Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga: New Darsana: Part-1: The Darsana Hita, or Means and the Methods

The importance of a proper method (upasana) to attain the highest state of spirituality is well recognized in all the schools of religion, but it is not so well understood or emphasized in the schools of philosophy. The moral preparation for any curriculum is usually forgotten. Indeed, thanks to the present day tendency, any emphasis on moral preparation or direction is said to produce in the minds of the disciples and students a contrary response - an opposition to discipline. Therefore directives or commands and imperatives are looked upon as dangerous, and provocative of counter responses.

Therefore it is that moral precepts and other guides to conduct have fallen out of favour in most religious and educational institutions. However, it is clear that no one can progress unless he imposes on himself disciplines and controls which would fit him for the noble tasks ahead. In other words yama or self-controls are very necessary.

They obviate avoidable suffering. They make one free from fear and all types of moral turpitude. They make one self-reliant and submissive to truth, however,

unpalatable it may appear. If, in the modern world, freedoms are sought to be assured to man by giving him his living needs, the ancient and eternal law of self-conduct (carya) is willingness to give up needs in order to uphold the truth, the love and kindliness, nonstealth or honesty and non-robbery and non-profligacy, which are the fivefold s'ila (virtues), the yama. To yield to temptation is to be in mortal fear of death and punishment. Our derelictions are criminal, and the courage of a robber or thief or profligate is a short lived triumph after all.

In the normal development of our life then, we have to pay heed to the spiritual nature of these sila rather than the mere ethical and sociopolitical codes. Even here these are important, and no one who has not abjured the wrong path or the fivefold vices can ever attain the highest good or the spiritual. The Upanisad has stated that for one who has not turned away from wrong (na virato duscaritat), there can hardly be the attainment of santi (peace of mind), nor of the worlds here and hereafter.

All spiritual teachers, therefore, specifically prescribe the necessity for good conduct, as well as for cleanliness and aspiration to attain Peace that comes from Above, or for the descent of Grace (Isvaraprasada).

In Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga, Sri Ram Chandra shows

that once an individual determines to follow the path and is accepted by the Guru (who signifies this by transmitting the superfinest consciousness to him), the sadhana takes on a dynamic aspect. The individual discovers that the qualities so essential such as sama, dama, etc. which can be said to be sattvika qualities, develop rapidly and the rajasic characteristics of anger, infatuation, intemperance and violence, as well as the tamasic characteristics of sloth, ignorance, dejection, rage and so on, recede or get diminished. This is very similar to what Sri Krsna Himself stated, that once the individual has chosen the Divine path and goal, he speedily becomes righteous, a sattvastha, who moves upwards. The devotee or seeker after divine life begins to find that is devotion becomes the love of God rather than of one's own salvation or liberation; his philosophic insight perceives all reality from the speculum of God rather than from his egocentric vision. All actions take on universal significance and effectuation, and they become cosmic conscious and cease to be private actions seeking little happiness and pleasures, or such ends as are circumscribed by one's body, community and interest.

Thus bhakti, as love, gets transformed into jnana and kriya, and they in turn become saturated with devotion, and become divine.

This naturalness of the change of perspective, vision, feeling and being is one of the first fruits of the transmission of the Guru. However, it is necessary that the individual should offer himself, desire the Ultimate, and surrender completely his person, body and mind, for this experiment with transmission.

While the rigours of the other practices prevent many from turning towards God, admonished by the Bhagavata as it were that those who are beloved of God are precisely to be recognized by the amount of suffering and loss that they suffer in respect of wealth, children, name, fame and even life, it is clear that the Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga doesn't demand heroism or courage in resignation or renunciation. On the other hand, it reveals how these losses can be perceived to be blessings, and also how one experiences absolute detachment with regard to these losses. One does not feel their loss. There is no emotional excitement over the matter either - the need to go about telling all about one's resignation or detachment or publicizing the same. The transmission of the Guru's highest superfine consciousness makes all quite natural, appear natural and not something to either exult or wail over.

