INTRODUCTION

Soares Prabhu's contribution to Christian Theology in India has been remarkable. Among other things it has been his merit to speak thematically of the Dharma of Jesus and that too in the context of the Gospels. But his discussion of the Dharma of Jesus is primarily biblical, and has been thematized from within the Christian cultural world. It needs to be taken up and developed across cultural boundaries the more so since the cross-cultural phrase Dharma of Jesus is heavy with such a hope.

The aim of the following pages then is to project Jesus' message, as Soares-Prabhu interprets it, on the backdrop of the world of Dharma in order (hopefully) to discover the Dharma of Jesus. Hence I am not preoccupied primarily with what the Jesus traditions have to say, understand and believe about Jesus; much less with what the Jesus of history actually said and did. I shall accordingly ignore historical questions altogether, because they are not germane to my enterprise. I am interested in studying not the teaching of the historical Jesus, nor the interpretations of that teaching current in the early church, but Soares-Prabhu's interpretation of this teaching as understood from within the world of Dharma.

THE WORLD OF DHARMA

Dharma derives from the root dh® "to uphold, to support, to nourish". Dharma has to do with holding, upholding, holding together; supporting, maintaining, sustaining. Rightly does the Mahabharata therefore derive Dharma from dharana, that is holding together: Dharma is that which holds the peoples together.

The world of Dharma is an interconnected, interrelated and therefore interdependent whole wherein whatever exists, exists as interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. Correspondingly whatever is not interconnected, interrelated or interdependent does not exist and is nothing (= no-thing). To exist is always to be part of, to participate in, the net-work of cosmic relations through which all things mutually hold and uphold, maintain and sustain, carry and support one another. In the world of Dharma, where every thing hangs together with everything, reality is a web of relations wherein every being is related to every other being and is what it is because of its unique relationship to the whole.

Thus in the Dharma-world there are two aspects: the aspect of the 'parts' and the other of the 'whole'. The former is called Prakriti and the latter Purusha. Prakriti is the aspect of change and temporality. And Purusha is the dimension of continuity and wholeness and its characteristics are non-change and self-consciousness. In Purusha the parts live, move and have their being. Indeed they are 'always and already' in Purusha. It is only in Purusha that they discover each other and relate to each other. As a matter of fact we cannot speak of Purusha because the speaking itself is already part of the whole Purusha. So when we purport to speak in this way our speaking is really a mere pointer to the whole Purusha in whom it is taking place. Purusha is the aspect of the wholeness of reality and Prakriti the
aspect of partiality. A part as a part of the whole is totally dependent on the whole. Thus everything that the part does and everything that the part is, is really of and from the Purusha. The part is in fact the whole seen part-ially. There is, to use the advaitic intuition, a non-dual relation between the Purusha and the parts.

1.1 The World as the Body of God

This metaphor of the parts and the whole can rightly be understood from within the mythic themes of Hinduism. One such theme considers the world as a cosmic body, the body of Purusha (= Ishvara, Lord, Paramâtmâ, etc.). The world is anima- ted by the Absolute Purusha. In the Hindu traditions, the Åtmâ being so to say the more 'comprehensive' reality it is more appropriate to say that the body is in the Åtmâ than to state that the Åtmâ is in the body, for it is Åtmâ that pervades the body: the Åtmâ stretches out (= tatam, protam) the body as the loom stretches out the cloth that is being spun. The world-body metaphor may have emerged from an experience of and an encounter with the life of the world. It is to some such mystery that this metaphor is pointing. What this 'life' of the world is we cannot explain; we can only elucidate through other more familiar metaphors. 'Life' cannot be captured in categories but it can be 'retrieved' through living metaphors and symbols. Our modern understanding of 'life' tends to be so 'scientific' that there is danger of reducing it to mere matter and energy.

1.2 The Part and the Whole

On the other hand we are a part of the living Cosmos. Accordingly the world-view of Dharma has to be understood on the background of a living Cosmos where the interconnection and interdependence in the tiniest as well as mightiest aspects of the universe is not mechanical but organic. However, interdependence and interconnectedness among the parts is only one aspect. The other and equally important aspect is that of wholeness-and-totality which consists of consciousness (= the Cosmic Purusha) in which interdependence and interconnectedness among the parts is possible. When we speak of the life of the whole it is to this Purusha that we refer. From within the Purusha [as Antaryâm¯] rules and regulates, guides and persuades, and is the source of whatever happens in and to the Prakriti. The parts are what they are because they part-icipate in the Purusha and it is the Purusha that determines the Karma of the parts. But neither Prakriti nor its Karma are ultimate; it is the Purusha that is ultimate. In the last analysis it is because of Him that the totality of Karma operates. Seen holistically Karma means the Karmic process of the Whole (= the Purusha); being a dependent reality it does not come into being on its own. It is a 'transitive' reality that originates from an intransitive source, namely, the Cosmic Purusha.

But when the part remains ignorant of its real relationship to the Cosmic Purusha and so thinks that it is an independent reality it finds itself in a state of bondage, where filled with Ahamkâra it is pushed and pulled by the twin force of rûga-dveΩa, that is, passion-and-hatred.

1.3 Sarva and Bhakta

In the world of Dharma there can be no such thing as an absolutely 'individual' Karma, (that is, Karma that is unrelated and unconnected with the Karmic whole). A Karmic entity is part of the larger process (= Prakriti) which in turn is vivified by the Total-Whole (= Purusha). The Total-Whole is neither the sum of its parts nor reducible to them. Thus though every Karma is part of the larger process called Prakriti, Prakriti cannot move on her own: it is Purusha who makes her move. In the last instance then all Karma takes its
origin from Purusha alone. Though Purusha is not affected by Karma but ultimately initiates the Karma of Prakriti.

The Gita usually calls this Totality [the Cosmic] Purusha except, in one central place, where the masculine singular of Sarva, (= 'the One-who-is-the-All') is employed. Now Karma is always and already Karma of the Sarva and it is such that whatever the Sarva does it is always for the welfare of all. This is primordial Dharma, the Dharma of the Sarva.

But the Sarva of the Gita, the One-who-is-the-All, is not the Stoic motor immobilis (of Aristotle), to whom we are of no concern; rather the Dharma of the Sarva is such that we are dear (iनa, priya, bhakta) to him and he takes us to himself and makes us enter into his very being. This is the parā-bhakti of the Gita, the love of the One-who-is-the-All for us (aparā bhakti being our love for him, our response to his love).

Traditionally Bhakti has been understood as devotion, and Bhakta has come to mean the devotee; this is a predominantly psychological and emotional perspective. Such a point of view is too flimsy a foundation for bringing out the real meaning of Bhakti. Bhakta means [literally] 'part' and Bhakti is part-icipation, participation at the level of be-ing. Be-ing is presence, and shows itself in being present. Thus Bhakti, like the act of understanding, has to do with the very act of be-ing, of being present and has therefore to be interpreted accordingly.

The Lord enters (avißya) into the three worlds (= the whole Cosmos) and supports them from within. He is established in the heart of everyone and everything. Para Bhakti is the ontological presence of the Sarva.

The Gita sees the response of the Human in the following: "Whoever thus knows Me, unconfused, as the Person [All-] Sublime, knows the All and [knowing the All] communes with Me with all his being, all his love." That is to say, Bhakti consists in becoming aware of the ontological presence of the Sarva and in responding to it with all-our-being-and-all-our-love (=sarvabhāvena). The Lord's pervasion of the three worlds and his support of them from within is on the level of being. The Sanskrit sarvabhāvena, as R. C. ZAENNER has rightly seen and beautifully translated, connotes both be-ing and love. Accordingly the Lord's support from within is an offer of be-ing made with love. For the Puruṣottama an offer of be-ing is an offer of love and an offer of love is an offer of be-ing.

This communion between the Sarva and the Bhakta, says the Gita (15:20), is the most mysterious doctrine which ultimately leads to the fulfillment of whatever needs to be accomplished. "And so have I [at last] revealed this most mysterious doctrine: let a man but understand it, for then he will be a man who [truly] understands, his [life's] work done." That this fulfillment is at the same time a liberation is hinted at through the phrase kṛtakṛtya [= having accomplished whatever has to be accomplished]. There are more than enough texts in the Gita which make this thematic. The very last verses of the didactic part of the Gita are a magnificent summary of our theme:

In Him alone seek refuge with all your being, all your love; and by his grace you will attain an eternal state, the highest peace. Of all the mysteries, this wisdom have I told you; ponder it in all its amplitude, then do whatever you will. And now again give ear to this my highest Word, of all the most mysterious: 'I love you well.' Therefore will I tell you your salvation. Bear Me in mind, love Me and worship Me, sacrifice, prostrate yourself to Me: so will you come to Me, I promise you truly, for you are dear to Me. Give up all things of law (sarvadharmān), turn to Me, your only refuge, [for] I will deliver you from all evils; have no care. (Gita 18:62-66)

If this is really the case then what is it that prevents the Part (the Bhakta) from realizing its Self?

1.4 Ahamkāra and Bandhana
For some reason or other the Part comes to believe that it is independent of the Whole; this leads to the development of a false sense-of-identity (= Ahamkāra) which in effect is a declaration of independence from the Whole. The Part does not realize that even when it thinks that it is independent of the Whole it is always and already in the Whole; without the Whole it would not exist. The false sense-of-identity is more in the line of an imposition, a superimposition (adhyāsa). There are two standard illustrations for this: one, a jaundiced person who perceives everything as yellow and the other, seeing 'double' when one puts pressure with a finger on one of the eyes. If everybody were to suffer from jaundice everyone would reinforce the impression that everything is yellow. The Dharma world-view states that such is indeed the case with us and our world. We all are affected by the jaundice of the Ahamkāra; we all perceive the world in a jaundiced manner and so are unable to see it as it really is.

