



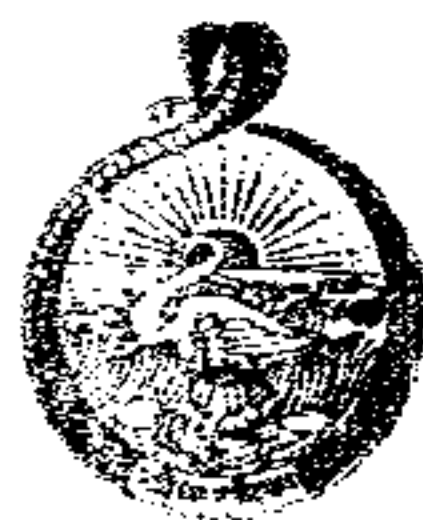
VOL. LXVII

MARCH 1962

Prabuddha Bharata

OR
AWAKENED INDIA

By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
all of these the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.



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No. 3



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:0:—

ON THE SEA'S BOSOM¹

In blue sky floats a multitude of clouds—
White, black, of many shades and thicknesses ;
An orange sun, about to say farewell,
Touches the massed cloud-shapes with streaks of red.

The wind blows as it lists, a hurricane
Now carving shapes, now breaking them apart :
Fancies, colours, forms, inert creations—
A myriad scenes, though real, yet fantastic.

There light clouds spread, heaping up spun cotton ;
See next a huge snake, then a strong lion ;
Again, behold a couple locked in love.
All vanish, at last, in the vapoury sky.

Below, the sea sings a varied music,
But not grand, O India, nor ennobling :
Thy waters, widely praised, murmur serene
In soothing cadence, without a harsh roar.

¹ Swami Vivekananda composed this poem in Bengali during his return, in December 1900, from his second trip to the West. At the time of writing it, he was probably crossing the eastern Mediterranean. It appears as if he foresaw a Western crisis and felt a nostalgia for the peace of India.

The poem is translated for the first time by Swami Nikhilananda of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Belur Math, April-September 1930
(Continued)

A monk had been suffering very badly of late. Mahapurushji said to one of his attendants: 'I wish very much to see him. Can you carry me down to him in a chair? The sympathy of people around can cure a disease.'

* * *

As one of the attendants of Mahapurushji had fallen ill, another monk had been fanning Mahapurushji for two hours every night for the last two days. (Belur Math had no electricity in those days.) On the third day, Mahapurushji told him: 'You better take rest, for it gives you pain; I do not need any more fanning.' 'No, no, Maharaj,' said the monk, 'I feel no difficulty at all. How can we achieve any good unless we can serve you?' 'Yes,' replied Mahapurushji, 'that is true enough; for we are old monks, besides being the servants of the Master; it will do you good if you serve us. There can be no doubt about that.'

* * *

One day, a monk asked Mahapurushji with great feeling: 'Maharaj, should it all end in seeing the Master in the picture alone in my case? Shall I have no realization?' 'No, no,' replied Mahapurushji with the utmost encouragement, 'why should it be in the picture alone? You will have his living vision here itself'; and he pointed to his own heart.

* * *

It was the Janmāṣṭamī day. A monk asked Mahapurushji: 'Did the Master have any special spiritual mood on such a day?' 'How can I remember so much?' said Mahapurushji, 'The fact was that the slightest suggestion sent him into states of divine absorption. You can get some glimpses of this in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, though that is not a complete picture. Master Maha-

shay (its author) did not visit the Master every day; nor did he record all that he saw. True, it must be granted that he had a wonderful memory. Even so, how much of anything can anyone put in writing from one's memory?'

The monk: 'Swamiji (i.e. Swami Vivekananda) had a wish that all the instructions that the Master had imparted personally to his close disciples should be collected and kept in record.'

'How can you get all that now?' inquired Mahapurushji, 'For most of them have already departed.'

* * *

In the evening, Mahapurushji said to a devotee: 'Go and attend the evening service of the Master. The Master himself is present in the Belur Math, for Swamiji installed him here. Know this as a truth.'

* * *

When the monk who performs the daily worship at the (Sri Ramakrishna) temple saluted Mahapurushji one morning, Mahapurushji was in his own spiritual mood, uttering, 'Jai Guru Maharaj, Jai Guru Maharaj!' Then, as his eyes fell on the monk after a while, he said with affection: 'It is very good that you are performing the worship of the Master. May you be filled with devotion and faith. At the end of the worship, you should pray thus: "Master, may it please you to have your worship performed by me in the way that pleases you. For what do I know of your worship?" Those who are working here in connection with the Master's service will all be blessed. Many assert: "The Master is present everywhere." That is quite true, but his manifestation is greater here. For Swamiji installed him here. Do you not know that *ātmārāma's* vessel (the vessel containing the ashes of the Master installed at the Belur Math by Swamiji)?'

Another day, he asked that monk: 'Do

you practise a little *japa* after opening the shrine in the afternoon?’

‘Yes, Maharaj,’ he replied.

‘Yes, you have to maintain a current of spiritual ideas flowing there for ever, so that whenever anyone goes to the shrine, one will have the feeling of being in the presence of God Himself. He likes His devotees and their devotion. What else can be the idea behind a personal God? Doing a little meditation?—that alone will not help much. One must have devotion—in fact, one must have both.’

* * *

Many monks had gathered in Mahapurushji’s room in the morning, and the talk turned to telling of beads. ‘It is people with gross ideas alone’, remarked Mahapurushji, ‘who think that the more one tells beads, the more propitious does God become. Does He really look at the number? He only watches how much the heart is dedicated to Him. If the proper divine mood prevails, what does it matter whether you keep count or not?’

A monk: ‘Yes, Maharaj, sometimes, it seems that the telling of beads is itself a sort of distraction.’

‘Yes, it is really so’, said Mahapurushji. ‘I never take to telling beads or such things. As a saint has put it: “He that tells beads is rather an ignoramus.” But then, one needs must have a rosary, for one has to show that one is a holy man!’ He laughed as he said so, and then added: ‘I have kept a rosary there (pointing to the rosary placed round his own photograph on the wall). I do not have to do any such thing as telling of beads; all that is done by this one (pointing to the picture again, and laughing as he spoke). The Master used to say: “The telling of beads comes first, then comes meditation, and after that divine moods, divine absorption, etc.”’

In the afternoon, Mahapurushji was pacing up and down in the upper verandah of the Math overlooking the Gaṅgā, while Khoka

Maharaj (Swami Subodhananda) sat at the other end in an easy chair, reading the *Bhāgavata*. Turning to an attendant present there, Mahapurushji remarked: ‘Khoka Maharaj is poring over the *Bhāgavata*.’

‘Yes, Maharaj,’ replied the attendant, ‘he has finished many other Purāṇas; he has read the *Śiva Purāna*, for instance.’

‘Yes,’ added Khoka Maharaj, ‘one has to keep oneself engaged somehow.’

‘Why somehow?’ remarked Mahapurushji, ‘Is the *Bhāgavata* an ordinary book? The *Bhāgavata* and the other Purāṇas speak to us of that Truth alone.’

In the evening, as he watched the moonlit river from that very verandah, he said with folded hands: ‘Glory unto Mother Gaṅgā, glory unto Mother! Please grant me devotion, Mother Gaṅgā.’

As his blood pressure had gone up, and as the doctors had forbidden too much talk, the attendant reminded him of this, to which he said: ‘I am a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, to be sure. Even when suffering excruciating pain from such a dangerous disease as cancer (of the throat), how he felt for all who visited him, and how he talked to them! And am I to keep quiet? The body is not well, what of that? Does it look nice that you should come and depart silently after saluting me? What will you think of me? You may well think: “So, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna is like this after all!”’

Belur Math, May 11, 1930

At night, a monk from South India saluted Mahapurushji and, by way of disclosing his heart’s desire to him, said: ‘Maharaj, I want to see God in everything. Kindly tell me how this can be possible.’

‘My son,’ replied Mahapurushji, ‘you will have to see God in your own heart first. How can it be possible to see Him in all things outside unless you can see Him first within yourself? When one is firmly established in one’s realization of Him as the Self, one can see Him everywhere inside and outside; then

only one attains the state described as "The whole universe is full of Brahman".

The monk: 'Can this state be reached through the perfection of moral qualities, like truthfulness, kindness to all, love, endurance of all suffering without a murmur, etc.?'

'Yes,' confirmed Mahapurushji, 'the mind becomes purified when it is disciplined through morality; and the divine vision dawns on that pure mind. But I cannot accept the view that the divine vision comes as the result of mere moral behaviour. It is through constant devotion and meditation that God becomes gracious and reveals Himself in the heart of the devotee. What is needed is meditation—constant thought of Him. By constantly thinking of Brahman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, which is truth, infinity, love, omnipotence, and consciousness, a man becomes Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Itself. All that one has to do is to establish God in one's heart by any means. Then, one need have no separate effort for building up a moral character. All such divine qualities as truthfulness, kindness, love, etc. then come to one as a matter of course. The Master used to say that a boy who is led by the hand by his father has no fear of falling down. Do you know the greatest secret, my boy? It is grace, grace. Men can see Him only when He grants His vision out of His own compassion. Spiritual practices and such other things are meant merely for turning the mind to God.' Saying this, he sang in a sweet voice:

'Whoever can see you unless you vouchsafe
the vision?

Can the heart ever run to you unless the
call be from you?

Infinite, higher than the high, you are
shoreless and inaccessible;

O Lord, whoever can grasp you through
meditation?

Often do I tell my mind that you are
beyond speech and mind;

Still is the heart athirst for your vision.

Do grant me your vision and assuage my
heart's thirst.

O remover of discomfiture, do please calm
my heart.'

He finished the song in a state of deep emotion, and then added slowly: "The Master used to say: "The breeze of grace blows freely and for ever; it is for you to unfurl your sail." This unfurling of the sail means personal effort, spiritual practices, and all that. Through spiritual practices, one must make oneself fit for comprehending God's grace. All else He does out of His own mercy. Through constant thought of Him and meditation on Him, the mind and heart become purified; and on that pure mind occurs a natural reflection of the divine light; it realizes God's grace. Besides, you have become monks; you have taken shelter under Him after renouncing everything. God-realization is the one aim of your lives. You have to live with Him alone at all moments. Have you not heard the Master's words: "A bee sits on flowers only, and sucks honey alone"? So, your one enjoyment will be with God—in sleep, in dream, in the waking state, and under all circumstances. You have to spend your time in meditation on Him, repetition of His name, recollection of Him, reading about Him, reflecting on Him, and prayer to Him. Then only, you will get real bliss and peace in life, and your reliance on Him will be fruitful. God sees one's mind. He becomes gracious where He sees sincere craving. There is no injustice in His domain.'

Belur Math, June 24, 1930.

Mahapurushji sang this song with deep feeling:

'What a machine has Mother Śyāmā made;
what a machine has Mother Kālī made!
What wonder She works through this
machine, only three and a half cubits
long!

Living inside the machine, She moves it with
strings She Herself holds;

The machine says : "I run", not knowing who makes it run' etc.

He repeated the song quite a number of times, and then sat silent. Finally, he said, speaking to himself : 'All that we know is that Mother is the only truth ; Mother is kind. We know nothing else ; we understand nothing else ; nor do we feel any need for more.'

A little later, a *brahmacārin* spoke to him about his failure to progress in the path of spirituality and the consequent want of peace. He prayed for Mahapurushji's blessings in all earnestness. Moved by this, Mahapurushji said with great feeling : 'May Mother bless you fully ; may She remove all the disquiet from your mind. Wait steadfastly at Her door, my son ; lie down at Her door. She will fulfil everything in due course. Never be dispirited. Call on God with all earnestness

and pray : "Master, be kind to me. I am an ignorant person ; I do not know how to pray to you. Be gracious to me. Grant me full love and full faith for your lotus feet, and grant me full knowledge. To whom else can I turn but you ? Take pity on me, and reveal yourself in my heart." Remain occupied with your own spiritual practices and duties. Why should you worry about what others do ? Whoever will struggle will surely succeed ; for him is happiness in store. Thinking about God is very helpful in life. If one but takes to meditation and *japa* and prays to Him constantly, one's mental tendencies get the proper direction, and one's senses come under control. Engage yourself in spiritual practices with all earnestness. Struggle, struggle, my son ; call on Him with all sincerity. His name has in it all the requisite powers in a latent form.'

A NATION BUILDER

Swami Vivekananda has been described as the patriot-saint of India, an Indian nation builder, or the father of Indian nationalism. The phrases are aptly applied so far as this side of his life and message are concerned, and so far as we can separate this from the other sides of his varied life, with which we do not propose to deal in this article. So far as the impact of his personality on the political life of the country is concerned, Principal Kamakhya Mitra was absolutely correct when he wrote in 1930 : 'I do not know a single self-sacrificing Indian worker of the present century who has not been influenced more or less by his thoughts, words, and example' (*Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 349). And this has been confirmed by such eminent leaders of thought and action as Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath

Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose, and Sri Aurobindo.

Though we are not dealing with the other aspects of the Swami here, in all justice to him we must warn the readers that he resented being called a politician or a mere Indian patriot. 'Those who ... want to prove that I am a political preacher, to them I say, "Save me from my friends"', he wrote in 1894 from America ; and he added, 'I am no politician or political agitator. I care only for the Spirit' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V. Seventh Edn., p. 46). In 1896, he wrote : 'You must not forget that my interests are international and not Indian alone' (*ibid.*, p. 124). All the same, his love for his country was intense and unparalleled : 'My life's allegiance is to this my motherland' (*ibid.*, Vol. IV. Seventh

Edn., p. 312). How this patriotism and universalism could be reconciled on the basis of spirituality is another question and quite beyond the scope of the present article. With these reservations, let us study how Swami Vivekananda roused the nation, and what programme he chalked out for future generations in this country.

