

# **The Indwelling of the Spirit: A Hindu-Christian Reflection**

by

Dr Christina Manhar  
Uni of Gloucester

## **Synopsis**

The Upaniṣads point to the mysterious, intimate motion of the Spirit, the mystery that pervades the universe is present in the innermost self of human beings. In this context the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the indweller will play a decisive role in mutual enrichment of Hinduism and Christianity. The Upaniṣads invites us to discover the fullness of the Spirit in the inner centre of inmost being of every human. While we acclaim that the Upaniṣadic accent of the inward experience of the divine resonates with many strands of Christian tradition we do not fail to point out that in the Christian tradition the Spirit is understood within a Trinitarian framework. The inner communion or the *perichoretic* relationship within the members of the Trinity reveals that within Godhead there is communion. Consequently this enables us to say that when we speak of the indwelling of the Spirit we are in fact speaking about the indwelling of the Trinity. This perception of a personal, interactive and inter-subjectivity of the Spirit enriches any understanding of the Spirit in impersonal and individualistic terms.

## **Introduction**

Hindu theology and, to be precise, the Upaniṣadic tradition is much oriented towards ‘spirituality’ ‘interiority’ ‘self-realization’ and a deep yearning to move from the incomplete to the complete (*pūrnā*). The following Upaniṣadic prayer found in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3:8 describes the spiritual longing of the Hindus.

*Asato ma sad gamaya* (from unreal lead me to real)

*Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya* (from darkness lead me to light)

*Mṛtyor ma amṛtam gamaya* (from death lead me to immortality)

It is to the Spirit that most Upaniṣadic texts point. What comes through the texts of the Upaniṣads is the deep yearning to listen to the internal voice of Supreme Life-force. Hence in this context the understanding of the Holy Spirit as indweller and inspirer is a relevant theme to explore. Our aim here is not to offer a new *theologoumena* or to meditate on Christian faith as mere concepts but to start with the experience of the Spirit which is at the centre of Christian theological tradition as well as Upaniṣadic tradition of Hinduism.

## **The Upaniṣadic Tradition**

The Upaniṣads represent a time when Brahmanic ritualism had reached saturation point and the age of the Spirit began. The Upaniṣadic tradition is a reaction to an overemphasis on ritualism in religion. Instead of an external religion of rituals and

sacrifices, it emphasises the intuitive and experiential knowledge of Brahman. Thus, it introduced a new worldview in Indian religious thinking. Augustine Thottakara explains,

The new trend of thought marked a shift from the external sacrificial ritualism of the Brahmanas to a search for internal knowledge of one Supreme Reality of the Upaniṣads, from *karma-kanda* to *jnana-kanda*, from Brahmanism to a kind of Sramanism, from a polytheistic idea of godhead to a monotheistic or monistic concept of the absolute ultimate Being. Man who was the sacrificer (*yajamana*) in the Brahmanic period, becomes the seeker of knowledge of Brahman (*brhama-jijnasu*) in the Upaniṣads (Thottakara 1998: 341).

The Upaniṣads cover several centuries (from the ninth to the sixth centuries BCE) of reflection on the divine, the mystery of being and the universe. There are about 112 Upaniṣads and some of the oldest ones are Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya and Íśa Upaniṣads. Upa-ni-ṣad literally means to be seated at the feet of the master in order to receive his instruction. They are mainly conversations between a master and a disciple. This teaching is secret and hidden and “is the disclosure of certain ‘correspondences’ which are not perceptible at the mental level (the realm of *manas*), but which a particularly acute *buddhi* (intelligence or intuition) can discern” (Abhishiktananda 1975, Reprint ed. 1997: 83). The central message of the Upaniṣads is intuition of non-duality and the inner correspondence between *ātman* and *Brahman*. The Supreme Reality is understood to be “the deepest mystery of immanence in the human consciousness” (Abhishiktananda 1975, Reprint ed. 1997: 77). The deepest centre of the human being, which is *ātman*, and the deepest centre of the universe, which is *Brahman*, are one and the same. This shows the “impossibility of putting in *dvanda*, in a pair, God and the cosmos” because “the Absolute is not simply transcendent but transcendent and immanent all in one. The transcendent dimension forbids monistic identification; the immanent dimension, dualistic differentiation” (Panikkar 1968: 519-520). With this overview of the Upaniṣadic tradition we shall now consider the Upaniṣadic epistemology in some detail.

