



ON THE ROAD TO LIFE

(A Book on Counselling)

Rev. Fr. O. Thomas M.A., B.D, M.Th., P.D.P.T.

10

DIVYA BODHANAM SERIES
GROWING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD





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ON THE ROAD TO LIFE

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ON THE ROAD TO LIFE

(A Book on Counselling)

A Translation of the Malayalam Book

"Jeevitha Pathayil"

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FOREWORD

Him we declare to you teaching every person in all wisdom, so that we may present every human person perfect and mature in Christ.
St.Paul. Colossians 1:28

Trusting in the grace of God, we launch this English series: "Divyabodhanam- On the Road to Life". This English adaptation of the Divyabodhanam series in Malayalam is meant for our lay people outside Kerala who are unable to use the Malayalam series.

This first series can only be on an experimental level. After the books have been used for some time, we hope to revise them in the light of users' comments. So please write to us quite frankly about how the series can be improved.

In our Orthodox tradition, we give only secondary importance to intellectual teaching. The important thing is to participate regularly in the sacramental life of the Church, in worship and prayer. We grow in divine wisdom as we separate ourselves from evil and grow more God-like.

The sacramental mysteries of the Church, like Baptism, Mooron (Holy Chrism) and Holy Qurbana are the means by which Christ wants us to grow in Him. Equally important is our life of selfless love and service to our fellow human beings. This study series can help you to grow closer to Christ, through worship, prayer and the sacramental mysteries and through a life of loving and compassionate service.

As you prayerfully study these lessons, and thereby know Christ more deeply, the Holy Spirit of God will guide you into all truth and into the great mystery of God's love and wisdom.

May the blessing of God abide upon you as you embark on these studies and continue to grow in Divine Wisdom. May your life become a light amidst the darkness of evil, illuminated by the life-giving light of Christ.

Feast of St.Thomas
New Delhi, 3.7.86.

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios
President, Divyabodhanam

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INTRODUCTION

I give thanks to God by whose grace I have been able to write "On the Road to Life".

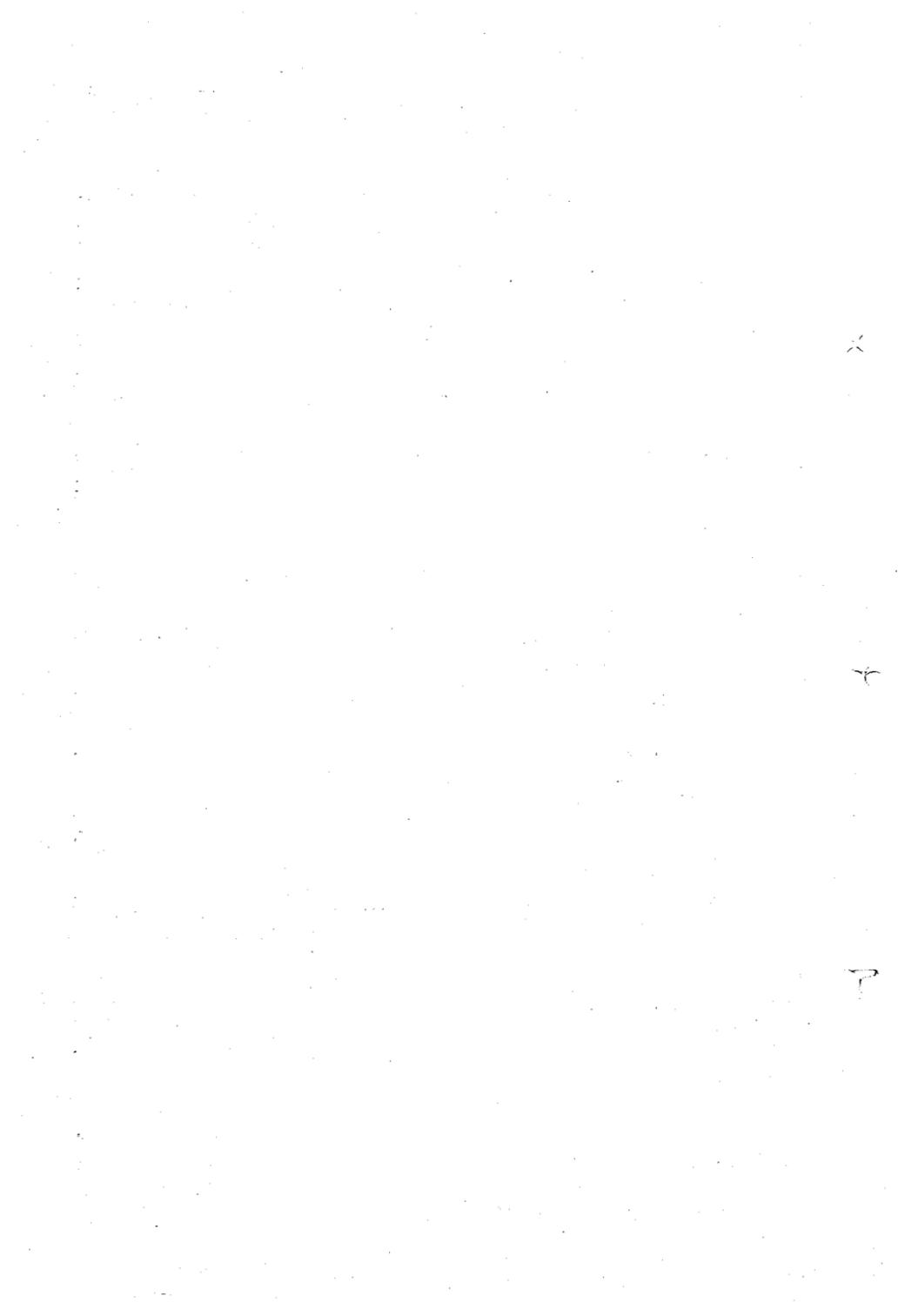
No one need be so naive as to think that psychology holds the key to all of life's problems; nor need he think that the study of psychology is unnecessary for the children of God.

The study of psychology is useful in that it throws light on the dark recesses of the human mind. The knowledge about the human mind which psychology provides makes success in life possible for those who have abiding faith in God. This is the theme of the book from beginning to end. The reader would do well to remember this fact, though the theme is not repeatedly stated in every lesson.

The lessons in this book have not been written solely for the benefit of those who undergo training in counselling; they have been written for the benefit of all those who want to make an analysis of their own personality and who in practical life wish to improve their personal relationships with others and to be of help to them. Those who want to have specialised training in counselling should try to understand Carkhuff's model of counselling in greater detail; what is given in the book is only an introduction to the model.

The book is intended more to persuade the reader to subject himself to a self-examination than to give him knowledge in psychology.

I am indebted to His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas and Rev. Fr. T. J. Joshua for having gone through the manuscript of this book and given me valuable suggestions, and also to Rev. Fr. C. C. Cherian who persuaded me with loving kindness to complete the book.



UNIT 1

Psychology and Counselling : Their Inter-Relatedness

LESSON 1

PSYCHOLOGY: ITS DEFINITION

- Definition*
- Is psychology a scientific study?*
- Different branches of psychology and counselling*
- Clinical psychology*
- Experimental psychology*
- Developmental psychology*
- Abnormal psychology*
- Social psychology*
- Educational psychology*
- Industrial psychology*

Man's efforts to understand the phenomenon called the human mind go back presumably to the very early days of man's history. In the development of Modern Psychology we see how these efforts have borne fruit.

Definition

The term 'psychology' is from the Greek words, 'psyche' and 'logia.' 'Psyche' means mind and 'logia' knowledge. That is to say, 'psychology' means the study of mind.

The question arises: what is mind? Mind is an abstract concept. How can an abstract concept be the subject of scientific or analytical study? Some argue that psychology is the study of man's conscious state of mind. Here too there are problems. Man is an animal, and therefore, if psychology deals with the conscious state of man's mind, is it only legitimate to think that animals and organisms other than man also have their conscious state of mind and that psychology includes their conscious state of mind too? Moreover, it is the experiments conducted on lower animals that have enriched this branch of knowledge called psychology. Yet another problem that one faces in arriving at a definition of 'psychology' arises from what Sigmund Freud has said about man's behaviour. According to Freud, man's behaviour is determined by his unconscious state of mind and not by his conscious state. Taking into consideration the above differing views, we may arrive at the following generally acceptable definition of psychology:

Psychology is the science that systematically studies the phenomena of conscious life and behaviour of man and other animals and attempts to explain observable behaviour and its relationship to the unseen mental processes that go on inside the organism and to external events in the environment.

(Kagan & Haremann, *Psychology: An Introduction*,
New York, 1972, p. q)

What Is Behaviour?

Psychologists have their explanations for behaviour. But a simple definition of behaviour is that it is the total response, motor and glandular, which an organism makes to any situation with which it is faced. The response may be external or internal. It is external when it concerns an individual's physical organs and nervous system. It is internal when it concerns his thought processes and emotional reactions. But both types of behaviour are closely inter-related. The thought processes and emotional reactions are not easily observable; all the same, these can be deduced from his actions arising out of them. For example, a

man who is grief-stricken can be found to be in deep distress from his facial expression, movements, etc. It is this fact that leads us to define psychology as a study of the behaviour of human beings and animals. We include the behaviour of lower animals too in psychology, because scientific studies of animal behaviour have enabled us to understand a good deal about the working of the human mind.

Is Psychology a Science?

Though we define psychology as a science, yet we should realise the limitations of this science in comparison with other sciences such as physics, chemistry, etc. Experiments and observations of the kind possible in physics, chemistry and other allied sciences are beyond the scope of psychology. This is because mental processes are both complex and diverse and have their origins in both biological and sociological causes. Yet, the techniques employed in psychology are the same as those employed in other sciences. These techniques are experiments, observations, proofs and deductions. The psychologist's use of these techniques has enabled him to arrive at certain conclusions in his field of study. For example, techniques used in other sciences help him find an answer to the question: why are street urchins more disposed to anti-social behaviour than other children? All this is to say that we call psychology a science because it uses techniques of study usually employed in the physical and biological sciences.

Branches of Psychology and Counselling

Those who read only periodicals and magazines are inclined to regard psychology as a study dealing with the problems of girls and boys in their adolescence and with those that married couples face in their relationships. There are also some who mistake psychology for some kind of witchcraft or art that foretells one's future. Therefore, it is necessary that we should have a general idea as to the different branches of psychology; this is helpful to our understanding of the range and scope of psychology. What is given below is a brief explanation of each one of these branches of psychology:

1. *Clinical Psychology*: This is the most important of all branches of psychology; it concerns itself with the diagnosis and treatment of behaviour problems. Forty per cent of those associated with psychology work in this branch. Broadly speaking, there are four categories of clinical psychologists. They are (a) psychiatrists, (b) psycho-analysts, (c) counsellors and (d) clinical psychologists. Psychiatry is a specialised study and practice dealing with mental and nervous disorders. Only those who have received basic education in medicine can practise psychiatry. They should be competent to diagnose the biological causes of psychic ailments and prescribe treatment. Psychiatrists are legally empowered to administer drugs as well as electro-convulsive therapy.

Psycho-analysis is a system of psychology as well as a method of treatment of mental and nervous disorders developed by Sigmund Freud. The approach is characterised by a dynamic view of all aspects of the mental life, conscious and unconscious, with special emphasis upon the phenomena of the unconscious, and by an elaborate technique of investigation and treatment based on the employment of continuous free association.

Clinical psychology is a branch of applied psychology concerned with the application of psychological knowledge to the treatment of personality problems and mental disorders. The clinical psychologist practises psychotherapy and diagnoses abnormal symptoms not arising out of biological causes. They are competent to diagnose and treat all kinds of neurosis.

Counselling psychology is closely related to clinical psychology. A counselling psychologist offers assistance to those who need temporary guidance on problems such as those arising from worry, anxiety, fear, disillusionment, etc. He also handles school difficulties, vocational choices and marriage conflicts. In diagnosing problems he uses different kinds of tests of personality, abilities, vocational aptitudes and interests. The tests enable him to give advice and guidance to those who need his assistance. Counselling becomes necessary in some cases mainly because of the tension inherent in our daily life.

2. *Experimental Psychology*: This branch of psychology employs experimental methods to obtain psychological data or to solve psychological problems. The employment of experimental methods helps the psychologist arrive at certain conclusions and formulate certain theories. For example, questions such as the impact of city life on individuals, the changes that are brought about in an individual by his membership of a particular religious group or social/political organisation may engage the attention of the experimental psychologist. Allied to this is the branch called physiological psychology. The investigation here is limited to the biological causes that are responsible for changes in behaviour; it is this branch that studies the functioning of the brain, the nervous system, hormones, etc. of an individual. This approach is now used mostly of the borderland between psychology physiology and neurology.

3. *Developmental Psychology*: This branch is concerned with the study of the processes by which the newborn baby acquires his patterns of overt behaviour, thinking and problem solving, his ways of coping with conflicts etc. that will contribute to the growth and development of his adult personality. Child psychology, adolescent psychology, etc. are allied to this branch.

4. *Abnormal psychology*: This branch of psychology studies mental and emotional disturbances and their treatment. It also explains how inferiority feeling, fear without any real cause, anxiety, worry, excessive sexual desire, indulgence in unnatural sex, alcoholism, addiction to drugs, etc. constitute abnormal behaviour.

5. *Social Psychology*: This branch studies the psychological conditions underlying the development of social groups and the mental life of individuals in so far as these conditions manifest themselves in their social organisation, and their institutions and culture.

6. *Educational Psychology*: This branch is concerned with the application to education of psychological principles and findings together with the psychological studies of problems of education.

Intelligence, memory, learning ability, aptitude, teacher-student relationship, the need for a congenial home atmosphere for study, etc. come within the purview of this branch.

7. *Industrial Psychology*: This branch deals with the application of psychological methods and results to problems arising in the industrial or economic field. It also concerns itself with the selection and training of workers, methods and conditions of work, etc., and provides necessary guidelines.

Apart from the branches of psychology defined above, there are other branches such as genetic psychology, comparative psychology, etc. The study of psychology includes the study of all these branches.

QUESTIONS

1. Examine the definitions of 'psychology.'
2. What is the relationship between psychology and counselling?
3. Distinguish between the different branches of psychology.

LESSON 2

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF COUNSELLING

—*Definition*

—*Counselling: its psychological basis*

—*Aspects of counselling*

—*Individual's reaction to environment*

—*Causes beyond one's conscious awareness*

In the previous lesson an attempt has been made to define psychology and to give a general idea about the different branches of psychology. Of all these branches, counselling which is part and parcel of clinical psychology concerns us most.

How is clinical psychology different from other branches of psychology? Those associated with clinical psychology are all professionals but not those associated with counselling. This is not to say that there are no professionals who practise counselling. What is meant is that counselling need not be practised professionally. Counselling is important to an individual in a wide variety of his social relations. Though not technically qualified, everyone practises counselling one way or the other. Priests who are entrusted with the duty of giving spiritual nourishment to the believers, parents who bring up their children, teachers who are saddled with the responsibility of educating and training students, neighbours who interact among themselves, and friends who meet and discuss matters are all engaged in fruitful counselling. If the above categories of persons have the advantage of training in counselling also, the results of their interaction will be much better.

The priest by virtue of his position and responsibility is a counsellor. It is said in the Book of Malachi, "...the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, ... he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (2:7). (So too are teachers and the educated members of the society counsellors in their own ways). The point is that counselling helps those who are troubled in mind, worried or anxious. Counselling is different from merely giving advice. The act of giving advice does not instill confidence or self-reliance in the person who receives the advice; it denies him the opportunity of developing his own personality. Psychologists have pointed out the drawbacks of merely giving advice. The person who seeks the advice of others not only loses self-reliance but also a capacity for shouldering responsibilities and taking his own decisions. Moreover, he will develop a tendency to blame his adviser for his failures. This, however, does not mean that there are no occasions in life when advice is necessary. What is important to note is that counselling is different from giving advice.

Seward Hiltner has defined counselling as an act of helping a person to help himself. That is to say, counselling is just like a mirror which helps a person see himself so that he realises his

shortcomings and deficiencies and takes remedial steps. A person who suffers from minor mental disorders can be helped through counselling. He can be made to realise his shortcomings as well as his own abilities that lie dormant in him. The aim of counselling is to inculcate in persons a self-awareness that enables them to make use of their own abilities to overcome their problems. The counsellor's task is thus not to diagnose a person's mental disorder or to prescribe remedies but to create a warm, congenial atmosphere in which the person can share his troubles, doubts and fears with the counsellor.

Counselling: Its Psychological Basis

Anyone who is engaged in counselling should make use of the knowledge derived from Psychology; for psychologists have made a study of the complex phenomenon of the human mind with the help of experiments and observations. Foremost among these psychologists is Sigmund Freud (1856-1939); he is described as the father of Modern Psychology. Freud was a physician in Vienna. His observations led him to assert that the unconscious mind is the repertory of our suppressed and repressed emotions and it is these emotions that tend to control our behaviour. Freud further maintained that as long as these repressed feelings remain in the unconscious they are capable of generating tension in us and that if they are brought to the surface of the conscious mind and given a chance to express themselves, they lose their power of generating tension. The process of bringing out the repressed feelings to the surface of the conscious mind and making them flow out is called catharsis or outpouring. Freud also asserted that for catharsis to be effective it is necessary to establish an equal and free relationship between the counsellor and the person who is given counselling. Such a relationship is described by Freud as free association. The mental tension of the person becomes eased once the relationship leads him to pour out his repressed emotions. In daily life we come across many instances of this phenomenon. Grief-stricken people, patients, old men and women and the youth get a lot of relief when they speak out freely. It is, however, not very easy

for the counsellor to establish such a relationship with every person; for it calls for specialised knowledge and training.