One fact that all students of the Swami's life have noted is that his appearance at the Parliament of Religions and his glorious achievement there constituted in themselves a unique event of national importance. And as he spoke at the Parliament, writes Sister Nivedita, 'a nation, sleeping in the shadows of the darkened half of earth, on the far side of the Pacific, waited in spirit for the words that would be borne on the dawn that was travelling towards them, to reveal to them the secret of their own greatness and strength' (*ibid.*, Vol. I. Ninth Edn., Introduction, p. xii). The Indians had been oppressed and disparaged till they had come to think that they really lacked the strength of body, mind, and spirit that makes a nation great. Here was one of their very own men who could not only hold his position against the *elite* of other nations, but could improve upon their philosophy of life. Yes, India had something to contribute to the progress of the world; she, too, had a mission to fulfil; and she could be self-confident about her role and feel proud of that.

In Swami Vivekananda, Hinduism found a champion who spoke uncompromisingly as a Hindu, without cringing apologies, or fear of foreign criticism, or eagerness for the approbation of Western dignitaries. Sister Nivedita writes: 'What Hinduism had needed was the organizing and consolidating of its own idea' (*ibid.*, p. ix); 'For India herself, the short address (at Chicago) forms, as has been said, a brief Charter of Enfranchisement' (*ibid.*, p. xiii). The Swami spoke of Hinduism as a whole, and he showed how its apparently contradictory ideas could be reconciled by assigning to them their due places of honour.

A whole nation heard him, and each individual felt a more intense love for his brother in faith. The Hindus became conscious of their invaluable possession, and felt no need any more for standing before others with begging bowl in hand.

In 1897, he received a hero's welcome on his return to India, and a greater hero he proved to be by his dynamic oratory; his transparent love for his country and countrymen; his message of hope, strength, goodwill, and self-confidence; his exhortation for re-ordering our national life, and for absolute selflessness in personal life; his vigorous call for renunciation and service; and his practical programmes for the educational and social betterment of our women and the masses. Swami Vivekananda knew that his work in America had a tremendous effect in India. It generated faith and self-confidence in the masses, and this paved the way for his Indian work. When he returned with this prestige, he used it all for the uplift of the country and not for any personal gain. He mentioned three tests for a real national worker—true and abiding love for those whom one would serve, absolute selflessness, and a practical plan of work. Examined from all these three points of view, the Swami proved that his heart, intelligence, and action were in full accord and wholly dedicated to the cause he stood for. His life is a standing witness to all this; his message is a source of inspiration to generations yet to come; and the path he chalked out is the surest way to success, as recent Indian history has been proving almost every day.

II

Lest somebody should suspect us of platitudes, let us study Swami Vivekananda's message in some greater detail. As we do so, we are struck with wonder at the way he penetrated into the innermost core of the problems and the far-reaching solutions he suggested regarding them.

It is a matter of history now that the

Indian national movement, in its earlier days, believed only in holding meetings and passing resolutions, sometimes couched in strong words, but oftener in a mild tone that would not offend the rulers too much. Apart from this, the national leaders could not hit upon any practical and effective programme. Things were much the same when Swami Vivekananda worked in India from 1897 to the middle of 1902. But, far from being influenced by the prevailing atmosphere, he showed his originality in more than one way, and subsequent history proved that he was absolutely right in his diagnosis of the disease in the Indian national life, as also in his prescription of the necessary remedy.

One point he emphasized in almost all his lectures and conversations in India was the primacy of religion in all the modes of expression of our national life. 'Religion and religion alone is the life of India; and when that goes, India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. Eighth Edn., p. 146). 'The secret of a true Hindu's character lies in the subordination of his knowledge of European sciences and learning, of his wealth, position, and name, to that one principal theme which is inborn in every Hindu child—the spirituality and purity of the race' (*ibid.*, p. 152). The Swami noted that the Indian people responded with alacrity when called in the name of religion, though they might be ignorant about politics and economic theories that sway the Western masses. As a necessary corollary of this, it followed that, if the Indian people were to be raised, their hearts had to be reached through religion. 'So, every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas' (*ibid.*, p. 221). 'Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us,

religion is the only ground along which we can move' (*ibid.*, p. 314).

The Swami was not scared by the bogey of religious fights; for, according to him, it is politics that is really responsible for such orgies. True religion unites, irreligion divides. 'What then incited people to do these things? Politics, but never religion; and if such politics takes the name of religion, whose fault is that?' (*ibid.*, Vol. IV. p. 125). Again, India had specifically chosen for herself the task of harmonizing all her religions in accordance with her national theme, as enunciated in the *Rg-Veda*: '*Ekam sat, viprah bahudha vadanti*'—That which exists is one; sages call It by various names. Unity in variety is the ideal inspiring the whole of Indian life. Future progress lies along that line alone.

Each nation had to make its special contribution to the sum total of human welfare. India had chosen spirituality as the field of her action. The choice had not been a bad one. But, even if it had been unwise, we cannot suddenly change the current of our national life overnight. Prudence also requires that one should follow the path of least resistance. The Swami had therefore no soft words for those who would decry India's religion and run after the West for bringing about a better order of things. Religion had been sustaining the nation for centuries, despite waves of oppression and foreign depredation. And it is religion, again, that holds the different regions together, varied though they are linguistically, socially, and in many other ways. 'This nation still lives; the *raison d'être* is it still holds to God' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 148). 'The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition, our religion. That is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build' (*ibid.*, p. 286). 'We see how in Asia, and especially in India, race difficulties, linguistic difficulties, social difficulties, national difficulties, all melt away before this unifying power of religion' (*ibid.*, p. 287). 'National union

in India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune' (*ibid.*, p. 371). 'There has been enough of criticism; ... the time has come for the rebuilding, the reconstructing; the time has come for us to gather all our scattered forces, ... and through that to lead the nation on its onward march' (*ibid.*, p. 367).

The preservation and advancement of spirituality must be our national policy, for in it lies India's real greatness, and also because the world is athirst for this spirituality, and looks to India to show the way. The only means of a vigorous national life, in the Swami's conception, was to conquer the world with Indian spirituality. 'They are waiting for it, they are eager for it' (*ibid.*, p. 277). By this spirituality, he did not mean the changing manners and customs, but the eternal principles underlying true spirituality. He enumerated them as, 'the idea of oneness of all, the Infinite, the idea of the Impersonal, the wonderful idea of the eternal soul of man, of the unbroken continuity in the march of beings, and the infinity of the universe' (*ibid.*, p. 110). To emphasize the primacy of spirituality in any truly progressive movement, he asked: 'Does man make laws, or do laws make man? Does man make money, or does money make man?' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 462). His own answer was: 'No nation is great or good, because Parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good' (*ibid.*, p. 192). His first duty in India, accordingly, was to make the nation more spiritual, and more united through an understanding of Hindu culture, history, and tradition. That would restore confidence, and that would arrest the tempo of denationalization which was in evidence everywhere.

III

A spiritual giant of the Swami's stature could not speak or write otherwise than as a man of religion. That was the Swami's only

aim—to raise India and the world spiritually, to make the whole of the varied human life a constant struggle for spiritual unfoldment. To make this a reality, he contacted men in all fields of activity, social, religious, scientific, economic, and others. In the Indian national life, he left his own unique contributions. One of these was: 'India is to be saved by the Indians themselves' (*ibid.*, Vol. IV. p. 659). He repeated this idea before several audiences and expatiated on it whenever an opportunity arose. The dictum voiced by him more than sixty years ago has not lost its significance even in the present context; for, even today, many people cherish a vague hope that other nations will somehow make India strong and prosperous. And one has to remind such people of the old adage: 'God helps those who help themselves.' Hence, how strange and unpractical this must have sounded in those days in the ears of the nationalists who saw no way of escape from foreign domination! Yet, the greatness of a leader lies in seeing beyond the immediate difficulties and rousing the drooping spirits of others by pointing forcefully to the essential principles of human life. So the Swami went on telling his compatriots: 'Every nation, every man, and every woman must work out their own salvation' (*ibid.*, p. 362). 'Every nation must save itself; we must not depend upon funds from America for the revival of Hinduism, for that is a delusion' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 61). 'You must not depend on any foreign help. Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism. If a nation cannot do that, its time has not yet come. It must wait' (*ibid.*, p. 108). It must have required a prophet's vision and a lion's courage to realize such a truth and give expression to it in the closing years of the last century.

And yet, Swami Vivekananda was not an isolationist. Often enough did he remind his countrymen that India's fate was sealed the very day she coined the term '*mleccha*' and ceased to have free communication with the

world outside. In fact, his words sound just like those of a modern internationalist, though they were uttered during the darkest days of Indian political life. 'The fact of our isolation from all the other nations of the world is the cause of our degeneration, and its only remedy is getting back into the current of the rest of the world' (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII. Second Edn., p. 325) 'Even in politics and sociology, problems that were national twenty years ago can no more be solved on national grounds only. . . . They can only be solved when looked at in the broader light of international grounds' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 241).

His conciliation of nationalism and internationalism in the Indian arena was equally charming. India had to learn many things from others, and she had to reconstruct her social, political, and economic life with the help of the light she got from outside. 'But it must always be we who build up a new India as an effect and continuation of her past, assimilating helpful foreign ideas wherever they may be found. Never can it be they; growth must proceed from within' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 198). 'Learn from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that, as Hindus, everything else must be subordinated to our own national ideals' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 152).

National dignity and the welfare of the world as a whole require that each nation should maintain and fulfil its mission in the comity of nations. India's mission is spirituality. So she must give as freely of this as she receives everything good from outside with open arms. 'We should learn from the West her arts and her sciences. From the West, we have to learn the sciences of physical nature, while, on the other hand, the West has to come to us to learn and assimilate religion and spiritual knowledge' (*ibid.*, p. 443). Elsewhere, he says that we can learn with profit from the West its method of organized activity. And he speaks of India's stable society which has withstood

the shock of ages, and which can serve as a model to others. We have to exchange these if we want to thrive. 'Each nation must give in order to live' (*ibid.*, p. 273).

The next point he emphasized was the uplift of women and the masses. India's salvation, according to him, was inextricably bound up with this. His emphatic declaration was: 'The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses, must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India' (*ibid.*, Vol. VI. Sixth Edn., p. 490). 'The whole defect is here: The real nation who live in the cottages have forgotten their manhood, their individuality. . . . They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated' (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII. p. 307). Education of the proper type, based on national ideals and conducted by true nationalists who must needs be spiritual, can retrieve the situation. But one did not, in those days, find any real endeavour to spread this kind of education. Besides, the national leaders made no attempt to win the hearts of the masses by serving them during natural calamities, like flood, famine, and pestilence; this was very much felt by the Swami, who initiated on his own account the service of the 'Daridra-Nārāyaṇas'—God in the poor—which phrase was first coined by him.

We cannot live on ideas and talk by shutting our eyes to the problem of hunger. 'Did not our *gurudeva* use to say, "An empty stomach is no good for religion"?' (*ibid.*, Vol. VI. p. 254). 'No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 222); 'First of all, you must remove this evil of hunger and starvation, this constant anxiety for bare existence' (*ibid.*, p. 380). The remedy lay in opening out new avenues of national income. Industry had to be developed, commerce better organized, and agriculture improved and intensified.

In this context, we cannot resist the temptation of referring to his estimation of the

work that was being done by the Indian National Congress of those days. He said during a private conversation at Belur Math in 1898: 'Sit at their (i.e. of the English) feet and learn from them the arts, industries, and the practicality necessary for the struggle for existence. You will be esteemed once more when you will become fit. . . . Without the necessary preparation, what will mere shouting in the Congress avail?' (*ibid.*, Vol. VII. Fifth Edn., p. 147). This was only one side of his estimation, which was concerned with the lack of constructive work in those early days and the want of realization that one must earn the esteem of others if one were to have one's due share of other people's help in international dealings. All the same, Swami Vivekananda knew that the Congress formed the vanguard on the political front for the betterment of the nation. When an interviewer asked him, 'Have you given any attention to the Indian National Congress movement?' he replied, 'I cannot claim to have given much; my work is in another part of the field. But I regard the movement as significant, and heartily wish it success. A nation is being made out of India's different races. . . . It will certainly end in the working out of India's homogeneity, in her acquiring what we may call democratic ideas' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p. 199).

IV

Swami Vivekananda certainly felt the need of economic and political advancement and freedom; but he preferred working in other fields. We have already mentioned religion, education, and philanthropy. The need of social reform, too, was admitted by him, and he had no kind words for such diabolical practices as untouchability, child-marriage, oppression of the masses by the higher castes, and so on. Though he did not lead any reform movement, the reforming spirit of the nation got a real impetus from his denunciation and forceful utterances. All this yielded a rich harvest in the years that followed.

Not content with this alone, Swami Vivekananda aimed at changing the very outlook of the nation. We have already referred to the galvanizing effect that his success in the West had on the Indian people as a whole. He took advantage of this success to make his message clearer and his effort more effective.

For eliminating communal rancour and for establishing brotherly feeling in all the spheres of human association, he urged all to imbibe the spirit of harmony illustrated by the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He also thought that a more dynamic, progressive, and balanced national life could be ensured through a better understanding of the fundamental principles of religion and a more practical application of these in life, without distinction of caste, creed, or colour. The Indians had enough of philosophy, but they lacked practicality. Our scriptures, for instance, say that all souls are same, but in practice we look down upon others and consider ourselves a little higher in stature. This brings about national weakness and disruption. In the modern world, no section of a nation can progress without pulling up the others also along with itself.

