prompt readers to ask such questions to themselves, and get new mystical insights and mystical experience which may be translated into creative and peaceful actions in the society.

2.2.1 His idea about renunciation and 'Nada'

John of the Cross reached the narrow path of 'nada' after renouncing everything except God. So it is inevitable to conduct a deeper study on his idea about renunciation.

i. His Concept of Renunciation

St. John's mind and spirit are fully based on the revealed word of God that is Jesus Christ. He firmly believed all doctrines of the Catholic Church. So his goal of life was union with God. For the achievement of the goal, he chose the narrow mystic way of renunciation, fully realizing the hindrances of the private and positive evils of inordinate affections. He believed that God is clarity, greatness, perfection in every order; He is pure, boundless, and perfect in all these attributes. He wished to be united to God's resemblance and likeness, as we have already seen union needs resemblance. Therefore, St. John of the Cross was conscious about the hindrance for divine union and the inevitability of renunciation on the mystic way, as steps of the mysterious ladder between the earth and heaven. (Ascent 1-6-5). He has discovered five evils that are concomitant to this general effect, which are given by St. John of the Cross in the following words: "the soul wherein the appetites dwell is wearied, tormented, darkened, defiled, and weakened"¹⁹⁵ (Ascent 1-6-34). They are the sad results, if the appetites are allowed to have free hold on any soul. St. John's life and pilgrimage were a constant struggle to

overcome these appetites. He wrote the poem of the dark night and the Ascent of Mount Carmel after reaching the summit of the mount. (p. 35). So his message of renunciation on the mystic way of "Nada" is practical and influentially effective to all people in all ages. After thoroughly examining the nature and the consequences of the appetites, St. John of the Cross came to the conclusion that the remedy for the five evil obstacles, is their total destruction.¹⁹⁶

ii. His conviction of non-possession

St. John of the Cross had practiced perfect renunciation even in his celibate passion and intimacy with St. Teresa of Avila. As a celibate lover, he not only sacrificed everything for the other but also became the embodiment of that sacrifice. He believed that to be an ideal celibate love maker, he must always have the other untouched and virginal, because there are sacred areas in the other which are reserved for God alone. There he had never entered. He had the full conviction that Non-possession is essential to a celibate mystic on the way of renunciation.¹⁹⁷ Detachment for him was never an ascetical practice, only for the sake of self deprivation; it was the generous gift to God of what is most intimate and precious to him. He had a bundle of precious letters from St. Teresa; one day he felt that he should sacrifice them and submit before God as gift, through the medium of fire, he gifted those precious letters to God and succeeded in his proceeding on the mystic way of renunciation.¹⁹⁸ He believed that detachment was not an end in itself. He did as Janie Gustafson puts it in his book, "ultimately we must be detached from the detachment

¹⁹⁵ Cf. CHRYSOGONUS., Op. Cit. P. 40

¹⁹⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 43

¹⁹⁷ GUSTAFSON, JANIE., Op. cit. p. 84, 85

¹⁹⁸ cf. CLISSOLD, STEPHEN., Op. Cit. p. 34

itself".¹⁹⁹ He wrote it is the context of Jesus Christ's instruction, not to become enamored of our ascetically accomplishments (Mat. 6:16; 3,6).

Detachment from all creatures and the total destruction of these evils of inordinate appetite, are the remedies for modern problems. This process of renunciation engenders the need to mystic way of 'Nada' to all citizens today. So we have to expose the deeper meaning of 'nada' and renunciation.

iii. Theological meaning of the word Renunciation

Renunciation is the voluntary action of renouncing or self-denial by which a person declares formally that one will no longer have anything to do with the renounced thing. That one no longer recognizes somebody or something having a claim to one's care, affection etc.²⁰⁰ In this general, sense one who begins to lead the life of a hermit renounces the world, giving up meeting people socially with positive spiritual goal of meeting the Absolute creator. In the new International Dictionary of New Testament Theology H. G. Link uses the word 'deny' as a synonym of 'renounce' in the context of the New Testament terminology (Mat. 16:2; Mk: 8:34, LK. 9:23) of following Christ. It implies "to deny oneself and take up one's cross. If we interpret this in the light of Peter's denial (Mat. 26:70, 72, 74) this means to say no to one's self and to surrender oneself totally. "To deny oneself" is not therefore a legalistic demand, but the way forward into life in Christ.²⁰¹ From these definitions, it is evident that Christian concept

¹⁹⁹ GUSTAFSON, JANIE. , Op. Cit. P. 85

²⁰⁰ cf. HORNBY. A. S. , Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983. p. 714, 715

²⁰¹ BROWN COLIN. , (ed.). The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Petermoster Press Ltd. , Exter, Devon, U. K. , 1980. p. 455, 446

of renunciation is Christ oriented pilgrimage of an inner life denying self-centered motives and earthly possessions.

Jesus Christ's teaching on Renunciation

Jesus Christ required renunciation for discipleship (Luke 14:33). He specifically pointed out the list of things to be renounced such as home, worldly friendships and business (Mark. 10:28; Luke. 5:27). He promised a reward for all Christian renunciations (Luke. 18:29, 30). Mystical renunciation is rewarded with the mystical union with Absolute creator.

iv. Attachments as Obstacles of Renunciation

Although religious renunciation is very much rewarding, only a small percentage of the society seems to be interested in this way of renunciation. Even if all people want to get benefits of renunciation only few elected people are persistent to overcome the obstacles on the mystic way of renunciation.

Personal intimacy has degenerated into the bondage of attachments in the ordinary human society. Janie Gustafson points out the obstacle of attachment in the way of creative renunciation and sacrificial life. He says in the context of explaining the well-balanced celibate passion through his book. Intimacy is not the summation of our attachments. But expression and result of our detachments. . . We cannot embrace God . . . unless we first let go our attachments . . . The freedom and lightness of having nothing allows us to be in love with all things and all persons.²⁰²

There are three types of attachments which are practical obstacles on the mystic way of nothing and renunciation. They are physical, mental and spiritual attachments in life.

²⁰² GUSTAFSON JANIE. , Op. Cit. P. 83 ,84

v. Physical attachments as bondage

Attachment to all visible creatures has a pleasure of possession, but it is bondage. St. John taught that creatures bring harm to a man only in so far as man's love of them, is disordered.²⁰³ Attachment to creatures is the disordered love of man. Man is ordered by the wholehearted love of God.

St. John of the Cross graphically put it:

"Creatures are crumbs dropped down from the table of God", He insisted upon the need of a purgation wrought by mortification and deprivation that a man may be freed from what is inordinate in his love. Then man is able to love God and his creatures with well ordered charity. A man through detachment from creatures acquires a clearer knowledge of them, a better understanding of both natural and supernatural truth concerning them. He taught that the joy, a detached man receives from creatures, is far different from the joy of the man who is attached to them".²⁰⁴

That new and free joy is the fruit of Holy Spirit who produces it on the mystic way of 'Nada" (Gala 5:22).

vi. Mental Obstacles of Renunciation

Ignorance, prejudice and misunderstanding about the life and its real goal are mental bondage's. Jesus Christ taught that 'the truth shall set us free' (John 8:32). It is natural that human soul clings to beautiful creatures, which have beautiful traces of creator; all

²⁰³ cf. KAVANAUGH KIERAN. , Op. Cit. P. 29

²⁰⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 30

the same, they are only His footprints. The soul that clings to them will not cling to God, but to His shadow; and while she is clung to the shadow, cannot be clung to the reality.

²⁰⁵ An immature attached soul may find a reason to cling to good and beautiful creatures by the partial application of the creation story in the Genesis of Bible, "God saw everything that he made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). Renunciation of good, beautiful thing is inevitable for the upward journey which is a mysterious ladder that stands between heaven and earth, and the soul has to climb by it in order to ascend to higher degree. ²⁰⁶

The ignorant mental state of soul, who does not know that creatures of sensible order are for man a necessary means to ascent to God, is an obstacle in the mystic way of 'Nada' and renunciation. This is the narrow and steep path of nothingness indicated by St. John of the Cross. One that lingers in creature stops in his heavenward journeys and will never reach the attainment of the end, his creator. But how do we cling to creatures? By an inordinate desire or appetite, for them, is the answer. This appetite is an inordinate affection of the will. According to St. John an inordinate affection being nothing else than to love something with an improper motive. And as every one knows, is the negation of God. An inordinate appetite, therefore, is nothing else than to love creatures in themselves without relating to God. ²⁰⁷ Evil motive behind inordinate affection is hiding place of evil spirit who will steal all spiritual energy of deceptive slave of the inordinate lover. That is why God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac (Gen.

²⁰⁵ cf. CHRYSOGONUS, Op. Cit. P. 36

²⁰⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 37

²⁰⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 38

:2). Here we can see the spiritual obstacle of renunciation is the dominion of evil spirits in human hearts with inordinate affection.

vii. Spiritual Obstacles by hidden evil spirits

There are two evil effects of inordinate affection and greedy appetites. They are privative and positive harmful effects engendered in the soul by the appetites. Privative inordinate appetites consist in depriving the soul of God or separating her from Him and other positive appetites which consist in communicating to the soul, the properties of the creature, in that order in which they are loved, because love establishes an equality between the lover and the beloved. These are the two necessary and inevitable evil effects of the appetites. Evil spirits of inordinate affection hinders the union of the soul with God. There exists in such a soul, a radical and contradictory opposition, because the soul adheres to non-God.²⁰⁸ Such is the substance of the concept of renunciation in the writings of St. John of the Cross (Ascent 1. 4-6).

The evil produced in the soul by the positive effect of the appetites is that they leave- in souls the resemblance of the things loved. Such resemblance is a consequence of the love, the transforming virtue of which has been recognized by St. Augustine and even by Pagan Philosophers.²⁰⁹ If we love things superior to us, we enable ourselves, for the spirit will share in the greatness of the things loved, but if things or creatures were inferior, the love will lower us to their level.²¹⁰ In the light of these facts about Christian concept of renunciation exposed through the Bible and modern theologians, and the physical, mental and spiritual obstacles of ordinary people we can evaluate the clarity and

²⁰⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 38

²⁰⁹ cf. Ibid. p. 39

effect of the one detached life of the one saint who loved God and became the Doctor of the Church.

²¹⁰ cf. *Ibid.* p. 39

2.2.2 What is the relevance of mystic way and renunciation today?

- I The present problem of evil
- II Five concomitant evils
- III Present weariness of soul
- IV Torment in soul
- V Darkness of soul
- VI Defilement of soul
- VII Weakened soul

St. John of the Cross points out the mystic way of 'Nada' from the top of the Mount of perfection, after the slow and laborious, path which is narrow and steep. He attempted to transcend slowly but surely, all created visible and invisible things until he reached God, his goal. But how can the tired and wearied ordinary lay man's soul accomplish her uphill journey? Is it possible to all who want it. Is it relevant today? Can this mystic way of 'nada' solve any complicated social, communal and spiritual problems of modern scientific age? By answering these questions we are getting ready to begin the journey as the Saint did, from the very bottom of the mount that is from the sensible order, which we must get rid of first.

The research work which we have done so far only serves to get ready for this journey. The study of mysticism, relevance of mysticism today, and the new definition of the mysticism in the modern scientific language, are meant to stimulate the modern man's hope in the mystic way of 'nada'

The definition of the mystic way of 'nada' and survey of the factors that influenced St. John of the Cross to formulate the concept of 'nada' and the critical evaluation of the

concept of the human renunciation in the light of Christian teachings and John's practice, are meant for the enrichment of the Pilgrim's Theological virtues such as FAITH, HOPE & CHARITY.

After fixing the final goal of union with God, and equipping a soul with the dynamic power of faith, hope and charity, eliminating all evil of inordinate affections through renunciation, we are at the bottom of the mount of perfection where God dwells. But the whole path ahead is dark and narrow, we need a torch that illumines the narrow steep path, the willing soul has to follow upwards until he reaches the summit.²¹¹ The leading principles written in the books of St. John of the Cross (The Ascent of Mount Carmel and the Dark Night) serve as the torch - St. John's soul filled with the Holy Spirit, is ready to guide all willing souls in this age on the mystic way today. E. Allison Peers has pointed out the relevance of the teaching of St. John of the Cross today, revealing the uniqueness of St. John's poems and mystical experiences which he had in 16th century. Only with the new century did man begin once more to appreciate his greatness. His mystical insight has set on a candlestick and its steady flame is penetrating to every corner of this age.²¹² According to well known proverb. "If there is a will, there is a way". if modern society wants to climb this mountain of mystical experience of union, through that good will. Holy Spirit will take initiative to help those who will to have this essential union with the Absolute Creator. This is the background of mystic way of 'nada' which positively replies the question. It is the relevance of renunciation to day on this mystic way.

²¹¹ cf. CHRISOGONUS - Op. cit. p. 35.

²¹² cf. PEERS. R. A. , OD. cit. D. 94 - 162

i. The present problem of the evils of inordinate appetites, privative and positive aspects.

Day today events in the world indicate restlessness and unsolved problems, threatening the very existence of this whole world. According to St. John of the Cross, this harmful situation of the world originated in human souls engendered by inordinate appetites which have deprived the human souls of God. Thus, there is a wide gulf of separation from the creator and creatures in this world. This is the root cause of all problems in the world.²¹³ While Adam and Eve were in, the Garden of Eden, without any inordinate appetite, they were in harmony with God.

But directive succeeded in creating appetite in her soul for the forbidden fruit (Gen. 1:26-31). When the fruit was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband and he did eat". (Gen. 3:4-6). That inordinate appetite was the root cause of the death of soul and all other consequent problems and deprivation of God from them.

Jesus Christ is the incarnated visible image of the invisible God and lived as the perfect man and God, to solve this problem from the very day of his birth, till his death he was renouncing all physical, mental and spiritual inordinate appetites and his soul got victory over the evil, spirit of attachment to creatures (Philippians 2:5-11). He renounced food and water for 40 days in the wilderness to destroy the inordinate evil appetite of the whole human being (Mat. 4:1-2). Only through renunciation of appetites, St. John of the Cross regained union with the Heavenly Father. They are now on the summit of the Mount of perfect mystical union. So there is no other way than this way of renunciation

²¹³ cf. CHRYSOGONUS. Op. Cit. P. 38

for the solution of all problems in this world. This fact recently proved that renunciation, as narrow mystic way is inevitable for the solution of all problems in this world. This is the relevance of the mystic way of 'nada' and renunciation today.

The second positive harmful effect of appetites engendered in the soul consists in communicating to the soul the properties of the creatures in the order in which they are loved.²¹⁴ This positive effect of the appetites leaves in our souls the resemblance of the things loved. Modern human society loves creatures rather than the creator. This love is the inordinate appetite of the soul who concomitantly receives only the evil resemblance of creatures and as rejected by creator, because all creatures without the creator are nothing else, but darkness and misery. So this positive effect of the inordinate affection of the souls of modern society is the cause of all misery today.²¹⁵ Mystical renunciation and total destruction of this appetite is the only remedy. This again points out the relevance of renunciation today.

ii. Five concomitant evils of appetites are creating hindrances in the society as political and communal conflict.

Increasing wars in this age, are threats to the peaceful well being of the whole world today. The seeds of present visible conflicts were sown in human souls from the prehistoric age of Adam and Eve together with fierce evils that are concomitant to inordinate appetite of love. Those five evil effects are:

- (1) weariness,
- (2) torment,
- (3) darkness,

²¹⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 38

(4) defilement (impurity),

(5) weakness (Ascent: 1. 6. p. 3, 4,)²¹⁶

St. John of the Cross as the Doctor of the Church prescribes the medicine for these epidemics of human soul. That is renunciation of all desires and being attached to God alone.

iii. Present weariness of the souls may create burglary and drug addiction

Weariness of soul and its consequences in the society points out the need of renunciation and the mystic way of 'Nada'. As we see above weariness is one of the five evil effects engendered by the inordinate appetite. As long as the appetites exist, they will force the soul to creep on earth, devoting her to mean occupations instead of growing as the branches of the vine. (Jn. 15:4). There remains to her the boredom to carry the chains of slavery to the recesses of darkness where her whims and fancies take her. In this condition, this person may be led to burglary and terrorism.²¹⁷ Thus, there is no end to the cravings for crumbs of creatures. This appetite has been defined as an excitation without rest, a continuous movement, which makes the soul run to and fro restlessly from one object to another. The cause of the restlessness of the modern society seems to be due to this evil effect of the inordinate appetites. So this condition also points out the relevance of the mystic way of renunciation.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 40

²¹⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 40

²¹⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 41

²¹⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 41

iv. Torment in the soul and its consequences

Torment of slavery seems to be another evil causing mental and political tension today.

It has also 'privative' (negation) and positive effects in the soul, concomitant to inordinate affections.²¹⁹ The spirit or the soul strives to bestir her wings, and to climb herself up to congenial and superior region, but all her efforts will be in Vain. This condition creates frustration and depression in the life. Here also renounced and mystic way is the remedy reconfirming the relevance of mystic way of renunciation today.²²⁰

v. Darkness of the soul creates aimless, useless citizens in the country.

Blindness of soul is the third evil effect. The most sorrowful state is that this evil hides the meanness of soul's darkness. The appetite bedims (make dim) the judgment to the extent of not perceiving things. But through the eyes of passions, which present all in the form of flesh and blood, they dazzle her, cause her to fall down and are defiled by, the mud of the earth. The darkened state of soul has many far-reaching consequences in the society, which entail the way of renunciation in mysticism.²²¹

vi. Defilement of soul creates foolish men without scrupulous mind in the society

Defilement of Soul is the fourth effect of the evil appetites. The Pearl in the soul is defiled by contact with mud; receiving in her the low and mean resemblance of inferior beings which defiles the soul. This defilement may go so far to blot out the very image of God from the soul. From the defiled, condition many other sinful states, words and deeds are emerged according the Bible verse (MK. 7:22). From the state of proud, heart such a defiled soul is degenerating to the level of murder. This seems to be the cause of

²¹⁹ 'Privative' effect of slavery in soul deprives her of God or separate her from Him cf. Ibid. p. 38

²²⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 41

increasing crimes in the modern world. For this problem, also St. John of the Cross prescribes the medicine of mystic way of renunciation. Thus, again this situation of the present world points out the relevance of renunciation on the mystic way.²²²

vii. Weakened Soul

Weakened soul produces lazy and useless bodies in the society. All these spiritual diseases of the soul widespread in all countries today, St. John as the mystical doctor prescribed a good medicine for these diseases; that is total destruction of these appetites. That process is cold renunciation at the starting point of mystic way.

Finally, the appetites weaken the soul, because they sap the energies of soul, as the parasite does on a tree.²²³ We have observed the evil effects of sinful appetites and their working in spirit, soul and body of man. Starting from the spiritual weariness, ending at physical weakness, through mental torments, blindness, and defilement, evil effects of appetites are now creating all problems in the world today which are consequences of them, in the family, community. All these situations increase the demand for mystical union with God and the mystic way of nothingness.²²⁴

According to Jane Gustafson, we must go beyond the ashes of despair in search of our true selves. Like Socrates, we must accept death as part of our being like the peculiar bird Phoenix. We must rise to immortality by passing through the fires of nonexistence. John of the Cross sums up the experience of nothingness in a single sentence.

²²¹ cf. Ibid. p. 42

²²² cf. Ibid. p. 42

²²³ cf. Ibid. p 42

²²⁴ cf. GUSTAFSON, JANE. , Op. Cit. p. 25

"The soul must be in all its parts reduced to a state of emptiness/poverty, and abandonment, and must be, left dry, empty, and in darkness".²²⁵ It is evident from this statement that on the mystic way of 'nada', after renunciation of the point of departure, a mystic is proceeding forward in the increasing degree at emptiness which necessitates the deeper study of the point of departure and emptiness here.

The real nothingness is impossible to define as Gustafson continues his scholarly comment, for it cannot be even be the place where nothing is. Nothingness cannot be identified with anything, for then it ceases to be nothing. The attempt of John of the Cross is to lead us through and beyond our existential dread, right up to the mountaintop of nothingness. 'Nada', 'Nada', 'Nada', on that mountain, nothing.²²⁶ This is the mystic way of 'Nada' and here is the mystic, who is getting ready for the departure through the narrow path. Now we have to define what is meant by point of departure.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 26

²²⁶ Ibid. p. 26

2.2.3 The point of departure on the mystic way of 'Nada'

- I What is meant by point of departure?
- II What are the things to be departed?
- III Self Renewal in the sensory life
- IV Self Renewal in intellect
- V Self Renewal in the memory through hope
- VI Self Renewal in the will through love
- VII Self Renewal of spirit

i. What is meant by point of departure

The word "departure is used by St. John of the Cross, in his commentary of poem "called The Ascent of Mount Carmel". I went out unseen,

My house being now all stilled", in the contest of a mystic soul's singing of her background of exodus as "One dark night, Fired with love's urgent longings - Ah, the sheer grace.²²⁷

The clause "I went out unseen" contains the idea of a departure, which is pregnant with deep ineffable mystical experience of a soul who is lucky with the grace of God in departing from its inordinate appetites and imperfections (Ascent I. I. I) To understand this departure one should know that a soul must ordinarily pass through two principal kinds of night. . Mystics call this purgation or purification of soul in order to reach the state of perfection. Margaret Smith has pointed out what is meant by point of departure.

