

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Le Lundi.

Mademoiselle,

J'ai reçu votre aimable lettre et je vous remercie de votre charmante invitation. Nous comptons, le Swami et moi, quitter Paris lundi de la semaine prochaine pour vous rejoindre à Lannion. Nous vous conformons pour le train à vis bonnes indications. Nous vous télégraphierons d'ailleurs au départ. Nous espérons que ce petit retour de quatre jours ne vous causera pas de dérangement.

Le Swami et moi, nous faisons une véritable joie de vous retrouver en bonne santé et dans un beau paysage.

Veillez, Madame, croire à mes sentiments dévoués et très respectueux,

Jules Bois

Je donna ma plume au Swami qui va écrire pour vous sa première phrase en français.....

(TRANSLATION)

Monday

Mademoiselle,

I have received your kind letter and thank you very much for your charming invitation. The Swami and I are thinking of leaving Paris on Monday, next week, to join you again in Lannion. We shall choose our train according to the best convenience possible. Moreover, we shall send you a telegram when we depart. We hope that our little visit of four days will cause you no inconvenience whatever.

The Swami and I are too happy for words to meet you again in such good health and in such a beautiful country.

Please, accept, Madame, the expression of my devotion and respect,

Jules Bois

I am handing, now, my pen to the Swami who is going to write to you his first French note.....

Ma chere Mademoiselle,

J'ai été très heureuse est très content ici. J'avais le plu bon temps apres quelque année.

Je trouve vie proper avec M. Bois, les livres, le calme et l'absence de tout ce qui m'a troublé.

Mai je ne sais pas quel destine m'attend maintenant.

Cett est drole, ma lettre, mais il est mon essai premier.

Votre fidèle,  
Vivekananda

Je ne regarde pas ce qu' a ecrit le Swami, afin que ce soit plus original.

(TRANSLATION)

My dear Mademoiselle,

I have been very happy and content here. I am having the best of times after many years. I find life here with Mr. Bois very satisfactory—the books, the calm, and the absence of everything that usually troubles me.

But I don't know what kind of destiny is waiting for me now.

My letter is funny, isn't it? But it is my first attempt.

Your faithful,  
Vivekananda

I won't even look at what the Swami has written so as to make it more original.

21 West 34th Street  
New York City

Dear Joe—

Experiences are gathering a bit thick round you. I am sure they will lift many a veil more.

Mr Leggett told me of your phonograph. I told him to get a few cylinders, I talk in them through somebody's phonograph and send them to Joe. To which he replied that he would buy one because 'I always do what Joe asks me to do.' I am glad there is so much of hidden poetry in his nature.

I am going today to live with the Gurnsey's as the doctor wants to watch me and cure me. I had my urine analyzed yesterday. There is neither albumen nor sugar now.

The heart they all say is only nervous. Dr Gurnsey after examining other things was feeling my pulse when suddenly Landsberg (whom they had forbidden the house) got in, and retreated immediately at seeing me. Dr Gurnsey burst out laughing and declared he would have paid that man for coming just then—for he was sure of his diagnosis of my case. The pulse before was so regular but just at sight of Landsberg it almost stopped from motion. It is sure only a case of nervousness. He also advises me strongly to take Dr Helmer's

treatment. He thinks Helmer will do me a world of good—and that is just what I need now. Is not he broad?

I expect to see the Sacred Cow today in town. I will be in New York a few days more. Helmer wants me to take three treatments a week for four weeks, then two a week for four more and I will be all right. In case I go to Boston he recommends me to a very good Osteo there whom he would advise on the matter.

I said a few words to Landsberg and went upstairs to Mother Gurnsey to save poor Landsberg from embarrassment.

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

OOTACAMUND 1926

Mahapurush Maharaj came to the Nilgiris on 4 June 1926 from Madras and stayed at the *Hathiramji Math* which belonged to the abbot of Balaji Tirupathi, a very famous shrine in South India. Once before, early in May, 1924, he had come to the Nilgiris and stayed at Coonoor for some months. It was then that he laid the foundation of the Ramakrishna Ashram at Ootacamund. . . .

Since coming to Ootacamund Mahapurush Maharaj spent most of the time alone, absorbed in his own moods. Though he avoided people, the local devotees, of course, used to come every evening and receive various kinds of spiritual instructions from him. They would return home contented at heart and with his blessings. At other times he would remain sunk, as it were, in the waters of the Ocean of Consciousness-Bliss. His mind seemed every day to be drawn away more and more from the outside world, and, as days passed by, he became increasingly reserved. Whatever little talk or contact he had, was with the simple young boys and girls of the hills. Every evening, before he went out for his solitary walk, he would take with him some small change and a little food. These he would

distribute, as he walked along the road, among the local *pahari* children, and he would mix with them as if he was of their age. . . .

One day, as he was sitting alone quietly in his room, looking at the blue billowing hills in the distance through the large glass window in front, an attendant approached him anxiously, thinking, from his far-away look, that he might be ill, and questioned him about his health. Though the question disturbed the flow of his thoughts, it failed to draw an answer on the point. He only began to speak of his thoughts and mystic experiences. . . . The attendant, after having listened to all these in great wonderment, asked :

'Maharaj, shall *we* never have any experience of this kind? We cannot feel the spiritual quality of the atmosphere of this place at all.'

Mahapurushji: 'Look, my child, He alone can give us these experiences. Hold on to Him, weep and pray to Him, and He will give all that is necessary in proper time. He is the Lord of the mind—the Master who is of the nature of the Supreme Self. If He turns the mind even a little in a new direction, it becomes calm and absorbed in *samadhi*, without a trace of the world, even though it were restless and turbulent like a mad elephant before. How can spiritual realities be experi-

enced unless the mind becomes very pure? And can the mind be free from all worldly trace in a day? How much spiritual practice is required for that! When the mind becomes the purest of the pure and dwells on a very high plane, then alone can all these fine realities be experienced. A pure mind alone responds to spiritual realities. The higher the plane the mind attains to, the more will it reflect great spiritual truths. The essence of it all is to achieve devotion and faith in His lotus feet. That done, everything is done.' ...

One day, a man from among a group of Malabari devotees, while praying for his blessings before taking leave, said: 'We never had the good fortune to see the Master; you are the Master in my eyes, you are my all in all.'

Listening to this, Mahapurushji affectionately replied: 'You should not say such things. He is the Lord and all in all for everybody. You must have read that the Master used to say: "The waves belong to the sea, and not the sea to the waves." I am only a servant of His who has found refuge in His feet. The Lord says in the *Gita*:

I am the Goal, the Providence, Lord, Witness, Support, Refuge and Friend, I am the Origin, I am where all is resolved and goes back, the Eternal Seed.

All this is God. You have found refuge in Sri Ramakrishna, the Incarnation of the Age, thanks to the great merit you acquired in previous lives, and a humble servant of His has dedicated you to His feet. You are blessed to have received the new life dedicated to the feet of the Lord. Acharya Shankara says:

Three things are rare here in this world, depending as they do on divine mercy, namely, a human birth, desire for Liberation, and the finding of refuge in a Realized Soul.

These three things are indeed rare, and can be had only through God's mercy. Thanks to Divine mercy, you have come into the possession of all these three rare gifts. Now dive into the ocean of His love and you will

become immortal. The Vaishnava books contain a beautiful saying: 'The mercy of all the three, the *guru*, Krishna, and the devotee of God was there, but without the mercy of one (i.e. self-effort on the part of the aspirant) the person went to pieces.' All these opportunities have come to you. Now dive deep into spiritual practices with what you have got and attain immortality. Then you will never again be faced with the puzzle of life and death.

The devotee: Bless me so that I may be absorbed by spiritual practices and be not once again caught in this net of worldly life.

Mahapurushji: It is because I bless you that I am saying so much to you. I bless you with all my heart that you may be absorbed, with all your mind and with all your heart in the meditation of the feet of the Master. My child, we have nothing to give except blessings. How can I express the delight we feel when we even so much as see a man trying to find God, or one trying to go forward in that direction? Those who want to be free from the bondage of the world and struggle with all their strength to that end are nearest to our hearts. The Master came to give Liberation to men. We are also His servants who have been given shelter at His feet—His servants in every Age. The only aim and end of our life is to help men to turn Godward and go forward towards Him. That is why the Master brought us with Him and has even now kept us here. Even to the last moment of our life we shall teach that to men, namely, how one can realize God.

This world is ephemeral. Yet, what ceaseless suffering! Despite this fleeting life, and maddened by the momentary pleasures of this world, man remains completely oblivious of the goal of life. Such is the play of the world-enchancing *maya*. Look, my child, you are still a young man. Thanks to His grace, the world has not as yet left its marks on your mind. I tell you the plain truth which is also the word of my heart.

Nothing can be had without renunciation. That is why the *Upanishad* says: 'By renunciation alone have some attained immortality.' It is only by renunciation that immortal life can be gained. Yoga and enjoyment cannot be had together. Unless the sense enjoyments of the world are given up it is impossible to taste the Bliss of Brahman. And the Master has said in the

simplest words what this world is: 'It is lust and gold which make up the world.' It will not do to give them up only outwardly, the desire for sex and gold should be given up even in the mind. Tulasidas has also said: 'Where there is *Kam* (lust), there is no Ram; that is to say, one must give up the desire for all worldly enjoyment, if one wants to realize God.

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## THE WESTERN QUESTION (VI)

BY THE EDITOR

Indian history after the age of the Guptas is generally a period of decline, which is intimately bound up with the decadence of Buddhism. We have referred before to its great success and also to its failure. It is unfortunate but undeniable that Buddhism came to have, almost invariably, a paralyzing effect on the State machinery. It failed to provide a complete philosophy of life, or to combine necessary strength with love. Its undue and almost exclusive emphasis on one side of life stopped all outlets for normal and healthy expression. It led to political incompetence and national listlessness.

Up till now no close attention—we are not talking of vague denunciations—has been paid to this side of the question, so that it is not easy to picture the political and social disintegration which went hand in hand with Buddhistic decadence. We shall have occasion, later on, to refer to some facts in this connection. Meanwhile, certain analogies will be helpful. Consider, for example, the case of Tibet and Burma, where Buddhism has held almost exclusive sway for long centuries. The extreme morality so widely and openly professed has not been able to overcome primitive ferocity to any great extent. It has been found difficult to reconcile the religion

with the needs of politics and ordinary life. So we find there neither good politics nor good morality; we find a kind of schizophrenia running through the entire national life. Consider also the case of China and Japan. In China the people have found it necessary to combine Confucianism with Buddhism, because Buddhism pays no due regard to all the sides of life. It lacks completeness. Japan found no inspiration in Buddhism for the healthy pursuits of life; it has had to turn to Shintoism, in absence of a better philosophy, to seek nourishment for its social and political efforts. One shudders to think what would have been the condition of India if Buddhism had stayed on.

The Indian mind smouldered for long centuries before it could blaze out with a new brilliance. Heroic attempts were no doubt made, as under Harsha and the Pratiharas, the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas, the Pallavas and the Palas, and finally under the various Rajput kingdoms which arose on the ruins of the ancient empires, to reconstruct something in the likeness of the vanished State of the Mauryas and the Guptas. Most of the rulers are inspired by traditional ideology and look back to the past, which gives to much of their

effort the character of a retrospect. But the ideal of a universal State lay wholly beyond the range of their achievement. The political task had become increasingly difficult, not to say impossible.

The loss of balance and vigour under the negative cult of suppression and an incomplete ideal, the constant stream of invaders who went on adding new elements into the Indian population and who recklessly pulled down many things before they came to form part of a common society, the vast distances of the country and difficulties of communication, the shortsightedness and mutual rivalries of new and inexperienced ruling families, all this, besides others, led to a process of disintegration. India was kept in a state of constant turmoil for centuries, which made recovery long and difficult and fitful. The great need was for a stable political order, achieved either through a universal monarchy or an international system of States, obedient to certain common conceptions and united against foreign aggression. But conditions in and around India had become hostile to the achievement of this political aim.

It is not surprising therefore that art and literature and other marks of culture show a decline. Though the period was not without activity in these respects, there was a distinct falling off from the old standards. The productions of the time do not compare with those of the past. They are generally crude and ornate and lack the simplicity and dignity of old days. The temples and monuments have the character of restorations and not of original creation. The old rational attitude towards life and world is increasingly replaced by crude and superstitious beliefs. It is remarkable that the more ancient a text is, the more rational and lucid it is. Morals decline, social freedom contracts, and some sort of artificiality comes to replace the old simplicity and naturalness of life. A darkness gradually creeps over the land.

Yet, despite all these, civilization did not die here, as it repeatedly did in other lands.

Beneath political disorder mental life at its deepest went on. India remained constantly at her work of bringing unity out of diversity by extending the bounds of sympathy beyond the frontiers of tribe or race. The deepest insights of her culture were never lost. The true values were preserved in some part or other of her society. The flame of her life never went out completely, however strong the winds that blew from time to time. The spiritual ideal struggled constantly to find appropriate social and political expressions by making the people feel the sense of a deep unity.

Buddhism in its good old days had done great things for India and the world, but we cannot at the same time help feeling that Indian history, for over a millennium, has been, in a very important sense, one long and continuous struggle to recover from the wrong emphasis it put on an aspect of life. Everything decays in time, and a thing becomes bad, not because it is intrinsically so, but because we make a wrong use of it.

However India began slowly to recover from this negativism which seemed to paralyze life at its source. The impulse for a fresh renewal came from different and widely scattered sources. The most representative and broad and dynamic of all the moral and spiritual renovators of the age was Shankara, who belonged to the eighth century according to the generally accepted opinion. Shankara is a very important figure in Indian history, the main currents of which cannot be understood without sufficient attention to his life and teachings.

History still continues to be written with undue emphasis on the political aspects of life. This will go when mankind in general will awaken to the true ideal of civilization. The greatest benefactors of humanity have been its moral and religious innovators who have sought to achieve unification of mankind through love and spirituality. They will receive greater attention in future than they

do now. If this is true of the whole world, it is all the more true of India. But Indian history has been approached from the Western angle, and a general lament has gone forth that India has kept no record of political brigandage. We do not deny Indians should have paid greater attention to history. While this is true, the fact also reveals where we should seek the elements of Indian historical unity. Because this is not sufficiently realized, the real forces of Indian history have not properly been taken account of.

Shankara's services to India have been very great—so great, indeed, that even many who admire him most do not possess an adequate idea of it. It is also necessary to remember that his greatness does not mean that he was a lone figure or that he preached something novel. He was only representative, and he formulated for his time the broad spirit of the ancient Tradition which was superpersonal. His force, lucidity, and rationality were derived from the realization of Truth. Minus this last, he would not have made an infinitesimal fraction of the impression he did.