Other Aspects of Counselling

Apart from Freud's theory, there are other findings in psychology which can also be made use of in counselling. For instance, there are the findings about the influence of heredity and environment on a person's behaviour. Experiments and observations have revealed that identical twins behave alike because of their common heredity whereas they differ in their behaviour because of differences in their environment. Psychology, therefore, insists that in order to know the reason for a person's mental tension, we should take into account his heredity as well as his environment. Peculiarities in the composition of one's genes and chromosomes and the imbalance of hormones and of glands may also have influence on one's behaviour. Counsellors, therefore, should have specialised knowledge about these psychological facts; this knowledge will make them realise their own limitations and enable them to refer cases to the right place for appropriate treatment.

Reaction to Environment and Personal Outlook

A person's outlook and his reaction to environment are intimately connected. This may be illustrated with the following example. Two students coming from almost the same background and living in the same locality fail in their examinations. The failure leads one to commit suicide whereas it does not generate any intense emotional tension in the other. Here the fact that the two students have differing outlooks is more important than the fact that they come from the same background and have the same experience. Everyone engaged in counselling should bear the above truth in mind and should impart new insights into persons seeking counselling.

Unconscious Motives

Mental tension in a person arises on account of his being unconscious of the motive forces at work within him. For instance, a young man keenly interested in social work becomes greatly agi-

tated when his name does not appear in the news item about an activity of the social organisation to which he belongs and proceeds to work against the organisation and brings about its dissolution. This happens because he fails to realise the motive force behind his social work. In fact, he wants publicity for himself. He can be helped if he is led through counselling to his real motive.

Psychology thus gives us numerous insights into the behaviour of persons. Besides Freud, there are many others who have formulated their own theories and approaches. Among them may be mentioned Carl Jung, Adler, Erich Fromm, Erikson and Carl Rogers. Their theories and approaches are also very useful to the counsellor.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the psychological basis of counselling?
2. What is counselling? Give examples.

LESSON 3

THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF COUNSELLING

—*Pastoral counselling*

—*Counselling: Its theological basis*

—*Christ's example*

While it is true that counselling has a psychological basis, a purely secular approach is not what we should adopt in counselling; ours is a Christian perspective. We may, therefore, consider here the theological aspects of counselling.

Pastoral Counselling

Essentially Christian is the concept of pastoral counselling. This concept has originated and been evolved in those Western Churches that do not believe in holy confession. Today pastoral

counselling is taught as a subject in all the seminaries. Believers generally share the causes of their mental tension with the priest. The priest also gets opportunities to meet believers on occasions of death, illness and family disputes and discuss with them their anxiety, fears, problems, etc. in his role as their shepherd. Moreover, the priest has the accredited role of offering consolation based on Christian faith to believers; this has been part of his work of tending the sheep right from the beginnings of the Church. What is called pastoral counselling has evolved from the blending of Christian beliefs and the new insights that psychology has provided.

Cultural divergences and conceptual differences concerning the tending of the sheep based on the differing traditions of the Churches have resulted in the emerging of different schools of thought in counselling. However, we are yet to evolve and develop models of pastoral counselling based on the traditions of our Church and our culture. No serious effort has been made in this direction. So, throughout this book the word 'counselling' is used instead of the term 'pastoral counselling.' There is one more reason for our eliminating the word 'pastoral'; this is the fact that the concepts that are useful in man's day-to-day relations and interactions are not the concerns of priests alone.

The Theological Basis and the Example of Christ

What is meant by theological basis is that counselling should be based on the example provided by Christ in his relations with men during his life-time as the Incarnate. This aspect of counselling is considered below:

1) Personality is made up of a three-dimensional relationship; i. e. (i) man's relationship with God, (ii) his relationship with his fellowmen, and (iii) his relationship with himself. Perfection in these three relationships is manifest only in Christ as the Incarnate. A person is subject to mental disorders when these relationships are adversely affected. For him to regain his mental health, the harmony of these relationships will have

to be restored. In secular counselling man's relationship with God is ignored.

2) The picture of Christ who identified Himself with men except in their sins is seen in the following verse: "(He), though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men; And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross". (Philippians 2:6-8). Such an identification in thought and feeling as we see in Christ's relationship with men is not an easy one. Differences based on community, wealth, education, etc. stand as stumbling blocks in realising such an identification. But an identification that rises above these differences is absolutely necessary in counselling. St. Paul reminds us: "...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" (Philippians 2:2).

3) The Holy Gospels teach us that God's love is unconditional (John 3:16). The gospel truth is that Christ loved us in our sinfulness. It is not very difficult to understand that most of the mental disorders are caused by lack of selfless unconditional love. We impose conditions on our love. The parents' offer of a gift to a child in the nursery school is conditional upon the child getting the first rank in class. There are numerous similar instances of conditions imposed on love:

- "I shall love you provided you are rich."
- " " provided you come of a good family."
- " " provided you give up drinking."
- " " provided you are educated."
- " " provided you are healthy."
- " " provided you are handsome / beautiful."

The list of such conditions is long. But Christ's love for us was based on the principle: "I love you for what you are." The tax-collector, Zachaeus (Luke 19:1-10), and the woman who had been caught in adultery (John 8:1-12) were all received, as

they were, by Christ and loved by him. It was this unconditional love that enabled him to bring about a change in them and make them repent. The person who seeks counselling should get respect, and love that knows no conditions.

4) One who believes in God should submit oneself to Him and live in Him. Christ has exhorted us: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). But when tension, worry, anxiety, fear, disappointment, baseless suspicion, and anger overpower a person, the right relationships established through counselling should enable him to re-examine with a fresh outlook his life and re-dedicate himself to God. He should submit himself to the Holy Ghost in accordance with the promise contained in the verse: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.." (John 16:13). What believers need to do in moments of tension is not merely to rely on themselves but hopefully to submit themselves to God (Matthew 11:28; 1Peter 5:7).

5) Those who suffer from mental tension are unwilling to recognise the goodness in themselves or in others. Here too, Christ is our example. When Christ saw Nathanael coming to him, he said "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John 1:47), ignoring all his shortcomings. It was because Christ highlighted what was good in Nathanael that he became a changed man. If a person is made aware of his own abilities and good qualities, he will be able to overcome his worries and tension and work for the development of his personality.

6) Psychology teaches us that development of personality depends on one's heredity and environment. Freud holds the view that the behaviour of a person is conditioned by his past experiences buried deep in his unconscious mind. There is much truth in all this. But the Holy Bible gives us yet another insight; this is the fact that whatever be a person's past experiences, his heredity and environment, the decisions that he consciously takes now will enable him to shape his future. The following verses may be considered: ". . . if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation;

the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). "And Jesus said, '...go and do not sin again' (John 8:11). "And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold' (Luke 19:8). We may cite any number of similar verses and examples from the Holy Bible to show that a person can forget the past and be 'a new creation'. Particular mention may here be made of the change that came over Christ's disciples.

Counselling is not just an exercise in psychology; it is a means to help an individual experience redemption in himself—that redemption which Christ gave the whole world. The ultimate aim of counselling is to help persons overcome their mental tension and develop their personality to the fullest extent possible, besides enabling them to live in peace and harmony with God, their fellowmen and themselves.

Most of what is said above is already known to us and has been heard in speeches and discourses. Yet, what counselling gives us is something different from what speeches and discourses give us. Speeches and discourses give us information and knowledge, but counselling makes us pass through an emotional experience—an experience in which we overcome our mental barriers. This may be illustrated with the help of an example. Suppose a person who fails in his effort to share love approaches a counsellor. What the person requires is not a lengthy discourse on God's love, but the feeling of certainty that he has come across someone who is prepared to love and respect him. Once he comes to know that another person like him can bestow love on him, he will also simultaneously realise that much more love he can expect from God. In brief real counselling should be able to raise a person to the heights of noble experiences from the depths of ignoble experiences in the same way as it is seen in the Incarnation (i. e. in the transformation of the Son of Man into the Son of God).

QUESTIONS

1. Elucidate the theological basis of counselling.
2. How does Christ's unconditional love agree with the principle underlying counselling? Give examples from daily life.

LESSON 4

COMMUNICATION IN COUNSELLING

- Mental disorders and counselling*
- Some basic principles of communication*
- Two levels of communication*

Mental Disorders and Counselling

Mental disorders are either severe or minor. In cases of severe mental disorders the individual's reactions are completely divorced from reality. Such cases are outside the range of counselling, and should be treated by psychiatrists in the same way as bodily ailments are treated by physicians. The treatment usually consists of medication and electro convulsion therapy.

Counselling is intended for minor mental disorders arising from tension, anxiety, fear, etc. in daily life. A person suffering from worries, tension, etc. is not cut off from reality; he is only subject to worries, fears, anxiety, disillusionment etc. because of professional, family or other problems. The counsellor can talk to him and understand him and his problems. The level of communication achieved by the counsellor here is different from that in an ordinary conversation; for he carries on the conversation with the person in a particular manner for a particular objective. Anyone who aspires to become a counsellor should first of all be trained to carry on a conversation in a manner that enables him to

establish a particular level of communication. It is this first step in training to become a counsellor that we are going to consider here in brief.

Some Basic Principles of Communication

Suppose two persons are listening to a speech, one from inside a hall and the other from outside it. The effect of the speech on the person inside the hall will be different from that of the speech on the other. This is because one sees the speaker's gestures and facial expressions whereas the other does not. It is unlikely that the person standing outside the hall and listening to the speech becomes as much emotionally moved by it as the one listening to it from inside. This has led psychologists to speak of two modes of communication, one verbal and the other non-verbal. By verbal communication we mean communication achieved through words and words alone; in this, communication is limited to thirty per cent. Seventy per cent of communication generally takes place through gestures, voice modulation, change of tone, etc. Perhaps there is difference of opinion about the exact percentage of the respective modes of communication. But one thing is certain: communication takes place not only through words but also through gestures. Children start communicating through words only when they are about three or four years old; but before they start using words, they will have already started communicating through gestures. Yet another mode of communication we have is in the hearty smiles friends exchange when they meet; their smiles reveal their affection, love and heartiness for each other; on such occasions it is not words such as 'I like you' or 'I am fond of you' that reveal emotions.

Communication at Two Levels

There are two levels of communication: intellectual and emotional. If words are useful for intellectual communication, it is gestures that make emotional communication easy. In counselling what takes place is the sharing of emotional experiences rather than that of ideas; for it is mental discomfort or tension that compels one

to seek counselling. So, the first step in training for counselling is to develop an ability to understand sympathetically the emotional experiences of another person.

How does communication, or for that matter, an ordinary conversation, progress? The listener hears what the speaker says and gives the latter his replies. That is to say, the roles of the speaker and the listener are different. In counselling too, this is a fundamental truth; the counsellor has to listen carefully and give satisfactory replies. (This aspect of communication is so important that it will be dealt with in some detail in the next lesson.)

We may now proceed to examine how people respond or react to what they hear. Consider the following statement and the different responses it evokes in different persons:

Statement: My brother has been involved in a car accident in the Gulf. A telegram from there says that his condition is serious. The news has upset me.

A's response: Is he your younger brother? Where in the Gulf is he? When did the telegram arrive? Is there anyone to attend on him or to be of help to him?

B: Car accident? Everyone drives very fast in the Gulf. An accident means sure death.

C: There are many accidents and deaths reported every day in the papers. There is news in today's papers too about two dead bodies being brought from the Gulf.

D: You must be in great anxiety now. It must be terribly upsetting for you because the news is that the condition of your brother is very serious.

E: Really bad news! I too feel very sad, having heard the news.

F: This is life! It is a mixture of both happiness and sadness. The only thing we can do is to suffer our sorrows.

G: Really sorry. What has happened is with God's knowledge; He has His own ways. Let us seek refuge in prayers.

H: Never mind; don't worry. Perhaps your brother has escaped with some minor injuries. Had he been in a worse condition, news would have by now reached us.

Let us assess these differing reactions. A is inquisitive and wants to know more details. He, therefore, asks probing questions which of course will be resented by anyone in a state of anxiety and sorrow.

B is prone to pass judgements; his reaction is likely to do more harm than good.

C's attempt at universalising the experience is not particularly helpful. No one who has lost his father feels consoled when he is told that the fathers of many others too have died.

D makes an attempt to understand the state of mind of the person. The person is likely to share his feelings with D.

E expresses sympathy. He can be a friend to a person who asks for sympathy. But it is doubtful whether many really care for mere sympathy.

F makes a philosophical statement about happenings in life. There is nothing original or novel in this kind of philosophising.

G spiritualises the situation. But a counter-question may arise in the mind of the person in anxiety. 'Will God, if He loves me, do this to me?' Though only for a moment, even Christ nailed to the cross cried out: 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani' (Mathew 27:46).

H tries to minimise the gravity of the situation. Giving a person false hopes and expectations cannot be a solution to the problem.

All the reactions given above have their relevance in an ordinary conversation. Reaction or response in counselling at any rate should be one of sympathetic understanding. Those suffering from mental tension require most of all a sincere friend who can really enter into their feelings and thoughts.

If such a friend is available, the problem can be viewed in all its perspectives with his help, and solutions, both philosophical and spiritual, can be sought. These basic principles of communication are not imperatives in an ordinary conversation, but they are a must in counselling.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the significance of 'verbal' and 'non-verbal' modes of communication.
2. What is the most appropriate type of response in counselling? Give reasons for your answer.

LESSON 5

LISTENING: ITS IMPORTANCE

—*The inner meaning of listening*

—*The Biblical basis*

—*How to listen*

The Importance of Listening

An eighty year old man was quite pleased and happy when he was visited and talked to by the present writer. The reason why he liked the visits was that he got someone to share his reminiscences with. The old man's sons working in distant places are not available for him to reel off his stories; their sons are not interested in listening to him; what he says is neither instructive nor interesting to them.

There are many who seek relief by telling others about their woes. But seldom do people get good listeners. The reason is that everyone is preoccupied with his own affairs and has no time to listen to others; this is indeed a curse of contemporary life,

especially in cities and towns. In Western countries one can engage a psychiatrist and unburden one's heart to him; the psychiatrist is paid for listening. Rolo May has dealt with this practice in his "Art of Listening;" he describes the practice as 'bought listening.'

The Inner Meaning of Listening

'Listening' has an inner meaning. We may illustrate this by an example. Suppose when the head of the family is in conversation with a visitor, his grandson comes and asks for a toy kept on a shelf. There is no response from the old man; the grandson shows his resentment by crying aloud. What has happened here is that the old man who is respectful towards the visitor has ignored his grandson's presence and has treated him with indifference. The individuality of the grandson is treated with scant respect by the old man who does not pay any attention to him. An attitude of indifference does not prove helpful in counselling. A readiness to listen patiently to what others say paves the way for good relations with them.

The Biblical Basis

In the Letter of James it is said: "Know this my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger (1:19). In both the Old Testament and the New Testament God hears the cry of the anguished heart. In Genesis God says to Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground" (4:10). The Psalmist sings: "Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!" (27:7). Throughout the Psalms the Lord is called upon to hear. That the Lord heard the cry of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David and a host of prophets is clear from the Old Testament. In the New Testament Jesus Christ heard the cry of the oppressed and the down-trodden as well as that of patients, sinners, tax-gatherers and prostitutes. Christ could love all and respect everyone's individuality. The real basis of our prayers and supplications is the belief that God hears us. Is it not, therefore, the duty of every believer to show in his own life too this attribute of God?

How to Listen

Now that we are convinced of the importance of listening, we should know how we should listen to others. Psychologists say that there are three ways of listening, namely, (a) pretended listening, (b) superficial listening, and (c) deep listening. In counselling it is deep listening that is most necessary.

(a) Pretended Listening

Pretended listening is not sincere listening. This is listening without attentiveness; only an impression is created that attention is paid, but in reality the mind does not take in anything. In schools and colleges students sometimes appear to be listening to the teacher but are actually thinking about something else. This inability to pay concentrated attention stands in the way of not only studies but also human relations. The parents who unthinkingly and mechanically respond to a child's queries create only an emotional distance between them and the child. Honest, straightforward expression of one's inability to listen is preferable to this kind of pretended listening.

(b) Superficial Listening

One is said to listen superficially to another when one does not pay full attention to what is being said and takes in only what one is interested in. In other words superficial listening is also selective listening. While listening to the problems of youth, showing an interest only in their sexual problems is an instance of selective listening. This kind of listening does not enable one to make a full assessment of the personality of the other. Moreover, the impression that one does not pay whole-hearted attention to all the problems will prevent the other from completely unburdening his heart.

(c) Deep Listening

What is required in counselling is an ability not only to listen attentively and whole-heartedly to whatever is said but

also to understand the emotional moods and attitudes behind the words. Emotional overtones and undertones of words are more communicative than words themselves. (The distinction between the verbal and non-verbal modes of communication may be borne in mind here). Love, sorrow, disappointment, hatred, happiness and such other emotions are certainly not expressed fully by means of words; they are better expressed by means of moods and attitudes. A counsellor should be able to understand this 'silent language' of communication.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it said that an ability to listen attentively is indispensable to the counsellor ?
2. How is listening classified on the basis of the manner of listening? Mention the merits and demerits of each one of them.
3. Attempt an assessment of your own ability to listen.