The means adopted for attaining the subtlest state should be subtle. Gross or physical means are of absolutely no help. In fact they become hindrances. Therefore one

should know the subtlest means. The psychic condition has to be rendered subtle by means of thought about subtlety. The form to be contemplated upon must be the subtlest form. The usual tendency is to take up a gross form embellished by ornaments and dresses pleasing to the eye. The highest Reality cannot, obviously, be represented by any physical form, though such a form may be given to some in intuition or revelation.

The Divine has infinite attributes which are deemed to be auspicious and immeasurable, but the Divine has also the quality of transcendence over all these qualities. The ordinary mind might be led, through wonder and amazement at the infinite and endless auspicious qualities, to the real nature of God which is transcendent to these, and thus to itself have the transcending quality or nature. Man, searching and yearning after Reality, would reach this transcendence which bodes the possibility of his transcendence over all limitations - limitations albeit excellences. Therefore the subtlest way is meditation on that subtlest transcendence. For this it is suggested that the Divine should be contemplated upon as the omnipervasive light in the heart that is to say the light in the heart should be conceived of as spreading all over, both within the whole organism from the head to foot and also outside, spreading to the farthest limits of perception. This conception of the omnipervading Reality is most beneficial in developing subtlety of

perception, and helps the removal of all impurities, obstructions and coverings on the inner psychic being.

This transcendence which negates all grossness and impurities, dissolves all obstructions and dissipates all coverings, is not hard. The possibility of conceiving the omnipervasive light in the heart, or perceiving it from the heart, is many times questioned by those who had tried this in meditation. However, this leads to the important point as to whether this can be had out of one's own unaided thought, or whether it requires extraneous help. There is no doubt that the extraneous help required for this experience of the omnipervasive Reality, or light within, should be transcendental and subtle. Sometimes the help of this transcendent Reality itself has to be sought, for this includes the immanent reality of the individual, and it is had through the flow of transcendence into the immanent, bathing it always. This is the experience of Grace, Peace and descent that purifies the heart and makes one feel light and subtle.

In the usual conceptions of Raja Yoga there are available two steps; namely, the physical purifications and disciplines, and the moral regulations and disciplines. The two important physical disciplines are asana and pranayama, the steady sitting posture which has to be cultivated and the control of breath by regulating expiration, inspiration and retention. There are, of

course, other schools which expand these sitting postures to include all types of postures which are said to bring under control almost all the muscles, including those of the heart. There are schools which seek to regulate breath in all possible ways by increasing the times of inspiration, or duration of retention, and expiration. There are others who would like to develop the art of prediction by noting the inspiration and expiration by the right or left nostril called the svara-sastra (science of notes or sound).

The other school would insist on the mental control arising from restraint of the senses from running after objects. These are called yama (control) and niyama (regulation). They comprise preparations for moral valuations between truth and untruth, injury and non-injury, stealing and honesty, robbery and charity, continence and incontinence, purity and impurity, godliness and godlessness, and so on. Without moral urge or awakening there is hardly any possibility of spiritual growth. The ancients prescribed certain minimum conditions for undertaking spiritual work; distinguishing of the eternal from he mortal or transient; a seeking for liberation from all bonds and chains; or at least the urge to escape from suffering, bodily, vitally and mentally or, in the language of the ancients, suffering arising from nature, from oneself and from gods, physical, psychological and theological

(adhibhautika, adhyatmika, and adhidaivika).

Some other schools had felt that one is unfit for the higher spiritual liberation unless one has renounced the goods of the world and the pleasures and profits of worldly life. Renunciation of all desire, and objects of desire, is the sine qua non of spiritual unfoldment or awakening. Great religious teachers like the Buddha, Mahavira, Sankara and others have taught the path of sannyasa or total abandonment of artha, kama and in some cases even worldly dharma. "Sell all that you have, or distribute it, and come". Another great Guru has said, "give everything to your Guru and be possessionless, then are you fit for the great instruction". Such renunciation of wife and children, and duties to them is the preliminary condition of any seeker (mumuksu), and it may well be the final condition also.