There is an idea, widely circulated, though Shankara himself repeatedly repudiates it, that he gave a new turn to Indian thinking and foisted a new interpretation, borrowed from Buddhism or invented by himself, upon the ancient scriptures. The West usually approaches such questions from the personal angle, or with what is called the historical sense. According to the first a great man must have to his credit an intellectual discovery which is original and was unknown before. This attitude fails to see that there can be a superpersonal Tradition, belonging to a realm other than the sensible, of which individuals are merely exponents, according to the needs and circumstances of their times. This Truth is neither of the earth nor of time, and so history can make no change in it. God is not a historical event, but we can have different conceptions of Him. All persons who have known Him in essence have had the

same experience, whether they are contemporaries or are separated by millennia. God is not an intellectual discovery.

The historical sense assumes that what comes after is better than what has gone before. Human progress, in this view, is, like the British constitution, broadening from precedent to precedent. Apart from the reason mentioned above, namely, that Truth in the ultimate sense is not of the earth or of time, to say that what comes after is better than what has gone before is an altogether indefensible proposition. All history belies it. There is no continuous progress, whether in individual or collective life. It is always a movement, sometimes going up and sometimes down. The concept of regress is not without application. Science tells us that even this visible universe will one day dissolve into invisible radiation. Viewed cosmically there is no progress at all, neither is there absolute regress. It is a see-saw. All that we can say in justification of our notion of progress is that it is merely local and temporary, which is to say that perfection is not of this world.

The Indian spiritual tradition (*sanatana dharma*) is not a religion originating with a particular person or deriving authority from a unique and uncommon revelation. It is superpersonal, revealed and periodically renewed by seers or *rishis*. Shankara belongs in this line of *rishis*. His metaphysic is traditional, though the polemic is personal and of the time. Reason has a definite place in our tradition as an aid to a correct understanding of the Truth. Shankara employed it to the limit it can reach.

He fought on a number of fronts. First there was the Buddhistic nihilism which pitted itself against all authority and made much of its logical subtleties. Shankara gave the metaphysical *coup de grace* to these logic-choppers who came to believe that they could pull down everything without themselves standing anywhere. Nihilism contradicted all our deep aspirations, it left unanswered the problem of certitude in knowledge. It thus contradicted

the Buddhist monks' discipline and way of life and the very logic on which it presumed to base itself. In those days great importance was attached to philosophical disputations. A saint therefore had to be a dialectician also to prepare the way for a true religion. Thanks to Shankara, nihilism never talked again in India.

It is the fashion today, in some quarters, constantly to charge Shankara with having preached a cult of negation and an absurd theory of *maya*. Curiously enough, these people keep silent over Buddhism. The reason for this strange behaviour lies, so far as we can see, in the fact that while Buddhism is practically dead in India and can be sentimentally admired from a distance, Shankara represents a force very much to reckon with. There is an anxiety to score over Shankara by misrepresentation. The teaching he represents goes against all romantic spirituality which draws sustenance from sonorous phrases that take the place of thought in superficial minds. These phrases, by their beauty and association, give rise to pleasant, poetic feeling-tones which become a substitute for clear thought. The temptation to water down spirituality to suit vulgar needs and to command followers is always strong. But such compromises with the truth always prove very unwholesome in the long run, however great the success may be for the time being. Truth never pays homage to society but society has to pay homage to Truth or else die.

Shankara never turned a blind eye to the facts of life as they exist, nor did he preach a cult of self-suppression. His life and activity and writings—all give the lie to this charge. There undoubtedly have been persons who misinterpreted his teaching in later times, but they were few and without authority. Shankara only preached, as Indian wisdom at its best has always said, that we should have a correct and not sentimental attitude towards life and world and view them as they are and not as they seem.

*Maya* is no creation of Shankara's brain.

It is an old conception going back to the *Rik-Samhita*. It is a plain statement of the contradictory character of our experience and of the mystery of the universe. We seek for things which we know cannot be had in this world. We have a conception of what truth should be, yet it is nowhere to be found in this relative universe. We are being continually faced by this sort of duality between aspiration and its fulfilment, without being able to know why it is so. Things are not, our analysis reveals, what they seem, yet our conduct is based on the belief that they are what they seem. This is *maya*.

Science has begun to say the same thing today. It has abandoned the search for absolute truth, for it is unattainable by its methods. Matter is only an appearance. The stuff of reality is constituted of points of force which cannot be observed but can only be pictured in terms of mathematical formulae. All that we see and feel is really a movement in the brain, which is somehow projected outside. In our attempt to get at the root of matter we return back to our self and find that it is a play of consciousness. But the whole universe seems to be out there, mysterious and inexplicable. This is *maya*.

But while science would abandon the search for absolute truth and banish our heart's desire for Perfection and Bliss as vain and elusive chimera, Vedanta says that man is not condemned to dash his head in vain against the surrounding rock of *maya*. There is a metaphysical method, which should not be confused with the logical, by which we can satisfy our irrepressible urge for Freedom, Truth, and Immortality. This superior power is known as inspiration.

Shankara follows logic up to the point it can reach. But it can, after all, go only a little distance, being limited by its own unproved assumptions. Our laws and language are just a convenient method for dealing with our experience and for the conduct of life. All that we call knowledge is only a linguistic convention for descriptive purposes. At



bottom it is all ignorance. Law and order apparently pertain to an objective universe, but all this, universe and law, is really and finally a freak of consciousness. All our proofs and methods of proof, Shankara points out, rest upon a prior fact of ignorance and a confusion of opposites, namely, the illegitimate mixing up of the Subject and object, of Consciousness and matter. There is, however, a way to get out of this circle. Reason points to a realm beyond and above itself which can be known through a process of identification. This is the true method of knowledge. The more we enquire into the nature of a law, the clearer the fact becomes that a law is essentially a statement of identity. The more comprehensive the law the more thorough-going is the statement of identity. We are said to know a thing when we refer it as a particular instance of a general law. The ideal of explanation or knowledge will be attained when we shall arrive at a law that will subsume all the facts of the universe under it. Finality in this direction will be reached when the duality between the knower and the known will be resolved in the realization of an absolute unity. Such knowledge is not a logical conclusion but a fact of experience, vouched for by those who have fulfilled the requirements of this method. Reason requires us to take a metaphysical jump. We, however, are not bold and rational enough to do this, because we remain fascinated by *maya*, by what seems but is not.

Rational life is based upon propositions of two kinds. On the one hand are the facts given through the senses, on the other are the urges and values inaccessible to them but known through feeling and spiritual inspiration. We must have hunger before the sight of food can stir us to appropriate activity. Similarly, some sort of moral compulsion lies at the back of our true ethical conduct. Reason only deals with what is given through these sources. It arranges physical facts in a system and makes use of them to serve certain ends of life. It never stops to question,

whether or not hunger or love is right, but always seeks to satisfy them. All these facts, and values require a supreme conception or end to achieve a thorough integration of life. This aim is given by the insights and deliverances of Religion.

It is not rationalism to refuse to admit new dimensions of Reality beneath and above the plane of sense-perception. To do so is altogether indefensible and dogmatic. While the authority of the *Shruti* (revealed knowledge) applies to an order of Reality that is accessible neither to the senses nor to inference based on them, the scientific method is the only method of right knowledge in this world. In essence the two methods are one. *Pratyakshadi pramananupalabdhe hi vishaye ... shruteh pramanyam, na pratyakshadi vishaye* : The *Shruti* is a source of knowledge in regard to things which cannot be known through the senses and not in regard to those which can be so known.

There are thus two distinct spheres of knowledge, having distinct methods of proof. Both are necessary for intelligent living; for, if life is not to be condemned to frustration, one must sooner or later lead on to the other.

One of the things which distinguish a man from an animal is that he is able to go through a present unpleasant task for the sake of a future reward. This is the beginning of intelligent living and detachment. This capacity for detachment is as yet very little developed among us. We still fail to see that most of which we consider to be ends are in reality means to a higher fulfilment. Our end in the final analysis is neither pleasure, nor pain, nor power; it is Knowledge or Freedom. Life is a means and must lead to something beyond.

We go to a street corner to catch a bus; we get into it to reach the office; we work there to earn money; we need it to maintain ourselves and our dependents, and so on. Each item in the series, considered apart from others, is an end in itself, but viewed in relation to what comes next, it is only a means.

In the same way all our ends in this world lead to something else. It is this capacity to think of the next thing that distinguishes intelligent living from the impulsive. But we generally go on thinking that working in the office or earning money is the be-all and end-all of life.

The above is the gist of Shankara's fundamental attitude towards life and science. And let us repeat, it is nothing new but entirely traditional.

The refusal to admit these two premises of living lead to skepticism in knowledge and random conduct in life. Such refusals are not modern. Most of what is called modernism is primitive superstition clothed in pretentious jargon. Such an attitude has been repeatedly practised in the past, and has repeatedly failed, but not without having first drawn civilization to naked worship of lust and greed, and then to disaster and death.

Shankara also fought against orthodox reaction which the social turmoil also brought in its train. The most important among the champions of this were the Mimamsakas who sought to establish a totalitarian creed of sacrificial religion limiting it to some sections of the people. According to them the only religious aim was pleasure in heaven and that the *Vedas* taught nothing else but Sacrifice as a means to its attainment. In fact one of the reasons why Buddhism arose and went to the other extreme was this dogmatic and totalitarian creed of the sacrificial religion. The protest was voiced earliest in the *Upanishads*, but Buddhism represents the swing of the pendulum to the opposite extreme. The Mimamsakas and other schools who confused *moksha* with a relative aim were all silenced by Shankara's logic.

Shankara's polemic against Karma-mimamsa has been mistaken for a denial of action. Apart from lack of any justifiable basis in his writings, such a notion seems odd viewed in the context of Shankara's life itself. Shankara disputed the right of the Mimamsakas to speak for absolute truth; he never

denied the relative truth of other ways and conceptions. But he made this clear, namely, that Freedom does not and cannot lie in action, which is not to say that action is without use or can be avoided by all. Action performed in a spirit of sacrifice and with understanding leads to purification of the mind, which thus becomes capable of reflecting the true nature of things. Freedom is not something which happens but always is. It is a question of spiritual discovery in our hearts. For the vast majority of men ordinary action orientated to a high aim is the only way to achieve fitness for a true life of contemplation. But, philosophically, the position had to be made clear that Freedom is not a product of action.

Shankara clearly saw and definitely stated that a true civilization requires a just balance between all its factors, above all, between power and spirituality. In his commentary on the *Gita* he says that Sri Krishna taught Yoga to Arjuna because power subordinated to Yoga is alone able to maintain civilization : *Tena yogabalena yuktah samartha bhavanti brahma parirakshitum, brahma kshatre paripalite jagat paripalayitum alam.* Is it not a little curious in the face of this to say that Shankara denied or even neglected the necessity of action ?

In his own life he combined ceaseless energy with the highest Knowledge. He put fresh inspiration into the heart of the people, firing them with new enthusiasm. He went from one end of India to another preaching, disputing, and purifying the atmosphere. He established four important centres of spiritual knowledge and activity in the four corners of India, without retiring to a secluded spot, veiled from public view, merely thinking and willing the good of humanity. He brought new masses of men into the Indian social fold. He helped to remove the corrupt practices that had crept into the society in the name of religion. He was no mere brain but a saint full of charity and kindness. He recognized and established methods of popular worship

and composed devotional hymns of rare beauty, which are still widely sung all over India. Yet people would have us believe that Shankara moaned and wept and mopped, sitting in a dark corner and ignoring the world and existence and humanity.

There are, of course, certain things in Shankara against which our conscience will now revolt, for example, his attitude towards caste and women and his torturing of certain texts. But while we may not accept these, we can make allowances for them in the light of his time. What if they are no longer valid? The clear and broad truth remains.

There can be no doubt that Shankara has been a great factor in maintaining the continuity of Indian civilization. No account of India can ignore him and yet be considered complete or true.

We have, therefore, felt it necessary to dwell at some length on Shankara, for he gives a correct insight into our civilization and a right perspective for our endeavour.

It is true much of our misfortune is due to a false emphasis on a certain side of life, but we have not generally known to look for the blame where it really belongs. After all, the

search for a true explanation of things is an arduous task. We always look for a scapegoat near at hand. So we have often put the blame where it does not lie. If we be sufficiently enquiring we shall find that we have to go elsewhere to discover it.

The problem of life is essentially a problem of balance. This is true both for an individual as for a community. But the balance need not be alike in all the particular cases or in one particular case for all time. That also is a problem within the bigger problem of social balance. The *Gita* has for ages stood for this balanced view of life. This accounts for its tremendous hold on India. There is not a scripture anywhere comparable to it in its wide sympathy, its profound wisdom, its acute psychological insight, and its magnificent synthesis. It has combined opposites which remain irreconcilable dualities in other systems of thought. It is therefore not at all surprising that the *Gita* is the most important single source from which Indian Renaissance has drawn inspiration endlessly. And Shankara only expounded the *Gita-dharma* for a fresh dynamic impulse among the people.

(To be continued)

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE UPANISHADS (II)

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

(Continued from the May issue)

### THE UPANISHADS

Now about the number and divisions of the *Upanishads*. With the disappearance of many of the recensions of the *Vedas*, many *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, and *Upanishads* also disappeared.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the sacred books

<sup>1</sup> The *Rig-Veda* is said to have existed in twenty-one recensions, the *Yajur-Veda* in a hundred, the *Sama-Veda* in a thousand, and the *Atharva-Veda* in nine. But there are differences of opinion among the authorities on this subject.

were not committed to writing in ancient times is partly responsible for this lamentable loss. Furthermore, among the works surviving, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number that should be regarded as authentic *Upanishads*. A religious system is considered valid in India only when it is supported by *Shruti* (the *Vedas*); hence the founders of religious sects have sometimes written books and called them *Upanishads* in order to give their views scriptural authority. The *Allah*

*Upanishad*, for instance, was composed in the sixteenth century, at the time of the Mussalman emperor Akbar.