LESSON 6

INFERIORITY FEELING AND COUNSELLING

--The defence mechanism of the unconscious

--Inferiority feeling

--Causes of inferiority feeling

--Symptoms of inferiority feeling

--How to counter inferiority feeling

A psychiatrist, who received his training in the United States, on his return to Kerala, opened a clinic in a village. But at the end of two months he closed down his clinic and returned to the States. The reason was that no one was willing to go to him for fear of being

described as insane; for the clinic was exclusively for the treatment of mental disorders. This kind of shyness generally seen in people often results in the aggravation of minor mental disorders that can be cured through treatment in the early stages. As long as there is this shyness, it is doubtful whether people are willing to share their problems with a counsellor.

Who are the people that require counselling? This is a basic question with us because of the prevailing shyness of people to go to a psychiatrist for counselling and also because of the fact that certain minor disorders of the mind, if not treated well in time, will result in the total disintegration of one's personality. Here too, as in most physical ailments, 'prevention is better than cure.'

All cases of mental disorders require counselling; some need treatment too. However, counselling alone is enough in the early stages; it is effective if the abnormality of the person has not become aggravated. All those requiring counselling are not mental patients; counselling at the right time is, however, necessary in some cases because it will prevent them from sliding into insanity.

The Defence Mechanism of the Unconscious

Everyone has in him a defence mechanism; it is this that guards him against mental breakdowns. But the mechanism is only a temporary protective measure. It is incapable of going on giving protection continuously; for if the defence mechanism is pressed into service continuously, it will inevitably lead to a complete breakdown of the individual. It was Sigmund Freud who for the first time spoke authoritatively about the defence mechanism of the unconscious. According to him, this built-in resistance of the unconscious is like the shock absorbers of vehicles. In his view, the mechanism does not help a person for ever; if overused the mechanism goes out of order, and the person becomes insane.

There is none who does not have this mechanism, though its strength may vary from individual to individual. An awareness of the limitation of the defence mechanism and a readiness to adopt timely corrective measures help a person in his mental health and in the proper development of his personality.

Though in a sense everyone requires counselling at one time or the other, yet three categories of persons may be mentioned here in particular. They are: (i) those who suffer from an inferiority feeling, (ii) those who want to hide their feelings, and (iii) those who want to escape or run away from problems.

Inferiority Feeling

Alfred Adler, who does not fully subscribe to the views of Freud and his emphasis on sexual drives, asserts that the personality of the individual is determined by an inner (and usually unconscious) urge for recognition and a desire for power. He classifies personality types as inferior and superior, and goes on to point out that desire for power is the basic driving force in man. In the struggle for power some are thrown out and are filled with a feeling of inferiority, but they do not want to continue for long in the state of the defeated and so contend for superiority. Man's achievement has always been the result of this conflict between his feeling of inferiority and his desire for superiority. This point of view suggests that there is nothing wrong in a person having a feeling of inferiority to a certain extent. This is because he will try his utmost to get over the feeling by engaging himself in some constructive or creative work. If there is an attempt to get over the feeling of inferiority, there is no problem for the individual. What is meant by inferiority feeling is the failure on one's part to recognise one's own essential qualities as a man; the feeling also leads to constant comparisons with others to one's own disadvantage. One who suffers from a feeling of inferiority in this sense has no sense of self-respect; he is helpless and diffident; he is afraid of accepting responsibilities, and foresees only failure. He is never optimistic.

Family as well as social environment is likely to engender a feeling of inferiority in individuals. Ours is a highly competitive world in which recognition is given only to the victorious. Failure to win recognition may cause a feeling of inferiority in some; this is because they do not realise that failures and successes in life are natural and that if one fails in one sphere there are other spheres in which one can make good and score victories. Family background is often found to be responsible for the development of a wrong attitude to life in the case of many persons.

Inferiority feeling is also caused by mishandling in childhood. Children are very often discouraged with remarks that are disparaging. Besides lack of encouragement and disparaging remarks, there are unhealthy and unrealistic comparisons between one child and another; these comparisons lead to harmful results. Sometimes parents contrast the deficiencies of one child with the strong points of another. These parents do not realise that each child has his own aptitudes. A child who is interested in music is compared with a neighbour's child who is good at his studies. Not only that no encouragement is given to the child to develop his interest in music, but he is made to feel inferior to the other child. What happens is that the child tries his best to become 'the ideal figure' his parents have projected before him, but fails in his attempt and falls into the abyss of inferiority. Unless he breaks the ideal figure that looms large in his mind to pieces and asserts himself and cultivates his own powers and talents, he will not be able to overcome his feeling of inferiority.

Symptoms of Inferiority Feeling

Whether or not a person suffers from a feeling of inferiority can be ascertained, if his personality exhibits the following traits.

1. An absorbing interest in one's own thoughts and feelings and a total indifference to those of others.
2. A tendency to blow out of proportion failures in life.
3. An inquisitiveness about what others think about oneself and the feeling that others' remarks and smiling at one another are aimed at making fun of oneself.

4. A desire to be alone and to keep aloof from others, thinking that one's own presence is not needed by others. (A desire to be alone now and then should not, however, be mistaken for a sign of inferiority feeling; this may be for other reasons.)
5. A keen desire to listen to others praising oneself repeatedly. (An interest taken in listening on certain occasions to words of appreciation, which one legitimately deserves, need not, however, be thought of as a sign of inferiority feeling.)
6. An absolute unwillingness to shoulder responsibilities and to participate in competitions of any kind for fear that failure is certain.
7. An urge to speak disparagingly of others in an attempt to create the impression that they are inferior to oneself, and a tendency to exaggerate their weaknesses and invent stories about them in a bid to tarnish their reputation.

How to Counter Inferiority Feeling

Those who suffer from inferiority feeling need not show all the above signs at the same time. Different individuals show different signs. If a person shows any or all of these signs, he may be helped through counselling to analyse his own personality traits and find out the traits that account for his inferiority feeling. Once this is done, he will be prepared to admit the traits to be his and adopt attitudes that are new, healthy and helpful.

Generally most people are not prepared to admit that they possess any one of the signs of inferiority feeling in their mental make-up. What is required is that the individual should stop comparing himself with others, realising that he has a personality of his own and that he should seek the right and appropriate environment for the development of his personality. It is better that the individual realises his own capabilities and

develop them in accordance with the circumstances in which he is situated.

No one achieves success straightaway. Even scientists who have become famous through their inventions must have experienced failures before arriving at the data leading them to their inventions. Failure is a stepping stone to success in the sense that it helps a person to draw new lessons and experiences from it and to reconcile himself to the reality of the circumstances he is in.

On top of all this, a person receives new insights and inspiration to lead a worthy life, if he realises that God has given a place he deserves to everyone in His dispensation and that the merciful God, and none else, guides him through life.

QUESTIONS

1. Examine how inferiority feeling hampers the development of one's personality.
2. How does one know that one suffers from inferiority feeling?
3. How can those who suffer from inferiority feeling be helped?

UNIT 2

A Model for Counselling

LESSON 1

TECHNIQUES OR METHODS OF COUNSELLING

—*Robert Carkhuff's model of counselling*

—*The three stages in counselling*

—*Initial stage: rapport*

—*Intermediary stage: exploration*

—*Final stage: decision—making*

Several models of counselling have been developed by psychologists. A counsellor who is conversant with all these models can do very effective work. Some of these models that are particularly useful and easy for those who are beginners in the field of counselling are introduced here.

Everyone requires specialised training in the work that he is called upon to do. So too, those who are engaged in counselling require training. Those who treat major mental disorders have training in the administration of medicines and drugs. In the case of counsellors it is not competence in the administration of medicines and drugs that is required, but a knowledge of the techniques of handling persons. By 'techniques' or 'skills' is meant the specialised knowledge of methods of handling persons that a counsellor should have.

The term 'technique' may be misunderstood; here it is not used in any technical sense. What is meant here is the tact and competence of the counsellor to win over the confidence of the

person who seeks counselling. We may illustrate this point with the help of an example. If someone asks you to do something which you do not like, you may react with an abrupt 'no' or with a tactful reply. The former reply is likely to disrupt your good relations with the person whereas the latter is not likely to. That is to say, considerate, pleasing behaviour will pay you dividends in human relations. When a person undergoes training to become a counsellor, he should learn to practise consideration and tactful behaviour. In the early period of training it may be difficult for him to practise them, but later in the course of his training he will develop a mature personality, if he is sincere and hard-working in cultivating these qualities.

Robert Carkhuff's Model of Counselling

We have already seen that there are several models of counselling developed by psychologists. Some of these are Carl Roger's client-centred therapy, Erik Berne's Transactional Analysis, the gestalt therapy, reality therapy, insight therapy, rational therapy, etc. Of these Robert Carkhuff's model is the easiest for anyone to learn.

Carkhuff came out with his own model of counselling, having subjected Freud and his followers to constructive criticism for the inadequacies of psycho-analysis. His own model is contained in his book "Helping and Human Relations" (1969) and in the revised edition of it called "The Art of Helping III" (1977). The point Carkhuff emphasises in his model is that it is the response of the counsellor from a superior level that gives consolation to the person seeking counselling.

The Three Stages in Counselling

Carkhuff divides counselling into three stages: initial, intermediary and final. The three stages do not necessarily mean three separate occasions of counselling. Sometimes all the three stages may be got over at one sitting and sometimes any one stage may take more than one sitting. Stages of counselling depend on circumstances in which both the counsellor and the client are situated.

The separateness of each stage is based on its distinctive requirement.

1. Initial stage: Rapport or Close Relationship

A very important duty of the counsellor is to create a congenial atmosphere for the person seeking counselling to make a clean breast of everything connected with his mental tension. The latter should have such a close relationship with and confidence in the former as to bring himself to speak without reservation. He should also feel assured that the counsellor is competent enough to understand his problems and is so trustworthy as to be taken into his confidence. The kind of relationship that should come into existence between the two is called rapport.

2. Intermediary Stage : Exploration

It is in this stage that the person confides in the counsellor. In the language of Freud there is an outpouring or catharsis. A joint effort is made by the counsellor and the person to probe into the problems so as to locate their deep root. As in physical ailments, here too, the line of treatment can be decided on the basis of diagnosis. So the probe or exploration at this stage centres round the root of the problems.

3. Final stage: Decision-making

This is the stage in which decisions are made. We have already seen that taking decisions does not mean offering advice. The counsellor's role is to encourage the person to come to terms with reality and to take certain decisions and put them into practice, once the latter comes to know of the real cause of his mental tension and, consequently, desires to free himself from the tension. It is also the duty of the counsellor at this stage, to dissuade the person from taking unrealistic and impracticable decisions. This stage should end at every sitting only with a preparedness for further sittings, if necessary.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the word 'technique' in counselling?
2. What does Robert Carkhuff emphasise in his model of counselling?
3. What are the different stages in counselling? Give examples.

LESSON 2

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP IN COUNSELLING

—*Rapport and intimate relationship*

—*Carkhuffs yardstick*

Rapport and Intimate Relationship

The one thing that enables us to judge the degree of intimacy in human relationships is the readiness with which one can confide in another. It is easy to understand that it is because of intimacy that one discloses one's secrets, however dark or shameful they may be, to another. No one is prepared to tell his secrets to another unless he is intimate with the latter. What is implied by the term 'rapport' is chiefly the intimacy that urges one to confide in another. Besides intimacy, the term also implies the intellectual capacity of the person who receives the secrets, the trust that can be reposed in him, his ability to keep secrets, etc.

The counsellor has first of all to establish a good rapport with the person who seeks counselling. For this, he has to give a good impression of himself to the person. He should consciously try to create the best impression of himself; since first impression is the best impression, he should be particularly careful about his dress, voice modulation, manners, gestures, etc. The person who goes to a counsellor for help will be filled with revulsion and dislike, if he is led into a room that is dusty,

littered with books, papers and clothes, and full of cobwebs. On the other hand, a well-appointed, neatly kept room, though small will attract the person and create in him a liking for the counsellor. Also, it is good that the counsellor's voice is sufficiently loud and assertive; for as Rolo May and others point out that soft voice unlike loud voice is a sign of unwillingness to interact readily with others. One who welcomes a person with a hearty smile and in a loud voice can easily establish a good relationship with the visitor. Yet another quality a counsellor should have is the ability to listen patiently to the person seeking counselling. This is a point that has been discussed in an earlier chapter and should be taken note of here too.

Carkhuff's Yardstick

Carkhuff's imaginary yardstick for sizing up a counsellor's ability is graded on a scale of five marks. The qualities that make one a successful counsellor are ranged between three and five. Those qualities should be graded above three for a person to be successful in his interaction with anyone seeking his counsel; others whose grading is below three will never succeed. This may be illustrated with the help of an example.

Consider the words spoken by three persons to a student who has not been able to score very high marks as expected, though he has passed in the examination:-

First Person: Never mind. What is the use of worrying?

Second Person: Perhaps you are a little upset; at least you have been able to pass when many others have failed.

Third Person: Perhaps you have had high ambitions, and have expected to get very high marks. Now the anxiety that you are not likely to fulfil your hopes and aspirations because your marks are low probably troubles you. I can very well understand your anxiety.

The words of the first person do not serve the purpose of consoling the student; for he fails to understand the anxiety of

the latter. A reaction of this kind can be given only the lowest grade in the scale. The second persons' words are fairly satisfactory; for he has been able to get into the feelings of the student to a certain extent, and makes an attempt to console the latter. A reaction of this kind stands at three in the scale. The third person's reaction stands at a higher level. He is able to realise the anxiety of the student, even though the latter does not give expression to it. That is to say, he is capable of a full understanding of the plight of the student. Such an attitude on the part of the person makes him acceptable to the student as a counsellor and enables the latter to share his inmost thoughts with him. This is because the student realises that the person understands him fully, and can be relied upon for consolation. The third person's reaction to the student's plight can be given a grade between four and five in the scale. In the opinion of Carkhuff, if the counsellor can rise to this level, then he will be able to practise counselling successfully.

QUESTIONS

1. What is rapport? Examine your ability to establish a good rapport with another person.
2. Analyse your abilities as a counsellor with the help of Carkhuff's yardstick.

LESSON 3

CARKHUFF'S CONCLUSIONS

(THE QUALITIES OF A COUNSELLOR)

- Empathy*
- The usefulness of empathy*
- Concreteness in counselling*

Empathy

Everyone is familiar with the word 'sympathy.' It denotes the tendency to experience the feelings and emotions expressed or manifested by those around one. But empathy is something deeper than sympathy, and is defined as the ability to accurately understand what another person is experiencing and to communicate that understanding to him. Empathy is a taking to oneself of another's emotions and sentiments. But it is not merely an emotional identification with another; it is also an intelligent way of feeling oneself into another.

Sympathy is different from empathy in so far as the person who expresses sympathy for another becomes a slave to his emotions whereas the person who practises empathy realises the mental state of another and places himself in the position of the latter and feels for him without ever succumbing to the feelings. The person who practises empathy realises the feelings of another and gets ready to help him. Suppose you witness an accident. You may react to it in two ways. You may burst out and helplessly watch the whole scene, or you may become emotionally involved without being overwhelmed by your own emotions and proceed to help remove victims of the accident to a nearby hospital.

Empathy has two aspects: 1) It is an ability to realise the feelings of another; 2) it is a skill which enables you to give

expression to the feelings. Sometimes one may not express these feelings but waits to see whether one's feeling for another are right or wrong. This approach enables one to tell another what he truly thinks about him; this in turn leads the latter to have a better self-awareness.

Empathy: Its Usefulness

The practice of empathy gives rise to a feeling of confidence in the person who suffers from mental strain or tension; he takes it for granted that there is one person who really understands him; consequently, he develops a liking for the person who practises empathy, and shows a readiness to come out with everything that upsets his mind.

A very important aspect of empathy is that it leads to mutual understanding. When the person who practises empathy is known for his ability to understand the other, then no games or tricks will be played by the latter. The boy who refuses to go to school out of fear of his teachers can be helped by the parents who have an empathic understanding of the boy's feelings. On the other hand, the parents who permit the boy to stay away from school or who punish him for his truancy are being unhelpful to him. Here the parents have to come down to the level of the boy and analyse the situation through the practising of empathy in order to be helpful to him.

Empathy may be practised on all occasions in human relations, and not in counselling alone. Parents and children, teachers and students, husbands and wives—all should develop an insight into the feelings of the other in the interest of peace and harmony. Empathy is a means to understand an individual. Empathy is the key for counselling.

Concreteness

By 'concreteness' is meant the state of having shape and form. A person in an excited or disordered state of mind will not be coherent and logical in his utterances. From whatever is uttered by him have to be sifted the facts that are relevant to his problem. The facts have to be written down one by one; this alone ensures

concreteness in communication between the counsellor and the person. The counsellor should, therefore, have necessary training and insight. What is required is a clear and concrete understanding of the problem.

Suppose, a mother-in-law talks for nearly two hours to a priest about the problems she experiences in her relations with her daughter-in-law. But the priest finds it difficult to understand her real problems. Another priest, who has received training in counselling and who has the right perspective, happens to overhear the mother-in-law's utterances; it is possible that he will react in the following way:—

“I happen to hear what you have said. May I point out what I have understood about your problems?”

“One, in your eyes your daughter-in-law is fond of luxuries; you don't like her luxurious habits.

“Two, she speaks in more glorious terms about her family than about her husband's family. This too you don't like.

“Three, she tries her utmost to make her husband, that is, your son, care more for her.”

What is important in counselling is that the facts relating to a problem or problems will have to be presented in a methodical manner. When this is done and the person seeking counselling also agrees with the counsellor, then the latter can move on to the finding of a solution to the problems. Unless facts are recorded methodically, what is possible is only beating about the bush; this will not lead the counsellor anywhere. So, it is important that the counsellor should have the ability to sift the facts that are relevant from those that are irrelevant and give the relevant facts a proper form and shape or, in other words a concreteness.

