

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**A Quest for Renunciation in A Tiger for Malgudi and The World of
Nagaraj**

**A Thesis submitted to the Central Department of English in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of
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**by
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This thesis entitled “**A Quest for Renunciation in *A Tiger for Malgudi and the World of Nagaraj***” Submitted by Nirmal Karki to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

The present research work basically focuses on A Quest for Renunciation in *A tiger for Malgudi* and *The world of Nagaraj*. Raja, the protagonist of *A Tiger for Malgudi* goes through many highs and lows in the different phases of his life. Later he comes across a hermit who is a genuine man of piety, a seeker and a true *yogi*, a man of renunciation in appearance as well as in spirit. Both the hermit and Raja evolve inwardly and walk together on the path of non-attachment. Likewise, Nagarj, the protagonist of *The World of Nagaraj* decides to put on the grab of *sanyasi* to have peace of mind and remain away from the hassles of material world. R.K. Narayan looks at the ideal of renunciation – not from the point of view of strict adherence to the traditional *asramadharm*. He focuses on renunciation as a means to add a meaning to our life which is disturbed by the material needs and concerns. He considers on the contrary its psychological, moral and spiritual implications. He finds in true renunciation a positive ideal, which makes for life rather than go against it, and which affirms both life and society.

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I. Introduction

This research is a study of the Indian writer R.K. Narayan's novels *The World of Nagaraj* and *A Tiger for Malgudi*. It examines Nagaraj and Raja's Quest for Renunciation. *A Tiger Malgudi* is more or less an autobiography of Raja, the tiger who says all about himself in a very impressive manner. He begins his story from his infancy goes on to the old age when he is forced to shun his virility and vigour. This is the age when he dwells on the most meaningful aspect of his life. Likewise, Nagaraj, the protagonist of *The World of Nagaraj* decides to put on the grab of *sanyasi* to have peace of mind and remain away from the hassles of material world.

R. K. Narayan is considered as one of the three best Indian authors writing in English, the other two being Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan's fiction contains a unique blend of Indian mysticism and English as a form of expression. His fictional world, Malgudi, is one of the everyday concerns and common language, set in southern India, which he successfully portrays through subtle prose and humor.

Narayan was born in Mysore, India, in 1906. his father was an administrator and headmaster at several government schools and instilled in Narayan a love of literature. He did not have much academic success, however, having difficulty with his college entrance exam in English. In 1926, he enrolled in the B.A. program in English in Maharaja College, Mysore, after which he embarked on a short-lived teaching career. Finding the academic life was not for him, Narayan turned to writing. After being turned down by several publishers, Narayan gave the manuscript of his novel, *Swami and Friends* (1935), to a friend and gave him permission to destroy it. The friend showed the novel to Graham Greene, who was impressed and found a publisher for the book.

Narayan's writing career was born and the prolific writer went on to publish novels, several volumes of short stories, collections of essays, and his memories.

Narayan's fiction inhabits the world of everyday events and common people in a fictional place called Malgudi. He incorporates traditional Hindu mythology and legends in stories of modern events. He tells stories of ordinary people who rely on Hindu principles to guide them through the ethical dilemmas and problems of modern life. Narayan's fiction avoids being overtly political or ideological. His early novels focus on the conflict between Indian and Western culture. *Swami and Friends* chronicles an extroverted schoolboy's rebellion against his missionary upbringing. *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) depicts an idealistic college student who attacks the bourgeois order but eventually reconciles himself to an obedient, lawful existence. In *The English Teacher* (1937; published in the United States as *Grateful to Life and Death*), an educator who endures the premature death of his wife overcomes his grief through religion and philosophy.

After 1945, Narayan's fiction portrayed middle-class characters who must reconcile Western ideals of financial and personal success with the everyday reality of Indian life. *Mr. Sampath* (1949; published in the United States as *The Printer of Malgudi*) chronicles a village printer's unsuccessful attempt to become a film producer. Narayan's most obviously political novel, *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), recounts the adventures of a man whose love for a young woman leads him to attempt to sabotage Mahatma Gandhi's peace movement. *The Guide* (1958) is Narayan's most popular and accomplished novel. This work is the tale of Raju, a former convict who is mistaken for a holy man upon his arrival in Malgudi. Implored by the villagers to avert a famine, Raju is

unable to convince them that he is a fraud. Deciding to embrace the role the townspeople have thrust upon him, Raju dies during a prolonged fast and is revered as a saint. In *The sweet-vendor* (1967; published in the United States as *The Vendor of Sweets*), a merchant abandons his profession and his family concerns for a life of tranquility and meditation. In *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), Narayan makes use of Indian legends and folktales to suggest that beasts may be as capable of thought and feelings as human beings. Narrated by a tiger, this novel traces the animal's spiritual development in overcoming its potential for violence. Narayan's collections of stories, such as *Gods, Demons and Others* (1965) and *The Grandmother's Tale* (1992), encompass many of the same themes as his novels in the tighter form of the short story.

The tiger in *The Tiger of Malgudi* is conscious of his growing physical strength which indeed caused a terror in the other animals of the Mempi forest. His sense of acute pride did not let him tolerate even the scanty disrespect shown to him either by the animals or the birds of the forest. He did not hesitate to use the earliest possible opportunity to punish his enemies. Though expert at climbing trees, it was not quite easy for him to become the main predator of monkeys.

Raja, at this stage, is completely ignorant of the perils of the world. After attaining his youth he fiercely fights with a tigress and then loves her and begets four children. They are zealously fond of their cubs. Once the tigress strays into human habitation in quest of her prey and is killed along with her cubs. In this way Raja falls a cruel victim of man's callous nature and loses his life partner and children. His own depredations in strong reactions in the nearby villages throw him into the laws of death but he luckily escapes his end. He very carefully avoids all the traps laid for him, but

ultimately can not get over a temptation that causes a change in his wild life. He is cautiously captured by the Captain who is the owner of the Grand Malgudi Circus. The Captain tames and trains Raja for his circus shows. The tiger totally surrenders to the dictates of the puny man. He gets a chance to act on a film set. The cruel Captain uses a metal tongue to subdue Raja here. The tiger administers a note of warning to the Captain when the latter inflicts severe sufferings on him. Eventually, he makes the Captain his victim. He leaves the places and takes refuge in a school building from where he comes under the hypnotic spell of a *sanyasi*. He is rescued by the *Sanyasi* who opens the door of spiritual life for the ferocious creature.

The *sanyasi* is no ordinary person. Once he was highly honoured man of society who actively participated in the Quit India Movement. He had wife and children and a house at the Ellamman street with river Sarayu flowing behind it. One day, at midnight he renounced all mundane comforts because of 'an inner compulsion' very much in the style of Siddhartha. This he did in order to reach spiritual heights. The dreadful animal surrenders himself into the occult powers of the *sanyasi*. He becomes his disciple and attains great spiritual heights. He humbly accepts the *sanyasi* as his master and the two leave Malgudi and return to the dense forest of the Mempi hills. They pass their days happily testing the sweet philosophical discourse, largely drawn from the teachings of the *Bhagwat Gita*. Slowly but surely the old age overpowers them and compels them to part company. Before his final end, the master sends infirm Raja to a zoo and leaves him to its professional care. In the zoo, the tiger may live happily and die undisturbed. He may get another chance to meet his master again in the next life.

Likewise, in the novel *The World of Nagaraj*, the story revolves around Nagaraj, a rich aristocrat belonging to the wealthy Kabir Lane. He leads an easygoing life. He is a content man, enjoying his time at home, chiding his wife Sita or seated on the pyol watching people move about in the mystical town of Malgudi. When outside he is satisfied helping his friend Coomar in his accounts at the latter's sari store. Nagaraj's dream is to write a book on the Sage Narada. He finds his life disturbed when his nephew, Krishnaji (alias Tim) comes to live with him having run away from home. Nagaraj is in a helpless state as he figures out the boy's activities often feeling that Tim comes home drunk. While Sita feels Tim deserves spanking so that he blurts out truth (though she loves him), Nagaraj is in no position to talk to him as the boy avoids him. Gopu, Nag's brother who is also Tim's father holds Nagaraj responsible for his son's deeds. Eventually Tim is married to a girl from Delhi. She is in the habit of playing harmonium. This irritates Nagaraj. After a small dispute he finds that Tim and his wife leave home and work in a Tavern. This leaves Gopu and Nagaraj distraught and Gopu disowns his son. Finally another altercation at the tavern Tim comes home to live with his uncle.