The Ahamkāra is sustained by a dual force: Rāga-Dvesha, that is, passion (=attraction) and hatred (= repulsion). Our behaviour is determined by them much before reason arrives on the scene. In the Gita's understanding, all our action is determined by our likes or dislikes. On the surface we adduce reasons in support of our behaviour but they are in fact mere rationalizations. Likes and dislikes so dominate our being that we become blind to our real identity. Instead of seeing things as they are we begin to project our wishes and longings on them. This implies that deep down we are really not free; we are pushed and pulled by forces (= Rāga-Dvesha) extraneous to our true being. This further implies that we are not true to our Self; we function at the level of the Pseudo-I, the Ahamkāra. Were we to function authentically, that is, were we really free we would not allow ourselves to be pushed and pulled the way we are. Indeed we are not even aware that we are not free at the deepest level. It is Scripture that draws our attention to the fact that real freedom is attained at the level of our true Self. Be-ing is of the nature of freedom. Indeed in the world-view of the Hindu traditions one could safely say that our true Self is synonymous with being really and fully free. Because we are free, we are called to become free and hence we have to become what we always and already are!

What are the consequences of all this?

Bondage connotes two complementary nuances: one, the absence of wholeness and fulfillment, that is, an absence of a real sense of identity which consists of freedom; and two, the presence of a certain one-sidedness, that is operative through the false sense of identity (which is determined and maintained by extraneous 'powers' called likes and dislikes), and is manifested in our wrong notion of freedom. The element that is absent is of course the main malaise and the element that is operative is its symptom. The malaise which is a sort of forgetfulness of being can hardly be spoken of, much less analysed and elucidated. Bandhana refers to both the elements.

In this context liberation will mean fullness or fulfillment; this is the awakening at the level of be-ing that we are a Part of the Whole and that the Whole accepts us as its Part, that the Part exists because of the Whole and it is the Whole that keeps the Part as part of itself. The relation of the Whole accepting the Part as a part of itself and of the Part knowingly entering into the Whole, this is indeed the final fulfillment of the Part which is neither separate from nor identical with but is non-dually (a-dvaita) related to the Whole.

This is attained through the practice of Yoga. Yoga means spiritual discipline, spiritual exercise, spiritual path, etc. with all the semantic richness that is associated with the 'spiritual life' - leading to complete integration.24 Jñāna-Yoga leads to an awareness of the dimensions of change and non-change, of being and becoming. That is, right knowledge is freedom that liberates from the blindness to the real nature of reality, a blindness that makes us lose ourselves in the realm of change and becoming. Bhakti-Yoga enables an experience
of love of and participation in the One-who-is-the-All. It creates fellowship with the cosmic comm-unity which is sustained by the One-who-is-the-All. Lastly Karma-Yoga inspires to act selflessly for Lokasangraha. That is, cosmic welfare is built on cosmic justice and so becomes the sole justifiable motive for action and commitment. By liberating us from the forces of Råga-Dvesha Yoga makes us see reality as it is, opens us up to every being and motivates us to work for the welfare of all. In the process we not only dis-cover our true Self and the true nature of the Cosmos; we also begin to commune with the One-who-is-the-All.

1.5 The Yoga of Liberating Knowledge

In our present state knowledge is rarely liberative. On the contrary it is used manipulatively to exercise power and control. Now the freedom that emerges from a practice of Jnåna-Yoga is a freedom that liberates from a false sense of identity as well as from internal compulsions and external pressures. The contact with the dimension of non-change gives birth to an insight into the emptiness of our likes and dislikes and discloses the real claims of the realm of non-change. It lays bare the foolishness of building our lives on the sand of change and shows the wisdom of building on the rock of non-change. When such freedom happens internal compulsions and pressures are destroyed. Following is the manner in which liberating wisdom manifests itself:

... the same in pleasure and in pain, profit and loss, victory and defeat (2:38)...
whose mind is undismayed [though beset] by many a sorrow, who for pleasures has no further longing, from whom all passion, fear and wrath have fled (2:56)...
his senses subdued to Self and disjoined from passion and hate (2:64)...
knowing no envy (4:22)...
equal the praise or blame [with which men cover him]. Equal [his mind] in honour and disgrace, equal to ally and to enemy (14:24-25).

The method of Jnåna-Yoga comprises two stages: There is first of all Såmkhya-Yoga which consists in reflection and reasoning. In general Såmkhya-Yoga reasons out the futility of basing our lives on transitory values of the world of change, values which are linked with our likes and dislikes. Reasoning and reflection are meant to produce convictions about the baselessness and emptiness of our attachments. To put it in other words: we all live according to certain values which whether right or wrong generate corresponding attitudes and convictions. Our self-identity is built upon them. The saner our values the more stable and durable will we discover our sense of identity to be. If however our values are based on mere likes and dislikes our sense of self-identity is bound to be insecure and shaky.

Obviously then there is need to critique our attitudes and convictions and the values they incarnate. For if they are born of irrational attachments and fears they will lead us astray and this in two senses: firstly, they will make us react in a way that is not beneficial to the liberation-process and secondly and more importantly, they will exercise a grip over us of which we are not even aware. Attachments, fears etc., are operative at the deepest level possible and it is there that they produce the false sense of identity. The task of Såmkhya-Yoga is to locate them and then to examine their worth.

Now whereas Såmkhya-Yoga reasons out what happens to us because of irrational fears and anxieties Buddhi-Yoga, the second stage of Jnåna-Yoga, makes us aware of the havoc they cause in the depth of our being. Not only do the attachments and anxieties make us act differently; there is also, as we just mentioned, deep down in us the insidious and enduring grip they exercise over our being: this grip is the root of our desires and attachments. Buddhi-Yoga brings us in touch with this. Thus whereas Såmkhya-Yoga tackles (on the noetic level) historical factors like fears Buddhi-Yoga concentrates (on the pistemic = [belief] level) on the a-historical level of our sense of identity.
There is in us a sense of awareness that accompanies most of our conscious and semi-conscious lives. This awareness cannot be objectified because it is both the 'essence' of our being and the background of all objectification. Given the usual concentration on the world of objects, we tend to take the accompanying sense of awareness for granted. Indeed more often than not, we are not even aware that it exists. Buddhi-Yoga makes us come to grips with this dimension of our Self. It heightens and intensifies it without objectifying, so that we become conscious of all that undermines our true sense of identity by setting up a false one in its place.

What does Jñāna-Yoga achieve and where does it lead to? Initially Jñāna-Yoga (when it is properly practised) promotes communion with the All (Bhakti-Yoga) on the one hand and commitment to the All (Karma-Yoga) on the other. In the last analysis the practice of neither Bhakti-Yoga nor Karma-Yoga (as we shall see) is possible without Jñāna-Yoga because these aspects presuppose Jñāna-Yoga in their very structure. Jñāna-Yoga takes us to the wholeness of being whereas Bhakti leads us to the wholeness of love and Karma to the wholeness of action.

1.6 The Yoga of Communion

The One-who-is-the-All, the Sarva, is not just an organism or a mere cosmic process but the Cosmic Purusha (the Sat-Cit-Ānanda of later times), who loves his Bhaktas and draws them to himself. This Parā-Bhakti is not a mere attraction which an organism experiences; rather it is an expression of the offer of being-and-love made by the Purusha. For one thing the offer is made to human beings alone and for another it is human beings alone who can reciprocate. Though every thing is a part of the Sarva, it is human beings alone who are Bhaktas, because they alone are capable of recognizing and responding to the love of the Sarva.

The response takes place at the level of being-and-love and so it is not merely intellectual or emotional. It is exercised through the love of all things (i.e. through the love for things) which is another way of saying, through the love of the Cosmic Body [of the Sarva]. For the hallmark of true Bhaktas is their ability to see all things in the Lord and the Lord in all things! The true Bhaktas do not get stuck to the things of this world. In and through them they find the Lord of all things.

With self by Yoga integrated, [now] he sees the self in all beings standing, all beings in the self: The same in everything he sees. Who sees Me everywhere, Who sees the All in Me for him I am not lost, nor is he lost for Me. Who loves and worships (bhaj-) Me, embracing unity, as abiding in all beings, in whatever state he be that man of Yoga abides in Me. Bhg 6: 29-31

What was formerly lust gets transformed into love. What was mere knowledge of the Sarva is now the experience of seeing Him in all things and all things in Him! The reason is that Bhaktas are really part of the Sarva and Bhakti means the realization of the relationship that obtains between the Bhakta and the Sarva. In ontological terms Bhakti is communion between the Bhakta and the Sarva. The following verses highlight the role Jñāna-Yoga plays in such a process:

The source of all am I; from Me all things proceed: this knowing, the wise commune with Me in love, full filled with warm affection. On Me their thoughts, their life they would sacrifice for Me; [and so] enlightening one another and telling my story constantly they take their pleasure and their delight. Bhg 10:8-9.

The centre of such a community is the fact that "enlightening one another and telling my story constantly they take their pleasure and their delight". To build a human community
on any other foundation is to build on sand. But the human community is part of the cosmic community because the Human and the Cosmic are bound together ontologically in and through the Divine. In and through the Cosmic the Human discovers the Divine. If today we have an ecological crisis on an unparalleled scale it is because of the lack of Bhakti that binds together the Human and the Cosmic.

1.7 The Yoga of Commitment and Service

In the interconnected world of Dharma Lokasangraha which derives from commitment to the Sarva is a communitarian, never an individualistic affair. As the word itself denotes Lokasangraha has to do with Loka, the world, the Cosmos. And Loka is a spatio-temporal process built out of Prakriti (= pra-karoti, like pro-cedere and processus). Service of the Cosmos, also a spatio-temporal matter, implies two things: selflessness and universality. Niṣkāma-karma is the direction and Lokasangraha the goal. The welfare of all presupposes knowledge of this world with all its vagaries and complexities. It is here that Karma-Yoga, if it is to succeed, presupposes the insights of Jñāna-Yoga.