QUESTIONS

1. “Empathy is the key for counselling”, Explain.
2. Illustrate what is meant by ‘empathy’ with the help of instances from your own life.
3. Explain the significance of ‘concreteness’ in counselling.

LESSON 4

CARKHUFF'S CONCLUSIONS (Contd.)

—*Consideration and respect*

—*Sincerity and genuineness*

Respect

What is meant by 'respect' here is not the kind of respect that we show persons in authority or those older than us or superior to us. 'Respect' here signifies what is implied by St. Paul when he says, "...in humility count others better than yourselves." That is to say, recognition, consideration, esteem, etc. are implied by the word. The attitude which enables one to count others better than oneself will certainly improve human relations and has to be cultivated. It is important that we recognise the worth of every individual; this is much more so, when we deal with persons suffering from mental tension; they are invariably persons who have lost their self-confidence and self-esteem. The counsellor should see that they are not further shattered; he should deal with them in such a way that their self-confidence and self-esteem are enhanced.

The basis of the above concept of respect in counselling is the acceptance of the view that all are God's creation, and are equals and brothers. In a sense, God becomes revealed through our interaction in human relations. Persons undergoing mental strain are also our equals, and we should be conscious of their potentialities. What is required is to make them aware of their potentialities and of their own inner strength and ability to overcome their problems.

The fact that one approaches another with his problems does not mean that the former is an incompetent, incapable person; such a preconception is harmful. A tendency on the

part of the counsellor to impose his decisions on a person seeking counselling, when there are differences between the two, arises from an attitude of disrespect to the latter. Attention has already been drawn to the principle that in counselling the tendency to give advice directly and deliberately should be given up.

Suppose a person who has a job in this country gets a job in another country and he is in a dilemma, not knowing whether he should accept the new job or not; he tells a friend about his dilemma. The friend replies to him, "What a fool you are! You have no reason to give up your present job and go anywhere else." The reply, which is given in haste and in a thoughtless manner, will not be liked by many. What the friend should have done is to lead the other person to a discussion of the reasons for his dilemma and thus guide him to a decision of his own. An attempt to impose one's own decision on another without taking into account the abilities of the latter and his prospects does not reveal respect, but only disrespect, indifference and self-conceit.

A tendency to belittle others, sentiments is also an instance of disrespect. In day-to-day life, consciously or unconsciously, we show this tendency. What is the meaning of our saying, 'Never mind', to a person suffering from a fatal disease or feeling the pain of separation? Here we should realise yet another truth: what appears to be a problem to one need not be a problem to another. There are many students who are not upset because of repeated failures in their examinations, but there are also many who are disheartened in their first failure itself. There is no justification in our saying, "Never mind" to the latter; their failure matters to them, though it does not to many others. Unless this truth about the sentiments of the latter is appreciated, it is difficult for us to make them repose trust and confidence in us and to establish a good rapport with them. In counselling, respect for the sentiments of others is very important.

Genuineness

In the opinion of Carkhuff one of the important qualities that a counsellor should have is sincerity, candour or genuineness. Let us examine how this quality becomes useful in counselling.

In day-to-day life we take pains to conceal our real feelings; we do not want to offend others by expressing our real thoughts. This, however, is not good in counselling. See how three persons, having listened to a rather dull and long speech, express their impressions to the speaker who asks for their comments:

First Person: A very good speech. I haven't listened to such a good speech for many days. (The truth is that this person has no high opinion of the speech).

Second Person: The speech has been prolonged unnecessarily. A very dull speech. (This person is jealous of the speaker.)

Third Person: Generally good, though a little long. It would have been an impressive speech, if the focus of attention had been on the main points and if time had been carefully regulated.

The third person's reaction alone is genuine. The first person's impressions are deliberately intended to please the speaker and does not do anyone any good; on the contrary, what he has said is likely to do harm in the sense that the speaker is denied the opportunity to correct himself and is likely to repeat his mistakes. The counsellor's aim ought to be to do good to others and to help them improve.

The second person's reaction arises from his attitude towards the speaker. He makes use of the opportunity to attack the speaker whom he regards as an adversary and of whom he is jealous. What he has said is neither a correct assessment of the speech nor a statement of his true opinion, but an expression of his resentment towards the speaker.

The third person does not make any attempt to hide his real impressions. He tries his best to express an opinion which will be helpful to the speaker. Opinions expressed in this manner will be useful in so far as they give the speaker or a person similarly situated an insight into his drawbacks and enable him to take remedial steps.

We have already seen that Carkhuff's basic principle is that the counsellor should respond to persons coming to him for

counselling from a superior level or higher plane. His own likes and dislikes should not in any way influence the counsellor in his evaluation of the problems with which persons approach him. It is all the same difficult in our cultural set-up for one to rise above the barriers of caste, religion, beliefs, region, and economic and family status. But counselling, to be successful, should be a disinterested effort and should not be vitiated by prejudices and preconceived ideas.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of 'respect' in counselling.
2. What are the harmful effects of belittling the problems faced by others?
3. Assess the harmful effects that may arise from reactions that are not genuine.

LESSON 5

CARKHUFF'S CONCLUSIONS (Contd.)

—*Self-disclosure*

—*Immediacy*

Self-disclosure

The counsellor's practice in sharing with the client his own personal experiences, which are similar to those of the latter, is termed 'self-disclosure' by Carkhuff. Personal experiences are shared by persons who are close to each other; such a sharing also strengthens their intimacy. Apart from this, sharing serves another purpose too. In the eyes of the person suffering from mental tension, all except him are

enjoying a peaceful life and he alone has problems; such thinking is likely to make him feel lonely and alienated and lose his peace of mind. So, if he is told that persons like the counsellor too have their own problems and miseries in life, and if he becomes aware of this truth, he will have great relief from his mental strain. It is this fact that makes many of us attempt to console those in sorrow by telling them about others' sorrows. We may attempt to console a mother who has lost her son by telling her about the death of three hundred and twenty-nine persons in the Kanishka plane disaster. But it is doubtful whether the mother's grief will be lessened because she is told about the deaths in the plane accident. Sharing one's personal experience of sorrow with another person afflicted with grief— especially when their sorrows have much in common—is, however, relevant, and serves some useful purpose. This is because the person in sorrow can easily come to terms with reality when he realises that the one whom he has taken to be invincible has also had similar experiences and problems.

Suppose a student who is keen to become a good speaker is afraid of facing an audience, and shares his fears and difficulties with a good speaker whom he is intimate with and whom he almost worships. The student has perhaps much inferiority feeling too. Will it help the student if the person tells him about his own achievements as a speaker and about the gifts which he has inherited? No. Even if the speaker gives him instruction in the art of speaking and the techniques and devices he has to make use of for becoming a good speaker, the student will not be benefited. This is because the information the student gets is intellectual and does not prove adequate to bring about a change in his emotional attitude. On the other hand, if the approach is personal, much good may come of it. The speaker may, in the course of a conversation, tell the student: "I know that you and some others recognise me

today as a good speaker. I am happy about it. But when I was your age no one gave me any recognition or even encouragement. In those days I too was afraid of facing an audience; perhaps I had much more fear than what you today experience. I could not overcome this fear overnight. It was constant struggle and repeated appearances before gatherings that enabled me to gradually overcome this fear. Even then there is a lingering fear in me when I face an audience consisting of eminent men. The fear that you experience now is something that can be got over through practice". Words to this effect are likely to instil a lot of confidence in the student. The reason is his knowledge that the person whom he has regarded as invincible too had passed through stresses and strains to a certain extent in his attempt to become a good speaker. Not only does this knowledge give him self-confidence but it also enables him to come to terms with reality. In self-disclosure, however, a counsellor should be true to himself; he should give instances only from personal experiences and should not concoct instances and pass them on as if they were from personal experiences. Concocted instances and incidents seldom agree with facts. If instances are taken from one's own experiences as in the above example, anyone who, like the student, listens to the facts, will be convinced.

Immediacy

Immediacy is a term used by Carkhuff to refer to the emotional state here and now of a person seeking counselling. A usual question that is asked while counselling is in progress is, "How do you feel now?" The question is relevant because it aims at assessing the present emotional state of the person seeking counselling. The word 'immediacy' refers to the immediate present, and in the context of counselling to the emotional state here and now of the person.

The Usefulness of Finding Out Immediacy

A person suffering from mental tension usually talks a good deal about things that have nothing to do with his immediate emotional state; these things do not have much relevance in counselling except as part of conversation. So, the counsellor should try to dissuade the person from going on with such irrelevant talk and make him realise the present reality and its relevance; for it is to help him overcome his present tension that counselling has become necessary for him. The intense grief that a son feels for the death of his father that took place ten years ago may, however, be examined in counselling, but not those things of the past reeled off by the person just for the sake of information; this is because his grief has much to do with his present emotional state. In counselling as well as on occasions when patients or bereaved families are visited, it should be the present emotional state that must be taken note of.

Another advantage of finding out the immediate emotional state of a person is that the counsellor can by doing so make the person shift from the intellectual level to the emotional; for it is the relationship at the emotional level that helps in counselling. One of the reasons for mental tension is the conflict between intellect and emotion. The counsellor's relationship with the person at the emotional level helps him in giving the latter the insight that is necessary for keeping under check any misplaced emotional attitudes.

QUESTIONS

1. How does sharing of personal experiences by the counsellor help the person seeking counselling?
2. What is meant by self-disclosure? Give examples to illustrate its meaning.
3. Explain why relationships at the emotional level rather than at the intellectual level are the basis of counselling.

LESSON 6

CARKHUFF'S CONCLUSIONS (Contd.)

—*Confrontation*

—*Confrontation: its necessity in counselling*

—*Fantasies*

Confrontation

'To confront' means 'to meet face to face', 'to oppose', etc. 'Confrontation' is the act of meeting face to face. In counselling too this is important. Situations arise in which the counsellor has to call a spade a spade. Suppose a person tells the counsellor that he does not bear any ill-will towards anyone. But his face and voice do not carry conviction; they do not agree with the words spoken by him. What does his conduct mean? He does not want others to think that he harbours ill-will or grudge, or though at the rational level he does not want to bear any grudge towards anyone, yet at the emotional level he fails to realise this desire. Here we notice an obvious discrepancy between his words and gestures. The counsellor should be able to bring home this discrepancy, which may be either conscious or unconscious, to the person. He may tell the latter, "Though you say that you do not have any ill-will towards anyone, yet this is not what your face, voice and gestures indicate." Perhaps this blunt statement may not be liked by the person; he may resent it. The counsellor should, therefore, be quite careful in expressing his impression in words: that is to say, his words should not in any way wound the feelings of the person.

Confrontation: Its Necessity in Counselling

In a way all mental tension arises from a general sense of disturbance of equilibrium, from self-contradictions within the person. He may not be quite aware of these self-contradictions; moreover, his own mind may have built up its own defence mechanism to overcome the tension. Neither his own unawareness

nor the defence mechanism of the mind is a lasting solution to his problem. So, confrontation on the part of the counsellor becomes necessary in the interest of finding a lasting solution.

Three of these self-contradictions or discrepancies that give rise to mental tension may be mentioned here. First, there is the discrepancy between expectations and their non-fulfilment. The son of an eminent physician cherishes the ambition of becoming a physician like his father. But he fails to fulfil his ambition and becomes a bank employee. He is constantly in the grip of tension because his unrealised ambition remains active in the unconscious and stands in the way of his coming to terms with the reality of his situation. Confrontation on the part of the counsellor will perhaps enable him to understand the real cause of his tension and thus overcome it.

Second, there is the discrepancy between emotional attitudes and their expression. A person may express sadness outwardly, but is inwardly happy. The counsellor practises confrontation when he points out this to the person.

Third, there is the discrepancy between values and their practice. A government employee is convinced that it is immoral to accept bribes, but he finds it impossible to resist the temptation of accepting bribes. This self-contradiction gives rise to tension unless he makes up his mind once and for all not to accept bribes or comes to the conclusion that there is nothing wrong in accepting bribes.

The defence mechanism of the unconscious is also something that upsets mental equilibrium; it may serve as a 'shock absorber' for some time, but in the long run it causes considerable harm to a person. It is this fact that Sigmund Freud's "Unconscious self-Defence Mechanism" and Eric Berne's "Games People Play" emphasise. One of the common defence mechanisms is mentioned below.

Fantasies

Fantasies are creations of the mind directed and controlled by the whim or pleasure of the moment. What we call day-

dreaming is akin to fantasies. What happens in fantasy is the dreaming of a very happy future to overcome, for the time being, the problems of the present. But the person who weaves a golden web of dreams around him is actually running away from problems. This is almost like what happens to a student who indulges in day-dreaming; he never realises his fancies; on the contrary, he fails to cope with his studies.

The self-contradiction and discrepancies in a person's conduct and words and the defence mechanism his unconscious mind builds up are not deliberately created by him. He is most often unaware of them; nor has he the insight to perceive them in his conduct and words. It is here that Carkhuff finds in confrontation a solution. Carkhuff's theory is that it is through tension that personality development takes place and that personality becomes stunted if there is no tension; so, tension is inevitable. But he insists that one should practise confrontation in one's own life in moments of tension without succumbing to self-contradictions and day-dreaming. The counsellor who attempts to eliminate tension in another person should have training in telling the person the truth about his behaviour without offending him.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain why confrontation is necessary in counselling.
2. Write short notes on (1) confrontation, and (2) day-dreaming.

UNIT 3

Counselling in Practical Life

LESSON 1

COUNSELLING THE YOUTH

—Psychology of the youth

—Three stages in the development of personality

What Theodre Lodz, a well-known psychologist, says about youth is this: "Youth is the stage when one makes a search within oneself for one's identity. This is also the stage when one asks oneself what one's place is in the world outside. The stage is characterised by an insatiable desire for friendliness, an unquenchable yearning for the attractions of beauty and love; it is at the same time a dark period of loneliness and disillusionment too." For various reasons youth, though full of hopes and aspirations, is nevertheless beset with conflicts. Young men create problems for themselves and others. The terrorist groups, active in different parts of the world, have for their members a large number of young men. It is again mostly young men who become addicted to alcohol and drugs. Though problems of the youth vary from place to place, depending on clime and culture, yet from a psychological standpoint they have a basic similarity. We cannot divorce the problems of young men and women from their social, economic and cultural environments. Any attempt to evaluate their problems without taking into account their environments will be superficial. For, psychological truths and insights will enable us only to understand their problems and will not lead us to find a solution to them. A consideration of the disturbed atmosphere

in our educational institutions points to this truth. If social environment is such that an undergraduate or postgraduate student can easily get a job on the basis of his qualifications and merits, and not by paying donations or bribes, then he will be concentrating on his studies instead of frittering away his energy. That is to say, social, economic and cultural environments too, apart from psychological insights, play a very important part in solving the problems of young men.

Psychology of the Youth

Eric Erikson finds eight phases in the life of man; he has dealt with the psychological level of a person in each of these phases. According to him, a person's state of mind in each phase is determined by the change that comes over him in his social relationships in that phase. Erikson asserts that in each phase a person's needs are different, and his modes of behaviour are related to his awareness of his needs. Erikson gives the example of a child; he says that till a child is fifteen months old, his/her social relationship is confined to his/her mother and that this relationship enables the child to keep up one basic attitude—an attitude of basic trust or basic mistrust. Accordingly, the conflict in a child's mind is between basic trust and basic mistrust. The more the child grows the more his social relationships too grow. The social relationships pass from mother to the society at large through parents, members of the family, neighbours, schools, classmates and friends, members of the opposite sex, and husband/wife; new tensions arise in him/her as new relationships come into existence; according to Erikson, this is only natural in the process of growth. So, psychologists like Erikson do not look upon tensions as problems but only as an inseparable aspect of personality development.

Three Stages in Personality Development

For a clear understanding of youth, we may divide personality development into three stages and evaluate the characteristic features of each stage. The three stages are:

1. Childhood—the stage of integration
2. Youth—the stage of disintegration
3. Adulthood—the stage of reintegration

1. Childhood

In childhood personality is integrated; this stage lasts for twelve years. Though during this period his social relationships extend beyond his family to neighbours, school, friends and classmates, yet his norms of behaviour are those of the family he belongs to. Moreover, he strictly adheres to certain rules of conduct that are in keeping with those of his family and society. He is not inclined to have a confrontation with his family or society on any issue. This is the reason why in this stage he is said to be integrated. Instances of integrated behaviour can be seen in every home. In Christian homes children below the age of twelve regularly attend evening prayers at home, service on Sundays, and Sunday school classes, and follows the rites of the Church without protest. His political values will be those of his family. If at all there is any tension, it will be between his own likes and dislikes. He is yet to experience conflicting values and emotional tensions. Once he begins to have these conflicts and tensions, he enters the second stage.

2. Youth

Conflict in terms of values and emotional tensions bring about a kind of personality disintegration. The individual's thoughts, emotions, imaginings and value awareness will lead him astray. He will begin to question whatever he has blindly believed in his childhood. He who has gone to church regularly till recently will begin to ask himself 'Why should I go to church? Won't God listen to my prayers said at home?' Because of this attitude of his, we should not label him as a rationalist or an atheist; it will not be wise. It is here that we perceive the importance of understanding the young man. We should realise that this kind of questioning on his part is inevitable in a crucial stage in the

process of personality development. Young men question the authority of their parents, the Church and the State, besides many things. In this stage a person may be compared to a ship that is in mid ocean; the ship has left the safety of the harbour, but has not yet reached another harbour. So too, the person has left his childhood behind, and is in the stormy ocean of conflicting values and emotional tensions. His growth to maturity, the full development of his personality, depends on how he tackles the problems arising out of his tensions and conflicts. Good guidance and counselling at this time will be helpful to him for attaining maturity in his personality development.