That vairagya, mumuksutva, and nityanityaviveka are requisites is well-known, but how to get them established is a very important question. It is said that one can habituate oneself to these, but it is equally recognised that these are precarious acquisitions of the human conscience.

The view that prevailed for quite a long time is that these could be cultivated by contemplation on the transitoriness of all pleasures - or by contemplation on the unhappiness consequent on any pleasure-getting or

pleasure hunting - the paradox of hedonism. Such contemplations help a renunciative mind but do not create the total withdrawal from temptations of the world with its wealth and women. The subtlest egoism such as love of name, honour, recognition do gather strength.

There is one important fact that the trainers in the art and science of mind control have slurred over. The manas or mind as such is, in the human individual, conditioned by egoism, both personal and individual. As such it is indistinguishable from the ego. The dictum that the mind is the cause of both bondage and freedom would be meaningless unless, in the former condition as the cause of bondage, it is different from the latter when it is the instrument of freedom and liberation. The explanation of the twin processes of the manas has to be sought in its basic nature as the primal thought, projected out of the Being or Reality which had developed the various degrees of grossness or tamas and which, after exhausting this movement, returns to its own condition of subtle being or sattva. The mind therefore has to be cured of its egoism, or individuation towards grossness, and has to be brought more and more into the original condition of subtleness, or at least linked up with that. The grossness, or the outer, gets impregnated with the inner subtle condition, and they become organic to one another instead of being divorced or divided and

distinguished from each other.

The process of making this mind sublime, or subtle is achieved by restraining the outer gross processes and promoting the subtle processes. This is one way, and the Patanjali Sutra states that Yoga is just this restraint of the modifications of the citta or mind from engaging themselves in the remembrance and retention of outer impressions. As a matter of fact one who starts this process of restraint of mental modifications would clearly discern his mind itself to be the centre and seat or abode of all ideas - an aalaya of the vijnana or ideations of all levels,both conscious and unconscious. The yogi is advised to suppress these modifications as they arise or slay them by counter-will, till one attains the condition of an empty void - void of all vijnana or ideations and images.

This demands absolute self-conscious discernment or vigilance till the condition of a thoughtless mind becomes achieved. This is the bodhi of Buddha which is the attainment of nirvana - mindlessness. What it is can only be experienced in samadhi - a condition of supreme transcendence of all thought or thought processes; stilled-thought, when thought and reality become one or merge into each other. Perhaps it is this condition that is also equivalent to the merger or union of the individual ego with the Godhead, or perhaps it is a condition

beyond all these individuations and generalisation.

This process of the Yogacara is undoubtedly a strenuous one. This conscious process is also counselled by Zen Buddhism (The Satori of the Zen Buddhist appears to be the S'atari - the enemy of the breath that brings about rebirth which was said to have been discovered by St. S'atari (S'atakopa) of S'ri Vaisnavism. This Zen was exported to Japan by a Monk of Kanci.) which has found that dhyana is the very condition when one traces the process of descent, or grossening or bondage to the gross with its particular experience and transient objects, as well as the ascent of the dhi beyond all objectifications and symbolisations inherent in any attempt to seize the object or the idea or object-idea subjectively. One passes beyond in, and during, this supreme tension of the consciousness, which would make all experiences basically conscious and will not permit any experience to sink into unconsciousness. The consciousness, so trained, is expected to make transcendence into superconsciousness - some have claimed this release from egoistic delimitation of consciousness in this higher consciousness which is utterly different from the unconscious and sub-conscious.

