

Tribhuvan University

The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: Purification of Inner Self

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, in Partial

Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts

in English Central Department of English

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur Kathmandu

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Sanjib Khatiwada has completed his thesis entitled “Purification of Inner Self in Robin S. Sharma’s *The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari*” under my supervision. He carried out his research work from June 15, 2008 to February 2, 2009. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Acknowledgements

There are many individuals involved in the completion of this thesis; however, it is Mr. Bijay Kumar Rauniyar, Lecturer, Central Department of English (CDE) without whose scholarly guidance, this thesis would not have seen the light of the day. So, first of all, my humble gratitude goes to him.

I also would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head, CDE, who was ever helpful and encouraging. Besides, Dr. Arun Gupto, Mr. Saroj Ghimire, including all the teachers of the CDE deserves my sincere gratitude for their assistance and suggestions.

I also owe the highest level of thankfulness to my father Mr. Ram Chandra and mother Mrs. Kausila Khatiwada, who were always there prompting me towards positivity, whenever necessary.

I also take this moment to remember my all my brothers and sisters, classmates, colleagues, and all those, without whose, support this thesis would not have seen the light of the day.

March 2009

Sanjib Khatiwada

Abstract

Robin S. Sharma's *The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari* is an odyssey into the self, by a materially well-to-do, but spiritually hollow man Julian Mantle. Mantle was a reputed lawyer in the United States, amassing wealth and popularity through his shrewd advocacy; however, until his physical collapse in the courtroom, during one of these famous trials. The collapse came as an awakening in his life; as it inspired him in search of inner self, to query if he was leading a satiated and meaningful life. These queries made his present materially rich life meaningless and, hence, he discarded all the worldly belongings in search of spiritual happiness, and came to the land of the Himalayas in the Northern India, to realize his self through the practice of Mahayana, a sect of Buddhism.

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Facets of Self and its Purification

Self, in simple understanding, is an individual's complete persona. It is associated with gaining one's recognition and thereby to achieve essence of living. *Illustrated Oxford English Dictionary* defines self as, "A person or a thing's own individuality or essence" (749). Thus, self is a process of emptying of the mind of thoughts, or the concentration of the mind on one thing, in order to aid mental or spiritual development, contemplation, or relaxation. In further understanding, self is to realize one's interest of life, and thereby to gain the spirit of a meaningful life.

Scholars and critics for ages have attempted to be acquainted with and define self, but with no universally accepted definition. Most of these attempts have been confined within the religious limitations. Buddhism, one of the oldest religions of the world has defined self in terms of knowing one's real identity and thereby to live a significant life. Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, a well known scholar and writer on Buddhism believes that the concept of self is beyond the description of a mortal being. He opines:

Self is beyond the description of a mortal being, because it can be familiarized only through the power of meditation, as it is not a worldly object or possession to be narrated, or could be narrated in terms of words. It crosses the border of the material and spiritual world and is altogether a different experience and feeling. (15)

Suzuki opines that self is above mortal and immortal's possession. It is neither material, nor spiritual but is above both these. It is the process of knowing one's individuality through the act of thinking about something carefully, calmly, and seriously for sometime, or an instance of such thinking which drives the individual to a state of perfect peace and serenity of mind.

Self is one of the prominent terms associated with theology, specially, Buddhism. Buddhism, in short is a way of achieving to larger goals of life through the realization of four

noble truths of life, propounded on the teachings of Lord Buddha. Gautam Buddha, who later became famous as Lord Buddha was born in Lumbini of Nepal in 6th century B. C. His prime concerns were on knowing the secrets; why people become sick, old and die. Suzuki explaining on the anxiety of Buddha, writes, “He became concerned with the world in order to seek an antidote of this suffering through religious means” (123). He travelled far and wide, and meditated for years, until he came to the secret of four noble truths of life, whose knowledge would relieve a person from personal and social woes. These noble truths are:

- a. Life is suffering. This is more than a mere recognition of the presence of suffering in existence. It is a statement that, in its very nature, human existence is essentially painful from the moment of birth to the moment of death. Even death brings no relief, for the Buddha accepted the Hindu idea of life as cyclical, with death leading to further rebirth.
- b. All suffering is caused by ignorance of the nature of reality and the craving, attachment, and grasping that result from such ignorance.
- c. Suffering can be ended by overcoming ignorance and attachment.
- d. The path to the suppression of suffering and to purify one’s self is the practice of Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right-mindedness, and right contemplation. These eight are usually divided into three categories that form the cornerstone of Buddhist faith: morality, wisdom, and *Samadhi*, or concentration.

James Paul McDermott, a western critic on Buddhism finds no difference on self and soul very close to each other. He writes, “It is soul, to many which is termed as self” (31). He analyzes the existence of soul in realizing the self and defines them in five forms. They are the material body, feelings, perceptions, predispositions or karmic tendencies, and consciousness. A person is only a temporary combination of these aggregates, which are

subject to continual change. No one remains the same for any two consecutive moments. Buddhists deny that the aggregates individually or in combination may be considered a permanent, independently existing self or soul, or *atman* in Nepali dialect.

Thus, according to McDermott, Buddha taught the doctrine of *anatman* (no soul), or the denial of a permanent soul to discard from one's suffering and find the real soul.

McDermott writes on Buddha's way of finding soul, as:

Buddha felt that all existence (living beings) is characterized by the three marks of *anatman*, *anitya* (impermanence), and *dukkha* (suffering). The doctrine of *anatman* made it necessary for the Buddha to reinterpret the Indian idea of repeated rebirth in the cycle of phenomenal existence known as *samsara*. To this end he taught the doctrine of *pratityasamutpada*, or dependent origination. (24)

This linked chain of causation shows how ignorance in a previous life creates the tendency for a combination of aggregates to develop. These in turn cause the mind and senses to operate. Sensations result, which lead to craving and a clinging to existence. This condition triggers the process of becoming once again, producing a renewed cycle of birth, old age, and death. Through this causal chain a connection is made between one life and the next. What is posited is a stream of renewed existences, rather than a permanent being that moves from life to life in effect a belief in rebirth without transmigration.

Closely related to this belief is the doctrine of karma (action). Karma consists of a person's acts and their ethical consequences. Every person is bound by their respective karma. It is not essential to analyze and worship the so-called Gods to realize and achieve the self. It can be known through a person's respective work and duty in which they are engaged to. So, for a mason the enlightenment of his self his through the perfection of his mastery over making the houses; and similar is the case with an artist, who can reach the state of aura,

through excellence in his/her artistic creation. Similar is the case with people of entire different range of profession.

Self in Buddhism can be achieved through human karma (deeds). It is deed or, action that results an individual in the cycle of birth, death and again birth and death. In doing the karma, the good deeds are inevitably rewarded and evil deeds punished. Thus, neither undeserved pleasure nor unwarranted suffering exists in the world, but rather a universal justice. The karmic process operates through a kind of natural moral law rather than through a system of divine judgment. One's karma determines such matters as one's species, beauty, intelligence, longevity, wealth, and social status. These karma of varying type leads to rebirth as a human, an animal, a hungry ghost, a denizen of hell, or even one of the Hindu gods.

Although never actually denying the existence of the gods, Buddhism denies them any special role. Their lives in heaven are long and pleasurable, but they are in the same predicament as other creatures, being subject eventually to death and further rebirth in lower states of existence. They are not creators of the universe or in control of human destiny, and Buddhism denies the value of prayer and sacrifice to them. Of the possible modes of rebirth, human existence is preferable, because the deities are so engrossed in their own pleasures that they lose sight of the need for salvation and, hence enlightenment is possible only for humans.

The ultimate goal of the Buddhist path is release an individual from the round of phenomenal existence with its inherent sufferings and to purify one's soul. To achieve this goal is to attain nirvana, an enlightened state in which the fires of greed, hatred, and ignorance have been quenched; and in simple understanding is to realize ones' self. Not to be confused with total annihilation, nirvana is a state of consciousness beyond definition. After attaining nirvana, the enlightened individual may continue to live, burning off any remaining karma until a state of final nirvana (*parinirvana*) is attained at the moment of death.