One hundred and eight *Upanishads* are enumerated in the *Muktika Upanishad*, which is a work belonging to the tradition of the *Yajur-Veda*. Among these, the *Aitareya Upanishad* and *Kaushitaki Upanishad* belong to the *Rig-Veda*; the *Chhandogya* and *Kena*, to the *Sama-Veda*; the *Taittiriya*, *Mahanarayana*, *Katha*, *Svetashvatara*, and *Maitrayani*, to the *Black Yajur-Veda*; the *Isha* and *Brihadaranyaka*, to the *White Yajur-Veda*; and the *Mundaka*, *Prashna*, and *Mandukya*, to the *Atharva-Veda*. It may be stated, also, that these *Upanishads* belong to differing recensions of their respective *Vedas*. Thus, for instance, the *Mundaka Upanishad* belongs to the *Saunaka* recension of the *Atharva-Veda*, while the *Prashna Upanishad* belongs to the *Pippalada* recension. The *Brahma Sutras*, which is the most authoritative work on the Vedanta philosophy, has been based upon the *Aitareya*, *Taittiriya*, *Chhandogya*, *Brihadaranyaka*, *Kaushitaki*, *Katha*, *Svetashvatara*, *Mundaka*, *Prashna*, and possibly also the *Jabala Upanishad*. Shankaracharya wrote his celebrated commentaries on the *Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Prashna*, *Mundaka*, *Mandukya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittiriya*, *Chhandogya*, *Brihadaranyaka* and possibly also the *Svetashvatara Upanishad*. These are regarded as the major works.

The teachings of the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita* constitute *Vedanta*. Three main schools of Vedanta exist; the Dualist, Qualified Non-dualist, and Non-dualist, their principal teachers being, respectively, Madhvacharya (A. D. 1199-1276), Ramanujacharya (A. D. 1017-1137), and Shankaracharya (A. D. 788-820). Madhvacharya has written commentaries on some of the major *Upanishads* according to Dualistic doctrines. Some of the disciples and followers of Ramanujacharya have done likewise to prove that Qualified Non-dualism is the underlying philosophy of

Vedanta. But neither of these systems has won such wide acceptance and prestige as that of Shankaracharya.

Shankaracharya's interpretation of the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Brahma Sutras* is the supreme Hindu contribution to the philosophical wisdom of the world. This remarkable genius appeared at a critical period of Indian history. The sun of Buddhism had already passed below the horizon. Various invading peoples, such as the Sakas, the Tartars, the Beluchis, and the Huns had entered India with their grotesque religious ideas and ceremonies and embraced Buddhism. At their hands the religion of Buddha had become greatly distorted. A Hindu revival was struggling into existence, and numerous Hindu sects, such as the old Vedic ritualists and the yogi ascetics, were asserting their contrary yet equally dogmatic views. A veritable bable was reigning in India when the youthful Shankaracharya appeared on the scene.

According to his followers this great pillar of Hinduism was the perfect embodiment of the vedic wisdom. Endowed with a keen intellect and with rare forensic powers, he courageously challenged all opponents. He cut through the cobweb of conflicting views with a direct and consistently rational interpretation of the authoritative texts, supported by his own profound spiritual experiences. Within the short span of a lifetime of only thirty-two years, he travelled the length and breadth of India, preaching his doctrines and reforming the *sannyasin* organizations. He founded four monasteries at the cardinal points of the country. And meanwhile he produced a body of literary work that includes not only his great vedantic commentaries but also many hymns addressed to the Hindu deities, through worship of whom the aspirant's heart is purified and his spirit qualified for the Knowledge of Brahman. When one considers the lofty height reached by Shankaracharya in his philosophy, and at the same time the soul-

melting love permeating his hymns, one cannot but marvel at the mighty sweep of his mind, the catholicity of his heart, and the austere purity of his intellect. He was indeed a saviour of the Hindu world.

The subject-matter of the *Upanishads* is abstruse. Unwary students easily become confused by their apparent contradictions. Therefore, from ancient times, books have been composed to explain and harmonize their mysteries. Among these the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras* are the best known. The *Gita* is compared to the life-giving milk of the great milch cow, which is the *Upanishads*; Arjuna is the calf, and Sri Krishna the milker. Sri Krishna, in His Dialogue with Arjuna, presented through the *Bhagavad Gita* the essence of the *Upanishads*. The *Brahma Sutras* (also known as the *Vedanta Sutras* and *Shariraka Sutras*) formulate the teachings of the *Upanishads* in concise aphorisms which reconcile the many apparent contradictions. Vyasa is the reputed author of these basic works. They, together with the *Upanishads*, constitute what is called the three *Prasthanas*, the canonical books, which form the foundation of the religion and philosophy of Vedanta.

Side by side with *Shruti*, or the *Vedas*, there exists another body of scriptural treatises known as *Smriti*. These works are regarded as having come into existence though human authorship. They derive their authority from the *Vedas* and include such majestic books as the *Mahabharata*, the various *Puranas*, and the *Manusamhita*. In ancient India only those people who belonged to the three upper castes were permitted to read the *Vedas*. The teachings of *Smriti*, however, were accessible to all. And they too opened the door to Liberation.

In A. D. 1650, fifty *Upanishads* were translated into Persian under the patronage of Prince Dara, the son of Shahajahan, Emperor of Delhi. From the Persian they were translated into Latin, in A. D. 1801-1802. Schopenhauer read and studied this Latin

translation and, in later years, declared: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads*. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death."

### THE MEANING OF UPANISHAD

The word *Upanishad* has been derived from the root *sad*, to which are added two prefixes: *upa* and *ni*. The prefix *upa* denotes nearness, and *ni*, totality. The root *sad* means to loosen, to attain and to annihilate. Thus the etymological meaning of the word is the Knowledge, or *vidya*, which, when received from a competent teacher, loosens totally the bondage of the world, or *surely* enables the pupil to attain (i.e. realize) the Self, or completely destroys ignorance, which is responsible for the deluding appearance of the Infinite Self as the finite embodied creature. Though the word primarily signifies knowledge, yet by implication it also refers to the book that contains that knowledge. The root *sad* with the prefix *upa* also connotes the humility with which the pupil should approach the teacher.

The profound Knowledge of Brahman has been described in the *Bhagavad Gita* as the 'sovereign science.'<sup>2</sup> It was considered a profound secret and sometimes given the name of *Upanishad*.<sup>3</sup> It is to be noted that the instructions regarding Brahman were often given in short formulas also known as *Upanishads*. 'Its secret name (*Upanishad*) is *satyasya satyam*, 'the Truth of truth.'<sup>4</sup> 'Now, therefore, the instruction (about Brahman): *Neti, neti*—'Not this, not this.'<sup>5</sup> 'That Brahman is called *tadvana*, the Adorable of all; It should be worshipped by the name of *tadvana*.'<sup>6</sup> The books which contained the above-mentioned secret teachings and formulas were also called *Upanishads*.

<sup>2</sup> IX. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Chh. Up.* I. i. 10; I. xiii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Br. Up.* II. i. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Br. Up.* II. iii. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ke. Up.* IV. 6.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF STUDENTS

The later Vedanta teachers formulated the qualifications of the pupil entitled to study Vedanta. He must know, in a general way, the *Vedas* and their auxiliaries; must have attained purity of heart by freeing himself from sin, through an avoidance of selfish and forbidden actions as well as by the practice of daily devotions and obligatory duties, particular religious observances on special occasions, and the customary penances prescribed by religion. Further, he must discriminate between the Real and the unreal, and renounce the unreal. He must cultivate inner calmness and control of the senses, preserve the serenity of the mind and organs after they have been controlled, acquire such virtues as forbearance and concentration, and lastly, be possessed of an intense yearning for liberation from the bondages of worldly life. Such a one, and such a one alone, is qualified to receive from the teacher the profound knowledge of the *Upanishads*.

'This highest mystery of Vedanta, delivered in a previous cycle,' we read, 'should not be given to one whose passions have not been completely subdued, nor to one who is not a son or is not a pupil.'<sup>7</sup>

A father may therefore tell that doctrine of Brahman to his eldest son or to a worthy pupil. But it should not be imparted to anybody else, even if he give the teacher the whole sea-girt earth full of treasure, for this doctrine is worth more than that. Yea, it is worth more.<sup>8</sup>

'One must not teach this to any but a son or a pupil.'<sup>9</sup>

The custodians of the vedic culture were the members of the brahmin caste. That is why the brahmins were held in the highest esteem by every section of Hindu society.

## TESTS BY TEACHERS

Aspirants desiring the knowledge of the *Upanishads* were subjected to severe ordeals

<sup>7</sup> *Svet. Up.* VI. 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Chh. Up.* III. xi. 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> *Br. Up.* VI. iii. 12.

by their preceptors. The *Katha Upanishad* describes the case of Nachiketa, who was tested in various ways by Yama, the god of death, to ascertain his fitness for the Knowledge of Brahman. He was offered horses, elephants, and cattle; children and grandchildren; rulership of the earth and many years of life; heavenly damsels and their music; and numerous other desirable things which do not fall to the lot of an ordinary mortal. But he spurned them all, understanding their transitory nature, and persisted in his prayer for the Knowledge of the Self. Prataradana was tested by Indra,<sup>10</sup> Janasruti Pautrayana by Raikva,<sup>11</sup> Aruni by Prava-hana,<sup>12</sup> Janaka by Yajnavalkya,<sup>13</sup> and Brihadratha by Sakayana.<sup>14</sup>

In the *Prashna Upanishad*<sup>15</sup> the teacher, Pippalada demanded of his six disciples that they should spend one year practising austerities, continence, and faith. 'Afterwards you may ask me any question you like; if I know the answer I shall give it to you.' The *Chhandogya Upanishad*,<sup>16</sup> in a celebrated passage, tells how the teacher Prajapati required Indra and Virochana to practise spiritual disciplines for thirtytwo years. Even after that, Virochana, the king of the demons, who had not acquired the necessary purity of heart, went away satisfied with the erroneous idea that the Self was identical with the body, while Indra, the king of the gods, had to continue in the austere life of a *brahmachari* for another seventythree years (one hundred and five in all) before he could realize the true knowledge of the Self.

## RECONCILING THE TEACHINGS OF THE UPANISHADS

One finds in the *Upanishads* various strands of thought: Dualism, Qualified Non-dualism,

<sup>10</sup> *Kau. Up.* III. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Chh. Up.* IV. i.

<sup>12</sup> *Br. Up.* VI. ii. 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Br. Up.* IV. iii. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Mai. Up.* 1. 2.

<sup>15</sup> I. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> VIII. vii. 3; VIII. xi. 3.

and Non-dualism. Further, the *Upanishads* describe both the Brahman with attributes (*saguna* Brahman) and the attributeless Brahman (*nirguna* Brahman). They also deal with the disciplines of philosophical knowledge (*jnana*) divine love (*bhakti*), action (*karma*), and *yoga*. Sometimes contradictions appear. Hence the question arises as to whether the *Upanishads* present a single, consistent, coordinated system of knowledge or a mere conglomeration of unrelated ideas. The orthodox Hindu view is that the *Upanishads* are consistent, that they describe a single truth, namely, the reality of the non-dual Brahman, and furthermore, that this same truth is rendered in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*. The vedantic philosophers support this conclusion by certain accepted means of proof.

But the Western critics maintain that the *Upanishads* present inconsistent views and that conflicting doctrines may be found even in the same *Upanishad*. Such a conclusion, according to the Hindu philosophers, is the natural result of the inability of the Western Orientalists to find the thread of harmony. They place their emphasis on particular details and lack comprehension of the general trend. The subject-matter of the *Upanishads* is Brahman, the Absolute, which transcends time, space, and causality and cannot be comprehended by human thought or rendered in words. Human language and reasoning can describe and interpret sense-perceived phenomena; but Brahman is beyond their grasp. Any presentation of this subject in finite and relative human terms cannot but contain seeming contradictions. Nevertheless, this does not vitiate the Absolute Itself. Further, the Hindu philosophers admit different degrees of power of comprehension on the part of various pupils and they formulate their instructions accordingly. But such differences do not affect Brahman Itself, which is the final object of upanishadic knowledge.

## THE KSHATTRIYA INFLUENCE

A striking feature of the *Upanishads* is the part played in them by the kshatriyas, the members of the royal military caste. This fact has given rise to certain interesting speculations. The *mantra* and *brahmana* portions of the *Vedas* treat of sacrifices in which the brahmins serve as priests. They deal with ritualistic works, in which a diversity of the actor, the instruments of action, and the result is recognized, while the sacrifices themselves are performed with a view to reaping results either here on earth or in the after-world. This multiplicity of elements and ends stands in contrast to the central theme of the *Upanishads*, which is *brahmavidya*, the unitive knowledge of Brahman and the oneness of existence, and to the vedantic condemnation of sacrifices as barriers to this unitive knowledge. The seeker for the Knowledge of Brahman is told in the *Upanishads* that he must renounce all actions calculated to bring fruits and eschew all desire for happiness either on earth or in heaven. Therefore several Western writers have contended that the *Upanishads* represent a protest of the kshatriyas against the influence of the brahmins.<sup>17</sup> They contend also that the knowledge of Atman, whatever its origin, was cultivated primarily by the kshatriyas and accepted by the brahmins only later on. Hindu scholars, however, do not accept this view.

In reviewing the problem, let us first point out a few of the references to kshatriyas in the *Upanishads*.

One of the most important and ancient of the *Upanishads* now extant is the *Brihadaranyaka*, which frequently mentions an emperor of Videha whose name is Janaka. This imposing figure is described as a master of the vedic knowledge (*adhita-veda*), endowed with a keen intellect (*medhavi*), and familiar with the doctrines of the *Upanishads*. It is stated in the third

<sup>17</sup> P. Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 19. Clark, Edinburgh, 1908.

chapter that on a certain occasion this great emperor 'performed a sacrifice in which gifts were freely distributed. Vedic scholars from the Kuru and Panchala countries were assembled.' The emperor then expressed a desire to know which was 'the most erudite of these Vedic scholars.' And so he had a thousand cows confined in a pen, and on the horns of each cow were fixed ten *padas* of gold.

Janaka said to the brahmins: 'Revered brahmins, let him who is the best vedic scholar among you drive home the cows.' None of the brahmins dared to accept the challenge except the sage Yajnavalkya, who asked one of his pupils to lead the cows home. This enraged the others. The Chief priest of the court arose and said: 'Are you, then, the best vedic scholar among us?'

Yajnavalkya answered: 'I bow to the best vedic scholar. I only want the cows.'

Thereupon the other brahmins were determined to test his knowledge of Brahman. A learned debate ensued, and this was presided over by the kshatriya king.

In chapter four of the same work Yajnavalkya and the emperor Janaka again appear. This time the kshatriya is the disciple and the brahmin the preceptor. Janaka receives from Yajnavalkya the supreme Knowledge of Brahman and demonstrates his appreciation by making a suitable gift: 'I give you, sir, the empire of Videha, and myself with it, to wait upon you.'

At the conclusion of the fifth chapter, this wise emperor Janaka instructs Budila, the son of Asvatarasva, concerning the *gayatri*, a verse the knowledge of which consumes a man's sins and makes him 'pure, cleansed, undecaying, and immortal.'

