

# **ON RESURRECTION :**

A Critical Appraisal of John Hick's Position on Resurrection  
and Life-Hereafter

A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

by

**EMMANUEL DAMARA**

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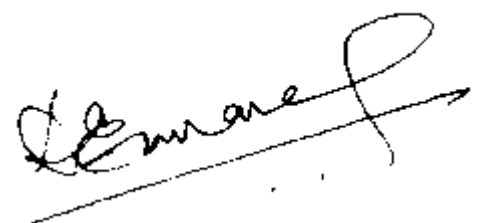
*ELSA, KENNETH & KAREN*

## **DECLARATION**

*I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis "**On Resurrection: A Critical Appraisal of John Hick's Position on Resurrection and , 'Life-Hereafter'**", has been carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Amitabha Das Gupta and that it has been subsequently revised. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or diploma, either in part or in full to any other Institute or University.*

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**EMMANUEL DAMARA**

# Certificate

*This is to certify that the thesis*

**ON RESURRECTION:**

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and Life-Hereafter*

*Submitted by*

**Mr. EMMANUEL DAMARA**

*in fulfilment of the requirement*

*for the degree of*

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*is a bonafide research work carried out under my supervision, and was duly revised at the Department  
of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad.*

*The Thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma, to any other Institute or  
University.*

*A. Radhakrishnan  
26-12-90*

Dec 1990  
HYDERABAD

*Amitabha Das Gupta*  
**Dr. Amitabha Das Gupta**  
Reader  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Hyderabad.

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## INTRODUCTION

A longing for life beyond death has been the key \* note of all human desires. Even in pre-historic times the burial of tools, ornaments, etc., along with the dead indicated a hope of continued existence. The Greek legends reflect an yearning for life after death. David's agonised cry over the death of his son, "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me", expresses immortality more poignantly. Plato's description of the death of Socrates in Phaedo serves as a basis for the immortality of the soul. An average person of any religion, whether an intellectual or not would unhesitantly affirm his belief in 'the immortality of the soul' .

The belief in the immortality of the soul is an essential part of every religion, perhaps differently coined as 'disembodied survival', 'after-life', 'existence of the other world', 'life-hereafter' and such like. The relevance of the immortality of the soul, is

accepted in every scheme of religious and philosophical thought, and has been rethought and reconsidered by each successive age, in the light of a broader scientific development accompanied by deepened religious, ethical and cultural experiences. Though much has been said and written on death and life after death, the subject appears to be debated perennially.

Christianity distinguishes itself from almost every religion and all philosophy in that, it not only affirms belief in immortality but has resurrection as a distinctive contribution to human thought about survival hereafter, Christianity is inextricably linked with resurrection or to be precise, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whose name it bears. Resurrection can never be separated from Christianity without destroying the entire Christian framework.

Resurrection of Jesus is a bed-rock on which the entire corpus of Christian truth and faith rests on. Resurrection is the heart of Christianity. There is

no way by which Christianity could have survived or can survive without the fact of resurrection.

This subject of perennial interest has been discussed by philosophers of different ages, from various view points, owing to their times and perhaps their religious traditions as well.

Today, we hear of a modern trend to suggest that the doctrine of resurrection and the concept of immortality are untenable propositions. This trend is not only among scientists but also among theologians and philosophers (of religion) as well. To this trend of denial of resurrection there are leading theologians like, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Gordon Kaufmann and many more, who subtly or blatantly deny resurrection and life hereafter. To this trend also belongs John Hick, a philosopher of religion.

We are going to consider in this thesis John Hick as a representative figure of this new trend. For the

others belong to theology proper but Hick belongs to philosophy proper. And therefore we are going to focus our attention on John Hick.

We would like to make it clear that the purpose of this thesis is not to defend the doctrine of resurrection but to carry out the philosophical enterprise on the subject of life-hereafter with special reference to the Christian frame-work, as seen in the writings of John Hick.

Before we proceed, any further we would like to make some clarifications about the usage of some terminologies and concepts, such as life-hereafter, resurrection, immortality and eternal life, which have been interchanged occasionally.

Life-hereafter or after-life is a term that is used in a general sense to express the belief or opinion, in any form of life after death, or any kind of future life anticipated beyond the grave. This ma"

include immortality of the soul, disembodied existence, or for that matter resurrection of resurrected life.

It is true, that resurrection is the distinctive contribution of Christianity to human thought about survival hereafter. The eschatological belief of Christianity is the recreation or a re-constitution of the human psycho and physical individual that has died, in a manner befitting the future life.

Though resurrection and life hereafter are not the same, resurrection is an expression of one's belief in life hereafter. In other words Christian belief in life hereafter is expressed in the idea of resurrection. Thus if life hereafter is indicated by a circle, resurrection or disembodied survival or immortality of the soul could be indicated by various smaller circles that could be drawn within this circle.

Although the belief in resurrection implies the belief in life hereafter, it does not necessarily

follow that the belief in life hereafter implies the belief in resurrection.

Similarly, eternal life, or eternity is an affirmation of Christian doctrine, which describes the unending nature of life after death. This could be in a state of bliss (heaven) or a state of punishment (hell), both describing a timeless state. Whereas, the immortality of the soul expresses the idea of death-less-ness, which is the nature of the soul, as opposed to the mortal nature of the body, i.e. the body is subjected to death.

Although, these are two distinct concepts, yet they are the necessary corollary of each other. For eternal and immortal are like the two sides of the coin, both indicating things of the yonder.

Further, we would like to point out that the thesis is not attempted from a historical perspective. We have not: gone into the historical or chronological

back ground of any of the concepts dealt in the course of our discussion. But our attempt here is only from a philosophical view-point, for our study is a philosophical study, more precisely a study in philosophy of religion.

Finally, we do not claim to 'prove' the present life could be identified with the future life, but our attempt here to show the possibility of identifying the present life with the future life.

The first chapter entitled "Resurrection and Life Hereafter: Hick's position" is an expository chapter on Hick's views on resurrection and life\_\_\_\_ hereafter. In this chapter, we have discussed Hick in two phases, phase one has been termed as 'early Hick' and phase two as 'later Hick'.

From there we proceed to the second chapter entitled "Critique on early Hick". Where we shall discuss identity between resurrected body and



survey in the five sections is aimed at showing resurrection is not a peripheral matter but an integral part of the Christian doctrine.

## CHAPTER 1

### Resurrection and Life Hereafter: Hick's Position

John Hick, a prominent and contemporary philosopher of religion has probed into the subject of death and life-hereafter very extensively under various titles like human destiny,<sup>1</sup> present and future life,<sup>2</sup> eschatological verification and so on. His basic work on the subject is Death and Eternal Life.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, scarcely does any of his writings miss this subject of perennial interest. Even a casual reader will not miss his consistency on the subject.

Hick's writings have a predominantly Christian background owing to the tradition he belongs to. A careful study reveals that Hick, although consistent so far as the interest on the subject is concerned, is not consistent on his position on the subject. This inconsistency is perhaps a mark of his progressive thinking. His essay on 'Human Destiny' in Philosophy of Religion of the early sixties portrays 'early Hick'

and his later voluminous writing on Death and Eternal Life (published in 1976) and its companion volume Problems of Religious Pluralism (published in 1985) speak of 'later Hick'.

The division of the work of John Hick into two distinct phases - early and later - is akin to that discerned in the work of Wittgenstein. In the case of the latter, the distinction has found wide acceptance in the historiography of Western Philosophy and is based on his two different perspectives on 'meaning'<sup>1</sup>. In his early phase, he was struck by the similarity between two sets of relations - that of a statement to facts, and of a picture to the scene it depicted. In other words, the meaning of a sentence was to be understood in terms of its correspondence (picturing) with reality. Wittgenstein's later phase is characterised by the view between language and reality can be understood in terms of the theory of meaning as use, even as we understand a tool in terms of the function it perform-

The meaning of a sentence was now construed in terms of the 'use' (functioning) it served. But we shall maintain that these distinct theories of meaning, however, do not warrant the division of Wittgenstein's work into two different phases but only point at a shift in emphasis.

Likewise, Hick, who in his early writings was pessimistic regarding the notion of a life hereafter (especially in relation to resurrection), as also about the idea of eternity, in his later phase makes a drastic change of emphasis and affirms life-hereafter as a necessary component of every religion. By virtue of the said shift of emphasis, Hick disengages himself from the western tradition and effects an alignment with Indian tradition.

Nevertheless, this does not suggest two different Hicks but, rather, a perspectival shift. So it must be borne in mind that we use the distinction between the 'early Hick' and the 'later Hick' only as a convenient.

albeit inaccurate, way of referring to the change in emphasis mentioned above.

#### I A. EARLY HICK:

The early Hick belonged to the Christian tradition and made this clear by identifying Christianity as the frame of reference for his philosophical outlook:

"We shall concentrate upon the kind of religion that has moulded our western culture and which still constitutes the most lively option for most participants in this culture, namely, the Judiac Christian tradition".<sup>5</sup>

Within this constellation Hick reiterates the distinction between Judaism and Christianity and affirms the theological superiority of the latter. It is for this reason, he says, that most of **his** material is taken from Christianity. As he **himself**

puts it.

" ... because Christianity is a more theologically articulated religion than Judaism, most of our material will be taken from this source."

He then emphasises the centrality of the concept of God to the Christian tradition and says that all other concepts revolve around it:

" ....All other elements of the tradition are dependent upon this concept, which will, accordingly, provide am, le material for philosophical analysis and discussion."<sup>7</sup>

Though within the purview our discussion it does not warrant a detailed discussion of the concept of God, a brief consideration would be in order; given the role Hick accords it in his overall framework. We shall therefore, even if only in passing, examine various characteristics of God, such as His being self-

existent, personal, loving, good, holy and the Creator.

The attribution of creation to God forms the springboard to our discussion, since man as the created is ever dependent on God not only for his existence but for his destiny (life-hereafter) as well. This, then, is the relevance of the concept of God to our discussion.

#### CONCEPT OF GOD:

Hick, drawing upon both the Old and New Testaments, articulates the monotheistic conception of God. For instance, he quotes the following passage:

"Hear O Israel: The Lord, our God  
is one Lord, and you shall love  
the Lord your God with all your  
heart and all your soul and with  
all your might".<sup>8</sup>

He refers to the message of the Old Testament prophets such as AMOS, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremaiah, who taught that God was not only the God of the Hebrews but also

that of all people and all history.<sup>9</sup> He refers to the monotheistic faith, as expressed in the teachings of the Bible, which further reveals that God is infinite and unlimited. Hick also points out that this infinite God has various divine attributes or characteristics, namely is self-existent, eternal, personal, loving and good, is holy and is the Creator.

1. Self-Existence: God is not dependent either for his existence or for his attributes, upon any reality other than himself. He has not been created by any higher being. In short, God has absolute ontological independence.

2. Eternal: It follows from the "self-existent" nature of God, that He is eternal, or without a beginning or an end. If he were to have a beginning, it would imply a prior reality bringing him into existence, and if he were to have an end, it would require another reality to terminate his existence.



3. Personal; Hick points out the personal nature of God, as evinced in the Old and New Testaments. He refers to the statement:

"I am the God of your father, the  
God of Abraham, the God of Issac and  
the God of Jacob."<sup>10</sup>

The personal nature of God is brought out by the instances of Jesus referring to the fatherhood of God. Also, significantly, it is reflected in the choice of the pronoun "He, " rather than "It, " to refer to God, who is addressed as a transcendent "Thou" and not considered an object.

4. Loving and Good: Hick refers to goodness, love and grace and points out that love is the most outstanding character of God, although, the three are virtually synonymous.