Attaining the self or Nirvana (salvation) is the state of liberation through full enlightenment and total extinction of desire and suffering entering into peaceful state. James Paul in the context writes, “Thus ultimate state of happiness and peace, a pure and spontaneous state of being is Nirvana or Enlightenment, the highest goal of Buddhist endeavor. This step of Nirvana is the achievement of self in Buddhism” (32). Nirvana is within the periphery of an individual, who awakens to realize his goal of life, based on the path shown by Buddha.

For the achievement of salvation from sufferings, Buddha’s doctrine of noble truths is the best way out. In theory, the act of realizing and achieving self is attainable by anyone, who sticks to the principle of Eight Noble Fold Paths. However, Suzuki opines that self can be achieved only by those members who are in association with the monastic community of Buddhism. He writes, “Self is attainable, but only to the members of monastic community. Here, an individual is preached to achieve the ultimate goal, the proximate goal of better rebirth through improved karma, as an option” (37).

The ethic that leads to the achievement of self is detached and is inner oriented exposed to making an individual to realize one’s essence. It involves cultivating four virtuous attitudes, known as the Palaces of Brahma: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. The ethic that leads to purification of one’s self is through service to other. Selfless act to others will emancipate an individual’s self from the cycle of birth and death. It will lead towards better rebirth; however, it is possible only through one’s selfless act centered on fulfilling other’s responsibilities towards a society.

Selfless act involves acts of charity, especially in support of the *sangha* (organization), as well as observance of the five precepts that constitute the basic moral code of Buddhism. The precepts prohibit killing, stealing, harmful language, sexual misbehavior, and the use of intoxicants. By observing these precepts, the three roots of evil lust, hatred,

and delusion may be overcome, and finally leading an individual towards the purification of one's self.

Purification of self can be achieved through one's devotion to Mahayana and Theravada, two most popular sects of Buddhism. These two sects of Buddhism are the two major branches known to their respective followers as Theravada, the Way of the Elders, and Mahayana, the Great Vehicle.

Mahayana, the most popular of Buddhist sects, comes from Sanskrit word, *Mahayana* meaning a Great Vehicle. This sect preaches on ways to realize one's self through thought and physical devotion. It originated in India and subsequently spread throughout China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, Central Asia, Vietnam, and Taiwan. Followers of Mahayana have traditionally regarded their doctrine as the full revelation of the nature and teachings of the Buddha, in opposition to the earlier Theravada tradition, which they characterize as the Lesser Vehicle.

In contrast to the relative conservatism of earlier Buddhist schools, which adhered closely to the recognized teachings of the historical Buddha, Mahayana embraces a wider variety of practices, has a more mythological view of what a Buddha is, and addresses broader philosophical issues. Two major Mahayana schools arose in India: *Madhyamika* (Middle Path) and *Vijnanavada* (Consciousness through Yogachara). Mahayana traditionally prefers the figure of the *bodhisattva* – who, out of compassion, helps others toward salvation – to the sage, who is concerned chiefly with his own salvation. With the spread of Mahayana Buddhism beyond India, other indigenous schools appeared, such as Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism.

Theravada is the second method of attaining self. The Theravada school traces its descent from the original *sangha* (monastic community), probably the first group of people organized to follow the Buddha and his preaching. Its canon of scripture consists of the

Tipitaka (Three Baskets), the first great compendium of Buddhist writings, composed in the Pali language. Theravada tends toward doctrinal conservatism, exemplified in a cautious interpretation of its canon. Because of this, it has been given the pejorative name *Hinayana* (Lesser Vehicle) by its rivals, who call their own tradition *Mahayana* as the Greater Vehicle. The goal of the *Theravadin*, or devotee of Theravada, is to become an *arhat* (sage) who has achieved self and will never be reborn.

Theravada was the only tradition among the so-called Eighteen Schools of early Buddhism to survive the first centuries after the Buddha's death in the 5th century B. C. Some authorities trace its origins to the events following the second great council of Buddhism at Vaishali, India, in 383 B. C. in which novel interpretations of doctrine were condemned by conservatives – the *Theras* (Elders) – who thereby became the originators of Theravada orthodoxy. The reformers, in turn, accused the conservatives of being too self-absorbed and dogmatic. The ideological split was confirmed at the third council, convened by King Ashoka at Pataliputra (now Patna, India) in about 250 B. C. After that, according to tradition, the orthodox school is said to have been spread to Sri Lanka by Ashoka's son, the monk Mahinda. There it became a national creed, centered at the great monastery of Mahavihara and closely associated with the Sri Lankan monarchy. Ashoka's missionaries also spread Theravada Buddhism to Myanmar and Thailand. For much of the 1st millennium AD, Theravada existed alongside Mahayana and esoteric Buddhism in all these areas.

While other early sects died out or were absorbed into Mahayana Buddhism, Theravada retained its identity. Similarly, when Buddhism died out in India after the 12th century AD, Theravada kept its hold in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. In about the 10th century, a Theravada reform movement began in Sri Lanka that consolidated the kingdom as a Theravada monarchy. The reform movement spread to Burma and Thailand, where it revitalized the Theravada tradition and ensured its supremacy over other Buddhist sects.

Reformers also carried the creed into Cambodia and Laos, where the geographical limits of Theravada predominance were reached. Despite some Theravada followers in Vietnam and elsewhere, Mahayana Buddhism became the dominant tradition in the rest of the Buddhist world.

Despite the European colonialism that began in the early 19th century, Theravada continued in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, in some areas becoming identified with nascent nationalist movements. In Sri Lanka, during the 18th and 19th centuries, Theravada split into factions, mostly over questions regarding the caste of worshipers. Thailand began reform of its Theravada tradition in the 19th century as part of the general national reform initiated in response to European colonialism, and the country has remained a fertile source of Theravada reform movements.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Theravada became an important factor in civil strife between the Buddhist Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority of Sri Lanka, with some militant Buddhists promoting a vigorous Sinhalese nationalism. In Myanmar, Theravada has become one element of the rigidly conservative political and social policies of the country's military rulers. Theravada in Laos and Cambodia suffered a setback during the Vietnam War (1959-1975) and the subsequent Communist domination but appeared to be reviving in the 1990s. Theravada has been reestablished in India in the modern era by the mass conversion to Theravada Buddhism of *Harijans* (the so-called Untouchables, who fall outside the traditional class divisions of Hindu society), who are attracted by Buddhism's indifference to Hindu concepts of caste.

Theravada claims to abide by the original teachings of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. Theravada doctrine reveres the Buddha as a single supremely gifted, yet mortal, teacher, in contrast to the succession of transcendent beings postulated by Mahayana. Some Theravada scriptures list other Buddhas, but in general the emphasis is on the one

historical Buddha, on the grounds that no universe can bear more than one Buddha without shattering.

The *dharma*, or teachings, of the historical Buddha are usually regarded as being contained in the *Tripitaka*, the holy scripture of Buddhism. Unlike Mahayana, which has generated a vast number of additional *sutras* (scriptural texts) beyond *Tripitaka*, Theravada confines itself to this core dharma. The Theravada regards human existence as a complex of various transient aspects, also called dharmas. These dharmas create a composite being not united by any enduring soul (atman) or identity: There is no self in the strict sense. The Theravadin endeavors to manipulate the dharmas so as to suspend the action of karma and thereby to achieve nirvana. Theravada is therefore less a philosophical doctrine than an almost scientific discipline, although it depends on a complex cosmology of cyclical, multiple worlds and an involved scheme of reincarnation.

Despite the two prime divisions, Buddhism focuses on purification of self by knowledge established by overcoming doubt about the three divisions of time by mean of discerning the conditions of that same mentality-materiality is the way of purification of self. One who wants to purify and achieve the self ahs to set about seeking the cause and condition for the mentality-materiality, just as when a skilled physician encounters a disease he seeks its origin, or just as when a compassionate man sees tender little child lying on its back in the road he wonders who its parents are.