Gurdjieff and Ouspensky have surely traversed this same path and seen that consciousness itself must undergo a radical change when it is restored to the Fourth Way -

without being circumscribed by the paths already made by men of the first, second and third ways, namely the mechanical, the vital-emotional and the intellectual; the karma, bhakti and jnana; or the tamas, rajas, and sattva ways. Nor do they counsel the adoption of the physiological and biological-chemical ways of arousing forces inherent in the gross system. Hathayoga, and especially the kundalini practices, have proved difficult, and they considered that the kundalini produced more difficulties which acted as buffers preventing one's fullest awareness. It entangled man in imagination and fantasy, whether erotic or otherwise. The volume of literature in the tantras about this kundalini and its arising or uplifting, through mantra or tantra or yantra, is vast and cannot be dismissed lightly. However, the preoccupation with it has produced more deleterious consequences to health, even as the Vyayama utilisation of the asanas and pranayama has done. The tendency to mechanicalise all spiritual activity has produced deleterious effects and grossness. As it is said of Law, that the letter killeth the spirit, so too habit killeth subtleness and freedom.

The attempt to establish a correlation of the yogangas with the three attitudes of bhakti, karma and jnana has been quite fruitful. The great Ramanuja equated bhakti with the yogangas - yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and Samadhi. The several

acts of worship were intended to illustrate the processes of yoga. The agama methods of puja had emphasized the importance of control of seat, breath and mind, as also the necessity of goal, direction, moral cleanliness and physical purity.

Similarly, Karmayoga insists on the strict detached performance of works according to dharma which leads not only to purification of mind, but develops that one pointedness of purpose in doing one's duty which is almost so intense on certain occasions as to stimulate samadhi - engrossment.

Similar also is jnana-yoga when it leads up to that perception of oneness of the ego with the Ultimate Self, be this construed as its body or power or part or even as complete losing of itself in it in deepest moments of absorption (dhyana) or Tanmaya.

All these methods are counselled, but the primary one is the condition of surrender, or self-giving or offering to the Ultimate. This condition prepares for all the rest. So much so, acaryas of the path of realisation had insisted on seeing the individual and his condition of preparedness to surrender himself, his ego, his possessions, and all including life itself to the Will and guidance of the Master. This is not as ridiculous as it might seem. Most individuals do sign away their lives or execute a bond or give an undertaking not to bring any

action against the doctor if the patient dies on the operation table, or as a consequence of it, under any circumstances. The doctor gets immunity from prosecution if the case goes wrong, or death ensues. Similarly, the individual must be willing to run the risk of complete dependence and reliance on the Master or Guru in his spiritual efforts. This total or integral surrender (prapadana or prapatti) alone makes for the evolution of the individual, and gives meaning and power to the practices of bhakti, karma and jnana. This is what Sri Krsna has emphasized in the famous concluding advice: Giving up all dharma surrender to Me. I shall save you from all sins - Do not grieve. The exclusive devotion and belief in the power and wisdom of the Master, or God, is the essential feature of faith. It transmutes itself into love as it matures, which means a total self-giving to the Beloved even up to death. Life becomes unbearable without the presence of, and union with, the beloved, the Master or God.

This important aspect of spiritual dedication cannot be developed through habit of mind or even by tendencies developed by constant reiteration or performance. As we know full well, the most emotional observances cool down into arid habits; meaning seems to get lost in the doing of acts, even of conscientious charity and reasoning. Thus a spiritual attitude is a thing that tends to preserve this meaningfulness and spontaneity that grows

out of superconscious nature, and never does it sink into unconsciousness.

Religious practices are more often ritual habits of mind and body, as it was later shown to be in the case of tantras or mudras - sophisticated symbolisms which demand exposition and explanations that have to be preserved in traditional ways in order to be remade significantly. Much of our myths and practices are, even like dramatic art or dance, frozen symbolisms which could be understood only when their symbolisms are expounded. This varies from culture to culture and from religion to religion.

Spiritual practices are, on the other hand, serious spiritual movements and actions which release the pent up forces in matter and materialisation, or symbols and symbolisms, concealed in tantras, mantras, yantras and mudras. It is because of their compelling dynamism that they restore life to all these and show the upward movement which unfortunately had got arrested, or obstructed, by these intermediary knots of thought and action and habits of reference. Traditional explanations, however valuable in one sense, also hinder clarity and simplicity of the rites, rituals and symbolisms. Therefore the means to be adopted should be such as can never degenerate into meaningless and sophisticated habits. They should constantly enlarge the range of

consciousness and make it more and more universalised. They should dynamically restore the original superconscious impulse which had led to creative evolution of the entire organism, as well as the cosmos of which the organism is a part and manifestation; which is a whole even like the Cause, and responds to the meaning and force of the Whole within it.