He discussed, at length, the concept love and points out the distinction between eros and agape, two different Greek words used in the New Testament for "love".

Eros, is love evoked by desirable qualities or, the love that depends on the lovableness of the object. Agape, is a giving love and is unconditional and universal in nature. This is exemplified in the New Testament by God's love for mankind:

"for God so loved the world..."

5. Holy: Hick cites 'holiness' as yet another attributes of God, and refers, in this regard, to various passages in "Isaiah", in the Old Testament:

God is "... the high and softy one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy"<sup>12</sup>

"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"<sup>13</sup>

"To whom then will you compare me that I should be like him?" says the Holy One."<sup>14</sup>

6. Creator: Hick describes the Christian notion of God as the Creator, rather the infinite, self-existent creator of everything that exists, other than himself. To articulate the concept clearly, he speaks of creatio ex nihilo, i.e. the creation out of nothing. This notion of creation entails the distinction between creator and created, or between God and creature. That which has been created will eternally remain the created, and the Creator will eternally remain the Creator. The idea of man becoming God is absolutely ruled out in the Christian tradition.

The creature, or the created, is absolutely dependent on God, for his existence and for his destiny, and this relationship is expressed in man's prayers to God. This leads us to a consideration of another important theme in John Hick's work—human destiny.

## I B . HUMAN DESTINY:

Hick's conception of human destiny bears upon the problem of resurrection and is therefore of obvious concern to our discussion. The statements he made while spelling out his position, serve as the basis for our critique of the early Hick.

Hick points out that in contrast to the infinite nature of God, man is a finite being created by God and endowed with a certain destiny.

In order to understand the nature of human destiny, Hick begins by examining the body-mind dichotomy that Plato's phaedo draws attention to. This, Hick points out, is the "first attempt" to prove the immortality or the soul.

He then refers to Plato's description of the soul, as simple and, therefore, imperishable as opposed to all material bodies which are composite in nature and, therefore, suffer destruction. To destroy something

is to disintegrate it into its constituent parts. Further, the soul is that which exists forever therefore, it cannot disappear.

From a consideration of this Platonic view of the soul, Hick passes on to a discussion of the Judaic Christian view of human destiny, viz., resurrection.

Death, according to Hick, is fearful because, in the hour of death, one has to depend upon God for the divine act of re-creation and for an existence beyond the grave.

He also discusses the Pauline perspective on the idea of "the resurrection of the dead." According to Hick, on the Pauline view, resurrection is

"the re-creation or re-constitution of the human psycho-physical individual, not as the organism died, but as a soma - oneumatikon, a "spiritual-body" inhabiting a spiritual world as a physical-body inhabits our present physical world."

In outlining the problems involved in the Pauline view, Hick, comes up with an argument crucial to our discussion when he says:

that "a major problem confronting any such doctrine is that of providing criteria of personal identity to link the earthly life and the resurrection life"<sup>17</sup>

He then continues to focus on the theme of human destiny, examining in relation to "heaven" and "hell". He describes heaven as a state of infinite good which outweighs all the pains and sorrows that have been endured on the way to it.<sup>18</sup> "Hell", which is a place of torment, balances the idea of heaven in the Christian tradition. But Hick argues that

"it is by no means clear that the doctrine of eternal punishment can claim a secure New Testament basis".<sup>19</sup><sup>19</sup>

The explication of these two arguments will, as we

shall see, forms a considerable part of our undertaking

The first of Hick's arguments gives rise to the problem of identity between the pre-mortem body and the resurrected body, and this also brings out another related issue, namely, disembodied survival.

Hick's second argument is based on his recourse to "aeon" or "age"<sup>20</sup> as a substitute for "eternal", and this substitution has consequences, as we shall see, for the related issue of immortality.

Let us defer a detailed investigation of these problems to a later chapter, "Critique of the early Hick", and turn, for the moment, to an outline of Hick's later writings.

## I C. LATER HICK:

Kick, as we have mentioned earlier, registers a dramatic change in his position on resurrection and life hereafter (afterlife). Critical, in his earlier phase of the ideas of resurrection and eternal life, he now accepts life-hereafter as a necessary component of every religion.

In fact, Hick is very critical of those who deny life after death. He cites Wolfhart Pannenberg and Gordon Kaufman as representing a vast number of theologians who hold that

"the end of the body **is** the **end** of  
 ,.21

This trend, says Hick, has it that when a man dies he passes into nothingness, is absolutely annihilated. On this view, further, when a man ceases to be, there **is no conscious existence. Consequently** they do not offer because **they** do not **exist**.



Determined to oppose the above mentioned trend. Kick sets out on his endeavour by posing the question, "what is man?"

He answers this question by employing the fundamental distinction between the physical and the non-physical. By physical he means the body, and the non-physical is intended to refer to entitles like mind, soul, self, I, person, spirit, ego, and also, in the Indian context, jiva (jivatman) and atman.

In setting forth his views, he refers to the Christian concept of soul and the advaitist view of the atman.

In accordance with the Christian concept, Hick maintains the soul,

"undoubtedly is the conscious self,  
which earns rewards and deserves  
penalties, which becomes or fails  
to become aware of God by faith,  
and which is to enjoy hereafter the

blissful life or heaven or to suffer loss  
of heaven."<sup>22</sup>

For Hick, the 'conscious self' refers to the spiritual element in man, i.e., the soul. The Biblical definition of the soul is found in the Genesis, where we read:

'He (God) breathed into his nostrils  
the breath of life, and man become a  
living soul •' "<sup>23</sup>

This is the spiritual element, an immaterial one unlike the body. It is this spiritual element, that makes the body live and move. On account of this, man is referred to as a 'living soul'. The life of man is based on the spirit that God breathed into his body. The body then is not alive by itself, but only by means of the soul.

In short, the soul (self) is the one to be judged and to be rewarded or punished in the life hereafter, on the basis of the choices and decisions it has made

in this life.

Referring to the vedantic view. Hick talks about the 'atman', the ideal state of human consciousness, awaiting realisation through the negation of the individual ego. (more on page 90).

Continuing the quest for an answer to his query, "what is man?", Hick appraises the beliefs of primitive man, which were rife with the idea of continued existence after death, as evinced in the burial of the dead along with ornaments, weapons, food and articles of daily use.

He also examines views on death in 20th century philosophy, as exemplified in the writings of Heidegger, Sartre and others. Summing up Heidegger's views, Hick observes that

"death constitutes a fundamental threat to us, engendering anxiety at the realization of our own finitude, surrounded as we are by limitless nothingness; but

... if we can deliberately confront and accept our own coming death we shall preserve our personal integrity in the face of it."<sup>24</sup>

Commenting on Sartre's view, Hick writes;

"Death ... for Sartre, deprives life of meaning by making it a matter of chance – instead of being a completion which gives retrospective meaning to the whole of a life, death cuts arbitrarily and unpredictably across the line of life, denying it any meaning".<sup>25</sup>

#### I D . BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF (LIFE-HEREAFTER) REBIRTH:

Persisting with his theme, "what is man?". Hick also draws attention to the Buddhist concept of life hereafter.

According to the Buddhist tradition. Hick says, man is essentially a temporal creature. At death the psycho-physical individual ceases to exist. He does not survive death. But a certain aspect of him does continue, though not eternally. This aspect is referred to as a "re-linking consciousness." This re-linking consciousness, is the first thought in a 'new-life-stream', which is the immediate successor to the last thought of a dying individual. The new life-stream is what we call re-becoming or rebirth.

Re-becoming is not necessarily into this world but may be into any of the 'many worlds'. Rebirth, is a special case of re-becoming, when a person comes back to earth-life.<sup>26</sup>

## I E . CHRISTIAN VIEW OF AFTERLIFE (THE NEW TESTAMENT):

We have seen that whereas the early Hick argued against the notion of resurrection, the later Hick accepts the idea of afterlife in Christian thought, and in other religious systems as well. While retaining certain arguments against resurrection, he recounts the Gospel narratives of the resurrection of Christ, and the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. He also refers to the following statement in the Book of Acts:

"God has raised Jesus, giving him power and authority, and that Jesus is alive".

He is of the opinion that Jesus' resurrection, while not the sole ground for belief in life after death, does, of course, suppose and confirm the belief in the continuity of man's life beyond his physical death.

Further, he recounts the teachings of Jesus about

afterlife and resurrection, as in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, and various other scriptural passages.

Kick also refers to the teachings of the apostle Paul such as in I Corinthians, chapter 15:

"what you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for fish. There are celestial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, is raised is

imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body."<sup>29</sup> <sup>29</sup>

Hick comprehensively surveys the teachings of the New Testament on afterlife and resurrection, but nevertheless observes that

"resurrection should not be considered from the standpoint of Christian faith as centrally important."<sup>30</sup>

It follows from all that we have seen thus far that hick's *new position* unequivocally affirms life after death •

He goes on to say:

"... the individual's next life, will, like the present life, be bounded, span with own beginning and end. In other



words, I am suggesting that it will be another mortal existence.<sup>31</sup>

Elaborating on this theme. Hick says:

"... a single life is not enough. And this, surely, is realistic. In western and Christian terms, if we understand divine purpose for human beings as their realization of the human potential, their full humanization, it is clear that this does not usually occur within the space of a single earthly life. Within this one life, some men advance a long way towards the fulfilment of the human potential. Most advance a little, but many hardly advance at all, and some, on the contrary, regress. The general picture is certainly not one in which the human potential is normally, or even often, fulfilled in the course of this present life."<sup>32</sup>

In other words, man in this life has not lived a humanly successful life and hence cannot attain perfection instantaneously at the moment of death. He, therefore,

"must continue beyond this life ...  
a further temporal process in which  
further moral and spiritual growth  
is possible."<sup>33</sup>

Although the later Hick affirms the immortality of the soul, he says that if the anticipated immortality were to be considered a personal immortality, such a conception of immortality would be irreligious. As opposed to the notion of personal immortality, he emphasises 'self-transcendence' or transcending ego-boundaries in a perfect community, many-in-one, one-in-many, a corporate life.<sup>34</sup>

Our enquiry thus reveals that with respect to his conception of ego-boundaries and his construal of immortality. Hick's position approximates a certain stand in Indian thought, the Vedantic. In fact, it may be said.

that Hick has made a quantum leap from Western to Indian Philosophy. This, however, does not suggest that Hick has moved away from the Christian tradition. On the contrary, he justifies his notion of transcending ego-boundaries, in terms of Christ's teaching.

The main thrust of our enquiry is to show that this position of Hick's is untenable and inconsistent. We shall, in the next chapter, commence our attempt at doing so.

## CHAPTER II

### Critique on Early-Hick

Christianity distinguishes itself from other religions and all on the basis that resurrection is its distinctive feature. And that resurrection is the foundation stone upon which the entire system of Christianity rests. A detailed survey has been made in chapter four to establish this, and show how resurrection is vitally related to Christianity. At this point, we shall proceed on the hypothesis that resurrection is not only vital to Christianity but also that resurrection of the body after death is possible. But this **kinds** of an hypothesis brings along its own set of problems.

The obvious problem that would arise is the problem of identity, i.e., identity between the resurrected body and the pre-mortem body. Of, what **would be** the criteria of personal identity? However the discussion of the criteria of personal identity, (which we

shall discuss shortly) poses another problem, an equally pertinent one, and that is, the problem of 'disembodied-survival'.

Both these problems shall be discussed separately, however comparatively the problem of personal identity appears to be far less complex than the problem of disembodied survival.

