



VOL. LXVII

NOVEMBER 1962

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
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Editorial Office
MAYAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS

Publication Office
5 DEHI ENTALLY ROAD, CALCUTTA 14

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

NOVEMBER 1962

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:o:—

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Belur Math, 1932 (Continued)

Mahapurushji used to warn his attendants that it would not do only to be engaged in serving the *guru* ; they would have to undertake spiritual practices as well. And he used to warn them that anyone who would neglect his spiritual practices and would spend his time merely in the service of saintly people and living in association with them, might often become puffed up with pride and egotism, thinking themselves superior to others, just because of these advantages they had over them. One day, at dead of night, he said to an attendant : 'Look here, it is good that you are serving me. It is only out of the inestimable mercy of the Master that he has been making you serve one of his sons. But mind you, my son, you must carry on spiritual practices along with this. You will understand what the Master really was, only when you carry on your *japa*, meditation, prayer, etc. regularly. You will court failure by thinking of us as mere human beings—have this fully in mind. To make this idea of divinity fully effective, you have to under-

take strenuous spiritual exercises. One is vouchsafed the divine mood when one's mind becomes purified through meditation on God. Though we have seen the Master, lived with him, and have been blessed by him, still what a series of difficult spiritual practices he made us undergo ! Could we, even ourselves, understand at the first instance that he was God and had come down to this world to save it ? Could we recognize him as such ? Gradually, through spiritual practice and insight, that knowledge has become permanent. At the same time, it is true, of course, that nothing has been achieved without his grace, though it is a fact that his grace does descend when one implores him piteously, and one seeks for him earnestly. I have realized by stages that he is God Himself, none other than the Lord of all the gods and of the whole universe ; he has revealed to me his real nature out of his own grace.

'Undertake *japa* at dead of night. If you make your *japa* at dead of night, you will have the result very soon, and your whole being will be filled with joy. The bliss will

be so deep, indeed, that you will feel no impulsion to leave your *japa*. You have to keep awake at any rate, for my service. Sit down during this time for your *japa*. After all, you have not to work for me all the time, it's once in a while that I want help. So here is a great opportunity; engage yourself fully in *japa*. Do you understand that? Don't let your time pass idly, my son. You have to be fully occupied in calling on him, it won't do to be half-hearted. Whatever you do in this respect, you must do with your whole mind; then only you will get joy and happiness. That's why the Master sang: "Dive deep, my mind, with the name of Kālī, into the fathomless water of the sea of your heart, which is the repository of jewels." One seldom derives any joy from a work, unless one can become fully engrossed in it. God looks at the heart, at the sincerity of a man; He does not keep count of the time. Besides, when one undertakes *japa* and meditation regularly, one gets one's mind purged of impurities thereby, and that mood becomes fixed in the mind. One has to practise daily and constantly. In the *Gītā*, the Lord declares: "The mind can be controlled, O Arjuna, through practice and dispassion." Go on calling on him daily with piteous imploration and tears; and you will find that the Power of Brahman, the coiled up energy in you, will be awakened—the road to the Bliss that is Brahman will be opened. If once that Mother, one with Brahman Itself, becomes propitious, one has nothing more to worry about. In the *Candī*, it is said: "It is that Blissful Mother Herself who, when favourably disposed, becomes the cause of people's salvation." It is She Herself who, having become propitious, grants the boon of freedom for men. She is but ever ready to grant; but who, indeed, is eager to accept? She grants everything—devotion, freedom, and all—if only one prays earnestly.

'You left home with the aspiration of realizing God. That's the aim of life; and you must not forget that main purpose. Have

the Master seated in your heart through strenuous effort, constant *japa* and meditation, continuous prayer and remembrance; then you will be granted pure joy, and you will have a happy life. All bodies have to die. Our bodies, too, are not everlasting, after all. It's already old enough, and it may fall off any day—then you will feel so disconsolate. But if, through *japa* and meditation, you can see your chosen deity you will find that the *guru* is not different from the deity, he is seated for ever in your very heart. The *guru* does not cease to exist even when this gross body is no more. I tell you all this, because I love you. My only prayer is that you should be ensured with all that is really good. . . .

'Now that I am ill, you live near me, serving me day and night. That's good enough. But you will be greatly-deluded, if you come to think that you alone are serving me and thereby achieving something very great; do you understand that? Do you think that you do something extraordinary by fetching something for me and nursing this body a little? That's not it. Somebody may be very far away, doing the Master's work with all sincerity; that, too, is a service to us. For the Master is the Soul of my soul. Even those who live thousands of miles away, working heart and soul in the Master's cause, and have established the Master in their hearts with the help of spiritual practices, are very dear to me; they are serving me only. I am happy when the Master is happy through service. "The whole universe becomes content when He is content." By doing the Master's work, they achieve greater results than by serving their *guru*.'

In the morning, when most of the inmates of the monastery had left after making their obeisance to Mahapurushji, a monk told him of the restlessness of his mind and the consequent dejection. His imploration moved Mahapurushji, who said: 'Why should you be afraid, my son? Continue at His door

taking shelter with Him; He never disappoints a supplicant.'

'All my time has been spent in vain', bemoaned the monk. 'I have not yet seen God, I haven't got peace of mind. At times, complete loss of faith assails the mind; I begin to doubt even the invaluable instruction I have received from you and others.'

This made Mahapurushji's face turn red. With great warmth he said: 'Look here, my son, if the Master is true, we too are true. Whatever I say is nothing but the truth; we have not come to cheat people. If we sink, you too will sink with us; but, by his grace, we have realized that we shall never sink, nor will you.'

As Mahapurushji remained cabined in his room, an attendant had the duty of keeping him informed of everything concerning the monastery after moving about the precincts personally and inquiring about the health of the inmates, the cattle, and other matters of importance. Mahapurushji used to receive his reports in the afternoon. One day, when the attendant came to him with the report, he found him seated alone in an indrawn state. His eyes were half-closed, as though in an effort to keep it open to visualize the outside. Even though the attendant stood in his front, he did not make the usual enquiry; it seemed as if he was not aware of his presence. Noticing him in such an abstract mood, the attendant moved aside. After a long interval had passed thus, when Mahapurushji began casting his look around, the attendant moved to his front and began reporting as usual. Then Mahapurushji said: 'Look here, this world has no existence to me at all: Brahman alone exists. It is only for the sake of keeping the mind on the normal plane, that I talk and inquire about things.' With this, he reassumed his former mood, and did not care to hear any report that day.

One day, he told us of a vision he had about Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda), when living with the Master at the Cossipore garden-house. 'Well, a very strange phenomenon

occurred while living with Swamiji at the garden-house', he related. 'In those days, we all slept together side by side, in a room downstairs; for we had not enough beddings worth mentioning. We had a big mosquito curtain which we put up, and all took shelter under it. One night, I slept near Swamiji; there were Shashi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) and some others as well. Suddenly, I became awake to find the inside of the whole curtain flooded with a brilliant light. Swamiji had been by my side; but now I could not find him there; instead, there slept a number of Śivas—all of the age of seven or eight years, without clothes and white in colour, and their heads covered with matted hair. It was the light emanating from their bodies that lit up the place. As I looked on, I became dumbfounded by the sight. I could not understand anything at first. I thought it was a hallucination; so I rubbed my eyes and again looked at it—there slept the Śivas, sure enough, just as before. So I was in a fix and sat up with wonder; I did not lie down again. Besides, I was afraid that I might touch them with my feet unconsciously during my sleep. So I spent the whole night in meditation. When the day dawned, I found Swamiji sleeping just as before. When I told him everything, he laughed heartily.

'Long afterwards, while reading a hymn to Vīreśvara Śiva, I discovered in a *mantra* about meditation on him that it contained a description just like that; and then I knew that my vision was quite true. Swamiji was nothing but that in reality. He was born as a part of that Śiva, and that's why I saw like that.'

Mahapurushji's health was declining steadily. He could not even move near about his room upstairs, leave alone walking on the monastery ground. When walking about upstairs, he needed somebody's help. At that time, he said one day: 'As the activity outside diminishes, the activity inside increases. For the mine of the supreme Bliss is nowhere

else but within. For the present, it will go on like that; that's how the Master has ordained.' Often enough, he would sing: 'The path for death is obliterated; my mental doubts are gone' etc. Now and then, he would also talk about visions etc. It was just evening one day; the evening services in the shrine had not yet commenced and the lamps had just been lighted in the rooms. Mahapurushji had been sitting silently in his room facing the Master. Suddenly, he said: 'Quick, give me some ashes brought from the Viśvanātha temple (of Varanasi); and spread a silken sheet on my bed. For here is the Master, and here also is Mahādeva.' Saying thus, he entered into a deep meditation, which lasted long into that night.

On another afternoon, he said: 'Swamiji and Maharaj came just now and they said: "Come along, brother Tarak (i.e. Mahapurushji)." Did you not see them? They had been standing here just in front.'

Some inscrutable meaning underlies even the smallest efforts of the saints who have realized the Self. When ordinary mortals judge their actions by their own standards and arrive at some conclusion on that basis, very often, it does not tally with facts. Nearly, from the year 1912 onward, when Mahapurushji had an attack of dysentery, he became very strict about his diet. His lunch consisted of some rice, ordinary vegetable soup, and boiled vegetables. Swami Saradananda called this soup 'Mahapurusha's soup' humourously. The night meal was equally simple and small in quantity. But, for a whole year before he was attacked with paralysis in 1933, he would often be asking his attendants for some special kinds of food. This created a surprise in the minds of the inmates of the monastery. This seemed all the more odd, when the doctors also wanted him to live mostly on liquid diet. One morning, he said after a long silence that he felt a hankering for a particular dish of which the Master had spoken. As the dish was rather rare, it was obtained with

some difficulty from the other side of the Gaṅgā from a Calcutta market. After tasting just a little bit, he remarked with a little smile: 'The desire came; so I tasted a little. The Master used to say that one should finish one's petty desires by actual experience.' And then, he added with a hearty laughter: 'Who, indeed, knows, my boy, that one shall not have to be born again for the fulfilment of such a petty desire?'

Just a few days before his paralytic stroke, he expressed a desire for a ripe mango. Mangoes of a good variety had not come to the market even then. So, after a long search in Calcutta, a few mangoes were brought for him. He sent all the mangoes, except one, for offering to the Master. Then, he ordered the attendant to squeeze out the juice of the remaining one and give it to him at meal time. He was then suffering from asthma, and the attendants were much apprehensive of the bad effect the mango juice would have on his health. So, after great deliberation, the chief attendant made bold to remind him of the warning of the doctor. But Mahapurushji said with some determination: 'I say, I shall have it.' When the mango juice was, however, offered to him, he just tasted it by dipping his finger into the juice and remarked: 'Here, I have tasted it. I had a desire to taste mango juice, so I just put a little bit in the mouth. Do you think I eat out of greediness? How can anybody else understand why I ask for diverse things to eat?' Then he said with some warmth: 'He comes to caution me about food! You know, I can leave this body this moment if I will, what to talk of this petty food! Was it for nothing that Swamiji gave me the name Mahapurusha?'

The only son of a woman devotee was seriously ill. When all kinds of treatment failed and the doctors declared that the case was hopeless, the woman came to Mahapurushji in her despair, and prayed piteously: 'Father, kindly take pity and just say that my son will recover.' Mahapurushji heard

everything in silence. In reply to the woman's repeated imploration, he said: 'The boy will come round if the Master wants it to be so.' But the boy died a few days later. The woman came again and wailed before him thus: 'You said, sir, that he would recover. But he is gone. With whom shall I live now?' It was a piteous and unending lamentation. At last, Mahapurushji consoled her: 'Look here, my daughter, I knew that the boy would not live; but you are his mother. How could I tell a mother that her son would not survive? That's why I was forced to say that he would recover, if the Master wanted it to be so. But don't wail, my child. I assure you that the Master will take pity on you and will wipe away the sorrows of your heart. Now onward, you should consider the Master himself as your son. He will remove all your wants out of his mercy, he will grant you heavenly peace.' The hope and consolation brought solace to the woman. She departed with peace, and in later life, she had her life spiritually transformed.

One day, at the Belur Math, K— Maharaj complained to Mahapurushji against a certain *brahmacārin*. After hearing it all, Mahapurushji remarked: 'Look here K—, the Master used to talk of "looking for the sea in a drop of it". Not only did he talk like that, his whole outlook also accorded with that. Were it not so, could we ourselves have found shelter under him? We found refuge with him, just because he drew us to himself out of his mercy, by ignoring all our faults. And who, indeed, is entirely free from fault? All who have come here have done so with a view to becoming full and faultless; not that they have come without any fault at all. As for those little defects, they will be cured by the Master's grace.

If one can but somehow continue under his care, he will set everything right, out of his own mercy.'

Not convinced by this, K— Maharaj suggested again: 'It will be good, if you call him to you and give him a severe warning. What you might have heard about him before may not be true after all. What I tell you is as a result of a thorough enquiry.' That, suddenly, made Mahapurushji very serious and he said with firmness: 'Well K—, do you assume to have greater insight than myself? By the Master's grace, we can understand a man at a single glance, we can see him through and through—inside and outside. The Master trained us variously. How can I tell you of all that? These things cannot, in fact, be told to anybody. We know well enough what sort of a man a certain person is, and when he will have perfection or not. A man is not cured simply by advice or scolding. Change the man's mental tendencies through your spiritual force, if you can.' Noticing the seriousness and the general attitude Mahapurushji had assumed, K— Maharaj folded his hands in supplication and laying his head at his feet, said: 'Sir, I was ignorant; please don't be offended with me, kindly excuse me.' Then Mahapurushji added: 'If you would cure anybody, you pray earnestly for him; pray to the Master for him. A man's mental tendency can take a turn for the better in a trice, if only he is pleased to have it so.' When K— Maharaj left, he went on talking as if in a soliloquy: 'None, who has taken shelter under the Master, is so insignificant. All are children of high parentage—be they senior monks or new probationers. It is as a result of merit earned in many previous births that one finds shelter here.'

FREEDOM AND PROGRESS

'Freedom' is a time-honoured word and it has been adored by all human beings. The saint wants freedom as much as the wicked aspires for it. The old want freedom as much as the young try to get it. Men and women, all over the world, want freedom. Only those that have willingly blindfolded themselves, as Victor Hugo once said, will not want freedom. Swami Vivekananda says: 'Freedom is the one goal of nature, sentient or insentient; and consciously or unconsciously, everything is struggling towards that goal.' We want freedom, because we feel that it will bring progress and happiness to us.

But, though freedom is the common quest of all men, there is a lot of difference about the conception of it from man to man, from group to group, from race to race. And this is only natural. The ideal is shaped by the mental condition of a man—his sense of values and consciousness of needs. For a starving man, food is the only thing he wants, whereas the same thing, even of the best kind, is detestable and a cause of resentment and grief to a man who has just over eaten in a luxurious banquet. Same is the case with our idea of freedom, with our conception of happiness, with our picture of progress.

What constitutes happiness or progress, may be the question. As we have just now said, the answer to this question will differ in various cases according to the needs they are faced with and in the circumstances they are struggling in. But one thing is certain. Though an essential condition for all healthy life, freedom from material wants alone does not constitute true happiness. Christ's words that 'man does not live by bread alone' are a great truth, nay, the only truth in the ultimate analysis of human wants. Mere political freedom or freedom from hunger or poverty does not guarantee real progress

or happiness for a society. History is replete with instances, when people have revolted against the government of their own country, by their own men. Discontent and restlessness have been a common disease of the wealthy and materially well-to-do societies. Political and economic conditions have, of course, much bearing on the life, character, and mental make-up of a people, and their value and importance cannot be ruled out. But, at the same time, we cannot deny the fact that there are greater considerations and stronger factors which make a people really happy and progressive. Just as only political freedom cannot, under all circumstances, make a people secure against economic wants and competition, in the same way, economic prosperity cannot bring to man so many other factors necessary to make him happy. A really happy society is, essentially, that in which men not only live comfortably, but also in mutual amity and love with one another. The progressiveness of a society should necessarily be judged by the number of men of that society living not only in conformity with law and order and free from the imposition of the clauses of the penal codes, but who are also just and righteous. Apart from political and economic freedom, every human society, for its real peace and prosperity, needs some higher ideal which will provide for its inner strength and integrity. This ideal must not be anything less than the realization of his divine nature. This requires the manifestation of the nobler aspects of human nature to have conscious play in social behaviour. 'That society is the greatest', said Swami Vivekananda, 'where the highest truths become practical.' Unless this ideal is kept in view and efforts are made to encourage the nobler aspirations of human life to have a free play in society, it will degenerate into a State, where man

would only have creature comforts and would never rise above them.