This mentality-materiality is not causeless, because if that were so, it would be identical everywhere always and for all. It has no overlord, etc, and then it follows that their mentality-materiality, which they call the overload etc, would itself be causeless. Having thus directed attention to mentality-materiality' cause and condition, an individual first discerns the cause and condition for the material body. Consequently there must be a cause and a condition for the sufferings and restlessness of an individual in this materially derived world.

Thus, these sufferings and restlessness can be relieved through pain of meditation, which helps an individual in knowing his/her true essence.

Thus, the achievement of self and its purification can be achieved by dedicating oneself to noble deeds, based on helping others and sticking oneself to the Buddhist way of living. Purification of self is simply realizing one's goal as a human being, and abandoning wrong search and gets requisites lawfully and properly. Thus by virtue of Lord Buddha one can purify one's self and reach his/her desired destination.

I. Self in Zen Buddhism

Zen is the peculiarly Chinese way of accomplishing the Buddhist goal of seeing the world just as it is, that is, with a mind that has no grasping thoughts or feelings beyond one's goal in life. The Buddhist goal is associated with Buddhism, an oriental religious tradition based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha that seeks the release from human suffering leading towards non-violence and peace. Involvement in meditation, striving for moral perfection and, finally, the acquisition of wisdom is the sole idea through which human beings can reach in their goal that is achieving one's self. This attitude is called "no-mind," a state of consciousness wherein thoughts move without leaving any trace. Unlike other forms of Buddhism, Zen holds that such freedom of mind cannot be attained by gradual practice but must come through direct and immediate insight.

Zen is a way, which challenges the traditional way of achieving and realizing goal. It seeks the philosophy that Nirvana is achieved by spiritual and physical exercise. In the context, Allan Wilson Watt, writes:

Zen abandons both theorizing and systems of spiritual exercise and communicate its vision of truth by a method known as direct pointing. Its exponents answer all philosophic or religious questions by non-symbolic words or actions; the answer is the action just as it is, and not what it represents. (122)

Zen Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism, which defines the ways of achieving self in association with theoretical and spiritual sense. It, however, depends more on action rather than words. The study of Zen, if deep and steady enough, makes a man efficient in his work, in his play, and in his spare time. All kind do people practice zazen, meaning meditation for the most prominent of all the reasons is to achieve Nirvana, the ultimate solace through the achievement of self.

Zen Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism, which developed as Chan in China and as Zen in Japan. Both Chinese and Japanese terms mean meditation, which has come from Dhyana, a Sanskrit vernacular. So, Zen Buddhism emphasizes the importance of mind controlling and concentrating to get the enlightenment or realization of one's inner self.

Zen originated as Dhyana School in India and was carried in China by an Indian monk, named Bobdhidhrama, during the 6th century A. D. (source: Microsoft Student's Encarta 2008). It incorporated the native Taoism and Confucianism. The Zen school was known for making the practice of meditation as the central tenet rather than adherence to a particular scripture or doctrine. Suzuki views, "Thus the goal of Zen was to bring a person to enlightenment through the practice of meditation" (89).

Zen is studied ordinarily in semi monastic communities to which laymen are admitted for limited periods. However, the Zen monastery is more strictly a training school combining meditation with a considerable amount of manual labor. The students in such schools give special attention to the arts and crafts, notably painting, calligraphy, gardening, architecture, and ceremonial tea drinking. In Japan the arts of fencing, archery, and jujutsu are also pursued.

According to Zen the mind serves properly as a window glass rather than as a reflector, that is, the mind should give an immediate view instead of an interpretation of the world. For example, in words of R. H. Blyth:

Many people who go for Zen are blind to art and deaf to music; don't like sports and never read a book; Zen gives them an interest in life. Some want to get rid of an inferiority complex; some think it will be useful in business; some like to attempt the impossible. Some people love paradoxes for their own sake. All these different kinds of people find meaning in life after they practice zazen (meditation) as instructed in Zen Buddhism. (12)

The followers of Zen Buddhism find meaning in whatever they do and believe.

Blyth further advocates that it is only Zen Buddhism, where the meaningless will find meaning in life. He explains as, “Zen is the only possible “philosophy of life.” It gives us the lack of support that we need; it takes away the unwanted words; it removes the non-existent bonds. At last we have timelessness in time and placelessness in place” (12). Here, the concept of Zen goes beyond what we behold in the terms of an individual’s interest. As Blyth says, “All that we behold is full of blessings” (13). The potential mind will always find blessings in doing whatever s/he focuses to do.

Zen could be understood only by transcending on it. But it may be urged, Zen is the very transcending of Zen. It is so because man is the eye with which the universe sees itself, and it is free to spit in its own eye if it so desires. And to spit with a scornful regret in own eye is to discard oneself from attaining self. It is similar to a Christian, who is a vegetarian but Christ was not; and Buddha was. So, Zen could be achieved only through zazen (meditation).

The inherent misery of the world is the constant refrain of Buddhism, continued down to the present day. In Christianity it is sin rather than misery, sin being far more subjective affair. According to Buddhism, misery is caused by desire; the extinction of desire is being followed in a rather unexpected and unexplained way by the bliss of Nirvana.

But how about the desire of virtue, the desire of enlightenment, the desire to help others, the desire for music and for art and for poetry, the desire to love, even the desire to be loved, than caused God to create the universe? As for the desire to reform the world, to save it, this must be the desire to create the universe? As for the desire to save and reform oneself is the desire to reform the world itself. Therefore, the wicked a person is, the deeper and stronger must be his repentance and endeavor to rescue the world from its sin.

Zen has had a strong influence upon Far Eastern arts and crafts because its point of view is connected with action rather than theory and with direct vision of nature rather than interpretation. All theories of nature and reality are considered to interfere with this direct vision. Zen thereby shows its continuity with the original idea of the Indian philosopher and founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, that suffering is the result of grasping desire, for it holds that the mind and feelings frustrate their own proper functioning when they cling deliberately to the world of experience.

Thus, the subject matter of Zen religious painting consists of natural forms, such as birds, grasses, rocks, and mountains, presented merely as images in a style that combines a maximum of technique with a minimum of planning and deliberation. Such art avoids iconography (illustration or representation by visual means, such as pictures) and expresses a way of experiencing rather than ideas based upon experience, for Zen is not committed to any system of doctrine or belief.

According to tradition, Zen was introduced into China in 520 by the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma. The most important figures in Zen's early development, which is distinctively Chinese, were Hui-neng, Te-shan, and Lin-chi. Chinese black-ink painting during the Song dynasty (960-1279) became one of the finest artistic expressions of the Zen school.

The two main sects of Zen were brought to Japan by Japanese who had studied in China. The Buddhist monk Eisai introduced Rinzai Zen in 1191, and the Buddhist monk Dogen introduced Soto Zen in 1227. Both sects continue to flourish in Japan. With the development of Zen in Japan, such painters as Sesshō, Sesson Shōkei, and Jasoku expressed the Zen view of nature directly in their work. Under Zen influence the Japanese brought the art of ceremonial tea drinking to a high degree of refinement and also developed a distinctive kind of poetry, the brief verse form haiku.

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Western interest in Zen dates from the publication of the first authoritative account of the subject in English, *Essays in Zen Buddhism* by the Japanese scholar Dr. Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki. After World War II and the occupation of Japan, a great interest in Zen developed in Europe and the U.S., notably among artists, philosophers, and psychologists. It had a special appeal for abstract and nonobjective painters and sculptors. Philosophers have noted its affinities with the thought of the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, with the theory of general semantics of the American scientist and writer Alfred Korzybski, and, to some extent, with existentialism as propounded by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger.