Critics often classify Narayan as arising out of the tradition of oral storytelling. Reviewers note his gift for wry, subtle humor, which he uses to expose the foibles of being human. Shashi Tharoor asserts that "Narayan at his best [is] a consummate teller of timeless tales, a meticulous recorder of the ironies of human life, an acute observer of the possibilities of the ordinary: India's answer to Jane Austen" (*The Hindu Sunday* 12). Narayan's comedy is the focus of many reviews, and it is commonly held that his is a gentle humor. Hilary Mantel says, "At the heart of Narayan's achievement is this: he

respects his characters, respects their created natures. This is why he can make jokes about them and stay friends with them”(*Indian novels in English* 22). Critics also point out his ability to give individual stories arising out of a unique cultural experience, universal significance. Reviewers assert that the creation of the fictional Malgudi helps Narayan portray the flavor of Indian life without worrying about the specifics of a real city. Critics attribute much of the popularity of Narayan’s work to his ability to successfully use the English novel form to portray Indian life and Hindu culture. Chitra Sankaran says, “With Narayan’s works ... the deceptive simplicity of his fiction very often obscures his superb capacity to blend traditional Indian modes with the English novel form.”

His fiction, deceptively simple and elusive in terms of literary theory and technique, is distinctive for its voice, its fusion of the comic with the sad, and its philosophical depth. He is famed for his lightness of touch and a style that is lean, lucid, undecorated, but wonderfully expressive and full of understated surprises. (Reddy 22) Narayan was a master of the ‘clear glass’ (Greene 35) style long before that term of art was invented. “Since the death of Evelyn Waugh,” declared Greene, “Narayan is the novelist I most admire in the English language. (qtd. in Sharan 6-7) It was no small praise from one of the great writers of the twentieth century. For John Updike, Narayan’s ability to convey the “colourful teeming” of his fictional town places him in the Dickensian tradition. (qtd. in Sharan 17-18) Graham Greene observes a strange mixture of humour, sadness and beauty in Narayan’s novel. He comments on Narayan saying, “complete objectivity, complete freedom from comments” (qtd. in Prasanna 189).

Narayan came to novel writing from journalism. Hence, journalistic narrative style is evident in his novel writing. He handles English language successfully. For Narayan English is an absolutely 'Swadeshi language' (Tharoor 45). He uses 'Bharat bran' (N. Ram 11) of English which suits the prevailing Indian conditions. Due to the fusion of humour and irony, his technique becomes impressive. Regarding this N.N. Sharan says:

His ironic dimension is an integral part of his comic vision. He explores the tremendous possibilities of the comic in the commonplace world of Malgudi. He is essentially a comic ironist who has taken a keen interest in Indian life in and around Malgudi. His humorous portrayal of outer and inner conflicts of man with touches of pathos and irony demonstrates his insight into the human reality. It shows his love for values in life too. His novels may appear to be regional at the outset but they transcend their limit and acquire universality. They provide fascinating studies of human drama and the little ironies of our daily life. (5-6)

Along with humour and irony, Narayan renders into modern fiction various myths and legends drawn from the classical Indian traditional literature, epics and tales such as The Mahabharata, The Bhagwata Gita Panchatantra etc. to illustrate his moral vision. Mythology helps the writer make the contemporary real more real. As the epic characters are prototypes of humanity, they are valid for all time. Narayan uses Hindu mythology and interprets the modern or contemporary life through a mythical parallel. He himself explains why he does so in his *Aspects of Indian Writing in English*, "With the impact of modern literature, we began to look at the gods, demons, sages and kings of our

mythology epics not as some remote concoctions but as types and symbols, possessing psychological validity even when viewed against the contemporary background” 921). From his first novel *Swami and Friends* to the last, *The world of Nagaraj*, there are many references from fables and legends of Hindu mythology in one way or the other.

Comic vision of Narayan not only deals with humorous side of life and its joys and delights but also with the serious aspects of life. Narayan’s fine sense of humour was observed by Graham Greene who rightly points out in the “Introduction” of his *The bachelor of Arts*: “... a humour strange to our fiction closer to Chekhov than to any English writer, with the same underlying sense of beauty and sadness” (vi). Narayan’s minute observation and depiction of life gained him this likening to the great master. And it is apt here to quote what Chekhov himself comments on his won art, “We? We paint life as it is and beyond that ‘no glee-up’ nor ‘glee-down’ ... beyond that if you lashed with whips, we could not go” (qtd. in Hariprasanna 170). This provides landmark to say that Narayan is also a realist. The minute details regarding the ways to people, their likes, dislikes, food, rituals and other things are described without glorification. Narayan provides real life situations to his writings by drawing widely from real ordinary everyday life of middle class family, their hopes, passions and emotions.

Narayan is primarily an artist with comic vision. Shashi Tharoor, an Indian critic, praises Narayan’s craftsmanship in this way:

A master story teller whose language is simple and unpretentious, whose wit is critical, yet healing, whose characters are drawn with sharp precision and subtle irony, and whose narratives have the lightness of touch which only a craftsman of the highest order can risk. (111)

Narayan is strikingly Hindu in attitude, custom, demeanour, conversation and practice. His novels conform to the Indian cycle view of history. One of the critics Margaret Berry in *South Asian Review* writes:

Narayan is to see into the soul of classical India: dominantly idealistic and mystic, on its Dravidian side to some extent life-negating and world-denying, on its Aryan side life-affirming and joyous: engaged in a caste system founded on individual Dharmas and Karmas and little concerned with practical public reform: resting in the perceived reality of Brahman and his myriad manifestations. (73)

Narayan is compared with Thomas Hardy and William Faulkner who also created imaginative setting like “Wessex” and “Yoknapatawpha” Narayan has beautifully created his imaginary town of Malgudi in which the action of his novels takes place. Professor Ian Watt says:

One of the important characteristics of the novel is that it gives its personages, a local habitation and a name. Narayan follows the line of Hardy and achieves his localization. Faulkner is another brilliant name in America who has an excellent mastery of place in fiction. So is the case with Narayan in India. Faulkner’s fictional place is Yoknapatawpha, Narayan’s fictional setting is Malgudi. Malgudi is a growing and developing town. It draws its substance from the human drama that it enacted in it. (qtd. in Sharan 6-7)

Narayan had started writing under the influence of events occurring around him. His main concern was the small segment of the Indian Middle-class society and traditions

as embodied in his every growing town Malgudi. C. D. Narasimhan says, “He has scarcely stirred out of Malgudi the Municipal limits of Malgudi they invariably came back, sadder and wiser, such is the spirit of place”(qtd. in Sharan 7).

Hence, Narayan’s setting is quite imaginative i.e. Malgudi. The place becomes the backdrop for the customs, beliefs and way of life. Malgudi operates at two levels, the human and topographical. On one level, Malgudi appears to enclose the grand humanity like grandmothers, and grand aunts with their oral tradition and religious rituals: while on the other, there are hotels, cricket clubs, hire purchases and in fact all modern amenities. Readers become familiar with the human world rather than with the topography. Narayan seems more interested in human world than in the vast expanse of nature. W. Walsh correctly pints out, “The physical geography of Malgudi is never dealt with as a set piece but allowed to reveal itself beneath event” (54).

Most novels of R.K. Narayan draw attention to protagonists who are seen as rooted in traditions, customs, beliefs and superstitions of their families. In the same way *The World of Nagaraj* offers a gently tale of an easy going townsman whose life is believed by the dual trials of caring for his wayward nephew and trying to write a book about an obscure Indian saint, is a mysterious story. A. hariprasanna comments on the writing techniques of the novel, “He is an enchanter, it is beautifully written, funny, haunting and evoking in marvelously rich detail the atmosphere of a small town in southern Indian and creating a magical world into which the reader is instantly drawn” (188).

He praises Narayan's craftsmanship and finds him as an enchanter who meticulously observes the atmosphere of small town in southern India Malgudi with very funny and haunting story. S. Krishnan in his book, *The Best of R. K. Narayan* observes:

On one level, the novel is about the present young generation the values of which mystify a conservative Hindu like Nagaraj, yet he cannot bring himself to abandon Tim, who, however difficult has come to him for refuge, the attitude moulded by hundreds of generations, the expectations of the joint family and the deep traditional respect he has for his older brother leave Nagaraj in a welter of conflicting emotions. (XVI)

Krishnan also finds the generational conflict that Nagaraj is conservative and follows the traditional customs on the one hand but he cannot abandon Tim with all follies who adopts modern norms and values on the other. He finds Nagaraj in a conflicting situation. Another critic N. N. Sharan says:

The World of Nagaraj presenting substantial human nature operating in Malgudi. The novelist has used flash on and flashback technique to depict Nagaraj's tension between the real and the ideal world. It has mythical overtones with example of wit and irony showing aesthetic control and healthy acceptance of life in accepting Tim with all follies. (380)

Though in a very small scale he takes Nagaraj tension between the ideal and real world. Nagaraj wants to live in his ideal world renouncing all the worldly materials but he cannot succeed and come to real world.

In this way most of the critics have dealt with the ideal of Nagaraj's craftsmanship, substantial human nature, mysticism, generational gap, conflict and so on.

The coming chapter will throw light on renunciation. it will also bring in focus the concept of *Nirvana and Moksha* which the two protagonists try to realize by going through the path of renunciation.

II. Notions on Renunciation

Renunciation

Renunciation does not imply apparent divesting of costumes, family ties, homes, etc., but renunciation of desires, affection and attachment. There is no need to resign your job, only resign yourself to God, the bearer of the burden of all.