II

Before the material sciences had their sway on the minds of men and turned them outward, the values given to various activities in human life were judged, more or less, according to the extent they helped the moral growth of man. We do not mean to say thereby that immorality is an invention of the material sciences or that men are no more concerned with moral advancement. What we stress on is this that spiritual values were given priority over everything else. Specially in India, the entire structure of its life—social or political—was built with a view to help it go towards the realization of Truth. Truth was the foundation (as it really is even now) of all sciences—even the science of finite, material things. The Indian sages, who were the makers of the social codes, had therefore regulated the details of a man's daily life, his domestic, social, political, and religious duties in such a way that he might gradually travel towards Truth. In every art and science, there was a conscious effort to help a man make for his goal from different stages of his development and from different angles of vision. Even in mundane affairs, the aim was to prepare the ground for the fruition of the spirit of man. And the basic attitude thought necessary for this end was that one must be free from the overpowering clutches of his narrow selfishness. The spirit of renunciation, therefore, was to be cultivated in varying degrees in the course of a man's march through life, and sacrifice was the method prescribed for its attainment. '*Tena tyaktena bhunñthā*'—Do thou enjoy through renunciation—was the injunction. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, says that it is on the principle of sacrifice (*yajña*) that this creation has been made, and it is on this principle that this creation is to be sustained. The *Taittirīya Samhitā* says, '*Yajña* (sac-

rifices) is Viṣṇu Himself'. In a Sanskrit verse, we read: 'For the family, sacrifice the individual, for the community the family, for the country the community, and for the spirit the whole world.' This sacrifice was not confined to formal rituals only, but to the development and culture of the spirit of sacrifice of the lower self in man. As a matter of fact, all ritualistic or formal sacrifices were only devices to foster this spirit and to strengthen it. It is freedom from selfishness. This is necessary for higher realization and freedom of spirit that is the ultimate aim of human life. To protect this spiritual outlook of life, a clan of people were specially raised up who were given leisure and opportunity to cultivate the spiritual ideals of purity, wisdom, and self-denial. It was thought necessary that such men should be made free from the petty worries of daily needs, so that they might devote more time to the culture of higher values and might act as the torch-bearers of good life and Truth and guide the different limbs of the social organism to move and develop themselves in a way conducive to the attainment of that good life. They, who were the Brāhmaṇas, the men more concerned with the realization of Brahman—the supreme Reality—were to live a life of exemplary unselfishness, free from the narrow considerations for personal gains, so that they could look to the best interests of the society from a higher and unattached, non-personal point of view. These men were held in high honour, and even kings bowed down before their wise counsels. The economic, social, political, and other aspects of life were thus co-ordinated to subordinate themselves to the supreme demand of the spiritual ideal. Dr. Radhakrishnan observes: 'This principle saved the State from becoming a mere military despotism. The sovereign is not identified with the interests of the governing classes, but with those of the people at large. While Dharma represents the totality of the institutions by which

the commonweal is secured and the life of the people is carried on, government is the political organization which secures for all the conditions under which the best life can be developed. The State did not include the other institutions, trade guilds, family life, etc. which were allowed freedom to manage their own affairs. It did not interfere with arts, science, and religion, while it secured the external conditions of peace and liberty necessary for them all.' The duty of the State, which meant practically the monarch in those days, was to look to the welfare of its people first. This was also an outlook of *yajña* or spirit of sacrifice that the king had to foster to be a righteous ruler. Manu, the great Hindu lawgiver, says that the ruler of a State shall be endowed with a high kind of spiritual and temporal education and shall be of a self-denying and chivalrous temperament, free from lust, greed, pride, and other vices, ever eager and ready to protect and defend his people, even at the cost of his life. As the main object before the monarch or the State should be the protection of righteous laws and commonweal of the people of all classes, the social life would also develop in a way as to make it happy, prosperous, and progressive, giving full scope for the cultivation of the principles of piety and spiritual upliftment. Art, culture, industry, business, agriculture, and other occupations meant for enrichment of material and aesthetic life of the society were also encouraged in the proper places, and the average man was then allowed to enjoy the best fruits of such a co-ordinated social organization. When the spirit of such sacrifice and service becomes the pivot of social forces, most of the differences and conflicts that exist between the ruler and the ruled, between the classes and the masses, between the castes and the creeds, quietly disappear of their own accord. The darker forces that destroy the peace of society are held back of themselves. The main principle then becomes co-operation and

assistance, though healthy competition between progressive things and opposition to evil exist. The society then becomes like a big family of fellow beings. What we have said is only to show that mere material welfare, mere political organization, or mere cultural achievements cannot be of real help to guarantee happiness to man, unless they are based and shaped on the principle of higher values, and not till they are aids to the achievement of the freedom of man from his bondage of cravings of animal existence to the wider life of the Spirit.

III

'Renunciation and service are the national ideals of India. Intensify her in these channels and the rest will take care of itself' exhorted Swami Vivekananda. Once again, we say that economics, politics, commerce, industry, etc. are not unnecessary, but rather essential things for any good and prosperous society. They are not ends in themselves, but only means for a higher attainment, which is the acquisition of a healthy spirit of sacrifice and service, leading to the joy of the Spirit. Economic plans, however well thought out they might be, cannot be worked out successfully, unless they are worked out by men of integrity and spirit of selfless service. The social codes and State laws, however strict and thorough they might be, cannot prevent men from committing theft, murder, and such other anti-social acts. It is some other inspiration that can make men really good and noble. Here comes the need of religion, and what is religion but cultivation of this spirit of renunciation and service? This is the end and aim of all religious codes all over the world—though particular emphasis has been laid on it in India by different religious systems and philosophical thoughts. The virtue of self-denial and self-sacrifice is a mighty force in itself. It inspires the most heroic deeds and gives a new meaning to all actions and behaviour. That society is really blessed in which a good number of men are

inspired by this spirit of self-sacrifice and can forego their own interests for the sake of the good of others, the baser for the sake of the nobler, the unrighteous for the sake of the righteous. Social good can hardly be achieved, if lesser demands of life are not renounced. Greatest service to mankind was done by men who had this spirit of renunciation in them. Śrī Rāma sacrificed his throne and royal comforts to keep the dignity and honour of truth. Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave up the throne of Mathura and installed his enemy's father on it. Buddha is said to have refused to enjoy the supreme joy of *nirvāna* till a single being remained in misery. Instances are not rare in the history of India and elsewhere, where men of wisdom and divine knowledge undertook the burden of duties and responsibilities for the welfare of their less fortunate brethren. Such men felt, as is expressed in an inspiring verse of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*: 'I desire not the supreme state of bliss with its eight perfections, nor the cessation of rebirth. May I take up the sorrow of all creatures who suffer and enter into them so that they may be made free from grief.' Jesus, also, taught his disciples in the same strain: 'Whosoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.'

The doctrine of service also is closely associated with the principle of renunciation. It is the positive aspect of it. It solves beyond measure the universal problem of suffering. 'It is', in the words of Shakespeare (of course, in another context), 'twice blessed. It blesseth him who gives and him who takes.' It requires no ritual, no dogma, no belief to be followed except the conviction—that, by serving others, one only serves his own divine Self. It should transcend the considerations of race, colour, or faith, for this is the religion of man. This doctrine of service, though it does not need a ritual for its performance, or dogma for its support, is the essence of all religions. H. G. Wells, in one of his books says: 'The desire for service, for subordina-

tion, for permanent effect, for an escape from the distrustful pettiness and mortality of the individual life, is the underlying element in every religious system.' If we analyse the various spiritual exercises and practices, as inculcated in different religions, we shall find that self-abnegation is the very essence of religious life. Swami Vivekananda says: 'Selfishness is the chief sin, thinking of ourselves first. He who thinks "I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and I will possess everything", he who thinks "I will get to heaven before others, I will get *mukti* before others" is the selfish man. The unselfish man says, "I will be last, I do not care to go to heaven, I will go to hell, if, by doing so, I can help my brothers". This unselfishness is the test of religion. . . . Unselfishness is God.' This unselfishness, this self-abnegation is attained through selfless service, backed by the spirit of renunciation. So long as the little self dominates in man, Truth can never shine. It is freedom from the idea of narrowness of selfish thoughts that invests one with the joy of life eternal. It gives one a catholic outlook on men and things.

IV

We started by saying that only political or economic freedom was not enough to ensure true progress and happiness of a people. Men must be inspired by higher values of life and for the acquisition of these, it is necessary that men develop in them the spirit of real religion, which consists in the culture of the spirit of 'renunciation and service'. People level charges against religion, saying that it makes men indifferent to the woes of the world. They take religion for a device invented by some wily, intelligent, privileged fellows to serve their own interests: To keep the poor in poverty, to keep the illiterate in ignorance, to keep the masses in degradation, and to exploit the weak. But the truth is something different, though it is true that there have been and there are people who

have carried on—or do so even now—selfish pursuits in the name of, and under the sacred garb of, religion. But this has been the case with many other good things, such as liberty, equality, and fraternity. How these noble ideas have been manipulated and misused in recent history need not be described in detail. A bad man makes a Satan of God also. It is only for the prevention of this unfortunate way of things that religion must come to the rescue of mankind. 'Religion has made man what he is and will make this human animal a God. That is what religion can do. Take religion from human society and what will remain? Nothing but a forest of brutes.'

All religions were founded by men of wisdom who gained it after immense suffering and intense self-sacrifice. Love and service were the keynotes of their success. They were no cheats or tricksters who had to gain their personal ends by befooling the people. Even if we leave aside their spiritual realizations and divine messages, we cannot deny that it was they who were the greatest inspirers of social good and material welfare of human beings. The foundations of human society would have crumbled into dust but for their precepts and examples. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Caitanya, and others were all lovers of mankind, and what they did and said for the good of the world is yet the rich legacy of mankind, inspiring it to make supreme sacrifices and perform

noble deeds for public good. It is only sad that people cannot put into wider practice what they did and said. If the principles they laid down could have been worked out in the life of the human race, only with more genuineness and sincerity, many of its sorrows could have been decreased and much of its load of miseries lightened. The alleviation of human sufferings by means of legislations and economic schemes cannot go far enough, unless the spirit of renunciation and service inspires our execution of those schemes. It is only to bring home this fact of facts to our minds—we who are engaged in the task of elimination of the evils of poverty, illiteracy, and social inequities—that we say once again that what we want is not only political freedom for our real progress and happiness, but also the establishment in life of piety and righteousness, which is the true guarantee for peace and progress. To work by overlooking this basic necessity of human life would be to build on sand. But we fervently believe that here, in India at least, where we have a rich heritage of glorious past, sustained by the higher values of life, we shall be able to see clearly and shall build a society where love, brotherhood, equality, and liberty will prevail, and where the practice of the nobler qualities of life will lead man forward and onward towards the true goal of life—which is to attain the freedom of Spirit, the Freedom divine.

WALT WHITMAN AND VEDĀNTA—2

BY SRI P. SAMA RAO

IV

Only he who has attained the great synthesis—his Self-realization—is silent and does not contradict himself. As long as he is conscious of his duality and expressive of his own divinity, apart from that of the qualityless

infinite of the Absolute, he certainly contradicts himself, for the diversity of creation would have left its impress upon him.

Whitman's inimitable humility cannot more adequately be described than in his own statement: 'I bequeath myself to the dirt

to grow from the grass I love ; if you want me again, look for me under your boot-soles' (*Song of Myself*, Sec. 51). He is also aware that, with all his superior inclinations and intellectual propensities, he is not lesser the sinner and imperfect than others. He finds in his cosmic experience that the glories of heaven and of earth are balanced and 'strung like beads' on smallest sights and hearings of his, during his walk in the streets or in the passage over the river. But yet, he deems himself the equal of all and sundry, because :

'It is not upon you alone the dark patches
fall,
The dark threw its patches down upon me
also,
The best I had done seem'd to me blank
and suspicious'

—*Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*, Sec. 6.

And his best thoughts were, in reality, meagre. As admitted by him, he 'too knitted the old knot of contrariety, had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes, . . . and was the snake, the wolf, the hog', . . . and lived the same life 'with the rest' (*ibid.*). Withal, we are conscious that Whitman is still the superior, because he has transcended his earthiness and pierced through the thickest veils of illusion. It is the unlimited love of others that sees perfection in them too, for the reason that they also furnish their own 'parts toward eternity, great or small—furnish, . . . parts towards the soul' (*ibid.*, Sec. 9).

Ferrying over waters is, indeed, a beautiful image of Whitman for the pilgrimage of the Soul toward its Haven, the Supreme ; for God is the real home of all qualities and their final culmination, too, into the non-quality of his absoluteness.

The real contact, physical and mental, with people, the interchange of ideas among them, and the silent contemplation of the common essence among them all, are aids for fusion of one into the other, and the discovery of the same divinity reposing in them all. Therefore, in a high sense, their consensus is divine.

Whitman has realized this truth and declared :

'Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatsoever is said or done returns at
last to me . . .
I speak the password primaeval, I give the
sign of democracy,
By God ! I will accept nothing which all
cannot have . . . on the same terms'

—*Song of Myself*, Sec. 24.

Here is the Unity of all creation simply told !

No one needs permission to look at the open skies nor travel along the open road. Both are limitless in their own way. One stands for the Beyond, and the other to the here (Earth). It is a truism in Advaita that, before final dissolution, one has to go a long long way, cross gross and subtle, and yet subtler, planes of existence shedding all qualities and attachments one by one, rising, as it were, from the concrete to the most abstract. This process is literally an evaporation or etherealization from the material to the immaterial, from the tangible into the most intangible, picking up on the way many a spiritual lesson from the myriad-faced Nature who holds the secret of Absolute-becoming. Thus Whitman's songs of the open road, of joys, of the Universal, of the answerer, of the rolling earth, of the redwood-tree, etc. are all inter-related. The one latent message common to them all is the shedding of duality in the bargain ; or rather, they indirectly hint at recipes for becoming selfless, and soulful of the Divinity at the farthest Beyond ; for, the 'Open Road' 'is not all that is here ; . . . much unseen is also here ; . . . and its paths worn in the irregular hollows, . . . are latent with unseen existences'. Trudging the weary way here of the earth, crossing the hurdles of the deceptive *ṣaḍgūṇas* (six qualities), experiencing the joys of such crossing, answering for oneself one's own doubts, and finally laved in the waters of Bliss, one cannot but sing one's own song of the Universal in the manner of either the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, or *Avadhūta-*

Gītā,¹⁹ or the *Aṣṭāvakra-Gītā*, or *Nirvāṇa-Śaṭkam*,²⁰ or *Vijñānanaukā*,²¹ or the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna or of Sri Ramana. Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*, *Passage to India*, *Song of the Universal*, *Song of Joys*, etc. are in their strain. Situated as we are on this earth 'that is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first, but contains divine things well envelop'd', there cannot be any other springboard for a jump into the Beyond. Whitman confirms this when he says :

'In this broad earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the
slag,
Enclos'd and safe within its central heart,
Nestles the seed perfection'

—*Gliding over All.*

Whitman, therefore, takes to the 'Open Road', 'lighthearted, healthy, free' unsolicitous of any good fortune, strong and content in the belief that he is himself good fortune. This content partakes of the knowledge that life on earth is itself sufficient preparation for a voyage to the Beyond. He declares that he has nothing to desire, inasmuch as—in R. Browning's words—'God's in his Heaven, and all's right with the world'. Whitman affirms this faith in the above, when he declares in his *To Think of Time* (Secs. 6-8):

'What will be will be well, for what is is
well, ...