Zen or Chan, Buddhist school that developed in China and later in Japan as the result of a fusion between the Mahayana form of Buddhism originating in India and the Chinese philosophy of Daoism (Taoism). Zen and Chan are, respectively, the Japanese and Chinese ways of pronouncing the Sanskrit term *dhyana*, which designates a state of mind roughly equivalent to contemplation or meditation, although without the static and passive sense that these words sometimes convey. *Dhyana* denotes specifically the state of consciousness of a Buddha, one whose mind is free from the assumption that the distinct individuality of oneself and other things is real. All schools of Buddhism hold that separate things exist only in relation to one another; this relativity of individuals is called their “voidness” (Sanskrit *sunyata*), which means not that the world is truly nothing but that nature cannot be grasped

by any system of fixed definition or classification. Reality is the “suchness” (Pali *tathatā*) of nature, or the world “just as it is” apart from any specific thoughts about it.

The two main sects of Zen are Rinzai Zen and Soto Zen. The Soto seems to put more emphasis on the discipline of zazen, while the Rinzai sect makes use of meditation problems (Japanese *koan*) based on the dialogues (Japanese *mondo*), similar to the example mentioned previously, between the old masters and their students. Students are expected to present their understanding of an incident to the teacher in some nonverbal direct form (by pointing, for example), in a private interview called in Japanese *sanzen*.

Rinzai Zen tries to enlighten by puzzling and baffling the mind by means of different activities. Suzuki clarifies: “One school, Rinzai taught that enlightenment was a sudden event, triggered by unusual circumstances that jolted a person out of ordinary consciousness. Hence, Rinzai was centered on meditation using riddles or verbal puzzles meant to baffle the ordinary working mind” (315).

Soto Zen, another sect taught that enlightenment was a gradual process. Its major feature was based on, according to Dr. Suzuki, “Just sitting and meditating in which the goal was to achieve the quiet state of mind and to empty it of all the thoughts accompanying in the human mind” (315). During the meditation, koan or mental exercise is done by removing all the unwanted and discarded feelings out of the human mind.

Besides, these two types of Buddhism, another Buddhism branch Vajrayana arose many years later and now have dominated largely in Tibet. Explaining about the traits of this sect of Buddhism, Blyth writes: “Magical exercises and Tantric rituals are practiced in it to proceed towards spiritual world. The hierarchy of Lamaism and their schools come under this Buddhism” (37).

Vajrayana is an esoteric practice in which only those who initiates properly can achieve enlightenment. It is “A third major school of Buddhism, known as Vajrayana

(diamond vehicle), developed stressing the esoteric side of the Buddhist tradition” (Blyth 38).

However, this sect has an ample influence in it. Blyth writes, “From the third of fourth century A. D., Vajrayan Buddhism grew from Buddhist, Hindu and other popular roots to become the Buddhism, most notably of Buddhism. Blyth further writes:

Vajrayana sought the mystical goal of union with divinity within. By dramatizing the inner work in a series of secret intuitions and magical techniques, Vajrayana Buddhists were trying to make the spiritual concrete. And by making the spiritual concrete, they hoped to achieve practical control over it. (45)

The third type of Buddhism, Vajrayana takes magical techniques to achieve spiritual world according to Blyth. Vajrayana Buddhist tries to make the spiritual concrete and to control over it by the help of mystical union.

Zen practice consists of meditation in lotus posture, which is called zazen. The zazen and koan are the prime source of attaining self in Buddhism. Through the regular practice, one can achieve the stage of Nirvana, or self and go beyond the worldly pleasure and state. Those, who experience the state of self, are called Satori. In the state of Satori, an individual experiences a mystical feeling which is beyond the worldly knowledge. In the context, Dr. Suzuki writes:

Zen is discipline leading an individual towards attaining and realizing self. It means emancipation of an individual from the worldly state of affairs. The real freedom is the outcome of attaining self through enlightenment. When a man realizes this (self), s/he might be in whatever situation but finds own self in a freer state to pursue line of action. (6)

Purification of self leads an individual to such a state taking to a state of extreme satisfaction, in to the world of relief from pain and sufferings.

Zen stresses in personal experience of enlightenment based on simple way of life and meditation method. It takes no complicated rituals but simple way of mediating in a sitting posture to relief oneself from the anxiety.

Zen is a simple way of salvation for society and international life. Shall we have Buddhist compassion to cure our personal and national evils, or Zen ego-lessness. Or are they same thing? Buddha cannot save the world; neither Christ nor Shiva can. As, Dr. Suzuki asks, “For what and to what could this infinite whirl be saved?” (35). He answers,

Zen can save it, because Zen tells us that the world is saved as it is. The ordinary man is the Buddha, time is eternity, here is everywhere. But this is only so if we know it is so. In history of Zen, each monk as he becomes enlightened gloat over it almost indecently, just as Buddha himself did, but how about all the poor unenlightened chaps, or those who died five minutes before they became independent. No, no! No universe must suffer, in being what it is, and we must suffer with it. The universe has joy, as Wordsworth perceived and we must be happy with it. Above all, the universe is a paradox, and we must laugh with and at it. (16)

It is thus the consciousness of sin and ignorance in an individual that makes a man religious and teacher of men.

Buddhism that developed in China and later in Japan as a result of a fusion between the Mahayana form of Buddhism originating in India, later became the Chinese philosophy of Daoism (Taoism). Zen and Chan are, respectively, the Japanese and Chinese ways of pronouncing the Sanskrit term *dhyana*, which designates a state of mind roughly equivalent to contemplation or meditation, although without the static and passive sense that these words sometimes convey. *Dhyana* denotes specifically the state of consciousness of a Buddha, one whose mind is free from the assumption that the distinct individuality of oneself and other

things is real. All schools of Buddhism hold that separate things exist only in relation to one another; this relativity of individuals is called their “voidness” (Sanskrit *sunyata*), which means not that the world is truly nothing but that nature cannot be grasped by any system of fixed definition or classification. Reality is the “suchness” (Pali *tathat*) of nature, or the world “just as it is” apart from any specific thoughts about it. (source: *Microsoft Encarta [DVD] 2008*)

Zen is studied ordinarily in semi-monastic communities to which laymen are admitted for limited periods. However, the Zen monastery is more strictly a training school combining meditation with a considerable amount of manual labor. The students in such schools give special attention to the arts and crafts, notably painting, calligraphy, gardening, architecture, and ceremonial tea drinking. In Japan the arts of fencing, archery, and jujutsu are also pursued.

Zen has had a strong influence upon Far Eastern arts and crafts because its point of view is connected with action rather than theory and with direct vision of nature rather than interpretation. According to Zen the mind serves properly as a window glass rather than as a reflector, that is, the mind should give an immediate view instead of an interpretation of the world. All theories of nature and reality are considered to interfere with this direct vision. Zen thereby shows its continuity with the original idea of the Indian philosopher and founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, that suffering is the result of grasping desire, for it holds that the mind and feelings frustrate their own proper functioning when they cling deliberately to the world of experience. Thus, the subject matter of Zen religious painting consists of natural forms, such as birds, grasses, rocks, and mountains, presented merely as images in a style that combines a maximum of technique with a minimum of planning and deliberation. Such art avoids iconography (illustration or representation by visual means, such as pictures) and

expresses a way of experiencing rather than ideas based upon experience, for Zen is not committed to any system of doctrine or belief.

The great difference between Zen and other sects of religions is, probably the concept of absence of God. Zen emphasizes on achieving self, through practical means rather than abstract means of praying and calling a soul, whose presence is itself in dilemma. The object of life is our communication with one another. This is difficult when both parties insist on using words which are different and vague in meaning. Similar is the case in worship, which Zen does not believe, and preaches to do.

There are different name for different objects representing them. But the same name has a different meaning; a different meaning has a different name – for that one person. But the same name has a different meaning for different people. A man may call himself an atheist and yet have an animistic feeling towards the universe. Many devout Christians, he most pious perhaps, are not anthropomorphic, have not a weak sense of personality of God, and would hesitate to ask the God for some favor, or even a necessary.

Corresponding to these permutations and combinations of names and meanings is the alternation of theism, pantheism atheism in the history of religious history of Zen in India. These are bewildering, but that is not so much because we are too stupid to unweave the mingled threads, as that the world is spiritually and poetically speaking, an absolute confusion. The universe is same to the scientist but delightfully lunatic to the madman, the lover and the poet.