One who renounces desires actually merges in the world and expands his love to the whole universe. Expansion of love and affection would be a far better term for a true devotee of God than renunciation, for one who renounces the immediate ties actually extends the bonds of affection and love to a wider world beyond the borders of caste, creed and race.

A *sanyasi* (wandering monk) who apparently casts away his clothes and leaves his home does not do so out of aversion to his immediate relations but because of the expansion of his love to others around him. When this expansion comes, one does not feel that one is running away from home, instead one drops from it like a ripe fruit from a tree. Till then it would be folly to leave one's home or job.

Renunciation is always in the mind, not in going to forests or solitary place or giving up one's duties the main thing is to see that the mind does not turn outward but inward. It does not rest with a man whether he goes to this place or that place or whether he gives up his duties or not. All these events happen according to destiny. All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inward and renounce activities there.

The idea of renunciation has never been a particularly attractive one for most people, even when its importance as an ideal has been admitted. For much of the Western world today, however, renunciation seems not so much unpalatable as unfamiliar, and indeed all but incomprehensible. This was not always so, of course. The people of the Middle Ages were well acquainted with the traditional Christian conception of this world as something which presents many snares for the soul, and is of little importance when compared with the eternal life to come. That this conception has ceased to be as influential as it once was, is the result of a number of complex historical processes, but as far as present-day attitudes are concerned, the factor of the greatest and most immediate importance would probably be the rapid development of science and technology in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Science has influenced people's attitudes towards the world in three ways. Firstly, it appears to have confirmed by its achievements the ancient Greek philosopher's faith in the ability of human reason to fathom all the mysteries of the universe. Secondly, these impressive achievements have led people to feel the physical world, which has up till now been the province of scientific investigation, is the only world worth investigating, and even the only "real" world. And thirdly, by providing, through the technology which it has made possible, an abundance of good things for our enjoyment, science has encouraged a preoccupation with the objects and pleasures of the senses, and a corresponding indifference to those things which are presumed to lie outside the range of the senses. If, then, this world we perceive is the only reality, and the senses and the reason are the only valid means of knowledge, it follows that renunciation of the world is pointless, and that aspiration to a reality which transcends the reason and the senses is

bound to be futile.

There have always been many people who would agree with this, and materialist philosophers were not lacking even in the Buddha's day. It would be true to say that ideas of this nature have never been so widely accepted as they are in Western and Western-influence countries today. Even religious thought has been affected, and a number of progressive Christian theologians are trying to adapt their doctrines to the spirit of the age by glossing over the element of renunciation in Jesus' teaching and Christian tradition, and stressing, after the Jewish fashion, involvement in the world rather than detachment from it. A similar tendency can be observed elsewhere: in many of the "new religions" of modern Japan, for example, or in the writings of Indian thinkers like Radhakrishnan and Sir Aurobinod.

In light of all this, Buddhism must be considered somewhat unfashionable. Some critics have accused (and still accuse) it of being pessimistic, nihilistic and life-denying. However, Buddhism is not pessimistic. In fact, it is the most optimistic of religions, for it teaches that man can perfect himself here and now, and free himself by his own efforts from all suffering and unhappiness. Nor is it nihilistic. As the Buddha has often pointed out, he taught only the annihilation of suffering and ignorance. And if Buddhism is life-denying, it is only because it is death-defying, for life and death are inseparable.

Nevertheless, these critics have sensed an important truth about the Dharma; that it is essentially a teaching of renunciation. In one sense, Buddhism is more "this-worldly" than any other religion, since it takes as its starting point, not some remote and transcendental Being or Act, but the world as it is experienced by ordinary living beings. In another sense, however, it is more "other-worldly" than most, for according to the

Buddha, the world as we know it has three fundamental characteristics: it contains nothing that is permanent; it is, for that reason, essentially unsatisfactory to those who see it as it really is, and are not led astray by superficial appearances; and finally, it contains nothing worth consideration as “me” or “mine,” nothing that is in any way unchanging or substantial. These three characteristics are the basis of the Buddha’s Teaching, and the second of them, known as “ill” or “suffering,” is the theme of the Four Truths which the Buddha expounded in his first sermon.

There is nothing ambiguous about this. The Buddha was well aware that much pleasure and happiness is to be found in the world as it is ordinarily experienced, but he insisted that these pleasures were transient and therefore relative and limited, and that true happiness is only to be found by renouncing what is worldly, transient, relative and limited, and seeking instead what is transcendental, unchanging, absolute and unlimited. This absolute state (if one can describe it so) is what is called *Nirvana*. It can be defined, if at all, only in negative terms, for what is completely transcendental is necessarily indescribable. It is certainly not a God creating and sustaining the world, nor is it a Godhead which is the source or substance of the world. In fact, although it can be attained by those still living in the world, it really has no connection with the world whatever, and for that reason its nature cannot be conveyed by means of such an earthbound thing as language, although the poetic (i.e., non-literal) use of language may certainly be able to suggest something of its quality, as in the following famous passage:

There are, monks, a realm where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind, neither this world nor the next, neither sun nor moon. There, monks, I say there is neither coming, nor going, nor remaining; neither deceasing nor being born. Without

foundation is it, without continuity, without support: this is the end of suffering.

Buddhism, then, is a teaching of renunciation. It remains to see what is renounced and why. The Buddha said: “What I teach is just ill (or suffering) and its cessation.” What is renounced, then, is ill, suffering, dissatisfaction. But what is dissatisfaction? “Birth is ill; old age and decay are ill; death is ill; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are ill; not to get what one wants is ill. In short, the five groups that are the object of clinging are ill.” These “five groups,” (*Teachings of Buddha* 21) taken together, constitute the totality of what we call a “being,” and what that being feels to be its “self.” They may be translated as follows: form or matter, feeling, perception or ideation, motivation or mental activities, and consciousness. It is oneself, then, that is the source of suffering, and it is self that must be renounced if one would be free from suffering. This is a truth which is recognized by most religions, but only in Buddhism is it fully understood. The feeling of “self,” the deep-rooted sense of “I-ness,” involves the desire for the continued existence of self. It generates, in other words, greed and attachment, both for the self and also for those things which enhance the existence of the self and make it feel secure, such things as sense-pleasures, possessions, kinship with others, and so on. It also generates hatred for or aversion from what is anti-self, that is, from those things which threaten the continued existence or the happiness of the self by attacking it (or whatever it identifies itself with) or by frustrating it in any way. Thus the self can never be really happy, for it is continually agitated by desires and fears which bind it tightly to the world, and cause the “ill” for which the Buddha has prescribed the cure.

It will be seen from this brief analysis that the self and the world are interdependent, our emotional responses to the world strengthening our sense of self, and

our sense of self causing the illusory appearance of a permanent and substantial world with objective qualities of desirability and undesirability. Therefore, renunciation of the world and the renunciation of the self are but two aspects of the same thing, and what we see as the world may, on deeper analysis, be found present within ourselves. So the Buddha said: “In this very body, six feet in length, with its sense-impression, its thoughts and ideas... are the world, one origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way that leads to the cessation of the world” (Sermons 223).

In the practice of renunciation, three stages may be distinguished. First of all, there is outward renunciation, as when a man or woman leaves the household life to become a monk or a nun. Outward renunciation has no intrinsic value, and may theoretically be dispensed with, but there is no doubt that it makes true renunciation very much easier. True renunciation is a matter of the heart and mind rather than the body. It is renunciation of the world of desires and aversions within, rather than of the world of “objects” without. Finally, there is the ultimate renunciation, which is the renunciation of one’s “self” in its entirety, and the consequent destruction of all ill.

To illustrate the traditional Buddhist method of renunciation, I would like to examine a stereotype passage which occurs, with slight variations, at a number of places in the Pali Canon. It describes the ideal life of the monk, beginning with his first hearing of the Dharma and concluding with his attainment of *Nirvana*. It starts as follows:

“Suppose that a perfect One arises in the world, an Accomplished One, fully Awakened, complete in knowledge and conduct, knower of the worlds, sublime (literally “well-gone”), incomparable, trainer of those to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, Awakened (Buddha), blest (Bhagavant). Having thoroughly understood, by his own

(Bhagavant). Having thoroughly understood, by his own supernormal insight, this world with its gods, its Mara (the personification of death), its Brahma (the most exalted of the gods), its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and men, he declares his knowledge. He preaches the Truth (Dharma), good in its beginning, good in its development, good in its consummation. He makes known the holy life in all its fullness and purity. (88)

A householder, or a householder's son, or one born into some good family, hears that Dharma. Having heard it, he comes to feel faith in the Perfect One. Possessed of this faith, he reflects thus:

The household life is cramped. It is a path choked with dust. To leave it is to come out into the open air. It is not easy for one who lives at home to lead the holy life in all its perfect fullness and purity, bright as mother-of-pearl. Surely I should now shave off my hair and beard, go forth into the homeless life. In course of time, he gives up his possession, be they many or few, and his circle of kinsmen, be it small or large, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the yellow robe, and, leaving his home, goes forth into the homeless life. (*Teaching of Buddha* 34)