In the Gita Lokasangraha takes on an added shade of meaning. It is not to be understood as just working for the welfare of all beings; it is taking passionate delight in the welfare of all beings. The Lord works with love and the Bhakta's response has to be a labour of love. The Gita (5.25 and 12.4) expresses this in a phrase that is as felicitous as it is forceful: sarva-bh' ta-hite ratå, i.e. taking passionate delight in the welfare of all beings! Felicitous because embracing all beings it combines Karma with Bhakti; and forceful because what I have translated as delight refers in the original to 'those delighting sexually' (ratå), the highest kind of delight in the order of the sense and is here employed (in both the occurrences in the Gita) in very holistic contexts.

When Karma and Bhakti come together in Lokasangraha it turns out to be a sa√gam of commitment and compassion, a blending of duty and devotion, a symbiosis of labour and love. Just as an experience of the unconditional love of the Father goads us on to work for a just human society the experience of belonging to the One-who-is-the-All inspires the Bhakta to work with 'all his being, with all his love' for his cosmic Body so that at that stage the Bhakta sees the Sarva in all things and all things in the Sarva. Thus in this formulation the Gita brings in the 'third dimension', namely, the knowledge of the Sarva, and in this way neatly rounds up the whole process of liberation.

II THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Whenever the New Testament writings, especially the Gospel of St. John, portray Jesus as the Son of God it is clear that the pericopes have, in most cases, been constructed in such a manner that they lead to a confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

2.1 The Son of God

It used to be a tradition among theologians and exegetes to interpret this title metaphorically: Jesus and God were understood as sharing in the same substance, that is, in the same nature. The New Testament was read with the glasses of metaphysics. "God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God" was understood more metaphysically than theologically. Today's exegetes and theologians are more cautious about metaphysical claims for their interpretations of Scripture. SOARES-PRABHU's writings do not belong to this category; he not only does not follow this tradition, he simply ignores representatives of this tradition (like BONSIRVEN) in the remarkably up-to-date bibliographies of his publications.

2.2 Jesus and the Kingdom
SOARES-PRABHU does not waste any time in his writings on the 'divine' titles but concentrates on the significance of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' preaching. In doing this he treads, what seems to me to be, an hermeneutically appropriate path; exegetically he works out the meaning of Kingdom in Jesus' background and history, and then in his teaching and proclamation. Subsequently in the light of this exegesis he interprets Jesus' message for us today. For such an enterprise he takes Mark 1:14-15 as "a programmatic summary spelling out for us the meaning of his [Jesus'] ministry". In his analysis of the setting of Mk 1.14-15 SOARES-PRABHU draws our attention to the following facts:

a. The mission of Jesus is closely related in God's plan of salvation to that of John and that the destiny of the former is similar to that of the latter;

b. Jesus exercises his ministry not in Jerusalem but in Galilee, the despised, barbarous, religiously backward, gentile-ridden up country of the North;

c. His ministry is a proclamation of the good news of God.

SOARES-PRABHU's analysis concludes that the proclamation consists of a pair of indicatives [a. the time is fulfilled, b. and the Kingdom of God is at hand] followed by a pair of imperatives [c. repent, d. and believe in the good news]. He reminds us that "in each pair the second member, in typical Semitic fashion, takes up and explicates the first. So b explains a: the time is fulfilled because the Kingdom of God is at hand; and d explains c: to repent means to believe in the good news." He concludes his treatment of this parallelism thus: "the core of the passage (b & c) is an accurate transcription of what Jesus himself would have preached - for 'Kingdom of God' was surely a characteristic theme of his preaching, and the call to 'repent' fits in well with the image he projects of a charismatic prophet (cf. Mt 21:11; Lk 7:16)".

2.3 God's Kingdom

SOARES-PRABHU then proceeds to ask: "what exactly Jesus meant when he spoke of the 'Kingdom of God', and what exactly he meant by repentance". To speak of the Kingdom (given its symbolic nature,) Jesus employed 'the allusive language of the parables'. First of all the Kingdom itself is not to be understood spatially but 'operationally', if one may be permitted to put it that way. For in the light of the Aramaic tendency to avoid verbal statements about Yhwh and to replace them with abstract noun forms, the nominal phrase Kingdom of God has to be interpreted as "God's kingly activity". According to SOARES-PRABHU the theology of Jesus' times pictures this kingly activity in two ways: "God shows himself to be king by creating the universe and by liberating his people through his mighty deeds in history." However the Kingdom as Creation "is not of primary importance to the Old Testament, nor original to it. It is rather in her awareness of God as the liberator King who sets his people free that the specific note of Israel's theology is struck."

2.31 The Kingdom as Liberation

Yhwh is the liberator God, the God who intervenes in history to save his people from slavery, starvation and annihilation. But this faith is severely tested since promise does not keep pace with fulfillment. The tension that follows "can be resolved only by projecting the fulfillment of the promise into the future. The promises of the liberator God will one day be fulfilled. God will one day fully liberate his people...The kingship of the liberator King, becomes an eschatological kingdom." Thus the First Testament is a book of hope. This hope manifests itself in various forms in the course of Israel's history; however only two forms seem paradigmatically important "because they have largely determined the thought
patterns of the New Testament, and indeed Jesus' own understanding of his mission. They are messianic expectation and apocalyptic hope.\textsuperscript{50}

In Davidic messianism a descendant of David, it is hoped, will establish a this worldly world-wide kingdom of justice, peace and prosperity in which all the promises symbolized by the 'land' will finally be realized.\textsuperscript{51} However the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile turn out to be a severe set-back to this kind of messianism.

On the other hand Apocalyptic hope with its expectation of an imminent, catastrophic intervention of God to destroy 'this evil age' looks forward to the ushering in of 'the age to come', with 'a new heaven and a new earth'.\textsuperscript{52} "Apocalyptic hope, unlike messianism, is thus strictly eschatological. It foresees salvation not as the fulfillment of our history but as its end."\textsuperscript{53}

\section*{2.32 The Kingdom: the Revelation of God's Unconditional Love}

From the historical background of the concept of Kingdom SOARES-PRABHU turns his attention to the meaning of the Kingdom for Jesus. Jesus' listeners, unlike us, he says, were familiar with the symbol of the Kingdom, though it is true, the symbol might have evoked differently in different hearers. "When therefore Jesus announces the coming of the Kingdom, what he is saying is that Israel's long sustained hope of liberation (no matter what form this takes) is about to be, indeed is being fulfilled. That is, it is being realized, but in a new, more perfect and therefore wholly unexpected way."\textsuperscript{54} His hearers might have at the beginning each thought differently as to how this could be realized (through political power, the power of arms or through perfect observance of the Law, or through a mighty display of cosmic power by God), but Jesus did not leave them in any doubt for long. "The only truly liberating force in the world is love, and it is just this that Jesus offers when he proclaims the coming of the Kingdom... It is this revelation of God's love (God as 'abba') that is the true content of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom...the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus, then, is ultimately his revelation of God's unconditional love."\textsuperscript{55}

This offer is both a gift and a challenge demanding from us a response in the form of 'repentance'. The Greek metanoein, in the sense of having after-thoughts, or remorse for some one action or the other is not, says SOARES-PRABHU, according to the mind of Jesus. For him it meant a complete turning towards God, and accepting the offer of his love by loving him in the neighbour. This interpretation is based on the fact that the indicative in the core-message is the proclamation of the Kingdom and that the imperative to repent signifies the readiness to open our hearts to the power of his transforming love.\textsuperscript{56}

\section*{2.4 The Significance of the Kingdom: The New Society}

With this SOARES-PRABHU proceeds to work out the implications of what happens when God's offer of love meets with trusting acceptance on the human side. "The movement brings freedom in as much it liberates each individual from the inadequacies and obsessions that shacktle him. It fosters fellowship, because it empowers free individuals to exercise their concern for each other in genuine community. And it leads on to justice, because it impels every true community to adopt the just societal structures which alone make freedom and fellowship possible. Freedom, fellowship and justice are thus the parameters of the Kingdom's thrust towards the total liberation of man. Together they spell out the significance of the Kingdom, and tell us what the Kingdom, in practice, means today."\textsuperscript{57}

\section*{2.41 Freedom: The Kingdom and the Human Person}

Lack of love, SOARES-PRABHU asserts, is the root-cause of our fears and deep needs; these in turn give rise to compulsions and pressures. We seek to fill this gaping void which
expresses itself in insecurity by 'grasping compulsively at possessions, position or power'. The result is that we are free neither internally nor externally.

But when love fills this void, we become fully free because we no more seek refuge in the transient. For to be free means to be freed from insecurity, fear and possessiveness. The supreme example of such freedom undoubtedly is Jesus.

2.42 Fellowship: The Kingdom Community

The kind of freedom that Jesus brings 'leads inevitably to a fellowship of mutual concern' and finds its fulfillment in commitment. "For the fulfillment of freedom is fellowship". An encounter with the love of and acceptance by 'abba, our dear loving Father' results in 'concern for every one in need'. SOARES-PRABHU argues that Jesus used the little known passage from Lev 19:18 to interpret in a new manner the shema' yisra'uel (hear, O Israel [Dt 6:4-6]). "To love God with all one's heart now means to love one's neighbour as oneself. One loves God by loving neighbour. The love commandment of Jesus, is then, that we love God by loving neighbour". SOARES-PRABHU paraphrases agapeµ as radical concern for the neighbour (which in its turn is a paraphrase of fellowship) and considers it as the great value of the Kingdom.