In the first case; The problem of personal identity between the pre-mortem and the resurrected persons will have bodies like ours and there would not be any difficulty in identifying the qualities or characteristics we ascribe to both these bodies.

In the second case: The problem of disembodied survival, appears to be more complex, because the term "disembodied" survival or existence is suggestive of a being alleged to exist in a manner that had a body before death but now does not. The problem is, can the predicates we ascribe to premortem be applied to beings

**without bodies? Or, can we conceive intelligibly of beings without bodies? Or, can the disembodied be identified with pre-mortem or embodied persons? And many more complexities of such like.**

**The discussion of these two major issues which arise in the context of resurrection is going to be our immediate concern.**

# I A. PERSONAL IDENTITY:

Of the various experiences in our daily life, the most common experience is that of recognizing people. Or to identify people as to whether or not they are the ones they claim to be. And to reidentify people, is equally a common experience to our daily list of activities, though we may not take note of it particularly. To reidentify someone means to say that, inspite of a lapse of time, and the changes that may have occured, he or she who we now see, is the same as the person we knew before.

Some philosophers have argued that 'sameness' and 'change' are incompatible. Especially Hume argues that it is a paradox to ascribe both change and identity to the same subject. According to the Humian thought, any ascription of 'change' is a denial of the same subject. And a strict adherence to this principle of incompatability endangers the very

possibility of recognising one another, or for that matter, our ourselves.

Such a predicament led other philosophers to the doctrine, that inspite of the changingness, there is some hidden core in the subject which persists unchanged throughout, thereby providing a back drop against which the change occurs. The back drop need not necessarily be unchanging but could be subjected to a gradual change.

It is this doctrine, formulated by Penelhum,<sup>2</sup> facilitates a compatability, whereby one can come out of the Humian muddle of 'sameness and change'<sup>1</sup>. Thus, there is no contradiction, between, saying that a person has changed and yet remained the same, if the changes are the characteristics of that sort of a thing

To agree with Humian principle of incompatibility is to deny ourselves of any possible solution. And hence, resort to compatability of sameness and change.



at least as a mere custom would be far better, if not philosophically, yet philosophical criticism cannot rule out the possibility of an accepted custom.

Thus a concession for our day to day affairs for a custom.<sup>3 3</sup>

Although there has been a concession, offered for our day to day activity of reidentification there has been much furore and debate on reidentification in the context of life-after or resurrection life, among philosophers. It is precisely in this context John Hick says:

"a major problem confronting any such doctrine is that of **providing criteria** of personal identity to link earthly and<sup>4</sup> the resurrection life."

The criteria for personal identity, becomes vital to our discussion here, because it is based on this criteria, we can establish the validity of resurrection.

Resurrection becomes meaningful only if we are able to reidentify the resurrected bodies with pre-mortem bodies. But how do we go about reidentifying?

The reidentification of persons (that survive death) can be done by two explicit criteria offered by Terence Penelhum.

Criterion (A):

"One is that the criterion of identity of a person is the identity of the body which he has that it is either a necessary or sufficient condition of saying correctly, that this person before us is Smith and that the body which this person before us has is the body that Smith had."

Criterion (B):

"The other answer is that the criterion of the identity of a person is the set of memories which-he

has that it is either a necessary or a sufficient condition of saying correctly that this person before us is Smith and that he should have memories of doing Smith's actions or having Smith's experiences."

The problem of identification can be settled by both the ways. Criterion A could be termed as bodily criterion, where the concept of form and resemblance is employed for the task of reidentification. That is, after the resurrection, what remains, is the form of resemblance of the Smith who was, with the Smith that is resurrected. The basis for reidentification, then would be that even if the body disintegrates at death, the form continues or persists, in resurrected life.

Criterion B could be termed as memory criterion where memory is considered as a sufficient condition to reidentify, atleast to himself, to have survived death because he continues to have memories in his

disembodied state about his pre-mortem existence,  
which could be checked, ratified by others who are  
supposed to have known him.

## I B. THE CHRISTIAN NOTION OF IDENTITY:

The Christian claim is that at the time of resurrection the soul will rejoin the body it has left. The resurrection body is the same as the present body.

Even if it is, that the continuity of the body is the necessary condition of the continuance of a person through time, this condition can be met with, in the case of resurrected body which is identical with the pre-mortem body. If it is identical it has survived death or has gone through what we call as the process of 'death'. At death, the body and soul are separated and the body destroyed, and the reversing of this destruction or recreating out of the same body by God, is resurrection.

The following metaphor explains more vividly the concept of resurrection.

"That which you sow is not made alive  
unless it dies. And what you sow, you\_\_

do not sow that shall be, but a mere  
grain - perhaps wheat or some other  
grain ..."<sup>6</sup>

This metaphor refers to the resurrection, where Paul describes, the plant that springs up from the ground is different from the seed that was planted. The living plant that springs from inert kernel is a renewal of life from death. Similarly the resurrected body will be different from what is (buried) i.e., our present body. Yet there will be similarity; as a seed so will the plant be.

The change from one body to another is not so radical that no connection between the two is discernable. Just as the plant cannot exist without the seed - there is some persisting element or a continuing link relating one to the other viz. the pre-mortem body and the resurrection body. This is a transformed state, which does not pose any difficulty

to identify the resurrected body, this transformed state refers only to the qualitative change that comes about, after resurrection, like the inert corn kernal that produces a corn stalk when planted.

There are other passages to quote in favour of

"linking pre-mortem life with post-mortem life".

For instance, we have the story of the rich man and Lazarus<sup>7</sup> in the New Testament where we read about a conversation that took place between Abraham and the rich man. The observations of the description reveals to us facts that vouch for the connection between bodily identity and personal identity.

The rich man who died and was buried was, able to recognize or identify Abraham, in the other world. Not only was he able to recognize Abraham, he **was** also able to identify Lazarus the one whom he knew in his "life-time" or in their pre-mortem existence. Further

there are ample evidences in the description that enable us to refer about the existence in the other world which could be identified with the pre-mortem.

Also, we find the rich man was begging Abraham for water to cool his tongue, cooling of the tongue is indicative of thirst, further his cry "I am tormented" speaks of the experience, which is in resemblance of the pain and suffering one undergoes in his bodily existence. So life-hereafter has resemblances of the life in this world. Or life-hereafter can be identified with life-here.

Again in the same verse, the rich man is asking Abraham to send Lazarus to bring a drop of water. He names him because he knows him, or was able to identify Lazarus as the beggar who lay at his gate in their pre-mortem life. Abraham replies "Son remember." - The memory of the past is not drowned in the other world. In other words, there is identification of the



past life, in the other world by the agency of memory.

Towards the close of the description we find the rich man asking Abraham to send Lazarus to his Father's house i.e., to the place of his pre-mortem existence. By asking Lazarus to be sent to his father's house, he thereby implied, Lazarus knows enough where his father's house is, he also knows his five brothers and they would also in turn recognise or identify Lazarus if he was sent from the dead.

We have attempted thus far, here, to show the problem of personal identity is tenable with the Identification of the body or in other words, we can link the resurrected body or the body in life hereafter, with pre-mortem body, on the basis of bodily criterion.

We now proceed to elaborately discuss the memory criterion disembodied survival.

# I C. DISEMBODIED SURVIVAL:

The talk about disembodied survival could best begin with the account of "Cartesian Dualism" of mind and matter.<sup>8</sup> Roughly stated, Descartes position is, the soul (or mind) and the body are two distinct substances that have no common properties and have only a casual and contingent relationship with one another. The mind occupies no space, is free and indivisible, whereas the body occupies space and can be divided. The mind or the soul is eternal while the body is temporal. And it is the body that is disintegrated while the mind survives death and continues to exist in a disembodied form. Therefore the term "disembodied" suggests that a being alleged to exist in this fashion, had a body before death but now does not.

And it is a popular belief that men survive their death and that they survive without a body. The problem of identity, of post-mortem persons (with the pre-mortem persons) becomes more difficult in the case

of disembodied survival than in the case of "resurrected survival" (survival after resurrection). The reason is very simple and that is, the non-continuance of the body, with which we have identified the person thus far.

The belief in disembodied survival and the belief in bodily resurrection are not necessarily inter-dependent, one can believe in disembodied survival without believing in resurrection. On the assertion that the person has no form (of life) after death.

It is in this context we are expected to discuss disembodied survival. The discussion can be a quite an elaborate and varied one, but we shall confine ourselves to discuss only to that which pertains in the context of "problem of identity". How do we identify the disembodied person with the pre-mortem person?

Upon the belief, that a post-mortem person has no body, one would say that many predicates we ascribe

to persons here can be no longer ascribed to disembodied persons. A disembodied person cannot walk, sleep or frown or turn his head etc. Though the disembodied person might perceive, imagine, form intentions, think thoughts, have memories, and even sense experiences of seeing, hearing etc., but without sense organs.

For example, can a disembodied person be said to see ? If one says "yes" to this question, one is obliged to give an explanation. And before one could give any explanation concerning seeing and what is seen, the question that confronts him is, whether the disembodied person is in space?

And if he is in space, he must be somewhere and, where is that? The only answer that is plausible is an arbitrary one, that the disembodied person is at a place from which a normal person sees the objects, with your visual field but the survivor is not seen by you.

But a better consideration, perhaps would be that

the disembodied person sees clairvoyantly, since this kind of seeing does not involve being in a certain place to see something and the seeing is not limited to one's visual field. Or in other words the disembodied person has special powers by which he does the functions of a normal person. Functions like seeing, hearing, etc. However, the disembodied person cannot have perception of his own bodily states, for obvious reasons.

To sum up: Consciousness survives but consciousness in itself cannot link the disembodied survival with the pre-mortem life. It is memory that links between the two states of survival.

If a person survives death, he must have the memory of his state before death without which even the alleged disembodied survivor himself is at loss to link with his supposedly pre-mortem existence. Memory therefore, is an important criterion of personal identity, here in disembodied survival.

However, memory alone is not a sufficient basis

for personal identity because memory often fails and diminishes, i.e., there are lapses in memory. It could be the case, that the disembodied survivor is in fact remembering doing things that he has not done; or perhaps wanted to do, and has imagined himself doing it.

The criterion of memory for personal identity cannot occur in isolation, because memory pre-supposes someone to do the remembering or memory experiences must be some one's experiences and thus memory as criterion of identity does not stand by itself but as an appendix of personal identity. Memory cannot exist by itself any more than colours exist by themselves (in relation to shapes).

It is true - that the disembodied existence can no longer stand by itself. But it does not in any way rule out the logical possibility of linking earthly life with post-mortem life.

#### I D. CHRISTIAN NOTION OF DISEMBODIED SURVIVAL:

According to the Christian notion, death separates the soul of man from his body and while body is buried, cremated, embalmed or whatever, awaits the day of resurrection, the soul or the spirit goes to it's "place"• And the spirit or soul by its very nature is a conscious being and therefore is conscious of what goes around.

The description of Lazarus and rich man in Luke 16; which we have seen earlier, tells us that the souls of both these men after death, were conscious of what was going around them. Further they were able to recognise one another.

Like wise in Matthew 17: 3 and 4, which concerns the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, on the occasion when two people who had left this earthly life a long time before Moses and Elijah, appeared before Jesus and his three disciples.

"And behold there appeared unto them  
Moses and Elias talking with him."

We therefore infer that man's spirit thinks and  
speaks after death or in it's disembodied existence.

Yet another case in favour of disembodied existence  
in the O.T., is the case, where King Saul visits the  
witch of Endor, who had a familiar spirit. All that  
the king wanted of the witch was to bring up one from  
the dead. It was necromancy, but the point that comes  
out is, disembodied survival. If Saul wanted a conver-  
sation with Samuel who had lately died he must have  
gone to the sepulchre.