So far, this is outward renunciation. Now the new monk must turn his attention to the world within. The first step is to free his mind from the domination by unwholesome emotions and sense-desires, and to this end he begins to discipline himself by strict observance of morality. The text continues: "So he lives the homeless life, observing self-restraint according to the rules of the Order, possessed of good conduct, seeing danger in the slightest offense, accepting and training himself in the precepts" (Sermons 22). There

are of basic importance, for they are the most general in character. They are also worth looking at because they stress the positive qualities of mind which the monk should be developing at this time, thereby helping to dispel the impression, which a series of prohibitions tends to give, that observance of the moralities is something dry and negative. In fact, just as one only renounces Samsara in order to obtain *Nirvana*, so the sole purpose of renouncing bad or unwholesome qualities is to allow good or wholesome ones to take their place. The wording of these first seven precepts makes this quite clear:

Here, the monk, having abandoned the taking of life, continues to abstain there from. Having once used stick and sword, now feeling shame, he is kind and compassionate to all living things. Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, he continues to abstain there from. Taking only what is given, he waits for the gift. Committing no theft, he lives as one who becomes pure. Having abandoned unchastity, he is chaste and keeps aloof, abstaining from coition, from the practice of the village-folk. Having abandoned false speech he continues to abstain there from, and is a speaker of truth. Pledged to truth, he is reliable and trustworthy, never lying to the world. Having abandoned slander, he continues to abstain there from. What he hears here, he does not repeat elsewhere in order to raise a quarrel against the people here, what he hears elsewhere, he does not repeat here in order to raise a quarrel against the people there. Thus he reconciles those who are divided, and encourages those who are friends (99).

The monk goes on telling about his delights after creating the harmonious

situation in the following way.

Harmony is his pleasure, his delight and joy, and he speaks words that create harmony. Having abandoned harsh speech, he continues to abstain there from. Whatever words are gently, pleasing to the ear, affectionate, touching the heart, polite, pleasant and agreeable to the people — such are the words he speaks. Having abandoned trivial chatter, he continues to abstain there from. His words are timely, in accordance with the truth, meaningful, concerning the Dharma and the Discipline and the Order. He speaks words that are worth treasuring. They are uttered at the right time, are accompanied by reasons, are well-defined, and profitable. (99)

These are the first seven moral observances. The rest concern other things to be avoided, such as harming vegetation, and various activities connected with mealtimes, personal adornments, entertainments, games, trading, and so on. The section on morality concludes as follows:

Then the monk, being thus complete in morality, sees no reason for fear on any side, as far as self-restraint in his conduct is concerned. Just as a ruler, duly anointed, whose enemies have been crushed, sees no reason for fear on any side, as far as enemies are concerned. And, possessed of this noble group of moralities, he experiences unalloyed happiness within himself.

So far, the monk has progressed through two stages of renunciation. First, he has public renounced the world and left the household life. Then, by strict self-discipline, he has ensured that no moral lapse on his part will cause him to become entangled once again in the life that he has left behind, and his success in this self-discipline has given

him a confidence and a happiness that he never had before. Thus, he has made his initial, outward renunciation secure. Now he is free to turn his attention to renunciation of the other, inner world, of the psychophysical life which is his 'self.' He begins by endeavoring to become detached from the activities of his senses, and of his mind and body, by the practice of mindfulness. He will now observe the things which impinge on his sense, watching to see that he does not react to them in an unwholesome or 'unskillful' manner. Thus morality becomes mind-control. Then, when sense-impressions are no longer capable of agitating his mind unduly, he learns to become aware of his bodily actions as he performs them, contemplating his body disinterestedly, as though it were somebody else.

How is the monk guarded as to the doors of his senses? The senses are considered metaphorically as so many doors through which impressions enter the mind. Having perceived a form with his eye, he does not fasten on its general appearance, or on its secondary characteristics. In other words, he does not allow himself to become fascinated by it, or by any aspect of it, or to feel that it is 'mine.' He simply watches with equanimity as phenomena come and go. As long as he lived with his faculty of sight unrestrained, he fell prey to craving and unhappiness, to evil and unskilled states of mind. So he undertakes restraint, watching over his faculty of sight and restraining it. (And similarly with the other faculties: hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and cognizing things with the mind.) The monk, possessed of this noble restraint of the faculties, experiences unalloyed happiness within himself. And how is the monk mindful and aware? The monk, in going forth or returning, is clearly aware of his action. So also when looking ahead or looking around, when bending his arm in or stretching it out, when

wearing his robe or carrying his alms bowl, when eating, drinking, chewing or tasting, when defecating or urinating, when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking or keeping silent; in all this he is clearly aware of what he is doing. Thus is the monk mindful and aware.

The monk has now shaken off most of his worldly desires, and has gained a considerable degree of detachment from himself. As a consequence, he is perfectly content with his lot and with his few necessary possessions. He is contented with the robes that protect his body and the alms food that protects his belly. Just as a bird carries its wings with it wherever it flies, so the monk is contented with the robes that protect his body and the alms food that protect his belly, and he has only them with him wherever he goes. Thus he is content.

Now, having surrendered attachment both to the world and to his won body, the monk can concentrate all his efforts on the true source of ill, which is his mind. Sitting in a quiet spot he strives to cleanse his mind of what are known as the “five hindrances.” The text describes the process as follows.

Having given up covetousness for the world, he remains with his heart (or mind) free from and cleansed of covetousness. Having given up ill will and hatred, he remains with his heart free from ill will and hatred. Friendly and compassionate to all living things, he remains free of them. Conscious of light, mindful and fully aware, he cleanses his heart of sloth and torpor. Having given up restlessness and worry, he remains free of them. Inwardly calm, he cleanses his heart of restlessness and worry. Having given up doubt, he remains having passed beyond doubt. No longer

uncertain of what is skillful (or wholesome), he cleanses his mind of doubt. (*Teachings of Buddha 25*)

Having brought about a subsidence of the five hindrances, he is filled with an exhilarating sense of freedom. The Buddha compares his feelings of relief and happiness to those of a man who has just discharged a debt, or recovered from a painful illness, or been freed from prison, or released from slavery, or who has safely crossed a dangerous wilderness. This subsidence of the five hindrances, and the ensuing calmness and happiness of the body and mind, make it possible for the monk to attain what is called the first “absorption.” This is the first of a series of levels of consciousness which can be achieved by the successful practice of intense concentration of the mind — a process which is often called, rather vaguely, ‘meditation.’ The attainment of these absorptions not only produces a blissfulness that is far beyond the range of worldly pleasures, it is also (and this is more important to the Buddhist) makes the mind an instrument of knowledge that can transcend the limitations of the senses.

After attaining the first absorption, the monk passes on the second, third and fourth, shedding successively thought conception, the exhilarating and blissful sensations that arise in him, and finally all feelings of happiness and unhappiness, pleasure and displeasure. He is now in a state of pure mindfulness and equanimity, and his mind — which has become “composed, purified, spotless, undefiled, pliant, workable, firm and imperturbable” — is capable of that direct and penetrating insight into the true nature of existence which brings deliverance. Now he has left the world a long way behind, but he must turn his mind back to it, if he would complete the process of renunciation; for the final deliverance comes, not from looking away from the world or the self, but from

seeing through them. So he scrutinizes his self, his body and his mind, nothing that “this is my body, possessed of form, composed of the four elements, springing from father and mother, built up by solid and liquid food; a thing impermanent by nature, fragile, perishable, and subject to total destruction. And this is my consciousness, bound up with and dependent on it.”

At this point he is said to be able to acquire certain supernormal powers if he wishes, including the ability to recall his own innumerable past lives, and the direct awareness of the death and rebirth of other beings in accordance with their past actions.

His final deliverance, his ultimate renunciation, comes now with the destruction of what are known as the *asavas* or *asravas*, a word which defies translation. (Literally, it means a flowing in or a flowing out.) These “cankers” (as they may be called for convenience) epitomize the forces which bring about continued existence or “becoming,” and their destruction involves complete and perfect understanding of the conditioned and unsatisfactory nature of becoming, as it is summed up in the Four Truths:

It is as if, the Buddha says, there were a pool of water in the mountains, limpid, clear and still, and a man were to stand on the bank and see with his eyes the various shells, the gravel and pebbles, and the shoals of fish moving about or at rest. So the monk, with his mind composed, purified, cleansed, spotless, undefiled, pliant, workable, firm, and imperturbable, directs his mind to the destruction of the cankers. (*Teachings of Buddha* 38)

He knows as it really is: “This is ill, this is the origin of ill, this is the cessation of ill, and this is the Way that leads to cessation. These are the cankers, this is their origin,

this is their cessation, and this is the Way that leads to their cessation” (25). Knowing and seeing thus his heart is freed from the cankers of sense-desires, the canker of becoming (that is, the desire for continued existence), and the canker of ignorance. Free, he knows that he is free, and he understands: “Exhausted is birth, the holy life is fulfilled, what was to be done has been done, there will be no more of the present state” (89).