2.43 Justice: The Kingdom and Human Society

Fellowship and justice, according to SOARES-PRABHU, go together. In a post-Marxian age our preunderstanding is slowly moving from individualistic to structuralistic ways of analyzing our problems. Today justice cannot any more mean 'merely rescuing the victims of these [unjust] structures or attempting (with dubious success) to convert the exploiters who maintain them'. SOARES-PRABHU finds justification for his interpretation in Jesus' "opposition to the burdensome legalism of the scribes (cf. the Sabbath controversies of Mk 2:23-3.6), his slashing condemnation of a casuistry which leaves no room for compassion (cf. his rejection of 'Qorban' in Mk 7:9-13), his consistent violation of the rules of caste separation (cf. his table-fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners in Mk 2:15-17) and his violent protest against the exploitation of the priestly aristocracy (cf. his cleansing of the Temple in Mk 17:15-19)". Similarly SOARES-PRABHU discerns how Jesus in his miracles too 'destroys the demonic power-structure which is the cause of all human ills' though we post-Einsteinians may not accept today his understanding of the cosmic processes. But however mythological Jesus' way of thinking about them, he thought of them as a structure. "And in opposing this structure Jesus shows us again that the concern of the Kingdom cannot be content with the individual rescue, but must challenge the 'demonic' power structures of the day, however and wherever such oppressive structures are perceived."

2.5 The Karma of the Father is the Dharma of Jesus

Thus freedom, fellowship and justice, expressions of new liberating relationships with God and human beings, constitute in SOARES-PRABHU's account the Dharma of Jesus which is the core of the proclamation of the Kingdom. Jesus himself incorporates these in his life and is the outstanding example of a liberated person committed to fellowship through work for justice.

The Kingdom, as we have seen, is God's kingly activity, an activity which creates and liberates. Jesus' Dharma embodies the proclamation of the Kingdom, founded as it was on his 'abba'-experience, and has as its content and source the unconditional love of God. Correspondingly this Dharma, to summarize SOARES-PRABHU's reflections, has two aspects:
God's loving activity (= the Kingdom of God is at hand) and our acceptance of and response to this offer of love (= repent!).

To these considerations of SOARES-PRABHU I would now like to add the following consideration: Jesus' Dharma is a reflection of the Father's work. For the substance of Jesus' proclamation is God's kingly Karma. "What the Father does that the Son too does. Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise." (Jn 5:19) The message of Jesus originates in the Father. The centre of all that Jesus stands for is not Jesus himself but the Father. His Dharma is not christocentric but theocentric. True, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life but he is the way to, the truth about and the life from the Father. The way is not the goal, the truth is not identical with that which discloses the truth and the life is not the source from which it emerges. But at the same time, we have to keep in mind that "he who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). For it is only in the Son that the Father is 'visible' and "no one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Mt 11:27)

III THE SAMSĀRA-MYTH AND THE MYTH OF SALVATION HISTORY

The main characteristics of the two worlds of the Kingdom and of Dharma are best summed up in the myths of Samsāra and of Salvation History.

For Christians the historical Jesus is the locus where the Father's commitment and love are revealed. Christian tradition which keeps alive his message animated by his memory shows signs of a 'historical' perspective. The sense of history on which the dominant myriad Christian traditions rest presupposes a certain evaluation about the significance of historical events. The view of the past, present and above all of the future is understandably from the perspective of the Jesus event.

In the Hindu world-view the historical process is incorporated in the belief in Samsāra. The metaphor of Samsāra depicts a spiral movement where one 'circle' lasts a hundred Brahmā years. The basic unit consists of four ages of decreasing moral fibre (from really good to really bad). Unlike for the Christian who speaks in terms of Salvation History, Samsāra is the history of bondage, something that has to be overcome. This bondage history is bondage both of the individual as well as of the world and is inextricably bound up with the cosmic process which is a continuation of past deeds and happenings. World and individual are born again and again but in such a way that the past determines the next birth. Unlike in the Christian perspective here no one single event is (or can be) more significant than the others. Samsāra as the realm of bondage does not have any redeeming features and so cannot be redeemed. The conclusion is obvious: to be liberated one has to go beyond Samsāra.

Clearly the traditions of Samsāra (where the Cosmos is the locus of revelation) and of Salvation History (where the historical Jesus is the locus of revelation) appear to be like oil and water; their Sangam does not seem to be feasible.

3.1 Transmythicization

Today we are in a position to analyse the myths of Samsāra and Salvation History, only because and to the extent that they are no more fully active. When a myth enters the realm of the Logos (that is, once it is known and is thematized) a new myth takes its place. The new myth however cannot be made thematic so long it is active, the mythic level being the background of all our knowing. Hence even when a particular myth travels from the
realm of Mythos to that of Logos, some other myth that takes its place, inexorably as it were, as the new horizon of understanding.

When the mythic garb of a myth turns obsolete, it becomes opaque and is incapable of revealing the original insights. However with that not everything is lost. The mythic story is a story built on the foundation of mythemes. If then there is to be a continuum between the old and the new myths, the horizon of understanding has to be broadened and extended in order to make room for the re-interpretation of the mythemes. This is the task of interpretation; an authentic interpretation helps cultivate a kind of openness to the insights of the earlier modes of experience and expression so that these are taken up into and interact with the magma of the new myth.

Living myths, of course, do not need interpretation. A living myth is that which is taken for granted and constitutes the background and horizon of our present understanding. Interpretation becomes necessary when myths are no longer active. We then need to re-interpret such myths. Such interpretation takes place on the background of our present understanding. If such an understanding does succeed then it implies that a re-adjustment of the existing boundaries of our present understanding has taken place.

Adjustment is possible with the help of the mythemes of the earlier myth. Mythemes articulate themes which are perennial and pertinent to the human condition. They are the connecting link between the old and the new myths. There is thus a continuum between the old and the new. This is the process of transmythicization. The more we attempt to ex-press our myths the more intensive such a process.

Even when the mythic form changes, the mythemes abide. The mythic garb differs according to time and culture but mythemes are common to all humankind. And yet the focus on a particular mytheme is determined by its specific historical situation. With the help of mythemes it is possible to enter into the myth of another culture. It is mythemes (and not the mythic story) that permit us to follow the meaning of a myth. Mythemes point in the direction of a myth's meaning.

The difference between the myth of the unconditional love of the Father and that of the Parâ Bhakti of the Sarva revealed in and through the Cosmos is the predominantly anthropocentric nature of the former and the strikingly cosmocentric nature of the latter. We can trace the differences in perception regarding freedom, fellowship and justice to this feature. One of the more significant differences is that whereas the revelation of the Father's love takes place in history the revelation of the Sarva's Bhakti remains abidingly cosmic and a-historical.72

Thus person and history form the horizon of understanding in the anthropocentric world-view but cosmic interconnections and interrelations wherein no one single incident or person stands out constitute the background of all understanding in the cosmocentric perspective. In the former where personhood is stressed there is stress on free-will and decision, freedom from internal and external coercion, freedom to develop oneself, freedom to love, freedom to contribute to the making and shaping of history. Where such freedom is absent there is no possibility of developing into a person. Freedom is considered to be one of the highest values in the world of the Kingdom.

But in the world of Dharma though freedom, as understood above, does not have that kind of importance, it is the highest value if understood on the one hand as freedom from spiritual blindness and on the other from desires and attachments. Spiritual blindness refers to the inability to see reality as it is, the inability to perceive the holistic nature of reality and the perduring tendency to view it only partially. It is desires and attachments that make us blind, partial and one-sided; conversely it is this blindness that permits desires and attachments to flourish and to internalize them as values.73 But freedom, understood as
liberation from blindness and from desires, freedom that is ultimate and definitive is, alas, absent in history; hence history as Samsâra has to be overcome, gone beyond, if one is to reach final and definitive freedom (= Moksha). Indeed since Samsâra is identical with the state where desires and attachments are of the essence, Moksha is the goal which consists in a complete absence of attachments and desires.

Thus freedom understood in two ways, freedom in history and freedom from history, forces us to ask how we are to understand freedom in our attempt to formulate the Dharma of Jesus. Obviously the choice cannot be either one or the other because our thematization of the problem shows that we have to some extent assimilated both and gone beyond both. This being the case we have to take help from both in order to take stock of where we are now. Freedom in history is not fully feasible without freedom from history; and vice versa, freedom from history is not really possible without freedom in history. The measure in which one attains freedom in history is the measure in which one becomes free from history. In the same way the measure in which one attains freedom from history is the measure in which one is really free in history. Because of the one-sidedness of our perspectives we are blind to the concomitant phenomenon. It is the characteristic of a communicatio in sacris mythis that a sort of wholeness, a stereoscopic vision emerges.

Similarly about fellowship and justice.

Thus we find ourselves at the crossroads in history where concern for religion and nation is gradually becoming secondary. Our overriding concern is with what it means to be Human in the world. What interests us today is neither the cosmocentric nor the anthropocentric but the cosmotheandric viewpoint, that is, a viewpoint which takes the constituent dimensions of reality seriously and gives them their due. This is the 'secular' perspective that appears to be emerging among people of good-will who though owing no allegiance to any religious tradition are still very 'religious' in the sense that they build their lives on truth, honesty, justice, peace, etc. The number of such people is on the increase and the number of adherents of the traditional religions is on the decrease. An attempt to articulate the mythemes contained in the myth of Samsâra and Salvation History from such a perspective might be worthwhile.

IV A COSMOTHEANDRIC INTERPRETATION

The 'secular' myth, as R. PANIKKAR has repeatedly shown, is a cosmotheandric vision in which the three dimensions constitutive of reality - cosmos, theos and aner - are integrated. The triple dimensionality can be formulated in different ways and at different levels. They are the three mobile centres of reality which are irreducible to one another. One important formulation stresses the Cosmic, the Divine and the Human aspects of reality. The Cosmic is the demonstrable, objectifiable, ostensive (that!) aspect of reality. The Human is the aspect of awareness, of consciousness; it is the centre that objectifies. And finally the Divine is the non-finiteness of both the objectify-ability and the objectifying-ability because the objectifiable can never be exhaustively objectified and the objectifying consciousness can never be exhaustively satisfied. The Divine is the depth-dimension that is operative in the Cosmic and the Human; that is to say, both the cosmic and the human aspects of reality are inexhaustible and unfathomable. The depth-dimension is the source of this inexhaustibility and unfathomability. We never reach a stage where we can say that we know the Human or the Cosmic exhaustively.