Pravahana Jaivali, another kshatriya king, appears in the eighth section of the first chapter of the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, where he is described as teaching the secret of the *udgitha*, discussed in the *Sama-Veda*. He appears again in the third section of the fifth chapter of the same *Upanishad*, where he plays a more important role. In this case the sage Aruni's son, Svetaketu, is having an

interview with the king, and the king asks him if he has been instructed by his father. The youth replies that he has received instruction; whereupon Jaivali confounds him by asking a number of questions regarding a man's departure from this world, his return, the way of the Gods, the Way of the Fathers, and the rebirth of the soul. When Svetaketu confesses that he does not know the answers, the king inquires: 'Then why did you say that you had been instructed? How could anybody who did not know these things say that he had been instructed?' Svetaketu returned to his father sorrowfully and described to him what had taken place.

Then Aruni went to the king, who said to him: 'Sir, ask as a boon such things as men possess.' The brahmin said to him, 'May such things as men possess remain with you! Repeat to me those words which you addressed to my boy.' The king was disturbed. He said to Aruni: 'Remain with me for some time.' Then he added: 'As to what you have just asked of me, sir, this knowledge has not gone to any brahmin before you. That is why, in ancient times, all over the world, the kshatriyas were the sole instructors in this knowledge.' Finally the king gave instruction to his brahmin disciple in what is known as the 'knowledge of the Five Fires,' which deals with the soul's rebirth following death. This had hitherto been a secret confined to the kshatriyas. He who acquired this knowledge, said the king, was not defiled by association with vile persons; he remained pure and clean and would gain the world of the blessed.

Section two of the sixth chapter of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* also tells of the teaching of the knowledge of the Five Fires by Pravahana Jaivali to Aruni, and in the *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, chapter one, we read that the kshatriya king Chitra, belonging to the line of Garga, imparted the same knowledge to the same brahmin sage.

Let us now return to the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. In chapter two, section one, the kshatriya king of Benares, Ajatasatru, was approached by the proud brahmin Balaki.



who said : 'I will tell you about Brahman.' The king begged him to go on. Balaki described the attributes of Brahman as reflected in such subjects as the sun, the moon, lightning, akasa, the wind, fire, water, and a mirror.

'Is this all?' Ajatasatru asked.

'This is all.'

'By knowing this much one cannot know Brahman,' said the king. The brahmin was humbled. 'I approach you as a student, he said.'

'It is contrary to usage,' said that king, 'that a brahmin should approach a kshatriya with the thought that the latter might teach him about Brahman. However, I shall instruct you.' Then the kshatriya Ajatasatru taught the brahmin Balaki the oneness of jiva and Brahman by explaining the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep.

This story is repeated in the *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, chapter four.

In the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, fifth chapter, section eleven, the story is told of five great brahmin householders, all well-versed in the *Vedas*, and another erudite brahmin, Aruni, who came to the kshatriya king Kaikeyi Asvapati for the knowledge of Vaisvanara Atman (the Universal Self). When they arrived, the king showed respect to them separately, and next morning said to his honoured guests : 'In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no brahmin without a sacrificial altar in his house, no ignorant person, and no adulterer—not to speak of adulteress. Sirs, I am about to perform a sacrifice. Please remain with me, and I shall bestow on each of you as much wealth as I should give to a priest.' They answered : 'A man should state the purpose for which he has come. At the present time, you are the one who possesses the knowledge of the Vaisvanara Atman. Please give us instruction.' 'Tomorrow,' said the king, 'I shall give you my reply.' Next morning the brahmins approached him, like disciples, carrying fuel in their hands, and received the instruction for which they had come.

One more illustration. It is told in the seventh chapter of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* that Narada once came to the kshatriya Sanatkumara and humbly begged him for instruction. Sanatkumara said : 'Please tell me what you know ; after that I shall tell you what is beyond.' The learned Narada enumerated the subjects that he had studied. These included, among others, the *Vedas*, mythology, grammar, the science of numbers, the rules of sacrifice for the ancestors, the science of portents, logic, ethics, etymology, the science of pronunciation and prosody, the science of demons, the science of weapons, astronomy, the science of serpents, and the sciences of perfume-making, dancing, and singing. 'But sir, for all of this,' concluded Narada, 'I know only the mantras, the sacred words, and not the Self, I have been told by such men as yourself that he who knows the Self overcomes grief ; I am in grief. Good sir, assist me beyond this grief.' Thereupon Sanatkumara began to lead Narada step by step, to the Knowledge of Brahman. Sanatkumara said : 'Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else—that is the Infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else—that is the finite. The Infinite is immortal ; the finite mortal.'<sup>18</sup> 'The Infinite,' continued the king, 'is, indeed, below, above, behind, before the right, and to the left. It is, indeed, all this.'<sup>19</sup> Thus it was that the venerable Sanatkumara revealed to Narada, when the impurities of his heart had been removed, 'that which lies beyond darkness.'<sup>20</sup>

It is apparent from all of this (and this is not by any means an exhaustive list of the possible citations) that the kshatriyas exerted a profound influence on the teachings and teachers of the *Upanishads*. They were versed in rituals, in the mysteries of rebirth, in the identity of jiva and Brahman, and in

<sup>18</sup> VII. xxiv. 1.

<sup>19</sup> VII. xxv. 1.

<sup>20</sup> VII. xxvi. 2.

the Knowledge of the Infinite, which is the culmination of the spiritual wisdom of the Indo-Aryans. This, as we have said, has led certain eminent vedic scholars of the West to conclude that the *Upanishads*, containing the Knowledge of the Self, must be a later development by the kshatriyas in reaction against the rituals and sacrifices of the *mantra* and *brahmana* portions of the *Vedas*; the brahmins, occupied solely with the details and paraphernalia of sacrifice, were ignorant of the philosophy of the Self and so had to learn Self-Knowledge from the teachers of the military caste.

Such a conclusion, however, is hardly valid. It is true, indeed, that according to Advaita Vedanta, the Knowledge of Brahman and the performance of sacrifices cannot coexist. They are incompatible. He who has realized the oneness of jiva and Brahman and the unreality of the relative world cannot participate in vedic sacrifices, the aim of which is to enable the performer to enjoy happiness in heaven. However—and this is the great point—sacrifices and the Knowledge of Brahman are meant for two different classes of aspirants. A *sannyasin*, who has experienced the transitory nature of enjoyment, is qualified for Self-Knowledge; but such enlightened ones do not constitute the major portion of society. It is the duty of others, who belong to the first three stages of life and who identify themselves with the body and mind and seek material happiness, to engage in sacrificial action. This is a basic principle, understood and taken for granted by every member of Hindu society. It is neither necessary nor possible for a *sannyasin* to perform sacrifices. To suppose that there

were among the brahmins no *sannyasins* who were endowed with Self-Knowledge would be wrong. The fact is that as there were both illumined and unillumined persons among the kshatriyas, so there were among the brahmins those who were devoted to sacrifices and also those who cultivated the Knowledge of Brahman. The passages of the *Upanishads* that condemn sacrifices and other actions cannot possibly apply to them; for they are still householders. Such passages were directed to, and can apply, to *sannyasins* alone.

As already stated, according to the vedic tradition, the Lord alone is the source of vedic knowledge. He is, indeed, the embodiment of that knowledge. At the beginning of a cycle He reveals it for the protection of creation, making it known through the pure hearts of the *rishis*. *Rishis*, according to the *Vedas*, are highly spiritual beings who attained perfection in previous cycles but have assumed human bodies in the new creation to become divine instruments for the propagation of the wisdom of the *Vedas*. Kapila, Vyasa, and Vasishtha belong to this number. Then, as time goes on, the vedic knowledge becomes disseminated through a succession of competent teachers. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* supplies several genealogical tables of such Vedic seers.<sup>21</sup>

There were a number of kshatriyas among the *rishis*, and the brahmins, eager to acquire their knowledge, accepted discipleship under them, in accordance with the well-known Hindu maxim that a superior knowledge should be learnt even from a person of inferior rank.

(To be continued)

<sup>21</sup> *Br. Up.* II. vi; IV. vi; VI. v.

‘The Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them.’

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# THE PROBLEM OF MORAL EVIL: A VEDANTIC APPROACH

BY PRABAS JIBAN-CHOWDHURY

Western idealism has shown great insight into the problem of moral evil, whose several characteristics it has ably brought out. But it has not been able to reach a convincing solution of the problem for want of an adequate metaphysic of the soul. Rather, if consistently worked out, it lands us in embarrassing contradictions. We propose to discuss this problem of moral evil or sin and to advance a solution of it based on an interpretation of Vedanta.

Western idealism (e.g. that of Bosanquet and Royce) has brought to light several basic principles of moral evil. They have a *prima facie* plausibility, and are more or less universally accepted in modern philosophy. They are as follows: (1) Moral evil is due to the finite-infinite nature of man: his self is torn between its present and the transcendence of the present, having its reach beyond its grasp, its content beyond its existence. (2) The nature of man being essentially finite-infinite, moral evil is inevitable. All men, regardless of their moral qualities, are sinners. The doctrine of original sin is defended implicitly by Western idealism (and also explicitly by Royce). Sin is variously regarded as erroneously absolutizing the finite self, as limited response to the communications we receive from our higher self which is infinite consciousness, and as rebellious self-will. All these are but various ways of conceiving the same subject-matter, and resolve into the self-same basic conception of sin as confusing the limited with the unlimited, a relative good with the absolute one. And it is natural to suppose that whatever progress the self may make there must be some degree of finiteness, that all response must be accompanied by some limit, and all self-surrender by some consciousness of it, all consciences by some conscientiousness. So

that sin is an inevitable corollary of the finite-infinite status of man. (3) From this it follows that good is interpenetrated by evil, a finite good is finite evil when it appears as absolute good; anything short of the Absolute or the Infinite is tainted with imperfection. (4) Lastly, the inevitability of moral evil jeopardizes moral responsibility.

But it is precisely here that Western idealism is most vulnerable. For man cannot, by any amount of rationalization, really shake off moral responsibility. He feels this to be an undeniable consequence of his moral freedom which he cannot disown without self-contradiction. There are the facts of his ethical speculation with the distinction between 'is' and 'ought', of choice of some rules of conduct amongst a number of alternatives, and of his self-repentance and self-reproach; in the face of these any inclination to deny the freedom of the self must be called perverted.

Yet the inevitability of sin follows from the finite-infinite nature of the human self, and to abandon the former entails a thorough over-hauling of the Western idealist's version of moral evil. To this last mentioned task we now apply our modest efforts.

The principles regarding moral evil as laid down by Western idealism are but half-truths. Man is not finite-infinite, eternally torn between finite existence and infinite essence, he is not two (finite and infinite) at the same time and in the same plane of reality. He is an individual finite self, and he eternally appears to be such only when he, under the sway of cosmic illusion (*maya*), adopts an individualistic outlook and, so, sees multiplicity and difference where in reality there is but identity. He can at any moment (of course, depending upon his self-culture or *sadhana*) transcend his finitude and individuality and

become identified with the 'One without a second', the Absolute. From this place his former being, tainted with individuality, imperfection and sin, will appear to be an unintelligible dream that is no more. His past individuality cannot be denied to have appeared, but because it now appears to be an object (you), while the real self is to be understood only as a subject (I), it must be accepted as an illusory presentation. Moreover, it is not a mere individual appearance like the appearance of a snake in a rope, for to correct the latter we but posit an objective world, while to correct the former we have to realize the illusoriness of Objectivity itself, that is, of the individual (the objectified self) and the entire world of which it is the reference-point. Thus the individual is the result of a cosmic illusion. Moreover, individuality cannot be asserted either as real or as unreal. It cannot be asserted as real when it is transcended and seen as an appearance, and it cannot be asserted as unreal for to do this one has to be an individual to see the unreality of individuality. For this reason the cosmic principle of illusion (*maya*) is called *anirvachya*, unassertible. This is the principle of individuality, also the principle of ignorance.

But rational philosophy may refuse to accept a state of being of the self in which the individual self is said to appear as an illusory presentation no longer admitted as real nor asserted as unreal, but only rejected as a false shadow-show created by the undifferentiated self to beguile itself. We will put forward the following pleas in favour of our (i.e. vedantic) thesis regarding the reality of an undifferentiated transcendent Self and the illusoriness of the individual one. (1) This may be accepted on the authority of the mystics of all countries (including the upanishadic *rishis*) who claim to have experienced this state of highest being. (2) This may be first granted as a hypothesis which will gain truth-value as it succeeds in

solving various problems of philosophy (ethics, aesthetics, cosmology etc.). We shall presently show that the hypothesis of an unindividual Self and of an individual self, regarded only as illusory, solves our problem of moral evil. (3) An analysis of moral consciousness in repentance indicates the possible reality of a higher Self transcending and subsuming the lower individual one. In repentance the Self regards with wonder and dismay its past self as an individual, an object to be addressed as 'you' while his real self is regarded as the subject. Yet the past self is not a dead object, it is believed to be somehow 'I', tinged with subjectivity. Thus the past self, the individual, is at once an object and a subject, 'you' and 'I'. This contradiction makes the individual an illusory object; the repentant self is the unindividual Self that is 'I' (subject) and never 'you' (object). The individual and its activities are regarded as false appearances, not to be taken as real yet not assertable as unreal. (For they did appear and are not as unreal as sky-lotus). Thus there is a state of spiritual consciousness which points to the possibility of transcending permanently individuality and its accompanying finitude and imperfection.

So that man is not finite-infinite in the sense that there is waged in him a conflict between the two poles of this being; rather he is essentially infinite and illusorily finite. There is no conflict in him for the two do not exist together in the same plane of reality. Instead of a conflict there is a kind of alternation in him, sudden lapse from the state of absolute being and sudden awakening into the latter. All conflict is in the plane of individuality, differentiation, and finitude; in the absolute Self there is but identity, not a harmony of the opposites.

This explains why moral evil may not be inevitable. It is inevitable only when man considers himself an individual, that is, erroneously absolutizes the finite. For as an individual he will attribute his sin to indivi-

duality which, however enlarged through sympathy and altruism, falls short of absolute universality and which is accompanied by limit, self-will, and conscientiousness (i.e. ego-sense, *ahankara*). But man may as well consider himself to be, and realize through appropriate self-discipline (*yoga-sadhana*), infinite, undifferentiated consciousness, eternally free and unaware of any limit or bondage. Its so-called lapse into individuality is but free illusory creation by magic-power (*maya-shakti*). It is only the individual who regards his individuality as real; the unindividual magician, Brahman or Self, does not take them for reality. And the magic-power is no restriction of His being. (It may be remarked that Brahman as wielding *maya-shakti* is *Iswara* (*Mayadhisha*), while Brahman itself is to be conceived without any reference to anything else than Brahman).