²²⁷ Op. cit. The Collected Works,p. 73

"The point of departure is the privation of all desire and complete detachment from the world: the road is by faith, and faith means night to the intellect, to which the divine goal is incomprehensible. There can be no love of God until there is detachment from all desire save that of following Him". Consequently the will of God and will of the soul, are conformed together, becomes transformed in God by Love.²²⁸

ii. What are the things to be departed?

So this departure is for a passage through the process of purification to reach the summit of the mount of perfection. The soul's departure is from the attitude of inordinate attachment to creatures. St. John of the Cross explains the reason of departure from creatures. "Creatures are crumbs dropped down from the table of God".²²⁹ Chrysogonus has commented on this departure beautifully as follows:

"All created things together are as nothing in comparison with God... Creatures may be said to be very beautiful tracks of God; all the same, they are only His footprints... Hence it is evident that no soul clinging to creatures, can be united to God".²³⁰

While man's soul is naturally attached to creatures, a supernatural power is inevitable, to be plucked from the grip of creatures. That power is the gift of God through his grace, which enkindle the fire of love for him alone.²³¹ Here we noted, what are things to be

²²⁸ MARGARAT. SMITH. , An Introduction of Mysticism, Sheldo Press, London, 1977. p. 103

²²⁹ Ascent. 1:6. 2-3

²³⁰ CHRYSOGONUS, Op. cit. p. 36, 37

²³¹ cf. Op. cit. The Collected Works p. 74

departed from at the point of departure on the mystic way. The point of departure is the starting point of the intensive grace of God to see the nothingness of creatures and need of a nothingness on the way to perfection. This gift of grace is hidden in an ordinary Christian, but hearing the loving words of Jesus as St. John puts it enkindles it: This movement towards abundance is a departure from the pleasures and creatures because the creature torments, while the spirit of God refreshes. According to St. Matthew, God calls us "all you going about tormented, afflicted, and weighted down by your cares and appetites, depart from them, come to me and I will refresh you; and you will find the rest for your souls that the desires take away from you" (Matthew 11:28-29).

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According to William Johnston this point of departure of mystical life begins with an invitation which is repeated many times. 'Friend go up higher' (Luke. 14:10).²³³ This journey is going forth into the desert and into the void, It is filled with conflicts from the very start. This traveling is performed in the realm of soul consciousness, passing through successive stages of the psyche and moving towards the ground of being where dwells the great mystery which we call the spirit of God.

The person who embarks on this journey is asking for troubles; for he may come into conflict not only with executive but also with ecclesiastical authority in his own backyard. This can be a painful affair.²³⁴ After the point of departure, the consciousness of the soul of a mystic passes through different stages. Evelyn Underhill has conducted a scientific investigation about these different stages of the mystic way. As she puts it the

²³² Op. Cit. The Collected Work. P. 88. 89

²³³ cf. JOHNSTON WILLIAM. , The Inner Eye of Love, Mysticism and Religion, William Collins Sons and Co. , Glasgo Great Britain, 1978. p. 96, 97

typical mystic seems to move towards his goal through a series of strongly marked oscillations between "states of pleasures" and "states of pain".²³⁵

iii. Self renewal in the sensory life

St. John's Personal experiences:

St. John of the Cross through his writings, pointed out seven stages of experiences on the mystic way. We have already studied the first stage of self-renewal in the sensory life (A-1. 1-5). Personal love of God is the essential factor of stimulus which sets the process transcendence to work. The first step of self upon the road to perfect union with the Absolute is a getting rid of all which are not in harmony with reality.²³⁶

iv. Self Renewal in the Intellect.

After the point of departure how much time he waited for mystical union? He waited until the end of Self-renewal in the intellect through faith. St. John of the Cross is the classic authority upon this portion of the mystic quest. He witnesses that greater fire of another nobler love enables the soul to abandon and deny all besides.²³⁷ (A. 2. 1-32)

Through faith in this stage he was seeking God in the intellectual world. He could reach the final goal of mystical marriage even at the age of 49 by his perfect life of renunciation.

²³⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 97

²³⁵ UNDERHILL, EVELYN. , Mysticism, Methuen and Co. Ltd. , 36 Essex Street W. C. London, 1926. p. 204

²³⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 240

²³⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 244, 245

v. Self-renewal in the memory through hope .

When it is achieved through renunciation and timely guidance of spiritual directors, in this silence of the emptiness of the memory, hope progresses as St. John experienced and articulates in his poem and expositions. Ordinary people also can discern their point of departure through the spiritual directions from the new insight got through this exposition.

vi. Self renewal in the will through Love

This experience made him eligible to serve other travelers on this mystic way as spiritual director. In this exercise of Love, the soul will pay attention to the following:

"not to stop at creatures, love creatures only in God, not to restrain generosity, vivacity, enthusiasm that must accompany all facts of love for him. One who is guided by faith, hope and charity, seeks in all one's thoughts, words and deeds, however small, only the happiness of God and His Glory, will that the love one had for self and creatures vanishes in the darkness of the spiritual night. He will experience at the same time the first genuine encounter with the beloved of his soul. "O guiding night! O night more lovely than the dawn, night that has united. The lover with his beloved, transforming the beloved in her lover. "²³⁸

²³⁸ cf. D'SOUZA GREGORY. „Spiritual Doctrine of St. John of the Cross, Carnal If 1. 1. 1, Mangalore. p. 48, 49 (Stanza 5. Night)

vii. Self Renewal of the sensory life and Spirit.

(Example of St. Teresa who utilized St. John's direction at the point of departure and renunciation useful for self renewal of spirit).

After self-renewal of the sensory life, the next stages on the mystic way (D. N. S. C. 1-12) is followed by the Divine Renewal of the Spirit (D. N. 2. S. C. 13-21). Before the point of arrival, which is the experience of divine emptiness, the soul reaches the highest state of love (A. C. 22-40).

St. John of the Cross took many years to reach the summit of the mount of perfection. While he died at the age of 49. Moses in the Old Testament could reach the summit of mount Sinai only at the age of 80. In this context, it is relevant to ask how can ordinary people discern their point of departure if they want. St. John could guide St. Teresa to discern her mystic way and she succeeded on the way. John of the Cross is still alive and active through his writings, to guide all those who want to set out their pilgrimage. Kevin G. Culligan, defines the practical side of spiritual direction necessary for today as follows:

"Spiritual direction in a counseling ministry in the church which helps Christians to draw closer to God, especially through prayer . . . by helping them listen to the spirit who is the Chief Director of us all".²³⁹

St. John of the Cross was clever enough to discern his own soul and spirit to reach the summit. Ordinary people also may be enkindled by the loving grace of God. Through many adversities Holy Spirit is leading them. But they may not know it properly. Here

is the need of spiritual counseling and direction. St. John recommended it.(The Dark Night of the Soul recommends it. 1. ch. 2,3,4).

We have surveyed the different stages of a soul's pilgrimage to the summit of the Mount Carmel through the mystic way of 'nada'. In this context let us go deeper into the experience of divine emptiness that is the point of arrival on the way of 'Nada'.

²³⁹ Culligan Kevin. ,(ed.). Spiritual Direction, Contemporary Readings,Living Flams Press,Box. 74, Locust Valley, New York, 1983. p. 9

2.3 Divine Emptiness - The Point of Arrival on the Way of ' Nada '

The Exposition of Mystical Marriage

2.3.1 Point of arrival

2.3.2 Mystical Betrothal in Divine Emptiness

2.3.3 Mystical Marriage

2.3.1 Point of arrival

- I what is point of arrival?
- II Practical advantage of detachment
- III Point of arrival and the Dark Night
- IV Encounter of God at the point of arrival
- V Secret of S. J. C's victory on the mystic way
- VI Consequences of his emptiness
- VII Point of arrival at divine emptiness.

i. What is point of arrival?

The word 'arrival' denotes the positive aspect of the renunciation and detachment on the mystic way. Evelyn Underhill clearly comments on this point of arrival, "The detachment of the mystic is just a restoration to the liberty in which the soul was made; it is a state of joyous humility in which he cries 'Naught I am, naught I have, naught I lack'. To have arrived at this is to have escaped from external illusion, to be initiated into the purer air, that universe which knows but one rule of action. 'Love God and do what you like' (laid down by St. Augustine).²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ UNDERHILL EVELYN. , Op. cit. p. 261

ii. Practical advantage of detachment

Jane Gustafson exposes the practical advantage of detachment to creatures as a profitable spiritual business in which by detaching ourselves from many things, we have become more clearly single hearted and apprehend intimacy more completely. We become detached only to become more attached to the real Absolute Creator.²⁴¹

iii. Point of arrival and the Dark Night

St. John of the Cross explained the meaning of the point of arrival. It is in God where the soul of mystic passes through the dark night in order to reach divine union.²⁴² Margaret Smith concluded her book on mysticism commending the positive achievement of the mystic way of 'nada' at the point of arrival as put forth here.

"If mysticism means the transcending of the temporal and the material for the sake of communication, even of union, with the abiding and the real; if it means dying to the old life of the natural man, with all its limitations and desires, in order to attain to the freedom of a new supernatural life which is everlasting; in short, if it means a real experience here and now, of what, we call eternity, then I can say that the mystics are right",²⁴³

iv. Encounter with God at the point of arrival

We have seen that the point of arrival is soul's encounter with God, after her renunciation and purgation. From his biography, it was evident that St. John of the Cross wrote about this point of arrival out of his experience. He reached this stage while he was in the

²⁴¹ cf. GUSTAFSON JANIE. , Op. cit. p. 87

²⁴² cf. Op. cit. The Collected Works, p. 75

²⁴³ SMITH MARGARAT. , An Introduction to Mysticism, Sheldon Press, London, 1977. p. 116

prison. He continued his journey for fourteen years and enjoyed the perfect transforming union at his deathbed.

v. The secret of S. J. C's victory on the mystic way

- (1) He had deep sense of vocation to empty himself for reaching the point of arrival.
- (2) His discerning of even minute things in life, in the light of his vocation and God's plan, was the result of his encounter with God in his emptiness.
- (3) His sense of humor and creative attitude in the midst of his adversities, was the byproduct of his achievement on the mystic way.
- (4) His desire to bear the Cross of Jesus and his daily cross for winning the crown, was a mystical phenomenon on his mystical state of emptiness at the point of arrival.

vi. Consequences Of his emptiness

In the light of S.J.C's encounter with God at the point of arrival, and the evaluation of the secrets of his victory on the mystic way of 'nada' it is interesting to note the consequences of his emptiness. There are four notable good consequences in his outlook and relationships.

- (1) Then his desire was to be hidden and to be despised by others, while loving all through Jesus.
- (2) Integrity, coherence and comprehension of St. John enabled him to see all things and all people through the eyes of God and in the wisdom from above.
- (3) His pure private life at this stage was fully controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- (4) His fellowship and cooperation with St. Teresa was mutually helpful for preparing the mystical secret bridal chamber in their empty souls.

These are not the only factors to be considered, however, there was bad consequence to S. J. C's mystic way of Nada'. Many readers had misunderstood it. Dr. H. J. M. Herman's research on S. J. C's mystic way, pointed out the skeptic comment as he puts it in his book on Transcending Techniques of Christian Mysticism: "The laity and especially the youth find much of the mystical teaching of a Western writer like S. J. C. is inapplicable to modern situation".²⁴⁴

As a result of his research the creative positive aspects of the mystic way of S. J. C has been discovered and illuminated. He conducted an empirical study among 54 members of the Discalced Carmelites, which S. J. C founded. The purpose of his study was to determine, if the mystical teaching of John of the Cross is correct and if it can be dissociated from his ascetic teaching (The way of 'Nada'). The subjects were given psychological tests, a questionnaire on spiritual experience and ascetically attitudes. In addition, EEG (Electro Encephalographic) readings were made. The result showed **that the ascetic way of negation is not an end in itself**. On the other hand, it showed conclusively that,

"Strict ascetical attitudes and practices are not related to contemplative or mystical experiences. Rather the degree of prayer development is related to complex of co-determinants: a high degree of happy emotionality, a low degree of anxiety, extroversion, social and religious dependency, normal ego strength, and stability. The theological attitudes involved are the emphasis upon the theological virtues; and practice of **Via**

²⁴⁴ cf. HERMANS H. J. M. , Christian Mysticism. Amsterdam 1977. p. 299

negative'. The psychological traits suggest that... a strong nervous system is a necessary pre-requisite to mystical or contemplative development". ²⁴⁵

vii. Point of arrival at the divine emptiness

The words of 'Point of Arrival' seems to be hopeful signal light which is indicating the positive, creative aspect of the Christian mystic way of 'Nada'. So the mystic way of negation is only the means of the affirmative mystical experience of union which takes place in the emptiness at the point of arrival. This point of arrival is performed in the 'dark night of the soul' where there is an emptiness. Today ordinary people can discern their point of arrival with the help of the writings of S. J. C. and Modern Spiritual Directors. So a Scientific Systematic study of Divine Emptiness is relevant here. It is in this stage of spiritual maturity, that famous mystical betrothal is taking place. This mystical phenomenon entails the study on divine emptiness

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 299

2.3.2 Mystical betrothal in Divine Emptiness

- I Usage of the word 'Emptiness ' by St. John of the Cross
- II Mystical Betrothal
- III Emptiness as Mystical Bridal Chamber
- III The Dark Night in the Mystical Bridal Chamber
- IV Self emptying of Jesus as Model
- V Theological Concept of Emptiness

i. Usage of the word 'Emptiness ' by St. John of the Cross

In the mature state of the soul's divine emptiness, she is attaining the likeness of Christ, which makes her eligible for the mystical betrothal.²⁴⁶ Herman's book on 'Christian Mysticism' has succeeded in highlighting the teachings of St. John of the Cross. It is reflection on the empirical testing of the touching of S. J. C. and his transcending technique, leading to mystical betrothal and mystical marriage.²⁴⁷

The word 'emptiness' as used by S. J. C. with special mystical meaning, which is evident in the following idea from his writings:

"Evangelical perfection is the detachment and emptiness of sense and spirit from the vile and low things of the earth".²⁴⁸ "One must renounce all and follow Christ in spiritual and interior nakedness, which is the emptiness of the desire for creatures".²⁴⁹ This divine

²⁴⁶ cf. HERMANS, H. J.M. , CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM, Amsterdam 1977. p. 19

²⁴⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 1 - 300

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 19. (Flame 111, 35; Letters 11, 6)

²⁴⁹ Ascent. 1,5,5

spouse frees the soul from the demon and from sensuality".²⁵⁰
Christ came to teach the contempt of all things in the world.²⁵¹ It
is the divine emptiness of a mature soul who is ready for mystical
betrothal.

ii. Mystical Betrothal

What is mystical betrothal?

St. John of the Cross adopted this mystical concept from St. Paul who wrote it in his
second ' Epistle to Corinthians.

"For I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy: for I have
espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as chaste
virgin to Christ".²⁵²

According to Catholic Encyclopedia, it is a figure used to denote the human soul living
intimately united to God through grace and love. In a broad sense, it is applicable to all
unions of souls loved by God and drawn to Him, as the case of virgins solemnly
consecrated, religious in vows, and all other souls espoused to Christ.²⁵³

iii. Emptiness as Mystical Bridal Chamber

The central point in S. J. C's teaching on this matter is precisely the way in which man
becomes transformed into divine nature by divesting himself of that is human.²⁵⁴ Man
should therefore mortify his desires for creatures, since the soul cannot reach God, 'until

²⁵⁰ Canticle. 22, 1

²⁵¹ Ascent. 11, 7, 8; I John. 5:17-19

²⁵² II Corinthians. 11:2

²⁵³ cf. BIALAS, A. A. MYSTICAL MARRIAGE, Catholic Encyclopedia. Op. cit. p. 170

²⁵⁴ HERMANS, H. J. M. , Op. cit. p. 19

the appetites cease, no matter how many virtues it may practice.²⁵⁵ Jane Gustafson further amplifies it. He puts forth 'Emptiness', as the mystical 'bridal chamber' where mystical union takes place. According to him emptiness is the stage of a soul at the point of arrival where enough space is being set apart and reserved for the bridegroom. He commends the success of St. John of the Cross in his self emptying process in the dark night.²⁵⁶

iv. The Dark Night in the Mystical Bridal Chamber

Gustafson further explains the privacy in the mystical bridal chamber. "Although it may seem eternal, the dark night of St. John of the Cross will eventually break. But for most of us, the suffering breaks us first. Only few individuals with strong souls will be in the dawn before their death. They are genuine celibates whose passion drives them ceaselessly through the dark night to the bridal chamber".²⁵⁷

The last night which John of the Cross describes is experienced by only very few persons because few are persistent enough to stay awake the whole night.²⁵⁸ This is the divine emptiness of the point of arrival on the way of 'Nada'.

v. Self Emptying of Jesus as Model

St. John of the Cross followed Jesus in emptying himself as St. Paul envisaged in his second Epistle to Corinthians (2. Cor. 8:9). "Though He was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich".

²⁵⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 19; Ascent 1, 5, 6

²⁵⁶ GUSTAFSON JANIE. , Op. cit. p. 87

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 46

²⁵⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 44

"Jesus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

But he made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was

made in the likeness of men".²⁵⁹ St. Paul used the Greek word

'Eknosen' to express the idea of his self-emptying.²⁶⁰

The New Testament Theologians have developed the Kenotic Christology from this

record of Jesus' self-emptying on the Cross. In the light of these facts we have to survey

the substance of the theological concept of emptiness.

vi. Theological concept of Emptiness

The Greek word 'Kenosis' is used in the Original Greek Bible to express the theological

concept of emptiness.²⁶¹ Philippians 2:7 has played an important part in the discussion

of the Kenotic Christology. According to the doctrine of 'Kenosis' Christ emptied himself

or did not make use of some at least of his divine attributes during the period of his

earthly life.²⁶² Thus he was not omnipresent, omniscient in his incarnate state.²⁶³

Theologians explained this in terms of a self-emptying of divine attributes which they

found implied in Philippians second chapter seventh verse²⁶⁴. It is in this divine

emptiness S. J. C enjoyed his mystical betrothal and mystical marriage.

Thus, when the word 'Emptiness' and Nothingness are used with negative meaning in the

secular world, we could see how S. J. C used it with positive theological meaning,

²⁵⁹ PHILIP. 2:8,7

²⁶⁰ MARSHAL ALFRED. ,The Interlinear Greek - English New Testament,Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd. ,
U. S. A. , 1958 p. 780

²⁶¹ N. I. D. N. T. T. p. 547

²⁶² cf. Ibid. p. 548

²⁶³ MK. 13:32

²⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 548

vii. Divine Emptiness

St. John of the Cross through his life and writings tried to refill the so called useless and futile state of emptiness of life. Embracing his own daily cross, he raised his emptiness to the higher divine level. He accepted all his limitations that were the Father's will.

According to C. Brown, Divine Emptiness envisaged by S. J. C was the outpouring of himself in life and also on the daily cross.²⁶⁵ It is the mature stage of a mystic who is ready for mystical betrothal.²⁶⁶

H. J. M has commented S. J. C's concept of mystical betrothal in mature divine emptiness. Hermans:

"Bride's mysticism is the application of the nuptial symbolism of the 'song of songs' of the Old Testament to the experience of the union with God. The usual presentation pictures God as masculine and the human soul as feminine. The argument 'to be advanced here is that John of the Cross develops a man's version of bride's mysticism, or what could be called 'bridegroom mysticism'".²⁶⁷

Theology has come to emphasize the merits of this symbolism for describing the collective bond between the people of God, (the Church) and God, rather than the bond of love between the individual soul and God.²⁶⁸ It is the mature stage of the soul of a mystic who is ready for mystical betrothal.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ cf. BROWN. C. , N. I. D. T. T. , Op. cit. p. 549

²⁶⁶ II. Cor. 11:2

²⁶⁷ HERMANS. H. J. M. , Op. cit. p. 171

²⁶⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 171

2.3.3 Mystical Marriage

- I What is Mystical Marriage?
- II Who enjoyed mystical marriage?
- III New birth after mystical marriage
- IV The deeper meaning of the word 'Nada'
- V Reserved bridal chamber for mystical marriage
- VI The glory of the divine illumination
- VII Practical use of divine emptiness today

i. What is Mystical Marriage?