Then, again, indolence masquerades here as the highest spiritual equipoise. That is a sign of death. If the nation is to be resuscitated, it requires to be strengthened mentally and physically. Under the prevailing conditions, the Swami did not even hesitate to utter such an apparently sacrilegious maxim as, 'You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the *Gītā*. These are bold words; but I have to say them, for I love you. . . . You will understand the *Gītā* better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 242). Swami Vivekananda has often been described as a prophet of strength; to some extent, it is true. His theory was that, to rise to spiritual equipoise, one has to pass through activity; otherwise, one will lapse into laziness. That was the ailment from

which India suffered. He therefore pleaded for strength, so that there might be more activity all around. The Hindus must become more dynamic, more confident in their approach to life's problems; for expansion is life, while contraction is death. Against such a background, one can understand why he decried too much of emasculating emotionalism in the religious expressions of contemporary society. 'What we now want in our country, however, is not so much of weeping, but a little strength' (*ibid.*, p. 130); 'The only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness' (*ibid.*, p. 160).

The Swami insisted on faith—faith in oneself and in one's own tradition. A denationalizing education had hammered it into our brains that we were nobodies, that our national culture belonged to a bygone age which the Westerners had transcended long ago, and that what good things it contained were borrowed from Greece and Rome. To lose faith in oneself and in one's nation, and then to run after others like beggars, not only hurts national dignity, but it also spells death. Time and again, therefore, the Swami dinned it into the ears of his countrymen that they were all potentially divine, and actually they were superior to others in many respects. Besides, their history was quite a glorious one. India in the past not only stood on her own legs, but actually taught others to do so. And in front of the Indians lay a brighter future, before which every other period would pale into insignificance, and every nation would stand in awe and admiration. 'So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into the past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life' (*ibid.*, Vol. IV. p. 324). As he visualized the bright future, he exclaimed: 'Up, up, the long night is pass-

ing; the day is approaching; the wave has risen; nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury.... Believe, believe, the decree has gone forth; the fiat of the Lord has gone forth—India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy' (*ibid.*, Vol. V. p.35).

It was not without reason that India fell in recent past. She had lost the vigour of the spirit; she neglected her women and the masses; she had no programme of national education; she failed to apply her vast wisdom in a practical way; she withdrew into a shell eschewing international co-operation, she magnified the emotional side of religion; she mistook weakness for strength; she lost faith in herself and her past; and she failed to achieve communal harmony. As a result of all these, as well as many other drawbacks, she became enslaved. From that resulted a series of vices that slave nations are prone to. Laziness, lack of initiative, selfishness, jealousy, want of co-operation, absence of business integrity, and such other vices followed in the wake of centuries of foreign rule. The situation needed physical as well as psychological treatment. Swami Vivekananda, accordingly, pointed out the defects, like a loving father, and advised their removal, like a bold surgeon. At the same time, he infused faith in the nation with inspiring words and promise of a glorious future, like some prophet of old.

He summed up his method of nation building in three short formulae: 'Three things are necessary to make ... every nation great: (1) conviction of the powers of goodness, (2) absence of jealousy and suspicion, (3) helping all who are trying to be and do good' (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII. p. 299).

A lesser ideal would not satisfy a Swami Vivekananda. A national leader of such light and leading, of such love, vigour, and inspiration, is rare indeed.

THE VEDIC TESTIMONY AND ITS SPECIALITY—1

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

1. *The twofold capacity of verbal testimony. It is the only vehicle of suprasensuous knowledge. It precedes intuitive perception.*

Verbal testimony (*śabda-pramāṇa*, lit. 'word as a means of valid knowledge') has a twofold capacity. It can communicate the facts of the sensible universe, and can also enlighten us on suprasensible truths; whereas other vehicles of knowledge are capable of acquainting us only with the sensible. Thus, there are two kinds of verbal testimony: the secular and the scriptural, conveying the knowledge of the sensible and the suprasensible respectively. As observed by Sāyaṇa, the great Vedic commentator, it is the special purpose of the scriptural texts to disclose truths that are beyond man's normal experience.¹ 'The scripture is the only source of the knowledge of the suprasensible', says Śaṅkara.²

Neither sense-perception, nor any of the other means of knowledge dependent on it, can impart knowledge of suprasensible facts, e.g. God, soul, their relation, soul's journey after death, heaven, hell, the origin of the universe, merit and demerit accruing from righteous and unrighteous deeds, their fructification, man's highest destiny, and its fulfilment. However, the existence of the suprasensible cannot be denied. The explanation of the seen is in the unseen. Perception does not exhaust reality. With the experience of an object, one is aware of the experiencing self that is invariably present. The finite betokens the infinite, the changeful the changeless, the temporal the eternal, the imperfect the perfect. Indeed, reality far exceeds the four dimensional objective universe.

Reason, which is founded on common experience, necessarily fails to unveil what is beyond it. Swami Vivekananda rightly observes: 'The field of reason, or of the conscious workings of the mind, is narrow and limited. There is a little circle within which human reason must move. It cannot go beyond. Every attempt to go beyond is impossible; yet it is beyond this circle of reason that there lies all that humanity holds most dear. All these questions, whether there is an immortal soul, whether there is a God, whether there is any supreme intelligence guiding this universe or not, are beyond the field of reason. Reason can never answer these questions. What does reason say? It says: "I am agnostic; I do not know either yea or nay." Yet these questions are so important to us. Without a proper answer to them, human life will be purposeless. All our ethical theories, all our moral attitudes, all that is good and great in human nature, have been moulded upon answers that have come from beyond the circle. It is very important, therefore, that we should have answers to these questions.'³

How does man know the truths that are beyond the range of the senses and out of the reach of reason? According to most religions, great saints and seers intuit these truths in a superconscious state above reason. As declared by Patañjali: 'In that state (of *samādhi*), knowledge can be said to be "filled with truth". The knowledge that is gained from testimony and inference is about common objects. The knowledge gained from *samādhi* is of a much higher order, being able to penetrate where inference and testimony cannot go.'⁴ Many Eastern and Western philoso-

¹ Introduction to his commentary on the *Rg-Veda*.

² *Brahma-Sūtra*, II.1.27; see also *ibid.*, II.3.1, commentary.

³ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I. p. 181.

⁴ *Yoga-Sūtra*, I. 48, 49.

phers concur on this point that the human mind can develop a suprasensuous and supra-rational faculty of 'intuition', which is far superior to intellect, and can perceive facts that are otherwise inaccessible. As observed by S. Radhakrishnan: 'We have to pass beyond thought, beyond the clash of oppositions, beyond the antinomies that confront us when we work with the limited categories of abstract thinking, if we are to reach the real where man's existence and divine being coincide. It is when thought becomes perfected in intuition that we catch the vision of the real. The mystics the world over have emphasized' this fact. Pascal dwells on the incomprehensibility of God, and Bossuet bids us not to be dismayed by the divergencies, but regard them all trustfully as the golden chains that meet beyond mortal sight at the throne of God.

'According to the Upaniṣads, there is a higher power which enables us to grasp this central spiritual reality. Spiritual things require to be spiritually discerned. The *yoga* method is a practical discipline pointing out the road to this realization. Man has the faculty of divine insight or mystic intuition, by which he transcends the distinctions of intellect and solves the riddles of reason. The chosen spirits scale the highest peak of thought and intuit the reality.'⁵

Of course, one has to undergo the necessary disciplines to develop the supernal vision. It is the intense practice of meditation on the nature of the Self or God that leads to the intuitive realization of the same. Other spiritual disciplines are the preparatory steps. For the practice of meditation, it is absolutely necessary for the seeker to have the previous knowledge of the Self or God from a reliable source. The sacred texts and the words of a qualified teacher are the only authentic source. The seeker should also convince himself of the truth of the verbal statements by reasoning on them. 'Seek,

and ye shall find', says Jesus Christ.⁶ But without a clear comprehension of the nature of God and His abode, one cannot seek Him even, far less find.

The purpose of meditation is to turn the mediate knowledge into the immediate apprehension. In consequence of the long-continued, steady practice of meditation on God or the supreme Self with a yearning heart, when the seeker's mental mode fully conforms to the object of meditation, the illumination is attained. One may ponder on the nature of the Self or God through sheer imagination, heedless of any authoritative account, but this cannot lead to the desired end. In such a case, one is likely to be subject to fantasy, which cannot remove ignorance and reveal the Truth. Without a definite knowledge of the Truth, right meditation is not possible. So it is said: 'One attains the supreme state of *yoga* by developing intuition (*prajñā*) in a threefold way—hearing of the authentic words (*āgama*), reasoning on them, and the ardent practice of meditation.'⁷ A spiritual aspirant meditates on God particularly as the innermost Self, since no other knowledge leads to liberation. 'Behold the kingdom of God is within you', says Jesus Christ.⁸

Thus the verbal knowledge invariably precedes the superconscious experience. Before one can develop the intuitive perception, one must know about God or the Self from the scriptures, or from a qualified teacher, or from both. So the questions arise: Where do the scriptures come from? Who is the first teacher of spiritual knowledge? How did man know God first? Some may hold that the scriptures are the records of the superconscious experiences of the seers. Even then, one can pertinently ask: How could the seers experience truth without being taught about it? So, in the last resort, it is to be admitted that the all-knowing, self-

⁶ Matthew, 7:7; Luke, 11:9.

⁷ *Yoga-Sūtra*, I.48, Vyāsa's commentary.

⁸ Luke, 17:21.

⁵ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London, 1940), Vol. I. p. 176.

existent supreme Being is the Teacher of all teachers and that the scriptures are initially His divine revelations.

Patañjali rightly says : 'He is the Teacher of even the ancient teachers, being not limited by time.'⁹ Swami Vivekananda comments on this aphorism : 'It is true that all knowledge is within ourselves, but this has to be called forth by another knowledge. Although the capacity to know is inside us, it must be called out, and that calling out of knowledge can only be done, a *yogi* maintains, through another knowledge. Dead insentient matter never calls out knowledge, it is the action of knowledge that brings out knowledge. Knowing beings must be with us to call forth what is in us; so these teachers were always necessary. The world was never without them, and no knowledge can come without them. God is the Teacher of all teachers, because these teachers, however great they may have been—gods or angels—were all bound and limited by time, while God is not'.¹⁰

2. *The Śruti is the only means to the knowledge of non-dual Brahman.*

The knowledge conveyed by the six *pramāṇas* (perception, inference, comparison, testimony, postulation, and non-apprehension) is, broadly speaking, of two distinct orders : (1) relating to conditional reality, and (2) relating to absolute reality.¹¹ Non-dual Brahman is absolute reality, being uncontradictable. All else, the sensuous and the suprasensuous as well, belong to the temporal order, which is conditionally real, being uncontradicted until the experiencer realizes his identity with Brahman. Non-dual Brahman is revealed only by the Upaniṣads, and by no other *pramāṇa*. So says the sage Yājñavalkya : 'I ask you of that Being who is to be known only from the Upaniṣads, who definitely projects those beings (that com-

prise the phenomenal world) and (again) withdraws them unto Himself, and who is at the same time transcendent.'¹² The Upaniṣadic texts, with one accord, declare the reality of Brahman, free from all distinctions and differences.¹³ 'That is the Brahman taught by the Upaniṣad; yea, that is the Brahman taught by the Upaniṣad.'¹⁴ Indeed, it is the Vedas that have revealed to mankind the ultimate reality of Brahman, One only without a second. As the primary source of the knowledge of non-dual Brahman, they are distinct from all other scriptures.

Even reason independently of the Śruti cannot determine the nature of the ultimate reality. Śaṅkara firmly maintains that human reason is incapable of ascertaining the fundamental reality, let alone sense-perception. As stated by him : 'Although in certain cases (relating to empirical facts), reason is found to have a stable ground, yet in the present case (the determination of the cause of the universe), it cannot but be subject to its defect of instability. Independently of the scriptures, one fails even to imagine this most profound, non-dual cause of the manifold, the attainment of which is liberation. Because of the absence of colour and the like, this entity cannot be known by sense-perception; because of the absence of an indicatory mark, this cannot be known by any such method as inference : this is what we declare.

'Moreover, it is the consensus of all who uphold *mokṣa* (liberation) that this is attainable by true knowledge. And true knowledge must be unvaried, being in conformity with reality. That is reality which is invariable. The knowledge of this is considered true knowledge in the world, like the knowledge that fire is hot. Therefore, the difference of views in the case of true knowledge is absurd. But the conclusions reached by

⁹ *Yoga-Sūtra*, 1.26.

¹⁰ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I. pp. 216-17.

¹¹ *Vide Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, VII.

¹² *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.9.26.

¹³ *Vide Brahma-Sūtra*, I.1.4, Śaṅkara's commentary.

¹⁴ *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, I.16.

reasoning, being mutually contradictory, are well known to be divergent.¹⁵

That the Upaniṣadic texts consistently point to the reality of non-dual Brahman is evident from the six characteristic marks of the treatment of a subject-matter. According to an ancient authority: 'In ascertaining the purport (of a treatise), the tests are: the consistency of the introduction and the conclusion, frequent reference to the theme, its originality, fruitfulness, commendableness, and reasonableness'.¹⁶ The sage Uddālaka's instruction to his son Śvetaketu in the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is often cited as an example, where one can see by these marks that the import of the entire discourse is non-dual Brahman, One only without a second.