Thus moral evil is not absolutely inevitable. It is only inevitable so long as we choose to remain forgetful of our essential infinitude and suffer, as individuals, bondage and unrest (pleasure-pain). And since the inevitability of sin is not absolute, moral responsibility is not jeopardized. The individual, as an individual, is certainly fully responsible for his immorality. In fact the repentant self, though wondering how it could be that he at all sinned and though alienating his past self as a miserable appearance, yet takes full responsibility of his sin. For he finds the past self, the individual object (you) still somehow tinged with subjectivity and so somehow belonging to him.

In moral consciousness there is a meeting of the two selves. The absolute Self witnesses the individual self with wonder and pity. But the individuality is not altogether disowned, the punishment due to it is entertained. The punished self is, however, again the individual self, the witnessing self is the judge and administrator of punishment. The embodied self is the accused, and it is always an object that is still somehow the

subject, a given contradiction, an appearance. In repentance, self-reproach, and acceptance of some punishment the sinner's soul is one with the 'universal soul' (as the stoics say) or the Absolute Lord (*Iswara* of Vedanta), who is but Brahman shining against, weilding, and contemplating, *maya*. This is the basis of the exaltation of confession and repentance in Christianity which has not explicated it with the help of an elaborate metaphysic of the soul such as Vedanta presents us.

Thus we find that Vedanta can explain moral evil by doing justice to all the facts of the case, viz. our apparent finite-infinite nature appearing as the ground of moral evil, the apparent universality and inevitability of moral evil, our feeling of moral responsibility as individuals and denial of it as the unindividual self.

Another fact which Vedanta takes care of and which is recognized by Western idealism is the interpenetration of good and evil. For Western idealism any actual good is limited and falls short of the absolute good, so that there is an imperfection and a tension between actuality and ideality. For Vedanta any actual good is determinate belonging to the world of multiplicity and difference, and, so, is but *maya*. Any actual good has a background of evil over against which it stands as the other; while in absolute good there is no such contrast, it being the undifferentiated Being without name and form. Vedanta offers a far deeper and sounder metaphysical explanation of interpenetration of good and evil than does Western idealism. For while the latter view cannot quite forbid a conception of infinitely progressing good approaching asymptotically to the absolute good, the former does so forbid. The reason is that Vedanta (of course we mean Advaita Vedanta throughout) stands for an uncompromising monism, and admits no continuity of the one with the many, of Brahman with the world. They are altogether two different planes of reality with no empirically causal connection

between them. But Western idealism offers a qualified monism where the Absolute spirit is said somehow to embrace and harmonize the many. The Absolute of Advaita Vedanta is an abstract identity, while that of Western idealism is a concrete universal. As a result of this there is no scope for a continuous passage from relative good to the absolute one in Vedanta. One has to forsake all thought of worldly good and its reward, of virtue and moral merit, in order to realize the absolute good that is but his true Self. Thus the interpenetration of good and evil conceived here is more fundamental than that conceived in Western idealism, which admits a progressive approach towards the absolute from the relative. If individuality is regarded as the principle of moral evil, Western idealism conceives the possibility of a development of this individuality towards greater and greater comprehensiveness to reach an ideal state of being where it harmonizes all multiplicity. But Vedanta, though it does not deny a development of the individual in comprehensiveness, tells us that this is not the highroad to the Absolute. We

are not to court and compromise with multiplicity keeping our individuality (ego or *ahankara*) intact, rather we have to forsake all multiplicity as well as our individuality in one single momentous spiritual act realizing them to be but false shows that veil and distort the self-identical Brahman that is our Self. The Vedanta shows a firmer and clearer grasp of the truth regarding so-called moral progress and exposes its limitation and relative futility with a greater boldness than does Western idealism.

Thus we see that Vedanta has dug deeper into the problem of moral evil than Western idealism has been able to do so far, and the solution of the problem advanced on the basis of Vedanta is far more comprehensive than that offered by the other school.\*

\* I am to some extent indebted to Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya's essay 'Advaitavada and its Spiritual Significance' (in the *Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. I*) for my interpretation of moral consciousness in repentance and of *maya*. I am also indebted to Prof. Paul Ramsay's essay 'Idealistic view of Moral Evil' (in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, June, 1946*) for providing me with an insight into the principal merits and demerits of Western idealistic theory of moral evil.

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## EXISTENTIALISM

BY SWAMI AKHILANANDA

Existentialism, as a school of thought, is inclusive of theistic Thomism and the atheistic views of such men as Heidegger and Sartre. Its range seems to be contradictory from the rational point of view; yet this school provokes considerable thinking on the part of modern theologians and philosophers. The Danish thinker, Sren. Kierkegaard, is regarded as the founder of this movement. However, Christian Aristotelians definitely seem also to be existentialists. In the fourth and fifth centuries, St. Augustine emphasized

the intuitive apprehension of God's essence as prior to the assertion of His existence. On the other hand, St. Thomas Aquinas states that human knowledge, based on sensuous experiences through the method of induction and abstraction, leads to ultimate intuitive awareness of the eternal truth, God. It is a fact that St. Thomas is not himself called an existentialist. Nevertheless, neo-scholastic thinkers and philosophers, like Father Phelan and Father Renard, who participated in a recent conference of Catholic philosophers, do

not hesitate to associate existentialism with St. Thomas. It is true that Thomistic existentialism is quite different from that of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Canis, Jaspers, and Marcel. We must admit that there is a wide gap between the views of even these thinkers which cannot be bridged. However, the modern existentialists, all agree that 'existence is prior to essence.'

The ideas of Kierkegaard have influenced the minds of great theologians like Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr. These theologians, followers of Kierkegaard, are in turn influencing the thought of many of the young religious leaders in Christendom. So it is very important that we evaluate his ideas.

Properly speaking, Kierkegaard's discussions and writings cannot be called a system of philosophy, as he himself decries the very idea of system as incompatible with existence. To him, existence is temporal. He says :

System and finality correspond to one another, but existence is precisely the opposite of finality. It may be seen, from a purely abstract point of view, that system and existence are incapable of being thought together ; because in order to think existence at all, systematic thought must think it as abrogated, and hence as not existing.<sup>1</sup>

He admits that there is a paradox when he tries to view the problems of life 'eternally, divinely, or theocentrically.' He is clear in saying that he is not in a position to contemplate either 'eternally, divinely, or theocentrically' and he is satisfied with existing. If this be true, we wonder how this Danish scholar can be regarded a philosopher. He is indeed a great theologian in his assertions of certain doctrines and craving for God. So he declares that 'existence itself is

a system—for God ; but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit.'<sup>2</sup> He is also an acute psychologist ; but he is hardly a philosopher.

Hegel showed that truth lies in the whole. Every experience is a particular of the whole and the whole is incomplete unless everything is included. Anything short of the whole is inadequate. On the other hand, Kierkegaard emphasized that the individual is not related to this abstract whole ; he is related, rather, to the divine Being who excites his feelings. Kierkegaard revolted against the Hegelian concept of being and the Hegelian Absolute. In fact, he felt that Hegel and his followers were living in a dream world of speculation and they were neglecting the soul. So he wanted to place the particular human fact first, as prior to pure being or pure essence. To him, existential dialectic is chiefly connected with the religious setting. The existing individual is the primary object of his interest. The individual is distinct, isolated. The individual exists not from the metaphysical point of view, but each is for everyone, or every human being is for himself. According to Kierkegaard, the very thinking process or speculative philosophy depends on human existence. Thoughts are transmitted by an existent human being to another existent human being. He cannot forget that he is primarily existent, not a mere instance of general humanity, as there is no such thing at all.

Kierkegaard makes a contrast between man and God on the basis of falsity and truth. According to him, the very nature of man is untruth. He says :

The teacher is God Himself, who acting as occasion gives occasion to the learner's being reminded that he is untruth, by his own fault. But this condition, to be untruth and to be it by one's own fault, what can we call it ? Let us call it sin.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, ed. Robert Bretall (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

He seems to be a lover of paradox. He tells us that every thinker, if worth anything, must have paradoxes, as love without passion is insipid. This emphasis on paradoxical thinking seems to strike at the root of ascertaining any valid truth through the very thinking process, when it consists of paradoxes.

Kierkegaard is definitely a theistic theologian, as he seriously objects to pantheism and absolutism. His objection to such conceptions of God is that they destroy the distinction between good and evil and destroy the freedom of individual existence.

Although man is sinful by his very nature, there is a hope for his redemption and there is also a possibility for his ethical life. It seems from the writings of some of Kierkegaard's followers, like Barth and Niebuhr, that man is in a completely hopeless state. But Kierkegaard impresses upon us that there is a definite purpose in ethical striving. Man's sensuous life has a meaning for his ultimate redemption. Its meaning is that he realizes its complete collapse. Then naturally he struggles through what he calls the second stage of life, namely, 'ethical striving'—a persistent striving for truth. He makes it clear that truth is not taken in a metaphysical sense but rather in an ethical sense. Man is constantly striving not for finality but for the realization of utter helplessness. Then comes the third stage of life, namely, religious awakening by what he calls a 'leap.' This leap takes place when the individual is thoroughly agonized by utter helplessness, torture, and desperation. This is what he calls 'faith.' Faith is the highest value in the religious stage of life. Love and faith are not what people ordinarily think about the subjectivity of the individual. In fact, when an individual in the consciousness of his falsity and sinfulness is severely agonized, then love and faith in his inwardness lead him to the redemptive power of God.

Kierkegaard discusses faith considerably. He states that the basis of faith is not intellectual or doctrinal but it is in the reality of the teacher, the God-man in the sense of his historical existence. He emphasizes that faith is based on reality in the particular, individual, historical existence, namely, Jesus the Christ. The greatest emphasis is on the historicity of this God-man, Jesus. We presume that the emphasis on inwardness leads one to this state. There again, we are puzzled about this very concept of inwardness. We wish that Kierkegaard and other such existentialists were clear in this matter of inwardness.

According to him, the 'work of love' is based on the love of neighbour; but love is explained by him in his own way as a duty. He is again paradoxical when he tells us that we are to love the 'nearest' one, the neighbour. We should love the man who is present now. On the other hand, he seems to be liberal in what is called 'liberal Christian love' and 'the social gospel.' However, we are afraid he gives sufficient reason, in connection with his treatment of 'Works of Love,' for his followers, like Barth and Niebuhr, to justify their attitude of relative ethics in a world full of evil. In his usual dialectic manner he gives considerable attention to the relativity of love in that chapter. He seems to feel that one should use prudence in applying the gospel of love, as his followers emphatically declared. It seems to us that there is considerable contradiction in his point of view on love of neighbour. So far as the love of God is concerned, he stresses unconditional love for Him.

It seems that Kierkegaard's whole dialectic on the 'Works of Love' is extremely confusing, in so far as the Christian doctrine of the Kingdom of God on earth is concerned. His explanation of 'love thy neighbour as thyself' is, no doubt, refreshing when he says that one should love one's self in the right way without



being selfish. But we confess that his whole discussion of the doctrine of love is as confusing and misleading as is that of Niebuhr in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society* and *Christianity and Power Politics*.

Kierkegaard is dead against any objective method of dealing with life. He says: 'Christianity protests every form of objectivity; it desires that the subject should be infinitely concerned about himself.'<sup>4</sup> He seems to feel that the truth of Christianity lies in its subjectivity. He also writes that Christians should aspire to have joy in heaven. We naturally conclude from this that Christians should not expect to have any kind of joy in this world, as he and his followers are so emphatic about the utter futility of moral social order.

The writings of many of his followers make one feel the utter futility of spiritual exercises, as being the acts of sinful man. But Kierkegaard himself seems to be quite emphatic about the practice of meditation and prayer. In discussing the subjectivity of truth he states that 'the reflection of a Christian is directed to the individual's God-relationship in truth.'<sup>5</sup> He is very emphatic that without purity of heart one cannot have Christian life. Then he stresses the utility of prayer. He writes: 'For purity of heart is the very wisdom that is acquired through prayer. A man of prayer does not pore over learned books for he is the wise man whose eyes are opened when he kneels down.'<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note what he has to say about Christian life. In his own dialectic fashion he discusses the very nature of Christianity. He writes: 'Christianity has declared itself to be eternal, essential truth which has come into being in time.'<sup>7</sup> In Christianity there cannot be any immediate

relationship to God as the pagans seem to think. But his idea is that a Christian's relationship to God takes place only when there is a definite breach between him and God. It is interesting to observe that God is so elusive to man because He is the truth and He keeps man in error.

We cannot help observing his dialectic reasoning in evaluating the nature of a true Christian. He seems to think that a man who merely follows certain doctrines is not a Christian, either by acceptance of doctrine or by appropriation of ideas; a man is Christian according to what he has undergone. When a person has received the Spirit in baptism and when he knows he has received the Spirit at that time, then alone is he a Christian. He does not make it clear exactly what he means by 'receiving the Spirit,' just as he is not clear about the idea of faith, which is the basis of Christianity. It is quite conceivable that a man can act under the delusion of receiving the Spirit, as we find in many of the evangelical movements.

It is very refreshing to note that Kierkegaard does not hesitate to evaluate the theory of the church and its adherents. He is very clear that a man need not necessarily be a Christian because he belongs to a church. It is essential that he receive the Holy Spirit, as we have already mentioned.

He excels and at the same time draws admiration in his discussion of contemporaneity. He says that Christ is the pattern. To his way of thinking, to be a Christian is to be contemporary with Jesus in His sufferings, humiliation, and withal in His love and forgiveness, just as the apostles were His contemporaries. Kierkegaard's essays on *Training in Christianity* stress that Jesus is in the present; the past is not reality. Only the contemporary Jesus is real for him. So a Christian should live as a contemporary of Jesus, as Jesus stands alone outside history. If we understand Kierkegaard correctly, he

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

emphasizes in these essays a pattern of Christian living, even though many of the statements are mere assertions and are often paradoxical. It is only natural for him to make such statements, as he admits that Christianity, to him, is full of paradoxes. However, we must say that he shows a way of life in this world of 'sin.'

We cannot help wondering why these theistic existentialists, from Kierkegaard to Barth and Niebuhr, condemn the place of reason in religious life while they use the very same dialectic to state their assertions.

Kierkegaard's objection to absolutism and so-called pantheism seems inconsistent with the very reasoning process. These schools do not destroy the distinction between good and evil and freedom of the individual, as he declares. On the contrary, they also realize the existence of evil on the relative plane. They do not deny evil and do not deny the distinction between good and evil, but they declare that in the absolute state both vanish, not merely evil alone. But at the same time both exist on the relative plane. In fact, when man is immediately aware of the relative plane of existence, he is not immediately aware of the absolute state, and *vice versa*. Hindu absolutists definitely declare that one must overcome evil by good and then alone can one reach the consciousness of the all-transcending Absolute.