Dr. Suzuki narrates these wonderful, yet varying ways of defining a soul's interest as:

In India hymns and invocations to a deity; then comes the world soul, then the scientific agnosticism of Buddhism; then the Eternal Buddha. In China the esoteric symbolism of the Tantric Sects and the shouting and beatings are ways of Zen. Then in Japan, "I am nothingness" and last scene of all,

Buddhism seems to dwindle, but it is the real freedom of enjoying and being associated with Buddhism. (56)

The freedom of realizing one's soul through one's convincing method is one of the strongest charms present in Zen Buddhism.

To speak of some of the disagreeable aspects of Zen, to which few critics and scholars point to is, in words of Blyth: "It (Zen) has certain level of cold-heartedness, its ideology is based on achieving self and discard all the unnecessary ones, at times even the social responsibilities, too" (20). This is of course innate, though encouraged by the doctrine of self dependence and self help. It comes from the same source as that of the Buddha, seen for example when he was asked about the spiritual blindness of even some of his own disciples. He declared that he was merely the Tathagata, who showed the Way, and accepted no responsibility for them.

Zen, it must be admitted, is the selfish side of the doctrine of selflessness that comes down through the Mahayana. Zen has a very weak missionary spirit, and for the reason interferes very little with other people's lives. It does not have, and does not want, the excuse to force people into Heaven. But it has the defects of its virtues, and would be communistic as it was once militaristic and feudalistic and capitalistic. The passing on of merit to other sentient beings, parallel with the supererogation, is something that Zen should have absorbed into itself.

The logic of Zen would seem to be this, in words of Blyth:

I am nothing. I have no special wants or wishes, any particular desire for the things of this world. But you want them, and I am you, so I want them – for you. Of course we might take it the other way round. I don't want comfort, and I am you, so you don't want it, and why should I help you to get what you really and truly don't want? (21)

The choice of these two attitudes, of helping you to be happy because I am you, and not helping you to be happy because you are you depends upon one's individual temperament. However, we may assert that the former is better, because it means that life is interesting, and helping nobody leaves us very dull and bored.

To an occidental, the forms and ceremonies of a Zen temple, and the feudalistic, not to say militaristic ranking of the priests may seem un-Zen like, and worse still, disagreeable. The rules and regulation the chanting and genuflections of a Zen temple may be not justified, but excused to some extent, on the ground that they continue a two thousand years tradition from India through China and Korea to Japan.

Much is said about Zen, but this is felt by people who have forgotten or never known the profound homeliness of mysticism associated with it. Zen is a virtue of necessity, but is there not something cunning, something slightly mean in this? To pretend to be glad to lose, when we really wanted to win is immoral. When we lose, we may, if we wish, burst into tears. Even to run up to the other person and hack his shins is all right. To shoot him, and exterminate his family would be going to extremes, but what is wrong with the extremes?

The aim of Zen is, of course, attaining Nirvana, or self, but it is not a state; but is an activity. The other shore is actually never reached. If reached, we drop dead. The omnipotence and omniscience of God would be his undoing. This is the state of great illusion, in which we assume we are enlightened. But, Zen is when s/he takes what is being offered, and knows what s/he really wanted, which is, the absolute.

Zen stresses the personal experience of enlightenment based on simple way of life and meditation method. It takes no complicated rituals and abstruse thought. All worldly concerns are banished and state of selflessness leads on enlightenment. Zen opposes the intellectual approach rather it offers the self-knowledge and introspection towards enlightenment.

Scriptures and doctrines are not important because Zen emphasizes mind-to-mind instruction in order to achieve the self.

Zen concerns with inner meaning of life. Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen taught the spiritual practice to his disciples. Dr. Suzuki states, “While they ask about the first coming to Bodhidharma to China, their idea is to get into the inner meaning, if there were any of his special teaching, which is thought to be spiritual transmitted to his successors” (212). Suzuki does not see the value of words in Zen. Instead of it, he observes the importance of action and gestures, “Since Zen is the truth of life, something more intimate and immediate than words is to be made use of, and this can be found in some kind of movement symbolizing life as it moves on” (218).

There are three essential factors in Zen practice. The first is strong faith, which is more than mere belief. The second is the strong doubt. This doubt is not skepticism rather a state of perplexity of probing inquiry stems from faith. It is a doubt as to why the world and we should appear so imperfect, full of anxiety and suffering. The third essential is the strong determination, which naturally arises from the feeling of doubt. It is an overwhelming determination of dispel the doubt with the whole force of energy and will. These three essential qualities propagated the Zen Buddhism.

Zen offers the method of spiritual practice whereby a disciple recovers their Buddha nature. Disciples may see their own nature and become a Buddha by means of meditation, and spiritual transformation from master to disciples. Meditation method point directly to the mind without the use of words, which are recognized as ineffectual either in scripture or as means of communicating to the enlightenment.

Zen helps to make a higher standard of living in terms of spiritualism. Suzuki quotes: “But wherever the students of Zen may live, his purpose of life is to raise his quality of living as distinct from his standard of living, his spiritual as distinct from his material wealth” (97).

Zen provides a new vision to look at. “For Zen is not a new thing but a new way of looking at things. It is a new vision with the old eyes” (Suzuki 99).

Trainees in Zen spend one or two week sequestered in the visiting monk’s quarters concentrating solely on zazen, or meditation regiment that forms the core of Zen spiritual life. Cleaning and washing like every part of daily life, are regarded as spiritual exercise, which are done in silence. The monks beg for alms once a year. This tries to remind that they depend on laity, and receiving donations encourages their spiritual pursuits. Through this, Zen aims to enlighten all human beings. It satisfies the deepest spiritual needs of human beings. It is a religion that seeks inner peace. It is “perhaps the only spiritual schools in the world which makes deliberate use of laughter in training in Zen life as I knew it is just full of life.

Self in Hindu philosophy and Buddhism is much similar to each other. The Hindu philosophy calls it Atman (soul). It is this soul that uses the personal pronoun, I in singular form for itself. Soul or self has a separate identity, aloof and different from its physical presence. In the context, Hassija explains that the body and soul are separate entity, as:

Soul has a separate identity. The body is material or physical whereas the soul is non-physical; it is metaphysical. We all know that car has the motor power, whereas the driver has the motive power, the intent, the will, the purpose or the goal, for it is the driver who gives the car a direction according to his will. It is the soul which has intent, purpose, goal, will or motive and directs the body or decides when, how or where and why to use what part of it. (14)

Thus, Hassija separates soul and body, though externally they seem together. He keeps the soul in the driver’s seat, so as to drive the externally visible body cart.

In some philosophical or spiritual texts, such as the *Upanishads*, the body has been compared to a chariot, the sense organs to horses, and the intellect to the reins and the soul to a charioteer, and self to nirvana.

Nirvana, a Sanskrit word meaning “extinguishing,” in Indian religious philosophy stands for transcendent state free from suffering and individual phenomenal existence, an ultimate religious goal most frequently identified with Buddhism. The word is derived from a verb meaning “to become cool,” or “to blow out,” as in the extinguishing of a candle. The connotation is that only in nirvana are the flames of lust, hatred, greed, and ignorance extinguished. With the attainment of nirvana, the otherwise endless cycle of rebirths is broken. Its nature has been much debated in Western scholarship, some scholars maintaining that it involves total annihilation and others interpreting it as eternal bliss. Both views are problematic, for nirvana is ultimately indescribable and can only be known directly. Mahayana Buddhists, a sect of Buddhism in East Asia interpret nirvana or self not as an external goal, but as one's own innermost nature, which needs only to be recognized. They speak of it as Buddhahood, suchness, and emptiness.

Hinduism, a religious tradition followed in the Indian sub-continent comprises the beliefs and practices of Hindus. The word *Hindu* is derived from the river Sindhu, or Indus. *Hindu* was primarily a geographical term that referred to India or to a region of India (near the Sindhu) as long ago as the 6th century B. C. The word *Hinduism* is an English word of more recent origin. *Hinduism* entered the English language in the early 19th century to describe the beliefs and practices of those residents of India who had not converted to Islam or Christianity and did not practice Judaism or Zoroastrianism.