Our enquiry started with the two basic problems  
concerning resurrected life, namely the problem of  
personal identity and disembodied survival. We have  
tried to show that these problems have been acknowledged  
and accounted for, within the Christian tradition. Fur-  
ther, it may be pointed out, that our enquiry reveals  
the possibility of what may be described as the Chris-  
tian notion of personal identity and disembodied survival



### I E. IMMORTALITY (OF THE SOUL):

In the earlier section, we have assumed that resurrection is vital to Christianity, and considered the consequences of such an assumption. In the first place, we have considered the problem of identity, and resolved it with the help of bodily criterion, where the notion of form is employed for the task of re-identification. In the second place, we have considered the problem of disembodied existence, which was resolved with the help of memory criterion. These views serve as a basis for linking earthly life with post-mortem life. At this point, it would be appropriate to admit two more concepts for our consideration, viz., ~~Imm~~ortality and eternity, since the talk about Immortality and eternity have their place within the context of resurrection, for immortality and eternity **are** closely connected with the idea of overcoming death.

#### IMMORTALITY:

A consideration on immortality philosophically.

can never begin better than to refer Plato's Phaedo where Plato puts forward a demonstration of immortality, when Crito asks Socrates, "How shall we bury **you?**" **Socrates** replied,

"However you please, if you can catch me and

I do not get away from you,"

And he laughed gently, and looking towards, us, said: "I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that the Socrates who is now conversing and arranging the details of his argument is really I: he thinks I am the one whom he will presently see as a corpse, and **he asks** how to bury me. And though I have been saying at great length, that after I drink the poison, I shall no longer be with you, but shall go away to the joys of the blessed, he seems to think, that was idle talk uttered to encourage you and myself."

The passage brings out quite forcefully, the

doctrine of immortality of the soul, that which continues to exist even after death. This summarizes the Greek thought, that man is essentially a duality of the mortal flesh and the immortal soul or more plainly stated, the corporeal element, the body and incorporeal element, the soul.

The body is thought of as a prison within which, the soul is somehow imprisoned, for the duration of a life. And at the dissolution of the body, the soul continues to exist, free from all the former restrictions.

The notion of immortality is ascribed to the concept of soul, which has been there, in all possible languages acquainted by man. Yet there has always been unclarity and indeterminacy concerning this key term, soul. And this very concept has been questioned and debated in modern times. The general usage of the term soul has been used along with the term.

immortality, and that is how men always spoke of the 'immortality of the soul', in contrast to the decaying body.

However, the concept has been used quite interchangeably and often substituted with concepts like mind and human personality, For instance, Gilbert Tyle in his "Concept of Mind"/ uses soul as an equivalent of mind,<sup>14</sup> with a marked emphasis that it is not a substance/ as opposed to the Cartesian notion of the soul being a separate entity, on equal footing with the body.

In Plato, we find the notion of the soul being substituted for person, "we are our souls". We are our soul, or I am my soul is justified, in Plato by saying, I cannot be my body because I use my body. (my hands, legs, nose etc.) and the user is different from the thing used. Therefore it follows, that I am my soul and not my body.

Although my body is empirical, my soul is not

empirical, therefore, the notion of soul is not to be examined and used, as one would do with my hands or legs or nose. At best, one can talk of the state of one's soul, reflecting moral and religious considerations. That's how we often see the usage of the term soul, in contexts like, 'destiny of the soul', or the "salvation of the soul", which is considered as immortal, compared to the mortal body.

# I F . CHRISTIAN NOTION OF IMMORTALITY:

The material and immaterial natures in man **are** commonly referred to as mortal in the man **within the** Christian framework. However, immortality **also refers** to the body.

**'For this corruptible must put on  
incorruption, and this mortal must  
put on immortality.<sup>15</sup>**

**Mortality and immortality are two sides of the  
same coin, referring to the body of man. Mortality  
is used for man's body in relation to time, and im-  
mortality also for man's body, (resurrected body) in  
relation to eternity. Immortality though refers to  
man's body, is not man's present condition. Immor-  
tality, means death-less-ness.**

**But men do die, but man's soul doesn't die.  
This is the principle that is not subject to the**

decaying, which is called the immortal soul.

Immortality, within the Christian framework is an attribute of the resurrected-body, it is the resurrected body which has the quality of immortality or deathless-ness. The body in time is mortal **but the body** in eternity is immortal.

This brings us to the necessity **for distinguishing** between time and eternity.

## I G . ETERNITY AND TIME:

Death is the intersection of time **and eternity**. The words eternity and eternal, which mean "ever", have their roots in Latin aeternus, which in **turn** has its root in aevum, both meaning the same as **our** English words, 'ever' and '**aye**'. **The notion of** eternity has other meanings like '**everlasting**' and '**timelessness**', which are like **various facets of** a diamond.

The idea of timelessness, **is seen in Parmendies**, where it is written,

"it neither was **at any time** nor will be, since **it is now** all at once, a single whole.<sup>16</sup>

The notion of timelessness or **rather, eternity**, can be better understood in comparison **with time**.

Time has been defined as **"the consideration of**



duration, the measure of it, as set out by certain periods, and marked by certain measures." Time is the essence of everything in the physical universe. Time consists of past, present and future. Man finds it difficult to grasp eternity, since he is in time, and in order to understand eternity, he ascribes time to eternity by saying, "eternity past" and "eternity future". Whereas eternity has no past or future.

Eternity is not a duration, duration is a length of time. Therefore, eternity cannot be conceived as innumerable lengths of time put together. If eternity would be made up of endless succession of lengths of time, then eternity would be gradually running out of time. Eternity could be best expressed as "the whole thing at once".<sup>17</sup>

Eternity and time differ. Time has both beginning and ending. Eternity has neither. Time moves to the future, through the present, to the past, whereas eternity is constant, and does not flow past, or else, some of it would have been used up by now. Or as

Spinoza would put it, "eternity is existence par excellence, an infinite existence."<sup>18</sup> Eternity refers to that which is eternal. For the distinction between these two is no more than, one being a noun form (i.e. eternity) and the other being an adjectival form (i.e. eternal) of the same term, constancy.

#### I H. CHRISTIAN NOTION OF ETERNITY:

The immortality about which we have seen in the earlier section on Christian notion of imortality, becomes meaningful in the light of what we said thus far concerning eternity. Eternity is affirmed in the New Testament as time-less-ness. And the notion is widely used in the context of rewards and punishments that await for man at the eschatological judgement. The eschatological judgement is based on the individuals choices and decisions made in this life in relation to God, i.e. whether one by faith, was aware of God or has rejected God totally in this life. The reward refers to the eternal or everlasting life, while punishment refers to the eternal damnation. The former referring to heaven, and the latter referring to hell. In other words, heaven and hell are eternal and everlasting, according to Christian notion.

The contrast between the rich man and Lazarus

after death, (which we have referred to earlier) speaks of an eternal state of both, one in eternal bliss, the other in eternal torment. Though there are various contrasting features there, one thing is common to them both, and that is – they both are in eternity.

The New Testament is replete with references concerning eternity, except that the usage has been substituted between eternal and everlasting. In any case, whether it is eternal or everlasting, the essence in all the cases has been the same, i.e. 'endlessness'. This is true either of heaven or of hell.

Christ speaking on this subject says,

"Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee ., cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire."<sup>19</sup>

"And every one that hath forsaken  
houses, or brethren, or sisters, or  
father or lands, for my name's sake,  
shall receive an hundredfold, and  
shall inherit everlasting life."<sup>20</sup><sup>?0</sup>

"And these shall go away into  
everlasting punishment: but the  
righteous into life eternal."<sup>21</sup>

We have the same notion used in other places in  
the New Testament like:

"For God so loved the world, that  
he gave his only begotten Son.  
That whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish, but have ever-  
lasting life."<sup>22</sup>

"That whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish, but have eternal  
life."<sup>23</sup>

Nowhere in the New Testament **do** we **find** an **"aeon**  
or age" as a substitute for eternal, as **Hick suggests**

it, when he says, "the punishment of hell is not eternal. for it does not have a secure basis in New Testament".<sup>24</sup>

Hick's attempt to capitalize on the meaning of *ainos* as "age", to deny death is rather misconceived or prejudicial. Although aeon in Greek may be translated 'age' it is never used in the New Testament merely in the temporal sense. The force attached to the word is not so much that of the duration of time, but that which has no end. The word consistently denotes indefiniteness as regards duration. The word in the singular (aeon) is never used by itself, to denote eternity or something eternal. It is always used in its plural (*aioonios*) or adjectival or idiomatic combinations to designate something eternal or non-temporal.

Therefore, by giving a new meaning to one concept (eternal). Hick is calling for the change of meaning of other concepts as well, for instance, without the notion of eternity meaning, endlessness or timelessness, the notion of immortality becomes meaningless.

For each is the necessary corollary of the other. If 'eternal' (or eternity) means something limited, what happens to the immortal? If there would be no 'eternity' then there will not be 'immortality'<sup>1</sup> as well, for both these concepts go hand in hand.

Further why should only the state of bliss, (heaven) be eternal? And the punishment of hell be temporal (not eternal)? Whereas hell is the necessary corollary of heaven and both the states have been referred by exactly by the same word aloonios, meaning unending, rather than just continuing to exist a certain period of time or one aeon or an age. Therefore one state cannot be eternal while the other is temporal.

By changing the meaning of the terms 'eternal'. Hick is falling into a two-fold inconsistency. On the one hand, there is the descriptive inconsistency by withholding the correct description of the term 'eternal', and on the other hand, there is the logical

inconsistency on the part of Hick, because logically, immortality and eternity are interdependent. It becomes logically difficult to conceive of one without the other.

This is a paradoxical situation in Hick, specially because of logical inconsistency (if not because of the descriptive inconsistency)• This paradoxical situation in Hick, can be concluded as Hick, is trying to play the 'game' (game of Christianity) without following all the rules, as Wittgenstein would put it.

Hick may be welcome, to be baised to a system as a whole but not to a concept alone, the concept being, eternal or eternity. Thus if eternity means an aeon or an age, it is anything but eternity.

Let us briefly retrace our steps. We have considered the meaning of immortality and eternity and have pointed out that both these concepts are by and



large interdependent. And is logically difficult to conceive of one, without the other. In our discussion in this section, we have also considered the Christian notion of immortality and eternity. Special effort was made to bring out the correct meaning of the term 'aeon' which means eternal or endlessness or timelessness and not an 'age' as Hick suggested.

With this we now proceed to the third chapter, where our focus is going to be on later-Hick, where later Hick, asserts the immortality of the soul, which again *i.e* a paradox in Hick because thus far he has been denying the true meaning of eternity, and he also questioned the possibility of resurrected life. But the assertion of immortality of the soul is not free from difficulties. The difficulties raised here again, are denial of the basic tenets of Christianity, which as we have noted earlier, was his frame-work, to work with.

### CHAPTER III

#### Critique on Later Hick

"the individual's next life will, like the present life, be a bounded span with its own beginning and end. In other words, I am suggesting that it will be another mortal existence."<sup>1</sup>

The above stated view of later-Hick, on the subject of "life-after" is that, he affirms the possibility of life hereafter. However, it is not free from problems or totally devoid of any argument against the subject. He has retreated from the first line of attack and is no longer in the camp of those that attack resurrection. However he has not joined the camp of those who accept resurrection, completely. In other words, even if he appears to be within the camp, he still continues the attack, with the difference that the attack is from within. And therefore the consideration of this new attack, which calls for a distinction between the present life and the future life, becomes the subject matter of our immediate concern.