If existence is individual and unrelated to the whole, as opposed to the Hegelian conception, then we do not find any possibility for love. Nor do we find the basis for 'social gospel.' It is true that Kierkegaard stresses love of neighbour, yet we do not find any *raison d'être* for that love. A question may arise in the minds of his followers: how can there be any love on the part of pantheists and absolutists when they are supposed to accept the oneness of existence? A similar argument can be brought against them that they, too, do not have any basis for love of

neighbour. Our answer is that Hindu absolutists declare that the consciousness of many vanishes only when a person is established in the consciousness of One. Until then, the individual is seeking unity in variety. Consequently, the very thought of basic unity brings out love. Then again, when he is established in that state of unity, he feels the presence of oneness in variety and thereby finds the basis for love.

Emphasis on the sinfulness of man and the way of redemption as presupposing man's feeling of utter helplessness seem to be extremely discouraging and contrary to some of the utterances of Jesus, such as: 'Be ye perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect,' and 'The Kingdom of God is within.' In the course of spiritual development during the 'dark night of the soul,' some of the mystics feel their inadequacy and entirely depend at that moment on God and His love. Thereby, they realize God or attain the Kingdom of God. The concept that awareness of sinfulness is absolutely necessary for spiritual development is contrary to the life of the great Christian mystics.

Another point made by Kierkegaard bothers us very much. It is that Christian life must consist of constant agony, torture, and suffering. He throws a horrible gloom on religious life itself. On the contrary, great Christians emphasize the joy of God. Even Kierkegaard himself, as we mentioned previously, talks of 'joy in heaven.' If a man cannot expect to have the joy of God right now, how and why should he wait for a joy which is now mere words, forever future? If God is existing and Jesus is an historical personality who is present at this very moment, an individual should have the joy of Jesus, the joy of God, when he is redeemed, however sinful he may be. In other words, awareness of God through subjectivity or the 'inwardness' of Kierkegaard must create joy by being in the presence of Jesus who is

existent God.

Kierkegaard wrote a great deal in his own dialectic method to establish the belief that religious life and experiences are subjective ; and he refutes the method of objectivity in religious life. We admit that 'inwardness' is necessary for the higher realization of God, so far as the objective experience of diversity of the world is concerned. Of course, it is essential that the mind be made indrawn, one-pointed, and purified. Yet, it will be an extremely narrow point of view if we wholly deny that there are experiences of God through objective realization of God as a separate existent individual. We wonder what he would say about the experiences of the apostles at the time of the ascension of Jesus. We wonder also what he would think of the experience of St. Paul on the road to Damascus. Innumerable Christian mystics, from the immediate apostles to George Fox and John Wesley, had their individual experiences of Jesus, as the 'historical God-man,' who is objective and apart from themselves. It is, however, true that mystics like Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Bernard, Eckhart, and a few others, had the realization of the unity of existence, the Absolute. The Absolute they realized is, no doubt, in some ways different from the conception of the Hegelian Absolute. Yet it is definite that their realizations included complete unity of all existences. This viewpoint is also in harmony with the vedantic conception of non-dualism. But vedantic teachers, like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, declare that there are two stages of spiritual realization. In one stage of the subject-object relationship, the devotee perceives objectively the personal aspect of God ; in the other, the subject and object, namely, the existent individual and the Godhead, are completely unified. What remains is Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. So we are compelled to say that

Kierkegaard's 'inwardness' seems to be incomplete, in view of the experiences of the great spiritual mystics of all religions.

The existentialism of Kierkegaard is quite different from that of Heidegger and Sartre. On the other hand, the existentialism of protestant Jasper and Catholic Marcel is theistic. As we observed, according to Kierkegaard, despair and torment of mind bring an individual close to God. He renounces dreamlands of speculative fancy and remains in the tortured condition of self to find God. On the other hand, Heidegger and Sartre deny the existence of God, even though Sartre denies that he is a materialist. But it is true that all of them start their philosophy on the basis of individual existence. Sartre's dialectic of existentialism seems to us not at all convincing for the establishment of atheism. He takes it for granted that if he accepts the existence of God he must also accept the necessity of His existence. That means His existence is contradictory because it becomes self-caused. He tries to show the logical impossibility of God's existence. We wonder why God cannot be eternal without causing His own existence. Sartre seems to feel that causal determinism is absolutely necessary in all planes of existence. It is true that relative logic cannot establish the Infinite or Absolute, which is beyond the categories of the finite mind. That is also the very reason Kierkegaard declares that it is faith alone that can establish the existence of God. From the vedantic point of view, Sartre's arguments are partly right when he says that it is logically impossible to establish the existence of God, the Absolute. He is wrong when he says that even God is related to cause and effect categories. Then he goes on to say no God, therefore no essence of man. According to him there is no such thing as general humanity. Humanity is individual.

# SOVIET INDOLOGY

BY A. P. BARANNIKOV

It may be said that during the Soviet regime of all the studies about the Eastern countries beyond our frontiers the most conspicuous changes have been effected in the domain of Soviet study of Indology.

Two causes may be advanced to explain this fact.

First, in the course of the last thirty years there appeared in India the movement for national emancipation; this was nourished to a great extent by the ideas of the great socialist October Revolution. As a result there was a tempestuous growth of literature in the different Indian languages. Simultaneously a wide development of philological sciences and lexicographic activities on a great scale of some of the languages of the country took place. Thus the problem of contemporary literatures and languages gained here (i.e. in Russia) special importance and evoked great general and political interest. Secondly, our pre-Revolutionary Indology which began in the nineties of the last century was so far from the real, contemporary India, that after the Revolution when the Soviet public grew much interested in the people of India, fighting for freedom, it was found impossible to continue the study in its old form.

To understand the above observations it is necessary to remember briefly the basical movements of the pre-Revolutionary Indology.

In our country the development of Indology covers a period of about one hundred and fifty years. The beginning was towards the end of the eighteenth century—almost about the same time when Indology developed in the important European countries of that period, namely, England and France.

There is, however, a cardinal difference between the conditions of the beginning of Indology in those West European countries and those in our country. At that time England and France led wars for domination of India; there the development of Indology at that time, as well as later on, stimulated

them colonially and politically. In contrast to this Russian Indology had its origin in a genuine effort to know and understand the general and peculiar culture of India.

This interest in India existed in our country from a long past and was exhibited in a series of facts. I remember two of them—the most conspicuous of all—the travels of Afansia Nikitin (1460 A.D.), who left his notes about India, and the activities of G.S. Lebedev—a musician from Yaroslav, who lived in India for about twenty-five years (1775-1799) and founded in Calcutta his own theatre. He studied Indian languages and culture, and wrote a *Colloquial Grammar of Hindusthani* (London 1801) and *Investigations into the Habits and Customs of the Indian People* (St. Petersburg, 1805).

Information about India, coming to Europe in great quantity from the end of the eighteenth century, found, by the standard of the time, very swift and wide acceptance in Russia. Thus, for example, the first translation of one of the most philosophical treatises of ancient India, *The Bhagavad Gita*, appeared in Moscow in 1788 A.D., and the first translation of the drama of Kalidasa, *Shakuntala*, was done in Moscow in 1792 A.D.

At the time when Russian Indology began we find only individual scholars, who studied primarily Sanskrit, translating the prominent literary productions of ancient India and conducting researches into comparative grammar.

Also by the year 1811, that is by the time of pointing out by Fr. Bopp the kinship among the Indo-European languages, we had already begun to investigate into the relation between Sanskrit and the Russian languages. One of the treatises on this subject was published simultaneously in the French and Russian languages.<sup>1</sup>

From the forties and fifties the study about

<sup>1</sup> *Relation between Sanskrit and Russian Language—* (St. Petersburg 1811).

India became more systematized. Chairs for Sanskrit were founded in the Russian Academy of Sciences, in the Oriental Institute of St. Petersburg University, and later in Philological Faculties of different Russian Universities, such as Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Yurev, Kiev, Kharkov, and Odessa.

The Indologists of the Academy of Sciences and Oriental Institute of Leningrad University directed their attention mainly towards classical Sanskrit and the contemporary idioms of the language. Scholars of the Philological Faculties of different institutes studied not only classical Sanskrit, but its comparative aspect, which explains the fact of uniting under one chair comparative languages and Sanskrit.

Pre-Revolutionary Indology in our country developed on two foundations, linguistically and as Buddhology. Great scholars working in both these departments have left a store of rich legacy for us. The earliest attempts were linguistic and were taken up in the Academy of Sciences and the various Russian Universities. The most blazing achievement in this direction was the publishing of two Sanskrit dictionaries—one comprehensive (1852-1875) and the other abridged (1879-1889). These great publications of our Academy which organized the lexicon work were for scholars of different countries of Europe a foundation-work. They continue to be so right up to the present time for the study of Indology all over the world.

The professors of Indology of the different Russian Universities, holding also Chairs of comparative languages, made extremely important contributions in the domain of linguistics. Some of them are—Professors K. A. Kosovich, I. P. Minaev, D. N. Obeyanko Kulikovski (St Petersburg), F. F. Fostunatov (Moscow), D. N. Kudruavski (Yuriev), V. A. Bogoroditsko (Kazan), F. F. Knaner (Kiev), P. Ritter (Kharkov), A. N. Tomson (Odessa), and others.

Though Sanskrit occupied a minor position in these Chairs, still the occupants did

a series of excellent research work in Indology and wrote a few Sanskrit grammars. The founders of Scientific study about Buddhism appear to be Academician B. P. Vasilev (1818-1900), who was primarily a Sinologist, and Professor I. P. Minaev (1840-1890). Professor I. P. Minaev was an erudite scholar of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, and modern Indian languages. He published many memoirs on ancient Indian literature. Much credit is due to him for his great researches about Buddhism on scientific lines. He was also one of the first grammarians of Pali. This grammar as well as his works on the history of Buddhism were translated into the French and English languages soon after their publication. Professor I. P. Minaev was the greatest Indologist of his time. He started new lines of work in Indology.

Three reputed Indologists were students of Professor I. P. Minaev. They started their scientific work at the pre-Revolutionary period, and continued with great success after the October Revolution. These were Professor D. Kudryavski, Academician C. F. Oldenburg, and Academician F. I. Shcherbatski. Professor D. Kudryavski, specially a linguist, besides writing a Sanskrit grammar, also did much valuable research work on ancient Indian philology; among these researches that about ancient Indian customs depicted on a comparative historical basis is of great significance.

The other two students of Professor I. P. Minaev were drawn to Buddhology and they confined their researches to Buddhism, especially to the study of Buddhism of the North.

The activity of Academician C. F. Oldenburg (1889-1934) is characterized by his many-sided resourcefulness. He devoted much energy to the study of Buddhism and the influence of Indian culture on the culture of the people of Central and Far East Asia. His memoirs about Buddhist collections are valued greatly. These are the famous collections of Xara-xoto, the collector being P. K.

Kozlov. In addition, Academician C. F. Oldenburg worked assiduously for the publication of Sanskrit texts of old and medieval Indian Sanskrit literature, as well as folk-lore, history, archaeology, arts, etc.

Academician F. I. Shcherbatski (1866-1942) devoted himself to the study of Buddhism i.e. Buddhistic philosophy and logic. He studied them from Sanskritic and Tibetan sources. His numerous important publications on this line—texts, translations, and research works appearing both in Russian and English, constitute a very valuable store for the history of Indian philosophy. His great work was continued by his talented pupil O. Rosenburg, whose early death was a great loss.

The Academy of Sciences published under the joint editorship of Academician C. F. Oldenburg and Academician F. I. Shcherbatski the famous series of *Bibliotheca Buddhica*, which also had the cooperation of a number of scholars from the West and East.

Besides pure scientific work our pre-Revolutionary Indology published a great number of translations and memoirs of Indian literature. The first translation from ancient Indian writings was done at the end of the eighteenth century; the tradition of translating from Sanskrit is continuing right up to the present time.

The translation of Professor Kudryavski and Professor N. Oslov (*Hitopadesha*), the translation of Professor P. Rittera (*Cloud-Messenger—Meghaduta*), and of Professor Academician F. I. Shcherbatski (*The Adventure of Ten Princes—Dashakumaracharita*) are remarkable for their great merit. The last work was published in the first year of Revolution.

The first numerous works of R. Tagore and other new Indian authors belong to the pre-Revolutionary period. However, most of the pre-Revolutionary translations were not done by specialists and therefore they frequently lack proper accuracy.

Pre-Revolutionary Russian Indology,

with all its great service, suffered from great insufficiency which was due mostly to the limited opportunities of Russian science in the Czarist regime. The chief deficiencies are the following :

1. Limitation of opportunity because of the small number of pre-Revolutionary workers in the domain of Russian Indology ;

2. The narrowing of the task of studying Indology when it was limited only to the philological study of ancient and medieval India.

3. Absence of any plan for scientific study of New Indian languages and literature.

The last limitation was based on an erroneous view imported from Germany. This view was accepted as the result of a leaning towards German scholarship about fifty years ago which held that the highest peak of original cultural value was Buddhism and that it was created by Indian Aryans of the pre-Muslim period of Indian history.

Thus our pre-Revolutionary Indology of the post-Muslim period completely ignored real India, her history and culture, and held that after the first conquest by the Muslims, and later by the English, the creative forces in her were completely dried up and India ceased to be Aryan. In such an understanding of the task of Indology, in the disbelief in the creative power of the great Indian people—lay the basical defect of pre-Revolutionary Russian Indology.

It is remarkable that the best representative of pre-Revolutionary Russian Indology felt the necessity of widening the task of Russian Indology and scientific study of contemporary India and her languages. This was Professor I. P. Minaev, who made three journeys to India and had a good knowledge of both the old and new Indian languages. He demanded a scientific-historical study of the Indian languages, literature, and Indian culture in general. But unfortunately at that time there was a very strong German influence in the Academy of Sciences of the St Petersburg University, and the ideas of

Professor I. P. Minaev did not find favour there.

After the great socialistic October Revolution, unbounded opportunity dawned before Soviet Indology and other branches of Sciences. The Soviet Government, already in the first year of its existence, gave exclusive attention to the development of Oriental studies.

The decree for the creation of Oriental Institutes in Moscow and Petrograd which was signed by V. I. Lenin in 1920 refers to this matter with special stress.

The Institute of Living Oriental Languages was founded with a view to focus attention on contemporary East, and partly on contemporary India which, after the first World War, organized her fight for independence. The Soviet public followed with great sympathy this fight of the Indian people; great interest was roused in our country about the people of India, their condition of existence, and their revolutionary fight. The Russian people also grew interested in the languages and literatures of contemporary India.