### **The Upaniṣadic Epistemology**

The Upaniṣadic way of knowing is not imparting information or conceptual knowledge; instead, the aim here is to help the seeker to have an attitude of mind and heart to experience God within. It is realising the unique presence of the Self or the Supreme Spirit within one’s own self. This is realising the secret place within a person, which is called *guhā* in the Upaniṣads. In the unfathomable silence, God is known. “Only in a state of total peace and relaxation, pure receptivity and expectancy, emptied of all thought, desire and volition, a simple transparency” will the Real be manifested in all its fullness. Brahman is “*asti*” (“it is”), “*tad etad iti*” (“that is it”) (Abhishiktananda 1979, Revised ed. 1997: 52).

According to the Upaniṣads, intellectual tools cannot help to understand God but God is known and heard in the heart. One has to be receptive to the unique presence of God within oneself. “It is not a question of attaining to the knowledge of God or to

the Presence of God, but of recognizing, realizing, that this Presence *is*” (Abhishiktananda 1979, Revised ed. 1997: 35, n.7).

Knowing God within means seeing the relation between God and the world as *advaitic*. The relationship between God and the world is neither one nor two.

It is simply the mystery that God and the world are not two. It is the mystery of unity (*ekatvam*). Advaita or non-duality means precisely this: neither God alone, nor the creature alone, not God plus the creature, not an ontological oneness; creature does not become God or God does not become creature but an indefinable non-duality which transcends at once all separation and all confusion (Abhishiktananda 1979, Revised ed. 1997: 98).

*Advaita* is not an idea but it is an experience. Abhishiktananda explains, “God is ‘*Adsum*’ – ‘I am present to thee’. The human being is also ‘*adsum*’ to God in the depth of his being. True wisdom is the experience of the divine ‘*adsum*’ at the base of my own ‘*adsum*’ to myself” (Abhishiktananda 1989, Revised ed. 2000: 6, n.1). In the Upaniṣads, the term *Ātman* illuminates the close proximity between divine and human.

### *Ātman*

In the Upaniṣads, the term *Ātman* is used to designate the Self, the Ultimate Reality that is Brahman. The root word ‘*an*’ (*aniti*), from which the term *Ātman* comes, means ‘to breathe, ‘to enliven,’ ‘to vivify.’ Therefore, the meaning of *Ātman* is “breath, life, life-principle, spirit, the vivifier.” There is also another opinion that the word *Ātman* comes from the root word ‘*at*’ (*atati*) which means “to go, to walk, to wander.” This indicates movement, the wind or the moving Spirit. Hence, the Brahman, the *Paramātman* or the Supreme Spirit is understood as the moving Spirit (Thottakara 1998: 342).

It is worth noticing that the Hebrew word ‘*ruach*,’ the Greek *pneuma* and the Latin *spiritus* have similar meanings. They refer to ‘breath’, ‘wind’, ‘movement of air’, ‘God’s energy’, ‘God’s strength, power and dynamic activity.’ The Spirit is wind-like energy. It refers to the creative and dynamic activity of God (Heron 1983: 3-4). Phrases such as the Spirit of the Lord, the wind of the Lord, the breath of the Lord refer to God’s activity both at the physical and at the spiritual level. The *ruach* of the Lord inspired the prophets, charismatic leaders and artisans. The *ruach* of God was active in liberating the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. The *ruach* is life-giving breath. It is the source of life (Gen 1:2; 6:17; 7:15; Gen 45:27; Judg 15:19; Ps 104:29; Ps 33:6; Job 33:4; 27:3; Isa 42:5; Ezek 37:5ff.). It is “God’s own power of creation, and the power of life, which is communicated, to all created things, in heaven and on earth.” The Spirit is the creative and vital energy of all that lives (Moltmann 1990: 92).