## II A. PRESENT LIFE AND FUTURE LIFE ("A quantum leap")

The earlier mentioned words of Hick suggests, that Hick is making an attempt to understand the nature of the future life. In order to do so, he says that (resurrected life) or future life is something, which has predicates of the present life. The predicate of birth, death, time, and mortality which are easily understood in this life, are being predicated to resurrected life as well. In other words Hick is attempting to bring out the characteristics of resurrected life or future life.

In doing so later Hick is still in the same spirit of trying to define resurrected life, or life hereafter, within the bounds of time. As seen earlier in the previous chapter. Hick had the idea of eternity, in terms of "an age" or aeon, which he still has when he says, 'that the next life will be bounded by a span with its own beginning and end'. In other words. Hick is

suggesting that one's death in the present life, is a birth into the next life; where again the individual should have an "age", wherein he could progress spiritually, and then the end, is anticipated for that next life. The "end" in the next life is possibly the death in that life, which could mean the birth-into some other life, if one did not "live" a successful "moral and spiritual life" even in that life. This process could go on and on, until one has exhausted all the possible "other-life(s)" and be possibly back in this earthly life.

Hick here is suggesting the re-incarnational scheme of the Vedantic philosophy, which indeed is a quantum leap from Western Philosophy (Christian) to Indian Philosophy (Hindu).

## II B. FURTHER SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

The idea of re-incarnation that seems suggestive in the earlier section, appears to take deeper roots when Hick explains about life after death as a

"process in which further moral and spiritual growth is possible . . . "

Hick is of the opinion that in this present life, with all its limitations, man has not been able to fully realize the God-given potentialities, and therefore the present life must continue beyond death, in which "growth" is possible. Hick, who belongs to the Christian tradition, is fully aware for himself, that he is suggesting a purgatorial scheme of the Catholic tradition and immediately withdraws himself from that tradition, by saying that the purgatorial scheme of the Catholic tradition is "spiritually static".<sup>2</sup>

Therefore a

"further temporal process in which  
•• growth is possible."

This type of survival is questionable, because "growth"<sup>3</sup> can be understood only in relation to a world of limitation. It becomes more bizarre to conceive of a discarnate person, 'to grow' into a full personality, when devoid of some body of limitation. Growth is not merely increased intellectual, but suffering and sacrifice, in a world of limitation. In other words, in this world of limitations alone, can the meaning of 'growth' be fully realised.

If Hick is anticipating after death, a

"future temporal process in which  
moral and spiritual growth is  
possible..."

the only possible way, is by the process of re-incarnation. This implies, donning a fresh human body by the soul (on as many occasions, as needed by the individual) to 'realise the God-given potentialities'<sup>5</sup>.

In this scheme of reincarnation, the (soul) or the individual is ensured of the growth of the soul, whereby the soul is able to attain its ultimate fulfillment. This way of rebirth is envisaged in the Vedantic thought (Hinduism). The general teaching of Hinduism in relation to reincarnation, is that, in each successive re-incarnation, one repays the past debts which are caused by the Karma (action) are totally cleared up. Only then can the soul attain its Moksha or salvation.

This reincarnational scheme implies a cyclic view of life, as opposed to the linear view, which is one of the hall marks of Western (theistic) religion and of Christianity as well.

Further more, the Christian tradition would consider this scheme as redundant and unnecessary, because the atoning sacrifice of Christ ensures, (at **least for** the believer) a blissful heaven at one's death, or the

torments of hell and eternal damnation, if one is not a believer.

In other words, the linear view according to the Christian tradition is this, that the present life is for once and only once, and not repetitive. If the individual in the present life, does not realise the God-given potentiality, he will not have another 'temporal process'<sup>1</sup>, to grow spiritually and morally.



## II C. THE IRRELIGIOUS CONCERN (The Personal Immortality)

Reincarnation, which was seen as suggestive in the first section, becomes evident in the second section. We now proceed to the next section, where we discuss, what Hick calls as, an 'irreligious concern'. Hick is of the opinion that if the anticipated resurrected life of immortality is a personal one, then it is not only selfish, but an irreligious concern of the little ego. A careful analysis of this leads us to the inevitable conclusion, that Hick is once again making reference to Indian thought, or to be precise the Vedantic view of 'Atman and Brahman', when he emphasises self-transcendence of transcending ego-boundaries, many-in-one, one-in-many. Transcending ego-boundaries or one's own self, means the denial of individuality or individual personality. And merging one's individual self in unity with other selves at death, or in the life hereafter.

Hick here is referring to the Indian Philosophy of the advaita Vedanta, where the Brahman is the ultimate reality, which on account of the (avidya) ignorance gives rise to an illusory world and individuals. The illusion of the 'individual' personal is the Jiva and will persist so long as the Jiva realises his identity with the real self Brahman. The self-realisation is the individual's salvation (moksa), where he ceases to exist as a separate person and becomes one with the Brahman, and is delivered from the endless cycle of births and rebirths. In short, the salvation (moksa) for the individual is the merging of the finite ego-consciousness into the infinite consciousness.

### III D. THE VEDANTIC VIEW: (Reincarnation Theory)

We have drawn attention to the 'quantum leap' made by Hick from Western to Indian thought. It would be in order in this section to briefly outline the Vedantic view of life-hereafter,

Vedantic philosophy falls into two broad divisions, namely, Advaita (non-dualism) and Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism). Shankara being the outstanding exemplar of the former and Ramanuja of the latter. It must be pointed out that the differences in the corpus of their respective teachings notwithstanding, the two share an essentially similar view of reincarnation. We shall first outline the distinct features of their positions before turning to their views on reincarnation.

According to Advaita Vedanta, the ultimate reality is Brahman, pure and undifferentiated consciousness. This reality is also called 'Satcltananda'.

meaning a trinity of being, consciousness and bliss. Further, Brahman is here also referred to as Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman.

Nirguna Brahman transcends all qualities while Sugana Brahman possesses qualities, and is Brahman as known to man, is God (Isvara). Isvara is the personification of the ultimate reality.

Maya, a creative power of the Brahman, expresses itself in the existence of the universe, in which the "infinite Consciousness", in association with maya, results in the plurality of "finite consciousness", the jivas or the jivatmans. These finite consciousness, being the products of maya, are wrapped in the illusion of separateness from the infinite or the one universal consciousness, namely, Brahman, whereas in reality, there is a unique identity of the jiva and Brahman.

It follows that the jivatmans are the pure

consciousness of Brahman, but are limited because of maya. plurality and individuality are ultimately illusory, and once the jivas or jivatmans attain the true consciousness of themselves at atman, the distinction ceases.

The theory of karma and rebirth, is primarily concerned with the Jiva attaining its true self-consciousness, through a succession of re-births, and culminating in the attainment of moksa (liberation), or the realisation of identity with the sole ultimate reality, the removal of the illusory sense of separateness.

While the foregoing is the position of **Advalta** Vedanta, Vishishtadvaita affirms that the **Brahman** is personal and is known as Isvara or Bhagavan (lord). It is He who created the multitude of jivas, as an act of his divine play. In other words, **the** multitude of individual souls is an expression of **His** creativity and of the superabundant energy of **His infinite** divine life. The samsara, the cycle of **rebirths, is**

not actually a purposive activity with an eschatological end, but is, in itself, divine play, an end-in-itself. Therefore, it is without beginning and end. Maya, too, is the exercise of divine creativity within which souls are moving through illusion towards a conscious communion with God. Each individual Jiva may attain liberation, worshipping and reflecting the glory of God; yet there is an infinite number of them, in the never-ending process of samsara.

i. BRAHMAN:

As we have seen, Brahman is the ultimate reality, the highest transcendental truth, which is beyond all attributes, is pure bliss, pure consciousness, one - without - a - second.

However, is this pure consciousness thinks itself to be a God, the clarity of a pure spiritual being is clouded, and this cloud is a self-delusion on a cosmic scale, becoming forgetful of the true state and nature of the Brahman, on account of the maya the cosmic aspect of ignorance or avidya, resulting a plurality of

ii. JIVA/JIVATMAN:

The Jiva, in reality, is uniquely identical with the Brahman or Atman. But it is maya that has caused the plurality of finite consciousness. The separation of Jiva and Brahman is only illusory. The Jiva is conditional, finite and many. It is described as a finite individual self, a reflection of the Self/Brahman.

Brahman is transcendental, while Jiva is practical. The jivatman, is identified with the mental and vital self of man and the Brahman is identified as cosmic soul. Further, the jivatman is identified with our body and the Brahman with the cosmos as a whole. The whole world is in the process of the finite striving to become the infinite, and this tension is found in the individual self.

The striving jivatman is responsible for its present state, whether of joy or of suffering, for

it is karma, i.e., the chain of **action in previous lives** that has led **to** the present **state of existence**.

The present existential state is justified in terms of the past life which, in turn, refers back to an earlier one, and so **on in a regressive manner**.

The discordant, striving nature of **the individual jivatman** will continue so long as there **is the avidya** or ignorance caused by maya. **Just** as **Atman and the Brahman**, are identical, so are **maya and avidya**. What Avidya is to the Jiva, maya is to Brahman, **for** it is a creative force attributed **to (Saguna) Brahman**.

The struggle for **liberation from avidya** is, in other words, the struggle of **the individual self** to be identified with the **ultimate Self**. This will occur when the inner (God) realises **itself**, or when illusion (maya) is purged.

### iii. REINCARNATION:

The purging of maya **and the eradication of avidya**



is not something that is achieved within the span of one human life, but is a gradual process, occurring over a succession of rebirths (the cycle of samsara) . For jivatman is able to exercise real, though limited, freedom only in this human birth on earth. It is here alone that jivatman undergoes stages of development towards the ultimate self-awareness which will culminate in moksa or liberation (mukti), i.e., the realisation of identity\_\_\_\_ with the ultimate Reality.

#### iv. MOKSA:

The Vedantic view of moksa is that of the highest condition, marked by a disintegration of individuality. It is attained through knowledge, the knowledge of the true - self. Knowledge itself is construed as liberation. Brahman's knowledge **culminates** in a stage where there is no **difference** between **the** knower, the known and knowledge.

From a transcendental viewpoint, self. Brahman and liberation are the same. The Self is Brahman, or the Atman becomes one with the Brahman. The plurality of finite consciousness is annihilated by the removal of the ignorance (avidya) which set up boundaries. The liberated self incorporates everyone in the self. This is the individual sal-vation (moksa) or deliverance from the samsara, the end-less cycle of rebirths, and the merger of the finite ego-consciousness with the infinite consciousness.

From what we have outlined, it follows that Vedantic Philosophy clearly enunciates a belief in after-life, whether in terms of the cycle of birth and rebirths or in terms of the ultimate union of the **self** with Brahman. In either case, the notion of after-life is affirmed.

### III E. AMALGAMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THE VEDANTIC VIEW:

Hick's reference to the Vedantic view of life is vividly seen in his emphasis of 'transcending ego boundaries' and the "corporate living - one - in - many" and a "further temporal process", is the life-hereafter. In short, the merging of the finite ego consciousness with the infinite consciousness.

In order to justify this new stand. Hick is amalgamating the Christian thought with the Vedantic thought by saying that the teachings of Jesus, support this kind of ego transcendence.

For instance, he quotes Jesus' sayings

"love thy neighbour as they self,"  
 "forgive with out limit",  
 "do not retaliate", etc.<sup>6</sup>

and says, if one follows these fully, **one** has

"ceased to be a self seeking ego".'

