

Parallels in Hindu and Stoic Ethical Thought

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WHEN studying the Stoics of Greece and Rome and the teachings of the early Hindus one cannot help but be struck by similarities in their thought, especially in the area of ethics. One might account for them in at least two ways. The Stoics were influenced by earlier Hindu thinkers as there was an interchange of ideas east and west in the years around 500 B.C. Another explanation is that the likeness is due to the fact that there are moral truths which are universally valid, that they have been known to men in all times and places and are not therefore exclusive to one particular society or culture. Our concern here, however, is not with the origin but the content of these ethical teachings.

There are several questions which moral philosophers are concerned with. What is the good? How is it known? Why do the good? How does one become virtuous? In what is the good grounded? How do we deal with evil? Our investigation will center around how the Stoics and Hindus answered these questions.

In regard to the first question Hinduism and Stoicism associated the good with doing one's duties. Since each of us is a member of several groups—family, community, nation—we must begin by asking ourselves what responsibilities we have toward those with whom we live and associate. For only by knowing and doing one's duties can a person be virtuous and social harmony achieved. In his *Meditations* the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, a noted Stoic, wrote of his father, the emperor before him, as being "a man who looked to what ought to be done, not to the reputation which is got by a man's acts". Another Roman Stoic, Epictetus, in his biography called *The Manual* asserted that, "The true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations, to understand our duties toward God and man, and to enjoy the present without anxious dependence upon the future". It is interesting to note that earlier in *The Manual* he wrote of a third type of duties, those toward one's self.

The Laws of Manu, an early Indian document, treats of the duties of the student, householder, forest dweller and ascetic. Each stage of life brought with it certain obligations to be fulfilled before passing on to the next. Manu also dealt rather extensively with the responsibilities of each caste or occupational group, saying that "...in order to protect the universe He, Brahman, the most resplendent one assigned duties and occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet". In the *Bhagavad Gita* we read also of the obligations of each group or caste in society which result from the nature of the individual. After describing the work natural to the seer, leader, provider and server it concludes that "A man's own natural duty, even if it seems imperfectly done, is better than work not naturally his own even if this is well performed".

It is interesting to note that, while there were certain duties common to each group, there were some which all were enjoined to practice. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* we read that

after Brahman had projected or created the four groups, "still He did not flourish", and "He projected, further, that excellent form, justice (*dharma*). This justice is the controller of the *kshatrija*. Therefore there is nothing higher than justice". In another document, the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, justice or *dharma* is spelled out more specifically, "Non-injury, truthfulness, freedom from theft, lust, anger, and greed, and an effort to do what is agreeable and beneficial to all creatures—this is the common duty of all castes".

The equating of the good with duties is characteristic, then, of both Stoicism and Hinduism. Of course many commentators, especially today, have asserted that the emphasis on duties in Hinduism was later carried to such an excess as to almost deny the end being sought. While true, we should keep in mind the original ideal of Hinduism and Stoicism, a society composed of a variety of groups which is harmonious and peaceful because people are concerned about doing their duties or fulfilling their obligations to one another.

A second answer to the question what is the good given by the Stoic and Hindu centers around the notion of the common good. The virtuous person is one who is concerned about the good of all and not just his own. If the two conflict, priority is to be given to the former. Epictetus claimed that, "No man who loves money, and loves pleasure, and loves fame, also loves mankind, but only he who loves virtue. Nothing is smaller than love of pleasure, and love of gain and pride. Nothing is superior to magnanimity, and gentleness, and love of mankind". Aurelius observed his father as being a ruler who was always ready "to listen to those who had anything to propose for the common weal". From his brother Severus he said he received "the idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed". In each of these statements we find an emphasis on the common good.