These three indispensable but mobile centres of reality are not separate; wherever one is present the other two are also there. None can exist without the other two. These are not three realities but three inseparable but at the same time irreducible strands which constitute
reality. Reality is identical with that which is constituted by the Cosmic, the Human and the Divine. What exists is not the Cosmic, not the Human, not the Divine but reality which is constituted by the three.

Our understanding of the human dimension cannot be restricted to merely the human being. Whereas the human dimension cannot be reduced to either the cosmic or the divine dimensions, the human being is composed of all three but in such a way that the Human dominates. Similarly our understanding of the cosmic dimension cannot be restricted only to the world. The Cosmic is a dimension but the world is composed of all the three dimensions but in such a way that the Cosmic dominates. The Divine too cannot be restricted to God but God is all the three dimensions but the Divine dominates. At the same time though the Cosmic is what binds one human being with another; the Human is what identifies this 'binding together'; and the Divine is what makes the binding together possible. But neither the Cosmic nor the Human could be what they are if the depth-dimension were lacking in them. From this perspective then the traditional concepts God, World and Humans, are more pragmatic than philosophical in nature. In PANIKKAR's words: "God, Man and World are three artificially substantivized forms of the three primordial adjectives which describe Reality."76

If today we are not satisfied with our way of speaking of the religion or message of Jesus but are experimenting with formulations like the Dharma of Jesus it is not primarily because being bored with traditional theological jargon we are trying at best to inculturate ourselves or at worst searching out for new and interesting formulations. The basic reason is that reality with its three strands does not permit us to rest contented with our understanding of it but constantly urges us to co-respond to its claims in the most adequate manner possible.

Thus in the Dharmic world-view where the stress on the Cosmic tends - to some extent - to turn attention away from the Human, it is not surprising that problems like that of untouchability and human rights constantly expose the inadequacy of this world-view's understanding of the Human. Similarly in the Christian world-view - where up till very recently concern for the Cosmos has been minimal - problems of ecology are making us aware of its defective appreciation of the Cosmos. What is in fact happening here is this: the depth-dimension (that is, the Divine) is not allowing us to rest satisfied with our inadequate understanding of the Cosmic and the Human.

There is therefore an inner need, an exigency, to understand everything - from religion to reality - holistically. An interpretation which does justice to both the world-views will have to include and integrate the insights of both of them. This is done not intellectually (and academically as it were) or merely mechanically by collating their insights but through a sa√gam of their mythoi. It is only when there is a participatio in sacris mythis that the path for an integral understanding is cleared. That is to say, only when we participate in both the traditions can we say that we are in a position to bathe in and be purified by the waters of their Sangam.

Though the two myths of History and Samsâra may be passé, or at least on their way out, we still can have access to their mythemes in order to find out what is still relevant in them for our times. The relevant aspects form a continuum with our present (unthematized and at the moment unthematizable). Under-standing in this continuum we have to attempt to re-interpret the Dharma of Jesus.

What is important to note is that, whether we want it or not, our working out of the mythemes is done on the background of our present (unthematized) myth; if our present myth is a Sangam our interpretation will manifest it. In spite of the fact that our present myth remains unfathomable, we can dimly guess its direction from the trends of our interpretation. That more and more people of good-will, for instance, are taking problems of poverty and
hunger seriously, that people believe in selfless service, hope for peace and commit themselves to working for a healthier environment without however being part of any religious tradition indicates, firstly, that in their own way they admit the importance of the dynamics of the Human, the Cosmic and the Divine operative in reality; and secondly, that religious values are not the monopoly of religious traditions alone.

When therefore we take up the mythemes of the earlier myths we allow our own myth to emerge but in a manner that is not explicitly discernible. A task like this implies that deep down in us an intra-dialogue is taking place wherein the frontiers of our myth are being constantly re-negotiated giving birth to a new language: global village, holistic health and food, ecological balance, environmental and moral pollution, a new world order, alternative medicine, feminism, etc.

4.1 The Myth of Samsāra

The home that is myth is formed by the material of mythemes. The kind of home one lives in depends on the kind of mythemes that constitute it. In the unfolding of the myth of Samsāra we find the following mythemes (without attempting to be exhaustive) operative: the burden of the past, the fear of the future, knowledge of reality and the solidarity of the Cosmic and the Human.

4.11 The Burden of the Past

There is no gainsaying the fact that the present is a product of the past. Try as we might we cannot break with the past. The present (whatever its condition) is the continuation of the past - though not necessarily in a linear direction. Even if there is a certain newness in the present it is due to the special combination of past events, a combination which we may never be in a position to fathom. Though the future may not be fully determined by the present the number of directions in which the future can take is not independent of the past. The future cannot be totally new. There can be no break between the present and the future; on the contrary the present is the continuum between the past and the future.

The past is a burden in the sense that we are not the choosers of our past; the past inflicts itself on us. We can escape neither its influence nor its effects. The past forms and informs us, not in the sense that it fully determines us but in the sense that like the set of cards that is dealt to us we cannot choose with what we start though we can choose how to go about with what is given to us.

4.12 The Fear of the Future

It is not just the burden of the past with all its unknowables but also the uncertainty of the future terrorizes the present. The uncertainty is all-embracing, pervading all that we undertake and all that happens to us. And uncertainty is the mother of fear and anxiety. There is a distorting element in fear which spawns shortsightedness, aggressivity and insecurity. Such distortion has far-reaching consequences ranging from apparent values to rationalization which masquerades under the guise of reason. All this begets an attitude of mind which is concerned with short-term results and neglects what transcends the temporal and the visible. Such a mind-cast tends to be satisfied with the here and now, a bird in hand being worth two in the bush. Fear of the future is an ever present shadow, more tangible in times of trouble than of pleasure and power.

And yet the uncertainty about the future contains an element which constitutes the human being. If the future were certain there would be no purpose in living. Not only would we be deprived of the thrill of discovery, the joy of surprise and the satisfaction of fulfilment; the future would not be the future at all for the simple reason that without the unpredictable
element, it would reduce love to a mechanical process, friendship to calculation and joy to a physio-chemical reaction. We would be bored to death in a world where a smile would be a predictable movement of the facial muscles.

A future that is certain is a future which has no place for freedom. And the price of freedom is uncertainty. If freedom is fraught with fear it is because we are still in the present; we are not yet in the future. Our future beckons to us. Looking forward to the future is 'shade of his hand outstretched caressingly'.

That the burden of the past and the fear of the future can paralyze and impoverish the present is one side of the human coin; the other side being that only thus is freedom with all its companions like love and friendship possible.

4.13 Knowledge of Reality

Whether we know it or not, and irrespective of our wishes we always and already stand in reality. Our finding ourselves within reality is not like being in a box but as being part of a unique relationship between knowing and being which is not reducible to the relationship between a knowing subject and a known object. In the latter knowing is considered to be a quality of the mind; in the former knowing is the same as being present in the disclosure of reality. In the subject-object epistemology we have knowledge of reality. Where knowing is a mode of being knower, knowing and known go together. It is not knowledge of reality but means standing in the disclosure of reality.

Thus knowing is authentic when it co-reponds to the claims of reality. But when knowing instead of treading the royal road of reality, takes to the highways and byways of inordinate desires and succumbs to their enticing a wedge is driven between knowing and reality. Knowing is hijacked by desires. When desires rule the roost the special relationship between knowing and being is disturbed and a world of inauthenticity and pseudo-values emerges. Knowing is then no more standing in the disclosure of reality. We have knowledge of reality.

4.14 Solidarity of the World and Human Beings

The solidarity between the world and Humans is such that what affects the one affects the other and vice versa. They are so intimately linked that to separate them would be to transform them into abstractions. The reason for this is obvious: the cosmic dimension is as much a constituent of human beings as the human dimension is a constituent of the world. The affinity between them is such that the specificity of the one corresponds to the specificity of the other. That is to say, the objectifiability of the Cosmic corresponds to the objectifying-ability of the Human; it is the two together that make sense.

The solidarity obtaining between the world and human beings is operative in all spheres: love, imagination, understanding, senses, culture, art, religion, literature, etc. Not only can we not think of the one without the other; they cannot be without one another. More than correspondence it would be more apt to speak of a continuum between them. Whatever the theory that is put forward to explain this relationship (between matter and soul, Purusha and Prakriti, etc.) it is the mytheme of the solidarity between the Cosmic and the Human that forms the base.

4.2 The Myth of Salvation History

Popularly history is taken to be the antidote to myth; history is the dynamite that explodes myths. Here history is mistakenly understood as a chronicle of facts. The truth is that history itself is a product of 'historical' consciousness, that is to say, of the myth of history whose parameters are quite different from those of the myth of Samsâra. This
difference is symbolized in their mythemes. In the myth of Salvation History we have mythemes like the irruption of the Inexplicable, the yearning of Humans for the Divine, the freedom of human beings and the determination of the Cosmos, and the transformation of an happening into an event.

4.21 The Irruption of the Inexplicable

There are moments which are privileged, moments we treasure and moments of terror, that is, moments which somehow have become momentous. They make us seek for their intimations in what preceded them and meaning in what follows them so that past, present and future appear to be of a piece. In the process some sort of plan and pattern becomes manifest. But search as we might there is no explanation for the irruption of the happening that is benevolent, merciful, inspiring, selfless, honest, truthful, friendly, joyful. Obviously this is equally true of evil and its associates. But good and evil, both of them remain inexplicable.

All the same we constantly seek to discover patterns of development, perhaps in order to foresee the pleasant or be prepared for the not so pleasant happening. Once we have found a somewhat satisfactory pattern we tend to turn it into a paradigm. We begin to apply it to all such moments. This is true not only in the case of individuals but also of communities and nations as well.

What we have to note here is not so much the pattern as the fact that there is in life an inexplicable irruption of good and bad. One of the human responses to this is the search for a pattern (called history) so that we can somehow account for the unaccountable events and happenings in life.