The chapter begins with the words: 'In the beginning, my dear, this (the universe) was Being alone, One only without a second', and ends thus: 'In That, all that exists has its self. That is the true. That is the Self. That thou art, O Śvetaketu.' Brahman is again and again referred to by the same statement: 'Now, in That, which is the subtle essence, all that exists has its self. That is the true. That is the Self. That thou art, O Śvetaketu.'

The fruitfulness of the knowledge of Brahman is thus stated: 'A man who has found a teacher to instruct him gains the true knowledge. For him, there is delay only so long as he is not liberated (from the body), then he attains perfection.' The knowledge of Brahman is thus commended: 'Have you, my dear, ever asked for that instruction by which one hears what is unheard, contemplates what is un contemplated, and knows what is unknown?'

The uniqueness of the theme is evident from the son's question: 'What is that instruction, venerable sir?' The reasonableness of

the statement that all is known by knowing Brahman is shown by the following illustration: 'Just as, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all this is clay, . . . even so, my dear, is that instruction.'

Indeed, the purport of the Vedic texts is to affirm the reality of non-dual Brahman, which cannot be known by any other means. Even the Śruti passages relating to Saguna Brahman and the diversified universe have that one end in view. The knowledge of Saguna Brahman as the Creator, as the Ruler of all things and beings, can be gained from other scriptures as well, but the knowledge of Nirguna Brahman cannot be attained from any other source but the Śruti and the scriptures that consistently follow it.

The all-transcendent non-dual Brahman is the one Self of the apparent manifold. This is the supreme unity underlying all diversity. Here is the culmination of human knowledge. It is the ultimate ground of all metaphysical conceptions, religious doctrines, scientific truths, and ethical principles. Swami Vivekananda rightly observes: 'You must remember the one theme that runs through all the Vedas—"Just as by the knowledge of one lump of clay we know all the clay that is in the universe, so what is that, knowing which we know everything else?" This, expressed more or less clearly, is the theme of all human knowledge. It is the finding of a Unity towards which we are all going. Every action of our lives, the most material, the grossest as well as the finest, the highest, the most spiritual, is alike tending towards this one ideal, the finding of Unity. . . . Irresistibly, we are impelled towards that perfection which consists in finding the Unity, killing this little self, and making ourselves broader and broader. . . . That is the foundation of all morality. It is the quintessence of all ethics, preached in any language, or in any religion, or by any prophet in the world. . . . This is the theme that runs through the whole of Ve-

¹⁵ *Brahma-Sūtra*, II.1.11. commentary.

¹⁶ The verse is quoted from the *Bṛhatsamhitā*, in the *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha (Pūrṇaprajñā-darśana)* [Ananda Ashrama], p. 59.

dānta, and which runs through every other religion.¹⁷

3. *It is by implication that the Śruti conveys the knowledge of non-dual Brahman that is beyond description.*

As declared by the Upaniṣad, non-dual Brahman is beyond the range of thought and speech. That is Brahman 'wherfrom words along with ideas turn back without reaching It'.¹⁸ Necessarily, the Upaniṣads indicate Its nature by negative expressions, such as :

'That Brahman is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior.'¹⁹

'It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long.'²⁰

'Other than righteousness and unrighteousness, other than cause and effect, other than what has been and what is to be.'²¹

But while declaring Brahman to be beyond speech, the Upaniṣads also describe It by positive expressions, indicative of Its intrinsic characteristics (*svarūpalakṣaṇa*), such as :

'Brahman is Truth, Consciousness, Infinite.'²²

'Brahman is Consciousness, Bliss.'²³

'Supreme Brahman is Being-Consciousness-Bliss.'²⁴

Yet there is no self-contradiction in this dual account, because the positive expressions refer to Brahman only by implication, and not by their primary significance. 'Brahman is beyond speech' actually means that Brahman cannot be directly signified by words ; speech cannot define, but can indicate, Brahman. As observed by Sri Ramakrishna : 'What the Vedas say about Brahman is only a hint.' All positive expressions with reference to Brahman have negative connotations. 'Being

(Sat)' excludes the idea of non-being with regard to Brahman ; 'Consciousness (Cit)' excludes the idea of unintelligence or materiality ; and 'Bliss (Ānanda)' excludes the idea of imperfection, or grievance of any kind whatsoever. The expression 'Being-Consciousness-Bliss' is used, lest the ultimate Reality beyond thought and speech be conceived as non-being, or as unconscious or imperfect existence.

Usually, the Upaniṣads define Brahman by extrinsic characteristics (*taṭastha lakṣaṇa*), which do not inhere in It, but differentiate It from all else. Brahman is characterized as 'That from which are the projection, the preservation, and the dissolution of the universe'.²⁵

'That from which these beings are born, That by which, when born, they live, That into which (at the time of dissolution) they enter, they merge ; seek the knowledge of That. That is Brahman.'²⁶

'He is the Lord of all. He is the knower of all. He is the inner controller. He is the source of all ; for from Him all beings originate, and in Him they finally disappear.'²⁷

The sole reality of Brahman is affirmed by declaring It as the basis and being of the world-appearance, as the unitary existence transcending all names and forms : 'All this is Brahman.'²⁸

'The immortal Brahman alone is before, that Brahman is behind, that Brahman is to the right and left. Brahman alone pervades everything above and below ; this universe is that supreme Brahman alone.'²⁹

4. *The identity of the individual self and the supreme Self pointing to the sole reality of Niringuṇa Brahman is the supreme truth revealed by the Vedas.*

Of all the Upaniṣadic teachings, the most significant is the declaration of the identity

¹⁷ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VI. pp. 2-4.

¹⁸ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II.9.1.

¹⁹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II.5.9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, III.8.8.

²¹ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I.2.14.

²² *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II.1.3.

²³ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.9.28.

²⁴ *Nṛsiṃha-pūrva-tāpanīya Upaniṣad*, I.6.

²⁵ *Brahma-Sūtra*, I.1.2

²⁶ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, III.1.

²⁷ *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 6.

²⁸ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III.14.1.

²⁹ *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II.2.12.

of the individual self with the supreme Self. This is the kernel of the Vedas. While disclosing the oneness of the individual consciousness and the universal Consciousness that sustains and manifests the manifold, the Śruti points to the sole reality of non-dual, non-relational pure Consciousness that Brahman is. The whole truth is contained in a terse sentence of three words. There are four such pithy sentences in the four Vedas. Each sentence is called a *mahāvākya* (lit. the great saying).

The four Vedic *mahāvākyas* are :

(1) 'Consciousness (manifest in an individual) is Brahman',³⁰ as stated in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* of the *Rg-Veda*.

(2) 'I am Brahman',³¹ as stated in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* of the *Yajur-Veda*.

(3) 'Thou art That',³² as stated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the *Sāma-Veda*.

(4) 'This Ātman (the individual self) is Brahman',³³ as stated in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* of the *Atharva-Veda*.

Each of these terse sentences declares the identity of the individual consciousness and the universal or the divine Consciousness. So the implied meaning of each is the sole reality of non-dual Consciousness that Brahman is. Hence, this great teaching (*mahāvākya*) is said to be *akhaṇḍārtha-bodhaka* (indicative of the undivided absolute Being, free from all distinctions).

This supreme Vedic teaching imparts a twofold knowledge attainable by no other means. On the one hand, by affirming Ātman as Brahman, it removes man's deep-rooted misconception regarding himself, namely, that he is bound, finite, imperfect, and mortal, and points to his true self as self-existent, self-shining, ever pure, and ever free. On the other hand, by proclaiming Brahman as Ātman, it removes man's equally indomitable misconception regarding the supreme

Being, namely, that He is remote, unattainable, hidden, if not non-existent, and reveals Him as the innermost Self, ever manifest, immediate, and direct. Thus, what is conceived as the farthest is revealed as nearer than the nearest, what appears to be unattainable as already attained, what is ever hidden as self-manifest. So it is said : 'That Brahman is vast, self-luminous, inconceivable, subtler than the subtle. That shines forth. That is far beyond what is far, and yet here very near at hand. That is seen here, dwelling in the cave of the heart of conscious beings. Brahman is not grasped by the eye, nor by the organ of speech, nor by other organs or senses, nor by penance or good work. Being pure minded through the purity of understanding, as a person practises meditation, thereby he beholds Him, who is whole and without component parts.'³⁴

The *mahāvākya* presents in a nutshell the Vedic view of God, the Vedic view of man, and the Vedic view of man's approach to God. It furnishes the clue to his spiritual life. By knowing the Self, one knows God, the one Self of all. The way to the supreme Being is an inner approach. It is the gradual realization of the innate divinity. In fact, the great Vedic dictum makes the inaccessible accessible, the incomprehensible comprehensible, the unknowable knowable.

5. *The knowledge of the identity of the jīva and Brahman is the only direct approach to the ultimate Reality.*

The teaching of the identity of the *jīva* and Brahman is the only direct instruction that can be given to a seeker of the highest of the high, the all-transcendent Being. There can be no other direct approach to Brahman than knowing Him as the very Self. Any instruction that does not unveil Brahman as the Self of the seeker is indirect, because of its remote reference to the supreme Being. It fails to bring Brahman within the

³⁰ *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, III.1.3.

³¹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I.4.10.

³² *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI.8.7, *passim*.

³³ *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 2.

³⁴ *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, III.1.7.8.

reach of the seeker. A few instances of indirect instruction are cited below :

'That from which these beings are born, That by which, when born, they live, That into which (at the time of dissolution) they enter and merge, seek That, That is Brahman.'³⁵

'From Him (the immutable Brahman), who has general and detailed knowledge of everything, whose austerity consists in knowledge (and not in effort), arise Brahmā (the cosmic soul), name, form, and food.'³⁶

'From fear of Him (Brahman) fire burns, from fear of Him the sun shines, from fear of Him Indra, Vāyu, and Death, the fifth, run.'³⁷

'No one can grasp Him above, across, or in the middle. There is none equal to Him, His name is great glory.'³⁸

It is evident that the seeker, while receiving the knowledge of Brahman through these teachings, becomes conscious of His remoteness. He feels that Brahman is far out of his reach. Even those Śruti texts that relate Brahman to the seeker's self, but set forth the immense difference between the two, are indirect instructions, for they do not dispel from his mind the remoteness of Brahman. The gap between the seeker and the goal is not bridged over. For example :

'That great, birthless Self is the eater of food (in all living beings) and the giver of wealth (the fruits of the actions of all). He who knows Him as such receives wealth (those fruits).'³⁹

'That Brahman is Tadvana, the Adorable of all; He should be worshipped by the name of Tadvana. All creatures desire him who worships Brahman thus.'⁴⁰

'Therefore, having reached this border (the Self), he who is blind ceases to be blind, he who is miserable ceases to be miserable,

he who is afflicted ceases to be afflicted'.⁴¹

'One attains supreme peace by realizing the self-effulgent adorable Lord, the bestower of blessings.'⁴²

'On knowing Him—who is the bestower of virtue, the destroyer of sin, the lord of the six great attributes, who is the support of the universe—as dwelling within (one attains liberation).'⁴³

Of the direct instruction on Brahman, the Vedas are the primary source. The identity of the *jīva* and Brahman, pointing to the absolute reality of non-dual Consciousness beyond the tripartite relative order (comprising the individual souls, the universe, and *Īśvara*), is the central theme of the Upaniṣads. This is the fountain-head of the Vedic teachings. The direct instruction being the very essence of the Vedas, they are rightly called the Śruti. The term 'Śruti' (lit. hearing) implies 'direct teaching' (*aparokṣa upadeśa*); whereas the term 'Smṛti' (lit. remembering) implies 'indirect teaching' (*parokṣa upadeśa*). All scriptures derived from the Vedas are generally called the Smṛti. In them is the predominance of the indirect teaching regarding the supreme Being. In this sense, all sacred texts other than the Vedas come under the category of the Smṛti. Their authority depends on the authority of the Śruti. They are to be accepted as far as they are consistent with the Vedic teachings. In case of any contradiction between the Śruti and the Smṛti, the Śruti has to be followed. In a restricted sense, the term 'Smṛti' is applied to Dharma-śāstras, the scriptures that deal particularly with rules of conduct in different spheres of life, such as *Manu Smṛti*, *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*, and *Parāśara Smṛti*. As stated by Manu: 'By Śruti is meant the Veda; while by Smṛti, the codes of laws.'⁴⁴

The identity of *Ātman* and Brahman can-

³⁵ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, III.1.

³⁶ *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I.1.9.

³⁷ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II.3.3.

³⁸ *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* IV.19.

³⁹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV.4.24.

⁴⁰ *Kena Upaniṣad*, IV.6.

⁴¹ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII.4.2.

⁴² *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, IV.11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, VI.6.

⁴⁴ *Manu Smṛti*, II.10.

not be known by any other means of knowledge. No human being can discover this supramental truth. The real nature of the Self beyond the ego cannot be determined either by perception or by inference. As observed by Śaṅkara : 'Being different from the objects of perception, the existence of the Self cannot be proved by this means. Similarly, inference, too, is powerless.'⁴⁵ Nor can the mystical intuition of the innermost Self be developed without the previous knowledge of the Upaniṣadic truth. In order to realize the identity of the Self with Brahman, the seeker has to be conversant with the Vedic dictum. The Śruti is prior to mystical perception. It is divine revelation. It did not originate from the superconscious experience of the seers, as is generally presumed by modern thinkers. The seers are those who perceive the supersensuous truths disclosed by the Vedas.

In the beginning, the Vedic truths were transmitted orally by the teacher to the disciple. The supreme Lord, the Teacher of all teachers, imparted the Vedas to the first created being, the Hiranyagarbha, the cosmic soul, whose limiting adjunct is the universal mind. So it is said : 'Longing for liberation, I seek refuge in the supreme Being, the revealer of Self-knowledge, who created Brahmā in the beginning and delivered the Vedas to him.'⁴⁶ Being at first transmitted orally through a succession of teachers and disciples, the Vedas have been called 'anuśrava', that which is heard from the utterance of the teacher.