Early Hindu political philosophy likewise upheld the ideal king as one having as his chief concern the well being of his subjects and not the keeping of himself in power. Manu declared "That king, indeed, is ever worthy of honor who ensures the safety of his subjects", and "Thus conducting himself and ever intent on discharging his royal duties, a king shall order all his servants to work for the good of his people". The upholding of the common good is stated in poetic form in the *Kural*, "A thriving trader is the trader known, who guards another's interests as his own". We see, then, that both the Stoic and Hindu affirmed the ideal society as one in which individuals, no matter what their station in life, are concerned not with their own ends only but with the ends and the well being of all.

In the third place the Hindu associated virtue with an attitude of non-attachment. The developing of such an outlook is strongly urged in the *Bhagavad Gita*. You must work, Krishna said to Arjuna, but "Desire for the fruits of your work must never be your motive in working... Renounce attachment to the fruits" and "Perform every action with your heart fixed on the Supreme Lord". Arjuna was still dissatisfied and so Krishna went on, saying, "Work done with anxiety about the results is far inferior to work done without such anxiety in the calm of self surrender. Seek refuge in the knowledge of Brahman. They who work selfishly for results are miserable". Continuing the theme, Krishna reminded Arjuna that "Thinking about sense objects will attach you to sense objects. Grow attached and you become addicted. Thwart your addiction, it turns to anger. Be angry and you confuse your mind. Confuse your mind, you forget the lesson of experience. Forget experience, you lose discrimination. Lose discrimination, and you miss life's only purpose". Krishna's point is that those who work solely for the sake of the material

rewards or things it brings are committing a basic mistake. They tend to dedicate their lives and efforts to worldly ends rather than to God. And when they are blocked in achieving their ambitions or have their possessions taken from them, they become angry, bitter, resentful and malicious, thus losing that equanimity or tranquility of mind which is the foundation of virtue.

The Stoics also recognized that non-attachment is essential to virtue. It is interesting to note that they were aware of the same causes for the lack of detachment and inner contentment. To Serenus his friend Seneca said, "Let us now pass on to property, the greatest cause of human troubles. For if you compare all the other things by which we are troubled, deaths, sicknesses, fears, desires, endurance of pains and labors, with those evils which our money causes, this last part will far outweigh the others". This does not mean that the Stoics, or the Hindus either, were oblivious to a person's need for a sufficiency of food, shelter and other amenities. The problem is that of attaining a balance or happy medium. As Epictetus noted, "There is a difference between living well and living profusely. The one arises from contentment and order, and decency and frugality; the other from dissoluteness and luxury, and disorder and indecency. In short, to the one belongs true praise, to the other censure. If, therefore, you would live well, do not seek to be praised for profuseness". The western Stoics are noted for their emphasis upon moderation. By practicing it one does not become so attached to material things that he lacks the inner tranquility and peace of mind which results from an attitude of non-attachment.

Already some answers have been given to the second question posed by the ethicist, how does one become virtuous. In fact the two questions of how and what are intertwined. To say that doing one's duty is good is to indicate that one becomes virtuous by doing one's duties. Similarly, through being moderate and non-attached one becomes virtuous. The central point of the question however lies in another direction. For there are those who would emphasize that it is not a matter of becoming good but rather that man is already good or evil. If he is basically evil, nothing he can do will make him good. And if he is already good, he does not need to become good.

The Hindu and Stoic, however, take the view that virtue is not something simply given to man by a beneficent God, for example, but it is a state or level of existence which is reached through self effort. It comes only as the individual wills and works toward it. Epictetus realized that one person cannot make another good; rather it is a voluntary act or a state which one must want and seek for himself. Thus he wrote, "As the sun does not wait for prayers and incantations to be induced to rise, but immediately shines and is saluted by all; so do you also not wait for clapping of hands, and shouts and praises to be induced to do good; but be a doer of good voluntarily, and you will be beloved as much as the sun".

The key to virtue, then, is self will and discipline. Aurelius wrote that "From Maximus I learned self government". He noted that such was characteristic of Socrates, "that he was able both to abstain from, and to enjoy, those things which many are too weak to abstain from, and cannot enjoy without excess". Especially significant is the Stoics' association of self discipline and freedom. "No man is free who is not master of himself", Epictetus said. Seneca noted that there are two aspects of one's self which must be mastered. One must have "proper control over the mind" and we must have command over our passions.