Thus in the normal method of creative evolution and renewal of the spiritual, what is most requisite is the dynamic awareness of the influx and interpenetration of that Superconsciousness in the very fibres and cells and atoms of our body and of the world.

The special means adopted by the Sri Ram Chandra's Rajayoga ensure that this is not merely a theoretical probability but a practical achievement. The superconsciousness is introduced into the individual's heart by the Guru or preceptor who has been made, as it were, an instrument for this purpose by the Divine.

We know of instances in mystical experience and history of this type of direct initiation by Masters who were endowed with this power of transmission. In our own times this was said to have been utilized by ` and Sri Rama-krishna. Sri Aurobindo had always held that Divine grace must descend into one, in order that the individual may grow in the light of that grace. There have been some cases where this seems to have taken

place. But there is also a large difference between one kind of force and another. This leads us to inspect the results of each case of initiation. What is the kind of consciousness or level of being introduced by the descent of grace, or influx or transmission? If it is merely leading up to a change or conversion that leads to a break away from social and other ties and grants renunciation (vairagya) of all worldly hopes and ends and goals, it is one type. If it leads to clinging to the Object which had made this renunciation of all other things, except itself, possible, it is a more positive awareness of a sense of values and discrimination. But if it is a quickening of the process of self-awareness and evolution, and a widening of the frontiers of understanding, it is a third way. If it leads to the abolition of all flickering of thought - of all thoughts - and a settled experience of peace and calm which are beyond the limits of our understanding and capacity, it is a deeper level of awareness. What we seek is this Ultimate Peace by itself without waiting on, or instrumented by, renunciation, intellectual discrimination, or sense of quickened activity and intelligence and a sense of push towards the goal of humanity or man. Sri Aurobindo states that the descent of cit s'akti is the sine quo non of evolution, and the Divine Mother will descend and transform the individual, once the individual surrenders integrally to the Divine Mother or Master.

Samadhi conditions, or trance states, are also said to be bestowed on worthy disciples by certain yogis, and in fact trance is considered to be absolutely necessary on the path of Kundalini-yoga. Sometimes trance conditions are sought as if they are ends in themselves, and men use drugs, emotional movements, constant repetitions of names, dramatizations, dances and rites in order to get at that oblivious condition. These are encouraged by certain schools of devotion, but the strain that they put on the human organism is great and turns out to be injurious to the system. Austerity, penance, fasting, and other privations do produce certain conditions which help visions and dreams, but these are mistaken for realities. Indeed it was the fear of these visions and dreams, bordering on hallucinations, that led some serious sadhakas to the view that the Ultimate Reality is beyond all, and is qualityless, formless and so on, and is felt only as pure consciousness and pure being.

So it appears that transmission, though it was known and given in certain cases, was not utilized for the purpose of liberation and attainment of the Ultimate Reality state continuously; nor was it the superconsciousness of the Ultimate itself that was so transmitted. A lesser than the Ultimate consciousness would only bring about a precarious change of levels which would not stay long. Only a single transmission could not bring about a total change of nature unless it was capable of bringing about,

or setting into motion, all processes so as to bring about total change in due course; or unless it ignites the inner core of an already evolved being so as to bring about a series of changes culminating in the permanent attainment of the Ultimate.

The unique point of the method propounded by Sri Ram Chandra is that the means by which human divinisation could take place is only transmission of the Ultimate Consciousness which, continuously and without breakdown, leads to complete realisation or divinisation of the human personality. It is the only force that could do it; according to him not even the supermind of Sri Aurobindo could do it, nor is there any one who could handle that force so as to be able to transmit it to every seeker seriously engaged in the problem of Being.