With this final and certain insight, renunciation of both self and world becomes complete, and the monk, now a blessed one, has attained the deathless state, *Nirvana*.

Nirvana

Nirvana is the supreme state free from suffering and individual existence. It is a state Buddhists refer to as “Enlightenment”. It is the ultimate goal of all Buddhists. The attainment of *Nirvana* breaks the otherwise endless rebirth cycle of reincarnation.

Buddhists also consider *Nirvana* as freedom from all worldly concerns such as greed, hate, and ignorance. No one can describe in words what *Nirvana* is. It can only be experienced directly.

Buddhism teaches its followers that in this life they are only temporary vessels of body, emotions, thoughts, tendencies, and knowledge. Buddhists believe that there is no sense of self or soul when in this world. A fundamental concept of Buddhism is the notion that the goal of one’s life is to break the cycles of death and birth. Reincarnation exists because of the individual’s craving and desires to live in this world. The ultimate goal of a Buddhists is to achieve freedom from the cycle of reincarnation and attain *Nirvana*. The enlightened state in which the person is free from greed, hate, and ignorance. The way to *Nirvana* involves the person showing love for others, being compassionate and sympathetic of other people, and showing patience in everything. A

compassionate and sympathetic of other people, and showing patience in everything. A Buddhist must also follow five main principles which prohibit killing, stealing, ill language, sexual immorality, and the use of toxic substances. When one successfully follows these principles, the three roots of evil (hate and deceit) can be overcome. It is believed that as Lord Buddha moved ahead on the path of Enlightenment, He remembered all of his previous lives. In Buddhism, life is considered as a 'samsara', which means continuous roving. Often known as reincarnation, rather than rebirth, the theory implies the transfer of the essence or the soul. It does not follow the law of causality or dependant origination, like in rebirth. The main aim of Buddhism is to break away the circle of samsara and reach a new level, known as *Nirvana*.

Lord Buddha reached the state of *Nirvana* at the time of His enlightenment. After experiencing *Nirvana* Himself, He decided to teach others the path to the same. According to Him, *Nirvana* should be the ultimate goal of every individual. Forty-five years later, when He died, He passed through *pari Nirvana*, the complete *Nirvana*. *Nirvana* literally means extinguishing or unbinding. However, in Buddhism, *Nirvana* means freedom from the constant cravings that we experience in life. It means freedom everything that leads us to dissatisfaction, like desire, jealousy, greed, ignorance, etc. after a person attains this sense of freedom, he moves into a state of total ecstasy. All karmic debts get settled and he doesn't need to go through the cycle of birth and death again.

Nirvana Buddhism is a state of living where mind remains free from any wrong thoughts as anger, lust or worldly cravings. Thus *Nirvana* Buddhism is a mode of living where mind and soul remains in complete peace and solitude. In Buddhism *Nirvana* is

spiritual happiness which is consistent and immortal.

Thus *Nirvana* is an ultimate state of life; Buddhists call it as 'Enlightenment'. The attainment of *Nirvana* frees one from countless reincarnations. In fact *Nirvana* could never be described it is something which can only be felt by them who attain it sincerely.

The experience of *Nirvana* cannot be felt by all the six sense (Eye, Ear, Nose, Tongue, Body and Mind). The *Nirvana* Buddhism is a congregate of two words nir+vana, where 'nir' denotes freedom and 'vana' means path of rebirth.

Moksha

Moksha is the state-of-statelessness on the wheel of action where one stands liberated from all desires, actions and consequences and thus free from the cycle of birth and death. *Moksha* is the ultimate goal of human existence rewarded in turn by Supreme peace and bliss.

Moksha is that ephemeral truth of life without which human beings cannot sustain themselves. The cause of the human body, the process of evolution, all lead to our soul (Atman) gaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death (*Moksha*) forever.

Moksha being the ultimate truth of life, none can just do without. In the present life, we may or may not pursue *Moksha* as the ultimate goal of all life inherently and spiritually our soul is bound to pursue this one and only goal in the life of every soul in the cosmos. If gaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death (i.e. achieving the stage of *Moksha*) is the only goal of every soul and knowing the fact that our body is but clothing for our soul. Our soul plays the governing role whatever be our present goal in life, the ultimate goal of our cosmic life remains the same, gaining *Moksha*.

Attaining the state of *Moksha* (Salvation) is reaching the Mount Everest of

physical manifested life. There is nothing beyond *Moksha* that is required to be achieved in this life. *Moksha* is that stage in the life of a human being when one cuts across all the shackles of the senses and the mind. Unless we gain absolute control over the five senses and the mind, we cannot achieve *Moksha* in this life.

Gaining absolute control over the senses and the mind is a complex process. One has to diligently take control of all the senses one by one and the moment we are able to establish absolute control over all the five senses controlling mind is easy to achieve. Our five senses help us live the physical manifested form of us. They have got nothing to do with our true inner self our soul within us.

We need to know the correct process of gaining absolute control over the five senses and ultimately the mind for us to achieve the stage of *Moksha*. For cutting across the various barriers of senses we need to maintain more and more purity in our day-to-day dealings. The more pure our thought process, the sooner shall we be able to gain control over the senses.

Spiritualism

Spiritualism in a narrow sense is concerned with matters of the spirit, however, it may include belief in supernatural powers, as in religion, but the emphasis is on personal experience. It may be an expression of life perceived as higher, more complex or more integrated with one's world view, as contrasted with the merely sensual. There are different definitions of spiritualism by different philosophers. Philosophers take human body as a unified whole composed up of two different entities as body and soul. For them, the body represents physical matter and the soul represents something abstract or metaphysical that keeps the life running. The philosophy that finds the significance of life

in bodily or physical pleasure is known as materialism, whereas the philosophy that highlights on the perfection of human life by means of awakening or the enlightenment of mind and soul is called spiritualism.

Paramahansa Yogananda, an Indian philosopher and yogi, sees human life and death as a system. In his opinion:

Superstitious awe of astrology makes one an automation, slavishly dependent on mechanical guidance. The wise man defeats his planets, which is to say, transferring his past allegiance from the creation to the creator. The more he realizes his unity with spirit, the less he can be dominated by matter. The soul is ever free, it is deathless because it is birthless. It cannot be regimented by stars. Man is a soul and has a body. When he properly places his sense of identity, he leaves behind all compulsive patterns. (163)

Physical death of Yogananda is only the disappearance of breath and loss of consciousness of flesh. To a man, who has realized himself as a soul, not the body or the ego the rest of humanity assumes a striking similarity of aspect. Ignoring all prejudices of caste, creed, class, colour, sex or race, human must follow the precepts of human brotherhood. His goal is to realize the absolute unity with spirit. Yogananda further adds:

A sublime self-assurance marked his mode of expression, it was unique. He spoke as none other in my experience ever spoke. His thoughts were weighted in a delicate balance of discrimination before he permitted them an outward grab. The essence of truth, all pervasive with even a

psychological aspect, came from his life a fragrant exudation of the soul.

(109)

One aspect of being spiritual is goal directed. Similarly, other aspects are improvement of one's wisdom and will power, achieve a closer connection to deity/the universe and remove illusions or false ideas at the sensory feeling and thinking of a person. Martsolf and Mickley highlight the meaning and values:

Spirituality is significance of life; making sense of situations and deriving purpose. Its values are beliefs, standards and ethics that are cherished. It also transcends experience and appreciation of a dimension beyond self connecting increased awareness of connection with self, others, god/spirit/divine and nature becoming an unfolding of life that demands reflection and experience; include a sense of who one is and how one knows. (35)

They also define spiritualism as an essential part of individual's holistic health and well being by developing an awareness of a "transcendent dimension" (Martsolf and Mickley) to the life.

Hinduism believes that the suffering of our life is caused by our attachments to things, which are not real. This view is based on the belief that this body, this food, this house and everything worldly, are not true realities of our life. Hinduism says that the suffering comes only when we take these worldly things as more important than the absolute spirituality. According to Sri Isopanishad, "A living being of mundane world has four defects" (Prabhupada 14). The book further says that a man "must commit mistakes, sometimes be illusioned, must try to cheat others and be endowed with imperfections"

(14). This principle says that no one can be perfect in this world. Radhakrishnan in his book *The Hindu Way of Life* writes, “The entire world of manifestations and multiplicity is not real in itself and seems to be real only for those who live ignorance” (16). This means, from Hinduism, this world is imperfect and a man and his actions are also imperfect. Hinduism says that to get rid of this imperfection one should accept the truth that there is the supreme ‘Lord’ who may help him get redemption.

“*Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha* are four values mentioned in the Hindu scriptures” (Rao 48). *Dharma* is termed as duty, *Artha* wealth, *Kama* desire and *Moksha* salvation. According to Rao, “duty is the part of human life” (19). Even when a man aspires for the life possessed by spiritual perfection, he has to live a life discharging the duties and responsibilities. It is the matter of gradual evolution from imperfection to perfection and a state of freedom. Similarly, Hindu ethics does not despise *Artha* and *kama*. It has a “right and limited jurisdiction in the building up of the human personality” (Rao 49). People fulfill their functions only when they serve the end, *Moksha*. Wealth, valour and power are in themselves neutral. Their moral nature is determined by the use to which they are put. The spiritual aspirant, in order to attend *Moksha*, a spiritual realization, needn’t affect a violent rupture with ordinary life.