The earth is not an echo, man and his life
and all the things of his life are well
considered, ...

The threads that were spun are gathered,
the weft crosses the warp, the pattern
is systematic.'

On this basis, he evolves his own theory of *karma* (*prārabdha*) and holds that the laws of the past, the present, and the future and that of transmutation cannot be eluded. He has it that the 'purpose and essence of known life, the transient, is to form and decide identity for the unknown life, the permanent'.

In the divine scheme of creation, 'the earth and the minutest thing upon it', together with what is called the 'good and the bad' are all perfectly designed, because everything without exception has an 'eternal soul'. Life, therefore, teems with immortality although the appearances of its diverse parts are transient. The divine scheme of creation itself is exquisite and is for immortality, because 'the nebulous float is for it, and the cohering is for it, ... and all preparation is for it—and identity is for it, and life and materials are altogether for it'. In this connection, it may be said, too, that the Lord is *raso vai saḥ*. Whitman does not, therefore, wish 'the constellations any nearer, because they suffice for those who belong to them'.²² He celebrates the 'Open Road' as he regards it as a part of himself, 'loos'd of limits and imaginary lines ... (his) own master total and absolute'. He realizes in his tramp that 'the east and the west, ... and the north and the south' are his, and that he has grown 'larger, better than' he thought, holding, however, so much of goodness, beauty, and infinity in his hands.²³ He is here made to feel that wisdom is of the Soul, which 'is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof'—the wisdom that is 'not finally tested in schools'. Here was the realization for him, the 'realization of the past, the future, majesty, love'.²⁴ It is 'the efflux of the Soul ... (coming) from within through embower'd gates, ever provoking questions' that bind him to men and women, trees he walks under, sunlight, and the star-tinctured shades of night, and all other creation round about him. This 'efflux of the soul' that aids in the realization of one's own Self in others is Bliss.²⁵ Whitman would, therefore, have the company of only the 'sweet and determined', and those who bring 'courage and health', and not 'diseas'd person, no rum-drinker or venereal-

¹⁹ Vide No. 18

²⁰ Śrī Śaṅkara.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Song of the Open Road*, Sections 1, 5 to 8.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

tainted'. Nature is inexhaustible both in mortal and immortal delights, and Whitman exhorts the pilgrims 'to merge all in the travel'.

Life is full of paradoxes. They could only be solved by the synthetic vision of *kavir-manāṣīs*. Whitman craves of God²⁶ the ability to express the great synthesis (*rta*) of His plan 'enclosed in time and space' in his own *Song of the Universal*. There is a silver lining to every cloud, and as Shelley has it, 'Our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thoughts' (*To a Skylark*). Both Whitman and Neitzche have found that

'From imperfection's murkiest cloud,
Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,
One flash of heaven's glory.'²⁷

Whitman is the 'uncaught bird, . . . ever hovering, hovering, high in the purer happier air', viewing with a detachment 'the mountain-growths of disease and sorrow', which cloud themselves at first, and then, disappear finally into the intangible ether of the Absolute. This prospect of the 'Truth is not a dream; the lack of it' is the dream for Whitman.²⁸

V

True poetry is an edible expression of the great synthesis envisaged by the poet from time to time. All parts of it, joined together by the latent strain of spiritualism common to them all, make up a song of the Universal. It is infinite in its suggestion of enduring values. Its true content concerns itself, directly or indirectly, with the qualities of the Godhead—immanence, omnipotence, omniscience, etc. Whitman solicits the grace of the 'Mother' in order that he may sing 'the songs of the great Idea' only, having 'loved the earth, sun, animals, . . . despised riches, . . . given alms to everyone, . . . stood up for the stupid and the crazy, devoted income and

labour to others, hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, . . . taken off hat to none known or unknown, . . . dismissed whatever insulted (his) own soul or defiled (his) body, claimed nothing to (himself) which (he has) not carefully claimed for others on the same terms, and rejecting none, permitting all, and reproduce all in (his) own forms'.²⁹ The poet is, therefore, the most 'equable man, bestowing on every object or quality its fit proportions'. 'He is the arbiter of the diverse, he is the key and he is the equalizer of his age and land, . . . He is no arguer, he is judgement; he judges not as the judge judges, but as the sun falling round a helpless thing. As he sees the farthest, he has the most faith; his thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things. In the dispute on God and eternity, he is silent, (because) he sees eternity less like a play with a prologue and dénouement, . . . he sees eternity in men and women, . . . he does not see men and women as dreams or dots.' This is all the mission and content of the poet's great Idea, and Whitman's visions of 'the free souls of poets'.³⁰ He cannot be said to be vain or boastful when he gives a cosmic vision of himself:

'Within me latitude widens, longitude
lengthens. . . .

Within me is the largest day, the sun
wheels in slanting rings, it does not set
for months,

Stretched in due time within me the mid-
night sun just rises above the horizon
and sinks again,

Within me zones, seas, cataracts, forests,
volcanoes, groups, . . .

'I see a great round wonder rolling through
space,

I see diminute farms, hamlets, ruins,
graveyards, jails, factories, palaces,
hovels, huts of barbarians, tents of
nomads upon the surface, . . .

²⁶ *Song of the Universal*, Sections 4 and 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *By Blue Ontario's Shore*, Sections 14 and 10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

I see the curious rapid change of light and shade,
 I see distant lands, as real and near ...
 as my land is true, ...
 I see the male and female everywhere,
 I see the serene brotherhood of philosophers,
 ...
 I see ranks, colours, barbarisms, civilizations, ...
 And I salute all the inhabitants of the earth :
 Each of us inevitable,
 Each of us limitless, ...
 Each of us allowed the eternal purport of the earth,
 Each of us here as divinely as any is here,
 ...
 My spirit has passed in compassion and determination around the whole earth,
 ...
 I think some divine rapport has equalized me with them.
 You vapours ... I have risen with you,
 moved away to distant continents, and fallen down there, ...
 I think I have blown with you you winds,
 You waters I have fingered every shore with you, ...
 I have taken my stand on the bases of peninsulas and on the high embedded rock, to cry thence :
Salut au monde.
 What cities the light or warmth penetrates,
 I penetrate those cities myself,
 All islands to which birds wing their way,
 I wing my way myself.³¹

There is no parody of the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* here : it is only a cosmic view of one's own self grown into the un-margined dimensions of the supreme Self. The poem *Salut au monde* is a salutation simple and chaste of the self to the supreme Self that it evidently is !

The true words of poetry should have the complexion of the root-syllables of *mantras* ;

otherwise, they will fail to evoke correct images of truths sought to be expressed. As stated by Whitman :

‘The word of the singers are the hours or minutes of the light or dark,
 But the words of the maker of poems are the general light and dark,
 The maker of poems settles justice, reality, immortality,
 His insight and power encircle things and the human race,
 He is the glory and extract thus far of things and of the race.
 The singers do not beget, only the Poet begets.’³²

According to our scriptures, there is no demarcation of the high-class singer from the high-class poet, because it is the primal melody of existence that sings of itself in both. Each is a *kavir-manīṣī* in his own right and divine dispensation. The highest poet, therefore, means and includes both. The office of poetry is to make man the most comprehensive and perfect being, that is, to divinize him :

‘The words of the true poems give you more than poems,
 They give you to form for yourself poems, religions, politics, war, peace, behaviour, histories, essays, daily life, and everything else, ...
 They do not seek beauty, they are sought, For ever touching them, or close upon them follows beauty, longing, fain, love-sick.’³³

A true poet is synthetic, because ‘every existence has its idiom, everything has an idiom and tongue ; he resolves all tongues into his own and bestows it upon men’.³⁴ As referred to in his *Rich Givers*, ‘the poet bestows upon any man or woman the entrance to all the gifts of the universe’.

The art of creation, poetic as well, is a psychic process, where action and reaction

³² *Song of the Answerer*, Sections 1 and 2.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Salut au Monde*, Sections 2, 4, 10, 11, 13.

playing on each other, and through an ecstatic union of the two, gives birth to a 'thing of beauty' which 'is a joy for ever'.³⁵ The poet's endeavour to encompass all things, 'poised on itself and receiving identity through materials and loving them, observing characters and (also) absorbing them', has proved to Whitman 'beyond cavil that it is not material eyes which finally see, nor material body which finally loves, walks, laughs, shouts, embraces, procreates,'³⁶ but the joy of the real life of senses and flesh transcending his senses and flesh. The poet, his materials, and his achievements have all been fused into the great joy of the Spirit that darts out like an uncaged lightning, enfolding in its arms not 'this globe or a certain time, ... but thousands of globes and all time'. Whitman would, therefore,

'Pour the verse with streams of blood, full of volition, full of joy,

Then loos'n, launch forth, to go and complete,

With the banner and penant a-flapping'.³⁷

Whitman's *Preface to Leaves of Grass* (1855) sets out the above in a more comprehensive and analytical way. In this process of poetic creation, the poet has to be, indeed, a God. A few jottings from the Preface may supplement the above :

i. 'Of all mankind, the poet is the equable man. Not in him, but off him, things are grotesque or eccentric or fail of their sanity. Nothing out of its place is good, and nothing in its place is bad.'

ii. 'He (the poet) lights up the study of man, the Soul, Immortality.'

iii. 'Faith is the antiseptic of the (poet's) soul.'

iv. 'The presence of the greatest poet conquers. The greatest poet hardly knows pettiness or triviality. If he breathes into anything that was before though small, it dilates with the grandeur and life of the universe. He is a seer, ... he is individual, ... he is complete

in himself, the others are as good as he, only he sees it and they do not.'

v. 'He is not one of the chorus, ... he does not stop for any regulation, he is the president of regulation. What the eye-sight does to the rest, he does to the rest.'

vi. 'The folks expect of the poet ... to indicate the path between Reality and their souls.'

vii. 'The poetic quality is not marshalled in rhyme or uniformity or abstract addresses to things, nor in melancholy complaints or good precepts, but is the life of these and much else, and is in the Soul.'

viii. 'All beauty comes from beautiful blood and a beautiful brain. ... Who troubles himself about his ornaments or fluency is lost. ... Of ornaments to a work nothing outer can be allowed, ... but those ornaments can be allowed that conform to the perfect facts of the open air and that flow out of the nature of the work and come irrepressibly from it and are necessary to the completion of the work. Most works are most beautiful without ornament.'³⁸

ix. 'The poet shall not spend his time in unneeded work. ... His trust shall master the trust of everything he touches, ... and shall master all attachment.'

x. 'The known universe has one complete lover and that is the greatest poet. He is no irresolute or suspicious lover, ... he is sure. Nothing can jar him. Suffering and darkness cannot, death and fear cannot. ... The sea is not surer of the shore, or the shore of the sea, than he is of his love and of all perfection and beauty.'

xi. 'The fruition of beauty is no chance of hit or miss, ... it is inevitable as life; ... it is exact and plumb as gravitation. From the eyesight proceeds another eyesight, and from hearing proceeds another hearing, and from voice proceeds another voice, eternally curious of the harmony of things with man.'

xii. 'Past and present and future are not disjoined, but joined. The greatest

³⁵ Keats, *Endymion*, opening lines.

³⁶ *Song of Joys*.

³⁷ *Song of the Banner at Daybreak*.

³⁸ Cf. Śrī Śaṅkara, *Sivānandalaharī*, 98.

poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is. The greatest poet does not moralize or make applications of morals, . . . he knows the Soul.'

xiii. 'The art of art, the glory of expression, and the sunshine of the light of letters is simplicity. Nothing can make up for excess or for the lack of definiteness. . . . The greatest poet has less a marked style and is more the channel of thoughts and things, without increase or diminution and is the free channel of himself. He swears to his art.'

xiv. 'As the attributes of the poets of the kosmos centre in the real body and Soul and in the pleasure of things, they possess the superiority of genuineness over all fiction and romance. As they emit themselves, facts are showered over with light. The daylight is lit with more volatile light. . . . Also, the deep, between the setting and the rising sun, goes deeper many-fold. Each precise object or condition of combination or process exhibits beauty.'

xv. 'Only the Soul is of itself. . . . All else has reference to what ensues. The world does not so exist. . . . Whatever satisfies the Soul is Truth. The prudence of the greatest poet answers at last the craving and the glut of the Soul.'

xvi. 'The prescient poet projects himself centuries ahead, and judges performer or performance after the changes of the time.'

xvii. 'A great poem is, for ages and ages, in common and for all degrees and complexions. . . . A great poem is no finish to a man or woman, but rather a beginning.'

These utterances of Whitman on poetry and its scope are only rivalled by Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* and Francis Thompson's *Critique on Shelley*.

Whitman follows up these utterances with a coloured tapestry, as it were, of his art. He would paint himself in a tapestry, woven of the golden threads of the sun shining over fresh, juicy, and ripe autumnal fruits, hanging over lawns of unmowed grass, arbourd

with trellised grapes. He would place a garden therein of flowers odourous at sunrise—all engendering a quiet rural domestic life, so that he may warble spontaneous songs to himself in the primal sanities of Nature and perfect solitude.³⁹ This has the tang of Bharṭṛhari's prayer in the *Vairāgya-Śataka* (verse 100).

Whitman is not a mere traditionalist when he invokes in a true religious sense the due relation of the created to the Creator as the true content of poetry. He is a progressivist, too, in that he discountenances old romances steeped in 'sentimental fripperies', . . . 'love-verses sugared in rhyme, intrigues, amours of idlers, fitted for only banquets of the night when dancers to late music slide', the unhealthy pleasures, 'extravagant dissipations of the few with perfumes, heat, and wine, beneath the dazzling chandeliers'.⁴⁰ He would have one and all to 'exalt the present and the real' through superber themes and teach the 'average man the glory of his daily walk and trade'.⁴¹ The daily walk should be executed in the spirit of his *Song of the Open Road*. His *Song of the Redwood-tree*, *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*, and *Memoirs of President Lincoln* are elegiac in essence, and like Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* celebrate the oneness of multiple creation through ineffaceable bonds of mutual sympathy of its parts to one another in distress and travail. The first two are also, in a way, allegorical in that they suggest the eternality of sacrifice and love surviving their passage through earth. The second is quite reminiscent of the *karuṇarasa* of Vālmīki, which preambles his great *Rāmāyaṇa*. Whitman describes how the old redwood-tree makes way for its youngsters:

'With Nature's calm content, with tacit
huge delight,

We welcome what we wrought for through
the past,

³⁹ *Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun*, Section 1.

⁴⁰ *Song of the Exposition*, Sec. 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

And leave the field for them,
 For them predicted long
 For a superior race, they too to grandly
 fill their time,
 For them we abdicate, in them ourselves.

...

In them these skies and airs, these moun-
 tain peaks,
 These huge precipitous cliffs, this ampli-
 tude, these valleys, ...

To be in them absorbed, assimilated.⁴²

How could resignation to the inevitable be better expressed, and the eternality of life suggested? The bereaved bird 'out of the cradle endlessly rocking' craves of land, sea, moon, and stars the rescue of its beloved, in order that they be reunited and continue their love eternal. In between the two Nothings, at the beginning and the end, the babe of creation is lulled to rest and quiet, what with the coos and toys Life, its mother, lovingly parts to her! Whitman does not celebrate the presidential excellence of Lincoln so much as his human perfection. He calls him the 'large sweet soul' in simplest and grandest of terms. All these poems are highly lyrical, what with their peerless apostrophes to Death as a continuer of life, endowing on life an eternity:

'Come lovely and soothing death,
 Undulate round the world, serenely arriving,
 arriving.