The transmission, once established consistently and continuously, immediately links up the abhyasi with the Guru at the highest level land demands nothing that is impossible for man. On the other hand, the abhyasi finds that he is being endowed, day by day, with all those conditions which other yogas prescribe as the preliminary conditions for initiation. Renunciation, surrender, devotion, discrimination, faith, lightness of being, fearlessness, all seem to grow with the transmission without any effort on the part of the ego. One seems to pass beyond the dualities (dvandvas),

infatuation with society and its values. Resignation into the hands of God, dependence on the Divine, a feeling that one is verily the body of God and God alone, seem to get established. One discerns that light which is the source of all light, that mind which is the source and cause of all minds and thoughts of several levels and degrees of grossness.

The continued experience of peace within, lightness, and a peculiar means by which the knots of distress that encompass an individual seem to get dissolved or loosened, are the most important results of super conscious transmission of the Master, or of his representative.

It is well known that the chain of Gurus is more or less continuous in all religious institutions. But it is also well-known that the powers of transmission which some of these gurus possess, in some measure, are not exercised by their successors in office. Thus we find that successors, as a rule, endeavour to copy the ritual or forms adopted by their predecessors, or gurus, and we find that there is more emphasis on the letter and form rather than the act of transmission itself. This snapping of continuity determines the fall in standards of spirituality in sects and religious institutions, not to speak of all institutions in general.

In the Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga the line of preceptors

is continuous, and the transmission by each and every preceptor is of the Ultimate Consciousness alone. There is hardly any difference in the quality of that transmission and consciousness, though there may be difference in each individual case of transmission as to the manner of operations in respect of cleaning, removing obstructions and uncovering the sheaths that had formed on the central core of being. This makes for the real continuous creation of divine men, or divinised men, by and through the transmission of the Ultimate Divine Being. It may also be observed that one becomes more aware of being, rather than knowing; one becomes filled with peace and fullness. There is thus the dawn of reality in oneself.

Thus the unique feature of this new system lies in divine Transmission, giving of the Breath of Being (Pranahuti) of the Divine to the individual seeker which after this first contact, continues to invigorate the individual and uplifts him to the ultimate Reality. It is called ujjivana - the real living or living in, and for, and by, Reality as such. One passes beyond all dualities and achieves Realisation of the Reality.

It is possible to think that transmission is the activity of God Himself within the individual, by which alone one is enabled to have the experience of God. It is possible also that this experience starts as a mere feeling of

vibrations at the heart and later on, in all parts of the body. It is possible also to feel Godly presence throughout. The Vision of God which is sought after by many saints and lovers of God, is of God in His manifested forms in the world, such as avatars. It is possible that the accounts of the forms of God or gods are got under high spiritual conditions. It varies from culture to culture or sect to sect. The Ultimate, or Paraform, of God is something that He alone can reveal, or is one into which one almost sinks or loses oneself even as a river loses itself in the ocean, or a drop of water in the lake.

But the physical body, or even the psychic body, does feel the flow of the divine energy which is soundless (ajapa). The experience of ajapa pranava (OMkara) naturally comes about when the transmission is made.

At the beginning some of the abhyasis had observed colours such as blue, red or yellow or just lightning-like white or grey clouds and so on. This is of course colour-experience usually referred to certain centres of transit or ascent. They are all astral colours, not of the retinal or physical stuff.

Similarly the sounds of the pranava could be observed and heard at certain points in the body, or they are felt as if there is tingling.

The experience of purification of the system is also had.

One experiences a feeling as if there is smoke going out of the body. Some abhyasis have related that they feel the transmission to be cool, and some have felt it to be hot or warm. These are possible because the transmitter is taking the abhyasi through several points each evoking a different sensation - even as there are physical hot spots, cold spots and so on.

It has been reported to me in certain cases that the abhyasi was feeling nectar in his throat.

All these are astral experiences spontaneously coming up when the transmission takes place. As the goal is the Ultimate Reality, and as the abhyasi is advised not to frame up or evoke any form of that condition or Reality in the light of his humanistic needs or desires, all experiences of the several gods and seers and saints are considered to be much below the goal sought after, even though all these are not deemed to be illusions or hallucinations or even relative truths.