Artha is necessary for man’s life. It is the source and substance of all virtues not to speak of the mere gratification of desires. Without wealth virtues become impracticable (Rao 53). Without wealth man cannot work and strive for *Moksha* which is a difficult task. Only the question is how one uses it whether for the just purpose spoiling wealth and character. If we use it for rendering a service to mankind, then it is positive for gaining a spiritual realization.

Hinduism says that an individual should make himself free from this worldly flaws by assimilating himself to the supreme power. He needs either suffering or actions, which is essential as means for the purification of the soul.

According to Hinduism, spiritualism does not mean dying and going to the heaven. True spiritualism means liberation of the individual soul from the cycle of births and deaths, from the sense of duality and separation. It leads him towards the union with the supreme soul. Hinduism does not prescribe a particular way to achieve such goal. It specifies the primary and the most important objective of human life as self realization but leaves the specifics of the manner and the method in which it is to be attained to the wisdom of the scholars and philosophers and to the individuals themselves.

Radhakrishnan states:

Moksha is the realization of the purpose of each individual. On the attainment of perfection, the historical existence terminates. When one individual completes his purpose, he develops the universality of outlook and characteristics of perfection, but retains his individuality as a center of action. When the whole universe reaches its consummation, the celebrated individuals lapse into the stillness of the absolute. (46)

The Hindu outlook is synthetic, integrated and co-centered in the attainment of *Moksha*. P. Nagaraja Rao says, “*Moksha* is the highest good” (23). All the other values of life sub serve the realization of the highest good and result in it. *Moksha* is needed for the radical termination of the sorrows of life:

Moksha is the master remedy for the ills of life. It is a state of perfection beyond suffering. The ideal of *Moksha* is not conceptual: it is result of

integral experience. It is a religious ideal. It is not the mere requisition of knowledge or mere self-culture. In that state all our doubts and disbeliefs are dispelled and our strife and tensions are overcome. (Rao 24)

The objective of spiritual quest is not only to advance knowledge or to find a correct way of thinking. It is more a right way of living. Unless one changes and reforms the ways of living, one cannot pave the path for spiritual realization. One should live a simple and holy life. So, it is a way of life, not a mere view of life. It is essentially a philosophy of values. Another postulate of spiritualism is that the soul in its intrinsic nature is full of bliss. *Moksha* is another name for the realization of the true and native nature of the self. According to the spiritualists, the self to be realized is not the individual ego that we are aware of. We mistake the ego for the true self and that is the cause of our suffering. “The ignorance of the true nature of the self, which is free from all impurities, sorrows, is the cause of the bondage. Self realization is achieved either through self culture or, in some forms of Vedanta, through the lord’s grace” (Rao 34).

These views, thus, make it clear that the self is the supreme reality and conquering the self is the attainment of the reality. It is possible when we conquer all the bondages hindering us to go to the intrinsic value of the self. We should be able to transcend all our sensuous pleasures and experiences; only then we can have conquest of our self or spiritual realization. Spiritualism is based on the principle of renouncing all sorts of physical and sensual pleasures. Its role aim is to attain a higher level of understanding through self-realization. It is a way to permanent bliss, which comes through salvation, and it is the key point of all the Hindu scriptures like *Veds*, *Upanishads* and the

Bhagvata Gita. Spiritualism is also grounded on the principle of simple living and high thinking and leading a holy life.

Hindu tradition defines the four stages of man's life as four Ashrams. They are the *Brahmacharya* (The stage of the student), the *Garhasthya* (The stage of the house holder), The *Vanaprastha* (The stage of the hermit) and finally the *Sanyasa* (the stage of reunication). The path defines a steady evolution of the qualitative aspect of ones life and it proves beneficial to the individual and the society. Shashi Ahluwala says, "it is essential from the point of view of the society that one who is economically well off should be magnanimous enough to give share of his income to the poor or those who are in need' (1). According to him, it provides the necessary backdrop for the ultimate shift from the material life, to a lonely existence in forest and then to the stage of complete selfness and meditation in the Sanyasa stage. It is necessary to understand the phenomenon of materialism fully so that it does not become a negative force. This is possible "only by understanding the eternal values essential for spiritual realization" (Ahluwala 1).

Spiritual path inspires man to rise higher and enlarge his vision. P. Nagaraja Rao, in his *Essays in Indian Philosophy and religion* says, "Sense perception and seasoning do not exhaust reality. Revelation is the means of communication to us only is spiritual matters, matters beyond the reach of common experience. Spiritual experience alone can demonstrate the nature of reality and truth of scriptural declarations" (27). According to him, reason adduces the possibility; it cannot give us absolute proof. Without the material supplied by scripture and faith, logical reason will be over speculation and fancy. Moral excellence and ethical virtues must accompany intellectual study and reasoning. There

must be moral discipline before enlightenment. No spiritual realization is possible without a moral *Sadhana*. The importance of ethical life is highlighted in the manner of spiritual quest.

According to Rao, “The Sadhana outlined in the different systems are identical in many ways” (29). The first stage is the life of morality lived in a society, discharging all duties and refraining from wrong. The path of ceremonial purity cleanses the mind. The discharge of moral duties and the leading of pure life prepares the aspirant’s mind of the message from the illumined teacher. Receiving it is *Sharavana*, and reflection upon it is *Manana*. After *Manana* the aspirant begins to meditate on the truth in an interrupted manner till he has direct experience of the truth. Religion helps a man living a moral life and it purifies man’s life by purifying his acts and behaviours.

Religion guides man through creeds, dogmas, scriptures, symbols and institutions which are the instruments of it. They function as the guidelines to lead man’s life towards perfection. Similarly, the rites, vows, ceremonies, modes of worship, and ways of sacrifice are also the instruments in attaining spiritual realization. Freedom is the achievement of spiritual life. Hinduism believes in the doctrine of cause and effect. As Radhakrishna writes:

The word karma means action. Sometimes the word is also used to mean the effect of action. According to this doctrine, all good actions produce good effects, and bad actions bad. The fruits of good deeds bring pleasure and enjoyment to the doer, which fruits of bad deed cause him suffering and pain. (28)

According to this philosophy, the energy of an action is transformed into another kind of energy. Hinduism doesn't believe in fatalistic belief that all is predetermined. According to the doctrine of Karma, a person's future is his won creation. The good or bad actions done in the present will cause enjoyment or suffering in future R. N.

Dandekar opines:

The doctrine of Karma is the solution offered by Hinduism of the great riddle of the origin of suffering and the inequalities which exist among men in the world. According to the Hindus, the law of causation operated in the moral world in as invariable and inviolable a manner as it does in the physical world. Every action of an individual leads to some results good or bad, and the life of the individual who acts becomes conditioned by the consequences of those acts. This is the inexorable law of Karma, the law of action and their retribution. (102)

People create the world of spirituality around them to remain unconcerned by hassles and problems of materialistic life. The spiritual world is so beautiful that they feel like having a kind of salvation during their stay on earth.

III. Nagaraj and Raja's Quest for Renunciation

Nagaraj's Quest for Renunciation

R. K. Narayan's novel, *The World of Nagaraj* takes us into the spiritual world to attain peace through the protagonist of the novel, Nagaraj. The novel begins with the daily routine of 50 years old Nagaraj who lives an orderly but purposeless life. Nagaraj, a conservative man who lives in his ancestral house with his aged mother and wife, Sita, adopts traditional norms and values. He is impressed by a Town Hall *Sanyasi* who wears *Sanyasi* garb and doesn't like this materialistic world. The *Sanyasi* gives Nagaraj the *Sanyasi* garb and instructs him to be away from all worldly desires so that he will attain some peace in his day to day life. Nagaraj always performs pooja wearing the dress and passes the remaining time sitting in the veranda, watching the world.

Opposed to the life of luxury and comfort, Nagaraj leads a simple and ordinary life. He lives a life within a pattern provided by Hindu scriptures and traditions. Nagaraj, a traditional Hindu, wants to adopt all norms and values according to the patterns provided by Hindu scriptures and traditions. Early in the morning, he takes bath and then prays for some time everyday. One day, he feels attracted by seeing a bearded sage, who has worn ochre of a holy man. Nagaraj's inner desire to wear that dress of a holy man is clearly told, "Nagaraj approached him timidly, the other's appearance being overwhelming, and asked with humility, 'where can I get cloth similar to yours?' the Sadhu looked at Nagaraj fixedly, 'why?' Nagaraj felt confused and said, 'I like it'(9).

Nagaraj makes it clear to the *sanyasi* that he wants to move on the path of renunciation as his day to day life is not giving him peace of mind. The material concerns

of life are making his life more and more difficult. By adopting the path of renunciation he wants to maintain the meaning of his life.