According to Catholic Encyclopedia,

"Mystical marriage refers to what is recognized in mystical theology as 'transforming union' between a soul and God, requiring extraordinary graces, and to which God calls only a few particularly privileged persons, e. g. St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila".²⁷⁰

According to St. John of the Cross:

"Mystical marriage constitutes a consummate union of love; a total possession, a fusion of 'lives' the soul is one with God, made divine, by participation, without losing its identity. It is a total union involving the transformation of the substance of the soul by

²⁷⁰ HALAS, A. A., MYSTICAL MARRIAGE, Op. cit. p. 171

sanctifying grace, and the transformation of the faculties by divine light and love".²⁷¹

A. A. BIALAS concluded his comments on mystical marriage as the mystery of Redemption, which was accomplished objectively through the Redeemer, Christ the Bridegroom; and is realized subjectively in the soul-bride, through baptism and sanctification.²⁷²

ii. Who enjoyed mystical marriage

Achievements of mystics who enjoyed mystical marriage are the supreme manifestations of a power, which is inherent in all men. Mystics are representatives of the whole human generation. They are the eyes and ears of the body of the human society. History of the world and the church are full of heroic persons who performed reforms and transformation in the society and in the church. Those reformers were mystics. All people in all ages have enjoyed the good consequences of mystics' services in the society mystics like St. John of the cross have succeeded in discerning the root causes and solutions of the human life. His teachings are useful as a torch in this dark world. Their statements are not out of mere imagination but they are practical advises out of their experiences. We have traced the mystic way from its beginning to its end. We have seen the ever changing, ever growing human spirit emerging from the cave of illusion, enter into consciousness of the transcendental world: the pilgrim attains his home in the bosom of reality.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Ascent of Mount Carmel. 2,5, 6

²⁷² BIALAS. AA. , m. Op. cit. p. 171

²⁷³ cf. UNDERHILL. E., Op. cit. p. 531

iii. New birth after mystical marriage

Evelyn Underhill exposes the concept of new birth after the mystical marriage as she puts it in her book:

"As the embryo of physical man, be he saint or savage, passes through the same stages of initial growth, so too with spiritual man. When the "new birth" takes place in him the new life process of his deeper self begins, the normal individual, no less than the mystic, will know the spiritual ascent towards higher levels, those violent oscillations of consciousness between light and darkness, those odd mental disturbances, abrupt invasions from subliminal region, and disconcerting glimpses of truth, which accompany the growth of the transcendental powers; though he may well interpret them in other than the mystic sense. . . .There is only one road from Appearance of Reality".²⁷⁴

She has simplified the mystic way for ordinary people just like a corporate task of any man with his creator. "To be a mystic is simply to participate here and now in that real and internal life; in the fullest deepest sense which is possible to man".²⁷⁵

The mystic way is the psychological process of peculiar type of personality, which is able set up direct relation with the absolute. But all mystics differ from one another.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 532, 533

²⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 534

²⁷⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 203

iv. The deeper meaning of the word 'nada'

John Ferguson in the Encyclopedia of mysticism and mystery religion defines the general and mystical meaning of the word, 'Nothing'. "Some religions as Judaism and Christianity speak of creation out of nothing. But for many adherents this is simply non-existence. But for many mystics, e. g. Dionysius The AREOPAGITE, this nothingness is infinitely more real than the other reality. Creation out of nothing is creation out of the ultimate; out of God, and to know the reality of God, and to know the reality of soul must strip itself of encumbrances and of all seemingly positive but actually limiting thought and descend into depths of nothing to encounter the Divine".²⁷⁷ St. John of the Cross uses the word 'nothing (Nada) as; Dionysius the Areopagite puts forth.

St. John of the Cross presented the way of 'nada' to complement the existing approach in 16th century which was known 'via affirmation' which was the way of affirmation for an approach to God through positive assertion about his attributes. He is just, wise, loving and so on. Many theologians together with St. John of the Cross claim that the 'via-affirmative', is inadequate without 'via negative' because via affirmative can speak only of the attributes of God, never of his eternal nature.

'Via-negativa'

Via negativa is the way of God through negation, a common place of all mysticism, whether Eastern or Western.²⁷⁸

NINIAN SMART'S comments on mystic way of St. John of the Cross of Nada is recorded in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy. "The imagery of the 'night' is indeed very

²⁷⁷ JOHNFERGUSON. , Op. cit. p. 134

prominent in his works and was used by him in a variety of senses. By "the dark night" he principally meant the extreme sense of desolation and despairs that overcomes the soul after its first illumination by God. This illumination is not the highest state, for eventually the soul will achieve a perfect lasting union, with God the spiritual marriage. The earlier illumination which St. John called the spiritual betrothal, is a "high state of union and love" It appears that the dark night is brought on by the deprivation when the mystical state of illumination closes".²⁷⁹

v. Reserved bridal chamber for mystical marriage

The emptying of mind and the point of arrival has been beautifully put forth' by him as follows:

"It is in this state that the spiritual betrothal can take place. St. John saw this dark night is related to what he called the dark night of sense. Thus, the purgation of the body and of sense experiences, in which the contemplative turns inward from the world. This self discipline, which involves great asceticism and which constitutes in the emptying of the mind of discursive thoughts and mental images"²⁸⁰ Now it is clear that St. John uses the word Divine emptiness at the point of arrival to denote the new reserved bridal chamber for the mystical betrothal and marriage.

St. John explained the dark night of the soul as follows:

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 205

²⁷⁹ NINIAN, SMART. , St. John of the Cross Encyclopedea of Philosophy. The Mac Millan and the Free Press, New York, 1967. Vol. 4 p. 286

²⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 256

vi. The glory of the divine illumination

The soul after the point of arrival and betrothal is not able to withstand the glory of the divine illumination. The soul, despite the betrothal, still has to endure further purgation. It is psychological rather than physically painful which results from the continued impurity of the soul. On The Part Of God, there is no change of attitude towards this soul.²⁸¹

How to handle this situation?

In these situations theological virtues of faith, hope and love are essential. Faith enables the contemplative to continue undismayed through the "night"; hope turns the soul towards the future rather than to the memory of deprivation;²⁸² love turns the soul toward God and men. Ultimately, then the soul will gain the full union of the spiritual marriage. This is described as a complete transformation of the soul in God.

St. John tended to use language identifying the soul with God at this stage, which is contrary to theistic orthodoxy. It is interesting that in his commentary on the poem, 'The living flame of Love' he expressed great unwillingness to write about this, the loftiest state that he had experienced. He also said like other mystics, that the communication of God to the soul is ineffable. However, his use of the imagery of marriage and love indicated that he affirmed the essential distinction between the soul and its lover.

The attainment of the higher state, according to St. John, is limited to very few persons. Such mystics long for death, after which they enjoy the beatific vision in perpetuity in the next life.²⁸³

²⁸¹ Ibid. p. 286

²⁸² Ibid. p. 286

²⁸³ cf. Ibid. p. 286

We have seen how the family background of the Spanish mystic influenced him to become a pilgrim on his mystic way of 'nada'. His adverse circumstances of physical life helped him to reach the mystical point of departure. His mental background filled with the love of God enabled him to climb up to mystical Mount Carmel and he got the fulfillment of the promise (psalm 18:33). His 'inner man' got legs of deer. St. John of the Cross' concept of the dark night of the soul and spirit illuminated his spiritual background in the concept of 'Nada' in his life.

vii. Practical use of divine emptiness today

We have already studied the factors that prompted St. John of the Cross to reach this point of arrival. He has beautifully explained it in his books. All sincere believers in God-centered goal in life can use the guiding light of St. John, to see the creative aspect of all adversities. The thirst for mystical union was enkindled by the grace of God, and the soul of St. John of the Cross was released from all its burdens to proceed on the mystic way of 'nada'.

Evelyn Underhill has put forth a practical link of a mystical soul with an unmystical man, asking vital questions; have the history and experience of a mystic touched and lighted up some part of normal general history of an unmystical man? Did any mystic contribute something towards our understanding of our nature, and destiny or the supreme goal of life? Are the matchless declarations of contemplative only the fruits of unbridled, imaginative genius?"²⁸⁴ The answer to the last question is negative, On the other hand, the answers of the first and second questions are positive.

²⁸⁴ cf. UNDERHILL EVELYN. , Op. Cit. p. 530, 531

Although St. John of the Cross lived in 16th century AD, he could transcend his life from 16th to 20th century making his mystical theology very relevant today. As a wise practiced spiritual director, his teachings have made him an everlasting inspiration to all mystics in the East and the West. After the exegesis and exposition on the mystic St. John of the Cross concept of 'Nada', now we are getting ready to study the deeper meaning of the word 'Neti' in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad exposed by the Sage Yajnavalkya. He is the representative of the sages in his age that used B.U for mystical union on the mystic way of 'Neti'. Our study on Upanishadic Mysticism and the deeper meaning of the word 'Neti' will enable us to have a useful comparative study of Hindu and Christian Mystic ways. The proposed study of the mystic ways of 'Nada' and 'Neti' entails the continuation of our discussion on Yajnavalkya's influential backgrounds, which molded him as a mystic. Therefore, we are entering into Chapter three.

3. THE EXPRESSION OF 'NETI' IN BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

(B.U).

3.1 THE MYSTIC YAJANAVALKYA AND THE SUBSTANCE OF B.U IN THE BACKGROUND OF INFLUENCIAL FACTORS:

3.2 THE MYSTIC WAY OF NETI IN THE LIFE OF RENUNCIATION OF THE SAGE.

3.3 THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE OF 'SATCITANANDA ' BY THE MYSTIC WAY OF NETI.

3.1 The Mystic Yajnavalkya And The Substance Of B.U In The Background of

Influentia Factors:

3.1.1 Physical background which molded him as a mystic. How did he use his physical obstacles as weapons to kill the lust of flesh for entering into the mystic path?

3.1.2 Factors that influenced the sage. The exegesis of the mystic way in Yajnavalkya's theological mental background.

3.1.3 Spiritual background with influencing factors on the mystic way.

Yajnavalkya's 'Neti' Marga Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (B.U)

The definition of the word 'Neti'

The Sanskrit word 'neti' comes from the root 'na' which means not, no, nor, neither,¹ and is joined with another word (iti) means that.² the word 'neti' has been used in the Upanishad with special mystical meaning that is 'not that' (na-iti) or, 'not this'.

As Abishiktanada points out:

The phrase 'neti' neti has been used to denote a mystical concept of 'atma'. We can see the repeated formula " 'no, no' 'not this', 'not that'! In the Upanishad, which means, that the atma cannot be seized, cannot be destroyed. There is nothing higher than it .It is the real of the real".³

(The mystic St. John of the cross and Indian Upanishadic mystic Yajnavalkya on their mystic ways to the mystical experiences are presented in the chapters two and three for a comparative study.

Mystic's physical background mystic ways of their mental background and the mystical experiences of both are presented in the background of Christian and Hindu mystical experiences recorded in books).

He has used the word 'neti-neti' to explain the inward quest of human soul on the way of her pilgrimage of the absolute Being".⁴ As discipline which is more radical than any other, it excludes even the slightest effort of a man's will towards a self chosen goal. It cuts at the very root of any self-satisfaction and so achieves the most radical purification. At the heart of every thought it inserts like a red-hot iron, the 'neti-neti' of Upanishads, 'the not that', 'nor yet that', which utterly rules out the possibility of halting on the quest.

¹ . Monier.M. Williams., A Sanskrit, English Dictionary, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1986. P 523.

² ABISHIKTANANDA, SATCITANANDA., Christian Approach to Advedic Experience, ISPCCK, Delhi, 1984. P230

Once again this 'neti-neti' is certainly not an idea in which the mind might seek at least some rest and relief. At heart of thought itself 'neti-neti' is already essential awareness, deep experiences, hidden, yet burning and devouring. The mind then releases more and more its inability to say, 'I am this or that; I am this person or that'.⁵

It is evident from this exposition that 'Neti.neti', denotes the hidden awareness at the heart of pilgrim who has the quest for the union with the Absolute, renouncing all self-centered goal of life, achieving a radical purification of the soul. We can point out what essentially is the meaning of 'neti' out of this definition.

The message of Upanishad and its relevance today.

Who is a Hindu Mystic?

What is 'Neti Marga'?

'Neti marga' in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is the mystic path where barriers are to be crossed, crucial steps are to be taken and disentanglements are to be effected with Divine Grace⁶, for the union with the Absolute. This Hindu mystic way is the way of rejection and purification of mystic by the authentic knowledge of the truth.⁷ As written in the Upanishads (Katha up. 11.1.1) a resolute attempt is made by the Hindu mystic to change the outward natural direction of the five senses into inward direction and store the life-energy centered round the soul.⁸ This is done on the mystic way of 'neti' Marga'.

The Relevance of Upanishads Today.

³ Ibid. p.40

⁶ cf. PANDIT M.P THE UPANISHADS, Ganesh and Co., Private ltd., Madras 17, 1969. P. 47.

⁷ Ibid. p.39.

⁸ Ibid. p. 38. Katha Upanishad, 11.1.1 "The principal Upanishad Trans. radakrishnan's. The self is not sought through the senses. The self caused pierced the openings outward: therefore one looks outward and not within oneself"

From the 6th century BC, during the past 25 centuries, devoted readers have been attracted to this mystic way of 'neti',⁹ "To every Indian Brahman today, the Upanishads are what New Testament is to Christians".¹⁰

Theosophists recognize in Upanishads, the source of deep mystic knowledge and consider them as a world scripture.¹¹ they have great historical and comparative value, but they are also of great present day importance.¹²

3.1.1 Physical background which molded him as a mystic. How did he use his Physical obstacles as weapons to kill the lust of flesh for entering into the mystic path?

- i) Yajnavalkya, the major dialectician of B.U.
- ii) His family backgrounds and conflict with the neighbors.
- iii) His personal background of adversities
- iv) His lonely meditation
- v) New realization of Yajnavalkya in the forest
- vi) Indian historical background of trials and political disturbances (distractions)
- vii) Indian Hindu Religious Background

i. Yajnavalkya, the Dialectician

Yajnavalkya is an outstanding teacher, who is trying to establish his authority over other contemporary scholars. He is the most prominent philosopher of the Upanishads¹ (B.U. 3.6). According to D.S. Sarma, Janaka and Yajnavalkya were great men in the time of

⁹ HUME. R.E., The thirteen principal Upanishads, (Translated from the Sanskrit), Oxford university press, Madras, 1949. P.8.

¹¹ Ibid. p.3

¹² Ibid. p.4

¹ cf. BRODOV. V., Indian Philosophy in Modern Times, Progress Press Publishers, USSR, 1984. P. 57,58. Ibid. P. 15, 12.

the composing of Brihadaranyaka Upanishads². It is a highly advanced philosophical and mystical text and one of the major Upanishads constituting the basic canons on which the whole philosophy of India and its general outlook of life may be said to be founded³.

The title 'Brihadaranyaka Upanishad' means the great forest of knowledge. It is a veritable mine of wisdom, with its six chapters touching up on the internal meaning of almost every phase of human life⁴. The teacher of B.U. was a poor pilgrim Aryan who migrated to India (descended into the plain of Sindhu river) who had conflict with non-Aryans, which compelled him to escape into forest. He's at the foot of Brahman and his mystical revelations were recorded as Brihadaranyaka Upanishad⁵.

ii. His Family Background of Conflict with Neighbors

As a new immigrant Yajnavalkya's race (Aryas) had conflicts with non-Aryans who were very powerful and wealthy according to Dr. Altekar. This conflict of his race ie. Aryas was a contributing factor, which forced him to move towards a silent life after renouncing his two wives and wealth. Then he withdrew into forest and started meditation. He became a mystic, using his loneliness and adversities in the forest. His subsequent life was nothing but Upanishads and sages in the forests⁶

What are the Upanishads?

The Aryans of the Vedic age had national religion of their own and consequently a well developed priesthood, priestly families and famous Rishis, who were gifted enough to be

² SARMA, D. S., The Primer of Hinduism, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1984. P. 127.

³ KRISHNANANDA SWAMY., The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Shivananda Nagar, U.P., 1984. (Front Flap)

⁵ BHARGAVA, P.L., India in the Vedic Age, The U.I.P. House, Pvt. Ltd., Lucknow-1, 1971. p –198,199.

⁶ cf. P.L.B., India in the Vedic Period. p. 199

the authors or medium of mystical revelations which were the sources of later Upanishads⁷.

The second kind of works together with Brahmana, Aranyakas and Sutras, which refer to the times when Aryans first settled in India, preceded by four Vedas and followed by puranas⁸. Yajnavalkya had disciples who sat at his feet and were taught by him.

The word Upanishad connotes secret instruction or a hidden doctrine. The word itself denotes as mystical revelations or secret wisdom, they are supposed to be listened to, heard about, or learnt from a master by one being seated in front of him, or beside him (Upa-ni-shad = sit near)⁹. Even though total number of Upanishads is very large (about 200) only a dozen of them can be classed as genuine part of Vedic literature which represent the flower of the Vedic thought¹⁰, Upanishads are collections of texts compiled by different authors, at different times and on different subjects. The earliest Upanishads are Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Aitareya, Kaushitaki, Taittiriya, and Kena Upanishads¹¹. 116 Upanishads in a book have been published in 1949¹².

iii. His Personal Background of Adversities

Yajnavalkya's adversities led him to prayer life and writing his experiences. His disciples sat at his feet and learned the substance of B.U. "From the unreal lead me to the real, From death lead me to immortality". "From darkness – lead me to light".

⁷ HUME, R.E., The Thirteen Principal Upanishads, Translated from the Sanskrit, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1949, p. 8

⁸ Ibid. p. 2

¹⁰ cf. Ibid. p. 4

¹¹ BRODOV. V., Indian Philosophy i~ Modern Times, Progress Press Publishers, USSR, 1984. p. 59

¹² cf. H.R.E., The Thirteen Principal Upanishads. Op.cit. p. 465

These three verses of B.U. (1; 3~8) express his earnestness of the search for Truth. It is one of the delightful and commendable features of the Upanishads¹³.

Knowledge and experience are identical; knowledge is Being. This is the final message of B.U.¹⁴. Upanishads are metaphysical treatise in the long history of man's endeavor to grasp the fundamental truths of Being¹⁵. According to Aurobindo, "Upanishad is a kind of poetry word of vision and rhythm of spirit - that has not been written before or after¹⁶. The Upanishads are not only the natural terminus, but also the final word, the crown and summit of Vedas, 'Veda-anta'¹⁷. The Upanishads as a whole put forward a synthetic vision of God and man¹⁸. Brahman is contemplated in the Upanishads as the highest self of existence; Atman is regarded as the inmost self of individualized existence of man and the inmost self of the cosmic existence. But in the course of upanishadic development Atman is identified with Brahman¹⁹. In the 6th century BC Brihadaranyaka Upanishad emphasized development of Atman-Brahman doctrine from ritual speculation.

iv. His Lonely Meditation

In the physical background of the mystic Yajnavalkya, as factor that influenced him on the mystic way of neti, he had personal problems as an Aryan immigrant in India.

Loneliness in the forest prompted him to meditation

¹³ KRISHNANDA SWAMI., Op.cit. p. 133

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 952

¹⁵ BHARGAVA, P.L., Op.cit. p. 7.

¹⁶ PANDIT. M.P., Op.cit

¹⁷ ibid. p. 8

¹⁸ NEDUMPLAKUNNEL GEORGE., Realization of God according to Aurobindo, Clarelion Publications, Bangalore, 1979. P. 17.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 18

Sage's personal problems as Aryan immigrant in India, compelled him to withdraw into the forest hermitages to contemplate the essence of all that and what was taking place there. At a time of social contradictions priests or Sages were afraid of people. They took great pains to shroud ideological problems in mystery and the super-natural making them inaccessible to the uninitiated²⁰.

v. New Realization of Yajnavalkya in the Forest

New realization of Yajnavalkya in the forests and caves of India was the factor, which influenced Yajnavalkya on his mystic way. Rigveda clearly mentions the conflicts of the Aryans with non-Aryans, some of whom were powerful and wealthy. In the lonely forest he could divert all his outward senses into inward direction to collect all his energy at his soul for mystical union with the Brahman²¹.

vi. Indian Historical Background of Trials And Political Disturbances

Adversities in the life of sages from his enemies compelled Yajnavalkya to proceed on the narrow mystic path to the Brahman for his mystical union. It was the Indian historical background of his trials and political disturbances influenced his life as a mystic²².

vii. Indian Hindu Religious Background

What is the specialty of the B.U. and Other Upanishads in the Hindu religious background of India. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the Isaupanishad belong to 'white yajurveda' which belongs to the Sathapatha Brahmana (So called because, it consists of one hundred chapters). They are not one, the most extensive but also the most important of all Brahmanas (Brahmanas are books dealing with Brahman i. e. Devotion or

²⁰ BRODOV. V., Op.cit. p. 57, 58.

²¹ BHARGAVA. P.L., O]p.cit. p. 199

prayers²³. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is one Aranyaka, or Forest book which is of theosophical character and which deals with the mysticism and symbolism of sacrifice. They are found at the end of the Brahmanas and form a transition to the Upanishads²⁴. Yajnavalkya became a mystic by his pilgrimage to the union of his Atman with the Brahman through the mystic way of 'neti' marga in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. It is a very complete scripture; it touches every point of psychology, and spiritual aspiration. What is B.U. is all in all²⁵ the secret of life is revealed in various stages.

²² cf. HUME. R.E., Op.cit. p. 1

²³ BHARGAVA, P.L., Op.cit. p. 15, 14

²⁴ Ibid. p. 15, 16.