These teachings of Jesus are indeed a challenge to the little ego, to overcome egoity and also self renunciation. But the error of Hick's justification is that, Jesus no doubt challenged the 'little ego' but in the context of its humanlife or present life, or in the interest of corporate life of perfect humanity.

No where does the Bible teach the of loss of the individual self, or that one has to give up the 'personality', specially in the context of resurrected life or immortality. On the contrary, the Bible maintains very emphatically, the 'personalist'<sup>8</sup> **view;** in the context of life hereafter, whether in hell or in heaven.

We really would understand the meaning of resurrection, only if the individual personality **continues** to exist, even after death. In fact the talk about resurrection stands meaningful, only if we maintain the 'personalist' view, because Hick himself **was** in

his early writings, asking the criterion for linking earthly life with resurrected life.

If resurrected life or immortality is for the individual as a whole, the individual self personality is as much involved as anything else that partakes immortality. The concern for personal immortality either by resurrection of the body, or the immortality of the soul, is no more selfish and irreligious concern, than one's desire to be known as Hick or Smith or John.

To take stock of what we have said thus far, we have considered in this chapter, the second phase of Hick or the writings of later Hick. Later Hick, as we have seen, affirms the immortality of soul but in this affirmation, Hick has made a quantum leap from the linear view of life, to a cyclic view of life, by suggesting reincarnational scheme. Further, Hick misinterpreted the Christian view of life after death. The Christian view is that the immortal life one anticipates is a personal one, but Hick says this is an

'irreligious concern' and suggests that one should transcend ego-boundaries. This is an indirect denial of the basic tenets of Christian view of life after death.

The next chapter is aimed at showing how Christianity is inextricably linked with the idea of resurrection. The idea of resurrection is not a New Testament contribution, but has its roots way back in the garden of Eden, where God created man.

## CHAPTER IV

### Christianity and Resurrection

The need for elaborating Christian doctrine of resurrection, arises in the context of what we have seen thus far, both in early Hick and later Hick- Early Hick, as we have pointed out was very skeptical on the notion of resurrection, and in his later phase, Hick, accepts life-hereafter. In both the phases, he was within the bounds of the Christian framework, but one cannot have Christianity without having the very basis on which the entire system rests upon, viz., resurrection. Therefore it is imperative to study how resurrection is thematically embedded in the entire Christian tradition. The doctrine of resurrection cannot be avoided and Christianity be still retained, it is as paradoxical as playing Hamlet without the prince of Denmark.

The objective of the present discussion is to show the centrality of Resurrection, as embedded in

the corpus of the following **Christian doctrines**

- A. Man - a creative act of **God**
- B. Sin and Death - the fall of man and **the** consequence of **sin**
- C. Salvation - the plan and program **of** God to redeem man
- D. Christ - the incarnation of God
- E. Death and Resurrection of Christ - the fulfillment of God's plan of **salvation and also** a foretaste **of (future)** eschatology.



#### IV. A. MAN: The Creative Act of God.

In Biblical thought man is regarded created by God,

"And God created man in his own image..."<sup>1</sup>

"And God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ..." <sup>2</sup>

man is classified above all forms of life, because of the distinction, that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and also he was made in the image of God.

The image of God goes not denote physical likeness God is a spirit. He does not have parts and passions like man. The image of God refers to the mental likeness. God is a spirit; the human soul is a spirit and the likeness refers to the attributes of a **spirit** i.e., reason, conscience and will. In making man after **his** own image God endowed upon man rationality, **morality** and thereby freedom. With these attributes which belong to a spirit man is distinguished from **all** the

inhabitants of the world. He belongs to the same order of being as God Himself, and thus the possibility **of** communication between God and man. This capacity to know God and have communion with God serves as the basis of religious enterprise.

Further man was endowed with intellect. Genesis Chapter two reveals that man had intelligence to give names. Adam, the first man created by God had **the** power of speech, and the connection between reasoning and speech. He could link ideas with words, i.e., he had the cognitive function of man.

In Genesis Chapter three, we read man **was endowed** with the moral faculty. Adam, had the power **to resist** or yield to moral evil. When **confronted with the** choice to eat or not to eat the **forbidden fruit**, we find Adam willfully ate the fruit offered by **Eve**.

Over and above these three facets **of** God, (**Rational**

Moral and Freewill) yet another essential attribute of God which is bestowed upon man is the "immortality".

The living principle, which is used interchangeably is the "Soul" or "Spirit" that man receives from God by virtue of being created by God. This Soul or Spirit in man is immortal. Man shares this essential attribute of God, in that he continues to exist after death. This Soul or the Spirit which is immaterial in man returns to God who gave it. The Spirit remains, to be reunited with the body at resurrection.

Generally speaking, man's Creation included a physical aspect as well. "The dust", symbolises the use of elements appropriate to the forming of material body. "The dust" stands as opposed to the "breathe of life". This two-fold distinction of the material and the immaterial, is the basis for the concept of resurrection (more on page 122). Further, this distinction brings us to the forceful conclusion of the " Psycho -Somatic" view of man.

#### IV B. SIN AND DEATH: The fall of Man and The consequence of Sin

In the previous section, we have seen that the human race was created in Adam and that the present generation is a result of natural generation. It is said that man who was created by God was "very good", i.e. well pleasing to the Creator. Though man was made in the image of God, yet he was a creature. A creature that was made with a free-will. It was this free-will that was subject to a test and the result of this test is the fall of man or Sin.

The test to which man was subjected to, was both significant and relatively minor as well. It was minor in that, it consisted of only a single prohibition, amidst a bountiful provision in the garden of Eden. Significant, in the sense, that the prohibition was a matter of life and death. To keep or break the commandment, was the principal means of showing obedience or disobedience to God.

The course of the test was **started**, by **Eve** lured to eat the forbidden **fruit**. **On examining the** forbidden fruit, Eve reasoned that **it was good for** food, and forgetting the fact **that God had expressly** forbidden the eating of that particular **fruit**, she ate the fruit and also gave **the fruit to Adam**. It must be remembered that **Adam and Eve were free moral** agents, with the ability **to resist or yield to the** evil temptation. This **willful choice of eating the** forbidden fruit, was breaking **the law given by God**. And this breaking of the **law or disobedience to the** will of God, is known as SIN.

Sin was purely **volitional**; an act of one's own determination. **In other words, a voluntary act of** the will, further **sin was the denial of the divine** will and the elevation of **the will of man**, over the will of God.. **In short, a deliberate over-stepping** of divine limits. **In its final analysis, the first** Sin was a positive disbelief, **in the words of God**

Sin is otherwise described as, the "Fall of Man".

i) THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN:

**The consequences of Adam's fall were both immediate and far reaching. The immediate consequence was that, Adam's relationship with God was broken. Adam recognised the fact that he had lost his standing before God, owing to his disobedience. He had now a sense of God's displeasure upon him and also the condemnation of God rested upon him. The condemnation of God was that, for disobedience man would 'surely die'. God said to Adam "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return". This condemnation of God on Adam was again, both immediate and far reaching. Immediate, that Adam did die, and far reaching, that the descendants of Adam do die even today.**

**"Wherefore, as by one man Sin entered into the world, and death by Sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all**

men have sinned."

Elsewhere Paul writing on the same theme says,

"As in Adam all die ..."<sup>9</sup>

Because of the unity of race in ~~Adam~~ and the **organic** unity of mankind Adam's one sin (or **sinful nature**) is imputed to each member of the race. The one **initial** sin of ~~Adam~~ is transmuted in the form of sinful **nature** by inheritance, from father to son throughout all generations. Now, men do not fall by their **first sin** but they are born fallen sons of Adam. **They are not** sinful by sinning, but they sin because **by nature they** are sinful. The effect of the **fall is universal**.

Thus, death is the far **reaching consequence** of Adam's Sin. ~~Man~~ the creature, had **the privilege** of sharing the immortal nature of God. **But by sinning** he forfeited his privilege, **and became subjected to** death.

What would have been the situation, if man had not sinned? To this **thought-provoking question**. Smith suggests that there **might have** been a **seperation** of soul and body, but **he** adds, "**it is certainly** supposable that the **transistion to another state** might be made without anything, **of that which** now goes to make up the **terribleness of** death".

Death is the separation of **the two basic elements** in man - the immaterial from **the material**, or the soul from the body. We have seen **that man was created by** God, with a material body **and immaterial** soul. When man ceases to exist as **a union of the two, i.e.,** the body with the soul, **we say he is dead**. Death then, is the disassociation **of the two**, while life is union of the two.

The Words **of Paul: "As in Adam all die •••"** have primary reference to death. But Paul was dealing with the subject of **resurrection and sets it over against**



#### IV C. SALVATION: Gods's Plan and Program for Man's Redemption

**Our** observation so far has been that the human race has been a result of natural generation through the centuries, with Adam being the first man created by God. And Adam's one initial sin is imputed to the entire human race, resulting in the unvarying sentence of death upon all. But God who created man and nature in such an orderly way, has not left man to a haphazard and an uncertain end. He has a definite plan and program of salvation for redeeming man.

Salvation is the whole work of God by which He rescues man, from the doom of sin (death) and bestows upon him eternal life, rather restores the initial privilege of immortal life. Salvation therefore, is the purpose of God to redeem fallen man. In all its aspects, it is God's work on behalf of man and not vice-versa.

God's plan of salvation was provided in the person

and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was made to assume flesh<sup>12</sup> like us, to die in our stead. His death was substitutionary death, this simply means, that Christ died **in** place of **the** fallen man. As Christ Himself said,

"For even the son of man came not  
be ministered unto, but to minister  
and to give his life a ransom for  
many."<sup>13</sup>

His death, as He Himself said, was **to be a payment** in the place of many. His death was in **the place of** the fallen man and for his benefit. In **relation** to Salvation, His death means the payment of **a price which** Sin demanded, so that the fallen **man could be redeemed.**

The death of Christ not only paid **the price for** sin, but also averted the **condemnation of God.** Because Christ died, God is satisfied.

The death of Christ is effective and **is acceptable**

as a ransom for many, because **of** the **impeccability** of Christ. The **impeccability**, refers to the **sinless** nature of Christ. **Christ** though tempted as any human, remained **sinless**. **The** substitutionary death of Christ does not end with the fact **that** he died as a ransom, but His substitution is **effective** in that He rose from the dead. The idea of **salvation** would have never been meaningful, if Christ did **not** rise from the dead.

Paul, in First **Corinthians** shows it very clearly, that if Christ is not risen, then men **are** still in their sins.<sup>14</sup> And if men are yet **in their sins**, the redemptive Program of God is an **utter failure**.

Thus, the doctrine of resurrection is **vital** linked with the concept of **salvation**.

Salvation is provided to **the world** in a general sense. As Adam's initial sin is **imputed** to the **human** race, to the end **that all** are under penalty of death.

and as the sin **of man** was **imputed** to Christ, to the end that He became a ransom **for the whole world**, so also the righteousness of **God is imputed** to all who believe, to the end that **they may stand before God** justified, free from the **condemnation of death**.

In the death and **resurrection of Christ**, God has provided salvation **for the human race**, the whole scheme is laid open to **every man**. All that is required of man is, to accept **what God has provided by faith**, without which the **accomplished work of Christ** stands meaningless **to the individual member of the human race**. The acceptance **of this accomplished work of Christ**, is what makes **man to have passed from "the condemnation of death unto life."**<sup>15</sup>

#### IV D. JESUS CHRIST: The Incarnation of God,

The Uniqueness of Christianity is **the close kinship of Christ and the distinctiveness of Christ** is that, He is the incarnation of God. **In other words.** He is the divine-human-being. The whole substance of Christian faith centres in Jesus Christ, **without Him** there is absolutely nothing.