The above lines clearly show the interest of Nagaraj to wear the grab of *Sanyasi* and move on the path of renunciation. So, Nagaraj asks for the holy man's dress. Nagaraj is in the quest of peace by taking a bath and sitting inside the pooja room alone by wearing the ochre-robe as in the form of holy sage. After his craze over wearing the ochre-robe, the protagonist gets an answer from the sage that a man who wants to get peace ever after his death, "[...] should always be only on God not no money or the family and his thoughts must be away from worldly desires like *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha* and *Moha*"(11).

According to the sage, one should observe silence without caring other's voices. While defining *Kama*, the lust and passion, sage takes it as totally different from the sexual pleasure that he gets from his wife and says, "Don't look at your wife except as a mother, and don't let your mind dwell on your night life" (12).

Nagaraj is fully impressed by the sage and take his principles as his guidelines and tries to mould his life accordingly. He lives a life of pure Brahmacharya, showing no interest on worldly pleasure or materialistic world. He wants eternal peace even after his death. By wearing the given cloth by a *Sanyasi*, he performs pooja where he prays for sometimes and feels as if he were in a "heaven of peace, silence and isolation" (13). He instructs his wife not to disturb him when he is in the pooja room. She has to conduct herself "as if he has created her to exist" (12).

Wearing the grab of *Sanyasi* and withdrawing from the materialistic world. However contemporary it may be, is a kind of renunciation in itself. In order to overcome

death the sage says that if we go on experiencing a little torture of death day by day then we will one day get into a situation to welcome it and we cannot avoid it as we are avoiding it today. Nagaraj's guru, the Town Hall sage has explained to Nagaraj, "It's good experience death little each day so that when your time is up you will slip into the state effortlessly. You will realize how noble and welcome it is then death will not be dreaded and avoided. You will overcome death itself" (12).

The sage's justification on the daily death as a rehearsal for the final one is a philosophy for Nagaraj's life. Nagaraj wants to prepare for the final one by doing little effort each day; he wants permanent bliss that he will achieve after his death. The sage teaches the protagonist that when someone is totally out from the worldly desires no one can disturb him to get salvation.

Nagaraj gets impressed by the sage and follows every footstep of the sage in action everyday. He wants to be away from the worldly desires as much as possible. In the matter of lust or passion he assures his guru that "I have none now. For over ten years we have been living like brother and sister" (13). By this extract it is clear that he is free from sensual matters or passion that he looks his wife as a sister not as a wife and his mind is not dwelling on 'night's life.' He wants to be away from his wife as much as possible. He feels full satisfaction in his peaceful spiritual journey and feels himself that if he remains away from family, it is easy to gain spiritualism.

Nagaraj follows the path of spiritualism; similar to the path of Hinduism defines. According to Hinduism suffering in our life is caused by our attachment to worldly material beings, "The entire world of manifestations and multiplicity is not real in itself and seems to be real only for those who live in ignorance" (Avidya 16). For Hinduism, all

those worldly things are not real. We must give more emphasis to the absolute than those worldly things. According to Hinduism we must get rid of this imperfect world for *Moksha*. The individual should make himself free from this worldly flaws by assimilating himself to the supreme which is essential for the purification of mind and soul.

Nagaraj has no greed and love in any material thing in this world that he is fully following the sage's instruction which is based on Hinduism. So, he follows the rules and regulation strictly for the attainment of spiritual peace. In the case of sharing property after the father's death also Nagaraj remains silent. His elder brother, Gopu called a lawyer to divide the property equally but Nagaraj remained silent: "Nagaraj's own inclination was to accept whatever came in as his share" (33).

Hindu ethics do not give importance to *Artha* and *Karma*. Hence, Nagaraj is strictly following the *Sanyasi's* instruction always to be in peaceful situation which is based on Hindu ethics. If there comes any disturbance or debate, he wears his ochre robe and becomes deaf to the other's voice. When there is debate in the matter of Tim, Nagaraj remembers his ochre robe to be in peace in this way: "He wished he could don his ochre robe and retreat for the pooja room, dead for the hour, away from all strife" (43).

Nagaraj's quest for peace to attain spirituality is perceived once again in the wedding ceremony of Tim. All children and aged people are happy in this ceremony. Noisy and untamed children are running round and round the verandah pillars, Nagaraj feels irritated and says, "Keep the dreadful children away. We are here to see a bride not to watch those devils" (88).

The novelist also makes a mention of the great sage, Narada which is relevant to the theme of renunciation. Nagaraj is obsessed with the thought of 'Sage Narada', based

on whom he wants to write a great kavya. A renouncer of the world, Narada moved with ease among gods and demons. He is able to traverse at a thought the skies and space, through galaxies, and is welcome in all the fourteen worlds above and below. He creates strife no doubt, by passing disturbing gossip from one quarter to another, but always to benefit the world in the long run, with an eternal perspective. Thus Narada proves himself to be a real *Sanyasi* who truly renounced the world and all that it implies and lives only for the sake of others and for the benefit of the humanity in general.

The Town Hall *Sanyasi* thus opens up an entirely new and fascinating world to Nagaraj to look at himself and his problems from a new angle. Now, Nagaraj has been a different man with a different and changed self. The new aesthetic and spiritual interest he cultivates, and his inner desire to get peace even after his death adds strength to it.

Raja's Quest for Renunciation

The novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi* is concerned with sanyasa proper. The tiger, Raja is the chief protagonist of the novel, and its mentor the hermit, is the second protagonist. The hermit strives to achieve non-attachment and quests after self-realization. Even as he seeks an answer to the question "who am I," seized with a passion to understand himself, he also helps the tiger to discover its essential self residing inside its rough exterior. In the case of both the hermit and tiger there is an inward transformation, though of different degrees and levels, without which there can be no sanyasa at all. The novel also finally suggests, among other things that all creatures human and nonhuman, must learn to free themselves from the bonds of attachment and illusions.

The old tiger, Raja non living peaceful and retired life in the zoo under the protective care of the zoo-keeper, recounts the story of its life. It is an enlightened tiger

which has begun to know itself thanks to the ministry of the hermit, that it reminisces on its long past and vicissitudes, beginning with its life in the jungle from its infancy onwards up to its final parting from its master to live in the safe haven of the zoo. Its account being continuous, we are enabled to follow every changing phase of its life and the inward transformation that takes place in it. Every phase of its experience leaves its mark upon it so that when it comes into contact with the hermit it is ripe for internal development. The progress of the tiger may be described as a movement from freedom to captivity and slavery and from there to freedom (though of a different kind) and liberation.

The tiger of the novel in its infancy lives in the forests of Mempi under the protective care of its mother feeling confident that its “mother would live for ever” (24). Now as an evolved tiger, it knows that it is “a natural delusion which afflicts all creatures, including human beings” (12-13). It succeeds and deludes itself once again as having become the “Supreme Lord of the Jungle” (13). Intoxicated by the deference shown by its fellow creatures in the jungle, the young tiger lives through a phase of arrogance, vanity and pride, and of “utter wildness, violence, and unthinking cruelty inflicted on weaker creatures” (13). Even though its notion of its absolute supremacy is continually challenged by the porcupine, the monkey, the crow and the leopard, it continues to indulge in the self-deceiving illusion of its omnipotence.

Next comes the phase of the tiger becoming a householder, when not only much of its freedom to range about is curtailed but some of its thoughtless violence is mitigated because of the need to care for the young ones and protect them against dangers. Family life results in the tiger developing attachment to the tigress and their four

cubs. They too vanish, killed by human hunters. While the tiger is busy trying to take revenge on the villagers for having killed its kin, it gets trapped by the Captain of Grand Malgudi Circus to be trained to perform various feats and become eventually the star performer of the circus and be known to the public as “that miracle tiger Raja – the magnificent” (65).

The world of film making brings out the worst in the Captain. He neither gives Raja rest nor shows any kindness, and drives it to despair by compelling it to stand on its legs even though it is completely tired out. Out of despair, Raja moves gladly into freedom and strays into the streets of Malgudi after months of degrading captivity. By chance it gets into the school and goes off to sleep in the headmaster’s room. At this stage of its life Raja happens to meet the hermit. Even the mere presence of the hermit in the vicinity begins to affect tiger though locked up in the headmaster’s room. Raja, who feels both helpless and uncomfortable under the new influence, becomes aware of some change coming inside itself and tries to resist it, though in vain. But the hermit, who understands the turmoil in Raja’s mind tells it: “A change is coming, you will have to start a new life, a different one.... I will take you out. Let us go together, it’ll be safer” (147). After the headmaster is helped out of the room, the hermit and the tiger come out and vanish towards mountains. Choosing a suitable spot for shelter on the Mempi Hills, together they settle down to a quiet and peaceful life, away from all the din and bustle of a crowd of human beings. Although to be with the hermit may appear to be a new kind of captivity to Raja, paradoxically it becomes the means for its final freedom and liberation brought about by an awakening of the soul. It is clear from his discourses to the tiger and his mode of life that the hermit is entirely a man of genuine piety, a seeker and a true

Sanyasi, a man of renunciation in appearance as well as spirit. He has tried to put his past behind and be occupied with the living present, as a *sanyasi* is expected to do but has not altogether obliterated memories of his past which he reveals briefly to satisfy the curiosity of his disciple Raja. The hermit never forgets his ordinary humanity. He objects strongly to his visitors regarding him as a ‘great’ man and coming to him for his darshan. When they tell him, “we are small men, but you are great,” he retorts:

How? Because I am unshaven and shirtless? I don’t shave because I find it easier not to, I don’t wear a shirt because I don’t have one. But for these, I go about with the tiger because it is God’s will. I am not different from you, we are equals and no need to pay homage to me. It has no meaning. You may prostrate only before God. You should seek only God’s darshan. (164).