²⁵ KRISHNANANDA SWAMI, Op.c: it.

3.1.2 Factors that influenced the Sage. The exegesis of the mystic way in Yajnavalkya's theological mental background

- i Sage's moksha oriented life.
 - ii Sage's Philosophy of monism and absolutism.
 - iii Yajnavalkya's reaction against Brahmana.
 - iv His concept of faith.
 - v His concept of hope.
 - vi His concept of love.
 - vii Exegesis of his mystic way of 'neti'.
- (a) What was his physical background, which prompted him to overcome his lustful, fleshly passions for starting his life of Pilgrimage on the mystic way at the point of departure?

As an Aryan immigrant, the mystic Yajnavalkya had personal, family and social conflicts in poverty, which compelled him to withdraw into lonely forests. The situation of forest and his personal physical adverse conditions influenced him to start his life of pilgrimage, by overcoming lustful passions of body. That was his point of departure to start on his mystic way. These physical influential factors were proved and supported by quotations from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad translated from Sanskrit to English by Swamy Krishnananda in the previous paragraphs. Now let us proceed to observe his mental influential factors.

- (b) What is the sage's mental background?

i. Sage's 'moksha' oriented life.

What are the influencing factors on the mystic way?

Even though Yajnavalkya's withdrawal into forest was to avoid his conflicts with non-Aryan neighbors, in the lonely forest also he had barriers in his mental background¹. As the proverb says 'necessity is the mother of invention', Yajnavalkya was prompted to invent new devices to overcome his barriers in the lonely hermitage. He invented the techniques of prayer and meditation and yoga², which developed his mind to know himself, and about the invisible cause of everything. He began to develop a philosophy of life and the supreme reality. By the increased knowledge of himself and the creator, his wisdom began to grow which pushed him forward from the point of departure on the path of his pilgrimage to the newly envisaged goal of life.

What were his barriers in the hermitage? What were his prayers and meditations? A famous prayer in B. U - answers these questions: "asatoma sad gamaya" (from non-Being lead me to True being) "tamaso ma jyotirgamaya" (from darkness, lead me to light) "mrtyor ma amrtamgamaya" (from death lead me to immortality)³.

It is evident from this prayer that Yajnavalkya felt non-being, darkness and death in his soul. They were his barriers which were overcome by the help and grace received through prayer, on the path of his pilgrimage of the goal of his life. That goal was immortality, light and True Being through the mystical union with the creator⁴.

Yajnavalkya's goal of life and the quest for immortality prompted him to choose a narrow and steep way⁵. It is evident from the meaning of the Sanskrit word 'neti' (The exegetical

¹ PANDIT. M.P., THE UPANISHADS., Ganesh and Co., Madras - 17, 1968. p. 47

² PANDIT. M.P., Op.cit. P.22.

⁴ cf. PANDIT. M.P., Op.cit. p.198

⁵ KRISHNANADA SWAMI., BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD, The divine life society, Shivanda Nagar, U.P., 1984. p. 905

word study and translation of the word 'neti' have been already done at the beginning of this chapter). From the meaning of the word 'neti' and the mystic way of 'neti' marga, we understand the mental background of the sage who was influenced by the 'moksha' oriented, meaningful life of prayer and meditation.

To amplify the sage's purpose of life reflected in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Swamy Krishnananda's statement is quoted here;

"The whole purpose of the story of creation, given in this section of Upanishad, (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) is to help individuals to return to the Absolute, enable the purpose of the practice of 'Sadhana' ...to re-unite themselves with that from which they have been alienated in consciousness⁶.

That practice of Sadhana was the influential factor in his mind of prayer and meditation on the mystic way of 'neti'. This fact is supported by the comment of MARK GIBBARD who emphasizes the power and new insight which emerge from the 'Moksha' oriented life of prayer and meditation: "Now is the spirit's springing time. What we cannot do the spirit can"⁷.

By the spring of Yajnavalkya's 'spirit' through the meditation, his conscience was led to the Supreme Being, indicating the trace of the philosophy of monism, which entails a study on monism in B.U.

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 39

⁷ MARK GIBBARD., PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION, an invitation to discover, Oxford, 1926. p. 172

ii. Sage's Philosophy of Monism and Absolutism

From the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we take up for clarification the DOCTRINE OF THE MYSTIC HONEY, to see that it reconciles the relative reality of world-existence with the Absolute Monism. B.U. tends in some of its sections to this philosophy of monism, which is called Madhu Brahmana⁸. This important part of this Upanishad is the strong hold for the 'Lofty Illusionism' of the later vedantins. It is not wholly in favor of the negation of the world's existence, which subsists by interdependence of the whole and the part. It is a 'Manifestation of Brahman' who subsists because of the Honey, the Madhu in it⁹. This philosophy of monism has been analyzed and discerned by Sri. Kapalisastri whose exegetical remarks are paraphrased here.

The Patriarchal Devendranath Tagore, one of the leaders of Hindu Reform (1818 -1905), however confessed his disappointment with the 'Monism' of Upanishads and their later interpretation by Sankara.

Sankaracharya has turned India's head by preaching the doctrine of monism; the identity of God and man. Following his teachings, both ascetics and men of the world are repeating this senseless formula 'I am that Supreme Deity'. He declared that he wanted to worship God, but if worshipper and the object of worship became one then there could be no worship. Hence both Upanishads and Sankara had failed, and what was needed was a religion of pure heart in which God would be seen by worshipper through worship and meditation¹⁰

⁸ PANDIT, M.P., Op.cit. p. 14

⁹ PANDIT, M.P., Op.cit. p. 46

¹⁰ cf. PARRINDER GEOFFREY., Mysticism in World Religions, Oxford University Press, New York, 1976. p. 109

In fact for the theistic believer God is not the object but the subject, the initiator or the experience, which he gives by grace. This theistic claim is often underestimated or ignored, but it is fundamental and deserves proper study as evidence. (p. 192). The 'neti' passages in this Upanishad are inspired utterances of the sage Yajnavalkya, who by disciplined effort, used Sadhanas to approach the ultimate reality, with his intuitions and revelatory higher faculties, developed by spiritual means. He penetrated into the secrets of subtle psychological and spiritual truths. He lived the life of spirit. He was aided by the tradition of the Vedic Rishis, by the achievements of others who had gone before him. He got the help of the Higher Intelligence and powers of the universal spirit itself¹¹. From the exegesis of 'neti' by Kapali Sastri, it is evident that Yajnavalkya's 'neti' marga was the means on his mystic way to the ultimate reality influenced by the minds of Vedic Rishis. Thus we could investigate historical background and the source of his writing as from the Rishis and from his intuitions. Yajnavalkya wrote his experience and thoughts through his disciples who sat at his feet, and heard his utterance, out of his contemplative silence¹². Here we can see the geographic background of lonely forests also, as a factor, which influenced him to write the way of negation through the word 'Neti'. After having the word study 'neti' its translation, and the investigation of his historical background, and source of influences from the ultimate reality and his Vedic predecessors, we could cover the tasks of this exegetical dealing of the word 'neti' with literary and historical criticism. Another thought provoking fact we noticed here is that B. U. is not directly written, by the (Master) Guru Yajnavalkya. B.U is only the collection of the fragments of the class-notes of his disciples who could only grasp a

¹¹ Ibid. p.46

portion of his master's wisdom. They wrote what they understood. They understood according to their mental ability and attendance. So it is noted in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that there are inconsistencies, contradictions and lack of sequence of thoughts in this Upanishad¹³. The discovery necessitates a deeper hermeneutic study of the real meaning of the word 'neti' as understood by Yajnavalkya and his disciples separately.

iii. Yajnavalkya's Reaction against Brahmanas.

Yajnavalkya had reaction against Brahmanas' elaborate system of ritualism.

Hermeneutics of the mental influential background of Yajnavalkya and his immature disciples indicates traces of his reactions against the exploited system of Brahmana's ritualism, which demands our attention and deeper analysis here.

The word 'neti' emerged from the heart of Yajnavalkya when he felt bitter about the hypocrisy of the Brahmana priests who had no mystical and ethical conscience. They were slaves of the practices of rituals without grasping the real purpose of them. They were puffed up with their external expressions of their devotion of God through rituals. They were satisfied with the physical and economic benefits of the ritualism. But Yajnavalkya was not satisfied with the existing ritualism because it was not at all satisfactory to his deeper mystical quest for the union with the ultimate reality. This psychological situation prompted him to say that existing external observance of ritual practices were not what is the ultimate end of the religion and life. Thus he was compelled to use a negative word that is 'neti' 'neti' (not this, not that), external ritualism, but something beyond that is to be achieved through the worship and rituals. Thus his

¹² Ibid. p. 17-19

¹³ Ibid. p. 19

reaction against the deteriorated system of Brahmanas (the priests), was another influential factor behind the usage of the word 'neti'¹⁴. The disciples need not be in the same mental fervent mood of their master. They might have used this word 'neti neti ' as mere repetitions of a word as the sound of parrots.

The depth of the word 'neti' is unfathomable because it was uttered out of long meditation and silence reacting against many evil tendencies visible in the society. So the word 'neti' has many aspects of negation and only one aspect of Supreme affirmative goal. There were many Gods among the illiterate society, which initiated him to seek a supreme ultimate God of other Gods. His realization of the one supreme invisible reality above the 'man - made Gods' and ritualism indicate another background of his deeper mind and conscience. That is his life of faith in the one Supreme Deity of Deities¹⁵. Now this influential mental factor demands our study and observation. So let us take up his faith among the faithless society.

iv. His Concept of Faith

His faith in the one Supreme Brahma is revealed through his writings. In B.U. (3.9.1-9) Yajnavalkya was pressed by Sakalya to state the real number of Gods. Unwillingly he reduced, in seven steps, the popular number 3306 Gods to one, and that one was Brahma, the only God. But apart from legend and apart from religion, it was difficult for the

¹⁴ cf. PARINDER GEOFFRY., MYSTICISM IN THE WORLDRRELIGIONS, Oxford University Press, New York, 1916. p. 30, 31.

¹⁵ cf. Ibid. p-14-16

ordinary person to understand who or what this Brahma was¹⁶ - through contemplation Yoga and Sadhana his conscience experienced, that Brahma is life Joy and VOID¹⁷. In this context Robert Ernest Hume Ph.D. commends this Upanishad. The mystic meaning of self is "the Real of the real" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.1.20). As a spider might come out with its thread, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Soul come forth all vital energies, all worlds, all Gods, all beings¹⁸. This is the most important passage, for it is the first in the Upanishads where the conception of Brahma is subjected to regressive analysis leading to conclusion which obtains throughout the reminder of the Upanishads, except as it is further supplemented¹⁹. In it, the following points are to be noted. Yajnavalkya's faith in the one Supreme Brahman, was the answer of his previous prayers recited from Rigveda.

"O Faith, give us faith! Through faith men come to prayer, light comes through faith. Faith is composed of the heart's intention"²⁰.

According to Andrew Wilson, Yajnavalkya's faith contained certain attitudes:

“They are devotion; longing for God; fear of God; submission to God; and obedience to Heaven's commandments; confidence in God's provisions that dispenses with worldly cares; gratitude for God's favors; and even the honesty of daring to agree with God.

¹⁶ cf. R.E. HUME., Op.cit. p. 15

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 16

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 18

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 18

²⁰ Rigveda. 10:151, 4 - 5.

Through these attitudes a person lives in faith, lifts up his heart to God, and finds a relationship with Lord"²¹.

These are the basic mystical insights of the upanishadic seers to amplify Yajnavalkya's faith, Sri. Aurubindo's statement is quoted here. "Our aim is to live in the Divine, the infinite, in God. This faith is a support from above"²².

We have discovered the need of exegesis and exposition of the 'neti' passages in the context of the noted background of the written texts of B.U. as only fragments of the records of Yajnavalkya's immature disciples. So neti, neti, passages will be taken and critically evaluated in this chapter's very 'neti' text itself, because the disciples could not grasp all aspects and visions of Yajnavalkya. So let us go deeper into his another mental ground which influenced him on his mystic way of 'neti'.

v. His concept of Hope

Yajnavalkya's: hopeful mind and attitude among the hopeless people in the society. In the following section 3.1(3) all 'neti' passages in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad are taken and a new definition of the neti marga is going to be evolved. To achieve this goal a historical criticism of the events of his withdrawal into forest has already been mentioned. His prayer and meditation and the new conscience about the one supreme invisible Brahman, enabled him to lead a hopeful life among the hopeless sinful wicked people. This mental condition influenced him on the mystic way of 'neti'. His gradual development of mind from the faith, which was the support he got from above, as we noted above, led him to this stage of hope. He still grows through his meditation and approaching the higher stage of love. This tendency in his mentality entails a deeper

²¹ WILSON ANDREW., (ed), World Scripture, Op.cit, p. 535

study about his life filled with the love of Brahman for which the following hermeneutics will be helpful.

vi. His concept of love.

(Hermeneutics of the message of love).

After the long period of pilgrimage on the mystic way after passing the point of departure he is going to reach the point of arrival which is a state of emptiness in the soul as a bridal chamber, for the mystical union with the Brahman. That will be dealt elaborately in the following sections:

Now he has a quest for his union with the Brahman in the observed context of his Hindu Upanishadic tradition. Eventhough he was hated by the hypocrite Brahmanans with their superficial ritualism, Yajnavalkya could develop a heart of love towards Brahman.

Which prompted him to love the society for their good future and repentance.²⁴ Thus his love grew among the hated of others.²⁵ This is a good lesson to modern society troubled with communal conflicts. Through meditation, prayer and realization of supreme reality, communal conflicts can be used as good means for withdrawal into lonely places for meditation so that new meeting points with fighting society can be discovered at deeper mystical level.

This achievement of Yajnavalkya demands deeper observation of his mystic way of neti in exegetical way.

²² GHOSE, AUROBINDO., The Synthesis of Yoga, Pondicherry, 1948 p. 660, 497

²⁵ KRISHNANDA SWAMI., B.U. Op.cit. p. 659.

“All love is love of self; all love is the love of the absolute and there is no love other than that”.

vii. Exegesis of his mystic way of 'neti'.

A view of Brahman as void was his realization, which influenced him to use the word 'neti' he developed his yogic practices as sadana, which is a great contribution to all people in all ages. He could overcome obstacle of the lustful eyes in his flesh, by meditating the Brahman as VOID. His mystic way up to this stage was a preparation for his envisaged mystical union with Brahman who is VOID (Brihadaranyaka.u.4.10: 5), while he was in forest.

He might have observed the long silent process of trees in the forest for its flowering and yielding of its fruits. He was also patiently waiting to become a mature yogi for perfect mystical union, which is like flowering and fertilization of flowers in a tree. While he has grown into the higher level of love, we can assume that he had reached the stage of fruition, because according to bible (Gal. 5:22), Love is fruit of the holy spirit. In this stage, the mystic Yajnavalkya's mental background is very clear to us. Now we are ready to study his spiritual background, which is deeper and invisible. The traces of his spirituality can be studied only through his teachings and recorded life in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. So we are going to take up all 'neti' passages in this Upanishad and examine them critically as proposed above.

3.1.3 Spiritual background with influencing factors on the mystic way.

- i) Yajnavalkya's spiritual background.
- ii) The Classic state of the 'Via Negativa'
- iii) The Supreme Reality Brahman
- iv) The Soul (Atman) does not tremble. He overcomes both 'whats'? Unuttered, unwritten 'neti'.
- v) How can you see your eyes?
- vi) Why Brahman is invisible?
- vii) The five 'neti' passages in B.U

i. Yajnavalkya's spiritual background.

Yajnavalkya had spiritual background with influencing factors on the mystic way. We will take five 'neti' 'neti' passages from the B.U. and examine his spiritual background behind them. We can see his development from meditation to contemplation of Nirguna Brahman alone. His entrance into perfect silence was useful to overcome the pride of life. That spiritual condition is point of arrival because Lucifer and his followers by their pride of life departed from the heavenly worshiping union¹. Yajnavalkya was released from the bondage of pride through silence and contemplation. The root cause of all problems of this world is pride². 'Pride goes before a fall' is a well-known proverb'. This message of contemplation and silence is implied in his 'neti' marga, which means, not in discursive meditation, nor in talkative nature, that we can realize the Nirguna Brahman.

¹ cf. EZEKIEL. 28: 16-19

² cf. Proverbs. 16:18

The purpose of this exegetical study of these five neti passages is to form a new definition of 'neti marga' which is relevant and appealing to modern ordinary people. The experience of 'Satacitananda' is the target of his mystic way. He is going to enjoy that bliss at this point of arrival. The Sage used all his negative adversities and positive yogic practice for purgation and illumination as a wet wood is dried under the heat of sun and near fire.

ii. The Classic State of the 'Via Negativa'

(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.5:15)

This classical statement of the mystic way in B.U. is emitting a spiritual light, which is helpful to find the Supreme Absolute. This passage is interpreted in the newly published book 'World Scripture' which is a comparative anthology of sacred texts of all religions.

It is a project of the International Religious Foundation in New York³.

"By whom shall the knower be known", The self is described as
"not this, not this" (neti, neti). It is incomprehensible for it cannot
be comprehended, for it never attaches itself, unbound, shall the
knower be known⁴.

As the seeker gradually strips away all relative phenomena, descending ever deeper into darkness, through such an emptying of the soul, perhaps the Absolute may be found. To amplify this ideal, Robert Ernest Hume is quoted here:

³ cf. WILSON ANDPEW., THE WORLD SCRIPTURE, Paragon House, New York, 1991. p. 59.

'Via Negativa' = Way of God through negation, a common place of all mysticism, whether Eastern or Western.

⁴ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.5:15

"The soul (Atman) is not this, it is not that (neti neti). It is unseizable, for it cannot be seized; indestructible, for it cannot be destroyed; unattached, for it does not attach itself; is unbound, does not tremble, is not injured"⁵.

iii. The Supreme Reality of Brahma. (B.U. 2.3:6)

In the context of explaining the two forms of Brahma, it is written to point out the Supreme Reality of Brahma,

"Hence, now, there is the teaching, 'not thus! not so! (neti, neti) for there is nothing higher than this, that he is thus. Now designation for him is 'the Real of the Real', Verily, breathing, creatures are the real. He is the Real"⁶.

He discovered the deepest basis of all creatures. That is the Real Brahma. It is evident in the following verses: Progress of the numerous Gods to the Unitary Brahma. (BU 3.9:26)

"That soul (Atman) is not this, is not that (neti neti). It is unseizable, for it is not seized. It is indestructible, for it is not destroyed. It is unattached, for it does not attach itself. It is unbound. It does not tremble. It is not injured"⁷.

This passage was written in context of explaining the soul to a person in the Upanishads.

iv. The Soul (Atman) Does Not Tremble.

"But the Soul (Atman) is not this, it is not that (neti neti). It is unseizable, for it cannot be seized. It is unattached, for it does not

⁵ HUME, R.E., Op.cit, p° 147.

According to Swami Krishanada, this emptying of soul and finding of the absolute is the way to the success of any thought through the contemplation (cf. p. 301). Thus Yajnavalkya reached the deepest level of his spirit to meet the Brahma.

⁶ Ibid. p. 97

attach itself. It is indestructible, for it cannot be destroyed. It is unbound. It does not tremble. It is not injured”⁸.

Thus spoke Yajnavalkya to Janaka, 'you have reached fearlessness'. Janaka was the King of Videha. He is grateful to Yajnavalkya for making him to know fearlessness. He expressed his adoration to his master by submitting himself as his servant. It is evident from this verse that Yajnavalkya's spirit realized Brahman as fearlessness*.

He overcame both, whats?

"That soul (Atman) is not this, It is not that (neti, neti). It is unseizable, for it cannot be seized. It is indestructible, for it cannot be destroyed. It is unattached, for it does not attach itself. It is unbound. It does not tremble, It is not injured. To Him (who knows this) these two denote overcome - neither the thought "Hence I did wrong", nor the thought, "Hence I did right", Verily, he overcomes both. What he has done and what he has not done do not affect him"⁹.

These words were written in the context of stanzas ten to twenty one, which contain the following statements.

- (1) They that delight in the knowledge, enter into blind darkness,
- (2) If a person knew the soul (Atman), with the thought” I am he!” for love of what would he cling unto the body?

⁷ B.U. 3.9:26

⁸ B.U. 4.2:4

* KRISHNANDA SWAMI.,Op cit. p. 498.

⁹ B.U. 4.4:22

- (3) He is the creator of all; the world is his: indeed, he is the world itself.
- (4) He who has wakened to the soul has entered this conglomerate abode.
- (5) Those who know this become immortal, verily, while we are here we may know this; If you have not known it, great is the destruction.
- (6) One does not shrink away from HIM, if one perceives HIM as the soul, as God, (deva), clearly.
- (7) They recognized the ancient, primeval Brahma. They who know the breathing of the breath, (The food of food), the thinking of the mind.
- (8) He gets death after death; who perceives here seeming diversity.· By the mind it is to be perceived that. There is no earth, no diversity.
- (9) It is to be looked upon as a unity only, This in indemonstrable, enduring Being, great enduring, spotless, beyond space, The unborn soul.