*Ātman* is also the term used to designate the human self, soul, spirit, and individual self. It indicates “that which makes an individual to be himself, that is, the principle of his essential personal identity” (Abhishiktananda 1975, Revised ed. 1997: 102). The term *ātman* is “the self – grammatically reflexive personal pronoun; it is the principle which constitutes the reality of the person, his awareness of himself”

(Abhishiktananda 1979, Revised ed. 1997: 61). In other words, the *ātman* or human spirit signifies “the most intimate core of the conscious being at a level beyond the reach of sense or mind” (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 95-96). It refers to the interiority of human self and it is the central point of all reality. Similarly, in Vedic understanding the word *ātman* means “breath or vital essence from which develops the meaning of soul or self” (Boyd 1977: 239). Also, the term *prāna* refers primarily to “the source of life within, and then to its diffused appearance throughout all the organs of body and mind, which are called *pranah*, or ‘vital breaths’, in the plural” (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 95). Here again it is worth noticing that the Hebrew term *ruach* also denotes “the vital principle in man, his whole psychical life, though usually regarded on its higher side, as the religious origin of the usage would suggest” (Robinson 1958: 20-21). *Ruach* is what gives life and personality and it is “what makes a creature a recognizable human being...” (Marriage 1989: 31). The term *pneuma* like the Hebrew *nephesh* is synonymous with the human soul or self or person.

In Upaniṣadic thought *ātman* as real self is distinguished from the empirical self. The *ātman* as real self is “the source of the three major elements of spiritual experience, namely the sense of the real, the presence of awareness, and the extension of freedom. It is the unity of being, truth and freedom.” The empirical self is the sum of one’s “customary roles, habits, aspirations, values, ideas, ideals, attitudes and sentiments, which are the deposits of his culture, and those biogenic traits which are reinforced by the mutable and the accidental” (Winthrop 1963: 147).

The Upaniṣads give central place to *ātman* as the real self and speak about the correspondence between *ātman* as the interiority of human self and the divine Self, Brahman. In the Upaniṣadic understanding, Brahman the transcendent Self indwells the heart of human beings as *ātman*. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14.2-4 says,

The intelligent whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether, omni-present and invisible, from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed; he who embraces all this, who never speaks, and is never surprised, he is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heaven, greater than all these worlds. He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and taste proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks and who is never surprised, he, my self (atman) within the heart, is that Brahman.

Knowing Brahman is like a lightning flash within. The desire to know God presupposes certain knowledge about God and therefore becomes a way of knowing (Chethimattam 1971: 133). Knowledge about God is not something intellectually constructed but rather it is received and experienced. It is knowing through one’s own inner self. This is *antar-yātrā*. Hindu pilgrimages to different sacred places are the symbolic act of this *antar-yātrā*.

Therefore, knowing God does not rely on objective observation but on subjective experience. The *antaḥkaraṇa*, the instrument of inner experience, provides reliable

evidence. This is a self-authenticating experience which needs no further proof. It is even said that an objective inner silence is reliable evidence of the knowledge of Brahman. By an objective inner silence is meant unbiased inner silence. It is a particular combination of concentration and detachment leading to an attentive inner silence. This subjective experience can be called intuition or sudden illumination or enlightenment. But this subjective experience does not discard reason; rather, it enhances reason. In the Upaniṣadic tradition ontology, epistemology and metaphysics are deeply interconnected. In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Yajñavalkya instructs his wife, Maitreyī, saying that Brahman, the Self alone, should be seen, heard, thought and pondered upon (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5). Brahman is the unseen Seer, unheard Hearer, the unthought Thinker, the understood Understander (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.8.11).

### **The Indwelling of the Spirit and Knowing God Within: A Christian Reflection**

The idea of the indwelling of the Spirit is not alien to biblical thought. In Ex 29:45–46, the liberator of Israel is one who dwells among the people. This theme recurs again in the prophets and in the priestly writings. In the Targums the term *Shekinah* is used to express the immanence of God who indwells his people. According to Wisdom literature, Wisdom is the imperishable breath in all things. Wisdom is kind, beneficent, all-powerful, permeates all things and holds all things in harmony (Wisdom 7:22-8:1). Wisdom is the divine mind immanent in this world guiding and directing all things from within. In the New Testament, in various passages, this idea of God's indwelling presence occurs (Jn 14:16-17, 23, 26; 15: 10, 26 Gal 4:6; I Cor 3:16; I Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 1:22; 3:2, 3; Rom 5:5; 2:29; 8:9, 11, 27; Eph 3:17; 2 Thess 3:5; I Jn 4: 12-13; I Jn 4:16).