A similar theme runs through many verses of the Kural. In one chapter we read, "He, who with firmness curbs the five restrains, is seed for soil of yonder happy plains". Elsewhere the poet wrote, "Guard thou as wealth the power of self control; Than this no greater gain to living

soul. Control of self does man conduct to bliss th' immortals share; Indulgence leads to deepest night, and leaves him there". Control of the bodily organs such as the tongue is extolled, "Though virtuous words his lips speak not, and all his deeds are ill, If neighbor he defames not, ther's good within him still". To be virtuous one should begin with himself, "If each his own, as neighbor's faults would scan, Could any evil hap to living man?"

In the Laws of Manu we find warnings against not disciplining bodily cravings; "Through the attachment of his organs to sensual pleasures a man doubtless will incur guilt; but if he keep them under complete control, he will obtain success in gaining all his aims". One's desires must be controlled for "Desire is never extinguished by the enjoyment of desired objects; it only grows stronger like a fire fed with clarified butter". Renunciation is held up as the ideal, "If one man should obtain all those (sensual enjoyments) and another should renounce them all, the renunciation of all pleasure is far better than the attainment of them".

The emphasis upon self control as the way of becoming virtuous reaches its peak in the Yoga philosophy. It emphasizes the disciplining and stilling of the body and mind so that one may find one's true self and attain the highest state of union with Brahman. We find this stressed continuously in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Krishna said to Arjuna, "When a man loses attachment to sense-objects and to action, when he renounces lustful anxiety and anxious lust, then he is said to have climbed to the height of union with Brahman". Again, "When a man is self controlled, his will is the Atman's friend. But the will of an uncontrolled man is hostile to the Atman, like an enemy". In speaking of the Yogi, Krishna said, "The yogi should retire into a solitary place, and live alone. He must exercise control over his mind and body. He must free himself from the hopes and possessions of this world... If a Yogi has perfect control over his mind, and struggles continually in this way to unite himself with Brahman, he will come at last to the crowning peace of Nirvana". For many centuries in India the true Yogi has served as the model of what the good is and how it is to be achieved. While Hinduism recognized that many in this life will not reach the heights he has, nevertheless his presence served as a stimulus and, without him, India would have been much poorer.

In answering the second question of how we have seen that Hinduism and Stoicism each place much emphasis upon every person being responsible for his own moral condition. Both emphasize the need for self discipline and control. It is the way to virtue and greatness. Both philosophies insist on the close relationship of the two. No man is truly great if he is not virtuous.

The Yogi philosophy also provides an answer to the third question of motives or why do the good, namely the attaining of union with Brahman or God. A caution should be entered here however. The *Bhagavad Gita* suggests that one will attain such a state if one is virtuous. But does that mean it is the reason for being virtuous, or is it simply a natural result? If the former, then we are using virtue as a means rather than an end in itself. We can find numerous references in Hindu scriptures to the ideal of doing good for its own sake. For instance in the *Mahabharata* we read:

To injure none by thought or word or deed,
To give to others, and be kind to all—
This is the constant duty of the good.
High minded men delight in doing good,
Without a thought of their own interest;

When they confer a benefit on others,
They reckon not on favors in return.

And in the Panchatantra we find this poem:

Praise not the goodness of the grateful man
Who acts with kindness to his benefactors.
He who does good to those who do him wrong
Alone deserves the epithet of good...
Hear thou a summary of righteousness,
And ponder well the maxim; never do
To other persons what would pain thyself...
The little minded ask: Belongs this man
To our own family? The noble hearted
Regard the human race as all akin.

The Kural likewise states:

Kindness shown by those who weigh not
What the return may be;
When you ponder right its merit
Tis vaster than the sea.