4.22 The Yearning of Humans for the Divine

Whatever one's stance regarding the nature and the existence of the Divine may be, there is in the human heart a yearning for 'more', more meaning, more love and a deeper and more intensive sense of belonging. Humans cannot rest satisfied with other Humans and their world but are always intent on crossing boundaries and going beyond the given. They are eager to know more and more about themselves and their world. The more they come to know the more they feel urged to investigate further. There is no end to this process in as much as Humans can never rest satisfied with the existing state of affairs. This never ceasing urge is only an expression of their unceasing yearning for the Divine. Ultimately Humans yearn for a [divine] background which can transsignify the events of their lives. Human life attains real, holistic significance only on an unlimited background.

4.23 The Freedom of the Human and the Constraints of the Cosmic

Humans are endowed with the capacity to project the possibilities of being differently. However, the capacity is limited by the nature of the Cosmic. Humans project only those possibilities that are permitted by the constraints of the Cosmic. However much the human spirit may soar into the farthest recesses of space its feet are always tied down to the Cosmic.

In spite of cosmic constraints Humans, imbued with the spirit of freedom, constantly strive to go beyond these limits. What yesterday seemed impossible is no more so today. And what is probable today will be commonplace tomorrow. If the myth of Samsāra stresses the solidarity of the world and Humans, the myth of history focuses on the struggle of Humans with their world. And if it appears that the Humans are constantly emerging victorious it should be noted that the Cosmic invariably remains unvanquished.
4.24 The Transformation of a Happening into an Event

The Cosmos, as today's science tells us, is a complex process of happenings.\textsuperscript{80} Happenings are all those occurrences in the Cosmos that go to make up its movement and its life. Happening refers to any and every process in the Cosmos. It is only when such a set of occurrences affects the Human in a way that the course of his history is affected and perhaps even changed that a happening becomes significant and thus is transformed into an event however seldom this may be.

Now happening is the genus and event one of its species. An event is that happening which significantly affects Humans and their world. History is such a sequence of events. It is not surprising that it is only in the myth of history that it is possible for a happening to become an event. Furthermore it is only in the myth of history that the myth of salvation-history is possible. Whereas in secular history a happening can be transformed into a historical event, a historical event can in a world of faith become an event of salvation-history. Thus the Jesus of history is interpreted as revealing and realizing the history of salvation.\textsuperscript{81}

V THE DHARMA OF JESUS

A Human is always and already in the Cosmos and is always moving in the direction of the Divine Mystery. This is so because the cosmic and the divine dimensions are constitutive of the Human but each in a different manner. Accordingly freedom, fellowship and justice which symbolize the Dharma of Jesus have to be interpreted neither anthropocentrically nor cosmocentrically but cosmotheandrically. To do this it would be helpful to recall what R. PaniKKar has often referred to as the law of ontonomy in his writings.\textsuperscript{82} A being when seen in the context of reality is neither fully autonomous (that is totally independent) nor fully heteronomous (totally dependent); it is ontonomous. Ontonomy is the unique blend of autonomy and heteronomy and refers to the fact that the complex of relationships of which reality is comprised is such that every being is uniquely related to every other being.

Since the law of ontonomy is the corner-stone of the cosmotheandric vision we need now an ontonomous interpretation of freedom, fellowship and justice on a cosmotheandric background.

Accordingly freedom has to be understood not merely as freedom from either internal compulsions and external pressures or as freedom from spiritual blindness and inordinate attachments and desires. Rather it is a freedom that is ontonomously holistic; it consists in being what it is meant to be, letting each thing be what it is meant to be and thus contributing to its own growth and the growth of the whole network of relationships. Thus a thing is free only when it can grow fully and at the same time also allows everything to grow fully. Fullness of growth is possible where freedom is ontonomous: the growth of one is such that it promotes the growth of all and vice versa.

Thus freedom is not to be understood 'individually' nor merely personalistically nor just structurally but cosmotheandrically. Not individually because there is no such thing as an individual. If we accept the ontonomous nature of everything, where everything is uniquely connected with and dependent on everything and thus is unique, we can dispense with the language of 'individualism'.\textsuperscript{83} Not merely personalistically because our understanding of freedom has to extend beyond human frontiers to non-human beings as well. Not structurally because whatever of structure is necessary for a being to move in the direction of its fullness is already provided for in the law of ontonomy. But
cosmotheandrically because freedom in the reign of ontonomy permits each of the three dimensions of reality to be itself and every thing to grow according to the unique relationships that constitute it.

What does this imply concretely? The question, if taken at its face value, is naive. It presupposes that one can describe and draw up a list. If however the question is about the characteristics of free persons then one could say that such persons, aware of the burden of the past and the uncertainty of the future, are not oppressed by the one nor paralyzed by the other. They realize that the cosmological burden (which includes biological heritage) being a constitutive part of the Human cannot, indeed need not, be unburdened. They can view it differently if they learn to build on what they are rather than with what they have. Similarly the uncertainty of the future is the direction, not the destiny, of their being. The destiny is fullness of growth in freedom - the growth of all for all.

Persons who are free, being at home in this universe, are neither lost in their own world nor exclusively attached to any one being. They are open to all. Hence they are not possessive since they do not lay great store on possessions. They value every thing because it is charged with an ontonomous value. Free of all kinds of possessiveness and of attachments such persons have no axe to grind when they undertake some thing except to work for the welfare of all. Committed to universal welfare they have no vested interest of any kind. Their only vested interest is the welfare of all. Free persons who are unfettered by all such interests are open to all; they can be dispassionate and there is no distortion in their way of looking at reality. They see reality as it is, and they are aware of themselves as part of reality.

When one has been liberated from greed and possessiveness there is no room for fear and anxiety, much less for aggression. Far from evoking fear such a one exudes a sense of harmony. For harmony, the penumbra of freedom, is not an 'individualistic' feeling but a public state of being, accessible to all [beings] who are open to it.

At the same time free persons are sensitive to the sensibilities of the smallest of entities, taking none of them for granted. Such persons are not fettered by likes and dislikes; hence they do not belong to those who do what they like but following the law of ontonomy they like what they do. Their joy therefore is from within and it cannot be taken away from them. It springs from commitment and is not born of success. One who is free is indeed a person for all seasons.

Freedom is the door that opens upon fellowship. To enter the home of fellowship one has to take the door of freedom.

Analogous to our understanding of freedom is fellowship. Fellowship is built on freedom; where there is no ontonomous freedom fellowship cannot emerge, much less survive. Freedom is the space where the home of fellowship is built. And because it follows from freedom fellowship too is ontonomous. Fellowship is the activated openness of being. In the home of fellowship no being is guest and all are family; fellowship is not restricted to the like-minded nor to those vibrating on the same wave-length. Ontonomous fellowship does not discriminate but it does differentiate between different modes of being and adjusts itself accordingly. Thus communion with the Divine Mystery is not the same as communing with Humans or with the Cosmos for that matter.

First of all, ontonomous fellowship is not to be identified with 'good feelings' towards others. Being based on relationship with the whole of reality fellowship is not a matter of choice, much less of feeling. However it is achieved neither mechanically nor automatically but with deliberation and determination preceded by awareness of the ontonomous nature of reality. Such awareness acts as the final cause that beckons one to co-respond to the ontonomous claims of reality. We may call this fellowship love or communion or Bhakti or
by any other name; but their parameters now are neither anthropocentric nor cosmocentric but cosmotheandric.

Secondly fellowship with the Cosmic is not a romantic club whose members are 'gentlemen' of leisure; cosmic fellowship is concern for the Cosmos but the concern is primarily neither economic ('in the long run it is economical to foresee and preempt environmental hazards') nor environmental ('if our environment is damaged we too shall share the same fate') but essentially ontonomous. The uniqueness of every being has to be respected and reverenced, and protected and promoted for the sake of the welfare of the whole world. Does this imply that work and labour to 'change' this world are superfluous and that it is simpler to return to the world where we eat figs and wear fig-leaves? If to work means trying to 'humanize' the world, to 'subjugate' it to Humans and to turn this world into a store-house for human needs then we are indeed on dangerous ground. Laudable as the concern for human beings is, the unconcern for the Cosmos cannot be a negligible matter that can be taken lightly. Though the physical action of work and labour may be the same in 'humanizing' the world and in treating it ontonomously, their motives derive from different worlds. The same action animated by a different motive and intention is judged to be different ethically. To promote cosmic welfare, work has to respect the ontonomous order. There is no justification for manipulating and treating the Cosmos as an object because in reality there are no objects in the first place. Hence for work to be cosmotheandric it has to emerge from commitment to universal welfare, not from a sense of achievement or any other partial motive.

Lastly fellowship among humans is in a class by itself: the Human is the discoverer of the cosmotheandric nature of reality and of its law of ontonomy. This indicates the special nature of human fellowship. It functions not merely at the level of emotion and feeling but is witnessed, especially on the level of love, knowledge and selfless commitment to the welfare of all. Their genuineness is proportionate to their communitarian character, anything opposed to this trait being detrimental to their fundamental nature.

If freedom functions primordially at the level where knowing and being are intimately integrated, fellowship operates at the level where loving and being are similarly related. Genuine freedom and authentic fellowship give no quarter to any kind of distortion in our knowing and loving. This being so, the ontonomous order which expresses itself through freedom and fellowship can fully come into its own only with the birth of justice. For freedom being centripetal and fellowship centrifugal their orbital movement is the search for justice. Justice is so to say the third member of the ontonomous trinity (freedom and fellowship being the first two). On the background of what we have been discussing we could state that justice is the thematic realization of the ontonomous order. What is ontonomy at the primordial level of being, is justice at the level of self-consciousness and commitment.

What does such an understanding of justice imply? Being neither an emotional nor a romantic attitude justice springs from commitment to the ontonomous order. It is the thematic realization of this order and includes justice to the whole of the human and the cosmic communities. It is not so much a juridical as an ontonomous concept implying the fulfillment of freedom and fellowship. Thus where freedom and fellowship flourish, their depth-dimension, justice, is the fruit. Justice, which is not the outcome of freedom and fellowship, is a travesty of justice.