The relationship between the human spirit and the divine Spirit is one of interpersonal communion. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen explains that by human spirit we mean “that aspect of a man or a woman through which God most immediately encounters him or her (Rom 8:16; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; Heb 4:12) that dimension wherein one is most immediately open to God (Matt 5:3; Luke 1:47; Rom 1:9; I Pet 3:4),” although one cannot be very sure in several passages of the New Testament whether the term spirit refers to the human spirit or the divine Spirit (Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, p. 28).

C. F. D. Moule points out that in the New Testament, for example in I Cor 2: 9-16, the term *pneuma* is used in reference both to God and to human beings. This indicates the affinity between the divine and human. Moreover, it also suggests that revelation comes to human beings through the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit stands for both the transcendence of God and God's immanent accessibility to human beings. Further, Moule points out Paul's emphasis on the ‘innate capacity’ of humans to receive God (Moule 2000: 8-9, 16).

Abhishiktānanda comments on Paul's use of the term *pneuma* for both human and divine:

Paul shows a disconcerting freedom in his use of the term *pneuma*. ... Paul's intuition boldly soars up to the Real, caring all too little for the fine distinctions of the intellect. At the deepest level of man's spirit is found the Spirit of God by which man's spirit is quickened (Rom 8:14). At the deepest

level of man's interiority there is the interiority of God, his Spirit, the spirit which introduces man into the very depths of God (I Cor 2:10). In fact, the Spirit alone can sound and reveal the abyss of Being, for it is in him that the cycle of Being, that is, of God's complete self-manifestation in his own mystery comes to its term (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 96).

In Yves Congar's view, Paul uses the term indwelling in the sense of "entering into a definitive relationship of covenant with God and of enjoying communion with him on the one hand and, on the other, of being in a state in which one is the true temple in which God dwells and where he is given spiritual worship" (Congar 1983: 80). Wheeler Robinson says, "If we may use the term 'spirit' to denote our human self-consciousness, the first thing we may say about it is that spirit operates as a unifying centre" (Robinson 1958: 68).

Further, Robinson points out that the term *ruach* originally meant desert wind, which carries an element of mystery and power. The term wind refers to upward thrust and to power that is beyond the human, which can be called supernatural. "It does exhibit the real inclusion of one life within another, ... in which man loses himself to find himself, and his life is 'hid with Christ in God'" (Robinson 1958: 273). Yet the Spirit is distinctly other to the human personality. The divine Spirit is a personality higher than our own and includes our own without destroying the "content of our self-consciousness" (Robinson 1958: 276).

[[Knowing God within is not uncommon also in the thought of the early church theologians. In the view of Didymus the Blind (c.313–98 CE) the Holy Spirit "will teach not like those who have acquired an art or knowledge by study and industry, but as being the very art, doctrine and knowledge itself" (McDonnell 1985: 223-224 citing *On the Holy Spirit* 1,2 (PG 23,130)). Augustine spoke about holy restlessness. Our hearts remain restless until they rest in God. We perceive God in our inner self. Augustine's exhortation, "Do not go abroad. Return within yourself. Truth dwells in the inner man. And if you find that your nature is mutable, transcend yourself... Therefore, head for the place where the very light of reason is kindled" (Lossky 1977: 74 citing *De vera religione*, I, 39; PL 34: 154), Meister Eckhart's confession that 'God is nearer to me than I am to myself' and Thomas Aquinas' reference to intimate presence of God in humans come close to the Upaniṣadic understanding of God. Like Augustine and Eckhart many other Christian mystics experienced God within. Bernard of Clairvaux speaks of a spiritual ladder leading up to God in progression from love of neighbour to love of God. Bonaventure spoke about the mind's journey to God. Teresa of Avila reaches to the castle of the soul through seven steps. Thomas Merton speaks of the spirituality of soul. It is in the innermost chamber that the soul perceives God and God perceives Godself. (Moltmann 1999: 91-93; Congar 1983: 81). They characterise a kind of infinite passion for God. They find fulfilment only in God. It is mutual knowing between God and the soul. This is often known as "the soul's 'mystical bridal' with God" (Moltmann 1999: 93).