A wise Brahman (Those who want to follow Brahman) should get for himself intelligence; by knowing Him only. He is the Lord of all. The life of mendicant (beggar) is described just before the 'neti, neti' passage here. The ancients desired no offspring saying: What shall we do with offspring, We whose is this soul, this world?¹⁰ For they knew that the desire for sons is the beginning of many other inevitable desires for wealth and world. So they rising above the desires for sons, lived the life of beggars!

This philosophy was the background and basis of Hindu ascetic practices and celibate life of yogis and rishis . Here 'neti,neti' passages is preparing and encouraging Yajnavalkya`s disciples to become, unattached and fearless, to be freed and emptied.

¹⁰ .cf. HUME, R.E., op.cit. p. 142 ,143.

That emptiness of neti-marga was the reservation of heart , the bridal chamber for the supreme Brahman who is also nirguna-Brahman¹¹.

Unuttered, unwritten 'neti'

We have observed the proposed five 'neti' passages. We studied the spiritual background and ten distinct thoughts of Yajnavalkya behind his neti concept of mystic way. It was evident that his way of negation was only a means of arriving at the supreme reality.

Thus we could see the positive aspect and the noble pure goal of seeking the invisible Niruguna Parabrahma on the narrow and steep mystic way of 'neti'.

Yajnavalkya used the 'neti-neti' phrase clearly in five recorded passages. We can trace his message hidden in other passages also. Such a typical text is presented here. There were unuttered unrecorded neti expressions in his life as well.

Even though we have finished the study of 'neti neti' passages in B.U there is another important passage in it, which is interesting to conclude our exegesis. We will start our expositions of mystic way and the mystical experience in Chapter 3.2 (3) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is being quoted here as it is in original Sanskrit.

v. How can you see your eyes?

"tad va elad aksaram, gargi, adrstam, drastr, asrutam, srotr, ematam
mantar, avijanatam vijnatrm nanyed ato'sti drastr, nanyad ato'sti
mantr, N anyad ato sti vijna tr; etasmin nu kalv aksare, gargi,
akasa Otas caprotas ca"¹².

¹¹ cf. Ibid. p.142,143

¹² Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, AN INTERPRETATIVE EXPOSITION,

He starts the interpretation with the following statement, which is the key sentence in his exposition. "Nobody has seen one's own eye is the seer". The exposition of the above Sanskrit passage, starts with the exegetical translation and the hermeneutics which makes the message of this old text comprehensible, in this contemporary situation, through the following interpretation of the text, in accordance with the scientifically formulated rules and principles of exegesis which is the doctrine of understanding.

"Tad va etad aksaram, gargi, adrstam drastr". "But so gargi, this great wonder about which I am speaking to you cannot be seen by anybody". It cannot be seen because it is the seer. How can you see your own eyes?

How can you comprehend your own mind behold your understanding?

They cannot be seen because they are the principles which are the subject of all such psychological actions and functions. "So Gargi" (Yajnavalkya is teaching his disciple Gargi, who sat at the feet of his master hearing the mystery of understanding, thus exposing the meaning of the word 'BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD' itself, where we can see the student who is sitting near and hearing in the background of a forest which is the image which emerges from the word 'ARYANYAKA' here. The phrase 'SO GARGI' indicates the affectionate addressing of the disciple by his master who is full of wisdom and love towards him. This imperishable Absolute is the seer of everything but cannot see it". How can you see it? By becoming it. How can you become it? By assimilating its character.

What is the character?

Non-objectivity. It is a tremendous blow to the mind even to conceive what non-objectivity is – ‘adrstam drastr, Asrutam, srotr’. “It is the hearer of everything, but you cannot hear it?

"Amatam mantr". This is the repetition of what was mentioned earlier. "It is the thinker of every thing, itself cannot be thought by anybody”.

Avijna tam vijnatr: It understands everything, you cannot understand it, because it is the cause and you are the effect. It understands everything because it is the cause of everything and everything is its effect

Nanyad auto sti': There is no hearer but that.

Nanyad ato'sti mantr: There is no thinker except that.

Nanyad ato'sti vijnatr: There is no other understander than that, ‘Etsmin nu Kalv aksare, gargi, akasa Otas Ca Protas ca’.

The unmanifested 'AVYAKRITA ,AKASA' the ether Supreme, is woven warp and woof, lengthwise and breadthwise, in this Eternal Absolute"¹³.

Everything is woven in it, we will find even the least of things there, in that Supreme Eternal Absolute"¹⁴.

We can see another comprehensive spiritual background of the 'neti' passage; here it is out of this spiritual insight that he used the 'neti neti' phrase frequently in his speech from which his disciples had written them five times directly, and many other times indirectly.

We can see the shade and colors of this 'neti, neti' concept throughout the whole B.U. In every bit of the fruit of this Upanishad, we taste the essence of his neti marga and the 'bliss' which is known as 'Satacitananda' (Synthetic instant essence of 'Nada 'and 'neti'

¹³ Ibid. p. 401

mystic fruit will be prepared in the closing chapter. From this hermeneutics, one popular philosophical question is raised and answered.

vi. The invisibility of Brahman

Why Brahman is invisible?

Even though Brahman is the Absolute Reality so imminent in everything and everywhere, why he is invisible? Yajnavalkya's thought provoking class on the analogy of the eye and its inability to see itself, points out that God is invisible because he is too close to human sense to be sensed. So the ordinary invisibility of God's presence is not to develop atheistic philosophy but it is to realize the being of God in the spirit, soul and the five sense organs of the body. It is evident from this argument and discussion that, the very act of human sensation itself is through the medium of invisible God as seeing is going on without seeing the eye itself by an eye. This insight is a convincing point of argument to defend modern atheism.

There are many 'full time atheists' in this world of devilish wisdom (James 3:16). They are fooling themselves as the psalmist comments (Psalm 53:1). But the fact is that they are using their mind and sense organs, which are gift and medium of the Absolute Truth, without realizing it. That is why they are called fools in Psalms 53. They do not know that all atheists are only a dead mouth piece of the God of this evil world (that is the devil), Who is described by Jesus as the Prince of this world (John 14:30). This prince of the world has an allotted role to be played by the permission of the **True Almighty God**. What is that role? The Supreme God allows that prince of devil to deceive those who do not seek the real God through prayer and silent contemplation (2. Thes. 2:10-12). "For

¹⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 401

this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe in a lie that they might be condemned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness". According to St. Paul atheism is a spiritual disease of unrighteousness, the atheist absorbs the seed of it unknowingly, while they are enjoying immoral pleasures which are sweet poison kept by the prince of this world. Before closing this hermeneutic exposition of new insight from the old Upanishadic text, relevant for today's atheist, as a special contribution of this writer, I cannot but mention another dangerous situation of another type of unnoticed atheism among the so called theists.

A secret: atheism among so called theists

What is that unnoticed dangerous atheism among the so-called theist Christians and Hindus?

May I describe it as the 'part time atheism' of hypocrites and shallow believers in the religions? They are creating all types of problems in the churches, temples, and mosques and even in monastic communities of religious faith, they are with egocentric vested interest. They have no faith of real God in their life. In their so-called faith, they have their own Gods in their own image and clothe it with the hypocritical ritualism and external existing system of beliefs. These part time atheists appear and are known as theists in the society, but really they are atheists in their secret life. These part time atheists are creating adverse situations in the life of holy mystics. Yajnavalkya had such problems from the priests under the bondage of rituals. They were part time atheists worrying about so many personal ambitions. So worrying is the symptom of hidden atheism among religious and ordinary believers (Philip 4:4-9). St. Paul advises the Philippians about the conditions of enjoying the benefits of the imminent presence of

God with them. Only those who are obeying these conditions are eligible to be consoled and benefited by the presence of the peaceful working of the invisible God in them.

"Those things, which we have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you".

This new insight is emerged from the exegesis, hermeneutics and expositions of the 'neti, neti' passages from the ancient 6th century BC Upanishadic texts. This insight is useful to create new renaissance among 'part time atheists' and 'full time atheists'. Using this message can solve communal conflict and the problem of the boredom of lonely life.

When a husband is away, wife can engage herself in contemplation and prayers for talking to her own spirit and the Supreme Reality. She can store love, hope and faith in her heart, which can be shared, with her husband through the medium of spirit and feel being loved and being consoled by the love of the creator. This experience will solve the problems of immorality in family life and terrorism. Drug addiction also can be solved by the medicine of Yajnavalkya (The mystic honey), in mystical union and contemplation. Through the daily yoga, we can collect all hidden energies in the body, soul and spirit and converge them to a single point in our heart. We use that yogic power for daily revival and accomplishing daily duties with more vigor and mystical insight.

That experience will supply heavenly bliss in body, soul and spirit. That is the mystical experience of 'Satchitananda'. So this neti marga is useful for all ordinary people also.

Yajnavalkya enjoyed the end of his mystic way and has shared it with us through his disciples. Now we can conclude this section by answering two more questions proposed in the scheme of this thesis.

vii. The five 'neti, neti' passages in B.U.

Are they used in the same meaning?

Is there any specific meaning to any specific usage of 'neti' in this Upanishad? What is the purpose of these questions here? It is to amplify the exposed insight and message we have noted just now.

From the various contexts and physical, mental and spiritual background of Yajnavalkya, even though he repeated the word 'neti' neti', we could observe that he used this negative word to articulate, his ineffable mystical experience of the Supreme Brahman. The ineffability of the mystical experience and wisdom is struggling in this word 'neti' because there were many obstacles, in his physical, mental and spiritual fields which were hindrances, to quench his quest of mystical union. He had the conviction that only with a naked soul and spirit, mystical wedlock with the Nirguna Para Brahman can be enjoyed. Even a small thing as loincloth, is also a hindrance at the time of that mystical marriage.

Then he will say and repeat his usual 'neti' towards those essential things, which were useful, even till that moment. So originality of his usage of the word 'neti' was on his mystic way from the point of departure till his point of arrival. When he realized persecution and physical adversities in his family life, he could say 'neti' to his home and neighbors and withdraw into the forest. He had an attitude of 'let it go' to all obstacles on the mystic way. As a traveler with a goal in his life, he cannot but renounce what is in his possession. By renouncing he gets new things for his journey. In a journey only by renouncing road in the rear he can proceed to the front. So the mystic way of Yajnavalkya, we can see the stone paved with invisible inscription of 'neti' on all his

steps. Then we can conclude that the mystic way of 'neti' is paved with the flat stones of 'neti' till his point of arrival. So this usage of each 'neti' is pregnant with new meaning of his readiness to renounce what is in his hand receiving new gifts with empty hands. Mystic way is to create and dispose empty hands and hearts, with empty hand he embraces the Nirguna Para Brahman and with his empty heart he could receive and accommodate Brahman by his central mystical union that is called 'Sat Cit Ananda'.

3.2 The Mystic Way Of Neti - In The Life Of Renunciation Of The Sage.

3.2.1 Critical evaluation of the concept of renunciation.

3.2.2 Relevance of Hindu way of Renunciation in India today?

3.2.3 Point of departure on the mystic way of 'neti'.

3.2.1 Critical evaluation of the concept of renunciation

- i) Definition of the Hindu Renunciation.
- ii) The interpreter of the world scripture.
- iii) Renunciation in the way of pilgrimage.
- iv) Point of departure.
- v) Three aspects of Renunciation.
- vi) Unique life of Yajnavalkya
- vii) Ultimate aim of Renunciation.

It is the proposed attempt to show that neti marga is adequate not only for a peculiar kind of mystical experience, but also in a sense necessary for authentic experience of God, for God is beyond every name and form. The particular conceptual framework of this exegesis, exposition and comparisons are already provided in above Chapters.

i Definition of the Hindu Renunciation.

We can formulate definition of renunciation after reading the concept of renunciation in the text: of B.U. Yajnavalkya addressing his wife said, "Maitreyi I am resolved to renounce the world to begin the life of renunciation. I wish therefore to divide my property between you and other wife, Katyayani", "My Lord, if this whole earth belongs to me, with all its wealth, should I through its possession attain immortality?" No. Your life would be like that of the rich. None can possibly hope to attain immortality through

wealth". "Then what need have I of wealth?" "Please, my Lord, tell me what you know about the way to immortality"¹. Here we can see a man of wealth renouncing his riches for the sake of a higher goal.

ii The interpreter of the world scripture

The interpreter of the world scripture K.L. SESHAGIRI RAO, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Virginia, comments on this Hindu concept of renunciation as follows:

"All scriptures regard, attachment to wealth and possession as a fetter to spiritual progress. Attachment promotes greed and avarice, which draw the mind downward into the core of self-centered desire. Therefore the path to transcendence, requires renunciation of wealth and the desire of its benefits"².

In the light of this text and its interpretation, we can define the Hindu renunciation.

iii Renunciation in the way of pilgrimage.

It is a continuous process on the mystic way of pilgrimage to immortality, from the more of self-centered desires and unnecessary wealth's (good wealth is unnecessary after its proper use and possession for a good cause) and it is the propelling force of the vehicle of his way of pilgrimage.

It is written in trains "less luggage more comfort, make travel a pleasure". In our pilgrimage to the Ultimate goal, we should be prepared to renounce so many luggages to make our journey a success.

¹ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. 2.4:1-3

iv Point of Departure

The point of departure is the mystical experience of soul who is lucky with the grace of God in departing from appetites and imperfections. It may pass through spiritual experience of purgation and purification to reach the state of perfection. In other words; the point of departure is the privation of all desire and complete detachment from the world. Consequently the soul becomes transformed in God by love.

v Three Aspects of Renunciation.

The renunciation has three aspects, in the context of three groups of people in this field of renunciation³.

- (1) Those in the first group distinguish religion from concern for wealth. A person must put God first, the attachment to riches is an obstacle to realize the spiritual goal⁴.
- (2) A second group of people recommends (with the support of scriptures) an attitude of non-possessiveness. People should not work with the expectation of reward, nor run after possession. Bhagavad Gita describes 'Nishkama Karma'⁵.
- (3) The third group of ascetics, describe a hierarchy of values, Righteousness and duty come above personal gain. As long as the former is upheld, the

² RAO SESHAGIRI, K.L., Renunciation of Wealth, in World Scripture, (ed), by Andrew Wilson, Paragon House, New York. 1991. p. 664.

³ cf. Ibid. p. 664

⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 464

⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 464

gain is permissible; but it is incorrect to seek gain at the expense of righteousness⁶.

vi Unique Life of Yajnavalkya

Yajnavalkya's life of renunciation was unique among his society. His creative and wise renunciation at the proper time was progressive and dynamic on his mystic way, which raised him to the status of the wisest sage in that age. That was proved by the king's Seminar on Philosophic questions and the gift of 1000 cows he got when he won in the dialogue. (Question and answers.)*

He had objection to the way of renunciation. They were physical, mental and spiritual hindrances on the mystic way. Prayer, meditation, and contemplation with fasting and silence solved his problems of his mystic way through adversities.

Bondage, darkness, and mortality were overcome by his progressive mystic way of 'neti'.

vii Ultimate Aim of Renunciation.

Jesus Christ has pointed out that His disciples should be ready to renounce home, worldly friendships and business. Then he promises a reward and that is the mystical union with the Absolute Creator. St. John of the Cross explained the meaning of the point of arrival as God where the soul of mystic passes through the dark night in order to reach the divine union. Sri. Aurobindo accepts the vedantic term 'Satchitananda' in order to explain the vision of the Ultimate Reality. Yajnavalkya reached at the point of departure and his point of arrival after the Hindu way of renunciation. However, the ultimate aim of renunciation is to reach the Highest Reality through spiritual experience.

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 464

* KRISHNANDA SWAMI., B.U. Op.cit. p. 833 - 936.

3.2.2 Relevance of Hindu way of Renunciation in India today.

- i) Attachment to wealth as fetters
- ii) Ascetic Sadhanas
- iii) Concomitant evils
- iv) Torments in the soul.
- v) New light and New goal
- vi) Collecting precious pearls
- vii) Achievement of ascetic life.

i Attachment to wealth as fetters

As we have studied this aspect of renunciation in Chapter 2.2 (2) (i - vii). All relevant reasons discussed there are relevant in the Hindu way of renunciation also because scholars have discovered a fact through their research that all scriptures in the world regard attachment to wealth and possessions as fetter to spiritual progress¹. This fact entails the way of renunciation in India also because majorities of people in India are Hindus who want their spiritual progress. So Hindu way of renunciation is relevant today because the present problems of the evil of inordinate appetite can be overcome through renunciation as Yajnavalkya achieved on his mystic way.

ii Ascetic Sadhanas.

We have already discussed what is Upanishadic teaching on renunciation. We have observed the philosophical aspects of renunciation where we saw the obstacles of renunciation were overcome by sages through their Ascetic Sadhanas². Yajnavalkya

¹ cf. World Scripture Op.cit. p. 664

² cf. III B. (a) vi

renounced his wealth and two wives and went to forest for achieving immortality and mystical union³.

iii Concomitant evils.

Concomitant evils of appetites are creating hindrances in the society now. That is the root cause of political and communal conflicts. Present weariness of souls, makes them unproductive and idle. This condition is the root: cause of drug addiction burglary and terrorism⁴. If living mystics attract them, they will get a better substitute of joy and vigor from the spiritual sources. Modern charismatic prayer groups and healing missions are attracting many drug addicts and thousands of people are enriched by it. This points out the relevance of renunciation and mystical experience today.

iv Torments in the soul

The spirit or the soul is always making an attempt to climb itself to the superior regions. But very often her efforts will be in vain because there is always a downward pull, the mental and political tensions are creating frustration and depression in life⁵. This slavery is a torment in the soul and the only way to escape from this is renunciation and faith in God.

v New light and New goal

An evil that often makes the soul blind is very dangerous in human life. Whenever there are passions of flesh and blood, there is a feeling of ecstasy, which results in blindness

³ cf. III B. (a) i

⁴ "We expect to reap what we sow. It may be healthier to recognize one's own responsibility for what happens in the body". Six outstanding Christian Philosophers and theologians have collaborated to prepare this book on Encountering Evil. It is a compendium of insight and scholarship

cf. DAVIS STEPHEN T., (ed); Encountering Evil, T and T Clark Ltd., 36 George Street, Edinburgh, U.S.A., 1981. p. 168.

towards the reality. This darkness may result in theft, murder or calamity. To avoid this darkness of the soul, we must experience the real light and that is the light of God. Then only there is a new goal and a new aim in life⁶.

vi Collecting precious pearls

We have often seen a swimmer going deep into the bottom of the sea to collect precious pearls from there. It is a laborious process involving even risk of life. On the other hand it is only a pleasure to sit by the seashore or to swim on the surface of the sea. Similarly renouncing everything in the world is not very easy. Like the swimmer we have to go forward in search of the precious pearl after renouncing all pleasures⁷.

vii Achievements of Ascetic life

Yajnavalkya's useful achievements from his ascetic life are useful to all Indians today. The point of departure on the mystic way is the starting point of renunciation as without leaving the standing place, one cannot travel, without renunciation, the life of pilgrimage is not yet started⁸.

In support of this statement a passage from the Laws of Manu can be quoted here:

“But having passed the third part of life in the forest, a man may live as an ascetic during the fourth part of his existence, after abandoning all attachments to worldly objects...By the restraint of his senses...by the abstention from injuring the creatures, he becomes fit for immortality” (Laws of Manu 6.33 – 60). There have always been heroic souls who dedicate their entire life to the solitary path.

⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 168.

⁶ cf. Ibid. 169.

⁷ cf. Introduction. P. 169.

⁸ WILSON ANDREW., (ed) Asceticism and Monasticism in World Scripture. Op.cit.p.668.

3.2.3 Point of departure on the mystic way of 'neti'.

- i Spiritual goal and point of departure
- ii Limitations before the point of departure
- iii Point of departure to Experience 'Satcitananda'
- iv Present Hindu mystic at the point of departure
- v Point of departure and solitude
- vi Self denial at the point of departure
- vii Personal experience.

i Spiritual Goal and Point of departure

In the text of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we can see the examples of the point of departure of Yajnavalkya¹. The spiritual goal of permanent happiness on the mystic way prompts Yajnavalkya to reach the point of departure. The departure is always from the temporal to eternal hence the necessity to renounce all temporality. It is very clear that a mystic has a point of departure when he gets the spiritual goal of mystic union.

ii Limitations before the point of departure

Even in the case of Yajnavalkya, there was a time limit for his mystical experience. Yajnavalkya, renounced his two wives and wealth and then only he could contemplate the bliss of mystical union². The limitation of wealth could be in the form of ownership, social status and could be a psychological condition as well. Ordinary people are unaware of the fact that 'sense of ownership' is only a phantom of the mind. To illustrate the example of a land transfer, the ownership is changed on the paper and agreed upon by the

¹ B.U. 2.4:4,5

² B.U. 2.4:1,3.

parties and in their minds but the land is existing as it was before because the owner cannot eat the property or take it to his home. Immortality is not dependent upon connection of exoteric values. A mystic's success is dependent on overcoming these phantoms of the mind which is attached to wealth in order to reach at the point of departure.

iii Point of departure to Experience 'Satacitananda'

As we have observed in the beginning of this section, the experience of Satacitananda was the target of the mystic way of Yajnavalkya and he used his entire negative adversities and positive practices for that illumination. Many mystic and even ordinary people are in search of the experience of Satacitananda through yoga and the life of devotion³. Through yoga a mystic is removing the stiffness of body to get ready for the departure. In the initial stages pain is inevitable in the practice of yoga. He overcomes this pain gradually in the hope of perfect bliss of Satacitananda.

iv Present Hindu mystics at the point of departure

We can see two types of mystics today at this point of departure. Hindu monks with total renunciation belong to the first group. They are believers of Hindu Bhakti Movement, Yogis and sages in Rishikesh and Haridwar. This first type of mystics who have passed point of departure on the mystic way. They are practicing the life of renunciation. At present even ordinary people have the opportunity to experiment the way of renunciation⁴. These ordinary mystics have moderate rejection of acquisitiveness; they

³ WILSON ANDREW., World Scripture. Op.cit. P. 129 – 131.

⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 664

regard wealth as secondary end; never overshadowing the purpose of God or the goal of spiritual advancement.

v The point of departure and solitude

Yajnavalkya's renunciation of family life is the perfect example of the necessity of solitude for reaching the point of departure on the mystic way. We can come across such mystics in history as well as today in the society. Hence the aspirant must separate himself from the world which is achieved either by physical isolation in a monastic community or by living a life of total seclusion as in the case of Yajnavalkya. For a very long time the Indian Sages have been practicing this life of renunciation far away from the madding crowd. They always had the vision before them to realize the ultimate reality⁵.

vi Self denial at the point of departure

A mystic at this point gets a deeper realization that he is trapped from flying towards this point of departure in the ego-cage of 'I', 'me' and 'mine'. It is evident now that self in the form of ego is the hiding place of all evil. One can reach the final goal of the true 'I' the real self-dedicated for Brahman who is the Supreme Self. In this stage the mystics attain dynamic power of soul with faith, hope and charity⁶. This perspective affirm the paradox that " he who loves his life loses it , and he who hates his life will keep it ."

vii Personal Experience

This thesis was written after passing the point of departure on the mystic way with the conviction that mystical experience is a good medicine for all modern problems in the society. This thesis is being written after a long period of silence and practicing

⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 668, 674, 678.

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 637 – 729.

renunciation of everything. It has been witnessed personally that hundred of people who are suffering from various diseases, problems and depressions are getting comfort and consolations daily through the way of renunciation, daily worship and mystical experience.

3.3 The Mystical Experience Of ‘Satacitananda’ By The Mystic Way Of Neti:

3.3.1 Point of arrival.

3.3.2 What is concept of emptiness in B.U.

3.3.3 Practical use of mystic way to ‘neti’ today?

3.3.1 Point of arrival

Is there any point of arrival on the neti marga? Yes. (Cf. Chapter 2.3) It has been discussed in previous section.

3.3.2 What is the concept of emptiness in B.U.?

The highest knowledge is also the highest happiness, this is a point which is driven home into the mind of king Janaka by Yajnavalkya. Swamy Krishnanda in his exposition on Sat, Cit and Ananda put it. “Our happiness is a little fraction, a finite reflection, a distorted form of the great ocean of reality, which is Bliss itself in its essence. It is Sat, Being. It is Chit, intelligence; it is Ananda, Joy”.

Brahman is the true happiness and the Supreme source of happiness. This can be very clearly illustrated through the example of a mirror. A person looking into the mirror sees his face in the mirror. But we know very well that it is not the real face but it is only reflection. Likewise happiness does exist but it is not in the objects. It is reflected in the object on account of certain prevailing circumstances¹. In addition to the Supreme Source of happiness there are lower levels of the source of happiness elucidated in B.U.They are as follows:

ISHVARA,

HIRANYA GARBHA,

VIRAT,

BRIHISPATIM,

INDRA,

GANDHARVAS.

Yajnavalkya with King Janaka discussed this concept. He explained this in the context of his dealing with the subject that the INNER REALITY is total reality, and MOKSHA is the final liberation. Satcitananda is the experience of identity with Nirguna Brahman. It is one; Sat is Cit and Ananda; Cit is in Sat and Ananda. Ananda is in Sat and Cit.

S.J.C's explanation of void and darkness are similar concepts. This experience of Sat Cit Ananda is felt in the empty heart of soul where Yajnavalkya renounced everything and set apart his soul only for the Nirguna Brahman.

The intention of renunciation was to prepare the empty heart for mystical union. The writer of B.U. is getting at the possibility of our failures of stopping our journey to the Supreme Joy, waiting with the Nirguna Brahma. His 'neti' usage is a reminder of this Upanishad, not to stop or not be enslaved by the lower levels of happiness in this world. Now we can see the new light in B.U. Why did he say 'neti', 'neti' to disciples in the background of the forest and the society².

We could see all hidden truths in the texts. Now we understand more clearly the reason and influential factors in his spirit and mind. In the light of this exposition we start our discussions on the practical use of the upanishadic mystic way of 'neti' today.

¹ cf. KRISHNANDA SWAMI., Op.cit. p. 941

² cf. KRISHNANDA SWAMI., Op.cit. p. 941

3.3.3 Practical use of mystic way of neti today

We have seen what is meant by Sat-Cit-Ananda. We can find that many scholars in the east and the West tried to study the deeper meaning of it and experience it. Sri.

Aurobindo accepts the vedantic term Sat-Cit-Ananda, as his own, in order to explain his vision of the ultimate and highest reality. But he explained it both in the light of his own spiritual experience and in the light of his theory of evolution and arrives at a sympathetic vision of God¹.

The same experience can be achieved by others also².

The mystic Yajnavalkya's pilgrimage on the Hindu mystic way of 'neti' reached at the point of departure and his point of arrival after the Hindu way of renunciation. The thought provoking and emerging insight has enough stimulation to the proposed comparative study of 'Nada' and 'neti' mystics' ways.

So let us enter into the chapter Four where we are going to compare the concepts of 'nada' and 'neti', renunciation and emptiness in both traditions.

¹ cf. NEDUMPLAKUNNEL, GEORGE., Op.cit. p. 44.

² Cf. NEDUMPALAKUNNEL, GEORGE., Op.cit. p. 44

4. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF 'NADA' AND 'NETI'

4.1 'NADA' AND 'NETI'.

4.2 CONCEPTS OF RENUNCIATION IN ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS AND YAJNAVALKYA.

4.3 CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS AND BLISS IN ST. JOHN AND YAJNAVLAKYA.

4.1 'Nada' And 'Neti'

4.1.1 Starting point

4.1.2 Meeting points

4.1.3 Arrival points.

It is evident from the previous Chapter that the exegesis and the exposition of the Hindu mystic way of 'Neti' practiced by Yajnavalkya led him to mystical experience of 'Satchitananda'. The exegesis and exposition of the Spanish mystic way of 'Nada' was practiced by St. John of the Cross who reaches the highest stage of the mystical marriage and the transforming union with the resurrected Jesus Christ. It is referred in chapter two previously. In the light of the general mysticism dealt in chapter one, and the Christian and Hindu mystic ways in the previous chapters, now we are ready to have the proposed comparative study of the mystic ways of 'Nada' and 'Neti'. The following questions are going to be answered in this chapter.

What is the starting point of departure of 'Nada' and 'Neti'?

Is there any meeting point of 'Nada' and 'Neti' on the way to the summit of the mountain of the mystical union?

Is the point of arrival alike or same?

Is there any mystical betrothal in Hindu mysticism?

What is the unique concept of Hindu mystical union in the analogy of merging of a river into the ocean?

What are the final status of the identity and the individuality of the mystic after his merging with the Brahman?

What is the new idea and thesis of this writer in this work?

After the point of arrival is there a ropeway or flight to the perfect mystical marriage of nada?

Is it the uniqueness of Christian mysticism?

Is there any other type of mystical union within Christianity other than mystical marriage (e.g. As John the Baptist was a maiden of the bride) or in the office as angels?

4.1 'Nada' And 'Neti'

Comparative study of religions in this age of inter-religious dialogue has succeeded in re-discovering many hidden truths in religious scriptures. It is a well-accepted famous fact that the original source of all goodness and truth is the Supreme one God the Almighty. His light and goodness are reflected in the nature and scriptures of different religions. We are going to observe how far these truths are evident in this comparative study of the mystic way of 'Nada' in the Spanish mysticism and the mystic way of 'Neti' in the Indian Hindu mysticism.

This study is in line with the teachings of the second Vatican council and the world council of churches¹. The teaching of the second Vatican council has pointed out the spiritual moral values found in the non Christian religions as seeds of the word, something true and holy. Now there has been a better insight into the “salvific” (saving) value of the non-Christian religions. Indian theology in their writings on non-biblical Scriptures points out that the cosmic Christ is at work revealing himself through the other religions especially in the experience of Indian spirituality².

As Yajnavalkya had influential insight and basis from the vedic Rishis and their Vedas, this writer also is doing this thesis work as the continuation of the study of Rgveda. It was conducted in 1986 for M.A. Christianity, under the University of Mysore, on Rgvedic Soteriology as comparative study of Jesus Christ and the myth of prajapathy in Rgveda³. (A Research dissertation submitted to the University of Mysore as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the master’s Degree in Christianity.)

This comparative study and evaluation of Upanishadic Hindu mystic way and the Spanish Christian mystic way starts where the above mentioned thesis concluded as follows:

“Now it is clear that out of this comparative study of Rgveda and the bible, every man can naturally state that God inspired, not only the prophets of Israel but also sages of Hinduism. But in the light of Biblical revelation and Christ’s revelation in human history, one can find out an order and priority. This would mean that though God had the plan of saving all people, he did not accomplish it all of a sudden throughout the world. He first

¹ cf. Vat II. P. 739

² Cf. AMALORPAVADASS, D.S., (ed), STATEMENTS OF NON-BIBLICAL SCRIPTURES, N.B.C.L.C., Bangalore, 1976, AP 1 - 51.

³ cf. SUNNYKUTTY, P.N., RGVEDIC SOTERIOLOGY. graduate Studies and Research in Christianity, University of Mysore Manasa Gangothri, Mysore, 1986. pp. 1 - 82.

selected the Jewish Tribe. When Yahweh came down on top of the mount Sinai, the radiance of the revelation could not be shared by the whole humanity, though its intensity may differ. Hence it could be said that Rgvedic sages had also some flashes of divine revelation as regards the salvation and liberation of man. This revelation, however, is perfectly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ⁴.

After the Vedic age of Rgveda and the Ages of the Brahmana, Yajnavalkya lived in the third stage of the ages of the Upanishads. The whole north India was Aryanized in this period with the highest truths of Hinduism. Those truths were discovered from the teachings and writings and taught in the light of the shared flashes of divine revelation on the mount Sinai as we see in the above paragraph. The source of all truth is the one absolute truth that is known as the Absolute Nirguna Brahman in Upanishads, and on the other hand in Christianity is the father in heaven. Yajnavalkya got it through contemplation and mystic way of 'neti' that Void which was known as Nirguna Brahman. Rgvedic Rishis and Rgvedic Soteriological insight of Prajapathi (Jesus in the Hindu myth of Prajapathi) inspired him on the mystic way to the experience of Satcitananda, as St John of the Cross was led to the mystical marriage and transforming mystical union with Jesus Christ, through his way of embracing cross daily (That is why he was known as St. John of the Cross)⁵.

Thus we can clearly say that both Yajnavalkya and St. John of the Cross got the mystical wisdom and insight from same ultimate Supreme Absolute Truth that is the historical incarnation of the invisible God in Jesus Christ⁶.

⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 81, 82.

⁶ cf. Colo. 1:15, John 14:6.

These truths are proved and amplified by the objective facts present in the preceding Chapters (2 and 3).

4.1.1 Starting Point of 'Nada and Neti'

As we have observed in Chapter 2 and 3 both were molded as mystics in the furnace of hardship, poverty and conflicts in their physical, mental and spiritual backgrounds. Those influential factors were providentially allowed by the great plan of God. This mystical insight is useful for all the people in all countries and all ages⁷.

Both mystics were developing their soul and spirit through narrow mystic way, which was started at the point of departure. The point of departure in the life of St. John of the Cross started at an earlier age while on the other hand Yajnavalkya entered into this point of departure at a later period of his life because he was married and had two wives. He had to wait a longer period till he distributed all his wealth among his wives to enter into the way of 'neti'⁸.

From married life of Yajnavalkya, and his successful journey on the mystic way, it is an encouraging message, which is emerging now; family people also can pass through this mystic way. This mystical experience is not a monopoly of celibates. This message is relevant to modern people who belong to married social life. Even though St. John and Yajnavalkya enter into the mystic way at different ages and circumstances, they had the experience of a point of departure, which indicates that everybody, who wants to have mystical union, must pass through this point of departure.

⁷ cf. p.94

⁸ cf. p.191

Both mystics used prayer and meditation to overcome their loneliness and troubles in this stage. Thus they got the experience as Mark Gibbard, puts it: What we cannot do, the spirit can” Now is the spirit’s springing time⁹”. They realized their mystic way of negation as a secret time of the spirit’s springtime.

4.1.2 Meeting Points of ‘Nada and Neti’

Historically there is a gap of 2000 years in between the mystic way of Yajnavalkya who lived in BC 550 and St. John of the cross who lived in the 16th century AD in Spain. Eventhough they lived in two different times and different countries, as mystics they could transcend the limits of time and space of their physical historical, and geographical background, they could meet in a common spirit of experience where there is no time and space limitation. It is a proven fact in the Bible that at his death and resurrection historical Jesus Christ transcended times and space. The cosmic resurrected Jesus is touching and meeting all spirits in all worlds¹⁰. Jesus could preach to all spirits in the spirit’s world who lived from the beginning of the world (IPeter 3:19; 4:6). In the light of this Biblical revelation, we can infer that Yajnavalkya also might have met Jesus’ preaching in the world of spirits and promoted to paradise with Adam and eve. All human spirits were created by the heavenly father even before the foundation of this world (Eph. 1:4). So Yajnavalkya’s spirit was created by the Father and kept in his son Christ before the foundation of the world. Spirit of St. John of the Cross also was there. So they were brothers before the same creator God. Both witness the glory and wisdom of the Father in Heaven in spirit even before their birth in this world. Only these physical births were in

⁹ cf. p. 198 footnote # 7

¹⁰ cf. Mathew. 28:20.

different places and times. They had congenial spiritual affinity in spirits while they were in Christ before their physical birth¹¹.

This seems to be the root cause of their meeting points in spirit, mind and ways of mystical life. These truths are common factor to all. Human society is sensitive to this spiritual common level of meeting points. They are now working for peace and communal harmony, by deepening the consciousness to the spiritual level of all people, gradually all people will be attracted and united in one point in future as envisaged in the Epistle of Paul (Eph. 1:10) and in the gospel of St. John (Jn. 17:21). Thus we have proved the meeting points of all people and all communities in all ages and religions in Jesus Christ; as anybody can find a common source of water spring to all wells in a place (when one well is deepened till the deepest level of the source of water spring). This possibility is prophesized fact and proved in the above-mentioned thesis Rgvedic Soteriology¹²

This is amplified by the quotations from Miller Samuel's book 'The Life of the Soul'; "The beginning of eternity is now. Eternity is mixed invisibly with the stuff on this earth"¹³ Yajnavalkya and St. John of the Cross got this conscience through contemplation on the mystic way of 'Nada' and 'Neti' which entails the unremitting reward of mystical experience in them which is the meeting point of 'nada' and 'neti'

"Once a man has discovered that there are realms of spirit which can be reached even here and now by his refusal to be satisfied with the meager dimensions of the world of

¹¹ Eph. 1:10 Col. 1:15-20.

¹² cf. SUNNYKUTTY, P.N., RGVEDIC SOTERIOLOGY op.cit. p. 11,12

¹³ SAMUEL, H.MILLER., THE LIFE OF THE SOUL, Word book publishers, Waco, Texas, U.S.A., 1951. p128-156.

experience and reputation, he finds himself in a warfare which is unremitting”¹⁴. Both Yajnavalkya and St. John of the cross succeeded in those spiritual way against the evil on the mystic ways and got the remittance of bliss from the Supreme reality by their refusals which are known as ‘Nada’ and ‘Neti’.

Thus experienced in prayer, meditation and contemplation, it is written by the same author. “Prayer is a thousand things, but it is always the meeting of God and man, and at that moment, there is peace that passeth all our understanding and joy that the world shall never take away”¹⁵.

Both mystics find common meeting points in their prayer life as witnessed by Miller Samuel as he is quoted here. That Biblical concept of peace and joy that passeth all our understanding is known in the Upanishad as Satcitananda¹⁶.

Eventhough mystic ways of ‘Nada’ and ‘Neti’ have meeting points they have parallel stages also as road way and railways go parallel and cross at certain stages. In parallel stages of mystic ways of ‘Nada’ and ‘Neti’, they are keeping their identity of Hindu mysticism and Christian mysticism according to their special graduations and doctrines. This comparative study is not for a mere syncretism.

4.1.3 Arrival Points

The two different arrival points of mystic ways are railway stations and Bus stands in a city, which are situated at different places. Both Hindu and Christian points of arrival on the mystic way have their own unique station of arrival. They are situated in different localities of the city of mystical experience. Both have similarities and uniqueness,

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 156.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 128.

according to their own particular theology, tradition and doctrine. There is small distance between these stations also. In fact, these points of arrival are not the terminal points of the way of the life of pilgrimage. These points are only the arrival, positive stages of mystic way. From these stations a Hindu mystic has to go up to the top of the highest summit of the Nirguna Brahman through a steep narrow ropeway which is available only to special Rishis like Yajnavalkya.

But after the Christian station of arrival point which is like a narrow railway line (as in Ooty) a Christian mystics mystical betrothal has taken place. After the mystical betrothal the bride designate is taken to the summit of the experience of mystical marriage as in a helicopter aircraft of mystical ecstasy and mystical raptures as St. Paul had in his life¹⁷.

Is there any point of arrival in mystic way of neti? Yes.

The point of arrival on the mystic ways in both the traditions is described as a spiritual emptiness for the experience of the mystical union. The beatitude preached by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5:1), the condition of poor in spirit is described in the concept of emptiness on the point of arrival. So it is clearly proved in this thesis that there is a way of negation typical of all mysticism¹⁸. We can see a self-transcending thrust intrinsic to all religions.

As proposed in the beginning of this thesis now we have the answers of the following questions. How does this way of negation which apparently negate passive affirmation about Being and nature of God¹⁹ connect with the God affirming aspects of the same traditions? Is God affirmed by those who worshipped and loved especially the love

¹⁶ cf. PHILIP. 4:6.

¹⁷ cf. II Cor. 11:12, II Cor. 12:1-4.

¹⁸ cf. p.12

devotion path typical of both later Upanishads and Christian tradition lying behind St. John of the Cross?

Are there different tensions set up within the traditions through different stages of the development of monism and Absolute Brahmanism? Yes. There are tensions among them.

Is there an integral way possible? Yes, through deeper mystical insight and inter-denominational dialogue, in the spirit level it is possible. Are both negative, positive thoughts experienced by the possible integral way? Yes, but the negative thoughts are only temporary on the mystic way only till the point of arrival.

Can we assure priorities between these two ways? Yes. The negation on the mystic way is a means and stepping stone to reach the goal of the experience of affirmation.

Is there any concept of mystical betrothal and marriage in the Hindu concept of mysticism? It is not so vivid in Upanishad as in St. John of the Cross. The prominent trend of Upanishad, is to merge into the Sea of Brahman and be hidden there, the ultimate state of mystical union²⁰. In this analogy, human individuality disappears. But on the other hand in Christian mysticism individuality of the bride i.e. present, evident and prominent in the concept of mystical betrothal and marriage. It is more consoling and stimulating than in individualistic philosophers.

But there is a vague analogy of procreation through the union of male and female present in B.U. in the context of the creation of Brahma²¹. Mystic way of 'Nada' and 'Neti'

¹⁹ cf. 3.1(3)

²⁰ cf. R.E.H op.cit. p.44

²¹ cf. p.26

starts and reaches the point of arrival in a similar stage but at different stations as railway stations and Bus stands situated in different places in a town.

4.2 Concepts Of Renunciation In St. John Of The Cross And Yajnavalkya

Points of Similarities

Is there any point of similarity? Yes.

There are many similar points in these concepts which have been noted in Chapter 3.2 (1), (2) and (3).

Meeting Points

There are meeting points in both traditions. Both were prompted by the quest of mystical union to renounce everything.

Uniqueness in St. John's renunciation

There is uniqueness in St. John's renunciation. He renounces everything at his youthful age. As St. Teresa and other disciples used St. John's way of renunciation, there was a group of disciples to Yajnavalkya.

4.2.1 Points of Similarities

As we see in 2.2 (1) i, Christian renunciation is saying no or 'nada' to self and to surrender ourselves totally into the way towards life in Christ¹. On the other hand, Hindu renunciation is total denial of all wealth for immortality².