In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
 Sooner or later delicate death, ...

Approach strong deliveress,
 When it is so, when thou hast taken them,
 I joyously sing the dead,

Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
 Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death. ...

The night in silence under many a star,
 The ocean shore and the husky whispering
 wave whose voice I know,

And the soul turning to thee, O vast and
 well-veiled death,

And the body gratefully nestling close to
 thee.

Over the treetops I float thee a song,
 Over the rising and singing waves, over the
 myriad fields, and the prairies wide, ...
 I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee,
 O Death'

—*Memories of President Lincoln*, Sec. 14.

This is so delicious and genuine that nature's most melodious children cannot keep themselves away, like the spirits in the *Prometheus Unbound*, from joining him in the dirge:

'Lilac and star and bird twined with the
 chant of my soul,

There in the fragrant pines and the cedars
 dusk and dim'

—*Memories of President Lincoln*, Sec. 16.

'O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!

In the air, in the woods, over fields,

Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!

But my mate is no more, no more with me!

We two together no more'

—*Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*.

We are now made to feel, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'⁴³ and agree with S. T. Coleridge when he sings: 'Each parting hour gives up a ghost to dwell within thee—an eternal now.'

All happiness and health, temporal and otherwise, are broad-based on the feeling of equality, engendered by love and charity. These are not mere concepts of ethics, called a human institution. These are the very essence of *ṛta* or divine order, which is primarily creational. The contributor to the commonweal of humanity through unstinted service is neither a servant nor a master; he is selfless and is both, by turns, like the Creator Himself. He is a master of himself when he plans, and a servant of himself when he executes, his beneficence. He does not higgie-haggle for any return.⁴⁴ Whitman

⁴³ Cf. *New Testament*, I Corinthians, XV. 54.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Balicaritam* in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*: Lord Viṣṇu, as Vāmana, vanquishes Bali, and at the same time, serves as his gatekeeper.

⁴² *Song of the Redwood-tree*, Section 1.

regards himself as such when he declares :

'Neither a servant nor a master I,
I take no sooner a larger price than a
smaller price, I will have my own who-
ever enjoys me,
I will be even with you, and you shall be
even with me'

—*Song of Occupations*, Sec. 1.

His conception of occupation embraces all selfless creational activity for *loka-saṅgraha* (commonweal). He regards work as divine, like Bhartrhari (*Nīti-śataka*, verse 92), and as an inevitable ingredient of all life, inasmuch as every 'landscape took substance and form that it might be painted in a picture', and bibles and religions divine ... 'have all grown out of you'; still,

'It is not they who give the life, it is you
who give the life,

Leaves are not more shed from the trees,
or trees from the earth, than they are
shed out of you'.⁴⁵

Thus Whitman suggests that it is the Self and the Self alone that is the knower, the knowledge, and the known—the enjoyer, the enjoyment, and the enjoyed.⁴⁶

'All music is what awakes from you when
you are reminded by the instruments,
It is not the violins and the cornets, it is
not the oboe, nor the beating of drums,
nor the score of the baritone singer
singing his sweet romanza, nor that of
the men's chorus, nor that of the
woman's chorus,

It is nearer and farther than they'.⁴⁷

Does not this passage of Whitman remind us of Śrī Śaṅkara's observation : 'Although the hearing of the sound proceeds from the musical instrument, it is nevertheless produced only by striking the instrument. The sounds that proceed from striking the instrument are not heard separately, but only in

conjunction with the striking. So, too, this universe whose efficient cause is illusion (*māyā*) is manifest, as it were, in conjunction with Brahman. But when that Brahman is inwardly realized, nothing will remain the object of perception.'⁴⁸

Words and gestures are symbols of thoughts. Their elemental universality conferring on them the sole agency for propagation of ideas is through sound (*nāda*), shuffled out by Lord Śiva adance on the dark mass of ignorance (*ajñānāndhakāra*), in order to trample out Form out of Choas.⁴⁹ Whitman hints at this when he says :

'The substantial words are in the ground
and sea,

They are in the air, they are in you.

Human bodies are words, myriads of
words, ...

Air, soil, water, fire—those are words,

I myself am a word with them—my quali-
ties interpenetrate with theirs—my name
is nothing to them, ...

A healthy presence, a friendly or com-
manding gesture are words, sayings,
meanings.

The charms that go with the mere looks
of some men and women are sayings and
meanings also.

The workmanship of souls is by those in-
audible words of the earth,

The masters know the Earth's words and
use them more than audible words'.⁵⁰

This is the *raison d'être* and the very founda-
tion of all forms of art, especially the in-
audible limbs of it.

The poetic gift, unlike the other talents,
has the greatest amount of wonderousness
(curiosity) and innocence, and the capacity
to intuit itself into the existence of others,
perhaps, through its essential trait of identi-
fication with them. Without this child's
temperament, Whitman could not have ap-
prehended the truth of things. In a perfect

⁴⁵ A *Song for Occupations*, Section 3.

⁴⁶ Cf. Śrī Śaṅkara, *Svātma Nirūpanam*, 95 : 'On the vast canvas of the Self, the Self itself paints the picture of manifold worlds, and the supreme Self, seeing but itself therein, enjoys immense delight.'

⁴⁷ A *Song for Occupations*, Section 4.

⁴⁸ Śrī Śaṅkara, *Śataślokī*, 63.

⁴⁹ Cf. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

⁵⁰ A *Song of the Rolling Earth*, Section 1.

image of child's trustfulness and faith, he describes himself :

'There was a child went forth everyday,
And the first object he look'd upon, that
object he became,
And that object became part of him for the
day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of
years.'⁵¹

A cursory acquaintance with his life would surely decide that that child was Whitman himself. He, therefore, realizes that 'every hour of light and dark', 'every cubic inch of space', 'the sea and the motion of its waves', 'the fishes that swim therein and ships that sail on it', together with other sights, are all miracles, the why and the wherefore of them being imperceptible to bare intellect.⁵² He simply wonders how the compost made up of 'deceased corpses' of vegetation etc. could sustain the sweetest and the healthiest blossoms of spring.⁵³ In his *Proud Music of the Storm* he visualizes the omnipotence of the Godhead at creation which 'in billows of godhood laves' him. He solicits the Almighty

⁵¹ *There Was a Child Went Forth.*

⁵² *Miracles.*

⁵³ *This Compost.*

to give him the power to 'hold all sounds, ... all the voices of the universe with their throbbings' (voices of nature, tempests, waters, words, winds, operas, chants, marches, dances, etc.) in order that he may bridge up 'the uncaught unwritten' way from life to death. The lines of this piece, *Proud Music of the Storm*, move with the same tragic harmony of Wagner's notes and are no less cosmological. In fact, the life on the earth is but a straying from its haven, and the realization of the Self is not only the 'prodigal come home', but also the 'wandering done, the Man and Art with Nature fused again'.

Whitman is most playful and sportive, too. He is wistful besides. He would some day become eligible to sport like the systems of orbs in mid-heavens and something more, too. He desires to die for the reason that life does not provide its much for 'all and time and space' as heavenly death does. He would, in fact, emulate not only the Godhead, but also nature and every object enfolded in her at all the triune functions of creation, maintenance, and destruction, so that he may attain to the full stature of his Soul.

(To be concluded)

RAJA-YOGA OF GURU NANAK

BY SRI DHARM PAUL

The Yoga system is one of the six schools of Indian philosophy that were systematized and developed, to set in order Indian thought, concerning the supreme, the cosmos, and the individual soul and their inter-relation. They resulted from an attempt at reformation and restoration of the ancient and time-honoured concepts of psychological and metaphysical matters. The word 'yoga' means union: Union of the individual soul with the Over-soul, supreme Being or God. In other words, it

implies the search for the 'Transcendental and the Divine' in man. *Yoga* means a mighty effort, a most strenuous endeavour, and a hard striving to attain perfection through the control of the physical body, the ever-active mind, the self assertive ego or will, the searching and questioning intellect, the vibrations of the vital force, the restless faculties, and powerful senses. Allegorically, the present state of the individualized soul is described as riding in the chariot of the body,

with dazed intellect as the charioteer, the infatuated mind as the reins, and the senses as the powerful steeds rushing headlong into the field of sense-objects and sense-pleasures. All this goes to show that a student of *yoga* discipline has to undertake such a course of an extremely strict and ordered activity, as may help to depersonalize the soul and free it from all the limiting adjuncts of life—physical, mental, and super-mental, and then to contact it with the power of God and achieve union with Him.

The Yoga system is generally divided into two parts: *prāna-kalā* or the path of *prānas* and *Cit-kalā* or the path of the *cit*. The different forms of *yoga* are but the classifications of either of the *kalās*, or the codes. Generally, there are four main spiritual paths for God-realization: *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*, *rāja-yoga*, and *jñāna-yoga*. *Karma-yoga* is said to be suitable for a man of active temperament; *bhakti-yoga* for a man of devotional temperament; *rāja-yoga* for a man of mystic temperament; *jñāna-yoga* for a man of rational and philosophical temperament or enquiry. *Mantra-yoga*, *surata-śabda-yoga*, *laya-yoga* or *kuṇḍalinī-yoga*, *āmbikā-yoga*, *hatha-yoga*, and *sādhana-yoga* are some of the different pathways of attaining union with God or communion with the Lord. Whatever may be the starting point, the end reached is the same. Some pathways are long and arduous, but the goal is the same.

To behold the one Self in all beings is *jñāna*, wisdom; to love the Self in all is *karma*, or action. When the *jñāna-yogin* attains wisdom, he is endowed with devotion and engages in selfless activity. *Karma-yoga*, for him, is a spontaneous expression of his spiritual nature, as he sees the one Self in all. When the devotee attains perfection in devotion, he is possessed of wisdom and selfless activity. For him also, *karma-yoga* is a spontaneous expression of his divine nature, as he beholds the one Lord everywhere. The *karma-yogin* attains wisdom and devotion when his actions are wholly selfless.

These paths are, in fact, one. But very rarely, only a few understand the oneness of these *yogas*, and often, indulge in disrespect of the other paths.

To make *yoga* more practicable, distinctions were made in later times for different types of people based on individual temperaments and vocational pursuits. While the persons who were highly intellectual and reasoned out everything, very often, took to *jñāna-yoga*, those with an emotional temperament were offered *bhakti-yoga*, consisting of devotional exercises like singing and chanting of hymns and psalms. Those who were primarily engaged in the outer activities of the world, were considered as best fitted for *karma-yoga*, consisting of austerities like fasts and vigils, performances of *yajñas* and other charitable acts, and meritorious deeds like pilgrimages to holy places and reading of scriptures etc., and above all, the path of selfless duty. In this way, there arose three types of popular *yogas* to be practised with head, heart, and hand.

What kind of *yoga* Guru Nānak, the founder of Sikhism, followed? *Śrī Guru Granth Sāheb* refers to it on page 1389. Guru Arjan Dev's court balladists, called *bhatts*, speak of Guru Nānak's *yoga* in 'Svayī Mehle Pehle Ke' and say that Guru Nānak adopted and performed *rāja-yoga*: 'Kab Kāl sujās gāvo guru Nānak rāja-yog jin mānio.' The poet Kāl speaks praise of Guru Nānak who believed in *rāja-yoga*. There are about ten *waras* (praise songs) of the Bhatt, the balladist, and in all of them, he repeatedly describes Guru Nānak's *yoga* as *rāja-yoga*. It is said that these balladists sang songs in the court of Guru Arjan Dev, and hence their statements are taken to be authentic. But, strangely, *Śrī Guru Nānak Dev* himself speaks scarcely of *rāja-yoga*. Instead, there are innumerable *śabads* (hymns) in which the Master talks of following *surat-śabad-yoga*. Some believe that *surat-śabad-yoga* is a branch of *rāja-yoga*, while others say that it is an offshoot of *bhakti-yoga*. Instead of con-

fining ourselves to this controversy about the classification of his *yoga*, let us examine from his *śabads*, what kind of *yoga* he followed and preached to others.

In *Jap Ji Sāheb*, for instance, which is a prelude to *Guru Granth Sāheb*, believed to hold the philosophy and essence of the universal or the world religion, great emphasis has been laid on the cult of *Nāma*, a cult in which the repetition and singing of the holy name is given great importance, and a complete surrender of one's thoughts, words, and deeds to God's will is deemed essential. In verse 20, Guru Nānak says: 'Some wash their bodies to obtain purity; some keep their clothes scrupulously clean to avoid pollution. But does not the water wash only the mud that besmears the body external? Does not the soap wash clean only the clothes? Alas! How to wash that filth, grown stone-hard? How will water wash or soap remove the sin-begotten pollution? Says Guru Nānak, nothing short of *nāma* shall remove the dark thick layers of the sins. No external rituals, no actions, however good or great, can secure the requisite purity that *nāma* alone does. Countless are the virtuous and vicious, encompassed in actions, unable to rise above *pāpa* and *punya*, (practising *jñāna-yoga*). What is to be talked of them? They look merely to the recording of actions in the book of account (practising *karma-yoga*). Why doesn't a man rise above the pale of actions to be saved of the bitter fruit thereof? If a man does not aim at *nāma* (practising *rāja-yoga*) which is thousandfold greater than the great or good deeds, he should be prepared to reap what he has sown. And that is the terrible wheel of transmigration where one will find himself thrown. So does God will!'

To be more clear, Guru Nānak says in the verse 28: 'In search of the Master Absolute, men become *yogins*, the ascetic worshippers, renouncing their homes, their kith and kin, turning away from the people to inhabit the jungles or the deserts or some lonely places for aloofness. They wear *mundra*, the big

heavy ear-rings, take in hand a *pāta*, a begging bowl, with *jhoṭā*, the wallet attached across their neck; they smear their bodies with *bibhut*, the burnt ashes, as a symbol of renunciation; and wearing *khīnthā*, the gown of shreds, and resting their arms on the wooden staff, the *danda*, they sit to pray. Says Guru Nānak, O *yogin*, let contentment be your ear-rings, modesty and humility your bowl and wallet, the meditation on *nāma*, the ash. Retire into the chambers of your soul in meditation. Practise *rāja-yoga*. Let remembrance of death be your gown. O *yogin*, keep your body chaste to preserve it for that sweet Beloved. O *yogin*, the staff made of wood will not bear your burden; let faith tempered with a disciplined conduct be your resting staff. Thus will you be a true *yogin* of the most exalted sect, *Aī Panth*. Such a *yogin* does not confine himself to obscurity, nor a single sect. He who conquers his mind conquers the world.'

Guru Nānak stresses repeatedly in *Jap Ji Sāheb* that, to be acceptable in the Court Highest of the High, man needs must have his life moulded into a precious coin. 'For that a mint is to be found. Man must learn what is the truest form of *yoga*. For that *yoga* or the mint, chastity, patience, understanding, spiritual knowledge, fear of God and death, the austerities and *nāma* are the requisites. Let chastity be the furnace and patience the goldsmith; proper understanding the anvil and spiritual knowledge the hammer. Let fear of God and death be the bellows, austerities the fire, and love the crucible. In that *yoga*, pour down the sweet ambrosia—your human life—and let it cool. You will have thus moulded your life in the true mint into the coin of *nāma*. With that precious signet shall you be admitted into the holy congregations of the holy ones and accepted in the Sacred Court of the Sacred Divine. Living in the world of temptation, who adopts this course, this *yoga*? Who follows this path? Says Guru Nānak, they who win His grace through His kindness, take to this path,

the path of *nāma, rāja-yoga*. And on them He showers His grace still more. They are blessed. They are absolved. They are happy to rest eternally in the consummate Bliss and Beatitude.'

In some of his subsequent hymns also, Śrī Guru Nānak Dev has elucidated his

philosophy, his *rāja-yoga* or *surat-śabad-yoga* in a very lucid and clear way. For instance, in *Rām Kali Mehala* Guru Nānak says in unmistakable words: 'As a lotus lives in water and as the feathers of the aquatic birds do not become wet, so a man should live in this world by adopting *surat-śabad-yoga*.'