This most important circumstance defined the character of new Soviet Indology. She went off from the pre-Revolutionary standard, both as regards the subject and the method of study. This was soon evident from the subsequent development of Soviet Indology :

1. In a very short time workers in the domain of Indology grew manifold.

2. Soviet Indology utilizes the Marxist-Leninist Methodology.

3. Scientific inquiry and application of methodology widened the range of subjects for the Soviet public. So, as great a number of people were attracted towards the scientific study as were attracted for studying new Indian philology, both of which were totally neglected in our country before the October Revolution.

4. Soviet Indology ceased to be simply a philological science, because our Indologists worked successfully in the domain of Indian history, Indian economics, and so on.

5. During the Soviet period intensive research work is proceeding both in the domain of Sanskrit philology and Buddhistic religion.

The training of young scientists as well as the problem of New Indian philology were first attempted in the State University of Leningrad, Leningrad Oriental Institute, and Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies. Somewhat later the problem of New Indian philology was taken up by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences.

A good number of specialists in New Indian philology went out from the Leningrad Institutes. These scholars are at present working with great success in the different scientific and teaching institutions of Leningrad: Lecturer V. M. Beskrovni, Lecturer D.A. Slucikin, Lecturer V.I. Kalyanov, V.A. Novikov, I.S. Kolovkov, D.M. Goldman, A.T. Abramov; of Moscow, Lecturer M.A. Shiryaev, M.N. Sotnikov, E.M. Buikov, N.F. Gusev, P.B. Gladnishev, A.I. Sharwihov, G.P. Nikotorov, A.V. Bolshakov, I.S. Rabinovich, A.A. Kovalenkov, and others; of Tashkent, I.D. Serebryakov, and others.

Very fruitful work was also done in this line by some young students of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, among whom I may mention the name of V.S. Moskalev, B.M. Sorok, U.L. Lavrineko, and others.

The Soviet Indologists took up for teaching and scientific research work the most important languages of contemporary India, namely Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, and also one of the old languages, namely, Tamil.

Grammars and various text books have been written for the consolidation of new Indological traditions for the above mentioned languages. Help-books, short text-book dictionaries, publications of texts etc. have been undertaken zealously. In this task, besides Academician A.P. Barannikov, and Lecturer D.A. Datta—an Indian who is working in the Soviet Union for more than 25 years—young scientific workers such as Lecturer A.S. Zimin, M.N. Sotnikov, Lecturer V.M.

Beskrovni, E.M. Buikov, I.D. Serebryakov, M.I. Klyagin-Kondratov, I.S. Rabinovich, V.S. Moskalev, B.M. Sorok and others are taking active part.

With a view to lay a serious scientific foundation for the study of the different new Indian languages, the writing and publication of many scientific dictionaries of those languages have been taken up. Right up to the great patriotic war this very important item was included in the plan of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, and was progressing with great success. Unfortunately, during the time of blockade of Leningrad, the death of two young talented workers in this line (Lecturer A. S. Zimin and Lecturer V. E. Krasnodemskovo) slowed down, for the time being, the volume and tempo of these important beginnings, which possessed great and exceptional significance for the further development of Soviet Indology and for the growth of mutual understanding between the representative Soviet culture and the original Indian culture.

In addition to the work in the two above-mentioned extremely important domains of Indology, necessary for the consolidation of new sections of Indian philology and the establishment of self-supporting bases for teaching work and for conducting scientific researches, the workers of the Oriental Institute worked out a series of purely theoretical problems. The direction of scientific research work is guided by two principles, namely :

(a) By the morphological and syntactical peculiarities of the structure of the new Indian languages, which were so far neglected by both the Indian and European research workers ;

(b) The reality of certain problems for India itself, where the question of creating a National and State Language is drawing a wide general interest. This is closely bound up with the growth of national freedom movement, with special complication of fighting between the Indian Hindus and Muslims.

Subjectively, these two cover the most

important work in the domain of the Indian languages.

Here are, for example, a few linguistic problems :

(1) Complex verbs in the Indian languages ; (2) Repetition in the Indian languages ; (3) Contemporary literary Indian languages (Hindi and others) ; (4) Languages of the medieval period of India ; (5) The problem of a National Language ; (6) The problem of a State Language ; and (7) General political terminology in Indian languages and others.

Theoretical research work in Indian literature and poetry developed on a somewhat small scale. Here also it is possible to call forth some most important problems : (1) The mutual relation between the old Indian and new Indian literary tradition, (2) Short stories in contemporary Indian literature, (3) Contemporary Indian drama and so on. A few young scholars have taken up the work of research into the writings of the contemporary Hindi writer Prem Chand.

Last year some attention was diverted to Indian poetry. This found expression in the works, *The Poetry of Tulsi Das*, *The Composition of the Ramayana of Tulsi Das*, *Imagery in Indian Literature*, *Imitative Methods in Indian Poetry* and so on.

Besides the publication of scholarly theoretical works dealing primarily with the modern Indian literature, some short essays on the history of Indian literatures have also been published, for example, *New Indian Literature*, *Hindi and Urdu Literature*, etc.

Also a few translations of the most popular productions of the different new Indian languages were done. For example, *Gazeli Galiba* translated from Urdu by Khlyagin-Kondryatev, *Garden and Spring (Bagh-O-Bahar)* of Mir Amman translated by P. Orenskov, *The Story of Gangotri* by Azizuddin Ahmed translated by A.P. Barannikov, translations from Hindi *Premasagar* of Lalu ji Lala and the *Ramayana of Tulsidas* (translator A.P. Barannikov). The translation of the great novel *Premasram*, recently



written by the famous Hindi writer Prem Chand, is nearing completion (translator V.M. Bekrovni). Besides these, translations of the short stories of Prem Chand have been done by other young Indologists, namely P. Khandrov, P. Gladnishev, and others. Besides translation from Urdu and Hindi, a good number of translations were made from Bengali, chiefly the books of Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Young Indologists like T.A. Korzin-Kryvoski, V.A. Novikov, I. Serebryakov, I. Rabinvoch and others took part in these works.

In the Soviet period, the traditional section of Russian Indology began to develop side by side with new Indian philology. During this period Academician F.I. Shcherbatski made his great fundamental researches in Buddhistic philosophy and logic. Academician C.F. Oldenburg in a number of ways continued his researches in ancient Indian literature, folklore, and arts.

E. Obermiller, a student of Academician F.I. Shcherbatski was a talented worker continuing the tradition of the old Indological school. He worked on old Indian languages and had great success in the Buddhistic literature. His premature death prevented the full blooming of his capabilities.

Lecturer V.I. Kalyanov is continuing the tradition of Academician Shcherbatski. He has, in the course of a few years, successfully worked on the translation of the *Mahabharata*. He has just finished the first book of this grand Epic.

The outcome of the collective labour of all the Sanskritologists of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences appears to be a new translation of *Arthashastra*, a politico-economic treatise of ancient India.

The work of translation from the *Rigveda* is continuing. Professor B.A. Larin published a series of translation of hymns from this book.

Sanskritic studies are continuing not only in Leningrad but also in other cities of the Union, especially in Moscow. Here worked

recently the late professor R. Ya. Shor, who published a translation of *Panchatantra* and the tales of *Betal* (*Betala Panchavimshati*). In Kharkov, Professor Ritter made a fine translation of Kalidasa's poem *Meghaduta*. He also translated a good number of Sanskrit manuscripts. In Kiev, the officiating member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, M.Ya. Kalyamvich, made some fine research work in ancient Indian literature. He is now translating the elegant speeches of poet Amara. In Tiflis, Academician G. A. Axble-diani is continuing his Sanskritic studies.

These are the works of Soviet Indologists on ancient and modern Indian philology.

Indian philology which had already made a stable foundation in our country in the pre-Revolutionary time had it further deepened and widened in consequence of the application of the Marxist-Leninist methods of research. History and economics on the other hand seem to be more difficult to our Indologists. Pre-Revolutionary Indologists did not create any tradition in this line, and Soviet historians are working under difficult conditions, combating the unscientific historical conceptions of bourgeois European scholars—conceptions which had wide acceptance in pre-Revolutionary Russia.

As a result of the conflict, there has appeared in Moscow a new school of historians on India, devoted to scientific teaching and conducting research work in the domain of ancient, medieval and modern history of India. A few of them are engaged with the general problem of ancient and modern history (Lecturer D.A. Subkhin, Professor I.N. Reisner, Lecturer Ossipov, A.V. Bolshakov). Others give special attention to medieval period. (Lecturer A.A. Pronin, Candidate Historical Science K.A. Antonov). A third group continues its scientific research activity into the great problem of contemporary India (for example, Professor A.M. Dyakov—into the national question; Lecturer V.V. Balabyshevich—study of workers' movement in contemporary India). A fourth

group works on more specialized problems (for example, Lecturer N.M. Goldberg is busy with the history of mutual relation between Russia and India, Lecturer G.G. Kocharyants with the Problem of ethnology of the Marathas and so on.)

The above shows the growth of Soviet historians on India, who are capable of resolving the various problems of Indian history and the historical problems of distinct periods from the remote antiquity right up to our days.

The economic study of India is still very weakly developed among us. Almost all Indologist-economists work on the general problems of modern India; such workers are Lecturer M.I. Melman, Lecturer I.P. Baikov, and I.I. Kozlov. Professor V.M. Shtein is very active with the economic development of Eastern countries and has given much attention to contemporary India.

The study of Indian arts is making very slow progress. After the death of Academician C.F. Oldenburg there has as yet been no specialist in the history of Indian arts.

In the face of all these shortcomings, which to a great degree appear to be the result of isolation of our country from India and insufficient supply of Indian literature into the Soviet Union, Soviet Indologists have attained great success. This is partly proved by the fact that the last June Session, in Moscow, of the Humanitarian Branch of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, devoted three sittings to the study of India, and a large number of papers were read about the different aspects of Indian culture.

Soviet Indology also included the programme for the study of Gypsies. Up to the October Revolution the study of Gypsies—their language, folklore, ethnography etc. were specially neglected. Only during the Soviet period Gipsy languages began to be studied as one of the languages of the Indian language system, the speakers of which live in the Soviet Union.

In a short time, some preliminary notes

about important Gipsy dialects were prepared, especially about the dialects of south RSFR and Ukraina, which were so far unknown to science. On the basis of these notes, a series of researches were done into Gipsy dialectology (Academician A.P. Barannikov). A grammar was published and other help-books prepared for the study of the Gipsy language. A Gipsy-Russian Dictionary has been published (Professor M.V. Sergievski, A.P. Barannikov), which covers the words of both the settled and nomadic Gypsies. This is the first time that in the study of Gypsies, Ukrainian Gipsy-word-elements have found place in the dictionary.

Summing up these informations about the development of Soviet Indology during the last thirty years we come to the following conclusions:

1. A good number of Soviet Indologists—philologists, historians, and economists sprang up in a short time, who busied themselves with the study of diverse aspects of the Indian languages and the intricate and manifold ways of Indian culture.

2. Thus the difficulty of collecting materials and getting workers to handle them scientifically was overcome to a great degree. This was a great drawback and a cause of suffering for pre-Revolutionary Russian Indologists.

3. Soviet Indologists first turned their attention to the fundamental study of the modern Indian languages. At present we have Indologists, linguists, literary scholars, and specialists of almost all the important languages of Northern India.

The Moscow school of Indologist-historians are growing very successfully and they are tackling many practically important historical problems.

4. A base has thus been created for the consolidation of new Indological tradition of research work and study on different lines.

5. A good deal of original research work has been done in Indian philology and history.

6. Progress is being maintained in the

work of composing Indian dictionaries, specially in the production of a dictionary of the most important language of India, namely, Hindi.

7. The principal Gipsy dialects have been studied.

8. A serious defect of Soviet Indology seems to be an inadequate study of ancient Indian culture and of Southern India—her history, economics, language, and literature. Training specialists for these works is one of the first tasks of Soviet Indology.

At present, when diplomatic relation has been established between the Soviet Union and India, there opens a wide possibility for mutual cultural approach. The Soviet Indologist now stands on the threshold of approaching a great and honourable task of widening and deepening the research work on

Indology.

For this purpose, regular supply of extracts from Indian scientific Indology and artistic literature is of much real and practical utility.

On 15 August 1947 India received Dominion Status ; at the same time she was divided into two countries Hindustan and Pakistan. This division on religious basis was quite unexpected for those who did not follow the developments of Indian history of the last ten years. Two States, one Hindu and one Muslim, were founded ; but this singular division of the country cannot stop the fight of the people of India for full democratic resolution of the Indian problem. One of the most important tasks for our Indologist-historians appears to be the study of the forces taking part in this struggle, which the Soviet people are watching with unchanging interest.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

This issue opens with more unpublished letters of Swami Vivekananda. Two letters in French written by Jules Bois and Swami Vivekananda sitting together are given in the original as well as in translation in the hope that they will be of interest to many of our readers. . . .

The search for an absolute standard of ethics is nearly as old as the history of human speculation. Relativistic philosophy, by its very nature, rules out such a conception, but absolutistic idealism of some kind or other has also been a marked tendency of Western thought from Greek times upto our own days. It has brought to light several basic factors of evil, but has failed satisfactorily to explain the fact of moral responsibility, because it has not been able radically to remove the distinctions between a finite self and the Absolute Spirit. And if sin is constitutional to finite

human nature, as such absolutism cannot but say, then moral responsibility vanishes, at least, in theory. But it remains in fact, and remains without an explanation. It is precisely at this point that Vedanta comes with an explanation that is not only verified by the experience of mystics but has, as a hypothesis, a cogency and truth-value that is superior to the explanation offered by Western Idealism. The above has been very lucidly presented by Prabas Jiban Chaudhuri in his thought-provoking article, *The Problem of Moral Evil: A Vedantic Approach*. . . .

Whether or not it can be called a true philosophy, Existentialism is one of the prevailing intellectual fashions of the contemporary West. Kierkegaard, the Danish theological dialectician of the eighteenth century, is the founder of the movement, though at present Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Jaspers, and Marcel are the chief exponents of this school. The

movement covers a wide range of thought, from theism to atheism, but the element of unity which makes it possible to speak of it as one movement despite such contradictions is supplied by the common formula 'existence is prior to essence,' which means that all existentialists, theists and atheists, start their philosophy with the individual existence of man as a prior fact of experience and the basis of all speculation. It is a revolt against absolutism, and seems to us, at bottom and in one of its aspects, a form of assertion of the modern doctrine of individualism. There are obviously enough other roots. The theistic essays of Kierkegaard in particular have provoked much theological writings in the West in recent times which try to ground the demand for faith and a religious life of surrender to God on the fact of a separate human existence loaded with sin and helplessness. Swami Akhilananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston, USA, examines the basic ideas of Kierkegaard in his very lucid and cogent article on *Existentialism*, and also answers some of the charges against absolutism made by existentialistic dialectic. . . .