We see in these verses the emphasis on doing good for its own sake and not for profit or gain. The latter motive is considered a lesser and unworthy one. In a rather pessimistic vein we find Manu declaring, "To act solely from a desire for rewards is not laudable; yet an exemption from that desire is not to be found in this world". While the statement may reflect the way people often act, Hinduism has always upheld a different way of living as the ideal. We find an interesting account in the *Bhagavad Gita* on the giving of gifts. "From the *tams* comes the gift which is given to an unworthy person, at the wrong time and in the wrong place, disdainfully, without regard for the feelings of him who receives it... Whatever is given in the hope of a like return, or with any selfish motive, or reluctantly, may be known to proceed from *rajas*". However a gift "may be regarded as proceeding from *sattwa* when it is given to a deserving person, at a suitable time, and in a fit place; not because of past benefits, or in the hope of a future reward, but simply because the giver knows that it is right for him to give". We see then that a virtuous action is one which does not involve ulterior motives or ends.

The Stoics likewise rejected a rewards-punishment ethical system. They were often public leaders and so were tempted to be moved by popular acclaim or disapproval. The Stoic ideal, however, was to not be swayed by flattery and we find Aurelius writing, "From Rusticus... I learned not to be led astray to sophistic emulation, nor to writing on speculative matters, nor to delivering little hortatory orations, nor to showing myself off as a man who practices much discipline, or does benevolent acts in order to make a display..." And he observed in his father "no vain glory in those things which men call honors", also the tendency "to check immediately popular applause and all flattery".

Epictetus too rejected rewards as an inferior motive when he wrote, "One man, when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favor conferred. Another is not ready to do this, but still in his own mind he thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a manner does not even know what he has done, but is like a vine which has produced grapes, and seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its proper fruit. When thou hast done a good act and another has received it, why dost thou still look for a third thing besides these, as fools do, either to have the reputation of having done a good act or to obtain a return?" The Stoics and Hindus realized that, if rewards are a person's motive, he will not do the good or right at those times which are many when there is no reward in sight. A better rule is to be like Aurelius' father who "was a man who looked to what ought to be done, not to the reputation which is got by a man's acts". Let our reason and our sense of duty tell us what to do and not the applause or disdain of the flatterer.

In coming to the question of knowledge of the good a prominent answer of the Stoics, as indicated above, was that reason suffices to tell us what the good is. Aurelius wrote that, "From Apollonius I learned freedom of will and undeviating steadiness of purpose; and to look to nothing else, not even for a moment, except to reason...". He admired Sextus for his "faculty both of discovering and ordering, in an intelligent and methodical way, the principles necessary for life". The Stoics as rationalists attributed three functions to reason or the mind. It was to control and guide the passions or appetites. Secondly, it helps one to gain a proper perspective on life. Epictetus wrote, "Be free from grief not through insensibility like the irrational animals, nor through want of thought like the foolish, but like a man of virtue having reason as the consolation of grief". Its third function was the apprehension of truth. As Epictetus stated in *The Manual*, "Truth is a thing immortal and perpetual, and it gives us a beauty which fades not away in time nor does it take away the freedom of speech which proceeds from justice but it gives us the knowledge of what is just and lawful, separating from them the unjust and refuting them".

The passage above shows that the Stoics recognized the close relationship of ethics and epistemology or the ennobling effect truth has on one's character. This close association of the good and the true is brought out forcefully by Laertius' discussion of the Greek stoics in which he wrote, "The Stoics define prudence as a knowledge of what is good, bad, and indifferent; justice as a knowledge of what ought to be chosen and avoided, and what is indifferent; magnanimity as a knowledge of engendering a lofty habit, superior to all such accidents as happen to all men indifferently, whether they be good or bad; continence they consider a disposition which never abandons right reason, or a habit which never yields to pleasure; endurance they call a knowledge or habit by which we understand what we ought to endure, what we ought not, and what is indifferent; presence of mind they define as a habit which is prompt at finding out what is suitable in a sudden emergency; and wisdom in counsel they think a knowledge which leads us to judge what we are to do and how we are to do it in order to act becomingly". For the Stoic, then, a knowledgeable man is a virtuous man.