These words are also a measure of his development in the direction of renunciation. One day he is visited by a lady who was his wife before he renounced his family and all his worldly engagements. At first indirectly and later on directly she accuses him for deserting his family and home for no reason. The hermit faces the challenge successfully, though with some effort. Patiently he explains to her, in the third person that she should have no reason to regret the loss of such a husband, “especially when he has left for (her) and (her) children a comfortable home, all the money he had, and every kind of security in life” (171). Further, he explains to her that her husband “left home not out of wrath, there was no cause for it, but out of an inner transformation” (171).

As the time passes both the hermit and the tiger evolve inwardly, though on different levels. The hermit realizes that the concern he feels for the tiger is a form of attachment and bondage from which he has to free himself, if he should be a fully non-attached man. Before he turned a new leaf he was no different from any other human being, and was as much self-centered and eccentric as any one else would be. It is an irresistible inner urge to know his self and to seek spiritual enlightenment that propels him towards *sanyasa*. The novel implies that there is nothing unusual or unnatural in such an urge possessing an individual. It fills him with such determination that once he leaves behind his former self and seeks the path of non-attachment, he does not return to it. It is the decision of a mature man who has experienced the different phase of life.

An achievement of Moksha through Renunciation

Nagaraj and Raja move on the path of renunciation to give some kind of meaning to their lives. Both of them are dissatisfied with the ways of the world. They are looking for a means which will give them some kind of mental satisfaction till they stay on earth. So, they choose the path of renunciation to have a rewarding life in the last phase of their lives. They wish to realize *Moksha* by renouncing all kinds of desires and physical pleasures in their day to day lives.

Nagaraj, the protagonist of *The World of Nagaraj* goes in search of spiritual peace by keeping himself detached from greed and other material aspects of life. He wants to attain Moksha through renunciation. He lives an everlasting life of felicity and avoids injuring other creatures. He abstains from injury and cast an equal eye upon all creatures. The protagonist is devoted to truth and is endued with fortitude. His five senses are under control and grants protection to all beings. He takes the responsibility of looking

after his brother's son, Tim when he comes to him after having a debate with his father. He is free from fear and is divested of desire and expectancy. He is freed from attachments of every kind. He leads a life of solitude and is enjoying the tranquility of the soul. His life is for the practice of righteousness. A *sanyasi* touches the spiritual chord present in the body of Nagaraj. By wearing the garb given by the *sanyasi*, Nagaraj tries his best to have pure thoughts to move on the path of renunciation to gain ultimate Moksha. Likewise *A Tiger for Malgudi* tells the tale of a tiger 'with a soul'. The tiger ruminates over its past starting from its early days to the spiritual awakening in the hermit's hand. Raja is endowed with intelligence and human personality. Spiritualized by the hermit the tiger behaves in a much more humanly way than human beings. The tiger follows its guru to the foot of the Mempi Hills and there they lead a life of peace and serenity trying to attain the heights of spiritual enlightenment. The tiger and his guru following the *guru-sishya* tradition, hold long discourses on the preaching of the *Bhagwat Gita*. The tiger now 'redeemed' is able to understand "yoga, life and existence of death" (157) and even has his own conception of God as an enormous tiger, spanning the earth and the sky and even feels remorse for having killed the animals for his sustenance. Raja too along with his guru looks forward to attain salvation. The enlightenment of the tiger can be seen in these lines, "You are not likely to understand that I am different from the tiger the next door, that I possess a soul within the formidable exterior. I can think, analyze, judge, remember and do anything that you do, perhaps with greater subtlety and sense" (11-12).

The enlightenment of the tiger may be due to his action. According to the traditional Hindu thought one is doomed to suffer for ever. The soul has chances of

acquiring merit and thereby advancing to eternal life. And this is what exactly happens to Raja. The tiger is redeemed through its spiritual transformation and selfless service to society. That is why it is often said, “One who is born as a bird or beast, can in the course of the series of births and deaths redeem himself by his actions and rise again in the hierarchy of creation” (45). The hermit is a true *sanyasi*, one who considers it his duty to serve the society. Hence he walks into Malgudi to subdue the tiger before it harms anyone. He takes the tiger back with him, gives it a name (Raja) and spiritualizes it with a brotherly sympathy. The hermit realizes ‘soul is universal’ and recognizes the same in the tiger also.

IV. Conclusion

Renunciation does not imply apparent divesting of costumes, family ties, homes, etc., but renunciation of desires, affection and attachment. There is no need to resign your job, only resign yourself to God, the bearer of the burden of all.

There is hardly a society of religion, ancient or modern, which does not honour or cherish the memory of one who has given up his all for the sake of others or to strive for a noble goal. But perhaps it is only in India the renunciation has been given an especially exalted place in the Hindu view of life and accommodated in the system of values developed in this country. Respect for this ideal has percolated to all levels of the society cutting across all social distinctions of class and caste. It has been so deeply embedded in the Indian consciousness for centuries that it has been continuously an operative force in everyday life, both private and public. Such is the veneration, the man of renunciation – ascetic or *sanyasi* – enjoys in our society, that he finds an important place even in the realm of active politics, which is notorious for its restless struggle for temporal power. That is why Meenakshi Mukherjee says: “Renunciation has always been an Indian ideal, be it renunciation of worldly goods and possessions or the renunciation of selfish motives, passions and emotional bondage” (12).

Set in Narayan’s fictional small Indian town called Malgudi, *The world of Nagaraj* follows some significant events in the life of a quiet man named Nagaraj. Nagaraj, a traditional and conservative, leads an easy going life of a simple man. He has been influenced by a Town Hall *sanyasi* whose instructions to be away from materialistic world becomes the philosophy of life for Nagaraj. He does Sadhana to be in perfect world. According to the suggestion of his ‘guru, the Town Hall *sanyasi* and wants to be

away from all sensual matters; free from *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha* and *Moha*.

Always after his bath, he takes up his ochre robe, enters into the pooja room, prays for sometimes and feels happy. He wants to be away from worldly desires and tries to concentrate his mind only on God. He shows no *Lobha* and *Moha* as he realizes the imperfections in the worldly life and wants to be away from worldly engagement and quests for spiritualism for inner peace. He follows the dietic restrictions such as fasting, silence, prayer, the adoption of simple life and simply rejects the material possessions for self purification. He cultivates the Gandhian philosophy of ‘simple living and high thinking’ throughout his life. He wears simple cloth of a *sanyasi* and does not like modern colourful life. Nagaraj is influenced by Hinduism and leads the life according to Hindu patterns. The Bhagwat Gita gives a better insight into his life. He cultivates his strong detachment and prepares himself for spiritual path.

Likewise *A Tiger of Malgudi* is a fascinating work of art. There are indeed very moving descriptions of breathtaking moments here. It proves beyond doubt the author’s clear cut and convincing understanding of the animal world and the perfect world of spiritual bliss. In fact he gets inside Raja and depicts the various moods of this dreadful animal. The circus life of the tiger manifests his activities on the stage where life is always a fraught with risks. Further he takes part in the film shooting but he cruelty of the Captain compels him to liberate himself by doing away with the menacing fellow. He safely escapes and enters into a school building causing terror not only in the heart of the headmaster but also in many more hearts. It is here that he meets the real Guru. Raja’s association with *sanyasi* transforms him internally and he fully understands the significance of spiritualism in one’s life. The tiger’s nameless Master is undoubtedly a

great saint who has attained great spiritual heights. We notice a complete transformation of a worldly man and he sees himself endowed with a new and global sense of perception.

Raja and the *sanyasi* move out of the town and take residence in a comfortable spot in Mempi Hills. *Sanyasi* teaches Raja that God is within every one of us. Years pass, both grow old, and Master finds a home for raja in a zoo, run by a friendly keeper who understands animal and is good to them. Before *sanyasi* leaves Raja there he whispers to him, “Both of us will shed our forms and perhaps we could meet again, who knows? So, good bye for the present” (222)

The foregoing analysis shows how renunciation is an ideal inseparable from the Indian consciousness, way of life, and values and how Narayan looks at the ideal of renunciation – not from the point of view of strict adherence to the traditional *asramadharm*. He considers on the contrary its psychological, moral and spiritual implications. He finds in true renunciation a positive ideal, which makes for life rather than go against it, and which affirms both life and society.

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