BHAKTI-YOGA RESTATED—1

BY PROFESSOR BRAJ BIHARI NIGAM

WHAT IS BHAKTI?

The word '*bhakti*' is derived from the Sanskrit root '*bhaja, sevāyām*', which means devotion and worship. It means 'to serve' or 'to resort to' and signifies service of or resorting to another for assistance. As a religious term, it connotes 'turning to God for protection, completely surrendering oneself to His will'.¹ It means devotion to and love of a personal God.

The *Bhāgavata*, the *Nārada-Sūtra*, and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* are the classical texts of *bhakti-yoga*. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* is called a *bhakti* epic. It depicts every phase of *bhakti* in the most lucid and poetic way. It shows not only 'what to love', but also 'how and why to love' and enumerates and describes the great lovers of God and man. According to it, *bhakti* is a selfless, enduring devotion to God.² The *Śāṅḍilya-sūtra* regards it as the highest and intense love for Him, which implies love for the Soul or love for those things which do not contradict the love for the Soul.³ For Parāśara, *bhakti* is love for the worship of God, and for Garga, it is devotion to hearing about the Ātman.⁴ Nārada expects, in *bhakti*, the surrender of

all our actions to God; and when intense attachment to Him is realized, there will be the feeling of the greatest misery in forgetting God or in separation from Him.⁵

According to the *Gītā*, true devotees are those who, with supreme faith, fixing their minds on God, ever earnestly worship Him.⁶ Such a devotee (just as a *sthitaprajña*) is ever-content, self-controlled, unshakeable in resolve, free from joy and anger, alike to friend and foe, alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and free from all attachment.⁷

Śaṅkara has defined *upāsana* as a continuous meditation for a long time on the object of worship which, according to the scriptures, has been brought under intellectual comprehension. When there is a continuous realization of oneness with Brahman and when a feeling of anything other than Brahman does not occur, it will be the culmination of *upāsana* according to Śaṅkara.⁸ Sri Aurobindo says that a devotee, seizing on the emotional forces of the being, the intense activities of the heart, abides in the love of God. A devotee is indifferent to the activities of thought. Thus an intense love or attachment to God will imply, negatively,

¹ Hiriyanna, *Popular Essays in Indian Philosophy*, p. 96.

² *Ahaitukī avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame*.

³ As quoted in *Nārada-Sūtra*, 18.

⁴ *Nārada-Sūtra*, 16, 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶ XII. 2. 20.

⁷ *Vide* XII. 14-20.

⁸ *Vide bhāṣya* on the *Gītā*, XII. 3.

a complete detachment from the world. The mind will be fully occupied with God-consciousness. It means that, if we follow the path of love, then also, equanimity of the mind can be achieved, which ultimately leads to the salvation of the soul.

Bhakti-yoga takes emotion as the basis of *sādhanā*, as it is the expression of the inmost centre situated in the heart. Emotions like love, sympathy, fellow-feeling, etc. work as forceful engines broadening the narrow road of egoism, and preparing us for an identification with society, the world, and God. They are the natural foundations of altruism. They never wait in anticipation for being actualized. They serve as the natural sources of attaining unity with others, and we may extend the same to the unity with the supreme Reality. They come with a natural force like a river in flood. If they are sublimated or canalized, then they may prove socially and religiously very fruitful.

The predominance of emotion in *bhakti-yoga* does not mean the driving away and divorce of the other modes of mind, viz. knowing and willing. When emotion is enlightened and rightly directed, then only, can it help us in the development of personality. When it is let loose on the path—as it generally is—it definitely makes the personality acute, pointed, abnormal, and socially undesirable. *Bhakti* is just like the flow of a river bound by the two banks, cognition or philosophy and conation or activity. There is the existence of the river, because the banks exist. The disappearance of the latter means the disappearance of the former. The necessity of concentration is implied in devotion or worship, but that is to be sought through emotion. Concentration means our identification with the object concentrated upon. The highest form of identification is that which may be achieved between the *jīva* and Paramātmān, and in *bhakti-yoga*, this is attained through emotion.

Bhakti has played and can play a very important role in the shaping of society in

terms of the ideal of a well-ordered world. On a social basis, it proceeds to create an atmosphere in society, which may prepare us to welcome heaven on earth. It may be said that *bhakti-yoga* and *karma-yoga* stress the social aspect of life while *jñāna-yoga* and *rāja-yoga* the individual aspect. The staunch followers of *bhakti-yoga* and *karma-yoga* have rendered an immense service to society, and society, in gratitude, regards them as either saints or divine incarnations (*avatāras*).

BASIS OF LOVE

Bhakti is intense love for God. Every object of love gives us pleasure and, therefore, when God becomes the object of love, He also gives pleasure. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Brahman is defined as bliss, and further it is said that beings are born from bliss, sustained by bliss, and on deceasing, they enter into bliss.⁹ It means that bliss is the beginning and the end of all our activities. Happiness derived from the objects of the world is also a part of the blissful nature of God.¹⁰ The same Upaniṣad portrays bliss as having a personality—pleasure (*priya*) is its head; delight (*moda*), the right side; great delight (*pramoda*), the left side; bliss (*ānanda*), the body (*ātman*).¹¹ This shows that pleasure in all its forms partakes of the bliss-nature of Brahman.

Love or joy, by its very nature, has duality of the lover and the loved for its realization and fulfilment. But duality itself is the creation of the formless and indeterminate bliss which is manifested in some form and quality. This form and the quality are the carriers of bliss, and when pleasure is derived from them, they disappear. A poet, when in bliss (which is formless and nameless), composes a poem and gives to it a beautiful form; but when this poem gives pleasure to the hearer, it again leaves its form and becomes

⁹ III. 6.

¹⁰ Vide Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. 8.

¹¹ II. 5.

pure joy. Therefore, from bliss a poem is born, and by bliss it is sustained, and to bliss it returns. Bliss, therefore, is the truth of which pleasure in the individual personality is only a fragment.

But what do we mean by duality? Is the lover different in nature from the beloved? According to Rāmānuja, they are distinct and not-distinct at one and the same time. They are distinct, because Brahman is the Soul of which the lover (individual personality) is the body; they are not distinct, because both of them are of the nature of consciousness and bliss. Had they been quite different, there could be no relation of love obtained between them. Inge argues that if two beings are separate, they cannot influence each other inwardly; and if they are not distinct, there can be no relations between them.¹² Our union with God is possible, because, in both of us, the same essence permeates. Though we possess the essence of God, yet we are not God. This is the relation that exists between the individual souls and God.

Some Christian mystics like Fenelon and Ruysbroeck have recognized some stages between the lowest and the highest kind of love. Fenelon mentions five stages of love¹³ and regards 'holy indifference or disinterested love' as the highest stage. He thinks that pure love is difficult to obtain, and therefore, mixed love is not a sin. Ruysbroeck mentions seven grades of love¹⁴ and he considers the ineffable, unknowable transcendence of all knowledge and thought as the highest.¹⁵ In *bhakti-yoga*, the highest stage of love is the attainment of either the abode of God (*sālokya*), or His form

(*sārūpya*), or nearness to Him (*sāmīpya*). At this stage, love is disinterested and pure, and the experience gained in it is ineffable and intuitive. The mystical experiences at this stage of love in the East and the West do not seem to differ.

RENUNCIATION OF EGOISTIC CRAVINGS— THE TRUE BASIS OF LOVE

Western mystics talk of the three stages, viz., the purgative life, the illuminative life, and the unitive or the contemplative life, for the preparation to behold God face to face. *Bhakti* demands complete self-surrender to God. It means that there should be a complete renunciation of our desires and their fruits, because 'it is our desires that limit the scope of our self-realization, hinder our extension of consciousness'.¹⁶ Renunciation will enable us for more altruistic behaviour by realizing our affinities with the not-self. As the degree of renunciation will rise higher and higher, more and more we will be approaching God. When complete self-surrender is reached, we will experience the Infinite and the Eternal in us. According to the *Bhāgavata*, *bhakti* is based on renunciation (*vairāgya*) and knowledge.¹⁷ We can, therefore, say that renunciation is the basis of love. No love is possible without self-surrender. It does not know any bargaining. We neither agree with St. Bernard, when he says that 'love as such desires nothing but reciprocation',¹⁸ nor with Fenelon who has counted 'interested love, love of hope' etc., under the name of love; because, in this way, love will become shop-keeping and bargaining, as we expect something in return for the love offered by us. Love in *bhakti* admits nothing less than complete self-surrender, because when our mind will be completely devoid of any thought about ourselves, the mind as a whole will be ready to receive God. Love knows no other motive except love.

¹² W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 241.

¹³ a. Purely servile (love of God's gifts apart from Himself); b. love of covetousness (love of God being the condition of happiness); c. love of hope (desire for our own welfare); d. interested love (still mixed with self-regarding motives); e. disinterested or pure love.

¹⁴ Goodwill, voluntary poverty, chastity, humility, desire for the glory of God, divine contemplation, and the ineffable, unnameable transcendence of all knowledge and thought.

¹⁵ W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 169.

¹⁶ Rabindranath Tagore, *Sādhanā*, p. 111.

¹⁷ III. 25-43.

¹⁸ Quoted in W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 240.

ORIGIN OF BHAKTI

Man has a complex nature wherein thought, emotion, and action are ingrained. He does not require any teaching to make use of these natural tendencies. Emotions are the fire inside the locomotive of man. The sources of *bhakti* are in these natural tendencies of man. In a society, men are bound to one another because of the tender emotions. Therefore, it can be said that the 'origin of *bhakti-mārga* is hidden in the mists of long ago'.¹⁹

Vedic literature makes a profuse use of the word '*upāsana*', though the word '*bhakti*' had not become popular in those times. Use of the words, '*yuñjate manah*', '*yuktena manasā*', show that purity of mind is necessary for developing selfless devotion to God. The word '*upāsana*' is very popular in the *Atharva-Veda*, too. A man offers his devotion to God who is possessed of various qualities.²⁰ These resources were so bountiful and potential that, after sometime, there came into existence a system named *bhakti-mārga*.

The *Bhāgavata* traces its territorial origin in Draviḍa, development in Karnāṭaka, honoured place in Mahārāṣṭra, and devolution in Gujerat. According to it, *bhakti* was sent down to this world by God Himself. It is very dear and near to Kṛṣṇa, and has been created in the very image of God. *Bhakti* descended to this world, with *mukti* as her maid-servant, and was blessed with two sons, *jñāna* and *vairāgya*, to serve humanity. There is evidence to show that even anterior to the *Bhāgavata*, *bhakti* had become popular in 200 B.C., when the Greek king Heliodoros converted himself into a devotee of Vāsudeva, in memory of which he erected a memorial in Vidiśā, on which is inscribed '*Parama bhāgavato Heliodorah*'. The Ālvārs from Draviḍa come up as *bhaktas*. These saints living a very simple life, many of them being poets with spiritualistic tendencies, impreg-

nated the period from the seventh to ninth century A.D. with the ideas of *bhakti*. They revolted against the distinction amongst men based on caste and colour. Many of them were from lower castes. Nammālvār was a farmer; Tirumaṅgai was a dacoit; the whereabouts of Āṇḍāl's birth is unknown. Thus it may be said that, spiritually, the lower castes revolted against all restrictions, because *bhakti* does not recognize any distinction. The upper castes, in their greed for self-protection, were receding from true religion, while the lower ones, being poor, had nothing to lose, but everything to gain. The practice of *bhakti* became very popular during this period.

The practice of *bhakti* had become so common that a theory automatically emanated from it, and there came a period of systematizers. These *ācāryas* gave a philosophy of *bhakti*. Raṅganāthamuni (A.D. 824-924) is the first *ācārya* who belongs to Nammālvār's line of *bhakti*. Yāmunācārya was a disciple of Raṅganāthamuni, and Rāmānuja was the disciple of Yāmunācārya. Before Rāmānuja, there had been a system of *bhakti* called Pāñcarātra, also known as Bhāgavata or Sātvata. As a matter of fact, the followers of the Sātvata or Pāñcarātra systems kept the fire of *bhakti* burning when the ghastly wind of Buddhistic rationalism was blowing violently. Pāñcarātra was prevalent from 44 B.C. to A.D. 1100. Then came Śaṅkara who, because of the prevailing Buddhistic rationalism, emphasized the logical and metaphysical consistency of Advaitavāda. Logical consistency convinces a learned man, but it never moves a common man. 'The Absolute of Śaṅkara, rigid, motionless, and totally lacking in initiative or influence, cannot call forth our worship.'²¹ We find *bhakti* only implicit in Śaṅkara. Too much intellectuality of the Advaitavāda was not favourable to the commoners, and the felt need was, therefore, freedom from the rigidity

¹⁹ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 559.

²⁰ Dayananda Sarasvati, *Rgvedādi Bhāṣya Bhūmikā*, Chapter on *Upāsana*, pp. 226-265.

²¹ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 659.

of Māyāvāda. Once the Ātman or Brahman is accepted as the ultimate Reality, the only interpretation that we can offer for the perceived things is that it is all an illusion. It appears to be real, but metaphysically it does not exist. People could easily accept the world as *māyā*, but they could not intellectually understand the ultimate Reality. Thus though, undoubtedly, Śaṅkara did an unrepayable obligation to Hinduism by uprooting Buddhism, yet the positive side of founding the people's faith on the firm grounds of the earth could not be achieved by him. True, it was so, because he was an intellectual fighter through and through. As a reaction to the Māyāvāda of Śaṅkara, we find that other *ācāryas* posited the reality of the world. Foremost of these are Rāmānuja, Madhvācārya, Nimbārka, Vallabha, and Caitanya.

PHILOSOPHERS OF BHAKTI

RAMANUJA : According to Rāmānuja, Brahman is the soul whose body is *cit* (consciousness) and *acit* (matter). *Cit* and *acit* are the modes of Brahman. *Cit*, *acit*, and Brahman are inseparable (*aprthaksiddhi*). Brahman is the material and the efficient cause of the universe, souls, and matter. The changes relate to the body of Brahman, i.e. *cit* and *acit*, while Brahman remains unchanged. Brahman qualified by *cit* and *acit* is the non-dual Reality. It subsists in the *jīva* and the world.

The self has not only an adjectival nature (being an attribute of Brahman), it has also a substantive being. It exists, but it derives its meaning from Brahman which is the ground of all existence. As the world is the body of God, it cannot be false, and for the same reason, *jīva* is also not an illusion. *Māyā*, which is an illusory power of God for Śaṅkara, is a real power of God. *Māyā* never means an illusion.²² The universe has been created by God in *krīḍā* (play).²³ Thus

Brahman is in no sense *nirguṇa* and the world is in no sense *mithyā* and the term 'advaita' does not imply either that Brahman is *nirguṇa* or that the world is *mithyā*.²⁴

The Brahman of Rāmānuja is *saguṇa* and is possessed of all the human qualities at their best. Knowledge, power, and love are the main powers of God. It is because of these that He can be kind to the devotees. By devotion, one can secure His kindness which would make us free. Viṣṇu is the highest reality for Rāmānuja.

We find that the reality of *jīva* and the world paved the path to *bhakti*. The individual (being real) can make earnest efforts to secure the kindness of God, who is possessed of a personality. The grace of God can make us free from all sins. Salvation is possible only by *bhakti*; *jñāna* and *karmā* are merely means to *bhakti*. Absolute self-surrender to God by an individual will bring salvation. For Rāmānuja, of all the ways of *mokṣa*, *bhakti* is supreme.²⁵ It is the essence and the real meaning of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.²⁶ He does not make any distinction between *bhakti* and *upāsana*, and regards *dhyāna* and *upāsana* as the essential elements of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is not possible without *dhyāna* and *upāsana*. He interprets the word '*viññāna*' as special knowledge regarding *upāsana*.²⁷ Thus Rāmānuja satisfies the claims of both philosophy and religion. His genius consists in the fact that the yawning gulf between philosophy and religion was bridged by him. On one side, he offers a philosophy of the Absolute, and on the other, he delivers religion to all alike without the distinction of caste. He 'guaranteed God and salvation to all finite beings'.²⁸

NIMBARKA : He advocated Bhedābheda-vāda (difference-non-difference), according to which, *cit* and *acit* are the internal divisions

²⁴ Raghavendrachar, *Dvaita Philosophy and Its Place in the Vedānta*, p. 103.