One finds an occasional association of virtue and Deity in the Stoics. In the Hymn to Zeus by the Greek stoic Cleanthes we read, "One Word—whose voice alas! the wicked spurn; Insatiate for the good their spirits yearn. Yet seeing see not, neither hearing hear God's universal law, which those revere, By reason guided, happiness who win". Likewise Aurelius wrote that "I received clear and frequent impressions about living according to nature, and what kind of a life that is, so that, so far as depended on the gods, and their gifts, and help, and inspirations, nothing hindered me from forthwith living according to nature, though I still fall short of it through my

own fault, and through not observing the admonitions of the gods, and, I may almost say, their direct instructions". We find in such statements the basic religious view held by most Stoics that there is a Divine Logos permeating reality which man can communicate with or which communicates ethical truths to man.

Concerning Hinduism and knowledge of the good we find that it too emphasizes reason. The term discrimination has been referred to earlier. Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* emphasized that attachment to the objects of the desires and senses makes us unable to distinguish between good and bad or right and wrong. Through discrimination one breaks the bonds of attachment, "When a man is endowed with spiritual discrimination and illumined by knowledge of the Atman, all his doubts are dispelled. He does not shrink from doing what is disagreeable to him, nor does he long to do what is agreeable. No human being can give up action altogether, but he who gives up the fruits of his actions is said to be non-attached".

For the Hindu, however, knowledge or knowing is viewed in a broader perspective than in the case of the western rationalist. The Hindu does not deny the place and value of reason in knowing the good any more than in knowing God. He simply says that discursive reasoning is limited or insufficient in both ethics and religion. In each case what is required is the overcoming or going beyond the subject-object dualism of rationalism and apprehending directly or realizing immediately God and the good. One finds this emphasis throughout the Upanishads. In the Katha Upanishad several verses attest to it:

Both the good and the pleasant present themselves to man. The calm soul examines them well and discriminates. Yea, he prefers the good to the pleasant; but the fool chooses the pleasant out of greed and avarice.

Atman, smaller than the small, greater than the great, is hidden in the heart of all living creatures. A man who is free from desires beholds the majesty of the Self through tranquility of the senses and the mind and becomes free from grief.

He who has not turned away from wickedness, who is not tranquil and subdued, and whose mind is not at peace, cannot attain Atman. It is realized only through the Knowledge of Reality.

This Knowledge cannot be attained by reasoning. Atman becomes easy of comprehension, O dearest, when taught by another. You have attained this Knowledge now. You are, indeed, a man of true resolve.

Beyond the senses are the objects; beyond the objects is the mind; beyond the mind, the intellect; beyond the intellect, the Great Atman; beyond the Great Atman, the Unmanifest; beyond the Unmanifest, the Purusha, Beyond the Purusha there is nothing; this is the end, the Supreme Goal.

Vedanta especially emphasizes the notion of going beyond reason to an immediate apprehension of the right. It also asserts the view that the good is grounded in Brahman. This is one and perhaps the major answer Hinduism gives to the next question of the grounds or basis of the good. The Hindu stresses the view that reality is one and is spiritual in essence. Thus God is in all; God is all or all is God (Brahman). A corollary to this basic premise upheld by the majority of Indian thinkers is that a sharp separation of ethics and religion is invalid. The two must go together. This is reflected in the assertion that morality serves two purposes or gives rise to two results, the good society and union with God. First it makes possible a happy life for individuals and a harmonious society for all. The contemporary statesman and philosopher S. Radhakrishnan wrote, "It is a fact of history that civilizations which are based on truly religious forces such as endurance, suffering, passive resistance, understanding, tolerance are long lived,

while those which take their stand exclusively on humanist elements like active reason, power, aggression, progress make for a brilliant display but are short lived". Secondly, progress in one's spiritual life is predicated on progress on the path of virtue. We read in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "When a man goes astray from the path to Brahman, he has missed both lives, the worldly and the spiritual. He has no support anywhere. Is he not lost, as a broken cloud is lost in the sky?"