We can also say that Upaniṣadic epistemology shares common ground with the Orthodox tradition of the East. In the Eastern tradition, the understanding is that God is beyond all conceptualization. The knowledge of God is experiential in the most personal sense. The knowledge of God brings about communion with God. Basil of

Caesarea speaks about the pneumatological roots of the knowledge of God. The work of the Holy Spirit is interior, it is knowledge from within, the Spirit produces illumination and one discovers God within (Bobrinsky 1984: 56 referring to Basil *On the Holy Spirit*, XVIII.47; XXVI. 61). According to Gregory Palamas, the knowledge of God is union with God. The apophatic way of knowing leads to union with God (Russo 1998: 173). Congar comments that in the Eastern tradition, it is not possible “either to know God or to express any positive idea of him, the deepest knowledge of him being purely experiential or mystical” (Congar 1983: 62).

Tracing back into history, Congar points out that Spiritual movements from the eleventh century onwards reacted to the hierarchical power structures by emphasising the role of the Holy Spirit. These movements emphasised inner light and spiritual experience as the basis for the daily life of a Christian. All these movements arose, says Congar, because of the lack of importance paid to subjective spiritual experience in religious life. Thus, they were a reaction to rationalism. This tells us that God’s intervention in human life can happen by way of mediation and also by way of immediacy. What is important here is the “inner illumination” that has occurred to people on various occasions and thus, “an irreducible personal factor enters into the instituted framework.” However, as Congar very clearly states, “this does not mean that it is not Christological. It could be called an element of Christological pneumatology or pneumatological Christology” (Congar 1986: 48-53).

Many contemporary theologians speak along the same lines. For example according to James Dunn the Spirit is “essentially an experiential concept” (Dunn 1975: 201) In G. S. Hendry’s view, “... the Spirit is God knowing himself, and to receive the Spirit is to participate in that knowledge” (Hendry 1953: 34). Kilian McDonnell says that the Spirit is both experience and a way of knowing ( McDonnell 1985: 222-23). “The Spirit known (object) is discovered by the Spirit knowing (subject)” (McDonnell 1985: 216-17). In other words, “God is object, but only because He is seen with His own seeing” (McDonnell 1985: 222).

Pneumatology plays the epistemological role in theology since no one understands God except through the Spirit. Knowing God by the Spirit within is non-objective, rather than a subjective experience. The Holy Spirit within, as a hidden persuader or the divine immanence in human, respects and enhances human personality. Hans Urs von Balthasar speaks of the Spirit as non-objective. The Spirit is breath and he breathes through us (Hans Urs von Balthasar 1993: 111-12). According to Heribert Mühlen, the Spirit is “the mediated mediation who mediates all to all, but who himself needs no further mediation” ( McDonnell 1998: 222 citing Heribert Mühlen, “Das Christuserignis als Tat des Heiligen Geistes,” *Mysterium Salutis* (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1969) 3/2.514). Thomas Weinandy says “... because of the Spirit dwelling within us, we are assumed into the very depths of God’s inner being – the mystery of God himself” (Weinandy 1995: 34). It is a blending of spirit with spirit or mingling of spirits with no replacement of human natural powers with divine powers or, to use Moule’s expression, the Spirit impinges on spirit (Moule 2000: 17). Robinson says that it is the “kinship of spirit and Spirit” (Robinson 1958: 121).

Abhishiktānanda points out that in the Indian context “God’s ‘Spirit’ would best be understood as meaning his *ātman*, his Self, since he is the deepest centre, the very ‘inwardness’, of the divine mystery.” Hence, one’s encounter with the Spirit is an

encounter with God's interiority at the deepest level of one's self. It is the meeting of the Spirit with the spirit. "In this depth of the soul, where the depth of God and the depth of the soul are but one and the same depth" (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 95).

In Upaniṣadic terms, as Abhishiktananda interprets, this is the communion between *ātman* and Brahman where *ātman* the human self is not absorbed in the divine Self. It is a deep interior communion between human and divine. It is a state of oneness or unity that is beyond dualistic categories. It is non-dual or *a-dvaita*, a kind of non-duality that transcends all separation. It is not a kind of monism but a unity-in-distinction. Following the Upaniṣadic pattern of thinking, Abhishiktananda explains that, in the most secret centre of one's being, "the only means of illumination is the purest awareness of the self; and this self-awareness is in fact nothing else than the reflection, the mirror, of the unique 'I AM', the very Name of Yahweh" (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 94-5). Here, God and human beings do not become one, yet they are not two. It is not ontological oneness yet it is in the divine 'I' that the human 'I' finds its ontological status and existence. Knowing is this 'deep awareness.' This is an awareness that the ineffable mystery that is deep within yet transcends one's being. It is beyond all concepts.