The study of the **incarnation of Christ, raises** the question concerning His **pre-incarnate state or** the pre-existence of Christ, i.e., Did Christ **exist** before He was born?

##### i) PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST:

The question concerning the **pre-existence** of Christ, is answered in John's Gospel, **Chapter one and** verses one and two which read as **follows:**

"In the beginning was the **Word, and** the Word was **with God, and the word was God.** And **the** same **in** the **beginning** was

with God."<sup>16</sup>

In eternal past, **"Christ was with God", i.e., in the beginning. "In the beginning", in John's Gospel refers to, "in the beginning" of the Genesis account.** where it says,

**"In the beginning God created..."<sup>17</sup>**

"This reveals another aspect of Christ, and that is, Christ had a part in creation where God said,  
**"Let us make man in our image..."<sup>18</sup>**

The reference is being made to Christ, in the usage of the plural pronoun us. The same is asserted by John, in his Gospel, when he declares,

**"all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made."<sup>19</sup>**

That Christ had a part in creation, undoubtedly speaks of his pre-incarnate state. Someone has said:

"a word is **a** medium of manifestation,  
a means of communication, a method  
of revelation."<sup>20</sup>

In harmony with this we read,

21

"And the word became flesh".

The Word becoming flesh, was a medium of God's manifestation of Himself in the person of Christ, and in the person of Christ God communicated Himself with the fallen man. Again, Christ was the method by which God's plan of salvation for humanity was carried out.

## ii) INCARNATION:

As seen earlier in John's Gospel, *Christ*, who was with God in eternal past, became flesh and lived among men. "Became flesh", is considered to be a designation of human nature, referring to its lower and visible side. It declares one of ~~whom~~, humanity could be affirmed. The meaning would have still been the same,

if John had said, "the Word became Man."

iii) HUMAN BIRTH:

In becoming flesh, to dwell among **human beings**,  
 in the first place, he was born of a **woman**.<sup>22</sup> His  
<sup>23</sup>  
 descent is traced back to Adam by **Luke**. But the  
 question that had been raised concerning **his humanity**  
 is, did Christ inherit a sinful nature? **Like it is**,  
 since the fall. In being born of a **woman**, He, though  
 He lay aside His glory, in no sense **did He lay aside**  
 His Deity. He was still God, **though in Human form**.  
 His essential nature of being **sinless**, was no way  
 tampered with, by being born **of a woman**. On the  
 other hand, we have ample **evidences concerning his**  
 sinless nature. John says, "in **Him was no sin**".  
 And Paul says "Who knew no **Sin**"<sup>25</sup> etc.

iv) HUMAN NATURE:

Concerning **His Human Nature**, Christ had all the



elements that are essential to human **nature**. He **had** the development of ordinary human beings. He **grew**, he advanced in wisdom and stature.

He had a body and a soul **or** spirit, the **material** and immaterial aspect of human nature. Of **the body**, we read,

"Through the **offering of the body** of Jesus Christ"<sup>27</sup>

"He Spake of **the temple of his** body"<sup>28</sup>

"He partook of Flesh and **blood**"<sup>29</sup>

Concerning the Soul, we read,

"My soul is exceedingly sorrow-fill, even unto death"<sup>30</sup>

"~~Now~~ my soul is troubled"<sup>31</sup>

"Jesus perceiving **in His Spirit.**"<sup>32</sup>

"Father, into they hands I commend  
my spirit"<sup>33</sup>

Further, he had the characteristics of a **human**  
being, like being hungry, **thirsty**, **tiresomeness**,<sup>36</sup>  
etc. And He was repeatedly **called**, a "Man".<sup>37</sup>

Despite the overwhelming **proof** of His humanity,  
Christ did not forsake His **Deity**. He continued to be  
God. In Him all the fulness of the **God** dwelt **bodily**.<sup>38</sup>  
The very essence and the **nature** of the God head, dwelt  
in Him, In short, he was **not merely God-like-man** but  
He was God-man.

#### v) **PURPOSE OF INCARNATION:**

The **One** and the **only** purpose of His coming, is to  
put away sin by **the sacrifice** of Himself. He came to  
give His life **a ransom** for many, to redeem man from sin  
by His death. **As John** puts it,

"and **we** know that He hath been

manifested to take away Sins;  
and in HIM was no Sin".<sup>39</sup>

But the question is, why **must he be a sinless man?** To this Schaff answers,

"because the justice of God requires, that the same **human** nature which had sinned should make satisfaction for sin; **but** no man being himself a **sinner**, could satisfy for others."<sup>40</sup>

The idea of putting away sin refers to **the** scape-goat, where a goat was offered as **a sacrifice and** another was sent into the wilderness, after **the sins** have been confessed upon its head.

Thus Christ was referred to as **the "Lamb of God**  
**41**  
**which has taken away the sin of the world."** **The**  
**Death of Christ is the foundation for man's redemption.**

IV E. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: **The** fulfilment of God's Plan of Salvation and a fortaste of (future) eschatology.

We have just seen the incarnation of God, in **the** person of Jesus Christ and also the purpose of the incarnation. It would be quite profitable to **look into** the work of Christ, during the earthly stay, as for example, His works as Benefactor, His labours as a Teacher, His deeds as a Healer, etc., but because of the nature of our work, we must pass these by and concentrate on the two main things in **His work, and** they are, His death and resurrection.

We would refer to death of Christ as a "Work", because His death was result **of** a definite **choice**, (for a purpose) on His part. It **was not** a **death** that came by unavoidable circumstances, **or came** upon Him unawares. Therefore, the usage of the **term** 'work', could be justified, because **or the purpo** of Christ's death.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ (and the

concept of resurrection in general), is essential to Christianity, And if resurrection of Christ is essential, the death of Christ is equally essential, **since** death preceedes resurrection.

The uniqueness of Christianity is **this, that it** assigns importance to the Death **of** its **founder**. The elimination of the death of Christ, is **as good as the** elimination of Christianity **from** the list **of religions\***

The death of Christ is the **fundamental theme of** Gospel. The term 'Gospel' means '**Good-news**' and the good news is this, that Christ **died for the sins of** man-kind because it implies **that we do not need to** die for them.

The Pauline description of the **Gospel is**

"the death of Christ **for our sins,**  
burial and **resurrection.**"<sup>42</sup>

In short the death of Christ is the **"Good news of Salvation"**•

This essential element of Christianity **and the** fundamental theme of the Gospel, is **prophesied in the** Old Testament on several occasions by **different writers**, as for example, we read about the **cruxifixion** of Christ in Psalms, <sup>43</sup> again <sup>44</sup> **in Psalms** we read about His resurrection. In Isaiah, **we are told that** He,

"was wounded for our **transgressions** and bruised for our **inquiries**."<sup>45</sup>  
Zechariah<sup>46</sup> **foretells the selling** of Christ for **thirty Silver Pieces** and the investment of that in **pot-  
ters field**.

To list out the references **in the New Testament** would be reduntant, because the entire **New Testament** revolves around the vital theme **of Christ's death an**

resurrection.

The death of Christ is the **fulfillment of the** chief purpose of Incarnation. **We have earlier pointed** out that the "Son of man came to give **His life a ransom for many**".<sup>47</sup> Thus, we repeat, **that Christ primarily came to die for the fallen man. The Incarnation of Christ is not an end in itself; it is but a means to **an** end, the end **is the** redemption of the lost through the death of Christ on the **cross**.**

The death of Christ, **a ransom for many, first of all, brings reconciliation between God and man. The relationship that was broken, at the time of man's fall, is now restored. Restored, because Christ atoned for man. The condemnation or the curse of God on man, has been removed.**

Christ has removed the **curse, as we read "Christ**  
48
**hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law."**

The summary of the whole redemptive program of *God* is like this:

At first God and man (Adam) stood face to face with each other. In sinning, Adam turned his back upon God. Then God turned His back upon Adam, Christ's death has satisfied the demands of God and now God has again turned His face toward man. (But what remains is that, the fallen man must turn around and face God, i.e., believe that Christ died for Him).

i) THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST:

The objective aspect of the entire redemptive program of God for man, includes more than the death of Christ; it includes His resurrection also.

Christianity as a religion, stands or **falls** with Christ's resurrection.

The **resurrection of Jesus Christ was a body** resurrection. There are many **who refuse to accept the**



bodily resurrection and advocate spiritual resurrection. They say, "in His Death He passed out of His Physical life and in His resurrection, He passed into spiritual life". But this by no means is an explanation, because if it is resurrection, it is the resurrection of the body and not of the spirit, for the spirit by its inherent nature does not die. The spirit is immortal and further more, if one passes into spiritual life, it need not be by resurrection, it could as well be by death itself. Perhaps, it's more logical to conceive of moving on to another phase by Death than resurrection.

Resurrection, is resurrection of the body, and not of the Spirit. This is proved by the by the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. Christ Himself declared

"Behold my hands and my feet, that  
is myself, handle me, and see, for  
the spirit hath not flesh and bones,

as you see me have.'

Again, he was recognised by his disciple, that He was Jesus, with the nail print on his hand.<sup>50</sup> Infact, the resurrection of Jesus becomes unintelligible if it was other than bodily resurrection.

"The resurrection of Christ affirms His Deity, as Paul says, He was declared to be the "son of God ... by the resurrection from the dead". Had Christ remained in the grave as other men had been, there would have been no reasonable ground to impose faith in Him, In fact, Christ's work of redeeming mankind has been acceptable to God because of resurrection. We read in Romans," was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.<sup>52</sup> The essence of the "statement would be, He died for the sin of mankind and rose again "for the sake of" justification. Resurrection is the objective proof of God's acceptance of Christ's death in place of man's sin. The confidence

that God has accepted Christ's sacrifice would not have been the same, if Christ had not rise from the dead.

Finally, Christ's resurrection carries with it with assurance that all men will rise from the dead. In our classic passage on resurrection we read,

"as in ~~Adam~~ all die; even so in Christ all be made alive",<sup>53</sup>

As in ~~Adam~~ all men die physically, so in Christ, all men are raised physically. In short, the resurrection of Christ guarantees the resurrection of all men. This guarantee is a foretaste of the future eschatology according to the Christian doctrine and as well, the consummation of God's original creative act. i.e. In creation, man was created in God's image, which we noticed was immortal. So in resurrection, we find this immortality is being restored to man.

The entire survey on the various Christian doctrines.

brinjs us to this conclusion that the resurrection is not an incidental or peripheral matter. Indeed, resurrection is an integral part of the entire Christian doctrine. The elimination of resurrection leads to elimination of Christianity itself, we cannot remove the foundation and yet retain the building.

## CONCLUSION

### Paradox of John Hick's Critique of Resurrection and Life Hereafter

The main objective of the thesis has been to establish the possibility of identifying the present life with life hereafter (resurrection) and also show the centrality of resurrection to Christianity. We have done this with special reference to John Hick and have criticised Hick's position on resurrection and life-hereafter.

The first phase of criticism was aimed at showing that personal identity between earthly life and resurrected life is possible. Personal identity, we pointed out, was the bodily criterion, i.e. the form or resemblance persists despite the disintegration that the body is subjected to. In this connection we have also considered the problem of disembodied survival, where we established that the disembodied state of existence

can be linked with the embodied or pre-mortem state with the help of memory criterion.