3. Adulthood

In this important stage of development personality becomes re-integrated. The tensions of youth do not generally last beyond one's thirty years; personality becomes settled and values are re-determined and made to integrate with one's personality. The person comes down from the world of ideals to the world of reality and gets reconciled to the latter. He is compelled to adopt definite religious beliefs, political views and cultural and literary ideas. Once thus re-integrated, personality generally remains unchanged; this is because the days of observation and experiments have ended and the days of practical living have begun. This does not mean that there are no tensions and conflicts in this stage; whatever tensions there are will be different from those of youth. Now in his adulthood the individual is forced to accept responsibilities of one kind or the other. It is tensions related to these responsibilities that the individual will have to experience in his adulthood.

QUESTIONS

1. What is Erikson's doctrine about personality development?
2. What is meant by disintegration of personality?

LESSON 2

PROBLEMS OF THE YOUTH

- The beginnings of youth*
- Self-realisation*
- The problems of the youth*

In the previous lesson we have seen that youth is a period of disintegration. Now let us examine the areas of disintegration and how disintegration affects personality development. Also, we may see how counselling is useful to the development of a mature personality.

The Beginnings of Youth

What are the characteristics of youth? How do these characteristics differ in man and woman? There are no remarkable physical changes in man as in woman that bring about changes in mental attitudes. Even then changes in attitudes noticeable in man and woman are basically due to the increasing sex hormones in them. In woman menstruation begins as conditioned by the increasing sex hormones. The physical changes seen in woman are also related to this process. The increasing sex hormones in man also are responsible for his rapid physical growth, the appearance of hair on his face and other parts, and the change that comes over his voice. The beginnings of youth are seen earlier in woman than in man, say, at thirteen in woman and at fifteen in man. The one special fact about youth is that both physical and psychological changes are interrelated in this period. Moreover, emotional attitudes, experiences of joy, sweet dreams about the future and attraction to the opposite sex lead the individual in his youth to an area which has not been hitherto within his range.

Self-realisation

Another special characteristic of youth is that the individual seeks self-realisation. He becomes all the more conscious about his physical appearance and his place in his family and society. It is also likely that in some an excessive desire for freedom and a keenness to oppose everything are seen in this period. An eagerness to be self-reliant makes some seek jobs; when they fail in their attempts, they become disappointed and begin to nurse feelings of hatred and vengeance, which finally land them in anti-social and terrorist activities. Life that is not creative is dull and uninteresting, and to get rid of boredom, some take to alcohol and drugs. When these tendencies are seen in young men and women, it is the duty of the elder generation to adopt an attitude of love and understanding towards them and help them out, instead of treating them contemptuously as outcasts. What we have said about empathy and respect should be translated into action here.

Problems of the Youth

According to Erikson, problems of the youth may be said to arise from five urges.

1. Desire for Recognition

Those young men and women whose character offers a difficult problem to their parents are basically governed by a desire for recognition rooted in their unconscious minds. The student who enters the college for his studies is driven to smoking and drinking because of this urge for recognition, though his classmates also play a part in giving him all the encouragement. Moreover, he feels that to be recognised as one among the elder students, smoking and drinking are necessary. One who has had a strict upbringing in his childhood is likely to go to the extreme. A tendency to question everything and to disobey those in authority also stems from this uncontrollable desire for recognition. All these facts should compel the elder generation to pay special attention to one's desire for recognition as one passes from child-

hood to adolescence and from adolescence to youth. Once young men and women are convinced that their voice is heard in their family and parish circles as well as in social and political organisations, it is very easy to dissuade them from their agitational approach.

Sexuality

An area in which young men and women experience great tension is one of sex. To some, what is supremely important in life is to fall in love with a member of the opposite sex. Yet some others will perhaps try to experiment with sex. When some confine themselves to self-abuse and homosexuality, a few at least are interested in having pre-marital sex. What is said here is not based on any statistics; in our society there are practical difficulties in preparing statistical tables on sexual matters.

The tendencies mentioned above are signs of ill health, and do not in themselves constitute illness. It is one's personality that is ill, and should be treated. Let us take, for example, the problem of young men and women falling in love. It is those who are indifferent to their studies and do not have a loving atmosphere at home and whose minds are dull and vacant that turn to calf-love. Instead of attempting to dissuade them from their love affairs, they should be lovingly encouraged to see the reality around them; this approach is likely to help them get out of their affairs.

The aberrations of sex also should be seen as a sign of ill health. A man's attitude towards sex reveals what kind of personality he possesses. If he visits brothels, we see in him a ruined personality. Here too, it is not the sign of ill health that requires attention and treatment but the patient himself. One who has grown up without receiving any instruction in righteous living goes astray and becomes a slave to sexual aberrations and finds it difficult to exercise moral restraint on oneself. On the contrary, one who is conscious of one's dependence on God and has cultivated an attitude of self-sacrifice and selfless service to others will never

make another a means to his selfish ends. But those whose assets are only their selfishness, their keenness to exploit others to their own advantage, will keep up their selfish mentality in their sexual conduct too.

Many psychologists do not agree that self-abuse is permissible. Most of them are of the view that though at a stage in personality development self-abuse is likely to be practised, yet it should be checked. Isn't it a sin not to sacrifice one's immediate pleasures for the sake of one's own ever-lasting goodness? When a person seeks the means of deriving pleasure in his own self, he is ruining his creative powers. Here what he is expected to do is to rely on God's mercy and direct his abilities and gifts through channels that will take him to higher achievements; this he can do only if he exercises self-control. Everyone who leads a spiritual life will be able to do this. An idle brain is the devil's workshop; the devil enters the life of a person who has no hopes for the future and who is idle and inactive; it is then that he chooses the self-centred means of deriving pleasure for the sake of getting rid of ennui and a feeling of emptiness. Alcoholism and drug-addiction too, like unnatural sex, are the products of ennui and inactivity. He who occasionally indulges in these pleasures develops a sense of guilt. The sense of guilt need not necessarily be the result of his religious upbringing; it may be due to the feeling that the indulgence was unnecessary. Whatever it be, the sense of guilt generates a feeling of insecurity and loneliness. The feeling of emptiness and loneliness will once again compel him to seek pleasures in unnatural sex, alcohol and drugs. He should be rescued from this vicious circle and helped to develop his personality on the right lines. This is possible through counselling at this stage. The awareness that one should rely on God and the consequent hopes for the future, an ability for self-sacrifice, selflessness, and the consciousness that one can do a lot of good to others will give him real happiness.

3. Finding a Job

A big problem faced by the youth today is the difficulty experienced in finding a job that suits one's temperament and

aptitudes. It is very difficult to suggest a ready-made solution; this is because the problem is interlinked with certain caste, religious, social and economic realities. The remedy lies in the individual developing a temperament that will enable him to accept any job and feel happy in discharging his duties conscientiously.

4. Status in Society

Every young man or woman would like to have a decent status in society. But unfortunately, wealth has become the main criterion in determining the status of an individual today. Since the man without riches is ignored in society, there is a growing tendency among people to make money by hook or by crook. This tendency is an important force behind the anti-social and terrorist activities seen in society. No immediate solution can be found to this problem unless there is a social and economic re-organisation of the society.

Life's Meaninglessness

One cannot cope with life's tensions unless one has a definite, meaningful philosophy of life. Those believers to whom Christ is a reality in their lives can have a meaningful life full of hopes for the future. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." (Psalms 127:1)

QUESTIONS

1. How can the sexual problems of the youth be tackled?
2. Relate the problems of the youth to social realities and assess them. Also, suggest solutions to the problems.

LESSON 3

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

—Two kinds of preparation

—Physical and psychological aspects

—Preparation for marriage through pure and righteous living

Success in life's ventures depends mainly on the preparation that goes before them. This is true of marriage too. Marriage gives an opportunity to a couple to live together for their lifetime and fulfil certain responsibilities. Problems may arise in married life. But those who enter married life with adequate preparation for it and a proper awareness of their duties and responsibilities will always succeed.

Two Kinds of Preparation

Broadly speaking there are two kinds of preparation for marriage. These are: (1) remote or indirect preparation, and (2) direct or immediate preparation. Remote or indirect preparation begins in early childhood in the environment of one's home. The good atmosphere that prevails at home and the happy, ideal relationship that exists between father and mother exercise a great influence on the growing boy or girl. Their mutual respect and consideration, their honest and sincere dealings and their value-oriented attitudes to life leave a permanent impression of ideal husband-wife relationship in the mind of the growing young boy or girl. The person who does not receive healthy impressions about married life from the example of his parents may ruin his married life.

Direct or immediate preparation is specifically devoted to married life and is received at the hands of trained persons and special organisations. Talks on marriage and interpersonal relationships in marriage are necessary. The Church should pay

special attention to this; the youth movements of the Church should organise classes and discussions on the various aspects of marriage.

The Church has its own definite beliefs about marriage. These are:—

- (a) Marriage is an institution founded by God. When some Pharisees asked Christ whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife, he said: "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female?... For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh... what therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19: 4-6). Even before the fall of man God's intention was that man and woman should live together as husband and wife.
- (b) Marriage is a permanent, inseparable, union. In Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9 it is said "what God has joined together, man must not separate". St. Paul who has dealt with the subject of marriage also expresses the above view. In our Church marriage is not a mere contract, but it is a sacrament—a sacrament of love.
- (c) Though the main aim of marriage is procreation, yet companionship is also another important one. "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (Genesis 2: 18). So God created a woman and gave her to the man.
- (d) The relationship between husband and wife is pure and sacred. "Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous" (Hebrews 13: 4).

It was in the relationship between husband and wife that St. Paul found an analogy to illustrate the divine relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5: 22, 23, etc.) St. John too speaks of 'the marriage of the Lamb' in his

account of the end of the world in the Revelation (Revelation 19).

Physical and Psychological Aspects

What we have seen above is the fundamental beliefs of the Church as regards relationship between husband and wife. It is necessary that one should know these beliefs before one enters married life. Equally important is one's knowledge about the physical and psychological aspects of married life. Ignorance of these aspects will create many problems. If we analyse cases of marital incompatibility, we will come to know that the main cause is ignorance and misinformation about sexual matters.

What is the best means of imparting sex education? Are educational institutions the right places for imparting sex education? Is there a role for parents to play in sex education? These are relevant questions. What happens today is that young men and women receive their information about sex from pornographic works and publications of a low standard; as a result, they become influenced by distorted notions about sex.

Sex is not something physical alone; it has psychological, emotional and spiritual dimensions too. To the beasts sex is just a physical urge, and has nothing to do with emotional and psychological considerations. Man alone faces problems arising out of the correlation of psychological phenomena with somatic or bodily conditions and variations.

Man's physical structure and mental make-up are different from those of woman. In their emotional attitudes too they differ. Man becomes easily excited sexually; the excitement does not last long either. But this is not so with woman.

In married life self-control and abstinence have a significant place. Marriage should not be thought of as a licence to sexual abandon. In the absence of spiritual enlightenment and discipline this happens. So, everyone should be conscious of the need for self-control, self-restraint and occasional abstinence.

Preparation for Marriage through Righteous Living

We have considered acquisition of knowledge about the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of man as important in one's preparation for marriage. But more important than this is one's pure and righteous living prior to marriage. Perhaps today society does not attach great importance to pure living before marriage; this indifference to righteous living may also be the cause of the failure of many a marriage that we witness in society.

It is good that those who intend to get married know each other before marriage. But this should not result in their taking unlimited liberties with each other.

Why should pre-marital sex and sex outside marriage be avoided? Some of the reasons are given below

- (a) Avoidance of pre-marital sex and sex outside marriage will save us from a guilty conscience. It is difficult for us to ignore our social laws, conventions, customs and regulations. Pre-marital sex which breaks the social norms results in a lot of mental tension that eventually gives rise to a guilty conscience and disturbs one's peace of mind.
- (b) Pre-marital sex or sex outside marriage does not result in absolute satisfaction and happiness. This is because of fear, anxiety, worry, etc. The satisfaction that is derived from husband-wife relationship is not only physical but also spiritual and psychological; physical relationship here is the climax of their psychological and spiritual union. Mere physical union does not make a couple any different from beasts.
- (c) Those who have had sex outside marriage will be suspicious of their partners' absolute loyalty to them. This is because we judge others from our own experience and attitudes. Illegitimate sex prevents a person from giving absolute love and satisfaction to his partner in life, and consequently, they become estranged day by day.
- (d) Pre-marital sex and sex outside marriage should be avoided in the interest of the future generation. It is a possibility

that a man who has been indulging in indiscriminate and promiscuous sex will have children who develop unhealthy character and outlook in life and go astray. Moreover, the children are likely to be victims of sexually transmitted diseases and will be disease-ridden and physically abnormal. So, if we care for our future generation, we should lead a pure and moral life.

What should be one's attitude to sex? Sex is neither abhorrent nor unholy. It is God-given and holy. This is how we should regard sex. All the same we should abstain from reading obscene books and using obscene language.

Any intimacy or close physical contact with a member of the opposite sex should not be such as to excite one emotionally. Occasions that compel a person to be alone by himself or alone with a member of the opposite sex should be avoided. An idle mind is the devil's workshop. So, one must not allow unholy thoughts and feeling to linger in one's mind; one must find opportunities to fill one's mind with noble thoughts. One should lead a pure life, knowing that one's body is 'a temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 6:9).

QUESTIONS

1. How do Christian beliefs about marriage differ from those of other religions?
2. What are the difficulties encountered in choosing a partner in life? What should be the right approach?
3. What are the things that one should pay heed to in order to practise chastity and celibacy?

LESSON 4

COUNSELLING FOR FAMILY PROBLEMS

- The social background of family problems*
- Ignorance about sexual matters*
- The nuclear family*
- Ways of avoiding problems*

Till recently we have been able to arrive only at certain conjectures about family problems; this too, we have done in the light of the studies done in the West and the theories formulated there. We have not yet made a scientific study of these family problems that are part and parcel of our culture.

The Social Background of Family Problems

The basic problem in our society stems from its economic structure. Ours is a capitalist society; the economic structure is capitalistic; the rich become richer and the poor become poorer in our society. Though we may not agree with Karl Marx's economic doctrines, yet we have to admit that his doctrine of the social influence of wealth is to a great extent true. Here, all the social structures are controlled and governed by wealth. Politics, government and religion have not yet been liberated from the influence of wealth. There is discrimination shown between the rich and the poor even in the matter of their spiritual needs being met; this is something that cannot be refuted. The basis of theological counselling which insists that an individual should be taken as he is has not been accepted in real life. It is against this background that we should examine family problems. Since family status and individual status depend on the wealth that has been amassed, there is a rat race for making money witnessed everywhere. And what happens, as a result, is

that all values of life are trampled upon and the bonds of human relationships are ruthlessly snapped. The rich are busy trying to preserve their rights and privileges whereas the poor are keen to become like the rich. The tensions these yearnings create in individuals and families are far too many. Some of them that may be stressed here are mutual rivalry, unhealthy competition, jealousy, hatred, selfishness, estrangement from relatives and friends resulting from lack of attention paid to human relationships in the wake of one's mad pursuit of wealth, etc. The neglect shown to the less fortunate friends and relatives by the rich may sometimes give rise to mental tension in the former. There are no specific solutions to these tense situations. What is required is a change in attitudes; this is possible only if an economic restructuring of the society on the foundations of equity, justice and Christian ideals is effected.

We may, however, pay attention to one or two things even in the present social set-up. We may make every family conscious of the fact that it is part and parcel of God's scheme of redemption and that it, therefore, has a duty to participate in His work of redemption. The happiness a person and his family experience when they discharge their duties and obligations to the society is in itself a bulwark against most of the problems likely to arise in the family. Money counts, but it is not the only thing that matters as a factor in achieving happiness. Real happiness consists in one's realisation of God through the experiencing of privations and difficulties and through the entertaining of hopes for the future.

Ignorance about Sexual Matters

All are generally agreed that the sexual incompatibility of a married couple may wreck their family life. Perhaps there are some who are ignorant about sexual matters in the present-day world too. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the question how far ignorance about sexual matters adversely affects family relationships. There is no doubt that ignorance about sexual matters enhances family problems. Counselling is helpful in such

situations. What is more important, however, is to check the disintegration of family life that has started in the wake of the impact of Western culture on our life. The influence of Western culture has caused much unease in the Indian mind. One is uncertain as to what is moral and what is immoral. The basis of counselling in our cultural set-up should not in any way compromise with evil but should, on the contrary, be a fight for what is morally good. Though it is good that a wife should train herself to live in harmony with her alcoholic, quarrelsome husband, yet she and the rest of the family should lay more emphasis on rescuing him from the evil of alcohol.

The Nuclear Family

In the present-day world people have begun to feel alienated; lonely and disillusioned; this is because of their having come away from rural surroundings to live in cities and towns and of their having set up nuclear families in preference to joint families. Disillusionment and loneliness lead them to take to drinks and drugs. The remedy for this lies in Christian fellowship. Christian fellowship does not merely mean an assembly or gathering of Christians, but it means the experience of translating Christian love into action through selfless service to those who are poor, miserable and helpless. The experience is so ennobling as to liberate a person from the clutches of alienation, loneliness, disillusionment, drinks and drugs.