Being the repository of the Truth of truths revealed by the supreme Lord, the Śruti is an independent means of knowledge. It is an authority by itself. It requires no proof. It can be corroborated, and not contradicted, by other means of knowledge. As observed by Śaṅkara, it is the primary source of our

knowledge of the suprasensuous truths.⁴⁷ Just as inference is dependent on perception, so the authoritativeness of the Smṛti, which consists of inspirational writings, is dependent on the Śruti, the primary revelation. Because of this difference, the Vedas are also called *pratyakṣa* (the direct or the first-hand knowledge), while other scriptures are termed *anumāna* (the indirect or the derivative knowledge).⁴⁸ Even the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, delivered by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, God incarnate in human form, falls into the category of the Smṛti, and cannot rank with the Śruti.

The message of the identity of Ātman and Brahman is based on the recognition of the oneness of existence underlying all diversity. It is evident from the sage Uddālaka's instruction to his son Śvetaketu : 'Of all these created things and beings, my child, pure Existence is the origin, pure Existence is the support, pure Existence is the end... In that subtle essence, all this has its being. That is Reality. That is the Self. That thou art, O Śvetaketu.'⁴⁹ As we have noted above, it is the Śruti that has revealed to man the absolute oneness of existence.

6. *The mahāvākya signifies a twofold approach to non-dual Brahman : the one is the direct, the other is the indirect.*

The sole purpose of the Vedas, comprising the Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas,⁵⁰ is to lead human individuals, step by step, to the attainment of non-dual Brahman through the realization of the identity of the self with the supreme Self. The great Vedic dictum (the *mahāvākya*) signifies the two main approaches to non-dual Brahman, the direct and the indirect, which are, in fact, the two main courses of man's spiritual journey. For instance, the dictum 'I am Brahman', being resolved into the two factors 'I am He' and 'I am His', signalizes two distinct methods of

⁴⁷ Vide *Brahma-Sūtra*, II.3.1, commentary.

⁴⁸ Vide *ibid.*, I.3.28, commentary.

⁴⁹ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI.8.6-7.

⁵⁰ 'The Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas together are called the Veda'—*Āpastarabha's Yajñaparibhāṣā-Sūtra*, 38.

⁴⁵ Introduction to his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

⁴⁶ *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, VI.18.

God-realization, the way to Nirguṇa Brahman and the way to Saguṇa Brahman. The formula 'I am He', signifying the identity of the individual soul with the supreme Self, marks the direct approach to Nirguṇa Brahman (the impersonal Godhead). It is a straight, but steep course. Since intellect plays a major part in it, this is characterized as the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*). But it is not purely an intellectual process; there is room for devotional feeling in it. None can see the face of Truth without ardour and consecration. The second formula 'I am His', signifying the relation between the individual soul and the supreme Self, marks the direct approach to Saguṇa Brahman (the personal God), and the indirect approach to Nirguṇa Brahman, because the realization of Saguṇa Brahman can lead to the realization of Nirguṇa Brahman. Because of the predominance of devotional feeling in this course, it is characterized as the path of devotion (*bhakti-mārga*). It covers all theistic religions of the world, inasmuch as the relation between man and God is the keystone of all of them. Each one of them is based on some form of relation between the worshipper and the worshipped. But this is not purely an emotional approach. There is enough scope for intellect also in this path. Without a clear understanding of the nature of God and the nature of the soul, the worshipper cannot apprehend his spiritual relation with the divine Being and hold to Him as the supreme Goal or the Ideal.

According to the non-dualistic philosophers, an average spiritual aspirant cannot follow the direct approach to Nirguṇa Brahman. He has to worship Saguṇa Brahman and realize Him before he can attain Nirguṇa Brahman. The worship of Saguṇa Brahman is an indirect means to the realization of Nirguṇa Brahman. So says Śaṅkara: 'The Vedāntic texts teach one and the same Brahman as the object of worship in relation to the adjuncts, and as the goal of knowledge without any relation to the adjuncts'.⁵¹ As stated in the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*: 'Meditation on the conditioned Brahman is also a cause of the realization of the unconditioned Brahman through the concentration of the mind. So it has been said: "Persons of ordinary intelligence, who are unable to realize the unconditioned Brahman, are done a favour by the delineation of the conditioned Brahman. When their minds are brought under control by the practice (of meditation) on the conditioned Brahman, that very unconditioned Brahman, divested of the superimposition of limiting adjuncts, directly manifests Itself."⁵² In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Ānandagiri expresses the same view: "The knowledge of the conditioned Brahman is the doorway to the knowledge of the Unconditioned".⁵³

(To be continued)

⁵¹ *Brahma-Sūtra*, I.1.11.

⁵² *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*. VIII, quoting *Vedāntakalpataru*, verses 1-2 on *Brahma-Sūtra*, I.1.20.

⁵³ *Bhagavad-Gītā*, X.7, gloss on Śaṅkara's commentary.

THE BIRTH OF THE SANGHA

BY DR. S. DUTT

The Saṅgha (monastic organization) of Buddhism is so inalienable a part of the system of the religion that, in the Tri-ratna (Three Jewels) creed, it is placed in a position of parity with the Buddha and the Dharma. Wherever Buddhism prevails in an organized and institutional form, there are monks and monasteries.

The Saṅgha was founded by the Founder of the religion itself and in a community that existed in the country before his time—of men who had renounced the world, gone into a spiritual career, and adopted mendicancy as a sacrament. They were known as *parivrājakas* (wanderers) or *bhikṣus* (mendicants).

Men of this type may be found individually in other countries, but they have been an 'institution' in our country. From the standpoint of our modern economic society, they are no 'producers of values'. Yet the highest values in our culture and civilization have been received from this very 'institution'; out of it have come from century to century founders of faith, leaders of thought, reformers of society, master minds in philosophy, from Lord Buddha himself to Swami Vivekananda of our own time. Our culture of over three millennia would appear poor and shrunken if we view it apart from the contributions of these great personalities and their conditioning effects on our cultural and social life.

Those who represent this institution in our country are known by various descriptive names, such as *sannyāsin* (one who has renounced the world completely), *parivrājaka* (wanderer), *bhikṣu* (almsman), *yati* (one under self-control), etc., and by different class-wise denominations, such as *avadhūta*, *paramahansa*, etc. Perhaps, the most generally used denominative name would be

sannyāsin, which is of Upaniṣadic derivation, or *bhikṣu* of Buddhist. They are correlative, in the sense that almsmanship is the pragmatic consequence of world renunciation.

In the earlier Upaniṣads, there are references to men who, having given up all worldly desires and 'having known Brahman or Ātman', turn to almsmanship (*vide Brhadāraṇyaka*, III.5.9 and *Muṇḍaka*, I.2.11). They are said to be 'learned' and 'knowers of Brahman', and are idealized as representing the consummation of the normative stages (*āśramas*) in the progress of a man's life on earth.

In the Upaniṣadic thought, a contrast or opposition is set up between the two worlds—the world of changeable and perishable things, in which we normally live and move and have our being, and a higher one of imperishable verities, where there is no change or death. This higher world is termed *amṛta* (the undying). It is a key-word that runs through the Upaniṣads, and is taken up in the Buddha's first sermon at Sarnath: 'Give ear! The Deathless (*amata*) has been realized by me; I will instruct—I will teach the Dhamma' (*Mahāvagga*, I.6.12). It is reiterated in his proclamation that, by his Dhamma, he has opened the portals of the Deathless (*amatassa dvāra*). One can find no access to the higher world unless one renounces the lower. On this basis, the Upaniṣads propound the doctrine of *tyāga* (renunciation): 'Not by work, not by offspring or wealth; only by *tyāga* does one reach *amṛtatva*' (*Kaivalya*, 2). Hence the world-forsaker, the *sannyāsin*, becomes the ideal type of all those who aspire to enter the deathless world along the path called *brahmacarya* (the process of knowing Brahman).

In the later Upaniṣads, this doctrine of *tyāga* is worked out into pragmatic forms,

into a somewhat elaborate ritual performance, symbolizing the state of *sannyāsa* (complete renunciation), and called *pravrajyā* (going forth). The act itself is variously described in different Upaniṣads, but it is purely symbolical in its significance, such as discarding the *upavīta* (sacred thread), the *śikhā* (sacred tuft of hair on the head), and all the implements of sacrifice; all family and kinship relations, together with the names and designations that express them; all distinctions of caste, social status, and social obligations. By this act, the person makes himself completely 'unsocial', 'unattached', 'unfettered', and 'free', left only with his unaided and unsupported individuality.

Of the 108 Upaniṣads, according to the traditional count, seventeen deal with *sannyāsa* and expatiate on the ideal attributes and approved ways of those who have by this act renounced the world.

The Upaniṣads, however, give us the doctrine of *tyāga* and its empirical fulfilment in *sannyāsa*. The world-forsaker stands in them as an idealized and isolated figure—the type and representative of a doctrine and an institution. Except that we know from the Upaniṣads that men, responding to Brahmanlore, used to renounce the world for the sake of spiritual advancement, and betook themselves to almsmanship; that they went, before setting out on the spiritual career which is called *brahmacarya*, through the symbolical act of *pravrajyā*; and that these men had certain approved standards and attitudes and rules of living—except that, we have no further evidence from the Upaniṣads which may be called historical or realistic. But this sort of evidence comes to us from Buddhist and Jaina legends, posterior to the Upaniṣads by a whole age. In these legends, the world-forsaker descends from the misty heights of an idealistic philosophy to the common earth and the human plane.

This type of men is designated in the legends as *bhikṣu*, *parivrājaka*, or *yati*; the term '*sannyāsin*', which has implications with

the Upaniṣadic doctrines, is generally dropped. They are described, on the basis of their common characteristic, as those who have 'gone from home into homelessness'. What is more intriguing is that we come to learn that the homeless, 'unsocial' men did not lapse, after their renunciation, into a social vacuum. They formed a community by themselves, and had rules and conventions of their own making, under which they lived in groups and congregations. The most learned and accomplished among them were called *śramaṇas* (labourers in spiritual life, i.e. those who were earnest in fulfilling the object for which they had 'forsaken home for homelessness'), and they enjoyed a status among people equal to the social status of a Brāhmaṇa, and were included in the ancient collective name for the *élite* in culture and learning, *śramaṇa-brāhmaṇa* or *brāhmaṇa-śramaṇa*, as it appears in the edicts of Aśoka.

The Buddhist and Jaina legends seem to indicate the largest incidence of this homeless community in the eastern parts of the country, including Magadha (modern Bihar), a prosperous kingdom in those times. Men of this community were known by the tokens of their almsmanship, a distinctive garb and a begging bowl (*bhikṣā-pātra*), which they used to adopt on leaving home, but which had a sacramental significance only.

Undoubtedly, this community, described in the legends, was historically affined to the Upaniṣadic type of the world-forsaker, the *sannyāsin*, who had left home and society, performed the rites of *pravrajyā*, and, along the way of *brahmacarya*, endeavoured to reach a spiritual *summum bonum*, which is termed Brahman-knowledge in the Upaniṣads. The term '*brahmacarya*' is retained by the community to describe their way of life, but Brahman-knowledge is not set as its goal. It seems that the growth of this community in India was historically not out of the philosophy and doctrines of the Upaniṣads addressed to the elect only by saints and sages, who only idealized and reoriented to their

high idealistic philosophy a practice which was of the people. It is one of great antiquity, and its exact sociological character is still a problem to be solved. Into this community came men from widely diverse backgrounds and from all ranks of society—men of different intellectual attainments, holding doctrines and doxies irreconcilable with one another, and certainly not chips from the old block of the Upaniṣadic thought.

The legends show that, within the community, there was a number of sects. Those sects were just 'cult-groups', each a union of faith under a spiritual guide and master. The sects were not of a fixed character, but fluctuant; and there are several reports in the legends of dissidents passing from one sect to another and seeking a different master. It was the agreeableness of a master's teaching that was the bond of cohesion among the disciples. So we find it customary for members of this community, meeting each other casually on the wayside, to ask these questions for mutual recognition: 'Who, sir, is your Master? Whose Dhamma (i.e. the system of spiritual culture) do you find most agreeable to you? What is the Dhamma you have adopted?' The Dhamma was the inner sign of his calling, as the mendicant's robe and begging bowl were the outer symbols. The Dhamma was the *raison d'être* of his homeless and mendicant condition, but it varied in form, substance, and pattern from one cult-group to another.

Such a cult-group, forming a sect in the community, is known as a Saṅgha or Gaṇa. One who is at its head as master or instructor is described in the legends as *saṅghī*, *gaṇī*, or *gaṇacario* (instructor of a Saṅgha or a Gaṇa). The legends mention the names of several who held this position, and the most frequently mentioned are six who were contemporaries of the Buddha—Purāṇa (venerable) Kassapa, Makkhali Go-sāla ('of the cow-pen', probably so called because he lived in a cow-pen), Kaccāna Pakuḍha ('of the *pakuḍha* tree', under which he had prob-

ably built his hut), Ajita Kesakambalī ('of the hairy blanket', which was his garment), Saṅjaya Belaṭṭhiputta (of the Belaṭṭhi clan), and Niganṭha Nāṭaputta (of the Nāṭha clan). The Dhammas propounded by them as their respective cults are stated and brought under analysis in some of the Buddhist legends, from the Buddhist standpoint, and there remains no doubt that the Dhammas that used to be propounded among this community were hardly of Upaniṣadic derivation.