In the case of most religions, beliefs and practices come first, and those who subscribe to them are acknowledged as followers. In the case of the Hindu tradition, however, the

acknowledgment of Hindus came first, and their beliefs and practices constitute the contents of the religion.

The Hindu tradition encourages Hindus to seek spiritual and moral truth wherever it might be found, while acknowledging that no creed can contain such truth in its fullness and that each individual must realize this truth through his or her own systematic effort. Our experience, our reason, and our dialogue with others – especially with enlightened individuals – provide various means of testing our understanding of spiritual and moral truth. And Hindu scripture, based on the insights of Hindu sages and seers, serves primarily as a guidebook. But ultimately truth comes to us through direct consciousness of the divine or the ultimate reality. In other religions this ultimate reality is known as God. Hindus refer to it by many names, but the most common name is Brahman.

In many religions truth is delivered or revealed from a divine source and enters the world through a single agent: for example, Abraham in Judaism, Jesus in Christianity, and Muhammad in Islam. These truths are then recorded in scriptures that serve as a source of knowledge of divine wisdom: the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'an. In the Hindu tradition, by contrast, there is no single revelation or *orthodoxy* (established doctrine) by which people may achieve knowledge of the divine or lead a life backed by religious law. The Hindu tradition acknowledges that there are many paths by which people may seek and experience religious understanding and direction. It also claims that every individual has the potential to achieve enlightenment.

The Hindu community today practices the concept of soul based on the teachings of *Gita*, a sacred book of the Hindus. It believes, “Self can never die nor can be killed” (89).

Since ancient times, Hindu thought has transcended geographical boundaries and influenced religious and philosophical ideas throughout the world. Persian, ancient Greek, and ancient Roman thought may well have been influenced by Hinduism. Buddhism, as

generally taken by the western world is the branch of Hinduism. They believe that Gautama Buddha, the initiator of Buddhism is supposed to have found the new trend, as most of his queries on life and death, and findings of the self were not answered by the Hindu religious philosophy.

Gita, one of the most sacred books on Hindu Philosophy defines self as an eternal entity. Swami Prabhuvapa in *In Bhagvad Gita – as it is* quotes self as, “The soul can never be cut to pieces by any weapon, nor burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind” (106). The Hindu philosophy accepts soul as an eternal entity because though a man dies, his/her soul remains forever. The spirit of soul cannot be killed by any kinds of weapons like swords, flame weapons, rain weapons, tornado weapons, etc. It appears that there were many kinds of weapons made of earth, water, air, ether, etc in addition to the modern weapons of fire.

The Bhagvad Gita divides Soul into Supreme Soul and Individual Soul. The Supreme Soul is universal that regulates and supervises the individual soul. However, the individual soul cannot be broken in to pieces nor it can be assimilated in the original supreme soul, rather the individual souls are eternally separated parts of the supreme souls. It is because, these souls are automatic individual souls eternally prone to be covered by the illusory energy and thus they become separated from the association of the Supreme Lord. It is just as the spark of fire, although one in equality with the fire, are prone to be extinguished when out of the fire. The Hindu philosophy further defines soul as, “The living entities as separated parts and parcels of supreme and individual soul’s existence as eternal and believes that it does not have any form, shape and size, nor it can be divided in to various types.

Zen Buddhism, unlike other religions, does not take human beings as sinner or faithless creatures. It does not believe that human are helpless and have to surrender under the

God. In contrast to it, Zen is a quest for inner peace and satisfaction through mind concentration. Suzuki explains:

We can thus see the antecedent that leads to the Zen experience is not adoration, obedience, fear love, faith, penitence, or anything that usually characterizes a good soul; but it is a search for something that will give mental peace and harmony by overruling contradictions and joining tangled threads into one continuous line. Every aspirant feels this constant and seeking for mental peace and wholeness. (54)

Suzuki claims that the Zen Buddhism searches for mental peace and harmony. Through Zen experience one gets spiritual peace, and thereby acquires his/her self.

Thus, hereby the researcher has his personal awakening based on Zen Buddhism. Its basic concept that self can be achieved only through physical and spiritual toil is the essence of all human understandings and achievements.

III. *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*: Search for Self

This research work is based on the work of Robin S. Sharma's most acclaimed novel *The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari*. It narrates the story of search for self by its central character Julian Mantle, who used to be a well known and well-to-do lawyer in the United States. He was quite a successful in his legal profession and a happy person, well externally. However, during one of his trials in a packed courtroom, he suffered from a severe heart attack and collapsed, and then started his search for self.

Mantle comes from a well-to-do family background, with his father being a reputed senator and his grandfather one of the successful judges of the country. However, he prefers to choose his own way of life and from very early days. He displays glory of intelligence backed by power of money and passion for work. The narrator, John is Mantle's legal assistant and friend explains Mantle workaholic passion as:

I could see that he was driving himself deeper into the ground. It was as if he had some kind of a death wish. Nothing ever satisfied him. Eventually, his marriage failed, he no longer spoke with his father, and though he had every material possession anyone could want, he still had not found whatever it was that he was looking for. It showed, emotionally, physically – and spiritually.

(5)

The zeal to win and possess engraved Mantle, until the famous collapse in the courtroom.

John narrates the collapse as:

And then it happened. This massive heart attack that brought the brilliant Julian Mantle back down to earth and reconnected him to his mortality. Right in the middle of courtroom numbers seven on a Monday morning, the same courtroom where we had won the Mother of All Murder Trials. (7)

The collapse made the entire legal scenario shocked, but however, it came as a boon to Mantle. It made him ponder on who he was and what his aim was in life. In an attempt to save self from the hectic legal schedule, Mantle sought out in an odyssey to the east in search of his real self.

Before the famous collapse, Julian, in a very short span of time not only had become one of the most successful lawyers of the nation, but also had owned a spectacular mansion, a private jet, a summer home on a tropical island and his prized possession – a shiny red Ferrari, always parked in the centre of his driveway. All these shows that he was materially successful, however, all these success and glory never satisfied this man, and every time he was hungry for more and more. He stayed late nights working in preparations of yet another blockbuster case that had arrived, just hours before. He hardly slept few hours a day, and was ever dreaming of trials and questions by the judges in the courtroom. He was ever preparing himself to face the question raised by the judges. This factor changed him to a workaholic machine.

He was extremely handsome and was notorious to use the charm on his fellow girlfriends. He attended late night parties and wine and women were very common in his life; despite all these, he never lost his focus on law practice. Soon, he rose to the height of one of the most successful young lawyers of the nation, however, until, his collapse in the courtroom.

But, beneath all these there was still something to relate Mantle to down-to-ground. He still cared for a birthday wish and, stood by his friends, when necessary. But in the obsession of desire to “win” he had lost appetite, and was living in drinks and women. All these had turned him into an embarrassingly overweight fellow. And the collapse, in the court was to happen, sooner or later.

However, the collapse inspired him to realize what was missing in his life. He sold all his belongings and moved to the East, to India and to Nepal amid the Himalayas to realize what was his goal in life; a search for self.

We all are creatures in world, which, even in the same species are different to each other. Every other creature has its own existence and survival, from the mightiest to the meekest, from the visible to the invisible. And, all this creatures have their own *self*; this self consists of knowing their real desire of living, or coming to this world. As, nobody comes to this earth without any reason, knowing this reason makes a man's life fruitful and successful. As Maya Angelou writes, "Life is pure adventure and the sooner we realize that, the quicker we will be able to treat life as art, and for this one needs to know his/her *self*" (qtd. The Greatness Guide, ix).

The purpose of human life is to walk the path of this great finding – finding of self. Sharma defines this path of self findings as:

My closely held belief is that a newborn child represents perfection and that state of being to which each of us is duty-bound to return, which in my understanding is the Great Awakening of Self. It is like the instant after you were born you were fearless, pure love, innocent infinitely wise, of boundless potential and beautifully connected with the unseen hand that created the universe. (qtd. The Greatness Guide 2)

Creatures in the world are different from each other because of their behavior, nature and physical differences, which is because of the upbringings we are habituated to. But there is common divine presence in every object of the world.