The close relationship of religion and ethics is reflected also in the Hindu's acceptance of the principle of Karma. Krishna reminded Arjuna of this when he wrote, "By struggling hard, and cleansing himself of all impurities, that yogi will move gradually toward perfection through many births, and reach the highest goal at last". In terms of the concept of Karma each person is responsible for himself. What one does in this life determines the status of his next existence. By leading a virtuous life here and now a person will reach a higher level in his next life and ultimately he will attain the final goal of union with Brahman. Religion and ethics, then, cannot be separated. Morality is a prerequisite to realizing God.

Hinduism is characterized by the breadth and inclusiveness of its philosophy. It takes a "totalistic" view of reality. It sees reality in all its aspects and variety as an interrelated, interdependent whole. From such a viewpoint it is perfectly reasonable to assert that the good is grounded in God.

Widely used by the Stoics is the concept of "nature". It provides us with a key to their answer to the question of the grounds of the good. Aurelius wrote of getting from Sextus "the idea of living conformably to nature". Epictetus mentioned his determination to "maintain my will in a manner conformable to nature". In describing mankind he wrote, "For we are made for cooperation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one another, then, is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away".

Scattered among the Stoics' writings are occasional references to a trinity of God, Nature, and the Good. Epictetus observed that, "He who acts unjustly acts impiously. For since the universal nature has made rational animals for the sake of one another to help one another according to their deserts, but in no way to injure one another, he who transgresses her will is clearly guilty of impiety toward the highest divinity. And he too who lies is guilty of impiety to the same divinity; for the universal nature is the nature of things that are; and things that are have a relation to all things that come into existence. And further, this universal nature is named truth, and is the prime cause of all things that are true".

Generally, however, references to a supreme God outside of nature are absent. The Stoics were content to view nature herself as providing a sufficient ground and model of the good. They saw it as a harmonious whole. Their belief in its inherent goodness led persons such as Zeno to write that "the chief good is life according to nature, which is life according to virtue, for thither does nature lead us". They held that just as there are universal physical laws on which nature operates, so there are universal moral laws which man knows through reason and which become embodied in the common laws of states and societies.

The final question to be considered is how to deal with the evil or wrong done to one by another. A specific answer is given by Epictetus in connection with Pittacus and Lycurgus. Of the former Epictetus wrote, "Pittacus, after being wronged by a certain person and having the power of punishing him, let him go saying, Forgiveness is better than revenge; for forgiveness is the sign of a savage nature". In regard to Lycurgus, "Who among us does not admire the act of

Lycurgus the Lacedaemonian? For after he was maimed in one of his eyes by one of the citizens, and the young man was delivered up to him by the people that he might punish him as he chose, Lycurgus spared him; and after instructing him and making him a good man he brought him into the theatre. When the Lacedaemonians expressed their surprise, Lycurgus said, "I received from you this youth when he was insolent and violent. I restore him to you gentle and a good citizen".

Epictetus' emphasis is upon forgiveness because of the two results which come from such. It brings about a positive change in the offender which retributive punishment would not. It has a redeeming effect on the one who forgives too, as expressed by Epictetus' statement, "The best way of avenging thyself is not to become like the wrong doer". Epictetus continued by declaring that, "He who does wrong does wrong against himself. He who acts unjustly acts unjustly to himself, because he makes himself bad".

What the Stoic is cautioning about is that a person should not let the unkind words or acts of another disturb him for they are a reflection not on him but on the doer. How we react to another's insults is determined by ourselves—"Remember that it is not he who reviles you or strikes you, who insults you, but it is your opinion about these things as being insulting. When then a man irritates you, you must know that it is your own opinion which has irritated you. Therefore especially try not to be carried away by appearance. For if you once gain time and delay, you will more easily master yourself".