Most important to our purpose, however, is the advent in the community, in the thirties of the sixth century before Christ, in the kingdom of Magadha, of a wandering almsman from the north, one who had before his *pravrajyā* been a prince of the Śākya clan which had settled on a foot-hill of the eastern Himalayas, with Kapilavastu as its capital.

The urge for this almsman's renouncing the world was to find a remedy for the eclipsing ills of human life, the sorrows that proceed from the very conditions of living in this world, from sickness, old age, and death. There is an ancient legend about it, which, however, has been challenged by Western scholars as being of no biographical value. But, undoubtedly, the Śākya prince set out on the path of *brahmacarya* with a definite goal in view, that is, to discover an antidote to this inherent sorrow of life. The remedy could only be found in so training life that it could bypass that sorrow and reach the Deathless (*amṛta*).

After strenuous experiments and painful frustrations, he obtained that 'enlightenment' which transfigured him as the Buddha. He wished to impart his own enlightenment to the world, and he soon became the centre of a circle of disciples and devotees in the community. One among the first batch of disciples was Sāriputta. The legend of his conversion shows that this almsman from the far-off north, after his enlightenment, had already become famous in the community of Magadha, though he was still unknown to Sāriputta.

One morning, when Sāriputta was on his begging round, he met a fellow-mendicant named Assaji, and was struck by the spiritual radiance of his countenance. He accosted him, and the following conversation took place between them, opening with the customary questions.

Sāriputta (meeting Assaji on the way): 'Under whose guidance, sir, have you accepted religious mendicancy? Who is your Master (*satthā*)? Whose doctrine (*dhamma*) is after your heart?'

Assaji: 'Sir, I have accepted religious mendicancy under the guidance of the great Samāṇa Sākyaputta, who passed on into the state of religious mendicancy from the Sākya clan. The same lord is my Master. I follow his doctrine.'

Sāriputta: 'What is your Master's doctrine, sir? How is it named?'

Assaji: 'Sir, I am a neophyte, newly ordained and recently admitted. I cannot explain exhaustively this doctrine and this rule. But I will explain its purport briefly.'

Being an almsman himself and settled in the almsmen's community, it was in that community that the Buddha found his first disciples and followers. He soon became a sect-leader in the community, the head of a cult-group that recognized him as Lord and Master (*bhagavā* and *satthā*), accepted the system of spiritual culture (*Dhamma*) given by him, and was devotedly attached to his person. But it seems from many of the Buddha's canon—reported utterances—that his ken was far beyond mere sect and sect-leadership.

From first to last, his own idea was to make the whole world accept his *Dhamma*; the sect was of little significance to him, except in the service of the world. His disciples called their own body by the simple name of 'Bhikkhu-saṅgha', but he himself called them to a wider horizon, calling them 'the Bhikkhu-saṅgha of the Four Quarters'. His teachings were given to all alike—his lay hearers as well as his followers and disciples in the

Bhikkhu-saṅgha; they were as open as 'the sun and the moon and the stars'. To the sect in the community over which he presided, the continuance and preservation of the sect was perhaps a matter of great importance. On the last missionary tour, when he was just convalescing at Beluva from a serious bout of illness, Ānanda, attending on him and becoming anxious as to the future of the sect after the Buddha's decease—the Buddha was then already eighty and enfeebled in health—asked for a set of rules and regulations for its guidance after his death. The Buddha brushed aside the request, saying that every one of his followers should be 'a lamp unto himself', and declared that it was the truth he had seen that he wished to see accepted by the world, and that, compared with that, the future of the Saṅgha was of little moment. When tempted by Māra on the same last missionary tour to pass out of life, among the conditions on which he said in reply he was prepared to die was that his *Dhamma* should be *bāhujanna*, i.e. world-pervading. It was the *bahujana* (humanity in general) that he had in his mind, rather than the sect under his lead; and he would not give to a sect what was meant for mankind.

The gradual growth of the sect, which called itself by the name Bhikkhu-saṅgha, but which was known to outsiders as 'Samaṇas attached to the scion of the Sākya clan' (*Sākkaputtiya samaṇas*), is described episodically in the legends. By ones and twos, men came under the spell of the Lord's personality and teachings and asked for ordination by him. So the Bhikkhu-saṅgha went on swelling in number; but even before it had reached a hundred in numerical strength, the Buddha charged it with a message—one that was instinct with his own inner thought and personality—fixing in perpetuity the character in which it must function: 'Go forth, O Bhikkhus, on your wanderings, for the good of the many—for the happiness of the many (*bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya*), in

compassion for the world—for the good, for the welfare, for the happiness of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way. O Bhikkhus, proclaim that Dhamma which is gracious at the beginning, at the middle, and at the end' (*Mahāvagga*, I.11.1).

So the small sect in the community of homeless wanderers of Magadha of the sixth century B.C. grew like an oak from an acorn

to mighty proportions. It has a history in India, where Buddhism is now extinct except in its distant peripheries, of seventeen long centuries, over which it functioned 'for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many'; and at the turn of the twelfth century A.D., its doom was sealed by the fanatic violence of the first Muslim invaders of Bengal and Bihar.

EDUCATION IN VEDIC INDIA

BY PRINCIPAL JOGIRAJ BASU

Education was compulsory for the three higher castes in the Vedic age. After initiation with the holy thread, a student had to go to the preceptor's house or forest-school to study. The three higher castes alone, viz. Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas, were eligible for initiation; and as initiation is regarded as the second birth or spiritual birth, they are all called *dviija* or twice-born. Regarding this second birth of the initiated, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* remarks: 'The teacher lays his right hand on the head of the pupil, whereby he is spiritually impregnated by him. Within the third night, the embryo issues out of the teacher; and being taught the Sāvitrī, he obtains true Brāhmaṇahood' (XI.5.4.12). 'This is his spiritual regeneration. The spiritual significance of initiation is thus stated in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*: 'Indeed, he attains a new birth, a spiritual birth who undergoes *brahmacarya*.' The student is termed *brahmacārin*, and he has to declare formally: 'May I enter upon *brahmacarya*; let me be a *brahmacārin*.' After initiation, a twice-born is allowed to study the Veda. The whole of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XI.5.4, gives a graphic picture of the initiated student's entrance to the preceptor's residential institution, and the pri-

mary injunctions of the *ācārya* or the teacher are recorded therein. 'From today, you are a student observing vows; do your duty; place fuel in the sacred fire; be obedient to the teacher; do not sleep in the day-time; observe continence'—these are some of the injunctions.

The student approaches the teacher in a submissive and humble spirit, and the teacher, asking his name, accepts him as his pupil. The period of student life is compared to a prolonged sacrifice (*satra*). The student has to study the Veda and its accessories daily. This is known as *brahmayajña*. He should tend the preceptor's holy fire by feeding it with fuel. 'Thereby he kindles his mind with fire, with holy lustre.' He is to beg alms every day without any sense of shame. Begging is prescribed to create a spirit of humility in the learner's mind. 'Shorn of shame and pride, he begs alms', observes the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. He should beg alms first of the preceptor's wife, and thereafter from his own mother, so that he may not be refused alms in the first begging. On completion of his academic career, he places the last fuel in the sacrificial fire and takes his final bath (*snāna*). After this final ablution, he is termed *snātaka* or

graduate, when he returns to his home from the forest-school. This coming back to the paternal home is called *samāvartana*. Hence the convocation is termed *samāvartana utsava* even today. While proceeding to the paternal home, the student takes up a burning fuel from the fire pit of the *guru*, and establishes his own sacred domestic fire (*gārhapatyāgni*) with that.

We come across names of many students in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads of the Vedic literature. Āruṇi, Bhṛgu, Śvetaketu, Satyakāma, Nābhānediṣṭha, Nārada, Śaunaka, etc. are famous names renowned for their renunciation, spirit of service, and knowledge *par excellence*. The student life of Nābhānediṣṭha is narrated in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, V.22, the whole of the ninth Brāhmaṇa of which recounts the truthfulness and honesty taught to the pupils by the ideal teachers of ancient India. Likewise, in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, we come across the story of the noted student Bharadvāja. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* speaks of the keen thirst for supersensuous knowledge, the desire to unravel the mystery of death, of Naciketas, a mere boy of tender years.

Looking after the house of the teacher and tending his cattle also form a part of the student's duty. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (IV.4.5) recounts how Satyakāma goes to a distant land with his teacher's cattle; and during his sojourn there, the number of cattle increases from four hundred to one thousand. The *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (III.1.6.3,4) and the *Sāṅkhyāyana Āraṇyaka* (VII.19) also refer to the rearing of the *guru's* cattle by the pupils.

The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (III.1.2.1-9) contains some important passages bearing on the internal and external training during the period of *brahmacarya*. A student should overcome sleep, lethargy, anger, greed, vanity, hankering after name and fame, bragging, cultivation of personal beauty, etc. He should shun the company of women, music, dancing, dandyism, scents, drinking, and the

like that stand as a bar to his intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress in the formative stage of his life. His behaviour should always be polite and polished. In the *guru's* presence, his conduct must be meek and humble. He is to take lessons for his guidance even from the trivial objects of nature.

THE SYLLABUS OF STUDY

As regards the courses of study, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI.5) gives a detailed syllabus of various subjects. The Vedic literature, comprising Mantras or Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, Upaniṣads, and Vedāṅgas, forms the main subject of instruction and the essential part of education. The sacred lore was handed down from generation to generation through oral transmission. The Vedic study was called *svādhyāya*. The whole of the sixth Brāhmaṇa of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is a glowing eulogy of the Vedic study, and contains injunctions for the same. Other subjects of study in which instructions are offered are also mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The items include Vedāṅgas (*anusūsanāni*), sciences (*vidyās*), dialogue (*vākovākya*), traditional myths and legends (*itihāsa-purāṇa*), and laudatory couplets in honour of human beings (*gāthā-nārāśāmsī*). Sāyaṇa, while commenting on this passage, takes *anusūsanāni* to mean the six Vedāṅgas; *vidyās* to mean the philosophical systems; *vākovākya* in the sense of theological discourses; *itihāsa-purāṇa* in the sense of cosmological myths, accounts of kings, etc.; and *gāthā-nārāśāmsī* to mean verses recounting deeds of human beings. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII.4.3) makes mention of the science of snakes (*sarpavidyā*), of demonology (*rakṣavidyā*), and of the black art of necromancy, which is termed *asuravidyā*, as it was not countenanced in civilized society. The courses of study gradually swelled in bulk with the inclusion of new subjects, as ages rolled by. This fact is amply borne out by the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII.1.2), where the pupil Nārada gives an exhaustive list of

the subjects he has studied to his preceptor Sanatkumāra. The list comprises all the four Vedas, the *itihāsa-purāṇa*, the Veda of the Vedas, the rituals concerning the propitiation of the manes, the science of numbers or arithmetic, the science of portents, the science of divination, the art of debate and metaphysical disputation, the code of conduct, the knowledge relating to the gods, the accessories to the study of the Veda (*brahma-vidyā*), the science of physics and biology, the science of politics and government, astronomy, the study of serpents and toxicology, and *devajanavidyā*. Śaṅkarācārya, commenting on this passage, explains the Veda of the Vedas as grammar, and *brahma-vidyā* as the study of the Vedāṅgas. He takes *devajana-vidyā* to mean the art of perfume making, dancing, and music, both vocal and instrumental. Some scholars, like Raṅga Rāmānuja, split up the word into two terms, 'devavidyā' and 'janavidyā', the former standing for music and dance, and the latter for the science of medicine.

EDUCATIONAL DEBATES, DISCOURSES, AND CONFERENCES

Debates, discourses, and conferences are a regular feature of the academic life, their topics being mostly educational or sacrificial. Debates are termed *brahmodya* in the Vedic texts, which in the classical Sanskrit literature are called *vidyāvivāda* or *vidyāvicāra*, as we find in the *Kādambarī* and other works. Questions and cross-questions are put in a debate by the contending participants, and there is a judge or a board of judges. The designations of the prime mover and the opposer are *praśnin* and *abhi-praśnin*, respectively, as met with in the *Śukla Yajur-Veda* and the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. Some scholars are led to think that the term 'vākovākya' originally meant this debate, which consisted of words and counter-words, or witty repartees in the shape of dialogue. The germ of logic or Nyāya-śāstra may be traced in this system of debate. Not only

students, but also teachers, who are eminent scholars and sages, launch on debating bouts with zeal and seriousness. Forest universities, royal courts, and sites of grand sacrifices, witness, as recorded in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, many educational conferences, theological discourses, and debating competitions. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa records many debating bouts. King Janaka of Videha is a great patron of learning, and his court convenes frequently debates and disputations, over which the king declares handsome prizes as the palm of victory. Thus the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa records the debate between Sage Yājñavalkya and Śākalya regarding the number of gods (XI.6.3); between Uddālaka, Āruṇi and Śauceya Prācīnayogya (XI.5.3.1); between the teacher Śāṅḍilya and his pupil Saptarathavāhana; theological disputation between the *hotṛ* and the *adhvaryu*, i.e. the Ṛg-Vedic priest and the Yajur-Vedic priest (XIII.5.2.11); questions and repartees between different priests in the horse sacrifice (XIII.5.2). In XI.6.25, we find Brāhmaṇas challenging King Janaka to a debate, and Yājñavalkya's rejoinder. An interesting account of a debate is recorded in XI.4.1.1, wherefrom we gather that there existed the custom of flinging a gold coin as the challenge to a debate, like throwing the gauntlet in a duel. A Brāhmaṇa youth of Kuru-Pañcāla country, Uddālaka by name, goes to North India, where he flings a gold coin as a prize of, and challenge to, a debate. The northerners accept the challenge and put up Svaidāyana Śaunaka, son of Gautama, as their spokesman to take up the challenge and champion their cause. In the bout that follows, Uddālaka is defeated by Śaunaka; and so the former offers the gold coin to the victor and becomes the latter's pupil. These are the beginnings of debates and discourses, which reach their culmination in the Upaniṣadic age, when the court of King Janaka becomes a celebrated seat of learning, a seat of famous spiritual discourses and theological disputations. The debates held between the

erudite scholar Yājñavalkya and other sages, recorded in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, constitute an immortal and unforgettable chapter of ancient India's sacred lore. The figure of the versatile woman seer Gārgī looms large in the field of female scholarship in Vedic India.