At the primordial level justice is the harmony between the Cosmic and the Human; at the ontological level it is the mediator negotiating between the freedom of a being and the fellowship of all beings. It is the culmination of freedom and fellowship in that without justice neither of them can reach its fullness. If these are incomplete without justice, on its
side justice presupposes freedom and fellowship to come into its own. Thus in the ontonomous order justice is the goal that is *primus in intentione et ultimus in executione*; that is to say, though from the very start justice plans and projects the path of freedom and fellowship, it reaches its final destination only when it has traversed this path of freedom and fellowship.

Because justice is the thematic realisation of the ontonomous order it takes on different hues in the light of the Cosmic, the Human and the Divine. Though in the realm of the Cosmic itself the nuances are diverse the crucial test of justice takes place at the meeting of the Cosmic and the Human. Humans suffer from a superiority complex and go about as if they were the princes of, not participants in the cosmic community, forgetting that justice among human beings themselves is not possible without justice towards the Cosmos. Injustice that is perpetrated on Humans is only a symptom of the injustice done in and through the manipulation of the Cosmos. For it is by attempting to manipulate the world that some humans control others, not only their body but also their spirit. The Cosmic is the bridge between humans; it is through the Cosmic that humans exploit one another. Reverence for the body, for any body, is reverence for the Cosmos; the Cosmos is the body of the Divine. In our context then justice will have to be paraphrased as the welfare of all. For welfare, if it is not the welfare of all, is not welfare at all. For the welfare of all is the fulfilment of the law of ontonomy.

Freedom, fellowship and justice are not three virtues to be acquired by a single individual. They are now to be understood as the claims that reality makes on us, the claims of an ontonomic order where everything is interrelated and interdependent. Henceforth then everything without exception will have to be interpreted from within this three dimensional world. Our response to these claims puts us on the road to wholeness and totality. We may call this Ahimsā, holistic love, universal peace, a new society or even a new world order. But all this falls much short of what the cosmotheandric intuition envisions, namely, the beginning of a new epoch where Humans are not merely Humans and the Cosmos not merely Cosmos and where the Divine Mystery interpenetrates and is interpenetrated by the Human and the Cosmic.

VI CONCLUSION

The Dharma of Jesus seen from the cosmotheandric point of view is the message of Jesus understood from within neither the myth of Samsāra nor that of Salvation History but from a viewpoint which takes up the insights of both and lets them grow into a symbiotic union.

If Christians are serious about their historical Jesus and if the Hindus really believe in the cosmic community of the Gita, they both have to read the Gospels and the Gita or any other Scripture for that matter with the spectacles of cosmotheandrism. The historical which neglects the Cosmic and the Cosmic which ignores the historical - both insist on seeing with one eye. Both need the stereoscopic vision of two eyes. The cosmotheandric vision is stereoscopic, the Human and the Cosmic being the two eyes that enable us to grasp the depth-dimension called the Divine.

All this however might give the impression of being an intellectual exercise. That would be a severe mistake. Operating as it does on the mythic level cosmotheandrism is not a theory; it is the product of a kind of mystagogy. Anyone interested in following it has to make room for a meditative approach in theology. Mere rationalism nor sheer emotionalism will not do. A hermeneutic awareness will make it clear that there are different layers of existence and interpretation; that rational methods are all limited to the realm of Logos and
that the realm of Mythos demands trans-rational methods, spiritual exercises like Yoga and Vipassana. This is not the occasion to go into all that. However it must be stated unambiguously that a theological approach which makes no room for trans-rational methods is a blind-alley.

Finally if 'Kingdom' is the catchword for the message of the Christian tradition and 'Dharma' the watchword for that of the Hindu traditions, ontonomy is the Mantra of the cosmos-theandric vision. But if after all that we have discussed we still speak of the Dharma of Jesus then this is to be interpreted as a sort of preparatio evangelica on the side of the Jesus tradition for entering into a Sangam with the Dharma tradition. The Sangam is symbolic of the cosmos-theandric experience. A Sangam is not a wrestling match with victor and vanquished but an embrace in which You and I discover their real identity in the communion of a We!

NOTES & REFERENCES


2. Mahābhārata 8.49.50.

3. Here I have in view the Bhagavad-gītā's understanding of the parama-puruṣa or the puruṣottama, not the Purusha of the later but decadent Śāskhya-Kārikas.

4. However in the cave of the heart it can speak to the Purusha in prayer and praise. Prayer in this context is the effort the part makes to find its fulfilment in the Purusha. The Purusha alone who is the fulness of the parts can 'full-fill' a part to its capacity.

5. I understand mythic in a positive way, not in the positivistic sense of the Oxford Dictionary.

6. Ṛg-Veda X. 90.

7. Even this might create a wrong impression. The aim of the metaphor of the world as the body of Purusha is obviously not to convey information about how 'body' and 'soul' come together and how they are held together. The metaphor does not put forward any metaphysical theory of spirit and matter. A metaphor has a dual function: one, it shows the limits of logos and two, it points to the realm of mythos (to use R. PANIKKAR's language in his Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics. Cross-Cultural Studies. New York: Paulist Press, 1978. [Indian edition: Asian Trading Corporation: Bangalore 1983]). Reality cannot be exhaustively expressed in the Logos nor can it be spoken of by the Mythos. Logos is the realm of expression and Mythos the realm of being-and-understanding. Expression as well as being-and-understanding are as intimately connected with each other as are Logos and Mythos.

8. I am here implying that understanding of science which tends to draw metaphysical conclusions about reality by reducing it only to the measurable and the quantifiable (which is part of what PANIKKAR calls, the Logos dimension of reality). But Logos is not the only kind of reality-consciousness; there is Mythos which is a sui generis kind of consciousness and is irreducible to Logos. Any attempt to categorize life is bound to be one-sided since no human attempt can ever grasp life as a whole. Life is more than a 'scientific' category. Because we always and already are [alive], we can develop science. Thus even if we try and guess what the metaphor of the world as the body of Purusha is getting at (perhaps life, consciousness, self-consciousness, fulness, totality, wholeness and much more) still all of this falls short of what the metaphor is really saying. The reason is simple: it is within life that we attempt to understand life, which means that the very attempt to understand life itself is part of life and so can never be object-ively captured! Life and understanding are not objectifiable since the very process of objectification presupposes life and understanding. Hence no scientific method can ever be adequate to study and understand life. Every attempt to objectify is at least one step behind experience. No articulation can ever catch up with life and experience.

same process, as if by divine revenge, Man has also devitalized the Earth. The Earth has become dead by the same token that Heaven has become empty. Modern Man seems to have forgotten what the Vedas, the bible and the Chinese Classics affirm: that Heaven and Earth share the same destiny. With the fading away of Heaven, the Earth is no longer a living being, but rather, it has become simply Matter and energy; and the forces of nature are no longer living spirits and qualities, but attributes of nature."

10. Such thinking immediately raises a problem for the Christian, especially the Western Christian, namely, the problem of freedom. If the whole determines what the parts do and do not do, where then is freedom of the parts? This however implies a different understanding of freedom. Freedom in our context means the state where the part is free to itself, that is, free to be and accept itself as part of and in the whole, free to be truly and really part of the whole.

11. Like process from pro-cedere, Prakriti derives from pra-karoti.

12. Karma that promotes Lokasamgraha, the welfare of the world, is in accordance with Dharma. Such Karma is Yajna.

13. On the other hand Karma that is not Yajna, Karma that does not promote Lokasamgraha, Karma that is not in accordance with Dharma is called by the Bhagavadgita asat in both of its primary meanings of not 'being' and not being good. Bhg 17:28: "Oblation offered or gift given without faith, or austerity or action thus performed, is called Asat (not Sat, not good), son of Pritha; It is naught hereafter and naught in this world." (The Bhagavad Gâtâ. Translated and interpreted by F. EDGERTON, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952. Part I. Text and Translation).


16. Bhg 15:17: "There is however another Purusha called the Paramâtmâ; he is the immortal Ishvara who, entering into the three worlds, supports them." Clearly the level at which the Ishvara enters into the three worlds and supports them is the level of being. Human support is always from the outside as it were but the Paramâtmâ's support is always from 'within'? That this is an offer of being and love is clear from what follows immediately. Bhg 15:18-19: "Since I transcend the perishable and am superior to the imperishable, therefore I am proclaimed in the Veda and in the secular realm as the Purushottama. The one who, undeluded, knows me thus as the Purushottama, he knowing the All loves me with all his being and all his love!"


19. R.C. ZAEHNER, The Bhagavad-Gâtâ, With a Commentary based on the original sources, London/Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. Those familiar with the original will not miss the subtle play on words in sarvavid which could also be translated as the person who knows the All. I have, as in many other places too, modified Zaechner’s translation to suit my interpretation of the original Sanskrit.

20. Ibid.

21. I am aware of my own bias in understanding Bhakti 'ontologically', on the level of being as an offer of being and love. This is the result of having been doubly influenced: by the Parâ-Bhakti [of the Gita-text] and by God's unconditional love [of the Christian tradition].

22. E.g. 4:9-10: "Who knows my godly birth and mode of operation (Karma) thus as they really are, he, his body left behind, is never born again: he comes to Me. Many are they who, passion, fear, and anger spent, inhere in Me, making Me their sanctuary; made pure by wisdom and hard penances, they come to [share in] my own mode of being."

23. Peace in the Indian traditions is rendered by prasâda, the state of tranquillity and transparency. Tranquillity is the opposite of turmoil caused by passions [like Râga-Dvesha] and transparency is the opposite of the confused and deluded state [which is a product of the Ahamkâra].