²⁵ Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Gītā*, XVIII, 64.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, IX, 1.

²⁸ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 720.

²² Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Gītā*, VII, 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, VII, 12.

of Brahman. They are the powers of Brahman and are as real as Brahman. *Jīvas* are atomic and many. They experience pleasure and pain. Each soul is a ray of Brahman, but its pure nature is obscured by its *karmas* which are due to *avidyā*. Freedom from *avidyā* can be achieved by *prapatti* or absolute self-surrender. *Bhakti* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is the way to God-realization. The individual souls are parts of Brahman, but Brahman is not affected by the experiences of the individual souls. Thus there is a relation of non-difference and difference between Brahman and *jīva*.

Brahman is both the efficient and the material cause of the universe. Brahman is the supreme Person (Puruṣottama). He is the creator, preserver, and the destroyer of the world. The universe is not unreal or illusory. It is a true manifestation and a real modification of Brahman. Thus the theory of Bhedābheda-vāda accepts the reality of *jīva* (as a part of Brahman) and the world (as a transformation of Brahman), and considers union with Saguna Brahman a possibility, but only by means of *bhakti*.

MADHVACARYA : He is a zealous opponent of Śaṅkara's Advaitavāda and a staunch advocate of Dvaitavāda. A philosophy, which enriches man's experience here in this life, makes proper room for ethical and religious development of an individual, and paves the way for the perfection of the whole society, is considered by him as the best philosophy.

According to him, knowledge implies the correlatives—the knower and the known. The knower is as real as the known. Knower is the independent Reality, i.e., God, while the known is the dependent reality which is divided into *jīva* and the world. *Jīva* and the world are eternally existing, but they are dependent on the Knower—God. Existence of the knower implies the existence of the known, knower and the known are not identical, there is a difference between them. He mentions the existence of difference between the following: a. God and the in-

dividual, b. God and the world, c. *jīva* and the world, d. one part of matter and another part, e. individual and individual.

The world is real, and its reality consists in the sense that it is not non-existent. The body of a man is not a sign of bondage, it is a means for liberating him from evil, both here and hereafter. Body is *sādhana-śarīra*. After liberation, one individual does not become identical with another, but his individuality is maintained even after *mukti*. Difference in individuality is based on the past *karmas* of an individual. Therefore, an individual is peculiar in his capacity and will remain an individuality even after the attainment of *mukti*. In *mukti*, an individual becomes identical neither with another individual nor with God.

Brahman is the independent and perfect Reality. It is the source of the world. It has *sattā*, *pravṛtti*, and *pramiti* independently of other things in the universe. It is omnipresent and is not affected by changes in the world. The world derives its existence and motion (*pravṛtti*) from Brahman. Brahman has the power of creation and destruction of the universe. God expresses Himself in various forms, e.g. Śaṅkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, and appears periodically in incarnations (*avatāra*). Lakṣmī is the co-eternal power of God.

Liberation can be attained by the grace of God. Absence of the favour of God puts us in bondage. For liberation, everyone should aim at securing His grace, because that alone can liberate him. His grace can be attained by being devoted to Him as our master. *Bhajana*, *nāmasmarana*, and *pūjā* are the ways of devotion. Merely *jñāna* or hearing of 'That thou art' (*Tat tvam asi*) will never liberate an individual. *Bhakti* is the only means to salvation according to Madhva.

VALLABHACARYA : Emotion of love takes up various forms in relation to the psychological development of man. Love for children (*vātsalya*), love for friends (*sakhya*),

love for wife or husband (*mādhurya*), and love for master (*dāsya*) are the gradual stages of projecting ourselves to other members of the society. Vallabha considers only two forms, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya*, and explains his whole theory with a new insight. As these tendencies are natural, types of *bhakti* based on them could become very popular among the people for a long time.

Vallabha is an advocate of pure non-duality or Śuddhādvaita. He dispenses with the *Māyā* of Śaṅkara, which is the illusory power of God. For Vallabha, God is above *sajātīya*, *vijātīya* and *svagata* differences, but He is the seat of self-contradictory qualities. God is *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*, and possesses two capacities of evolution (*āvīrbhāva*) and involution (*tīrobhāva*). The involution of *ānanda* from God creates the *jīva*, who is *sat* and *cit*, and when there is involution of *ānanda* and *cit*, then comes the world, which is the expression of *sat* of God. Thus *jīva* and the world are merely the embodiment of *sat-cit* and *sat*, respectively. Therefore, if God is real, these forms of His expression are also real. But God is the whole reality while *jīva* and *jagat* (world) are partial realities. The relation is expressed as between fire and spark. But why do evolution and involution take place? It is merely for *līlā* or *krīḍā* (sport). He does it whenever He so pleases. When the onward movement or evolution begins, the *jīva* attains *mukti*. The view that God, *jīva*, and the world are real, lends reality to human love and affection.

Vallabha distinguishes between *jagat* and *samsāra*; *jagat* is real while *samsāra* is unreal. *Jagat* is a part of God exhibiting His two essences, namely, *sat* and *cit* while *samsāra* is the creation of the individual in the form of attachment to the worldly things which are temporary and non-eternal. Thus *jagat* is eternal with God while *samsāra* is temporary.

Brahman in *līlā* takes up different *avatāras*. God, when endowed with *jñāna* and *kriyā*,

is Kṛṣṇa. Vallabha regards *Kṛṣṇa* as the highest Reality. Brahman takes up the following forms :

- (i) Puruṣottama (eternal joy or Śrī Kṛṣṇa);
- (ii) Akṣara Brahman (manifesting in the forms of *jīva* and *jagat*);
- (iii) Antaryāmin (emanating in *avatāras*).

Puruṣottama or eternal joy can be realized only by *bhakti* or complete self-surrender through love. Akṣara Brahman can be attained by *jñāna*, but it is regarded as inferior to Puruṣottama. Antaryāmin is the object of our worship. The world has been created by God in sport for sport, but *jīva* creates *samsāra* and is bound to it, liberation from which can be attained only by *puṣṭi* or grace of God. A *jīva* may go through the following states :

- (i) *śuddha* (devoid of divine joy, but yet uncontaminated by *avidyā*, ignorance);
- (ii) *samsārin* (contaminated by *avidyā*; they are also of two kinds : *daiva* and *asura*. Again, *daiva-jīvas* are divided into *maryādā-mārgins* and *puṣṭimārgins*);
- (iii) *mukta* (devoid of *avidyā* completely).

Vallabha's way is called *puṣṭi-mārga* (a way to attain the grace of God, so that *mukti* may be possible). It demands a complete surrender of our body and soul to God. Brahman is pure *ānanda*, and when a *jīva* wishes to attain It, he has to make efforts for the *puṣṭi* or grace of God. Akṣara Brahman can be attained by *jñāna-mārga*, but Puruṣottama can be attained only by *bhakti*. Vallabha considers *puṣṭi-mārga* as the highest means to salvation. He speaks of four kinds of *puṣṭi* : *maryādāpuṣṭi bhakti* is a means to know the various qualities of God; *pravāhapuṣṭi* consists in activity in conformity with *bhakti*; in *puṣṭipuṣṭa bhakti*, the devotee is full of love for God; and in *śuddhapuṣṭi bhakti*, there is complete surrender of the self to God.

Kṛṣṇa in childhood (*Bālakṛṣṇa*), boyhood (*Gopasakhā*), and youth (husband of *Rādhā*) becomes the object of worship. Innumer-

able expressions of the above tendencies become the object of love. The whole *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa becomes the object of *bhakti* in *puṣṭi-mārga*. No limitations of *jñāna* or *maryādā* are to be observed by the devotees like the *gopīs*. No doubt, this philosophy had a forceful beginning in India, but it resulted in the most voluptuous and sensuous deeds by many in the name of *bhakti*.

CAITANYA: The spirit of *bhakti*, taking its foundation on love, reached its culmination in Caitanya in Bengal (1485 to 1533 A.D.). He himself was not a great metaphysician but happened to be a devotee unparalleled. His teachings were so impartial and full of love that many Muslims were attracted towards Caitanya and became his disciples, after their conversion to Hinduism. Haridāsa was originally a Muslim;²⁹ Rūpa and Sanātana were high officials under the then Muslim ruler of Bengal. Rūpa-gosvāmin and Jīvagovāmin gave us the poetic literature which is in tune with Caitanya cult, while Baladeva, another disciple, gave his excellent account in *Govinda-bhāṣya* of the *Bhāgavata*, by furnishing to us the philosophy of this cult. Caitanya is an advocate of Acintyabhedābheda—an incomprehensible difference in non-difference. God is omnipotent with incomprehensible power. *Parā* and *aparā śakti* of God create this universe. He is both the efficient cause because of *parā śakti* and material cause because of *aparā śakti*.

The *parā* and *aparā śakti* of God have created the universe and its creatures. These *śaktis* (powers) are dependent on God for existence. The world is real and not illusory. *Jīvas* are neither one nor different from God. *Māyā* binds a man to the world. *Jīva* and *jagat* are the outward expressions of the powers of God. Because Brahman is the creator and the created, there is *abheda* (non-difference), but as *jīva* is atomic and God is absolute, there is *bheda* (difference) also. *Saguṇa* Brahman, who is *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*,

omniscient and omnipotent, is the ultimate Reality. Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate Reality and not an *avatāra*.

There are four realities, viz., *Īsvara*, *jīva prakṛti*, and *kāla*, out of which the last three are dependent on God and have come into existence due to His power which is incomprehensible. It is because of *māyā* that souls forget their real nature. They are fettered by their own *karma*. Liberation can be attained by the eternal experience of love in *mādhurya-bhakti*. God has two forms, power (*aiśvarya*) and love (*mādhurya*). Power creates submission, but love creates love. *Bhakti*, arising from love, is supreme, but this love is of conjugal type. This is the basis of the *bhakti* of Rādhā in this cult.

In this form of *bhakti*, self-forgetfulness comes easily. Separation from God, with whom we desire eternal union, is torturing to us. When self-forgetfulness comes in, *bhakti* begins. This state is called *mahā-bhāva*. This cult recognizes three stages of *bhakti*, viz., *sādhana*, *bhāva*, and *premā*, the last being the highest.

Caitanya has accepted *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya* forms of *bhakti*; but *mādhurya* is regarded as the highest, while the rest are merely stages to it. *Mādhurya* creates in us a feeling of *tavatva*—that now I am the love-object of Kṛṣṇa—when everything of ours is surrendered to God, while the first four create only *mamatva* or a feeling of mine, e.g., my Kṛṣṇa, my God. But in the realm of *bhakti*, it is definitely better to say 'I belong to God' than saying 'God is my master', 'my lord', 'my child', 'my friend'. The first entails self-surrender, while the second still keeps back egoism.

Kīrtana (singing of God's name and qualities), *nāmajapa* (repetition of His name), and reverence for the teacher are means to *bhakti*. It is unnecessary to say that ethics is the first essential ingredient of *bhakti*. The followers of this cult did not accept the importance of *jñānakāṇḍa* and *karmakāṇḍa*, which were previously accepted as means to

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 761.

bhakti. Caitanya preaches only love. The *naimittika* (formal) actions prescribed by the holy books were also dropped by the followers of this cult. Once, Jīvagosvāmin was asked about the reason for not performing *sandhyā* (a form of daily worship enjoined by the scriptures). In his usual way, he replied in a poetic way that recently *bhakti* was born as a daughter to him, and *māyā*—the mother of the new-born child—was dead. Therefore, how during the time of *sūtaka* (Hindus observe ten days, both after birth and death as *sūtaka*, impurity period, and during this period, no holy act is performed) could a holy act like *sandhyā* be performed?³⁰

³⁰ Vide Ramdas Gour, *Hindutva*, p. 680.

The story of the philosophy of *bhakti* does not end with the union with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, as we have seen above. Later on, it branched off into innumerable forms according to the ideal of worship (*upāsya*) and the means of devotion (*sādhana*). It is usually seen that great saints leave a line of followers, some of whom, after sometime, give a new name and turn to the teachings of the master and found a new school. Thus we see that, apart from the worship of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, there are innumerable schools of *bhakti* which are associated with the name of their originators and are prevalent only in some limited areas. But all of them share the common basis of *bhakti*.

THE MYSTICISM OF ANGELUS SILESIUS

BY SRI S. SUBHASH CHANDRA

The history of German mysticism is, undoubtedly, dominated by towering personalities like Meister Eckhart, Jacob Boehme, and Angelus Silesius. These three mystics unquestionably incarnate the pivots of the mysticism of their country. We propose to deal in this article with the mysticism of the last of the three. He is, in our opinion, the most popular and the most readable of all German mystics. Equipped with lyrical gifts, which he uses in abundance, he has made over to the world a priceless legacy, and mystical literature has been vastly enriched by his writings. Since the life of a mystic often happens to be a valuable guide in the understanding of his mystical thought, we shall begin with a short account of the life of our mystic. We shall, then, undertake a succinct elucidation of his doctrine and shall, thereby, prove and substantiate our view that

Angelus Silesius belongs to the rank of the immortals of world mysticism.

Angelus Silesius was born in Breslau in December 1624. His original name was Johann Scheffler, which he changed to Angelus Silesius upon his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. Our knowledge of the personal lives of the parents of Angelus Silesius is meagre and sketchy. His father, Stenzel Scheffler, a Polish aristocrat, was born in Cracow in 1562. An adherent of the Protestant religion, Stenzel Scheffler was constrained, presumably by the bigotry of the dominating Roman Catholic elements in Poland, to migrate to Breslau. At the age of 62, Stenzel Scheffler married Maria Henne-mann, who was then 24 years old. Aside from the illustrious mystic, Maria Scheffler also gave birth to a girl, Magdalena, and a boy, Christian. In 1637, at the early age of 13,

Angelus Silesius lost his father. Two years later occurred the premature demise of his mother.

Our knowledge of the early childhood of Angelus Silesius is gravely hampered by a severe scantiness of information. We know that, from 1639 to 1643, he pursued his studies at the Elisabeth Gymnasium in Breslau. In 1641, he wrote his first major poem in honour of his teacher Chrisostomus Schultz. In 1643, he joined the University of Strasburg. In the summer of 1644, Silesius went over to Leyden, which was then the nucleus of intellectual activity in Europe, and spent two fruitful years there. The University of Padua was the next landmark of the academic Odyssey of the great mystic. On July 9, 1648, after nearly a year's sojourn at this celebrated university, he obtained his doctorate in philosophy and medicine. In 1650, Silesius got acquainted with the renowned mystical writer, Abraham von Franckenberg, whose influence, according to Hans Ludwig Held, has been significant on the mystical thought of Angelus Silesius.¹ June 12, 1653 turned out to be the pivotal day in the life of the poet-mystic. On this day, he became a convert to the Roman Catholic Church. On May 29, 1657 he renounced the allures of the mundane life and became a Catholic priest. A protracted illness, involving inflammation of the lungs, led to his demise on July 9, 1677.