TWO TYPES OF STUDENTS

There are two classes of pupils called *upakurvāṇa* and *naiṣṭhika*. The *upakurvāṇa* students retire to their paternal home and enter into the second order of life known as *gārhasthya*, whereas the *naiṣṭhika* students do not come back to their homes. Inspired by the great ideal of renunciation, they reside in the preceptor's residence, observing a vow of perpetual celibacy. They turn out to be great scholars and great sages. The *upakurvāṇas* are called so, because, on the day of their leaving the Alma Mater, they are enjoined to offer something to the *guru* as fee. Be it mentioned here that education is imparted free of cost. The parents are not to pay a farthing for the tuition and food of their children. The villages skirting the sylvan institutions maintain the pupils. Daily, the pupils beg cooked food from the villagers and subsist on it. The teacher does not realize any fee. The very term '*ācārya*' means a teacher who offers instruction without realizing any fee. There is a belief that learning becomes futile if something, however humble it may be, is not offered by way of '*dakṣiṇā*' or fee. So, only on the day of leaving the school, the pupil pays something in kind of his own accord. A poor student is enjoined to offer a bunch of edible herbs, only if he fails to procure anything else.

TWO TYPES OF TEACHERS

Mention has already been made of teachers of residential institutions, where students go for study and all-round training after the initiation ceremony is over. These teachers are rooted to their institutions. Besides these, there is a class of wandering teachers or peri-

patetic instructors, who move from place to place and impart learning to the seekers. They are called *carakas*, from the root 'car', which means 'to roam about'. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV.2.4.1 refers to such wandering teachers. These teachers fulfil a great need of society as an important medium for the propagation of learning and culture, carrying wisdom wherever they go. They are like the mobile schools of learning, easily available and accessible. They educate the masses and help the cause of literacy campaign. The title of '*kulapati*' is conferred on those residential teachers who maintain at least ten thousand students by offering them board and lodging. Sage Kaṇva of Kālidāsa's famous drama *Abhijñāna-Śakuntala* is a *kulapati*. A *kulapati* stands at the head of a big university.

THE CONVOCATION ADDRESS

The convocation address of the universities in the Vedic age is recorded in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. The address speaks of the wisdom, practical outlook, and far-sightedness of the Vedic sages. Even today, it is unsurpassed as a convocation address, and it is delivered to the graduates of forest institutions on the day of their leaving the institutions. On the day of their leaving the institution after graduation, the students take their final bath and congregate at a place within the campus of the institution, on the velvety green amidst idyllic sylvan surroundings, and the preceptor delivers his parting message in the following words :

'Speak the truth. Do your duty. Be virtuous. Do not give up the study of the scriptures. Deviate not from the path of truth. Deviate not from the path of religion and duty. Deviate not from the path of good. Forget not to offer oblations to the manes and gods. Respect your teacher. Respect your mother. Respect your father. Revere your guests. Do such deeds only that have the sanction of the scriptures and the learned. Shun evil deeds. Your manners

must be polished and praiseworthy. Lead a chaste married life, and keep up the continuity of the line. Whenever you give anything, give it with reverence and grace. Do not be a miser or a self-seeking man. By all means, you must keep to the path of duty and piety. This is the commandment. This is the injunction. This is the teaching of the Vedas. This is also my instruction, and this should be the guiding motto of your life.'

Even a casual reader cannot but be impressed by the deep wisdom, practical utility, and far-sightedness of this convocation address of ancient India, which, in its original Sanskrit, is couched in beautiful and inimitable language. Western savants, like Max Müller, Goldstuckor, Sylvain Levi, Stein Konow, and Winternitz, have paid glowing tributes to this convocation address, which is a message to the student community for all times to come.

From the foregoing lines, we may safely conclude that the scheme of education in Vedic India provided for the physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual development of the pupils. The education was all-sided, both brain-cultivating and man-making. The very fact that the synonym of student life was *brahmacarya* speaks of the spirit of education of that age. The term '*brahmacarya*' implies discipline in thought, discipline

in words, and discipline in action. The student passed his life in an ideal atmosphere of learning, renunciation, discipline, and strict continence, under the paternal care of an ideal preceptor and far away from the din and bustle of the madding crowd. He received an all-sided education, which contributed to the harmonious unfolding of his latent faculties. His parents had not to pay anything for his education and maintenance. The teacher enjoyed the perfect confidence of the guardians. The student drank deep of the fount of knowledge at the feet of his teacher. After graduation, the pupil came back to his home and got married. Thenceforward, he became a member of society. It goes without saying that one who passed the period of his student life in such strict discipline, self-reliance, and pursuit of learning, following the motto of plain living and high thinking, was never tempted by sheer worldliness or gross sensuality. The base propensities of the ordinary worldling could not touch him or lead him astray from the path of duty and righteousness. Thus he became an ideal householder and a useful member of society, holding aloft the noble example of discipline, honesty, self-denial, morality, and service. Such students turned out to be the gems of society and the pillars of the nation.

THE ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

BY KUMARI NASIM TAHIR MIRZA

The history of humanity is full of disputes and conflicts. Man has been endowed with the natural instinct of pugnacity, which forces him to create disturbances and riots. This instinct of pugnacity, coupled with the desire for power and authority, is the root cause of all bloodshed, fight, and enmity between man and man.

Should this natural endowment be

checked? Definitely not, because our struggle for our rights and against social wrongs would not be possible if we root it out.

In order to gratify this inborn tendency and to settle disputes, two methods have been adopted, namely, war and non-violent resistance. War is armed conflict between groups. It is destructive; particularly modern warfare demands a tremendous price,

without giving enough good in return to counter-balance the sacrifice. War is the negation of humanitarianism, morality, and religion.

Another method is non-violent resistance, commonly known as *satyāgraha*. It is understood by the simple Indian people as the 'Gandhi's way of fighting the British Raj'. Literally, by the word '*satyāgraha*, is meant insistence on truth. It is a form of direct action, but contrary to war; it is a non-violent direct action. The fundamental assumption of the doctrine of non-violence is that there is a force greater than the physical one; that illumination and enlargement of heart and enrichment of consciousness exert greater influence than suppression of feelings by force. Violent force degrades both its user and the victim; but non-violent pressure touches and strengthens the moral fibre of those against whom it is directed. It is a type of integration, which satisfies the desires of both the parties concerned and utilizes freely and fully the energies of both without suppression. The aim of a non-violent resister is to convert his opponent and to change his sense of values, and not to injure or crush his feelings or to humiliate him. The result therefore is a lasting, creative, and genuine relationship, which will create mutual respect between the two parties.

Love, sacrifice, truth, self-reliance, and suffering are the essentials of *satyāgraha*. Love is the foundation of a non-violent movement. It is not sentimental feeling, but a strong and clear-sighted reverence for an ideal. It must be patient, enduring, kind, unselfish, and full of understanding and insight. Respect and admiration for an ideal are created in the opponent through love. It is love towards people, love for truth, courage, patience, and tolerance. The foundation of war is hatred, and it ends in hatred; while the basis of *satyāgraha* is love, and it culminates in greater love and understanding, and in the unity of mankind.

Non-violent struggle requires sacrifice

and suffering on the part of the resister. The price of the resistance is paid by the resister himself, and not by innocent people. A *satyāgrahī* believes that dying for his ideals is a way, perhaps the only way, to make those ideals live, and that killing or wounding others for the sake of his own ideals kills the very ideals themselves. Therefore he himself suffers. Progress is measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. Others are not forced to share the hardships, but, ultimately, they share them by moral force and by the force of his example.

Truth is no less important in the practice of non-violence than love. Gandhiji gave even greater importance to truth than to love. Non-violent struggle is for a true cause, and it is believed that truth would eventually triumph. Self-reliance in both thought and action is a quality that needs to be cultivated in a non-violent resister for the achievement of truth.

The concept of non-violence is not a new one. In some form or other, it has existed from the beginning of human civilization. In almost every religion, sacrifice was essential to please God and to serve humanity. This is the origin of *satyāgraha*. In recent ages, the practice of sacrifice was refined into one of self-sacrifice and self-denial, which later on took the form of *ahimsā*. Gandhiji's doctrine of *satyāgraha* is the practical application of the ideal of *ahimsā*, which is common to almost all the great religions of the world.

In the modern era, this principle as applied to social problems is seen in the writings of Tolstoy. His conviction is that spiritual force has been, is, and shall be the only force by which progress is possible. Thoreau is also a follower of this theory. He fought almost single-handed against slavery in the United States, and showed that it was not the number of resisters that counted, but the purity of their sacrifice and suffering.

The practice of non-violence for social and political reforms is a phenomenon of the modern world. Some of the Eastern as well

as Western nations have applied it very recently. The first example is the Hungarian non-violent resistance, which took place in the middle of the nineteenth century. Another instance is the struggle in South Africa, which lasted eight years beginning from 1906. It was also practised on behalf of the indigo cultivators of Champaran in Bihar, in 1917, under the leadership of Gandhiji. The next non-violent resistance for social rights took place in Vykom village in Travancore, also directed by Mahatma Gandhi. Another successful non-violent struggle for economic justice was fought in 1921 in the north of Simla. Still another effective campaign occurred in 1928 in Bardoli, near Surat, undertaken by some eight thousand farmers. Besides these, there was the all-India non-co-operation struggle of 1921-22, which, although unsuccessful in its immediate objectives, was yet immensely successful in awakening the nation.

In the beginning, it was pointed out that war and non-violent resistance are the two methods for the gratification of the instinct of pugnacity. Which of the two is morally a better method? There are some common features in both the methods. Both are modes of social action, aiming at the solution of social conflicts. Both require suffering and sacrifice. A sense of chivalry and a spirit of adventure are common to both. Both are organized institutions, because, like the soldier in a war, the non-violent resister, too, has an incentive to get victory. Thus non-violent resistance resembles war in practical aim and effect, in working against the morale of the opponents, in settling disputes and conflicts, and in the requirement of courage and ability to endure suffering and hardship.

In spite of all the above similarities, non-violent resistance is more efficient and morally far better than war. It brings about a change of heart in the opponent, because, unlike war, it does not require wholesale murder, bloodshed, and destruction of property and national resources. It costs far less in money,

as well as in life and suffering. Usually, it permits a large part of the work of the people to go on unhindered, and hence the normal life of the nation is maintained during the struggle. Thus, although it fulfils the purpose of war, it does not entail the horrible and undesirable consequences of violence.

Another difference between violence and non-violence lies in the treatment of means-ends relationship. A worthy end should be achieved by equally worthy means. Violence aims at annihilation rather than at adjustment, while non-violence aims at converting the opponent instead of destroying him. Its effect therefore is lasting. It ends in an adjustment based on goodwill. The resister has respect for the personality and moral integrity of the opponent. This demonstration of respect for the personality of the rival exercises a deep influence upon the opponent. The resister's gentleness, courage, fortitude, generosity, and goodwill fill the opponent with surprise and change his heart. Thus his conduct wins public sympathy, admiration, and support. His aim is to remove fear and anger, and to give instead a feeling of security, unity, sympathy, and goodwill. The result is that the opponent gradually loses fear, anger, hatred, indignation, false pride, contempt, worry, and anxiety, and he realizes that the resister's scale of values is ethically at a higher level, and that his courage is not limited to physical bravery, but is beyond it.

Apparently, the aim of *satyāgraha* seems to be, like the aim of war, to suppress the free will and expression of feelings of the opponent. No, it is not so. The feelings are not suppressed, but they are automatically changed by a sort of auto-suggestion; a new attitude comes to be established in the opponent, which is based on sounder moral values. The resister does not break the opponent's will, but alters it; he does not destroy the latter's confidence, hope, and enthusiasm, but transfers them to finer purpose.

The effect of non-violence is far more lasting than war. In the case of war, one may

win more for the time being, but in the long run it spreads hatred and indignation. In the incident of Jallianwalabagh, for instance, the hundreds who died there did more, by the manner of their death, to lower the prestige of the British rule in India and abroad, and to further the cause of Indian struggle for freedom, than the death of thrice that number could even have done in violent rioting.

Psychologically, non-violent resistance is better in several respects. Anger and hatred, which destroy our energy, are avoided in it. The peaceful resister does use his energy, but his energy is applied more intelligently. The angry and violent man applies too much energy on the immediate objects and too little on the ultimate results, and thus he wastes much of his energy. The peaceful resister moves very slowly, but his work is more efficiently done and is more permanent and effective.

The way of *satyāgraha* is psychologically better, because it purifies the inner heart of both the parties. The peace imposed by war is only a political peace, but psychologically it is a suppressed conflict. It is momentary or unstable, because it carries with it the seeds of its own destruction. The outer peace is not a guarantee of inner peace. But in the peace which is the outcome of non-violent struggle, there is no inner conflict; on the contrary, the energies which were in conflict formerly work in harmony. Here the inner condition is reflected in the outer condition. Political freedom attained by war is not freedom for all people, but merely

slavery to a different group; while peaceful freedom is freedom for all.