25. It might help to recall that the message of Jesus (as worked out by SOARES-PRABHU) is at home in an anthropocentric world of thinking and that the world-view of the Gita is cosmocentric. Thus the 'offer of unconditional love' is one made to human beings alone whereas the offer of being and love in the Gita, though promised to human beings, is made in the context of the whole cosmic Body. Through the offer of unconditional love we are made aware that the offer of being and love is not a monotonous, uniform offer to every being but is differentiated according to (as we shall see at the end of this essay) ontonomous

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nature of beings themselves. Far from being two separate paths, Bhakti and Jnana together constitute a non-dual Yoga.


27. If Buddhi-Yoga is often ineffective, it is because the preliminary but indispensable Sāmkhya-Yoga has been neglected in the first place.

28. I have been describing Jnana-Yoga more from the negative than the positive side. There is of course a positive and more important aspect to it; we undergo not merely fears and anxieties but also positive and liberating experiences. Identifying these through Sāmkhya-Yoga and becoming aware of means of Buddhi-Yoga of the liberation they bring in is the positive side of Jhāna-Yoga.

29. Cf. Bhg 10:8-11: "The source of all am I; from Me all things proceed: this knowing, wise men commune with Me in love (bhaj-), full filled with warm affection. On Me their thoughts, their life they would sacrifice for Me; [and so] enlightening one another and telling my story constantly they take their pleasure and delight. To these men who are ever integrated and commune with Me in love I give that integration of the soul by which they may draw nigh to Me. Out of compassion for those same men [all] darkness born of ignorance I dispel with wisdom’s shining lamp, abiding [ever] in my own [true] nature.

Bhg 4:36-42: Even though you were the very worst among all evil-doers, [yet once you have boarded] wisdom’s bark, you will surmount all [this] tortuous [stream of life]. As a kindled fire reduces its fuel to ashes, so does the fire of wisdom in its power to purify; and this in time a man himself may find within [him]self, - a man perfected in spiritual exercise. A man of faith, intent on wisdom, his senses [all] restrained, wins wisdom; and, wisdom won, he will come right soon to perfect peace... Let a man in spiritual exercise [all] works renounce, let him by wisdom [all] doubts dispel, let him be himself, and then [whatever] his works [may be, they] will never bind him [more]. And so [take up] the sword of wisdom and with it cut this doubt of yours, unwisdom’s child, still lurking in your heart: prepare for action now, stand up!"

Bhg 5:7, 24 & 25: Well-versed in spiritual exercise, his Self made pure, his Self and senses quelled, his Self become the [very] Self of every contingent being, though working still, he is not defiled...His joy within, his bliss within, his light within, the man who-is-integrated-in-spiritual-exercise becomes Brahman and draws nigh to Nirvåna that is Brahman too. Nirvåna that is Brahman too win seers in whom [all] taint-of-imperfection is destroyed; their doubts dispelled, with self controlled, they take their pleasure in the weal of all contingent beings."

30. Hence no Yoga-aspect can be practised in isolation. Each of them presupposes the others which is a sign of their mutual inclusiveness.

31. Bhg 6:29-31: "With self integrated by spiritual exercise [now] he sees the self in all beings standing, all beings in the self: the same in everything he sees. Who sees Me everywhere, who sees the all in Me, for him I am not lost, nor is he lost to Me. Who standing firm on unity communes-in-love with Me as abiding in all beings, in whatever state he be, that integrated man abides in Me."

See also Bhg 5:25: "...they take their pleasure in the weal of all beings!" Similarly 12.4: "Who hold in check the complex of the senses, in all things equal-minded, taking pleasure in the weal of all contingent beings, these too attain to Me."

32. Finally, justice and Lokasamgraha, in spite of being substantially differentiated by their respective anthropic and cosmic world-views, are not only complementary; they have to be animated by love and Bhakti to be really justice and Lokasamgraha. Justice without love and Lokasamgraha without Bhakti are like a corpse without a soul. This is so because it belongs to the nature of Dharma that each thing has its own specific place and function in the Cosmos (PANIKKAR’s ‘law of ontonomy’). It is Pará-Bhakti that has determined this. In our response justice and Lokasamgraha, which try, each in its own way, to promote the harmony of the Cosmos, have also to be characterised by love and Bhakti.

33. When therefore the experience of the One-who-is-the-All engenders freedom it is really a comprehensive freedom: freedom to see and to love one’s real Self, and to see and love others as they really are. Gita 6:30 expresses this aptly: "Who sees me everywhere and sees the All in me, I am not lost to him nor is he lost to me!" Thus freedom leads to fellowship. This fellowship is a continuum between human fellowship and cosmic fellowship. And passionate delight in the welfare of all beings far from denying either the harmony or the hierarchy that are characteristic of this continuum testify to the opening up that freedom ushers in.

34. Lokasamgraha may be a homeomorphic equivalent of justice but the differences between the two have to be kept in mind. The focus of justice is human justice, on justice among human beings because its understanding is anthropocentric. Lokasamgraha on the other hand, being clearly cosmocentric,
concentrates on the welfare of all the parts of the cosmic organism and stresses not so much equality (as justice does) but harmony and integration. Besides, justice presupposes a community of human beings whereas Lokasamgraha presupposes a cosmic community which includes the human community. Though all this might strain the distinction and make it appear black and white this is not the intention; the intention is to highlight rather than to confront the differences of the two world-views with each other.

35. I owe this beautiful expression to R.C. ZAENHNER’S translation of sarvavid bhajate mām sarvabhāvena (Bhg 15:19).


39. J. BONSI RVEN, S.J., Theology of the New Testament, specially chapter one “The Only Son of God”. BONSIRVEN goes to the extent of reading the definition of the Council of Chalcedon in the New Testament, the Council which obliges us to “acknowledge one and the same Christ, the Son, Lord, Only-begotten, possessing two natures in such a way that they remain distinct, unchanging, indivisible, inseparable” (p. 25).


41. Ibid., 588-589.

42. Ibid., 590-591.

43. Ibid., 591.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., 592.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., 593.

49. Ibid., 595.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., 596-597.

53. Ibid., 597.

54. Ibid., 598.

55. Ibid., 598-599.

56. Ibid., 600.

57. Ibid., 601.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 601-602.

60. Ibid., 602.

61. Ibid., 603.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., 604.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 604-605.

67. Ibid., 605.

68. Theologians, especially of the Western variety, have raised history to the level where it is supposed to be the hallmark of Christian revelation. Implicit in this enterprise seems to be the distinction between historical and mythic a distinction which does not hold because the historical perspective is as mythological as any other perspective since all perspectives belong to the realm of Mythos. See the insightful contribution of W.T. STEVENSON, "History as Myth: Some Implications for History and Theology," Cross-Currents, 20 (1970): pp. 15-28. As I see it, the distinguishing mark of Christian Revelation is not history but the trinitarian understanding of the Divine. See W. PANNE NBERG’S "Dogmatische Thesen zur Lehre von der Offenbarung," in: Offenbarung als Geschichte . hrsg von W. PANNE NBERG, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965. pp. 91-114
Although we can discern individual parts in any system, the nature of the whole is always different from the interactions and interdependence of their parts. The activity of systems involves a process known as and thus a living system...

All these natural systems are wholes whose specific structures arises [sic] from the smallest bacterium through integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units...

Every organism - from the smallest bacterium through the wide range of plants and animals to humans - is an integrated whole and thus a living system... All these natural systems are wholes whose specific structures arises [sic] from the interactions and interdependence of their parts. The activity of systems involves a process known as transaction - the simultaneous and mutually interdependent interaction between multiple components... Although we can discern individual parts in any system, the nature of the whole is always different from the mere sum of its parts."

This is not the case with the Krishna-avatāra.

For example, see his "Philosophy as Life-Style," pp. 93-228, esp. 203: "The concept of ontonomy, nomos tou ontos, referring to the internal and constitutive nomos of each being, contributes, I believe, to..."
the mutual understanding and fertilization of the various fields of human activity and spheres of being by allowing for (ontonomous) growth without breaking the harmony. In politics, economics, sciences, metaphysics, religion and life, this concept appears to me as crucial. It emphasizes neither the loose and disconnected independence of individual fields (autonomy) nor the domination of so-called higher orders over weaker or inferior ones (heteronomy), but that mutual relationship, that radical relativity (prat’yasamutpāda) which considers that, ultimately, reality presents a non-dualistic polarity, and thus what is best for a particular sphere of beings is its harmonious integration into the whole (ontonomy). In our ecologically troubled world, we begin to accept that: it is not in the self interest of America to consume more energy than everybody else; it is not profitable to Russia to become the military[sic] most powerful nation of the world; it is not the best business to condone a liberal 'laisser faire' or to impose artificial measures; to curtail freedom fosters rebellion; to encourage anarchy produces totalitarianism, and so forth and so on."

83. Regarding the concept of the individual A. PIERES relying on B. SCHWARTZ, The Great Rights of Mankind: A History of the American Bill of Rights. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, in his "Human Rights Language and Liberation Theology," Vidyajyoti LII, 11 November (1988): p. 524 has the following to say: "The American Bills [sic] of Rights with its more complete list of individual rights, succeeded in immunizing itself constitutionally whereas the English Bill of Rights did not have an enforcement machinery built into it. Thus, the American Constitution has immortalized the inviolability of the human person in terms of a series of basic, 'God-given' rights." On his own PIERES then goes on to say on p. 527 :"The human rights movement is, in other words, the West’s specific contribution to the understanding of human liberation. It is the spiritual nucleus of Western culture, the quintessence of the Western ethos. It is the ideological substance of which the Western democratic order of social relationships is constructed. Understandably, therefore, all political organs of the West - both governments and the NGOs - could hardly perceive, proclaim or promote the values of freedom and fellowship except in terms of individual rights."

84. R. PANIKKAR, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism. Revised and enlarged edition. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1982, p. 27: "Any Christ who is less than a Cosmic, Human and Divine Manifestation will not do... Christ is still a living symbol for the totality of reality: human, divine and cosmic... In this book Christ stands for that centre of reality, that crystallization-point around which the human, the divine and the material can grow."