Ways of Avoiding Problems

1. An Awareness of Dependence

Family life requires the cultivation of an awareness of mutual dependence between husband and wife. In our set-up wife's dependence on husband is too much; also, the exercise of husband's authority over wife exceeds normal limits. Both these tendencies adversely affect the wholesome atmosphere that is necessary in family life. What is required is to develop an attitude of co-operation and consultation between husband and wife.

Where necessary, children should also be consulted. This will assure them of their important place in the family.

Sharing of Feelings

Of all human relationships the relationship between husband and wife is the most abiding and deep; for this reason husband and wife should not desist from the emotional sharing of joys and sorrows in life. They should also appreciate each other's aptitudes and abilities, taking into account the fact that the family, and even social background of the one may be different from the other's. The relationship between husband and wife should be based on the truth contained in the verse..." whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" St. Mat. 7:12). The relationship becomes strengthened when husband and wife sincerely love the members of each other's family. This does not mean that they should attach themselves to their parents; what is meant is that as children of God they should discharge their responsibilities in keeping with the positions they hold in each other's family.

The suggestions given above are based on the problems that are likely to arise in our social set-up. Whatever be the intensity of the problems encountered in family life here, there does not seem to be any scope or atmosphere for counselling on the lines it is carried out in the West. Payment of huge fees is a pre-condition for professional counselling in the West; if the system is copied here in India too, counselling like many other useful activities will be the exclusive preserve of the rich. What may be done here is for priests and other Christian workers to look upon each family as a separate unit and examine its problems against its own background and offer appropriate suggestions and guidance.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the family problems that are generally seen in our social set-up?
2. How does counselling help in solving family problems?

LESSON 5

COUNSELLING THE SICK

—*The mental state of the sick*

—*Guidelines for those visiting the sick and the ailing*

When Christ sent out his disciples to preach the Gospel, He blessed them, first of all, with the power of healing. "And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, to heal every disease and every infirmity" (Matthew 10:1). "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay" (Matthew 10:8). An important mission of Christ in this world was healing the sick, which was also regarded as a sign of the advent of the Kingdom of God. The Christian Church has from its very inception followed in Christ's footsteps in the service of the sick. The Christian hospitals and their set-up are a manifestation of the service rendered by the Church to the ailing all through the years of its existence. The mode of functioning of the Christian hospitals today is perhaps unsatisfactory and leaves much room for improvement; for all those who need help do not get it because of their poverty. Yet, we should not forget the fact that healing the sick has always been an integral part of Christian life and mission.

What is discussed here is not the kind of treatment that the physicians can give the sick; nor does it concern the type of counselling that those who have received specialised training can give. What follows is a set of guidelines that almost everyone can put into practice when he visits the sick. An important thing to note here is that illness casts a gloomy shadow over even the most powerful person and his relatives and that physical ailments, especially those that cause sudden deaths or are incurable, generate much tension in human minds, and that we

should do what we can to relieve the ailing of the mental tension they are in.

The State of Mind of the Sick

We should pay special heed to the state of mind of the sick while counselling them. We do not have to ascertain how serious the condition of the sick is. The nature and seriousness of the disease are for the physicians to take care of. What is important for us is to have an insight into the relation between the state of mind of the sick man and his ailment. Any disease can generate anxiety, worry, fear, etc. in the mind of the sick. When the disease aggravates, anxiety increases. When anxiety becomes uncontrollable, physical uneasiness, discomforts and pain also increase. This in turn affects his mind all the more. The condition of the patient then becomes worse. The process thus turns out to be a vicious circle. This is why doctors, while treating patients, are expected to help them, through counselling, to overcome their anxiety and fear.

The sick man easily becomes a prey to all kinds of complex emotions—loneliness, disillusionment, disappointment, fear (even fear of death), resentment, hatred, a sense of economic loss and insecurity, a feeling of being neglected, etc. These feelings keep on changing, depending on the seriousness or otherwise of the patient's condition. The approach in counselling in these circumstances should be such that it should help the patient come out with his feelings and derive consolation through sharing them with another person. The counsellor should also persuade the patient to be realistic and come to terms with his condition and to have faith in the ways of God and His concern for everyone. (The doctrines of Carkhuff which we have seen in the earlier lessons should be put into practice here too.)

Guidelines for Those Visiting the Sick

Those who visit the sick have certain responsibilities and obligations. We may, therefore, point out here how they should conduct themselves.

1. *Visiting Hours*

Those visiting a patient should find out beforehand where he has been admitted and what the visiting hours of the hospital are. Also, if the patient is advised rest, they should look him up only after he has had his rest. It is the convenience and comfort of the patient that matter, and not those of the visitors.

2. *Visitors' Mental Attitudes*

The mental attitudes of the visitors are important. Their approach should be such that it should give the patient solace and comfort. If visitors have complaints about their having not been informed earlier about the patient's condition or harbour bitterness towards or are prejudiced against him, it is better that they do not visit the patient; for since 'the face is the index of the mind' the visitor's feelings towards the patient will not remain hidden from the latter and the situation will become tense. Visitors should also take care to see that they do not give expression to excessive joy or sorrow in front of the patient. A sensitive patient is likely to react to any display of feelings; there is also the danger of his thinking that the expression of sorrow or poignant feelings on the part of visitors is on account of his condition having been aggravated. So, visitors, in all humility and sympathy, should show a demeanour that inspires hope and relief in the patient. Those who, for one reason or the other, are immersed in grief, disappointment, fear, etc should not visit patients because in spite of themselves they will pass on their state of mind to the patients.

3. *Topics of Conversation*

One should be careful as regards one's utterances in front of patients. Those patients who have difficulty in talking should not be forced to talk. On some occasions silence is more valuable than speech. We should not think that a visit serves its purpose only if we make a short speech. What is valuable is our presence, our consideration for the patient and our sincere prayers for him to recover.

When conversation is necessary, what is important is to give the patient an opportunity to express his feelings. The visitor's role on this occasion should be that of a counsellor. Though towards the end of the conversation the visitor may talk to the patient in a manner soothing and comforting to him, yet what is most important is to take in the sorrows and sufferings of the patient. (The importance of listening has already been emphasised in an earlier lesson.)

It is always better to permit the patient to choose his own topics of conversation than for the visitor to talk on topics which are uninteresting to the patient. When it is noticed that the patient is not interested in the topics the visitor forces upon him, the latter should not persist in talking about these topics, but should, on the other hand, find out topics that will be of interest to the patient.

The conversation between the visitor and the patient should not turn into a debate. Debatable or controversial topics should be avoided. A debate or controversy or the expression of conflicting views will disturb the mental peace of the patient. Whenever conversation borders on a debate, the visitor should bring it to an end saying that the controversial topic can be taken up for discussion on a later occasion. This is because even if the visitor wins the argument in the end, he is likely to lose the patient. The purpose of the visitor's conversation with the patient is certainly not to lose the latter. A protracted debate will agitate the patient's mind; this will adversely tell upon his health.

4. *Questions That May be Asked While Talking to the Patient*

No question or query that will upset or irritate the patient should be asked by the visitor; nor should the visitor put questions to the patient about his health as if he were a doctor. He may ask the patient some questions about his general health. Any set of searching questions can only cause resentment. Questions that can help the patient come out with the causes of his mental tension alone have any relevance in counselling.

Patients in general are mentally upset. Therefore, any reference to incidents that are sad or frightful should be avoided in the presence of the patient.

5. *Assessment of the Doctor and the Hospital*

For a patient to regain his health, he should develop an attitude of mind that is helpful to his recovery. Belief in the doctor and a high opinion about the hospital are included in what is meant by the right mental attitude. If the visitor thinks that the doctor and the hospital are not good, he may express his opinion to the relatives of the patient, but not at any rate to the patient. To say to the patient, "So you have been admitted here! A friend of mine who had been under treatment here for a similar complaint died last week", would be most foolish.

There are also visitors who prescribe their own nostrums or lines of treatment to the patient much to his discomfiture. The visitor's role is at best that of a counsellor and not at any rate that of a physician; treatment is the responsibility of the doctor and not that of the visitor.

6. *Consideration for the Members of the Patient's Family*

Our social set-up is such that family relationships are still intact and have not become disintegrated; they are still regarded as sacred. Relatives of the patient continue to look after and nurse him. The patient may be in a coma and unaware of what is happening, and it is the relatives who really experience pain and hardship. Visitors should, therefore, be very cautious and considerate while talking to the relatives; they should do well to bear in mind the basic principles of counselling on these occasions. What they say to the relative should give them mental courage to face the crisis. In a sense such considerate conduct of visitors will indirectly help the speedy recovery of the patient who will imbibe hope and equanimity from the relatives attending on him.

Spiritual Remedy

The main aim of counselling is to enable the patient to be spiritually strong. If he can be made to feel that "God is our

refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1), then he will have the necessary inner strength to face any eventuality. Priests should, therefore, take pains to see that the patient accepts God as his refuge, prays meaningfully to Him and participates in the Holy Sacrament. Others too should help the patient in this through their considerate words and deeds.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain how physical ailments and mental disorders are inter-related. Give examples.
2. Examine how visiting patients and dealing with them on the basis of principles of counselling can be different from your present manner and conduct at the time of visiting them.

LESSON 6

PROBLEMS OF THE AGED

—*When does old age begin?*

—*Ways of making old age happy*

—*Society: its responsibilities*

In the present-day changing social set-up, the aged experience all kinds of mental tension that are not adequately looked into. In the joint family system the old were respected and taken care of; this was because the heads of families wielded authority and commanded respect. Under the system it was women and children who were neglected. But in today's nuclear families, husbands, wives and children constitute a unit; they tend to neglect the aged parents. The problems of the aged in India, where millions of people live below the poverty line, have increased. These people, when they were healthy and active, had

their own means of livelihood. Now in their old age they are without resources to keep body and soul together. Their lives become miserable because they are weak and often ill and have no money to go for medical treatment or meet the expenses of food and clothing. The problems of the aged cannot be solved merely on the basis of the analytical data supplied by sociologists and psychologists. But even then an analysis of their problems can be useful in a search for remedies.

When Does Old Age Begin?

There is much truth in saying that ageing depends on one's mental age and not on one's physical age. Those who preserve their mental health and alertness can postpone entering old age in spite of their advancing years. But such a postponement is possible only up to a limit; for with advancing years, one's eyesight, hearing and memory become weaker; one's joints become stiff and limbs become weaker; moreover, one requires the support of a walking stick to move about. The above changes are inevitable, though in different individuals they begin to show themselves at different times. Broadly speaking, the changes assert themselves in almost all by the age of sixty-five. In the case of those who have been in professional service, old age may be said to begin as soon as they retire from service; this is because of the mental tension that they undergo when they retire.

Ways of Making Old Age Happy

Psychologists are of the view that a person can find out for himself whether he is going to be happy in his old age, if he conducts a self-examination on the basis of the following factors.

(1) *Personality of the Individual*

The personality of the individual counts a lot. If a person is in the habit of doing things promptly and quickly, he will have problems in his old age. This is because he feels disappointed when he finds that his physical powers are not a match for his

mental alertness in his old age. His disappointment leads him to think that there is no meaning or purpose in continuing to live. What is said above does not mean that to make old age happy, one should have led an idle life earlier. What is meant is that in old age a person would not feel disappointed, if he trained himself to take time off his busy schedule of activities for amusements and entertainments. Hobbies such as reading, gardening and cultivation developed during one's active life will certainly help him spend his old age happily.

(2) *Life-style of the Individual*

Old age will give rise to problems for those who are accustomed to a life of luxury and a lot of attention from others. In old age a person does not get as much attention and regard from society as he used to get when he was active in his professional life. Even if a person has the means to continue to lead a luxurious life in his old age, yet he will find that he does not have the natural inclination to lead such a life in his old age for the simple reason that his life of luxury in his professional life which was geared to certain definite aims and goals ceases to have any relevance in his old age. Persons who lived in the limelight of publicity and occupied high positions would crave for similar attention and regard in old age too, but society would not be prepared to give them the same degree of respect. Those who were accustomed to giving orders in their professional life would have to become supplicants in their old age; this would result in considerable mental tension to them. But if a person is mature enough to view the publicity and recognition he used to get as part of the privileges of the position he once occupied and as something he will never again enjoy as he has lost his position, he will not feel disappointed in his old age. Also, a person, who consciously trained himself to lead a peaceful life even in the midst of the din and bustle of his professional life, will not feel in his old age that he is being neglected. This truth becomes quite evident, if we examine the temperament and attitudes of those who repeatedly complain that they are

being neglected by their children and grandchildren. Those who find nothing to do when they are alone also complain that they are being neglected.

(3) *Attitudes towards Changed Circumstances in Life*

Changes take place in life; this is a fact of existence. Fashions in dress, food habits, values of life, etc. change with the times whether we like the changes or not. Those who refuse to accept the changes and do not change with the times and are intolerant of changes, will find old age full of problems.

The grandfather who insists on evening prayers to be said at six when his grandson wants to watch the special programme of the Prime Minister's Kerala tour on the T. V. will only be creating problems. On the other hand, if the grandfather is prepared to have prayers said at 5.30 p.m. and watch the T. V. programme along with his grandson, both will be happy. What is suggested here is not to sacrifice one's values and principles of life, but to adopt an attitude of give and take which is necessary for the elimination of problems in one's old age.

Society: Its Responsibilities

What is said above is to help the individual train himself to face his old age. But society too has certain responsibilities to make the individual remain happy in his old age. Of these responsibilities the important ones are given below.

(1) *Facilities for Medical Treatment*

A person's health declines in his old age. So, he should get all facilities for health care and treatment. His own family as well as society and its agencies should pay particular attention to the basic needs and requirements of the old.

(2) *Economic Security*

A person in his old age should have enough means to meet, though in a limited way, his requirements. His own sense of security depends on his economic self-reliance.

(3) Fellowship

Loneliness creates problems for the aged. If a person has friends to share his feelings and thoughts with, then he feels greatly relieved; he gets over the feeling of being neglected. The feeling that he is listened to and loved by others enables him to retain his zest for life. If the hand of fellowship is extended to him through prayers, he becomes spiritually strengthened. This is a sphere in which the counsellor can play a useful role.

QUESTIONS

1. Examine how a person's individuality and life-style in his youth serve as helpful factors in making him happy in his old age.
2. Discuss as a group what each one of you can do for the aged.
3. Briefly describe society's responsibilities towards the aged.

UNIT 4

Problems And Reactions

LESSON 1

THE MIND THAT WISHES TO HIDE FAILURES

—*Defence mechanisms of the unconscious*

—*Shortcuts to hide failures*

We should not think that counselling is meant only for the mentally disturbed. It is also meant for those who consider themselves to be healthy in mind; it is just natural that they too have problems. If a person's problems are not dealt with in time, they are likely to affect his personality. But if handled effectively, the problems will disappear; the result will be the development of his personality on the right lines. This will be beneficial not only to him but also to others. For instance, if the head of a family has a well-integrated and well-developed personality, the rest of the family, especially the children, will get opportunities to develop their personalities on sound lines. Of course we should not forget that personality development depends mainly on the individual's will and determination.

In an earlier lesson we have seen that inferiority feeling comes in the way of personality development. Here we may examine how the defence mechanisms of the unconscious affect the individual in his development.

Defence Mechanisms of the Unconscious

“Defensive behaviour deals with problems that lie somewhere between effective solution and no solution”.¹ That is to say, the

1. B. Von Haller Gilmes. “Applied Psychology”, Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., New Delhi, p.80

defence mechanisms of the unconscious do not solve problems fully; they only help the individual overcome problems for the time being. The defence mechanisms of the unconscious may be made use of for personality development in a limited way; but any extensive use of these mechanisms will hamper personality development. Eric Berne describes defence mechanisms as 'the games people play'. Every game the individual plays is basically dishonest and is intended to enable him to hide his failures and run away from problems.

Shortcuts to Hide Failures

The motive forces behind a person's desire to cover up his failures are his fear of what other people will think of him and his interest in projecting a good image of himself before others. He may for the time being succeed. But if he repeatedly hides his failures, the practice becomes a weakness which in actual fact follows him like a shadow. Some of 'the games people play'—the defence mechanisms employed by people—are given below.

(1) *Rationalization*

Rationalization is the process of justifying by reasoning after the event in an attempt to satisfy oneself and others. But, more often than not, the reasoning does not fit in with facts. Those who resort to this defence mechanism of rationalization are like the fox in Aesop's fable that was unable to reach the grapes and consoled itself by saying that they would have been sour any way. Rationalization is also resorted to by some students who fail in their exams; they find fault with their teachers, who have taught them, for their failure.

Rationalization is a kind of deception—deception of one's own self and deception of others. This results in distorted personality development. For a healthy development of personality the individual should admit his failure and accept responsibility for it.

(2) *Excessive Dependency*

There are some who are noted for their over-dependency; they have made it their life-style to depend on others for getting things done, even when they themselves can do them. Instances of over-dependency can be drawn from our daily life. Some children insist on their homework being done for them by their parents or others at home. These children in later life become increasingly dependent on others for everything and thus become a problem to their fellowmen. It is probably their love for their children that forces parents to do their children's homework for them. But they are doing a great disservice to their children; for this adversely affects their personality development. When these children grow up and begin to lead a married life, they become greatly dependent on their partners who in turn will exercise absolute authority over them.

Besides adversely affecting personality development, over-dependency on others renders a person incapable of taking his own decisions and of accepting responsibilities (even when he is duty bound to accept them).