This common superior force has several names, according to belief and faith of the respective clan of people; guides everything in the world. Each and every living being has their own eternal force to guide their life. One, who wants perfection, should experience the

world through his/her eternal soul. One's eternal soul can see that there is infinite value even on commonest and cheapest objects in the world. To experience the whole universe one should have intuitive or eternal power. Through this power one can communicate with every self of the world.

In concept of achieving this state of intuitive eternal power, Walt Whitman writes:

To achieve the fullest development or realization of the *self*, one must transcend his persona singularly to the divine (the supreme power) by discarding the wholeness of the material world and its identities. One discovers the self by entering in to the relation and thus experiencing the sphere of the between. (*Preface, Song of Myself*)

Whitman in his famous poem, *Song of Myself* talks about transcendentalism, which is most nearest to self or nirvana. The easiest way to achieve self identity is to submit oneself to the divine.

Self has been defined by various persons in different perspectives and manners, since time immemorial. However, theology has emphasized on the concept of self, largely based on spiritual sense and has narrated several ways to achieve the self. Mantle finds his self in Buddhism, one of the ancient religions of the world that had its origin in Nepal almost before 4450 years. Mantle the materially rich, but spiritually hollow lawyer found solace and meaning in Zen Buddhism, one of the sects of Buddhism. Sharma, through the depiction of the powerful character of Julian Mantle, has questioned the mentality of most of the so-called successful people of the world – are you happy, has your goal in life, as a human being achieved?

But, the reality of those so-called successful peoples is no different to that of Mantle. They have possessed uncountable wealth and believe that they are able to solve all their woes and worries, without any second to think of. They find themselves in the state of Master-of-

all, at least in their respective fields. However it is similar to the situation of Mantle, who narrates himself as: “I couldn’t remember the last time I had read a book that didn’t deal with law. The profession was my life. I began to realize that the sterile world I have grown accustomed to have dulled my creativity and limited my vision towards the real essence of life” (35).

Similarly people in modern days are materially successful in the specific field of business, but are farther away from the pleasures of life. Most of us on the planet today have lost this connection with simplicity and simple pleasure, we get from the minor things in an attempt to achieve large, however, nobody knows and has a limitation for achieving large. We have been surrounded by people who behave selfishly, fearfully and hurtfully. This behavior is not a reflection of our essential nature but is, instead, a reflection of the wounds we have suffered as we have left the innocence to which we were born and traveled along the journey of our days. Only people in pain can do painful things. Only people who have been hurt can hurt others. Only people with closed hearts are able to act in less than loving ways.

Bono, the lead singer of U2 band, one of the most successful in the United States and in Europe shares his secret of being able to donate million of dollars to the homeless and destitute children of the world as, “knowing his self” (qtd. *The Greatness Guide* 78). He further writes:

I used to think that one day I’d be able to resolve the different drives I have in different directions, as I wanted to be successful in as many fields, I heard of; but the tension between my inner self and external had it the other way. Now, I realize that is who I am. I do feel I’m getting closer to the song in my head. I wasn’t looking for grace. But luckily grace was looking for me. (79)

One has to follow his/her intuition to achieve self and thereby to get success in his/her goal in life. Bono, a mere singer can achieve his dream of serving the less fortunate ones by singing for others, is an exemplary personality, in the case of an individual, who achieved his self.

The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari is more like an awakening call to many, who possessed the mentality of Mantle. The most symbolic happening in the novel, the collapse of Mantle in the courtroom was a call of awakening for him, and the reading of the novel has similar impacts on various personalities, including Joe Tye, author of *Never Fear, Never Quit*. He writes about his experience and feeling of reading this book:

The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari is a treasure – an elegant and powerful formula for true success and happiness. One can feel the thrill of the awakening right from the beginning. Sharma has captured the wisdom of the ages and made it relevant for these turbulent times. I couldn't put it down; simply, I was trying to find the Mantle in me. (78)

The book is based on various mantras and sacred preaching from the ancient Buddhist scriptures. These preaching and mantras, Sharma had derived from the ancient scriptures of Buddhism.

Similarly, Brain Tracy in his *Readings on Robin Sharma*, writes:

The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari is a tale of fun, fascinating, fanciful adventure into the realms of personal development, personal effectiveness, and ways of achieving individual happiness through the internal awakening. It contains treasures of wisdom that can enrich and enhance the life of every single person. (37)

The book narrates how Mantle reached to the height of his law practice and suddenly decided to quit all the glory and charm of greatness, in a different way of story-telling.

Sharma, himself had made an intensive study on ways of findings of self visiting the Buddhist monasteries in Northern India and Nepal. He, as mentioned in his *Guide to Greatness* travelled far and wide and meditated in the laps of the Himalayas, to know what he actually he wanted to achieve in life. After his intensive research, he produced his findings in the form of *The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari*. Tracy, rightly points out the similarities between the writer and his character as:

One day the great Julian Mantle sold all his valuable commodities and silently in the dark headed for East, in an odyssey of realizing his self. Similar was the situation of Sharma, who despite being a successful western businessman was not satiated, on what he earned from life. He travelled to the Himalayas in the east to endeavor his desire; he had secretly nurtured for years. (67)

These similarities between the writer and Mantle are more nearer than the fictive approach depicted in the novel. Sharma, who presently works international companies as a spiritual speaker, is more or less the role of his character, Mantle. However, Sharma is convinced that the ways of reaching and achieving self is different from person to person, depending upon his desire and wishes, let alone be Sharma and Mantle.

The nature and identity of self has been a subject matter of discussion for years, however, with no universally accepted answers. Most answers given in relation to what is self, though substantially similar has varied largely in wording, mannerism and tone of the people who answered them. B. K. Jagdish Chandra Hassija, one of the spiritual preachers of India has defined self in relation to consciousness, as:

Meaning of self comes through consciousness, and, in turn, consciousness is true knowledge of soul. However, self is not a matter of superficial importance nor is it to be left to some philosophers or religious scholars to discuss. Since each and every one of us is a conscious being, it concerns us all individuality

and severely. To refute ourselves with the true knowledge of consciousness is to deny ourselves the right and the duty of living a meaningful life. (Preface, 1)

To disprove oneself from the true knowledge of consciousness is to lead a meaningless life, or, precisely, is to lead a dead life. Every individual has their own self, however, most of them really knowing their self, seeks their identity in mere material success.

Material success, of course leads them to the glow and charm of the postmodern world but, at the same time takes them away from the essence of living and life. Mantle was one such fellow who was lost in the pomp and charm created by the illusion of the materiality, but, when he knew its reality; he declined to stick to the false ideology.

For some, the concept of self is the name of his/her profession, like banker, lawyer, teacher, and the like; for others, it is designation, and for some it is nationality. These answers are merely external and material identity of an individual. It proves that most of us have never tried to find out real self. However, these answers are further proof that most of us are happy on external identity, and have not bothered in search of self. Very few of us, have ever tried on knowing our self.

Sharma, in explaining his concept of self neither denies the scientific truth to merge the individual essence with the essence of the world. The materialists or scientists focus on particularity, diversity, flux, body, etc. But, Sharma in *The Greatness Guide* expresses his belief that “changelessness, God, soul and essence exist in order to show humanity the right way” (134). In the view, the direct observation of the world can give a more accurate sense of truth than all the logic and sermons of priest, scientists and philosophers. Logic and sermons never convince the thrust for more knowledge and findings of the *self*.

In ways of Self findings, Sharma opines, “Through logic and sermons an individual can reach only to the level of curiosity but to know, who s\he is to go to the preaching of

Buddhism” (135). When we think of the self we only see its external form getting material shape in form of possession of wealth or fame or related terms. This material possession is only the outcome of a selfish mind and its outcome. In the words of Whitman, this external self is “I,” which at the same time is transcendental and selfish, as well. However, Whitman again opines way of reaching to self by means of “The unseen is proved by seen” (*Song of Myself*).