Points of Similarities

As we observed in Chapter 2.2 (1) vii.

St. John of the Cross was conscious about the hindrances of divine union and the inevitability of renunciation on the mystic way, as steps of the mysterious ladder between the earth and heaven³.

¹ cf. Note No. 2.2 (1) iii., vii

² cf. Chapter 3.2 (1).

Yajnavalkya also had a similar concept of renunciation⁴.

4.2.2 Uniqueness in St John's renunciation

As we see the benefit of St. John's way of renunciation in the life of St. Teresa and in many disciples. (Sec 2.2. (3) vii).

Yajnavalkya's way of renunciation made him the master of the King and many other disciples⁵. We have to appreciate the spirit of the renunciation of St. John of the Cross while he had the freedom to marry. He was prompted by the divine love of Jesus and took the path of celibacy and monastic life from the age of youth. But Yajnavalkya's renunciation comes at a later stage of life after his marriage. So St. John's renunciation was more costly entailing a more worthy and earlier mystical union. Two kinds of renunciation can be observed in St. John and Yajnavalkya as noted in the world scripture⁶.

One kind of renunciation is total renunciation, the vow of poverty incumbent upon the monk. St. John of the Cross heartily welcomed it in word and spirit and reaped all its result, which is evident in his writings⁷.

Yajnavalkya also reached the stage of total renunciation in the final steps of contemplation in a hermitage in the forest⁸.

The other kind of renunciation is more moderate rejection of acquisitiveness: wealth should be regarded as a secondary end, never overshadowing the purpose of God or the

³ cf. 2.2 (1) iii. E.note.8.

⁴ cf. chapter 3.2

⁵ cf. p.210

⁶ World Scripture. P. 664.

⁷ cf. p.144

⁸ cf. p.194

goal of spiritual advancement. One's work may result in gain, that gain should never be grasped at, nor even desired if it would conflict with the demand of righteousness and required the exploitation of others. This kind of moderate renunciation is more appealing to ordinary people today⁹.

Yajnavalkya also had an achievement of new mystical revelations, which was enriching his wisdom. This fact has been noted and commented by M.P. Pandit as follows:

“But all the same, we are assured, the Upanishads are notable departures from the traditional Indian penchant (inclination) for mysticism and sacerdotalism which are important because of the new orientation in thought and outlook”².

Sacerdotalism is claiming excessive authority for the priesthood. From these facts it is evident that both traditions have a meeting point here. This message of emptiness can be applied in modern society for solving present problems of hypocrisy and ritualism religions and in churches also. It provides real freedom for mystical union when everything is renounced.

We can see similarities in both ways, in different stages of meditation and contemplation³.

⁹ cf. World Scripture. P. 664.

² PANDIT M.P., Op.cit. p. 7.

³ Cf. KRISHNANADA SWAMY. Op.cit. P. 901, 902, 903. B.U. IV. 4, 23. LIVING FLAME. I. V.5.

4.3 Concept Of Emptiness And Bliss In St. John And YAJNAVALKYA

Any meeting point

4.3.1 Is there any meeting point in the concept of divine emptiness in two traditions of the mystic way?

Any parallel stage

4.3.2 Is there any parallel stage in both concepts and experiences of divine emptiness on this mystic way?

The unique claim of Christian Mysticism

4.3.3 The unique claim of Christian mysticism in the light of the definition of mysticism.

4.3.1 Is there any meeting point in the concept of divine emptiness in two traditions of the mystic way?

The new mystical insights of St. John of the cross emerged after his departure from the traditional way of ritualism in the catholic Monastic Communities in Spain at his point of emptiness.

4.3.2 Is there any parallel stage in both concepts and experiences of divine emptiness on this mystic way?

What is unique claim of Christianity in this mystical field?

There are parallel achievements and similarities in Yajnavalkya and in St. John of the Cross. As Sri. Aurobindo observed, both Yajnavalkya and St. John of the Cross had mystic spirit that surpassed the lives and thoughts of their contemporaries and people of modern age also. A happy natural intuition was their guide even as it is observed to be elsewhere, men have not yet cultivated the rules of reasons. They were aware that the

physical world of objects that is seen before the eyes is not the whole truth of everything”⁴.

This insight has created revival in Indian philosophy and political field as well as in the catholic Monasticism from the 16th century to 20th century.

The horse sacrifice described in B.U. has influenced many thinkers in this modern age to proceed to a great spiritual advance of an evolutionary movement⁵.

St. John of the Cross was recognized by the universal catholic church as the Doctor of their church. Thus he could influence thousands of souls even now.

(3)In the context of the similarities and parallel achievements of both S.J.C and Yajnavalkya , now it is relevant to evaluate Christianity and its unique mystical claims.

4.3.3 Unique Mystical claims of Christian mysticism:

What are they ?

- (i) Jesus said “ Iam the way the truth and the life” (Jn:14:6)
- (ii) “If a man loves me, he will keep my commands and my father will love him, and we will come into him , and make our abode with him”. (Jn:14:23)

- (iii) I am the Vine, ye are branches;
He that abideth in me, and I in him,
the same bringeth forth much fruit:
for with out me you can do nothing. (Jn:15:1-5)

- (iv) Jesus unique mystical prayer:

⁴ cf. PANDIT, M.P., Op.cit. P.11.

“That they (those who heard and believed and abiding in Jesus) also may be One in Us: (Jesus and the FATHER) that the world may believe that thou hath send me”.(Jn17:21)

(v) The mystic St. Paul’s unique Christian mystical claim. The mystery of God’s will is that “in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ”.(Eph:1:10)

(vi) St. James Christian mystical claim of unique wisdom from Above. “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and Willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”. (James 3:17)

vii St. Luke’s Christian mystical unique claim of salvation through Jesus only (Acts of the Apostle. 4:12)

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved”.

There are many other unique statements of Christian mystical claims in the Bible. But the above mentioned claims represent all other words of claims in the Bible. We are going to evaluate these claims critically and objectively. To a non-Christian these claims seem to be narrow, one sided and the slogans of converting all others into Christianity. In the

⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 15.

history, British colonial powers have misunderstood the spirit of these claims and misused them for their vested interest of colonialism in India.

But after second Vatican Catholic Church started investigation of the mystical claims of Christianity in a new light. Indian Christians have formulated a new Indian Christian theology in a new broad outlook respecting all other religions. In this latest context, while this thesis work is intended for the communal peace in India, we have to evaluate the above claims in a new hermeneutics for the exposition that which is relevant today.

We have to do this task of comparative study in the light of anew definition of what is, and what is not real mysticism.

The unique claims of Christian mysticism in the light of the definition of mysticism:

What is not mysticism?

“Mysticism” is one of the most abused words in the English language: it has been claimed as an excuse for every kind of occultism, dilute transcendentalism, religious or aesthetic sentimentality and bad metaphysics. It has been used in different sense by religion, poetry and philosophy¹. Mysticism is not excited or hysterical emotionalism, nor sublimated eroticism, nor mere illusive visions and revelations, nor irrationalism². It is not hypocrisy or escapism from the real practical way of religious life.

Mysticism is the inspirer of whatever is best in man³. All achievements of human society are out of the best fruits of men who have been inspired by the source of everything good.

¹ cf. UNDERHILL, EVELYN., MYSTICISM, London and Tornado, J.M. dent and Sons Ltd., 1914. P. 14, 15

² cf. INGE, W.R., MYSTICISM IN RELIGION, Chicago, 1948. P. 154.

³ RUSSEL, BERTRAND., MYSTICISM AND LOGIC AND OTHER ESSAYS, Longmans Green and Co., London, 1921. P.1

Mystics, who have mystical union with GOD, experience the Supreme Source of whatever is best in man. Mysticism is the systematic scientific study of the human experience of union with the creator who is eagerly coming down to the level of creatures with the love of a bridegroom. Mystics have witnessed different stages of mystical experience as mystical betrothal and mystical marriage between Bridegroom the creator and the bride the human soul. So mysticism is not an occult science as astrology or magic. Every creature is expected to be united into the creator, eventhough only a minority of creatures are mystically in union with him. According to the Bible, God the Supreme creator has a big program of gathering together in one, all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth. (Eph. 1:10) Thus mystical experience is open to all. Mysticism is not mere transcendental which is not based on mere personal experience or reason alone. Christian Mysticism is based on reasonable experience of mystics in the truth (Resurrected Jesus) eventhough all mystical experiences are ineffable. Mysticism is not mere aesthetic sentimentality, which is emotional attachment to beautiful aspects of religion. Mystics renounce everything to be free from the slavery and emotional attachments.

ii. The positive aspect of negation

. The negation of a mystic is a means to the end of affirmative mystical union with God, without whom all other possessions are mere bondage's. Mysticism has nothing to do with bad metaphysics, which deals with abstractions in philosophy. Mysticism has presented objectively the experience of mystics who inspire the society for all types of creative works. Mysticism is not hysterical-emotionalism, not sublimated eroticism that is

only evaporated sexual desires; mystics have received the gift of transforming the sexual creative power into spiritual creative power. Mystics have the sexless attitude of the kingdom of God⁴. They are fully satisfied with mystical marriage. Mysticism is not based on mere visions or revelations. A mental patient also may have revelations and visions, which are only symptoms of disease. Only discerned and reliable visions and revelations are considered in mysticism. The visions and revelations of the mystics are usually misunderstood and rejected by the contemporary people. The famous Spanish mystic of St. John of the Cross was well recognized only after 300 years.

iii. Passive waiting on the mystic way for active service in the Society

Only in this 20th century men begin to appreciate his greatness and his reliable visions⁵. Mystics with their deep discerning insight are spiritual fathers who are led to the midst of society, which is full of problems⁶.

Jesus Christ as a model mystic Christ spent 30 years in mystical union with his heavenly Father and he could solve all problems of thousands of people within three years of his public ministry. Mysticism deals with both the contemplative period of passive long waiting and active miraculous works of mystics. The coin of mysticism has both sides of passive waiting and active transforming works in the society. Mystics are like emergency electric lamps, which are silently being charged in the daytime and will be useful in the night when there is no supply of electricity. Only mystics have been benefited in the emergency period of dark social problems. So mysticism is not escapism from the practical field of society.

⁴ Mat. 22:3.

⁵ Ref. Spirit of Flame by E. Allison Press, p. 96.

The mystic way of negation is to approach Jesus for a personal encounter and union with Him. After mystical union the way of affirmation begins with Jesus. After the renunciation of everything, Jesus the precious treasure is possessed by the mystic, then he is bound to the smooth yoke of Jesus. Thus Christian mystic's life of pilgrimage process into the positive glorious way to Heaven. After taking the yoke of Jesus, a mystic starts studying in the supreme university of Christ (Col. 2:3) in the college of tranquility.(Ps:46:10). This is the foundation and secret of the mystical theology based on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

For providing this truth, we have to start a new inter-religious and inter-church dialogue where charismatic prayers and counseling can be done freely. The Holy Spirit will have the supreme control of everything and mystical experience is shared to common people of having simple child like obedience and faith.

iv Modern Charismatic movement has proved these unique claims of Jesus:

Only experienced mystics can successfully discern the meaning, cause and effect of modern charismatic movement, embracing all religions. It is being experienced in charismatic prayers that only mystical experience is the better substitute for drug addiction and terrorism, many such causes are being cured now.

Only at deeper mystical level, all churches and religions can have a better understanding. So in the context of modern inter-religious, inter-church dialogues and charismatic revival, by having mystical union with the loving God. We can fulfil the prophecy of Eph. 1:10 unification of all things in Christ and St. John 17:21 and realize the practical lessons of Jesus who wants to walk with us, as he promised in Mt. 11:28, 29.

⁶ CULLIGAN, K.G.O.C.D., ed., Spiritual Direction, Contemporary reading, Living Falme Press, Box 74,

“Take my yoke and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: Ye shall find rest unto your soul”.

v Substance of Christian unique mystical claim

In the light of the substance of Christian mystical experience and its definition, we can sum up the unique claim of Christian mysticism as follows:

“Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, (Supreme, Absolute God) the first born of every creatures, for by HIM were all things created and for Him; And he is before all things, and by Him all things consist: He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence”⁷.

This is the mystical doctrine and the fundamental faith of all Christian churches all over the world. 300 crores of people on the earth now have understood its truth: but it is thought provoking and notable that, this witness of the uniqueness of Jesus has been written by the most Brilliant scholar in the first Roman empire in which he was a prestigious citizen also. Not only that, he was the persecutor of all Christians at that time. He was an antichristian revolutionary who was against the unique claims of Jesus of Nazareth who was the historically dead person on the Cross. How could such an antichristian, revolutionary, Roman citizen write completely opposite statement as written above in his epistle?

vi An antichristian Roman citizen witnesses Christ’s uniqueness:

Locust valley, New York, 11560. P. 9 – 19.

⁷ St. Paul. Colo. 1:15-18.

St. Paul stands here as the representative of all religions, atheists and all antichristians all over the world. If such a great scholar got a mystical revelation and locution on the way to Damascus directly from the resurrected Jesus Christ, and if that conviction has spread to the majority of the whole world now over 300 crores of Christians in the world the remaining 1/3rd population will also soon get the same revelation as the fulfillment of the irrevocable prophecies of Bible as is written in (Philippians 2: 10-11). This is the miracle of mystical experience and mystical revelations. This happens in the deep levels of spirit and appears in the consciousness of man through his soul. Then he cannot but accept it. St. Mary was the first person in the history that got this revelation and she conceived this word of truth as the visible image of the invisible. She got this truth as pollen in the flower of her heart, realized him, as a child in her womb. The same process of incarnation is going on from the 1st century till now as Meister Eckhart experienced and exposed it in his life. One day, in future every human being will get this experience because it is misunderstood as a process of proselytizing or nominal conversion of non-Christians into any denomination or external church organization.

vii A Hindu with Christian Mystical Experience

Now it is a fact that there are so many non-Christians with the experience of union with Christ and the same time there are so many so called nominal Christians without knowing the mystical experience of union with him. This means that everybody can enjoy mystical union with Christ without converting into any Christian church or organization. There is an invisible Christian Community in Paradise where there is no church difference of denomination of different religions or castes. Now by uniting oneself with the cosmic Jesus, one can enjoy Jesus Christ's love and mystical union by obeying his words only.

Jesus Christ is not a monopoly of any Christian denomination. Jesus is the gift of salvation as bumper lottery present from the heavenly government, given to the whole humanity⁸. So Jesus is the common gift of salvation to all religions, castes or societies. This is the modern meaning of the uniqueness of Christian mystical claim. Thus the peripheral conflicts of religions disappear at the center of religions circle by boring deeper wells of inter-religious dialogue with mystical intuition and insight. Such new bore wells will be springs of water of salvation as prophesied by the great prophet Isaiah in 12:3. “therefore with Joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”.

At this mystical core level of religious experience, all religions can meet together by deepening the wells of understanding through mystic way and mystical union with the center of all creatures. Thus Christian unique claim as in Eph. 1:10 of “gathering together in one, all things in Christ and that they may be one” will be fulfilled in the end of this age, as many other old prophecies were fulfilled in the history so far. We can describe this exposition and doctrine as a new Indian Christian mysticism for all Indians. **Thus we can see the meeting point of all in Christ here.**

⁸ John 3:16.

**5. CONTRIBUTIONS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS AND
BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD IN THE FIELD OF MYSTICISM**

5.1 CONTRIBUTIONS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS IN THE FIELD OF
CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM.

5.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF YAJNAVALKYA IN THE FIELD OF HINDU
MYSTICISM.

5.2 HIDDEN NEW CONTRIBUTIONS OF MEETING POINTS ON THE MYSTIC
WAYS OF NADA AND NETI.

What are the Criteria of Contributions?

In Christian Mysticism?

In Spanish literature and in other languages.

In Catholic Church Monastic, Ascetic Theology.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF ST. JOHN

What is the Criterion of Contributions?

In Mysticism

In Christianity

In the Whole World

In the Literature

(c) In the Catholic Church

Any other Contributions

CONTRIBUTIONS OF B.U.

(a) In Mysticism:

In Hinduism

(b) In the Whole World

In Literature

In the Indian Hindu Society

Any other Contributions.

MEETING POINTS

Any meeting points?

Any conflicting points?

Any solution for communal conflict today?

5.1 Contributions of St. John of the Cross in the Field of Mysticism.

What are the Criteria of Contributions?*

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St. John of the Cross was doubtless a profound contemplative, (mystic) theologian and poet, but in unusual combination he was at the same time a co-founder, reformer, and busy administrator”¹.

Mystics always wanted to be unknown and hidden in God. So they seldom attempted to record all their contributions and services they have done to the whole humanity of all ages. So we cannot collect and find out all contributions of St. John of the Cross and Yajnavalkya now. Yet, in the light of their writings we are trying to discuss their

* We can see all aspects of Contribution of St. John of the Cross, in the opening paragraph of the introduction to the Book Collected Works of ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS by its translator KIERAN KAVNAGUGH

¹ cf. Ibid. p. 15.

contributions mainly under their heads of mysticism, literature and monastic ascetic theology. This is the criterion with which we search and arrange their contributions in a systematic way.

5.1.1 In Christian Mysticism

Contributions of St. John the Cross in the field of Christian Mysticism. According to Fr. Constile O.C.D. “St. John of the Cross is undoubtedly one of the greatest mystics who ever lived”. His intention of mystical writings was the dynamic growth of souls in union with God. He charted the course they must follow to achieve divine intimacy, reaching a perfect union. As he intended he became the reliable director of mystics on the narrow mystic way. The spiritual needs of men are always basically the same in all places and in all ages. So he is and he was, and he will be a spiritual director of all aspirants on the mystic way³.

As commented by catholic Herald, E. Allison Peers who has translated all works of St. John of the Cross from Spanish as nearly as possible to convey the original meaning by which we can evaluate his contributions from his works⁴. He described St. John of the Cross as the MYSTIC’S MYSTIC. His messages are relevant for the world today⁵. He has been further described as unique, seen in the unity, range and method of his mystical writings, in its intense subjectivity, which underlies an objectivity of form and in the variety of his attainments⁶.

³ cf. Ibid. p. 13. Cf. P.A.E., (Trans and ed), Spiritual Contacts, St. John of the Cross, Image Book edition, U.S.A., 1961. p. 1.

⁴ Cf. P.A.E., (Trans and ed), Spiritual Contacts, St. John of the Cross, Image Book edition, U.S.A., 1961. p. 1.

⁵ cf. PEERS. E.A., Spirit of Flame, A Study of St. John of the Cross, S.C.M. Press Ltd. 56, Bloomsbury Street London, W.C.I. p. 114-117.

⁶ cf. Ibid. p. 94 – 103.

5.1.2 In Spanish Literature and in other Languages

He is known as poet's poet in verse and in prose⁷. The oriental imagery and analytical skill of the "medieval scholar combine in an intense style which reflects not only the magnificence of the saint's spiritual vision but the full flowering of Spanish poetic genius" (Forward of the Collected Works).

Attractiveness of his teachings is another contribution in the field of literature. His teaching methodology expressed through his literary works is attractive to all Christians today. He restores a divine transcendence. He is a realist, who presented things as they are. His severity is wholesome and tracing. He certifies to us of the possibilities of union with God. He holds up to us high ideals through his literary works.⁸

Geoffrey Parrinder⁹ highlighted the contributions of St. John as follows:

"St. John of the cross is noted for his doctrine of the 'ascent' and the 'dark night of the soul'. The soul is purified by the 'night of the senses' and being detached from outward forms of it subsists in pure faith. Then there is a 'dark night of the spirit', a second purification, usually with intense suffering. Finally there is union in the 'living flame of love'. St. John of the cross is generally regarded as an austere saint, teaching utter abandonment of forms and helps in 'nothingness, nothingness, nothingness'. Yet his writings are classics of Spanish literature, and his poems in particular, breathe both beauty and devotion. Here the unity of the

⁷ Ibid. p. 104 –113.

⁸ cf. P.E.A., Spirit of Flame. P. 9

soul with God is seen to follow the example of the divine unity in the trinity, an important example for the mystics of the east and the west in Christianity.”¹⁰

According to this observation, St. John’s mystic way of “nada” is hidden in his repeated usage of ‘nothingness’. It is not a mere ‘nothingness’. But it is full of mystical intuition and provides insights for the positive experience of union. The apparent “nothingness” means nothing to worldly people, but for mystics that void nothingness is the sweet, secret, empty, hidden bridal chamber.

5.1.3 In Catholic Church Monastic, Ascetic Theology.

Clement X beautified John of the Cross on January 25th 1675. Benedict XIII canonized him Dec 26th, 1926. Pius XI declared him Doctor of the Universal church on August 24th 1926¹¹. From these official documents it is evident that the very life and writings of St. John of the Cross were a great contribution to the Entire Catholic Church. His life, experience, and attitudes. As expressed through his writings are the basis of modern monastic theology of asceticism in the religious orders of the Catholic Church especially in the Carmelite order. His greatest contribution is his deep sense of vocation with faith, hope and love of the lord in minute things in his persecutions in the jail. He regarded his final persecution as a kindly visitation from God in answer to his prayers. This attitude is the best contribution to all Christians in all ages, because all Christians are expected to

⁹ GEOFFREY PARRINDER, *Mysticism in the World Religions*, oxford University Press, New York, 1976. P. 153

¹⁰ cf. *Ibid.* p. 153.