(3) *Projection*

Projection is a defence mechanism in which the individual foists off or projects on to other people motives or thoughts of his own that cause him anxiety. For example, a young man who has been strictly brought up does not want to admit that love for the opposite sex is a feeling he too experiences; so, when he falls in love with a girl, he will perhaps tell his friend thus: "A girl loves me. What should I do?" Those who complain that they are not liked by others are actually hiding the fact that they do not like others and are attributing this drawback to others. It is the same with the man who talks too much about the dishonesty of mankind; he may well be concealing his own tendencies towards dishonesty. So is the case of the woman who talks too much about the immorality of young people; she may be concealing her own strong sexual desires which cause her considerable anxiety. It is the fact of their being slaves to this common defence mechanism of projection that makes some persons fail in their personal relationships.

(4) *Negativism*

Negativism is an attitude of resistance to suggestions coming from other people. Those who exhibit negativism are people who have repeatedly experienced failures in life and who do not know how to adjust themselves to their surroundings. Their negativism does not enable them to overcome their failures, but only alienates them more and more from others. What they ought to know is that they can succeed in life only if they analyse the reasons for their failures and are prepared to turn over a new leaf in their lives in the light of the analysis. Their negativism may also be an outward expression of their lack of confidence and sense of security. Those who fail to find sense of security in God are likely to deny Him. We should not sit in judgement over them for their denial of God. On the contrary, we should try to understand their real state of mind and attitudes, and then deal with them.

(5) *Compensation*

This is yet another defence mechanism used to cover up failures in real life. A person who fails in one sphere of activity seeks out another sphere to compensate for his failure in the former. It is all right if he finds a sphere of activity in keeping with his aptitudes. But if his attempt is only to seek compensation for his failure, then it is not conducive to his mental health. The child who is not good at his studies concentrates his attention on games. If this is only to cover up his failure in studies and is not the outcome of his genuine interests in games, he is not likely to succeed in games either.

(6) *Repression*

Attempts are made by some people to banish from their conscious thoughts those incidents that have caused them pain, grief, anxiety, disappointments, etc. This process of pushing down from the conscious into the unconscious is called repression. But the process will continue to create problems in the unconscious, though for the time being the

conscious mind is freed from painful thoughts and conflicts. At times these conflicts and frustrations are likely to surface in the conscious mind and create problems.

According to Freud, feelings that have been pushed back into the unconscious and kept there are the causes of mental disturbances. These repressed feelings or motives have to be brought back to the conscious mind and analysed in order to find a solution that ensures permanent cure.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the defence mechanisms of the unconscious? How do they hamper personality development?
2. What does negativism signify?
3. Mention the harmful effects of over-dependency.

LESSON 2

THE MIND THAT WISHES TO ESCAPE FROM PROBLEMS

—Refuges sought by the mind

—Day-dreaming

—Identification

—Displacement

—Regression

—Sublimation

In the previous lesson we have seen some of the common defence mechanisms by which individuals attempt to hide their failures. This lesson examines how and in what manner the human mind sometimes attempts to run away from vexing problems in life.

There are students who fall ill with a headache or nausea on the eve of their exams. Excessive fear of exams is the reason behind this. Persons who react to problems in life in this way require the help of either a psychiatrist or a psychologist. Those who have received training in counselling can also be of help to them.

Refuges Sought by the Mind

The mind that wishes to escape from problems and hardships finds temporary refuges as detailed below.

1. *Day-dreaming*

Day-dreaming is a type of fantasy in which the individual allows his mind to wander aimlessly among pleasant dreams, gratifying wishes ungratified in real life. Day-dreaming is resorted to when the individual is overcome by lethargy, a feeling of emptiness, disillusionment, frustrations, etc. In his imagination the individual weaves a golden web of images and dreams, and attempts to live in a world of fantasy. Day-dreaming is indulged in by almost everyone. But frequent day-dreaming renders the individual inactive; his inaction leads him away from any attempt to turn his life's ambition into reality. The girl who goes to school with a mind beset with anxiety and problems arising from a father's drunken behaviour at home fails to concentrate on her studies; her wandering mind indulges in day-dreaming and creates an imaginary world of peace and happiness for her to live in. Though this defence mechanism enables her to get comfort and relief from her immediate hardships, yet in the long run it does not do any good to her. What is required is the mental preparedness to face squarely problems and difficulties and suffer sacrifices and endure hardships to make good one's future. Also, the individual should seek God's grace and blessings for courage and fortitude to face problems and hardships with equanimity.

2. *Identification*

Identification is a process by which the individual behaves or imagines himself as if he were another person with whom

he has an emotional tie. This process may be unconscious or partial, and is an escape route for him to run away from his immediate problems in life. Identification is a tendency seen more in young men and women, who are prone to imitate others, than in grown-up people. It is the anxiety of the mind that acts as a driving force here. The individual's hero-worship of leading figures in politics, religion, culture, art, cinema, etc. in certain circumstances develops into emotional identification which in turn makes him think of himself as being almost the same person as his hero. He then takes into himself his hero's power, virtues, triumphs, etc. and derives a kind of ecstasy that is indefinable. Emotional identification with great men may help a person imbibe high ideals and values, and may thus indirectly help personality development. But if identification is only a refuge and a means to run away from problems, it will not do any lasting good to the individual. On the contrary, he becomes disappointed and disillusioned once his world of idealism crashes in its collision with the world of reality.

3. *Displacement*

Displacement consists in improper display of emotions on certain occasions which do not justify or warrant such a display. It is also a device of the mind to run away from present problems. The subordinate who has differences of opinion with his boss in office cannot give vent to his displeasure or resentment to the latter, but does so to his wife and children at home. This is an instance of displacement. Sometimes what happens is just the other way round. The man who has no peace of mind at home shows his temper to his subordinates in the office. Displacement does not solve problems; on the other hand, it creates problems. The cure for displacement is for the individual to train himself to express his feelings appropriately in a manner that suits the occasion. Here the individual has a duty to himself; he should learn to correct himself through prayer and self-examination.

4. *Regression*

Retreating towards some types of activity appropriate to a lower level of maturity is called regression. The individual who is incapable of facing emotional conflicts and frustrations is seen to display outbursts of temper characteristic of children. In the midst of situations of stresses and strains he behaves like a child; he beats his breast, hits his head against the wall and stamps his feet or throws similar tantrums. Such demonstrations of temper need not be taken seriously if they are indulged in under unusual circumstances. But if they become common enough, the individual requires care and attention. Training in reacting in a mature way is necessary for personality development; otherwise, there will be problems for oneself and others.

5. *Sublimation*

Sublimation is the process by which a forbidden goal is replaced by a different goal. It is in other words alteration in the goal sought by an instinctive urge so that it becomes socially acceptable and valuable. According to Freud, it is through sublimating his sexual urge that man has built up the civilization as we see it today. However, sublimation does not help a person get over disappointments and sorrows in life. The story of a missionary who was born in Canada, but is working in India, is a case in point. The missionary was her parents' fifth daughter. The parents who had been looking forward to a son being born to them showed their disappointment in their treatment of the girl. She felt that she was an unwanted girl and believed that if she married and gave birth to a girl, her daughter would also have the same fate as hers. So, she decided against getting married. But later in life, when she went for counselling, she was found to be in deep distress and frustration. The truth about the missionary is that in spite of sublimating her sexual urge through selfless service, she has not been successful in liberating herself from sorrows and frustrations. In situations such as the missionary's what counselling can do is to help her cultivate an attitude by which she can obtain peace and happiness through self-sacrifice in the service of God.

All that is said above shows that the mind sometimes attempts to run away from certain realities of life and seeks refuge in certain mental processes. The individual may not be fully aware of the fact that he is running away from problems. So, what is important is for the individual to have self-awareness; self-awareness is the first step that helps him face problems in life. Shortcuts in the form of defence mechanisms of the unconscious should not be resorted to as God has given everyone strength to encounter problems, bear hardships and suffer pain. It is the individual's attitudes and outlook that play a decisive role in his facing problems. There are two ways of looking at problems: one is to treat them as realities of life; the other is to make a mountain out of a molehill and look at them as insurmountable problems. The first approach enables a person to tackle them; the second forces him to run away from them and seek refuge in subterfuges. What is important is to adopt a realistic approach.

QUESTIONS

1. Are there occasions in your life when you have run away from problems? Make an assessment of yourself in the light of the defence mechanisms mentioned above.
2. Write notes on the following:
 - (a) Day-dreaming
 - (b) Identification
 - (c) Sublimation

LESSON 3

IN FEAR OF DEATH

- Thoughts on approaching death*
- Protest*
- Resentment*
- Bargaining*
- Despondency*
- Expression of last wishes*
- Acceptance of reality*

There is a prayer in the Syrian Christian liturgy asking for a happy, peaceful end and protection from sudden death. In real life, however, just the opposite is happening: peaceful end is unattainable to many and sudden deaths are on the increase. The core of Christian beliefs is that death, the ultimate enemy of man, has moved away and that death is like sleep. Life in this world is transitory and there is no reason to feel sad about departing from this world. This is because we believe that when the faithful die, they enter everlasting life. Though this is the concept about death which we believe in and proclaim, yet we do not find it comfortable and easy to see off those about to die or bid farewell to them with a handshake, saying that we will meet again. Death makes us feel frustrated, our knowledge and rational thinking seldom come to our aid on occasions of death. Psychological analysis too has no place here. Only those, who have deep and abiding faith in God and are prepared to welcome a life after death happily, can be of any real assistance to the dying. That the dying should be seen off happily is more pronounced in the Christian tradition than in the psychological approach. The fact that there are special prayers to be said for those about to die illustrates the truth of

this concern of the Church. The Christian believer should die like Stephen who could "see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7.56). Since death, like life, occurs without our being aware of it, we should be ever prepared for it throughout our lives.

The question we have to consider here is what we can do for those who are approaching death. Those who are ill and getting weaker day by day, unlike those who die suddenly, can be prepared to face death. However, there is a big problem. Is it right to inform the sick man about his approaching death? Won't such information worsen his condition? There is also a counter-question. Is it right to give the sick man false hopes when specialists have certified that his ailment is incurable and that death is fast approaching? The answer to this is yet another question. Isn't God who had raised Lazarus from the dead capable of working a wonder here too? This also attracts counter-questions. Isn't death a part of God's dispensation? What is wrong in preparing the sick man for a peaceful end, since death enables him to reach God? It is difficult to answer these questions in a word or two.

All the same an incident well known to the present writer may be cited here for everyone to arrive at his own answers to the above questions. A son did not disclose to his father for about one and a half years that the latter was suffering from an incurable disease. But later, the son revealed the truth to his father. He said: "It is God who decides how many years we should live in this world. If God thinks that even as a sick man one should live for some more time one's life will be prolonged to that extent. Medical science has its own limitations. It has no permanent cure for the disease you are suffering from. The medicines you are using now will help you to prolong your life. The rest is God's will." Though the words used by the son were not exactly those in the quotation, yet whatever he said to his father conveyed the truth about his condition. The father lived for one and a half years more. During this period he overcame his fear of death and developed the courage to face death. The words of Paul Tournier are worth quoting: "Our mission is to help people live

and die." When we consider the verse, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4), we become convinced of the fact that though death appears to be a dreadful reality to man, yet God has given him the strength to face it. The aim of counselling the dying is to help them make use of this God-given gift and prepare for a peaceful end.

Thoughts on Approaching Death

E. K. Rose, who has written a book entitled, "On Death and Dying", on the basis of his conversations with nearly four hundred sick men and women awaiting death, has dealt with the phases usually passed through by a sick man who knows that he is approaching death. The thoughts of the dying in each one of the phases are given below.

1. Protest

No one wants to accept the reality of death. There is no reason why anyone should react to this attitude of protest on the part of the sick; for the good shepherd who guides the sheep to their pen on the hill-top has to take them through dark valleys too. So, what is required is to counsel the dying that they should be prepared to die peacefully and happily.

2. Resentment

Sometimes the dying express resentment against God, parents, brothers and sisters, and doctors. We should realise that such a reaction comes from the great pain of knowing the truth about their approaching death. We should not critically judge them on this score, even when they have expressed resentment against God. We should, on the contrary, help them understand that Christ too cried out in great pain, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34), and that he is also full of love for us and will never let us down.

3. *Bargaining*

When a dying man gets over his resentment, he may begin to bargain for his life. He will say that if he is given a new lease of life, he will lead a good life and distribute his wealth among the poor. We should on this occasion advise him to follow the example of Christ, who at first said, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me", but later submitted himself to the inevitable, saying, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:40), and thus to leave everything in the hands of God.

4. *Despondency*

When bargaining proves futile, it is likely that the dying man will fall into despondency. Our duty then is not to encroach upon his silence or moodiness resulting from despondency, but to give him hope through prayers and sacraments.

5. *Expression of Last Wishes*

The dying man may not persist in his despondency for a long time. He will show signs of accepting the inevitable. He will express his last wishes including his views on how his property should be divided. Normally in this phase he will express a desire to meet his relatives and friends and to receive the Holy Sacrament.

6. *Acceptance of Reality*

In this phase the dying man's mind moves away from a disturbed state to a calm one. Like Jeemuthavahakan he will lie in his bed listening to the approaching sound of the hoofs of death. We should now assure him of the fulfilment of Christ's promise: "In my Father's house there are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:3). We should persuade him that the Christian hope in a future life will become a reality. This will enable him to bid farewell to the world saying, "My God, I entrust my soul to Thy care".

All the above stages need not necessarily be gone through one after the other by a dying person. What is required to note is that he will finally accept the reality of death and that it is our duty to help him prepare for welcoming death happily through his deep faith in Christ and true Christian experience.

QUESTIONS

1. "Death can be faced happily." Discuss this statement in the light of real experiences.

LESSON 4

TO THE GRIEF-STRICKEN BEREAVED

- Benefits of praying together for the departed*
- The degree of intensity of grief for the departed*
- Present-day wrong approaches*
- Different phases of grief*

It is part of the tradition of our Church to say prayers and Masses for the souls of the departed. Most people may have understood the theological meaning of this practice, but not its psychological significance. There are two points of psychological importance worthy of note. These are the opportunity it gives to the bereaved to sorrow over the dead together with others and the strength and relief derived from such fellowship.

Benefits of Praying together for the Dead

1. *An Occasion to Sorrow over the Dead*

There was a time in the past when Masses were said regularly and memorial services were held almost daily for the dead. But today when everybody is busy, though it is difficult to have

Masses and services held continuously for a number of days yet before the fortieth day of death, special Masses are said and sacramental rites performed at the tomb in memory of the dead. The bereaved participating in the Masses and sacraments thus get occasions to mourn for the dead and express their grief, and gain relief thereby. This is indeed a great psychological benefit.

2. *The Strength Derived from Fellowship*

It is a normal practice for the bereaved to take part in the functions and religious rites performed in memory of the dead. This practice affords great relief to the grief-stricken bereaved. Though it does not serve the purpose of filling the gap arising from the death of their dear one, yet it brings them together in a common bond of fellowship and enables them to share each other's love and company and face obligations and responsibilities together. When we realise that such psychological benefits as mentioned above result from the religious practice, it assumes more meaning and credence in our thinking.

The Degree of Intensity of Grief for the Departed

All deaths cause great pain to the dear ones of the departed. Yet there are degrees of intensity in the agony of their grief. Those who meet and talk to the bereaved should do so keeping in mind the degree of intensity of their grief. The death of a ninety-year old grandfather and the sudden death of the head of a family consisting of a dependent wife and five-year old child have to be viewed differently. The poignancy of grief depends on how essential the love, help and presence of the departed have been for the bereaved. The counsellor should have the ability to assess the poignancy of grief of the bereaved in the light of the above psychological truth.

Present-day Wrong Approaches

The approaches adopted by some today to console the bereaved are psychologically unsound. The first approach is seen in those saying, "Never mind". What is the meaning of saying,

“Never mind”, to the bereaved suffering intense grief? There are others who not only say, “Never mind”, but also relate stories of the deaths of others to the bereaved. Will a person who has lost his son be consoled just because he hears stories of other people’s deaths? There is no easy way to console the bereaved; what is necessary is to realise the poignancy of one’s grief and not to minimise it. The counsellor’s role is to assess the degree of intensity of sorrow and try to share in it.

There are some who fail to understand the psychological truth that expression of grief in any manner gives a lot of relief to the grief-stricken; they dissuade the bereaved from weeping or from expressing grief in some other way. This is an unsound approach. Persons suffering intense grief gain great relief once they give expression to their grief. Grief that is suppressed creates problems. So, it is not right to prevent the bereaved from crying. Crying is not a sign of cowardice; on the contrary, it is a natural characteristic of human nature. Not to weep, when one suffers agonising sorrow, is unnatural.

St. Paul says, “...you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (1 Thess. 4: 13). Here Paul does not mean that one should not grieve; what he means is that one should not grieve like those who do not have hope in a life after death. Christ too has declared: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5: 4).

Different Phases of Grief

The grief-stricken bereaved regain their calmness of mind after passing through different phases. These phases are given below:

1. Shock

The individual forgets himself in the suddenness of the shock he experiences; in this condition he cannot even bring himself to cry, but can only stare hard.

2. *Protest*

He finds it hard to accept the reality; he refutes it. He may cry, saying "My father is not dead; everybody is lying."

3. *Emotional Reactions*

Even as the individual refuses to accept the reality, he will express his resentment against God, his relatives and the physicians who treated him. He may also sorrow over certain unfulfilled obligations of his to the departed. This kind of emotional reaction has to be viewed with tolerance.

4. *Withdrawal*

There are some who withdraw from active life, feel lonely, and fall into despondency. The duty of the counsellor here is to motivate the grief-stricken persons to accept responsibilities and discharge them.