The unseen is the self and who sees it, becomes the transcendent or achieves the nirvana or the self in the Buddhist terminology. The unseen self was achieved by Mantle by doing what desperately wanted to do, but in the pomp of power and zeal for more wins, his self was hidden in his subconscious mind. So, to do what one wants to do all his life is the easiest way to achieve the self. However, most persons abandon the search for self, once they come across the hardships of life. When we face hard times, we think the way we see the world reflects the way it really is. This is a false assumption.

We are simply viewing the world from our hopeless frame of reference. We are seeing things through sad and hopeless eyes. The truth of the matter is that when we begin to feel better, our world will look better. And when we return to a state of joyfulness within, our outer world will reflect that feeling to joyfulness within, our outer world will reflect that feeling to us.

Mantle, in the similar fashion had lost his way into the world of glitterati of wealth and power. But the famous collapse, and the doctor’s warning that either he should quit his profession or his life, he had no way left, except to chase the second one. As John narrates:

He collapsed right in the middle of a packed courtroom. He was one of this country’s most distinguished trial lawyers. He was also a man who was as well known for the three thousand-dollar Italian suits which draped his well fed frame as for his remarkable string of legal victories. I simply stood there,

paralyzed by the shock of what I just witnessed. The great Julian Mantle had been reduced to a victim and was now squirming on the ground like a helpless infant, shaking and shivering and sweating like a maniac. (1)

However, the parody of the collapse lies on the future of Mantle. It showed him, with options left to join the path of spiritual way or risk his life.

Mantle led the spiritual way of finding his self. He was able to control his nerves and thoughts. His goal, who once wanted to be the centre of power and wealth, was to share sheer pleasure and the formulae to achieve it to the people of west. As he (Mantle) narrates on to John:

They (people) have not learned the art of self-control and disciplined thinking. Most people I have spoken to have no idea that they have the power to control every single thought they think every second of every minute of every day. They believe that thoughts just happen and have never realized that if you don't take the time to start controlling your thoughts, they will control you. When you start to focus on good thoughts only, and refuse to think the bad ones through sheer will power, I promise you they will shrivel up very quickly. (151)

So, to give up the bad thoughts and engulf within oneself with positive thoughts is the way to achieve self. If one cannot control his mind from the negative thoughts, it will eventually control the person. So, it is meditation to control the mind and the body from the negative thoughts coming to an individual.

Mantle stayed for years in the company of the Sivana sages in the Himalayas to realize his self. The Sivana sages taught him the secret of long and happy life, in the form of Seven Stages of Self-Awakening. Sharma narrates this secret in the following manner:

The seven stages of self awakening is a remarkably potent process for living your biggest life and walking the path to your destiny. The seven stages are a blueprint for awakening your best self and manifesting the potential that you have been given by the force that sent you into the world. Few people in the world know it today. These stages reflect the pathway that every seeker needs to travel to return to his or her original nature – the state of mind, body, and spirit that they first experienced when they were perfect and pure. (94)

The east has a mystic way of living and leading life since ages. The seven stages of self awakening learned by Mantle is, but, only another depiction of eastern mythical trends and traditions.

The seven stages of self awakening that help an individual to defy age and lead a life full of charm and charisma. These stages, according to Sharma are discussed in brief, hereunder:

Stage one is the stage that most people on the planet are currently at. It's the stage of living an unconscious life – being asleep at the wheel, so to speak. This stage is known as “living a lie” because people at this beginning platform of personal evolution are caught up in a lie about the way the world works and how they exist within it. Now I'm not, in any way judging people who spend their lives at this stage. Who am I to judge another human being? But I am stating a fact when I tell you that this is the lowest level of consciousness that a person operate at, when measured against all seven stages. Those of us who are at stage one has no connection with the truth.

Second stage is “The Choicepoint.” It helps us to make correct decision and awaken our best, and after one has become aware of the world beyond the illusion. Here lies the world of extraordinary wonder and limitless possibility.

Third stage is “Query.” It means an individual gets into genuine interest about what s/he is, or what is the aim of coming to the life. The same old things and matters that had no seemingly any value makes him/her wonder a lot and starts making query. This stage is also known as being inquisitive.

Fourth stage is Instruction from Masters. It is at this stage that the seeker usually begins to search for various teachers and explores many different paths to learning. It is a very confusing time because when lots of new knowledge comes to the seeker in a short span of time. There is lots of confusion arising in this stage. However, it is only through confusion, clarity can be achieved.

Fifth stage is “Transformation and Rebirth.” After the confusions are cleared a clear vision evokes into the individual and there is the transformation and rebirth of the individual. However, it is the most challenging stage. But it is also one of the most unforgettable, as it is the stage of self start. The world begins to change and the new birth will eventually start heralding gifts and rewards in the form of solace.

Stage six is “The Trial.” Before a seeker reaches the treasure of knowledge and solace, s/he has go under a trial. The purpose of this trial is twofold: first to ensure that she has learned all the lessons she was meant to learn along the way and second, to see how badly she wants the prize. It is at this stage that most people give up. Too many people retreat at this point when, sadly, had they persisted a little bit more; their greatest gift would have been available just around the corner.

Finally, the seventh stage is “Self Awakening of the Self.” To get to this point – is to achieve the self, the Nirvana. At this stage all things that reflect look natural. One return to way of being that you know when was connected to the force of nature that sent you into the world. One becomes fearless, innocent, and infinitely wise, of boundless potential and pure love. No shadows – all light. One can get to that stage – if only the individual is willing to

devote. But to get to this final place, you have wanted to get there more than you want life itself.

Mantle's life too had gone through these seven stages of awakening. Initially he was a living a lie, the first stage, when he was a mere lawyer. Secondly, he became quite successful on his profession as the choicepoint, the second stage. And so on, he started to ask queries on who he was, and what his aim was and hence, he started to walk on the way of self purification. A simple way of reaching enlightenment as, Mantle describes is, "To have inner strength to get up earlier, eat less, read more, worry less, be more patient or be mover loving, all I have to do is exert my will to cleanse my thoughts" (151).

Hence, the search of self is the awakening of one's inner strength. It can be achieved through meditation and focus on the aim of life.

IV. Conclusion

Material achievement alone cannot lead a person to the success and essence of life. Human beings, at whatever height, or success heralded by material possession cannot achieve solace in life, and which can be attained only through realizing the self. Julian Mantle, the protagonist in Sharma's *The Monk who Sold His Ferrari* was a renowned name in the legal profession in the United States. This young lawyer was one of the leading and successful lawyers of the nation, and his success had come to him at within the few years of his career. There were clear indications that this lawyer would leave no stone unturned in achieving the heights in the legal profession. However, all his material and showy success came collapsing one day, when, during a famous trial he collapsed in the court. His collapse was due to the excessive pressure he exerted on himself in the process of achieving all the material success in life.

However, this material success was only a hollow and he realized, one day that his life was lacking the spiritual calmness and prosperity to lead a man to essence of pleasure. In the pretext of realizing this essence of life, Mantle travelled to east, giving up all the goods under his custody and adopting to simplicity of eastern philosophy based on meditation and possession to realize his self.

He realized in the company of the Sivana sages, who were living in the solitary of the Himalayas far from the reach of development of the material world. For years, no person had come to their contact, as they remained ousted from the worldly affairs. But Mantle, who was firmly determined to achieve his self, became the first person to get in to the contact of these simple and pious sages. They were a group of person, who were friendly and willing to share their age old knowledge on making people's life easier and smoother.

Mantle found the meaning of his life in simplicity and in leading a disciplined life. The source of eternal solace and meaning of life was to realize one's self, and it was possible

only through meditation. Meditation was the only medicine to get to own self, and thereby to lead a meaningful life. After gaining the generation's old knowledge, Mantle was asked by the sages to return to his world to teach his fellow people the secret of happy living.

Thus, realizing the Buddhist way of simple living and thereby defying age and anxiety, mankind can lead a life full of peace and security – the philosophy of Buddha's teachings. These teaching will lead an individual to achieve one's goal in life and derive him/her in the path of achieving self purification.

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