The Stoic believed that good may come out of evil, if we let it. It is determined in large part by ourselves. As Epictetus wrote, "On the occasion of every accident that befalls you, remember to turn to yourself and inquire what power you have for turning it to use. If you see a fair man or a fair woman, you will find that the power to resist is temperance (continence). If labor (pain) be presented to you, you will find that it is endurance. If it be abusive words, you will find it to be patience. And if you have been thus formed to the proper habit, the appearances will not carry you along with them". To the Stoic the test of a person's virtue is the way in which he deals with evil. If he acts in terms of revenge, he is not virtuous. If he forgives, if he takes a detached view, he will not be disturbed by insult or injury. In fact he will find himself growing in those attributes of patience, self control and fortitude of which true virtue consists.

In the case of Hinduism its emphasis upon returning good for evil had been mentioned already in connection with the *Mahabharata* and *The Panchatantra*. This "Golden Rule" is found in many other scriptures of Hinduism. We read in the Laws of Manu, "Wound not another, though by him provoked; do no one injury by thought or deed; utter no word to pain thy fellow men". Elsewhere in the same code we find, "Let him (the ascetic) patiently bear hard words, let him not insult anybody, and let him not become anybody's enemy for the sake of this perishable body. Against an angry man let him not in return show anger, let him bless when he is cursed, and let him not utter speech devoid of truth". We find a similar emphasis in the Kurrall, "Though others work thee ill, thus shalt thou blessing reap; Grieve for their sin, thyself from vicious action keep. With overweening pride when men with injuries assail, By thine own righteous dealing shalt thou mightily prevail". An even stronger statement comes later, "Ev'n death, that life devourer, their happy days shall spare, Who law, 'Thou shalt not kill', uphold with reverent care".

Several reasons are given for acting in terms of the Golden Rule. There is the pragmatic one, that it is the best way of solving the problem. Another is that God wills one to. As indicated in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "He who is the same to foe and friend, honor and dishonor, who is the same

in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and is without attachment, who holds blame and praise equal, silent, content with anything, without a home, of firm thought and full of devotion, to me, that man is dear to me". Also Brahman or the divine dwells in all men and to have enmity toward a person is, therefore, to have such toward God. Thus we find in the *Upanishads*, the statement, "The wise man beholds all beings in the Self, and the Self in all beings; for that reason he does not hate anyone".

Another reason for practicing the Golden Rule is the effect it has on one's self. In this respect especially we find the Hindu in accord with the Stoic. If, as the *Bhagavad Gita* indicates, one bears "shame and glory equally" one will have peace and an "even tranquil heart". It stimulates such virtues as forbearance, patience and endurance. As the *Kurral* indicates, "Who wreak their wrath have pleasure for a day; Who bear have praise till earth shall pass away. They who transgressors' evil words endure; with patience are as stern ascetic pure". Inner tranquility and purity are the result or a fourth reason for returning good and not evil for evil. As the 19th century Hindu saint, Ramakrishna, has so vividly said, "As by rubbing gold and brass on a touchstone, their real worth becomes known; so a sincere Sadhu and a hypocrite are found out when they are rubbed through the touchstone of persecution and adversity. The iron must be heated several times and hammered before it becomes good steel. Then only it becomes fit to be made into a sharp sword, and can be bent any way you like. So a man must be heated several times in the furnace of tribulations, and hammered with the persecutions of the world, before he becomes pure and humble".

As we look over the broad range of human thought, we find that men are confronted universally with the same problems. Life forces men everywhere into situations necessitating choice. Two fundamental types of choices we must make are the moral and religious. This essay has been concerned primarily with the former. It has dealt with several questions involved in the making of a moral decision, and it has demonstrated how much in agreement two traditions, Hinduism and Stoicism, are in regard to the answers given.

We in the 20th century cannot avoid moral choices either. Can the past be of any help? Contemporary western humanists, who, perhaps more than any other western school of thought, have inherited the Stoic tradition, and the Hindu in India today both answer yes.

Each tends to lament the present tendency to look without rather than within for the sources of pleasure and virtue. We in the West particularly are much more externally oriented. This is reflected in our tendency to often blame others or the environment for what happens to us. If we were more internally oriented, we would see how we are at fault ourselves. We would see the mote in our own, not our brother's eye.