Cherubinischer Wandersmann embodies, undoubtedly, the acme of the contribution of Silesius to the mystical heritage of mankind. It is an extraordinary work. Endowed with a rare poetical genius, Angelus Silesius has here succeeded in creating an epic of mystical literature. The book is replete with the profoundest mystical insights. Here occurs a fascinating coalescence of truth and poetry. The convictions of the mystic find expression in rhymes of exquisite beauty. The words are invested with a celestial charm and the

syllables begin to sparkle. Rightly has Kuno Francke observed: 'In the whole range of literature, there is no book in which pantheism has found a more original poetical expression than in the childlike sybylline verses of *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*.'² *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, published in Vienna in 1657, constitutes verily the *magnum opus* of Angelus Silesius. But an equally important work, though lacking the epical qualities of this monumental book, is *Heilige Seelenlust Oder Geistliche Hirtenlieder*, which appeared in Breslau in 1657. If the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* represents a truly unique espousal of *jñāna-yoga* in the European mystical tradition, then the *Heilige Seelenlust* is, perhaps, the most moving documentation of *bhakti-yoga*. In the first work, as we shall show in the sequel, the quintessence of the Advaita Vedānta is enunciated and conveyed to the reader with an indelible impact. In the second work, however, the mystic becomes a devotee and his soul yearns for a blissful communion with Jesus Christ. The two works together comprise a unity and present to us a picture of Angelus Silesius as an extraordinary religious phenomenon in the history of European mysticism, in whom the elements of *jñāna* and *bhakti* find a successful assimilation. Mention ought, also, to be made of still another work of Angelus Silesius, viz., *Sinnliche Beschreibung Der Vier Letzten Dinge*. In this contribution, the poet undertakes a fanciful, sometimes even naive, description of death, the last judgement, the eternal torments of the damned, and the eternal joys of the redeemed. This work possesses scarcely any philosophical significance. It was clearly meant to serve clerical purposes. That, however, does not detract from it its worth as a literary contribution of a high standard. Angelus Silesius, the poet, is even here very much in evidence. Indeed, his profound poetical genius is a permeative

¹ Angelus Silesius, *Werke*, Vol. I, Edited by Hans Ludwig Held, Carl Hanser Verlag, Munich, 1949, pp. 26-27.

² Kuno Francke, *A History of German Literature*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1916, pp. 195-96.

element in all his writings. A sublime exuberance of expression is conspicuous in the compositions of the mystic of Breslau. To cite August Kahlert: 'The poetical element asserts itself in all that he contributes, even where it is obscured by unusual admixtures. Luminous phantasy, glowing emotions—conditioned perhaps by the Sarmatian blood of his father—lend to his language that overwhelming expression, that hallmark of immediacy, that makes all his writings conspicuous literary monuments.'³

We have alluded to the fact that the contribution of Angelus Silesius is characterized by a balance of stress upon *jñāna* and *bhakti*, and that the two elements are, respectively, enunciated in the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* and the *Heilige Seelenlust*. Surprisingly enough, this has led to a controversy among the Western scholars. The European scholar, predisposed to forcing things into analytical strait jackets, fails to see the unity underlying the mystical knowledge and devotional love. For him, these two trends, when concentrated in a single person, signify a logical discord. Thus, it is contended by some scholars that the kernel of the thought of Angelus Silesius is embodied in the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, and that the devotional elements preponderant in the other work represent a doctrinal concession to the Roman Catholic religion, whose adherent the mystic became. On the other side, it is maintained, that the foundation of the profound contribution of Silesius rests upon devotional elements and that the pivot of his work is the *Heilige Seelenlust*. Needless to say, most of the protagonists of the second view are Catholic scholars. The religious schism, which continues even today to paralyse religious thought and opinion in Europe, has exacerbated the controversy. In our opinion, the controversy is irrelevant, if not senseless. The mystical ingredients and the emotionally

toned approach of the devotee represent no irreconcilable dichotomy, but are two sides of the same coin. The simultaneous presence of these two tendencies in a religious personality, as evidenced, time and again, in the course of the spiritual history of India, implies no contradiction at all. It merely testifies to the fact that the ultimate truth is capable of being realized in various ways and that the law of contradiction could become guilty of irrelevancies.

It may not be out of place here to briefly discuss the conversion of Angelus Silesius to the Catholic Church. In 1653, as we have already pointed out, Silesius severed his ties with the Protestant creed and went over to the camp of the Roman Catholics. Why did he change his religion? What were the factors that led to his disavowal of the religion in which he was born? His own explanation of the factors that led to this crucial step fails to carry conviction, although some of these factors could, no doubt, have played a subsidiary role in influencing his decision. In a tract specifically devoted to an elucidation of the *Reasons and Motives (Ursachen und Motiven)*, he offers such reasons as that the Protestantism had allegedly failed to produce a single saint as against the Catholic Church, which (again allegedly) could boast of a host of saints and seers.⁴ We are assured that the controversies and clashes inherent in the Protestant movement render it no match for the Catholic Church, founded as it was by the early Apostles and fortified by historical tradition and a perfectly well developed system of dogmas and doctrines. It will be seen that these and other similar reasons throw no light on the compelling motivations that ought to characterize a genuine conversion. Indeed, in this tract, and also, in some other minor writings, the approach is polemical to the verge of being recriminative, if not malicious. This bitterness and intolerance, so utterly in

³ August Kahlert, *Angelus Silesius*, A. Gesohorsky's Buchhandlung, Breslau, 1853, p. 89.

⁴ Angelus Silesius, *Werke*, Vol. I, p. 242.

clash with the personality of Angelus Silesius, was perhaps rooted in the aggravated political and ecclesiastical atmosphere then prevailing in Europe. 'The Silesia of the Thirty Years War between Sweden and the Emperor, Protestants and the Counter Reformation of the Jesuits, the Lutheran orthodoxy and the fanatical sectarianism is the soil upon which ... the work of Angelus Silesius grows up.'⁵ In the absence of a really convincing reason, one must resort to conjecture. There can be no doubt of the fact that Silesius was not on good terms with the local Protestant dignitaries, and the Absolutistic tenets expounded in the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* must have put a considerable strain on the already tense relations prevailing between him and the other votaries of his creed. Not only Hans Ludwig Held (who is the editor of the three-volume edition of the writings of Silesius), but also Georg Ellinger is convinced that 'the opposition of Lutherism to mysticism had driven Scheffler (Silesius) in the Catholic camp'.⁶ In the absence of any other substantial motivation, one is constrained to give a qualified assent to this explanation of the conversion of the great mystic.

Before we begin our exposition of the basic tenets of the contribution of Angelus Silesius to human heritage, the reader will bear with us, if we make a brief reference to the intellectual and spiritual factors that had moulded the metaphysics of our mystic. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the contribution of Angelus Silesius consists of 'rhymed distichs embodying a mystical pantheism, drawn mainly from the writings of Jacob Boehme and his followers'.⁷ The influence of Meister Eckhart is easily discernible in the mystical verses of Silesius. Weigles and Tauler, eminent figures in the

mystical tradition of Europe, appear to have palpably influenced his writings. He was acquainted with the writings of Bruno, although the extent to which the latter influenced his thoughts is not easy to assess.

To facilitate a neat and systematic delineation of the mysticism of Angelus Silesius, we propose elucidating first the groundworks of the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, and then we shall deal with the *Heilige Seelenlust*.

The *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* consists of six books, which, respectively, comprise 302, 258, 249, 230, 374, and 263 sublime verses. These verses, most of them couplets, serve to expound a distinctive view of the universe. These verses contain no mere unconnected and disjointed set of mystical fancies, but serve as vehicles to convey a well developed *weltanschauung*. The essence of the mysticism of Angelus Silesius has been brilliantly epitomized by Wilhelm Dilthey in the following words: 'He (Angelus Silesius) does not find the abiding principle of life in the autonomy of the individual, but in the transcendence of the self, in the tranquillized desire, in the consummation of suffering, in the peace in God, where no time, no will, no knowledge is, and which, at the same time, is present in every part of the world and in every self.'⁸ Angelus Silesius propounded an absolutistic view of the universe, and the kernel of his teaching confirms once more the Indian view that an underlying unity is characteristic of all mystical systems of thought.

God, according to Silesius, is the substratum of the universe. He is the Alpha and the Omega of reality. He is the form and the content of the universe. He constitutes the unity of the finite and the Infinite, of the One and the many. He is beyond the categories of time and space. He is eternal. He permeates every nook and corner of the universe. He is immanent and omnipresent. But this immanence does not

⁵ Hermann Heimpel, Theodor Heuss, Benno Reifenberg (ed.), *Die Grossen Deutschen*, Vol. V, p. 118.

⁶ Georg Ellinger, *Angelus Silesius*, Verlag von W. H. Korn, Breslau, 1927, p. 138.

⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. I, (Fourteenth edition), p. 922.

⁸ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. III, B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1959, p. 52.

fetter him to the fleeting and illusory world of time and space. His immanence is based on the bed-rock of his transcendence. He is immanent in so far as he essentially assimilates the multiplicity in his transcendent unity. He is ineffable. In a passage typically reminiscent of the Vedāntic doctrine of 'neti, neti', we are told: 'What God is, one does not know. He is not light, He is not spirit, not truth, unity, one, not what one calls divinity. Not wisdom, not understanding, not love, will, virtues, no thing, no nothing also, no being, no mind. He is what I and you and any other creature, till we have become what He is, never know.'⁹ The God of Angelus Silesius is at once characterized by infinite attributes and is devoid of all attributes. He is not conditioned by the shackles of name and form.¹⁰ He is beyond good and evil, nay, in him the moral norms are fully transmuted. He is constituted of an inexhaustible plenitude of possibilities.

In God, as we have already pointed out, the finite and the Infinite attain their unity. Indeed, Silesius maintains that there is no difference at all between the finite and the Infinite. Just as the difference between the ocean) is idle and fortuitous, so, too, is the souls, avers Silesius, are like drops in an ocean) is idle and fortuitous, so, too, is the distinction between the Creator and the created a mere appearance. The highest truth is an inalienable unity. And this underlying unity embraces the entire world of appearance in all its manifold diversity. Nothing escapes it. The high and the low, the profound and the profane, the sacred and the sacrilegious find their transmutation in the all-assimilative unity of God. God made not only man in his own image, but he is present even in the most elementary forms of life. Even the meanest insect does not fall outside the divine scheme of the universe,

asserts Angelus Silesius.¹²

The mystical universe of Silesius is characterized by a unique phenomenon. Here not only the world of appearance owes its existence to the reality of the unity underlying it (if one may at all speak of the 'existence of the appearance'), but, conversely, the unity, too, is inconceivable without the multiplicity! Angelus Silesius not only espouses the total unity of God and man ('God is what He is; I am, what I am; but if you know one of them, then you know me and Him.'¹³) but opines that this unity is inconceivable without the illusory multiplicity. The reality, we are assured, cannot dispense with appearance and that the unity is inconceivable without multiplicity. Not only is God the substratum of man, but, conversely, is man the *raison d'être* of God. God and man are mutually inter-dependent. 'I know that, without me, God cannot even for a moment live; if I come to nought, then He (too) must, perforce, abandon His soul.'¹⁴ As a result of this doctrine, even the world of appearance acquires a meaningful place in the universal scheme of things. Perhaps, by this doctrine of the mutual inter-dependence of God and man, Angelus Silesius strove to bring out the difference between the illusoriness and the falseness of the universe. Like the Indian Vedāntins, he too, probably, was an adherent of the view that the world is illusory, but not false.

The supreme Reality, then, is to be located in the inalienable and all-encompassing unity of God. The highest good of life is to strive to regain this unity. Indeed, sin signifies nothing but this ignorance of the essentially divine nature of all things. In the words of Silesius: 'Sin is nothing else than the man turning his face away from God and returning (thereby) to death.'¹⁵ Not in various

⁹ *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, IV. 21; *Werke*, Vol. III, p. 111.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, V. 41; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 145.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, VI. 171; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 208.

¹² *Ibid.*, IV 221; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 136.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I. 212; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 8; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, IV. 69; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 118.

manifestations of iniquity, but in this ontological ignorance of the nature of the supreme Truth are the roots of sin to be located. The logical result of this view is that the extent of the iniquity is to be measured in terms of the ignorance separating the finite from the Infinite. Conversely, the extent to which we are convinced, in word and in deed, of the divine substratum of all reality constitutes the criterion of our spiritual progress.

We should, therefore, strive to regain this unity. The finite must lose himself in the illimitable vastness of the Infinite. Salvation is only to be attained, when the identity of the knower and the known is realized, nay, when this identity becomes the very foundation of life. For salvation connotes not merely theoretical conviction, but actual and living realization of the supreme Truth. Our whole being should be saturated by this realization. The Infinite should permeate fully and absolutely our whole being. All distinctions of name and form are transcended in this mystical union of the soul and God. One is immersed absolutely in the unity. This state of mystical ecstasy has been eloquently summarized by Silesius in the following words: 'I do not know what I shall do! For me all has become one: space, no space, eternity, time, night, day, pleasure and pain.'¹⁶ The key-note of this ecstasy is the total dissolution of the individual ego. The universality of the mystical experience brooks no cramping individualities within its framework. It is all-assimilative.

These, in a compressed form, constitute the fundamental tenets of the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*. Having dealt with them, we shall now undertake a delineation of the cardinal aspects of the second important work of the mystic of Breslau, viz., the *Heilige Seelenlust*. This great devotional composition is divided into five books and contains a total of 206 songs. The songs are

characterized by an unusual devotional fervour. The songs serve to give expression to the yearning of the soul (Angelus Silesius calls it the 'Psyche') for the divine love of Jesus Christ. Some of the songs are also used to extol the Holy Virgin. As a rule, however, Jesus Christ is the object of veneration of the mystic. These songs remind an Indian reader, perforce, of the *bhajanas* of Mīrā Bāī and Dādu. The key-note of these songs, as of all other *bhakti* literature, is the advocacy of a deeply personal relationship between God and his creatures. Love, the most intimate of all possible relationships, is advocated as the surest avenue through which God may be approached and attained. To a devotional aspirant, the intellectual approach of the philosopher smacks of pretension and arrogance. The supreme bliss is to be won by the utter surrender of the heart, and not by the sceptical qualifications of the metaphysician. Humility and unreserved faith are the watchwords of the aspirant here. Every glimpse of the divine beloved embodies an incomparable experience suffusing the devotee with an ineffable bliss. Every lapse of this experience is accompanied by the most excruciating pain and suffering. The poet is possessed by his mad infatuation, for infatuation it is, though a divine one.

The deity at whose shrine Angelus Silesius yearns for the grace of divine love is Jesus Christ. He is not merely a great religious personality. He is the incarnation of God himself. He is intransient and replete with compassion. Just, compassionate, benevolent, generous, forbearing, graceful, the great bliss and delight are some of the attributes ascribed to him by Angelus Silesius.¹⁷ The saint goes into raptures while describing his love for the Jesus of Nazareth. He centres all his hopes around the divine person of Jesus. He yearns to commune with him. He declaims: 'No pleasure of the world

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 190; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 28.