The having of visions and experiences by itself does not constitute a nearer approach to the Divine Being. All that it denotes is that one is being opened up in different parts for the divine experience of God's presence. As one advances, one's sensitivity is increased profoundly, bringing about a quiet and a peace that is unearthly or divine.

The need for certain kinds of self-torture or penance or

some such sufferings is felt by several saints, if not by ordinary people, who would have an impression of the extraordinary humiliations and privations necessary for God-experience. Thus, He has been sought in the solitude of prisons or caves or uninhabited places including fearsome places like the cremation grounds. Sainthood was thought to be a result of martyrdom, or at least of near-martyrdom. This belief has been very common all over the world. It is this willingness to go to the desert and all that, that has been considered to be the hall-mark of sainthood. The Bhagavata states that those whom God loves or desires to give Himself to, from them all riches, etc. will be taken away. Such a denudement is necessary for enjoying loneliness with God. Thus, exclusive devotion to God includes separation from all else. God thus exacts this supreme sacrifice of all else.

Indeed events transpire in the life of the saint which bring about this supreme or splendid isolation from all except God, who becomes more and more the only person occupying his vision and experience. But the question is whether all this is not based on the concept of unnaturalness, that there is a gulf between Nature and God and man's choice is based on the dilemma of "either/or". Martyrdom, as a step in courage, as a decision in favour of God, is quite a necessity as Sri Krsna has shown in the Gita; and all religions had held

up the ideal of martyrdom - to die for God and higher values, which is one definition of love.

Evolution, perhaps, demands this act of decision to die rather than sail with the world and its lower, or restricted, views. So much so, penance or tapas was inculcated for purification of the entire physical body and the soul.

The world in which we live is itself a great area of suffering. Both in respect of oneself and in respect of others around, we have a world soaked in suffering of all kinds, physical, vital and mental. A world in which ups and downs are the rule is a world of transient happiness and pleasure. All seem to be gripped by the principle of vanity and pain.

Sri Ram Chandra affirms that the world of samsara itself can be shown to be the training ground for higher life. To run away from it, or depart from it into solitude and silence as such, may be one way, but certainly not the only way. That path is the path of austerity and penance and outer renunciation, which finally has to bring about inner renunciation and nothingness. One does not develop a void within by running to a void. If one has to achieve the void within, so that God may be installed in it, one must look after the within alone. Undoubtedly the others may be said to be of help in achieving renunciation and nonpossession. We know that those

who have sought the outer silence or solitude had tried, sooner or later, to return to civilization with all its original foibles, ostensibly to cure it of them.

The samsara itself is a training ground for renunciation. Here, too, Love plays the part of renunciation of possession, and develops the attitude of sharing. Disinterestedness can develop in the concrete setting of the family and community life more naturally, and without casting any aspersion of uncleanliness and sin on family or community life.

The real difficulty, till now, had been that few indeed of the saints thought about the Divine Force or Grace as capable of being brought to the sinner without his having to be taken out of his social life and environment or, in one sense, abstracted from it. The spiritual modification made by the transmission of the Divine Force makes it possible for the human individual, male or female, to grow in the context of the environment which begins to undergo change, pari passu with the changes in the consciousness of the individual. The consciousness of sin, so essential to the call to be saved, is overcome, if it subsists by the growing dependence and assurance of liberation and salvation and forgiveness. The naturalness of the process, so spontaneous and unaffected, consists in the simplicity of the happening. Thus God is seen not to insist on any radical or spectacular departures from

those who had surrendered to Him wholly for, verily, these had been prescribed for all those who had developed their ego and had been made to be aware of its existence as the root of all sin. It is true that the ego is the effective principle of individualism, and its abolition is most difficult provided we start with it. Supposing one goes beyond to the Divine and does not put the ego either against or for the Divine as such, or plays one against the other in all forms of relationships, the ego slips out of the picture and occupies its natural place in the scheme of Divine Being.