Both the Hindu and today's humanist of the classical theistic tradition are concerned about the dominance of ethical relativism which denies any grounds for the good. God has been ruled out. Nature has been interpreted in a Darwinian manner as anything but harmonious and good. The relativist claims that there are no universal ethical principles. So each person determines for himself what the good is. If we act on that basis, will we not sooner or later end up in social anarchy and chaos? For people to live together in a society must there not be some commonly accepted moral principles and practices such as those espoused by the Hindu and Stoic?

The Humanist is dubious about the crass materialism of the West which stimulates attachment and thus gives rise to selfish ambition, pride, conflict and war. Many Hindus admit technology as one way of advancing the material well-being of the Indian people to a level where

at least the basic needs of all individuals are met. Yet they have reservations, for they are aware of the situation in the West. They know that people in a "things" oriented society are not necessarily a happy people, for happiness and virtue come from within and are not entirely dependent on externals. They recognize that there is a constant danger in industrialized societies of the machine becoming the master of men rather than the reverse. They know that sensuous societies or nations may become aggressive and predatory, and they do not want this to happen to India. Gandhi's greatness was due in part to his awareness of these tendencies. It led him to caution Indians about industrialization and to hold up to them the ideal not of poverty but of simplicity.

Both are apprehensive about the preeminence of utilitarianism. It makes the worth of a person depend upon his usefulness. It assumes that no action is without motive; that, when a person performs an act, he must have a reason for doing it. They disagree, however, and claim that it is possible for human beings to act simply for the sake of acting or, in ethics, doing good for its own sake. Men can act on other terms than fear and reward. The Hindu and Stoic believe that only as more people turn toward such a mode of behavior can men attain personal and social peace and harmony.

The humanist criticizes the excessive individualism of the west which often leads to the common good being lost sight of, and the Hindu is fearful lest Indian society becomes the same. Individual rights has been the dominant theme of the west in the modern period and in the 19th and 20th centuries that philosophy spread eastward. We tend to lose sight of the fact that "no man is an island unto himself". We are members of a society and as such have duties and responsibilities we must fulfill. Have we not now reached the point where we should try to strike a balance between rights and obligations?

The Stoic and Hindu asserted a qualitative criterion for greatness. Today the tendency is to associate greatness with quantity. An industrialist is great if his corporation is bigger than anyone else's. A team is great if it wins all its games in a particular season. We talk about a scientist being great because of some new discovery. The difficulty is that magnitude and magnanimity have been confused and equated. The Humanist and Hindu call us back to the original criterion of greatness which is a qualitative not quantitative one. Greatness is measured not by what one has but by what one is. Being not having is the primary category. Greatness comes from within not without. True virtue is not dependent on or determined by externals; it takes its cues from within.

(Original editorial inclusions that followed the essay:)

In the first place it should be noted that the attribution of a separate meaning to the terms "astrology" and "astronomy" is of relatively recent origin; among the Greeks both words were employed without distinguishing between them, in order to denote the whole of the field now divided up between the two terms. It would seem then, at first sight, as if this were but another instance of that division introduced for the sake of "specialization" between what were originally only parts of a single science; but what is peculiar in the present case is that, whereas one of the parts, that namely which represented the more material side of the science in question, underwent an independent development, the other part, on the contrary, disappeared altogether. So true is this that it is not even known any longer what ancient astrology amounted to, and even those who have attempted to reconstruct it never achieve more than a counterfeit of it; either they attempt to turn it into the equivalent of a modern experimental science and have recourse to statistics and the calculation of probabilities, in consequence of the adoption of a point of view that could not possibly have existed for either the ancient or the mediaeval worlds, or else they direct their attention exclusively to the restoration of an "art of divination" which amounted to no more than a perversion of astrology in its decline and which could be regarded at most as a very inferior application, scarcely worthy of serious consideration, as can still be observed in the attitude shown towards it in the East today.

René Guénon.