5. *Catharsis*

Catharsis is the process of emptying of emotions; this affords an opportunity of working off natural feelings. It is necessary that the bereaved should be allowed to do this. We may console the bereaved, but should not attempt to prevent him from crying; tears are a gift of God for us to show our grief as well as joy.

6. *Recalling Memories*

This is a process quite allied to catharsis. In this process the individual recalls memories at the sight of the room, bed and other things used by the departed. He should be allowed to give a free rein to his emotions by recalling memories associated with these things, for this kind of display of emotions will give great relief.

7. *Acceptance of Reality and New Arrangements*

If it is the head of the family who has passed away, arrangements will have to be made anew for the conduct of family affairs.

In certain cases the housewife who has not been employed will have to look for a job. The counsellor should be able to give practical suggestions for making new arrangements.

Whatever be the intensity of a person's grief, God has given him strength enough to bear it; for everything happens with God's will and knowledge. The counsellor's duty is to awaken this dormant capacity in each individual and to see that it becomes useful to the latter.

QUESTIONS

1. Prepare a model for counselling the grief-stricken bereaved.
2. Briefly describe the phases that the bereaved are likely to pass through.
3. "Expression of grief should not be prevented, but should be allowed." What is your view?

LESSON 5

SOME MENTAL DISORDERS

—*Kinds of mental disorders*

—*Neurosis*

—*Psychosis*

—*Psychosomatic diseases*

The benefit of training in counselling is that it enables us to distinguish between one mental disease and another. There are some people who even in these modern times believe that those suffering from mental disorders have been possessed by evil spirits and that witchcraft and similar practices are to be resorted to for cure. They do not realise that mental disorders like physical

ailments can be diagnosed and treated, and in most cases, cured. These people invite trouble by keeping minor mental disorders a secret and allowing the disorders to worsen. The counsellor should be able to make them aware of the need for treatment and persuade them to go to psychiatrists; this particular work of the counsellor is called 'referral counselling'. It is not possible to treat all mental disorders through counselling. But those who have received training in counselling will be able to distinguish between mental disorders, and advise individuals as to the kind of treatment they should go in for.

Kinds of Mental Diseases

Mental diseases are divided into three kinds on the basis of their particular characteristics. These are (1) neurosis, (2) psychosis, and (3) psychosomatic ailments.

1. Neurosis

The mental disorders that come under this category are minor ones. The disorders render the individual inactive because of his inability to solve the emotional conflicts of the unconscious. He is not completely divorced from the realities of life, but becomes a neurotic because the defence mechanisms of the unconscious have failed him. Some of the mental disorders that come under neurosis are given below.

(a) Hysteria

The word 'hysteria' derives from the Greek word 'hyster' which means 'womb'. This is because it was believed in ancient times that the disorder, commonly seen in women, was caused by the displacement of the womb. In the Middle Ages it was believed that the individual who suffered from hysteria had been possessed by evil spirits and was subjected to tortures for exorcising the spirits. But Modern Psychology and Sigmund Freud throw a flood of light on the causes of hysteria. Hysteria is caused when frustrations, stresses and strains that cannot be borne by the

conscious mind are repressed into the unconscious and when the repressed impulses and tendencies express themselves in the various symptoms which the person shows. For instance, when a person who hears the sad news of the death of a dear one faints and is in convulsions, he is said to suffer from hysteria. Psychologists say that there are two desires of the unconscious at work behind the person's convulsions: (i) the desire to overcome the shock for the time being, and (ii) the desire to attract the attention of other people to himself. Persons who are prone to indulge in histrionics, who are self-centred, who are not self-reliant and would like to win the sympathy of others, and who are highly emotional easily become subject to this mental disorder.

All forms of hysteria mentioned above can be successfully treated. The patient can be cured of hysteria through psychotherapy* by bringing back to the conscious mind the emotional conflicts that have been repressed and pushed into the unconscious. The patient can be helped in this by psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors who have received specialised training.

(b) *Anxiety*

Anxiety means excessive worry, vague, baseless fear, disappointment, etc. But we cannot say that all those who experience anxiety states are neurotic. A person becomes a neurotic only if he shows such physical symptoms as palpitation of the heart, gasping, headache, cold sweats, dizziness, etc. Helplessness, poor memory, inattentiveness, tiredness, etc. are the mental symptoms generally associated with anxiety states. The individual, who suffers from anxiety, imagines problems that do not exist and accidents that are unlikely to happen, and worries over them.

Anxiety neurosis cannot be cured by means of psychotherapy alone. Drugs and medicines in small doses have to be administered. The counsellor's duty here is to help the patient find a good psychiatrist.

* the treatment of mental diseases by hypnosis, psychoanalysis, etc.

(c) *Obsessive-Compulsive Neurosis*

Obsessive neurosis is caused by thoughts that keep cropping up in a persistent and disturbing fashion. Baseless fears or thoughts haunt the mind of a person suffering from this kind of neurosis. Sometimes the person is under certain irresistible urges (compulsions) to perform some irrational acts over and over again. Washing one's hands dozens of times a day, wiping one's face every now and then, and going on sweeping the floor all the time are examples. Obsessive-compulsive reactions seem to represent an attempt to substitute thoughts or actions for the unacceptable desires that are causing conflict and anxiety. The finest example of obsessive-compulsive neurosis is seen in the behaviour of Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's play "Macbeth", who washes her hands, being obsessed with a deep sense of guilt. It is those who have a puritan outlook and those who have been brought up in an unwholesome family atmosphere and unhealthy social environment that usually fall a prey to obsessive-compulsive neurosis. This mental disorder may be in itself a symptom of some severe mental disease. This has to be found out through proper diagnosis. If the disorder is not a serious one, it may be cured through psychotherapy. In some cases medicines have also to be administered.

(d) *Phobias*

Phobias are allied to obsessive-compulsive neurosis in that phobias constitute baseless fear or uncontrollable dread of some object or situation. Phobias are experienced by almost everyone in one form or another. Dread of heights, of loneliness, of crowds, of darkness, of depth, and of animals like the dog, cat or rat can be seen in varying degrees in people. Though phobias do not generally create problems for the individual, yet on certain occasions they may produce mental conflicts, stresses and strains in some. It is not difficult for the individual to get rid of his phobia, if with the help and guidance of a psychiatrist, he gets an opportunity to come to grips with the reality of the situation.

2. *Psychosis*

Psychosis refers to the extreme forms of mental disturbance. It makes a person incapable of getting along in society as his thought processes appear to be different from those of the normal person. His thoughts and statements often seem to be illogical and unrelated to reality. His conversation is incoherent and irrelevant. He is unable to control his thoughts and actions. In some cases of psychosis suicidal tendencies will be quite pronounced, and there will even be attempts to commit suicide. Hallucinations and delusions are common symptoms. All forms of schizophrenia come under psychosis. Almost all those suffering from psychosis have also physical weaknesses. This is the main characteristic that distinguishes psychosis from other neurotic diseases.

Only a psychiatrist who is experienced in both psychiatry and pathology can treat those suffering from psychosis. The treatment consists in electro convulsive therapy, administration of medicines and insulin, etc. In the early stages counselling and psychiatric treatment have no scope here. In the convalescent stage counselling is useful. Though this is a serious mental disorder, yet it can be treated and cured. But in some cases use of medicines will have to be continuous and even for a lifetime.

3. *Psychosomatic Illnesses*

'Psychosomatic' derives from 'psyche' which means 'mind', and 'soma' which means 'body'. The changes that take place in the body owing to certain mental processes constitute the special feature of psychosomatic illnesses. That is to say, prolonged mental tension results in certain physical illnesses; this is something quite common nowadays. Blood pressure, peptic ulcer, asthma, premenstrual tension, impotency, sexual frigidity, etc. are some of the physical manifestations of mental tension. A psychosomatic patient can be treated by a physician jointly with a counsellor, who will take care of his mental tension, and thus can be cured completely.

QUESTIONS

1. For what kinds of mental disorders is counselling useful?
2. What is 'referral counselling'?
3. Write notes on the following:
 - (a) Psychosis
 - (b) Psychosomatic illnesses
 - (c) Hysteria

LESSON 6

HOLY CONFESSION AND COUNSELLING

—Characteristic features of holy confession

—Ways in which counselling is of use to the priest in his functioning

What is the need for counselling in our Church and in the Roman Catholic Church, in both of which private confession has an important place? There are many who say that counselling may be necessary in the Western Churches that have given up the practice of confession but not in our Church or the Roman Catholic Church. As regards those who sincerely confess their sins and enjoy the fruits thereof, counselling in our Church is not necessary. But large numbers among the faithful do not make sincere confessions. The present writer conducted a survey some time ago in a bid to find out what benefits the faithful derive from confessions as practised nowadays. For the purpose of the survey eighty persons of different age-groups and having varying academic qualifications were asked the question: "Why should we have holy confession in our Church?" The data collected on the basis of the survey are given below:

<i>Answer</i>	<i>Percentage of those who gave the answer</i>
1. Confession is a traditional rule of the Church	25%
2. Confession is necessary for receiving the Holy Communion	17.5%
3. Confession enables a person to repent	47.5%
4. Confession enables a person to share his problems with the priest	7.5%
5. Confession gives a person physical well-being	2.5%

It is clear from the data that the stress is on redemption through repentance as the main goal of confession. When 47.5% express the view that the aim of confession is redemption through repentance, only 7.5% say that it affords a person the opportunity of sharing his problems with the priest. Though 47.5% have said that redemption is the goal of holy confession, yet the sins they have mentioned as having been committed by them are only personal ones. They do not seem to have understood that apart from sins of commission there are also sins of omission. No one seems to repent of desires for wealth, power and luxurious living and of the different kinds of anti-social activities one may commit in the promotion of one's own interests. When 75% accept the priest's right to give absolution, 25% reply that they have not given serious thought to the question. Though the latter do not refute the priest's right to give absolution, yet what they have said seems to mean: 'either way it is all right'. Perhaps those who do not have any sense of guilt or sin will not be able to accept the reality of redemption. What is, however, important to note here is that confession has certain special advantages that counselling does not have.

Special Advantages of Holy Confession

1. Holy confession is a sacrament through which the faithful der...

ive the benefit of repentance which Christ has enjoined upon the Church to give the faithful. No scientific analysis will enable us to arrive at the great truth behind holy confession.

2. Holy confession being a sacrament strengthens the beliefs of the faithful and brings about a change in their lives much more effectively than any psychological remedies. The awareness that God forgives them their sins gives great solace to those struggling under a sense of guilt.

3. Those who prepare themselves for holy confession become conscious of their sins. Such an awareness is necessary in this increasingly secular world in which the concept of sin has become irrelevant.

4. Holy confession is an act of worship which affords a broken man the opportunity of seeking God's grace to set right his problems, The opportunity enables him to seek out God's will, rather than depend on himself, for solutions to his problems.

5. Priesthood has a sacred place in the Church. This distinguishes the priest from the psychologist and enables the person seeking counselling to have a better rapport with the priest than with the psychologist. The priest is expected to make use of this aspect of his relationship with the faithful to the advantage of the latter.

Counselling cannot be thought of as an alternative to holy confession which is a sacrament and an act of Christian worship. It can, however, be of great use to the priest too in the performance of his duties.

Ways in Which Counselling Is of Use to the Priest in His Functioning

1. Psychology has developed to such an extent as to give us much knowledge about the complexity of the human mind. Counselling makes use of this knowledge. It enables us to go deep into the workings of the mind. Knowledge of the techniques of counselling helps a priest in understanding better the man who goes to him for special prayers every day as well as in getting at the roots of his problems.

2. Training in counselling helps the priest in tackling problems at their emotional level rather than at their intellectual level. It is emotions that give rise to problems even as it is reasoning that gives rise to doubts. For instance, to a student failure in examinations becomes a problem because of emotions such as fear, anxiety, etc. Emotional problems cannot be tackled through reasoning; their solution lies in their being dealt with at the emotional level:

3. Training in counselling enables the counsellor to examine his own life and make necessary amends. The counsellor whose duty it is to help others cannot be of much use unless he himself is free from fear, anxiety, disappointments, etc. Self-awareness is absolutely necessary for the counsellor.

4. The occasion of holy confession is such that the individual goes to the priest for confession. Whatever problems he confesses cannot be solved immediately. So, confession can be regarded by the priest as the first of all occasions for future counselling. Another thing that the priest should bear in mind is that every occasion of counselling should culminate in holy confession and in the receiving of the Holy Communion.

5. Training in counselling helps the priest in visiting families and solving personal as well as family problems. Quarrels within the family, death, illness, etc. give the priest chances to come in close contact with the faithful. On these occasions as well as on the occasion of holy confession counselling can be most effective.

6. General information about mental disorders helps the priest in 'referral counselling. It also enables him to distinguish between serious and minor mental disorders and advise a person as to the kind of treatment he should go in for, besides weaning him away from his beliefs in devils, witchcraft, etc.

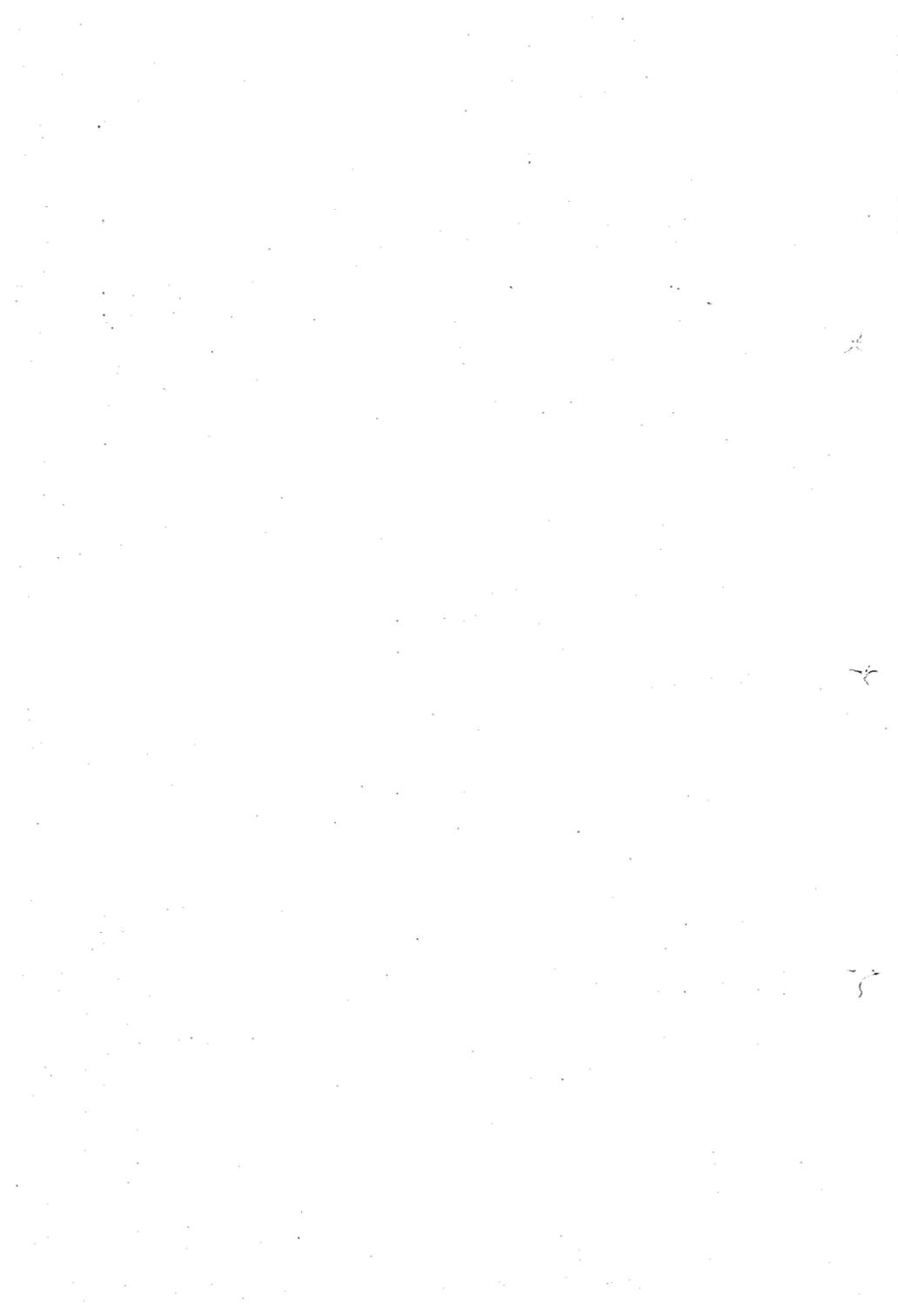
The faithful should be able to see in the priest alternately a father confessor and a counsellor. For this the priest should be a man of deep faith in God and should be morally upright, suave and pleasing in his conversation.

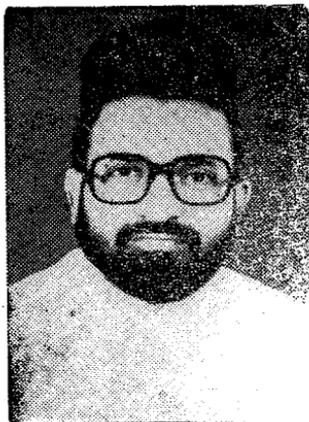
QUESTION

1. Examine how holy confession and counselling differ from each other.
2. How can training in counselling be made use of in holy confession?
3. Are you happy with the existing mode of confession? If you are not, suggest ways of reforming it without in any way offending the theological truths associated with holy confession.

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