John Moffitt, analysing the Upaniṣadic way of knowing, claims, "in Christian terms, the voice of intuitive wisdom bears witness to God's dwelling in the depths of the human soul, where he is to be known. It tells a man to know God as the foundation of his own existence" (Moffitt 1973: 31). Avery Dulles speaks about five models of revelation namely, revelation as doctrine, revelation as history, revelation as inner experience, revelation as dialectical presence and revelation as new awareness (Dulles 1992: 121). We can see some parallels between the Upaniṣadic way of knowing and Dulles' model of revelation as inner experience, which is a direct divine communication to the human soul that is open to God. The above discussion makes it clear that the Spirit is an epistemological principle and an ontological reality. The Spirit is the indweller and also the link between God and human beings.

While we highlight these parallels between the Upaniṣadic epistemology and the epistemological role of the Spirit as understood in the Christian tradition we do not fail to acknowledge what Christian tradition has to offer to enrich the Upaniṣadic understanding of Spirit.

### **The Spirit in a Trinitarian Relationship: A Distinctive Contribution of Christianity**

In the Christian tradition the Spirit is always understood in relation to the Father and the Son. Jürgen Moltmann emphasises the Spirit's Trinitarian personhood in his writings. He writes,

The nature of the Holy Spirit is perceived only in his relationships to the other persons of the Trinity, who are 'of like nature,' His trinitarian inter-subjectivity illuminates his subjectivity, because his subjectivity is constituted by his inter-subjectivity. In his Trinitarian inter-personhood he is person, in that as person he stands over against the other persons, and as person acts on them (Moltmann 1999: 289-90).



The same idea is explained by Abhishiktānanda as the *advaita* of the Spirit. The Spirit and the Son are in each other rather than opposed to or stand over against each other. Likewise, when he speaks about the Trinity he says, "...In the mystery of God, at the very heart of Being, the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father, alike in the non-duality (*advaita*) of nature and in the threefold communion (*koinonia*) of Persons."

In the Spirit, he writes, the Father and the Son are fully revealed. The Spirit is the revelation of both the Father and the Son but the Spirit himself is not known apart from the Father and the Son (Abhishiktānanda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 103-4).

The biblical understanding of the indwelling of the Spirit as interpersonal communion can positively interact in general with the Upaniṣadic thinking of Brahman, who is the light that shines within the human self. The Upaniṣadic understanding could gain much from interacting with the concept of the Spirit of God as solidarity and communion. Michael Welker points out that the characteristic of the Spirit of God is a self-giving nature and self-withdrawal, even selflessness. The Spirit is a turning to others. The Spirit "makes present the self-withdrawing and self-giving Crucified One" and it is by "turning to Christ and others, the Spirit creates solidarity and communion" (Kärkkäinen 2002: 138 citing Michael Welker's *God the Spirit* trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), pp. 280-83). In Abhishiktānanda's view, the Spirit is the perfect communion that adds *koinonia* to essential *ekatvam* or oneness. One's own 'I' is discovered in the 'I' of the others.

### **The Indwelling of the Trinity**

Hence if we affirm the Trinitarian basis for the Spirit then we have to affirm here that the fact that the Holy Spirit indwells us means that the whole Trinity indwells us. In Congar's view, God encounters himself in the interiority of the human self.

God *himself* is present as a gift and he dwells in our innermost depths—'intimior intimo meo', 'more inward and more secret than my deepest and innermost self.' This means that the heart of the believer is, to the extent that the Spirit dwells in it, a place where God encounters himself and where there is consequently an inexpressible relationship between the divine Persons. It is really the desire or longing of God himself interceding for the saints at a deeper level than their own expressed or expressible prayer. Jesus himself, after all, said: 'O righteous Father...that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them' (Jn 17:26) (Congar 1983: 117).