¹¹ cf. BRUNO., *St. John of the Cross*, London, 1931. P. 360.

bear their own cross daily with Jesus¹². St. John was known much, by rich and by poor, as a spiritual adviser, and for his ‘discernment of spirits’¹³. St. John’s life as a contemplative mystic, his philosophical writings as a wise theologian, his poems by his poetic genius, his cooperation to build monasteries and convents, his life as a reformer and his loving helping ministry as an administrator are notable contributions in his life. It is proved and described in a book by Alain Gupta, ‘ Reflections of Mystic Experience’¹⁴

¹² cf. Ibid. p. 362

¹³ cf. CLESOLD. S., *The Wisdom of Spanish Mystics*, Sheldon Press, London, 1977. P. 10.

¹⁴ Seasbury Press, New York, 1982. P. 104

5.2 Contributions Of Yajnavalkya In The Field Of Hindu Mysticism

5.2.1 In Hindu Mysticism

5.2.2 In the literature of India and around the world

5.2.3 In the Hindu society.

5.2.1 In Hindu Mysticism (Through Brihardaranyaka Upanishad)

The profound thinkers of early India had put earnest attempts to solve the problem of the origin, the nature and the destiny of man, and of the universe or more technically the meaning and value of 'knowing' and 'being'. These useful efforts of thinkers are represented in B. U. together with Yajnavalkya. In the long history of man's endeavor to grasp the fundamental truths of being, his metaphysical treatises in Upanishad are well known now¹. In B. C. 6 he had exercised a continuous influence upon the entire Indian thought, which has now made itself, felt in the West also². As a mystic, Yajnavalkya's mystical writings in B. U. had awakened the searching spirit of the Indian and Western Philosophers to the ultimate reality on the mystic way of "neti" through the mystic honey in contemplation of "Bramhan"³. It is a veritable mine of wisdom which is the most notable contribution⁴. The enlightenment of consciousness to the perfect being is the entire process of this wisdom⁵.

¹ cf. HUM. B.R.E., Op.Cit. P. 7

² cf. Ibid. p. 1

³ KRISHNANADA SWAMY., Op. Cit. (Front Flap)

⁴ cf. Ibid. p. 4

⁵ cf. Ibid. p. 34

5.2.2 In the literature of India and Around the world.

Robert Earnest Hume, Ph.D., has published a long systematically arranged Bibliography of books on Upanishads in India and Abroad. It covers 56 pages of different types of books on Upanishads⁶. It is evident that Yajnavalkya's writing of B. U. has provoked creative thoughts in many scholars. B. U. has been translated into German, English and other world languages⁷.

M. P. Pundit (An author of 40 books on Upanishads, yoga, Veda and tantra) observed the contribution of Upanishad:

“The Upanishads alone entitled to represent the true Indian spirit, in the sphere of religion, philosophy and spirituality”⁸. From this witness it is evident that Yajnavalkya as a teacher of B.U contributed new insight and spirit of Indian philosophy, religion and spirituality through his life and writings.

5.2.3 In the Indian Hindu society

B. U. has influenced many philosophers and mystics in India. They have utilized his message for social and political revivals with religious renaissance. Sri. Aurobindo is one notable philosopher, mystic and politician, who is known in India and Abroad. He has greatly contributed to the renaissance of Hinduism. He got the inspiration from B. U⁹. His explanation of Upanishadic vision, God and man consciousness - Force, delight of existence of bliss, the seal of divination of man, his new conception of yoga, self sacrifice of works, concepts of renunciation, are notable contributions of Yajnavalkya to Indian

⁶ cf. Op. Cit. p. 459-515

⁷ cf. Ibid. p. 465

⁸ cf. Ibid. p. 5

⁹ cf. Op. Cit. Preface

society through Sri. Aurobindo. Other philosophers like Dr. Radhakrishnan, Mr. Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer, while judge of Supreme Court of India, mentioned mystical confluence of higher consciousness of Brahman and lower consciousness of man. He got this idea from B.U. through Aurobindo. As he puts it:

“the higher consciousness is the consequence of confluence between the human ascend and divine descend. The breakthrough is achieved by few. The breakdown is the lot of many. I hope with your unusual experience you will rationalize and illuminate your thesis to the edification of the materialist and begotten fractions of mankind”¹⁰.

¹⁰ From a personal letter of V.R. KRISHNA IYER who sent it to a social worker George Philip Geophi, who retired as a pilot from Royal Indian Air Force.

5.3 Hidden new contributions of meeting points on the mystic ways of nada and neti

5.3.1 What is the newly discovered meeting points on the mystic way of nada and neti?

‘Deepened wells of salvation’ (Isaiah .12:3). New meeting points of Hinduism and Christianity at the level of the water of spirits.

5.3.2 Practical application of these new insights in the current problem in India: Is it a preparation of a synthetic instant cool drink of mystical apple juice of nada-neti mystic way?

5.3.3 Is there any possibility of any conflicting points on these mystic ways now or in future? Yes, reason being the need of discerning the source of wisdom: James 3:13- through an electronic “spirito-meter”

5.3.1 What Are The Newly Discovered Meeting Points On The Mystic Way Of Nada And Neti?

(Ref: Chapter 2.1 (2) ii; 2.1(3) vii

The uniqueness of Christian nothingness with these negative and positive sides has a common meeting point. The nothingness of nada in the western mysticism has a clear meeting point with the void of neti in Eastern mysticism .

The famous Christian mystic St. Paul* has witnessed the practical instant utility of mystical experience of union. (Who had a mystical confrontation with the resurrected Jesus Christ on a bright noon in the beginning of the 1st century.). The mystic way of (nada) nothingness (I Cor 2:2 knowing only crucified Jesus) made him available to all poor needy seekers of peace. He was an instant helper of everyone with problems.

Yajnavalkya was also such a helper of his disciples and even to the ruling king. This

attitude and power is the result of nada and neti of St. John and Yajnavalkya. In this context we can apply this technology of instant help to all needy, people in the society, through prayer, contemplation, silence, counseling, and a charismatic healing mission. It is out of this that St.Paul commands his disciple Timothy to be instant in season and out of season. To help others through preaching the word of God, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine. (II Timothy 4:2). Only a mystic[↓], like St.Paul travelling on the mystic way of nada and neti, can obey such a laborious instant task. So, this new meeting point of nada and neti can be considered as fruit of an apple tree, of mystical experience. It was through the mystic way of nada and neti SJC produced the ready fruit of the instant help to others. St.Paul has written (Gal 5:22) that love and helping others are mystical fruits of the Holy Spirit, in union with a believer. Thus going through the mystic way of nada, and neti anybody can produce this apple of loving help, to all people. To be an instant helper of other people, one needs the mystical fruit of nada and neti.

5.3.2 What is another problem to be solved in practical life here?

Anybody can be instant helper in the season of fruits, but a tree cannot produce fruits in all seasons. Then, how can we be instant out of season? To solve the practical problem of being instant helper to all out of season, we have to develop a new technology of making synthetic apple juice of mystical fruits and keep its essence always in the heart, to be instant out of season, by diluting the concentrated essence of synthetic 'Nada Neti' fruit juice in the water of salvation, prophesized in Is. 12:3 (water of salvation)

[↓] cf. Christian mysticism, New Millennium encyclopedia Compact Disc, 1999, Simon & Schuster Inc. and its licensors.

We can adopt the latest technology of synthetic apple juice making here. Synthetic, chemical and artificial apple juice also can be made and used even when apples are out of season. We can apply it in mysticism. Thus we will be ready to supply ‘Nada Neti’ synthetic essence of apple juice of mystical experience which is a combination of the essence of eastern ‘Neti’ and Western ‘Nada’. This instant cool drink will quench the thirst for drug addiction, terrorism and communal conflicts.

5.3.3 Is there any possibility of any conflicting points on this mystic way now?

The greatest contribution of Eastern and Western mysticism is the discerning power of mystics in the practical field of evil and good. This power can be stored and used to illuminate the dark vague areas of human deception and confusion through the techniques of yoga and contemplation. Modern mystics can be used as mystical meters to measure and discern the source of human wisdom, visions, locutions, and such other mystical phenomena.

Everybody in the philosophical field appreciates now the wisdom of the Upanishads but, in perfect discerning of this wisdom, we will be able to see different kinds of wisdom in it. All wisdom are not so good and fruitful. For the discerning of all mystical wisdom’s St. James as a trainee of mystics has succeeded in pointing out what “wisdom from above” is, which is useful and fruitful. But there are other seemingly good wisdom’s, in the mystical philosophical field. They are referred to in the Bible as “earthly, sensual and devilish (James 3:15). These types of wisdom are harmful in the long run. They have their own identity as follows. “But ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts... this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish. For where there is envying and strife there is confusion and every evil work... with partiality and

hypocrisy”. The wisdom from the above shows, out of good conversation works with meekness, purity, peacefulness, gentleness, mercifulness, and fruitfulness.

Such genuine pure mystic life and attitudes are easy to be interacted due to absence of partiality and yielding nature. With these fruits and symptoms, we can discern whether a mystic’s wisdom is from above or from the devil. All modern terrorism, and communal conflicts are originated from the devilish wisdom, from the sensual and earthly evils. A true mature mystic with deep and clear discerning capacity can be described as a mystical electronic ”SPIRITOMETER”. Such an ideal mystic is enriched by the good aspects of all types of mystical experiences, in the east as well as the west. They can have unity among diversity. They will not cling unnecessarily to anybody or anything. They are pilgrims dynamically moving towards God renouncing everything for the Lord. Everyday renounced things are “passing milestones” on the narrow mystic way of nada and neti.

6. CONCLUSION OF THE THESIS 'NADA' AND 'NETI' MYSTIC WAYS

- i) What is the substance of the new definition and relevance of mysticism in the context of history and its nature?
- ii) What is the uniqueness of St. John of the Cross and the new message and insight emerging from the mystic way of 'Nada' leading to the mystical union? (Mystical Marriage).
- iii) What is the significance of Yajnavalkya and new messages and insight from the mystic way of 'Neti' leading to the Hindu mystical union? (Satchidananda).
- iv) What is the Hindu - Christian meeting points on the mystic way of 'Nada' and 'Neti'? In the context of the concepts of renunciation point of departure and points of arrival on the mystic way of Nada as a roadway and Hindu mystic way of neti as a narrow railway gauge – sometimes parallel and sometimes crossing at meeting points.
- v) The unique position of Jesus Christ on the mystic way of Nada and Neti as cosmic Christ beyond, church denomination and religions, a ropeway from the point of arrival to the throne of God in a heavenly helicopter and space ship to paradise. These are three-dimensional.

- i) **What is the substance of the new definition of mysticism in the context of its nature and historical survey with its relevance today?**

The new history making mystic as a portable TV

The perfect paradigm of Christian mystical experience can be seen in the life of St. Mary, the mother of Jesus who is the ideal mystic. Both of them were responsible for the beginning of the new era of 'ANNO DOMINI' (A.D), which is based on a historical incident of the venerated day of annunciation on March 25th. That day is commemorated as the perfect day of perfect history making mystical marriage of Virgin Mary with the Holy Spirit, resulting in the incarnation of the invisible God as the visible image of God. (Col. 1-15, Lk. 1-38). So today Christian mystical experience is the continuation of the incarnation of Christ in an individual life. Today's mystical experience can also make new history in every society, as the fanatic anti-Christian Roman citizen Saul had unexpected mystical union with Jesus on the way to Damascus. He also made new history in himself in the whole of Europe and Palestine (Acts 9). That anti-Christian persecutor of Christians became the irrevocable witness of the risen Jesus Christ. It is the Apostle Paul who had many mystical phenomena in his life of prayer and mystical contemplation.

A mystic can be scientifically described as a living portable television set with a free personality. The possibility of mysticism brought up to date for the solution of current problems, then view the mystic as a man of action, in the background of the study of mysticism and the historical survey, conducted in chapter one. It was to achieve a systematic exegetical study proposed in the introduction. The purpose of this study was to

contribute insight and enrichment of wisdom. It is intended to see old mysticism in a new light and a new perspective, to be prompted to creative actions today.

ii) The new insight of the uniqueness of St. John of the Cross.

The proposed new insight and dynamic wisdom from above, (James 3:16) is to present the mystic as a man of action. In chapter two, the mystic St. John of the Cross, his mystical way of interpretation and exposition and his mystical marriage after passing through the point of departure and arrival to the state of divine emptiness for mystical union, - all these facts were presented in chapter two where we can see the relevance and influential physical, mental and spiritual background of his new insight into the uniqueness of St. John of the Cross as a poet, mystic and theologian is inspiring to modern people.

iii) New messages and insight from the way of 'Neti'

What is the significance of Yajnavalkya and new messages and insight from the mystic way of 'Neti' leading to the Hindu mystical union today? During the 25 centuries from BC 6th century, devoted readers have been attracted to this mystic way of 'neti'. To every Indian Hindu, Upanishad is what the New Testament Bible is to Christians. B.U. has great importance, even in the present day.

Adversities in the life of sages compelled Yajnavalkya to proceed on the narrow mystic path to the Brahman for his mystical union. Today any man of faith, hope and love can utilize any adversities as a propelling force to proceed on this narrow mystical way without lustful eyes and pride of life, develop meditation and contemplation through

Yoga. We can also utilize every obstacle and evil attraction for turning our attention to God and prayer, for attaining the mystical union.

The exposition of the mystic way and the mystical experience of Satcitananda through renunciation made it clear that to a mystic with the ultimate goal of union with the Brahman, all renounced things are stepping stones and mile stones on the progressive path of the way of 'Neti'.

iv) Hindu Christian Meeting Points

What are Hindu Christian meetings points on the mystic way of 'Nada' and 'Neti'?

In the context of the concept of renunciation, point of departure, and point of arrival on the mystic way of 'Neti' as roadway and Christian mystic way of 'Nada' as a narrow railway, these two ways start somewhere near the bottom of the mountain of the obstacles and barriers of mystical union. Both mystic ways proceed as roadways and narrow railways. Sometimes they meet and cross each other through level crossings or fly over bridges. Both ways reach somewhere near the top of the mountain as points of arrivals with negative and positive aspects of divine emptiness. Experiences of both traditions in this stage have similarities but they have their own identity as a bus stand and railway station have their own special place and fashions. Both are within a small distance – both stations may be in the same city or town. The Hindu void neti and Spanish nothingness of Nada are very similar and have meeting points on this way as in the level crossing; both ways touch each other.

v) The Unique position of Jesus Christ.

The unique position of Jesus Christ on the mystic way of Nada and Neti is a cosmic universal savior God, beyond organized church denominations and manmade religions. After reaching the point of arrival at the summit of the mountain of mystical betrothal and divine emptiness, a mystic passes from the mystic negative way of Nada and Neti. Only with a special grace from above both types of mystics can reach the perfect experience of mystical union with Satcitananda or mystical marriage with the heavenly bridegroom. This last stage of the mystic way can be described with the analogy of rope way and helicopter. The way of 'Neti' proceeds on the ropeway to the experience of the merging with Brahman as a ropeway of carriage goes through the clouds and mist on the top of the mountain. Then on the other hand, a Christian mystic is taken in the helicopter of mystical rapture, ecstasy and levitation up to the bosom of the bridegroom Jesus Christ.

In these modern times of the development of technology of space travel, Jesus may be used as a rocket of speedy and quick mystical experiences. As St. Paul had such a flight to the stage of third heaven as he has described in II Cor. Chapter 12, after his mystical betrothal recorded in Chapter 11: 2 of IICor. Ordinary people can also enjoy mystical experiences. In order to be an obedient Christian and admirer of all, good advises in all scriptures, Hindu or Christian, ordinary mystics can cultivate the fruit of mystical experience as apple fruits. In the season apples can be eaten and shared with others. But out of season instant mystics, can be of help to the whole society. As St.Paul demands (II Tim. 4:1-4) we need the "Synthetic mystical apple juice of Nada Neti mystic way'. Thus in season of favorable mystical experience we can take more time for contemplation and

yoga practices. Then we can prepare the essence of the 'Nada' 'Neti' , apple juice, to be used out of season, while we are busy with unexpected programs and other adversities. In the famous book 'THE WAY OF A PILGRIM'^{**} the Russian Mystic has very clearly explained how he was capable of ceaseless praising of God in his mystic way. St. Paul in his letter to The Thessalonians (1 Thes 5:16,17) has clearly stated that we should have ceaseless praising of God. I think that even if we are very busy, by deep breathing exercise of Yoga and small mystical prayers of 'Nada' 'Neti' essence, we will be capable of this ceaseless praising of our God. In this way a mystic's soul is kept pure and poor in spirit. Such mystic's are peace making children of the heavenly FATHER, as envisaged in the beatitude (Mathew 5: 1-10). Nothingness 'nada' is the 'Jesus shaped – vacuum' in the human soul. The entrance of Jesus only fills it and fits perfectly and in the union with him this 'nada' is filled and the soul is in perfect mystical union.

Before the union ,all dispelling factors should be removed from man as quoted in the Bible: (1-John 2; 15-16) The world and the lusts in the world are hated by the Father because human soul is led to death by the lust of the eye and flesh with pride of life.

As long as man is moving on the conveyor belt of destruction of world's lust and pride, the Father can not attract him. Man has sold himself to evil through unbelief and disobedience (Isaiah 50:1-2; 2 king 17:17). The evil principalities and wicked rulers of this world have authority over those who are dead in lust and pride. Only resurrected part of human personality can be united to Christ. In baptism, a believer's spirit and soul are elevated to heaven (Ephesian2: 1-10). Redeemed units of soul are resurrected during prayers in Holy Spirit for the continuation of union with Jesus. When the Spirit of man's

^{**} FEDOTON. G. P., THE WAY OF A PILGRIM, in A Treasury of Russian Spirituality, Nordland

candle is lightened by the Holy Spirit (Proverbs 20: 27; Psalms 18:28), the melting wax of the candle (soul) is transformed into spiritual light as physical light traveling 1,860,000 miles per second. That spiritual light is joined to Jesus' enlightened body in heaven. All human life of soul released from the body of a Christian is elevated to the body of Jesus and be hidden there until Jesus Christ's second coming (Colossians 3: 1-4). Everyday at every time, a believer's soul can be transformed through the spiritual fire of faith and love. Through this conversion of soul she enters into the kingdom of God which is the experience of righteousness, peace, and joy in Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17) Through the daily fighting against the right of evil in the soul, purification, burning the candle of spirit, and the ceaseless praising of the Lord, man can be one in Christ gradually.

The meeting points of all in Christ was envisaged by the prophet and apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians 1: 9-10. But it is not yet fully fulfilled as projected by the great prophet Moses in Deuteronomy 7:21-23. The experience of the Promised Land of Palestine by the old Israelites was the shadow of the experience of the kingdom of God in the New Testament period now. The capturing of the old Promised Land of milk and honey was, 'by little and little.' Just like that the New Testament promised the experience of the union of all in Christ in the kingdom of Christ is also 'by little and little.' That is why the Christians are continuing the Lord's prayer repeating, 'thy kingdom come.' Believing strong Christians are being reunited in the body of Christ 'by little and little' every day through the repetition of the prayer for the kingdom of God and ceaseless praising of Christ. That is the meaning of Jesus Christ's claim, "I am the way" (St. John 14:6). That is the Christian mystic way. **There is the meeting point of all in Christ.**

That is the mystic way of 'Nada'. The Hindu mystic way of 'Neti' is a narrow mystic path to the real Way of 'Nada.' This mystic way of 'Neti' also has a meeting point in Christ as all have a meeting point in Christ Jesus, who is Alpha and Omega. (The beginning and the end) To him are all things being magnetized. (Rev.22: 13; Roman 11: 36; Ephesians 1: 9 and 10).

Nothingness of 'neti' is an attempt of Indian Upanishadic sages to remove all what is not of Brahman. It is provided in this thesis that Indian 'neti' is the seeking of new light, life and truth to realize the supreme Source Being who is without shape and color. It is also provided that 'nada' is the perfect condition of a soul with poverty of the spirit and single heart to see and taste Christ by the mystical union. After tasting Christ because Christ is now living inside as St. Paul wrote "not I but Christ is living in me" (Galatians 2: 20)

Thus, as a result of this exegesis and exposition, it can be seen that the Christian Spanish Mystic Way of 'Nada' (nothingness) has a meeting point on the Hindu Mystic way of 'Neti' (nothingness). So there is a 'Nada' in 'Neti' and on the other hand, there is a 'Neti' in 'Nada' also. It is exactly understood in the title.

The Meeting Point of All in Christ

On:

THE MYSTIC WAYS:

‘NADA’ AND ‘NETI’ IN AN UPANISHAD:

BRIHADARANYAKA AND

IN A SPANISH MYSTIC:

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

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