With this we proceeded to discuss the twin problem of immortality and eternity. Here again we discussed in relation to Hick's argument that eternity is an 'age'. And pointed out that eternity or eternal does not carry with it the idea of an 'age' or duration anywhere in the New Testament, but timelessness or more precisely non-temporal. Further, we also pointed out that it is an logical inconsistency to conceive of one without the other. In discussing-the two problems viz. problem of personal identity and disembodied survival, we have seen that Christian notion of both is tenable.

In the second phase of our enquiry, we have criticised Hick's view on immortal life or life-hereafter. Here, we have shown the inconsistency of Hick's position on life after death. The findings

of our enquiry in this phase have been more interesting, in that they show that Hick was making a shift from Western thought to Indian thought. We pointed out the Vedantic theme of Atman and Brahman and reincarnation are embedded in his later writings. From what we have said so far, it affirms that Hick has been influenced by the Indian thought and was amalgamating both the Christian and Vedantic thought, with a view to -defend his notion of life-hereafter.

This supposed amalgamation is, in our view, no amalgamation. To use a metaphor the whole thing looks like, mixing oil with water. What he did perhaps could be better expressed by saying that Hick smuggled some of the ideas of Indian thought and tried to push it into Christianity by the back door. This is vividly seen in his effort to incorporate the idea of transcending ego-boundaries into the corpus of Christianity and to justify it, by appealing to the teachings of

Christ. This has been shown untenable. Nowhere does Christ refer to such a corporate living, infact there is a blatant inconsistency between what Hick claims and what is really claimed by Christ. More over the term like 'love thy neighbour' for example, though refers to the transcendence of one's ego, does not have any spiritual meaning but only have a moral import. Such propositions are meant to be moral propositions and they do not indicate anything what Hick is trying to attribute to them.

Finally, after showing the untenability of Hick's critique, we have tried to show how resurrection is embedded in the various doctrine of man, salvation etc. Thus pointing out that resurrection is not a peripheral matter but an integral part of the Christian thought.

Our enquiry shows that Hick's critique as a whole, does not shed any new light to Christianity nor does it make Christianity free from resurrection, a task which Hick was involved with.



Hick's argument against resurrection (based on linking earthly life with resurrected-life) amounts to a challenge of the entire frame-work of Christianity. As we have seen in the chapter entitled Christianity and Resurrection, that Resurrection is so vital to Christianity that one cannot conceive of, one without the other. This involves a paradox i.e. how can one challenge, one's own frame-work, while retaining it? Hick is precisely doing, what he cannot do, i.e., questioning the framework of Christianity and yet at the same time working with it. For Hick, at the out set claims, that Christianity provides for him the framework for his philosophical discussion.

Again in his later phase as well, Hick's position is a paradoxical one, when he is suggesting, **the life-**hereafter to be, one of self-transcendence, transcending ego-boundaries, a corporate life, **many-in-one** and one-in-many.

The paradox is this. Hick appears to have moved away from the Christian frame-work (on to **the Vedantic**

view of life-hereafter). This however is not the case. Though he is talking about transcending ego-boundaries he is taking recourse to the teachings of Christ in order to justify his new claims, which really cannot be done. For the teachings of the **Christian view of** life-hereafter and the Vedantic view of life-hereafter or diametrically opposed one to the other.

In the ultimate analysis, Hick both in **his early** phase and later phase is entangled in a paradoxical situation, this in our evaluation involves **the "Paradox of John Hick's Critique of Resurrection and life-hereafter"**.

## N O T E S

### Introduction

1. The Bible - II Samuel 12:23

### Chapter I

1. Philosophy of Religion, **Hick John, Prentice Hall, Inc. U.S.A., 1963, Ch. 4 & 7.**
2. Problems of Religious Pluralism, **Hick John, St. Martins Press, New York, 1985, Ch.9.**
3. Death and Eternal Life, **Hick John, Macmillan, London, 1985.**
4. **Ibid.,**
5. Philosophy of Religion, **Hick John, Prentice Hall, Inc. U.S.A., 1963, p.6.**
6. **Ibid., p.6.**
7. **Ibid., p.7.**
8. The Bible - Duet. **6:4-5**

9. Philosophy of Religion. Hick John, **Prentice Hall,**  
Inc. U.S.A., 1963, p.6.
10. The Bible - Cf., Isaiah, 40: 18-26, 43:10, 44:6 & 8  
48:13, Amos 1:3-2; 2:16; 9:5.8.
11. The Bible - John 3:16.
12. Ibid., Isaiah, 57:15.
13. Ibid., Isaiah. 64:6.
14. Ibid., Isaiah, 40:25.
15. Philosophy of Religion, Hick John, Prentice Hall,  
Inc. U.S.A., 1963, p.48.
16. Ibid., p.51
17. Ibid., p.51
18. Ibid., p.53
19. Ibid., p.53
20. Ibid., p.53

21. Quoted by Hick John, Problems of Religious Pluralism, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1985, p.131.
22. Death and Eternal Life, Hick John, Macmillan, London, 1985, p.38.
23. The Bible - Genesis 126.
24. Death and Eternal Life, Hick John, Macmillan, London, 1985, p.100.
25. Ibid., p.103.
26. Ibid., p.346-47.
27. The Bible - Acts 2:33
28. Death and Eternal Life, Hick John, Macmillan, London, 1985, p.179.
29. The Bible - I Corinthians Ch. 15.
30. Death and Eternal Life, Hick John, Macmillan, London, 1985, p.174.

31. Problems of Religious Pluralism. Hick **John**,  
St. Martin's Press, **New** York, 1985, **p.143**.
32. Death and Eternal Life, Hick John, Macmillan,  
London, 1985, p.155,
33. Problems of Religious Pluralism. Hick John,  
St. Martin's Press, **New** York, 1985, **p.41**.
34. Cf., Ibid., p.134

## Chapter II

1. David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, ed., L.A. Selbg Bigge, Oxford, 1986, BK I, part 4, Sec.6.
2. Penelhum Terrance, "Life and Death", in Contemporary Philosophy of Religion, (ed.) Steven M Chan & David Shatz, Oxford, University Press, N.Y., U.S.A, 1982, p.192.

The appeal to custom means to be quite prominent in the works of later-Wittgenstein. His argument against the possibility of a private language, the notion of rules, form of life etc., are to a great extent explained by him by appealing to what is accepted as convention in society. The various conventions for a custom that is determined by the meaning of a given thing. Appealing to custom should be thus, distinguished from its empirical-sociological dimension. The present reference to custom is thus meant in the above philosophical sense.

4. Philosophy of Religion, Hick John, Prentice Hall Inc., U.S.A., 1963, p.51.
5. Survival and Disembodied Existences/Routledge Penelhum Terrance, & Kegan Paul, U.K., 1980, p.14.
6. The Bible, I Cor. 15; 37.
7. Ibid., Luke, 16:19-31.

8. This view of Descartes is one of the two central themes of the Meditations.
9. Cf ., Survival and Disembodied Existence, Penelhum Terrance, Routledge & Kegan Paul, U.K., 1980, p.24.
10. cf ., An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis, Hospers John, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., U.K., 1976, p.415.
11. The Bible, Matt. 17:34.
12. Ibid.,
13. Phaedo, Quoted in Melwin Rader The Enduring Questions, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y., U.S.A., 1969, p.42.
14. We may note Ryle, being radical behaviourist holds an extreme doctrine where even mental activities and mental verbs are described by physical activities and physicalistic vocabulary

Similarly Peter Strawson seeks to resolve the mind-body dicothemy of the Cartesians by appealing to the concept of person. For him the concept of 'person' is a primitive category which incorporates both body and mind or to it we can ascribe both 'M' predicate (material object predicate) 'P' predicate (personal predicates) to use his own expression. Ref• Individuals,



15. The Bible, I Cor. 15:54.
16. F.M. Conford, Plato and Parmenides. trans. N.Y., U.S.A, 1939.
17. Cf., Ibid
18. Wolfson, H.A., Duration, Time and Eternity, **in** the Philosophy of Spinoza, BK.I, Cambridge, Mass. 1934, Ch. 10.
19. The Bible, Matt. 18:8.
20. Ibid., Matt. 19:29.
21. Ibid., Matt. 19:29.
22. Ibid., John 3:16.
23. Ibid., John 3:15.
24. Philosophy of Religion, Hick **John**, **Prentice Hall**, Inc., U.S.A., 1963. p.53.

## Chapter III

1. Problems of Religious Pluralism, Hick John,  
St. Martins Press, N.Y., U.S.A., 1985, p.**143**.
2. Ibid., p.141
3. Ibid., p.141
4. Cf., Martin Israel, 'The Nature of Eternal Life'  
in Life After Death, by Arnold Togabee & others,  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, U.K., 1977, p.159.
5. Problems of Religious Pluralism, Hick John,  
St. Martins Press, N.Y., U.S.A., 1985, p.**145**.
6. Quoted in Problems of Religious Pluralism, Hick  
John, St. Martin Press, N.Y., U.S.A., 1985, p.**136**
7. Ibid., p.136
8. Singh, Surjit, Preface to Personality,. **1952**,  
quoted in Indian Christian Theology, by R.H.S  
Boyd, C.L-s. Madras, 1969, p.**210 & 211**.

Chapter IV

1. The Bible -Genesis 1:27.
2. Ibid., Genesis 2:7.
3. Ibid., Genesis 2:19.
4. Ibid., Genesis 3:6.
5. Ibid., Ecclestantes 12:7.
6. Ibid., Genesis 2:16 & 17 .
7. Ibid., Genesis 3:19.
8. Ib id., Romans 5:12.
9. Ibid\*, I Corinthians 15:22.
10. Quoted in Introductory tortures in Systematic Theology. **Henry Clarence Thiessen, W M B Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grandrapids Michigan, 1968, p.251.**
11. The Bible - I **Corinthians 15:21 & 22.**

12. Ibid., John 1:14.
13. Ibid., Mark 10:45.
14. Ibid., I Corinthians 15:17.
15. Ibid., Romans 8:1 & 2.
16. Ibid., John 1:1 & 2.
17. Ibid., Genesis 1:1.
18. Ibid., Genesis 1:26.
19. Ibid., John 1:3.
20. Quoted in Lectures in Systematic Theology, by Theissen, WM.B. Eerman Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, U.S.A, 1968, p.312.
21. The Bible - John 1:14.
22. Ibid., Galatians, 4:4.
23. Ibid., Luke 3:28-38.
24. Ibid., I John 3:5.

25. Ibid., II Corinthians 5:21.
26. Ibid., Luke 2:52.
27. Ibid., Hebrews 10:10.
28. Ibid., John 2:21.
29. Ibid., Hebrews 2:14.
30. Ibid., Matthew, 26:38.
31. Ibid., John 12:27.
32. Ibid., Mark 2:8.
33. Ibid., Luke 23:46.
34. Ibid., Matthew, 4:2.
35. Ibid., John 19:28.
36. Ibid., John 4:6.
37. Ibid., John 1:30, Acts 2:22, John 8:57.
38. Ibid., Colossians 2:9.

39. Ibid., I John 3:5.
40. Quoted in Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology, Henry Clarence Thiessen, W M B Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grandrapids Michigan, 1968, p,312
41. The Bible, John 1:29.
42. Ibid., I Corinthians 15:1-4.
43. Ibid., Psalms 22:1.
44. Ibid., Psalms 16:8-10.
45. Ibid., Isaiah 53:4-6.
46. Ibid., Zechariah 11:12&13.
47. Ibid., Mark 10:45.
48. Ibid., Galatians 3:13.
49. Ibid., Luke 24:39.
50. Ibid., John 20:27.
51. Ibid., Romans 1:4.
52. Ibid., Romans 4:25.
53. Ibid., I Corinthians, Chapter 15

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