Similarly Thomas Smail points out the comments of Heribert Mühlen on John 14:23. The whole Trinity makes its home within a person:

Those who love me will keep my word and my Father will love them *and we will come to them and make our home with them.*' Here again is the same first person plural that we found in Genesis 1, but here it has an almost explicitly trinitarian understanding of God to give it substance. It is the God who is the

‘We’ of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in their unity and their distinctness in whose image we are made and in whose image we are to be remade (Smail 2003: 25 citing Heribert Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person*, Münster: Verlag Aschendorf, 1963).

Again, the Eastern doctrine of *perichoresis* is suggestive here. It sees persons of the Trinity indwelling one another. They are consubstantial and they are “inside one another.” So, when we say the Holy Spirit indwells, we in fact mean the whole Trinity indwells a person (Congar 1983: 85). God indwelling us means a mutual communion between God and ourselves. Moltmann says, “In the charismatic experience of the Spirit, we experience the reciprocal perichoresis of God and ourselves. ... In the Holy Spirit, the eternal God participates in our transitory life, and we participate in the eternal life of God. This reciprocal community is an immense, outflowing source of energy” (Moltmann 1999: 196). In Abhishiktananda’s view, in the innermost depth of man, “God contemplates himself eternally” (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 121). Smail comments that Jesus in his humanity is *imago Trinitatis* since the human life of Jesus reveals such an interpersonal communion. This is the clue to our own ontology (Smail 2003: 25). This is explained by Abhishiktananda within the *advaitic* framework. Jesus was one with the Father or he found his ‘I’ in the ‘I’ of the Father. This is the place of ultimate encounter, the meeting of divine Spirit with the human spirit in the inner depth of one’s being.

For Jesus, God is truly ‘an Other’, another *I* distinct from his own *I*. Jesus addresses God as ‘You’, and God also speaks to him in the second person. With this *You*, this *Other*, Jesus has continual communion and communication. But the relationship is a particularly profound and mysterious one. No words can adequately describe it or fully express its richness (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 79).

There is no place for division, confusion and separation between the two. There is no *dvaita* but *advaita*. This is seen in Jesus’ prayer too. His prayer is “enfolded in the unique *Thou...*” (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 126-27). God is “not—one an—eka and also not—two, a—dvaita.” (Abhishiktananda 1974, Revised ed. 1997: 135). This is the meeting of *ātman* and Brahman. It is not an equivalence of *ātman* and Brahman but the human self is truly the human self and the divine self is truly the divine self, a non—duality transcends oneness.

Jesus in Spirit was one with the Father. Jesus was inseparable from the Father and the Spirit. Jesus’ own pneumatic life offers a clue to our own pneumatic existence. In Apostle Paul’s view, mature Christians “live by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16), “led by the Spirit” (Gal 5:18), have “the mind of the Spirit” (Rom 8:6) and ordain their lives by “the law of the Spirit” (Rom 8:2). Yet he does not separate the Spirit from Christ. Living by the Spirit means living by Christ. Hence Paul could say ‘It is not I but Christ lives in me.’ Thus he offers a Christological and pneumatological perspective on Christian life

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion we say that developing an interior life and pointing to God who abides in the heart and the inmost realm of human which is the true home of the divine is the strongest contribution of the Upaniṣadic tradition. Thus the Upaniṣads lay foundations for theology of inward experience which is not uncommon to Christian tradition. Both Christianity and Hinduism point to this interiority. However, at least three points stand out in the foregoing discussion of the Christian reflection of the Spirit. In Christian tradition, pneumatology cannot be separated from Christology. The Spirit's personhood is a Trinitarian personhood and the indwelling of the Spirit in Jesus makes Jesus *imago Trinitatis* and this precisely is the clue to our ontology. These are the distinctive contributions of Christian tradition to the Upaniṣadic tradition. The Upaniṣadic understanding of the Spirit can be greatly enriched by the rich understanding of the Spirit as relationship, solidarity and communion. The essential *ekatvam* of *advaita* can be enriched by communion of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the end, not just Christ, not merely Spirit, not even Spirit and Christ but the Trinity is the point of convergence. God may be all in all (I Cor 15:28). It is in the Trinity that unity and communion takes place since the Trinity itself is a model of such communion. To this end,

The Spirit and the Bride say 'come' (Rev 22:17).

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