¹⁷ *Heilige Seelenlust*, V. 186.8; *Werke*, Vol. II, p. 333.

offers me the tranquillity of heart. Your presence alone, Oh Jesus, is my delight.¹⁸ Christ personifies the highest joy of life. To commune with him is to feel oneself elevated in a state of unbelievable ecstasy. All earthly pleasures pale into insignificance in front of this supreme bliss. No wonder, then, that the aspirant yearns for him with all his heart. Without Jesus, the soul is restless. The aspiring soul cries out: 'Where is my leading star, my sun, my moon, and the entire firmament? Where is my beginning and my end? Where is my joy, my bliss? Where is my death and also my life? My heaven and my paradise? My heart to whom I have so fully surrendered myself, that I am unaware of any other (heart)?¹⁹ The poet longs to lose himself in his beloved deity. The love assumes a personal character. Christ is conceived of as the bridegroom. The bride (i.e. the mystic) pines for his loving presence. She cries: 'Now I die, if he does not come and fold me in his arms. Ah, ah, what a terrible pain it is to love him and yet not be with him.'²⁰ Now and then, the bride is taken aback by her presumption. She becomes aware of her insignificance and despairs of ever becoming worthy of the divine love. She then becomes a bundle of restless anguish and hopeless despair. Immense is her sorrow when she falls prey to some earthly seduction. She is shattered and overwhelmed by despondency and remorse: 'Oh thousand woes, oh dead lust, how have you annihilated me! Oh vanity, oh desert of sin, how have I been executed! You, you, oh sin, oh murderess of the soul, you have deprived me of my own self! Because of you, I have lost my father, God, master, friend, and bridegroom.'²¹ But the remorse does not permanently overwhelm the aspirant. The spark of hope refuses to be extinguished. Faith in the merciful grace

and benevolence of the divine beloved kindles the flame of hope anew. The unflinching devotion quenches the gnawing doubts. Faith is reinforced by the conviction of success. The yearning begins to mount. The flood of tears washes away the formidable hurdles. The obstacle crumbles. As the goal nears, the aspiration reaches its apex. And, lo! The soul is redeemed in the reciprocated love of the celestial beloved.²²

With this, we complete our delineation of the substance of the mysticism of Angelus Silesius. In this essay, we hope to have succeeded in providing an idea of the monumental contribution of Angelus Silesius to the religious heritage of mankind. Angelus Silesius, like other mystics all over the world, confirms the Indian view, so eloquently advocated by Swami Vivekananda in recent times, that an essential unity is characteristic of mysticism, regardless of the religious tradition in which it happens to take place. Indeed, this universality is not only useful in so far as it strengthens the forces combating intolerance and doctrinal narrow-mindedness in various religions, but also serves as the most compelling proof of the validity of the spiritual Truth. The fact that the writings of Angelus Silesius are no mere theological treatises, but are documents of actual religious experience enables them to take a place among the truly great classics of the religious history of the world. As authentic accounts of personal insights and intuitions, they serve as guide-posts for other aspirants. Indeed, the mystic himself laid stress on this point, and the concluding verse of the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* (with which we, too, may aptly conclude our article) pertinently avers: 'Friend, it should suffice. In case you would like to read more, then go and embody yourself (the doctrine of) the writing and become yourself the Real.'²³

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I.3.3; *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I.12.5; *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 50.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, III.75.4; *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 144.

²¹ *Ibid.*, IV.127.8; *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 232.

²² *Ibid.*, IV. 127.17; *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 234.

²³ *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, VI.263; *Werke*, Vol. III, p. 218.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

In this issue, we publish the second instalment of Sri P. Sama Rao's learned article on 'Walt Whitman and Vedānta'. Like the first instalment published last month, this one, also, will be read with interest by our readers, who will be acquainted with the wide outlook of the poet, the elements of love and charity in him, and his spirit of synthesis. The great American poet comes very near to Vedāntic thought in these matters. The third instalment, which will be published in the next issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, will conclude the article. . . .

Sri Dharm Paul, a journalist from New Delhi, says in his article 'Rāja-yoga of Guru Nānak'—which we publish in this month of Śrī Nānak's birth—that, according to the great Sikh preceptor, the king of *yogas* is the *nāma-yoga*, which means the *sādhanā* of the holy name, as a preparation for complete surrender to, and thereby, loving communion with God, which is nothing but coming under His grace. . . .

Professor Braj Bihari Nigam, M.A., of Indore, Madhya Pradesh, in his article 'Bhakti-yoga Restated', traces the development of the cult of devotion in India and describes the contributions of the different *ācāryas* of *bhakti-mārga* in endowing it with a strong philosophical background and making it a popular way of religious practice. His treatment of the subject is comprehensive and the way of expression lucid. The second part of the article, which will complete it, will follow in the next issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . .

'Angelus Silesius belongs to the rank of the immortals of world mysticism.' Sri S. Subhash Chandra, M.A., of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, who is, at present, working as a

research scholar in some of the West German universities, deals with the life and doctrines of the great mystic in his article. This interesting study, done with due care to facts and enriched with copious quotations from the mystic, will be found informative and refreshing.

THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Disraeli, the famous British Prime Minister, once declared in the House of Commons that a 'University should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning'. The aim of education, specially of higher education, is to help the learning youth develop a balanced personality by acquiring largeness of heart and by fostering in him a sense of duty towards the country, if not humanity, so that he can adjust himself well in, and become a useful member of, a society in which he has to live and work. This education should equip him with intellectual efficiency, keenness of observation, power to engage himself earnestly in any work he takes up, and above all, a feeling of self-confidence to be able to achieve what he aims at gaining. But, though the ideal nowhere is always what practically materializes, the case with us here, in this country, is, unfortunately, very unsatisfactory. Except, of course, in a few cases, where some of our university students give really good account of themselves, generally, the education that they get, as someone has aptly said, is 'to know something of a few things, everything of nothing, and to make nothing of the something that is known'. The result of this state of affairs is too evident to mention.

In this connection, the remarks made by Sri C. D. Deshmukh, the Vice-chancellor of the Delhi University, on the occasion of the Asian Cultural and Educational Seminar held at Bangalore recently, are very significant. He welcomed the new thinking in the universities that they should take a lead in

promoting international understanding and solidarity. The aim of education is to help a man manifest the best in him, and this can be done only when he rises above narrow prejudices and suffocating limitations of mind and intellect. This trend towards endowing the students with a feeling of universal brotherhood and mutual co-operation, Sri Deshmukh said, 'would help refine and reform the basic concepts of education'.

On the purpose of university education and its relation to the nation's needs, Sri Deshmukh said that the aim should not be to turn out scientific and technical personnel alone. A nation could not sustain itself merely on that basis. Developing the integrated citizen, rather than the mere specialist in a subject, ought to be the aim of the universities, he added.

Sri Deshmukh, also, drew the attention of

his audience towards another very important factor required to make the imparting of education really successful. He said—and it is very true—that the teacher was the heart of the university, and for the matter of that, for any education, at any of its stages. It is the quality of the teacher's mind and the living contact between him and his students that make for the success of education. But, unfortunately, the teaching profession, specially nowadays in India, has failed to draw always the really capable and talented men into its fold. Sri Deshmukh, therefore, stressed the need to ensure that 'the best men were attracted to the teaching profession'. It is, therefore, the duty of the authorities particularly, and the society generally, to see that the teacher is free from economic problems, and is socially honoured and respected and academically competent to do the onerous job he is expected to do.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THINKING THROUGH THE CREED. By HUGH BURNABY. *Published by Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London EC.4. 1961. Pages 94. Price 4s. 6d.*

The book contains one of the courses of instructional addresses on the Apostles' creed to the undergraduates of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. In it, there are twenty-two addresses dealing with the tenets of Christianity, viz. the Trinity, the Church, prayer, baptism, grace, etc. The author is a pious Christian, and briefly explains his beliefs as a Christian. The Trinity means God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He says: 'The Christian faith is not, primarily, an intellectual assent to certain doctrines, but trusting in God, as Christ has revealed Him.' On God he says: 'We must think of Him as one who embodies our highest ideals. Of course, we cannot comprehend God completely: if we could, He would not be God.' Truly, God, being infinite, cannot be exhausted by any human experience. God is both all-loving and all-powerful. He is the creator and ordainer of the universe. He is the ground and supporter of the world. Faith in Him is a tremendous power in man. Man, though dependent on God for his existence, is sufficiently independent of God to be

able to enter into personal relationship with Him and to co-operate with Him in the work of creation. Thus the author shows the relation between God, man, and the world. He also raises the question of good and evil, but does not offer a solution for it. The problem, he admits, still awaits solution.

According to Christianity, God revealed Himself as Jesus Christ, who is called the Son of God—the Saviour of mankind. Some addresses, naturally, deal with the birth of Christ, his activity, crucifixion, and resurrection. Attempt has been made to prove that his uncommon birth and the supernatural elements in his life, which are called miracles, indicate that he was an incarnation of God.

The crucifixion is not his defeat; it is his victory. 'The crucifixion happened by the appointed will and fore-knowledge of God.' It has two aspects, human and divine. 'Resurrection is not a return of Jesus to earth, but is itself His exaltation from earth to heaven.' Here, we may not agree with the author fully. If Jesus rose from the dead after crucifixion, he only appeared in his spiritual form to his disciples, and then ascended to heaven. So, it is not quite correct to say, I think, that the resurrection is only the exaltation of Jesus

from earth to heaven (*Vide* A. C. Das: *A Modern Incarnation of God*, General Printers, Calcutta, pp. 38-41).

As regards the Church, the author says that it has a mission to the world. It does not exist for itself alone. The author is conscious of its imperfections. He admits that its history has been marred by intolerance, undue conservatism, worldliness, etc.

Lastly, the author stresses the importance of prayer, baptism, grace, and the confession of sin in Christianity. He believes in the eternal life of man.

The book is written in simple and lucid language. The book makes interesting reading and would prove informative and instructive to Christians as well as to non-Christians who want to understand Christianity.

HIRENDRA NARAYAN SARKAR

A SCIENTIST WHO BELIEVES IN GOD. BY H. N. V. TEMPERLEY. *Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, EC.4. 1961. Pages 171. Price 15 shillings.*

Dr. Temperley, a working scientist with distinction, has tried to show, in the book under review, that 'it is possible to arrive at a view of the universe that is reasonably consistent with the known facts about it and that is close to the spirit and letter of the Bible and Christ's teaching'. This he discusses from different modern points of view, in ten interesting chapters that form the book. Being a true Christian, the author restricts his approach only to Christianity, but accepts the greatness of other religions, even though apologetically. However, the book reveals to us how even a scientist, irrespective of the faith to which he belongs, can go beyond the frontiers of science to derive inspiration from religion and show that science and religion can be compatible.

In chapter VIII, while discussing the relative merits of other religions, the author says: 'There is one absolutely crucial way in which our religion (Christianity) differs from all others that have proved lasting: Jesus is the only founder who made the definite claim to be God. Other founders have been described as sages or prophets; inspiration of divine origin has to be attributed to them in greater or less degree'. Perhaps, the author is not aware of the doctrine of incarnation (*avatāra*) in Hinduism.

The book is a good addition to the literature written in recent times by eminent men of science to show the validity of religion. The get-up and printing are nice, but the price is high.

SWAMI NAGESHANANDA

BENGALI

ŚRĪ ŚRĪ MAHĀPURUṢ MAHĀRĀJER SMRTI-KATHĀ. FIRST PART. *Published by Ramakrishna-*

Sivananda Ashram, P.O. Barasat, Dt. 24-Parganas, West Bengal. Pages 204. Price Rs. 2.50.

Swami Sivanandaji, better known as Mahapurush Maharaj, was one of the few exceptional souls who took active part in the divine mission of Sri Ramakrishna. After the passing away of Swami Brahmanandaji in 1922, he became the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The book under review contains the reminiscences of Swami Sivanandaji as laid down by three of his devotees who had the privilege of coming within the aura of his divine personality. His conversations, covering a wide range of subject, and his practical suggestions for solving the various problems of the spiritual aspirants have been lucidly described in this booklet. It will be read with delight by all devout people and can be called a companion volume to *Śivānanda Vāṇī*. Though meditative and indrawn by nature, Swami Sivanandaji was not out of touch with the outside world. In pages 163 and 182, we read with interest, how he appreciated the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress for achieving India's freedom. The inclusion of his short biographical sketch and the few letters written by him during the period of 1918-32 has made the volume more useful. The book is nicely got up and printed on good paper. The entire profit from the sale of this book will go to the Ramakrishna-Sivananda Ashram, Barasat, towards meeting the expenses of worship.

SWAMI NIRGUNANANDA

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA. BY SWAMI ANNADANANDA. *Published by Udbodhan Office, Udbodhan Lane, Calcutta-3. Pages 310. Price Rs. 4.*

Once, in an exalted mood, Sri Ramakrishna made it clear to his foremost disciple Naren (later, Swami Vivekananda), that *Śiva-jñāne jīva-sevā*, i.e., service of man with the idea of worship of Śiva or God should be the real spirit behind all works. This made Swami Vivekananda declare afterwards that the national ideals of India were renunciation and service. And it was Swami Akhandananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the third President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, who first set the pattern for translating these ideals into action. Indeed, he was the living embodiment of these ideals of renunciation and service. Due to his unbounded enthusiasm for the service of the poor and miserable, the first branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission was started at Sargachi as early as 1897.

The book under review is a comprehensive and chronological biography of Swami Akhandananda, published for the first time in Bengali. Apart from a detailed account of his life and activities, the book brings to light numerous unknown events relating to the earlier days of the Ramakrishna Math. The thrilling and fascinating description of his wandering life in the

Himalayas and other parts of India offers a glimpse into the dauntless personality of the Swami. Moreover, the history of the origin and growth of the Sargachi Ashrama, founded by the Swami, can be traced here in detail.

The author has laboriously collected the materials of the book from various authentic sources and spared no pains to make the volume worth a careful perusal. The book amply bears the stamp of his deep devotion for Swami Akhandananda, with whom he came in close touch for many years. It is nicely printed and attractively got up.

SWAMI NIRGUNANANDA

ŚRI 'MA' DARŚAN. By SWAMI NITYATMANANDA. Published by Presidency Library, 15 College Square, Calcutta-12. Pages 398. Price Rs. 5.

'Ma' is the pseudonym of Sri Mahendra Nath Gupta, better known as Master Mahasaya. He was one of the foremost lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. His *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta*, or the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, has immortalized him by kindling the fire of renunciation in the hearts of millions of people. Its value is immeasurable to the spiritually thirsty people all over the world.

Swami Nityatmananda had the rare privilege to serve and live in close association with 'Ma' for a long time, both before and after embracing the monastic life. He used to maintain a diary for his own use, by recording some of the day to day conversations and spiritual talks of 'Ma'. The present book under review is a compilation from the records of his diary. In this volume, we find some original reflections made by 'Ma' on his own book. It also reveals to us some facts hitherto unknown about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. Moreover, 'Ma' is found discussing here the *Gītā*, the Upaniṣads, the Bible, and other scriptures, with a deep philosophical insight, in the light of his Master's teachings. Through his own words, as recorded in this book, we become intimately familiar with this saintly character and his outlook on life. A short biographical sketch of 'Ma', at the beginning, has enhanced the value of the book. The compiler, Swami Nityatmananda, has to be congratulated for bringing out such spiritual gems kept so long hidden under his custody.

We wish the book had been edited better so as to make it more readable.

SWAMI NIRGUNANANDA

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI ANANYANANDA LEAVES FOR LONDON

Swami Ananyananda, who was till recently the Joint Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, reached London by air on the 26th September 1962. At London, he will be assisting Swami Ghanananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MADRAS-4

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1961-62

The work done by this dispensary for the period April 1961 to March 1962 was as follows:

Allopathic Department: Total number of patients treated: 1,46,630; new cases: 49,666; repeated cases: 96,964; (injections: 17,996; minor surgical operations: 671).

Eye Department: Total number of patients treated: 3,302 (new cases: 2,474; old cases: 828). Number of

extra-ocular operations done: 11; number of refractions done: 37.

E.N.T. Department: Total number of patients treated: 13,134 (new cases: 4,689; old cases: 8,445). Number of tonsillectomies done: 61.

X-ray Department: Number of patients X-rayed: 426. Number of patients screened: 121. Twenty-five per cent of these cases were treated free, and for the rest, a nominal charge was made.

Children's Special Treatment: Fundamental treatment, by way of supplying medicated milk, was given to 6,987 sickly and rickety children.

Milk Distribution: Powdered milk was distributed to 1,96,229 undernourished women and children.

Dental Section: Number of extractions: 3,419; number of caries cases: 3,104; number of pyorrhoea cases: 2,214. Total number of patients treated: 8,747.

Laboratory: Number of specimens examined: 914.

Homoeopathic Department: Number of cases treated: 19,741 (new cases: 5,971; old cases: 13,770).

Present need: A permanent endowment fund fetching a monthly income of Rs. 2,000.