Academician A. P. Barannikov is considered to be the greatest living Indologist of Russia. The article on *Soviet Indology* by him appeared originally in the Literature and Language Section of the *Journal of Academy of Sciences, USSR*, Vol. VII. Bk. L of 1948, January-February. It gives a short but complete account of Indological work in Russia right from its beginnings upto 1948. Contrary to general belief Indology did not suffer from lack of interest after the October Revolution of 1917 which established Soviet rule in Russia. Today Indological researches in Russia cover a wider field and receive a greater attention than they did at any time in the past. Though the reason for this is mostly political, closer acquaintance with India is sure to have deeper and more abiding consequences. We feel no doubt that the article will be read with great eagerness and profit by many. One

thing in the article is bound to cause great regret, we mean the reference to the Marxist-Leninist methodology as applied to Indology. This method, after all, rests upon a very weak philosophical dogma, namely, materialism. Material interpretation of history goes a long way to explain certain facts, but it wholly fails to account for the big questions of life and culture. It works within a narrow field. Material conditions have their influence on literature and morals, but to hold matter responsible for all that we think and believe is, in the long run, to put the cart before the horse. Of all subjects Indology is least suitable for the application of this method. We hope, however, that Russian science will be able to follow facts wherever they may lead, without being tied down by a dogma.

The translation has been done from the original by S. S. C. Sengupta.

#### THE PRESENT CRISIS AND OUR EDUCATION

When the last Great War was upon us people felt that the world would settle down to a long period of peace once it was over. The belief was however contrary to all the past lessons of history. In fact all the great wars of the past were only a prelude to more widespread and fundamental changes. Consider, for example, the Napoleonic wars which touched off the nationalistic movements in Europe and the first World War which led on to the Communistic Revolution in Russia and fascist reactions in several countries of Europe. Wars are just part of vast changes having deep historical reasons behind them.

Today, on the morrow of the last global war, we feel that a crisis is in the air. Vast changes are coming. That is certain. The question is whether or not they are going to be catastrophic.

The crisis is felt all over the world, but is viewed differently in the two ideological hemispheres into which mankind at present finds itself divided. Those who are committed

to Communism believe that it is purely economic. In their opinion unity and happiness of mankind are essentially and wholly problems of production and distribution. The whole thing, they would have us believe, hinges on how much we produce, who owns the means of production, and how the total income is shared. All this being settled aright, man will be happy and free and greedless.

In the opposite camp are people, according to whom the trouble at bottom is ethical. The world will not be set right unless we emphasize spiritual values as of central importance to civilization. A spiritual aim must inspire all attempts of social and economic reconstruction.

Men of communistic persuasion make light of religion and morality. To them all means, fair and foul, are welcome, if only they will help to realize their goal of a classless society. They fanatically believe in the dream of a hypothetical humanity, free from all restraint and want and selfishness, and also in the official dogma that the transition to the new order of things cannot but be catastrophic. Violent revolution and class war are inevitable historical necessities. Without them we cannot pass on to the new society where men are free and happy, because ownership of the means of production is joint and distribution of income is equal. Deceit, lying, and murder need not deter the communistic sectarians, for, in the final analysis, all moral values are fleeting notions derived from passing material conditions and class selfishness. They have no deeper roots than greed and economics. Even if a democratic way is open for the achievement of the communistic aim, the communists do not rely on it, on the theory that the change over is bound to be bloody and violent.

In spite of its economic objective which is desirable, Communism as a philosophy, as an economic or political theory, and as a means to the attainment of the socialistic goal, is utterly wrong and bestial. To believe in it

is to believe that villainy is a means to saintliness. This philosophy cannot succeed against the deeper realities of life and higher laws of evolution. We do not believe good will come out of evil. Hatred never produces love, nor violence peace. But this does not mean that a false philosophy may not misguide men into widespread chaos and misery before it is defeated by its own excesses and inherent falsity.

In the past communistic challenges led to fascist reactions, which, in theory and practice, were even more untrue and horrifying. For the time being fascism has been crushed by the combined forces of democracy and communism. True, a host of other factors were involved in the last titanic struggle between peoples, but in the main the fight was one between two opposing ideologies, in a sense in which the first World War was not.

At present communism and democracy face each other in hostile and deadly opposition. It is likely the communistic challenge will grow more serious and provoke a more gruesome fascist response, unless the democracies take positive steps in time to solve the question of poverty and racialism from which all destructive forces in history have generally originated. If the democracies fail to achieve justice in the economic and racial fields, they will inevitably die.

Though the democratic thinkers have awakened to the moral nature of the problem, yet the democracies are still too much tied up with the past. For example, economic and other privileges and powers enjoyed by certain classes and peoples are sought to be selfishly retained. There is often a lip service to equality, without any serious attempt to make it operative beyond a circumscribed area. It has become clear in thought that concentration of economic and political power in a few hands is injurious to the general interest of the community. Yet it is difficult, in practice, to give up power. Capital remains idle, when the prospect of profit is poor. Racialism and

imperialism are not quite dead. Not only our outlook but the established system also requires change. Until we feel that we are of one family and that the happiness or misery of any one of us is of practical concern for all, we shall never build up a peaceful world-order.

All this leads up to the question whether or not democracies can base themselves on a positive spiritual conception which seeks active justice in society in order to restore to man the dignity he has lost and the worth of which they speak in one voice. Change democracies must. The alternative to speedy rational change is violent revolution.

This problem faces mankind all around the globe. Here in India the question is daily assuming a more and more threatening aspect. There is real danger that destructive philosophies may gain ground quickly, despite our pious wishes, and plunge the whole country in chaos and gloom. The prevailing situation often makes one feel that we are on the brink of a volcano.

How can this threat be met? Not by more production and just distribution alone, nor by constant lip-service to Gandhian morality. These alone are not going to help us. We are drifting. Let us be clear on this point. The main reason is that all our efforts and protestations lack a real spiritual basis. If we sincerely believe that our troubles arise not only from wrong-doing but also from wrong-thinking, we should take adequate steps to see that our thinking is correct and rests upon a sure spiritual foundation.

Gandhian morality flowed from Mahatma's belief in God. We cannot cut out God from our life and be moral.

It seems whole generations have been nurtured in towns in a wrong atmosphere. We are going to perpetuate it further by fencing off spiritual questions from our public concerns. The most dangerous thing that can happen to a people is to divorce education from the conception of a right existence.

We expect our universities to give us leaders in society and State. But do our boys imbibe any sense of values from the institutions to which they go? Religious instruction in State schools is going to be a taboo. The reasons given do not convince us. Our belief is that this is the outcome of wrong thinking and ought to be remedied.

Unless we take positive steps to instill into the minds of our students a sense of spiritual values, we shall find increasing manifestation of disorder and immorality among them. The students will one day become leaders of the community. What can we expect of leaders who have not known the reason and value of self-control, or developed an insight into the deeper realities of life? How can a student understand his country without any knowledge of the most marvellous spiritual heritage of its people?

A new word has risen to honour at our independence; we mean secularism. We are constantly harping on it without realizing what effect this negative conception is bound to have on us. We cannot just leave out God or spirituality from our colleges and schools. In this connection we quote below the striking words of Sir Walter Moberly on the subject of religious instruction in colleges from his momentous book *The Crisis in the University*, which is devoted to showing that University education in England has been a failure, since it teaches no Christian values to the students. The effect of leaving out God and spiritual questions from colleges is not so innocent as it might otherwise appear. Says Sir Walter :

'It is a fallacy that by omitting a subject you teach nothing about it. On the contrary you teach that it is to be omitted, and that it is therefore a matter of secondary importance. And you teach that not openly and explicitly, which would invite criticism; you simply take it for granted and hereby insinuate it silently, insidiously and all but irresistibly.'

This is what secularism in education will in effect mean. We do not want that schools

and colleges should be centres of evangelization of particular creeds. What we want is that religion should be put to the test of rationalism. If it cannot survive that test, let it die. Keep out fanaticism and communalism by all means from public concerns, but let us emphasize fundamental values and follow truth wheresoever it may lead.

Banishment of religion from educational institutions is bound to infect national leadership at its source. Education is not for merely earning a living, it must teach the art of living. Some means has to be found out for producing rounded students combining a sense of values with efficiency. If lecture halls are not the right places for teaching the fundamental values of life, these can be imparted in residential halls attached to the colleges and

schools or in some other ways. It will not be difficult to devise ways of doing this if we are really concerned about preserving a spiritual outlook in our society. But if we give our boys an education that has no connection with our liberal spiritual tradition, then woe betide the nation! We do not live without philosophies; the choice is always between a true one and a false one. If we cannot win over our boys to a just and rational philosophy, they will fall a victim to godless Communism. Democracy cannot survive in a secular atmosphere. It derives all its force and justification from a spiritual truth.

Those who ignore the spiritual roots of democracy are insidiously watering the plant of Communism. It is a tragedy that many do not see this.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ESSENCE OF HINDUISM. BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA. Published by the Beacon Press, Boston, USA. Pp. 118. Price \$1.75.

The religious spirit in India expressing itself in a relentless search after the ultimate Reality behind the phenomena, and seeking a solution to the problems of existence, has been growing unhindered for the last 7000 years or more. This spirit growing freely found varied expressions, different people approaching the problem from different points of view, without any obvious unity. Yet this mighty banian with the ramification of its various branches and offshoots has retained an unexplained unity. The necessity for systematizing this unweildly growth, a veritable encyclopaedia of religious quest, had not been felt until recently, for the entire resources of this achievement were never before needed to be called into action to meet a powerful challenge. This challenge came in recent times from the overwhelming tide of materialism sweeping over the world. To meet this challenge it required a great seer to unite the spiritual resources of India and the world, and such a seer was born in the person of Sri Ramakrishna, whose great disciple Swami Vivekananda gave in modern times the earliest and most authoritative expression to this unity. The Swami's special contribution to India is the finding of the unity of Hinduism, the mother of all religious quests, weaving its rich tapestry round certain of its essential

features. Following him several people have worked in this line.

*The Essence of Hinduism* is one such attempt made by Swami Nikhilananda to present to the American public the essentials of Hinduism in his three lectures delivered at different times: (1) Faith for today, (2) Transformation of Western culture into a Spiritual Culture, and (3) Immortality. The author has done the job with remarkable success bringing into focus all the essentials of Hinduism, with appropriate quotations, and stringing them together in a logical sequence. He has presented the subject in the modern context and as applicable to the problems of our own days, especially the providing of a spiritual basis to the self-stultifying material civilization and showing the harmony between science and religion as conceived in Hinduism. 'In simple, clear language this book sets forth the faith which has sustained the structure of Hindu society for the past seven thousand years ... a spiritual philosophy which promotes human solidarity and brotherhood helping fulfil the dream of One World.'

The printing and get up of the book are excellent

THE DOCTRINE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE: BY SRI AUROBINDO. *The Arya Publishing House, College St., Calcutta; Pp. 88, Price Rs. 1/8.*

Passive Resistance is an ancient weapon of the dis-

possessed for the redress of grievances, both individual and collective. In this book one finds mention of the Irish no-rent campaign, the American 'No representation, no taxation' campaign and similar other movements. But it is only during the last five or six decades that it has been discussed and formulated into a doctrine, a science. The adjective *passive* to this resistance which does not brook any injustice is a bit deceptive. It is used only in lieu of armed and violent revolutions.

The book is a collection of articles written by Sri Aurobindo on the subject in the *Vandemataram* during 1907. In these articles he sets out the theory and practice of Passive Resistance ably and boldly. Here one finds

several aspects of the *satyagraha* struggle which Gandhiji was developing in South Africa and which was later on introduced in India. Only there is a slight difference in approach to the problem. Aurobindo does not abjure the use of violent resistance at any cost and under all circumstances. He advocated passive resistance as an expediency, that is to say, as a method suitable to Indian conditions and the temperament of the people. But the writings recognize the use of any method whatever, if necessary and practicable, which would lead to the goal of independence. The doctrine is conceived here in a practical and constructive way with a high moral background.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, VIZAGAPATAM

The 114th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated here on 1st March last. There were Vedic chantings and special *puja* in the morning and discourses on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in the evening. On Sunday the 6th March a public function was held in the evening in the Ashrama premises, when Sri Nanjundiah, Port Administrative Officer, presided. After prayer, Dr K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar of the Andhra University, Shri K. V. Ratnam, Advocate, and Swami Sarvagatananda, Secretary of the Ashrama, spoke on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. There were large congregations on both the occasions.

Dr Iyengar depicted the historical background of Sri Ramakrishna's appearance on the Indian scene. India had once been in the vanguard of civilization; but in course of time the successive invasions and conquests wrought a disastrous change. Slowly, however, the countermovement began in the nineteenth century. Western education revived the dormant critical impulse and stimulated the desire for new creations. But this new awakening was assuming the form of a surrender to the West and the forcible suppression of India's own soul. It was at this critical juncture that Sri Ramakrishna was born to redeem the soul and make it live. Unique among saints, he was a God-intoxicated man, in whom divinity and humanity were equally manifest. His appeal was always to the lotus of the human heart to open out and dedicate itself to the service of God in

man, Shiva in Jiva. Dr Iyengar concluded by saying that the torch Sri Ramakrishna lighted at Dakshineswar has carried its light and life-giving beams literally to the end of the world, while his mission is being fulfilled by the band of noble souls who worthily bear his name and spread his message.

Sri K. V. Ratnam, who spoke in Telugu, emphasized God-realization as the greatest aim of life. As the *Upanishads* have so beautifully expressed it, our senses are all directed outwards and a few bold ones turn them inward to realize the Self and *amritatvam*. The distractions of modern life are many, and they give us little chance for meditation. Large numbers of highly intelligent and capable scientists devote their time to the study of the external world, but few think of the Spirit. Hence there is need to emphasize the importance of the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and God-realization, and Sri Ramakrishna did this by his life and teachings, which appeal to all, irrespective of their station in life and religious beliefs.

Swami Sarvagatananda explained how Sri Ramakrishna's teachings on the harmony of religions are especially needed in India. Though the *Upanishads* had taught it long ago, it was left to him to establish it by realization. Every one can live in harmony with his neighbours and the real spirit of live and let live will be possible only when his life and teachings are fully and widely understood.

The Chairman spoke on the great part played by the disciples and followers of Sri Ramakrishna in the spreading of his noble ideas. The proceedings concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair by Dr Perraju.

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