Non-violent resistance encourages truth, love, spiritual unity, integrity, and equality, as well as gentleness, self-purification, and voluntary self-suffering. Greed, evils of capitalism and purely monetary valuations, over-emphasis on individualism, race pride, class pride, intellectual pride, and aggressive nationalism are all the negation of non-violence and the result of hatred spread by war.

The application of the principles of non-violence is by no means easy. It requires patience, endurance, large-heartedness, and an enlightened mind. But it is the only hope of our time, when nuclear weapons are threatening to destroy humanity itself. And in the context of our own country, too, a revival of Gandhism is an urgent need, for people of every caste, creed, and religion are living side by side. Simply living together is not creditable, but living together with moral responsibilities and goodwill is desirable.

To establish harmonious relationship between man and man, purification of the heart is necessary, which is possible only by the abandonment of wars, riots, and struggles and by the organized application of the principles of *satyāgraha*. Only love can subdue the sinful dispositions of man; only goodness can exterminate evil from the world. Secure and harmonious life lies in being gentle, harmless, and peace-loving. The violent people who resort to the sword are destined to perish by the sword.

This is a great lesson for us all to learn, that in all matters the two extremes are alike. When the vibrations of light are too slow, we do not see them, nor do we see them when they are too rapid. Of like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance. One man does not resist because he is weak, lazy, and cannot, not because he will not; the other man knows that he can strike an irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike, but blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering resistance.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

AN APPROACH TO TANTRA ART

BY SRI AJIT MOOKERJEE

The Tantras are an experience of life, and offer systematic and scientific methods by which the spiritual powers inherent in man can be brought out. In this way, they are the basic foundation of many a philosophy that has developed in India. As a matter of fact, the Tāntric method of *sādhana* was in existence in essence from very ancient times; it was in vogue widely in all parts of India; and its doctrines and precepts even crossed the frontiers.

The initial secret of the Tantra doctrines having been lost in the course of centuries, it

is necessary to restore the fair frame of genuine Tāntric approach by making public their original scientific foundations. Analysis points to the need to associate the Tāntric systems with the various uses in rituals, in dance, in *rāga-rāgiṇī* music, and even in architectural portrayal, as well as the majestic disciplines that are inculcated by the Vedas and the Samhitās—more explicit in the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas—outlined in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Caṇḍī* and repeated in a thousand ways in a million examples. These disciplines have been retained within



I. OM

Painting: Rajasthan School.

the grand rituals, open or secret, followed in the Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain practices, by each man according to his vocation.

Tantra is derived from the Sanskrit root 'tan', meaning 'to expand'. Therefore, Tantra means all-comprehensive knowledge or expansion of knowledge, an appreciation of the fact that the external objects about us are the outcome of some conscious energy expressing itself in various modes of manifestations.

The highest contribution of the Tantra towards human knowledge is, however, the discovery and location of the centres of energy, technically known as *cakras*, in the human body.

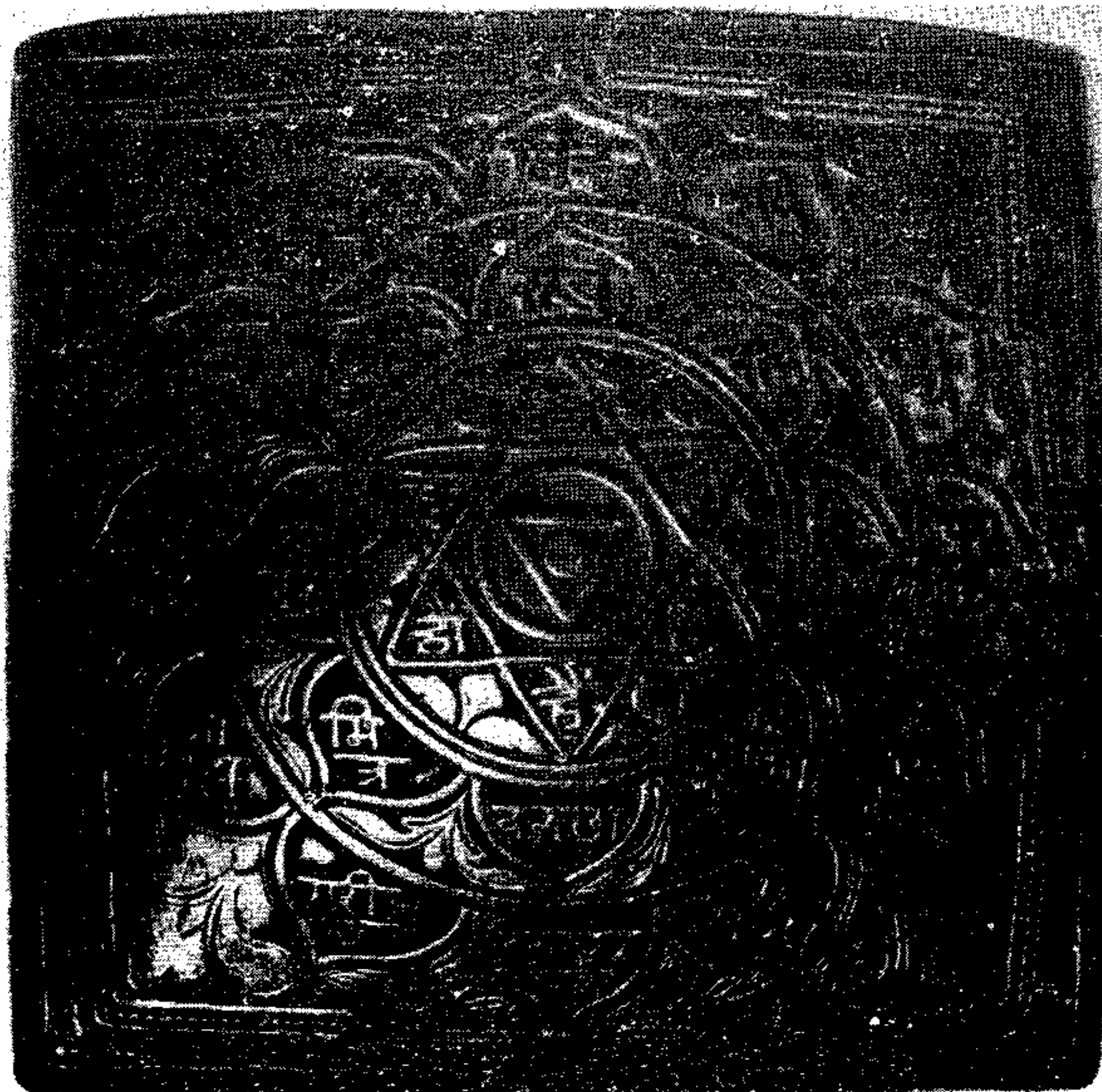
Every individual, according to the Tantras, is a manifestation of that energy, and our individual ego-consciousness, with which our existence in this world is linked up, is but a small appearance in the cage of time, space,

and causality; it is a momentary section of the whole.

Man is a point in the universe, that is to say, he himself is the universe; the whole universe has been condensed in him. It is the story of becoming aware of one's own incredible potentialities, of appreciating some of the miracles of existence. Man wants to have what once fell asunder reunited on a plane where the danger of a split is eliminated. Everything is latent within us, and has been waiting to be discovered.

Throughout our whole life, most of us view the world in only one way. But the Tantra claims that drastically different perceptions of the world, of oneself, and of one's relation to the world are possible. The world, as seen in this state of awareness, is classed in the Tantra-śāstras as the 'subtle world'.

Through meditation on his own nature, man comes upon the power to remake his



II. YANTRA

Copper : South India

vision both of himself and of the world. In fact, no relative vision of the world, however glorious, need hold him prisoner, if he has the courage to refuse to form an attachment to it, and to press on beyond it to the Absolute.

It is in the search for that freedom that we learn to suffer life patiently and to let the inward truth, from which all creation flows, penetrate more and more the outward movements of mind and heart. This is the creative mystery in which we are immersed, and which impels us to transmute action more and more into contemplation. The meaning of such realization is beyond our grasp until a way has been found to actualize it, a way, in other words, which enables us to grasp it. This is the way of *tantra-yoga*. *Yoga* is necessary for the highest mental concentra-

tion. It is only by *yoga* that one can develop all the potentialities and powers that lie dormant in the subconscious regions.

The art of Tantra is based upon the conception of the universe and of man's part in it. Its philosophy and physics grew out of real experience, and the practice of *yoga* is a proving in actual living of the pattern of reality which has been spiritually seen. We learn it by living it. This crucial experience is one of the great moments of mankind's spiritual history.

Man is no longer the measure of all things; his microcosm has been absorbed into a much vaster macrocosm. It is now man closely bound up with the life of all created things. In everything, he seeks the underlying essence, the core of universal truth, which pervades all life.



III. JAINA TIRTHANKARA

Painting: Showing yantras and cakras in the body

But man is normally aware of only a little part of himself. The mind with which he thinks and acts, the life-energy by which he is moved and sustained, and the physical body in which both the mind and life are housed are all that he knows. But that is only his inner being, of which the outer is really a projection. If a single atom contains such energy, what about man himself in whom there are universes of atoms. One has to learn to enlarge oneself, to extend the range of one's consciousness, to embrace more and more of the universe, and then only a man comes face to face with the meaning of creation.

see the truth, as Sri Aurobindo writes, 'does not depend on a big intellect or a small intellect. It depends on being in contact with the Truth and the mind silent and quiet to receive it'.

It can only be sensed in the intensity. This is what the Tantra artist does; he dedicates himself to the task of integrating his vision. In India, this task was regarded as a branch of *yoga*, and involved, like every other spiritual activity, a discipline and a ritual, by which the artist might become identified with his creative source. 'He must meditate', a Tantra says, 'on the original purity of the first principle of things.' Art is not a pro-



IV. ADYĀŚAKTI

Trinayanī (Detail): Bengal

Until we have the humility to acknowledge the existence of a vision beyond our own, until we have faith and trust in superior powers, the blind must lead the blind. Seeing, knowing, discovering, and-enjoying these faculties of powers, according to the Tantra, are pale and lifeless without realization. To

fession, but a path towards truth and self-realization.

We will then see the world as if it were within ourselves, and ourselves as if we were within the world. The forms which our imagination creates will then be the true expressions of our formless essence. For the birth

of a universe and of the universal man obeys the same organic laws and reflects the same divine pattern.

A system of thought and practices has been developed in the Tantra, by which one can reach the conclusion that the cosmos ultimate-

ly consumes one's self and establishes one's eternal unity with the Absolute, when one can exclaim in wonder, 'I am He' (*So'ham*) or 'I am She', for 'there is no difference between me and Thee'. The Tantra art has a great message to this awareness.

A YĀDAVA TEMPLE AT LIMPANGAO

BY SRI VISHNUDEV N. SISODIA

Situated about twenty-five miles north-east of Dhond on the way to Ahmednagar, Limpangao is a very small village, practically unknown. In this small village stands a temple built in the Hemādṣpantī style of the thirteenth century, under the Yādava rule. The temple is neither protected (or, at least, no such protection is mentioned) by the Archaeological Department nor even mentioned in the District Gazetteer. The temple is surrounded and covered with a comparatively new wall and roof, which makes it least conspicuous.

The Yādava rule was established in the Deccan, with its capital at Devagiri (modern Daulatabad), in the year 1187 by King Bhillama, and it was taken to the height of prosperity by the third king of the line, Singhana, who ruled from A.D. 1210 to 1247 (1132-1169 Śaka).

Kṛṣṇa, Singhana's grandson, was succeeded by his brother Mahādeva in 1260, whose reign was also full of adventures and new conquests. A grant from Paithan represents Mahādeva as the conqueror of Gujarat. He is also said to have overcome a Karnataka sovereign (probably, a Yādava Hoysala of Halebid). Mahādeva was kind, and never killed a woman or a child. The kings of Andhra and Malava took advantage of this kindness and placed a woman, Rudramā, and a child on their respective thrones. Mahādeva is called 'Praudh-

pratāpa Cakravartin' (paramount sovereign possessing great valour) in an inscription at Pandharpur, which dates 1192 Śaka (A.D. 1270) and records a sacrifice performed by a Brāhmaṇa priest Keśava of Kāśyapa *gotra*.

After Mahādeva's son—Āmaṇa who did not last more than a few months—his brother's son Rāmacandra came to the throne of Devagiri in 1271 and ruled until 1309. He is also styled sometimes as Rāmadeva or Rāmarāja, and his inscriptions are also found near Mysore, which suggest his rule or at least influence in the South.

The king patronized literature and art, and many learned men flocked together at Devagiri. The celebrated mathematician Bhāskarācārya flourished during the rule of the Yādavas. Bopadeva was also at the court of Rāmacandra.

Mahādeva and Rāmacandra, though not very strong kings, were able to retain a large kingdom because of the expert advice of their minister Hemādri, popularly known in Maharashtra as Hemādṣpant.

An inscription at Pandharpur marks the visit of Hemādri in the year 1273. This inscription is carved on a stone, now popularly worshipped under the name of 'Cauryāyaśī'. The other inscriptions of 1276 and 1277 mention Hemādri's (Hemādi's) and King Rāmacandra's kind gifts to the temple of Pandharpur, respectively.

Hemādri is known to Sanskrit literature as the great author of *Dharma-śāstra*, and the famous *Caturvarga-cintāmaṇi* is also attributed to him.

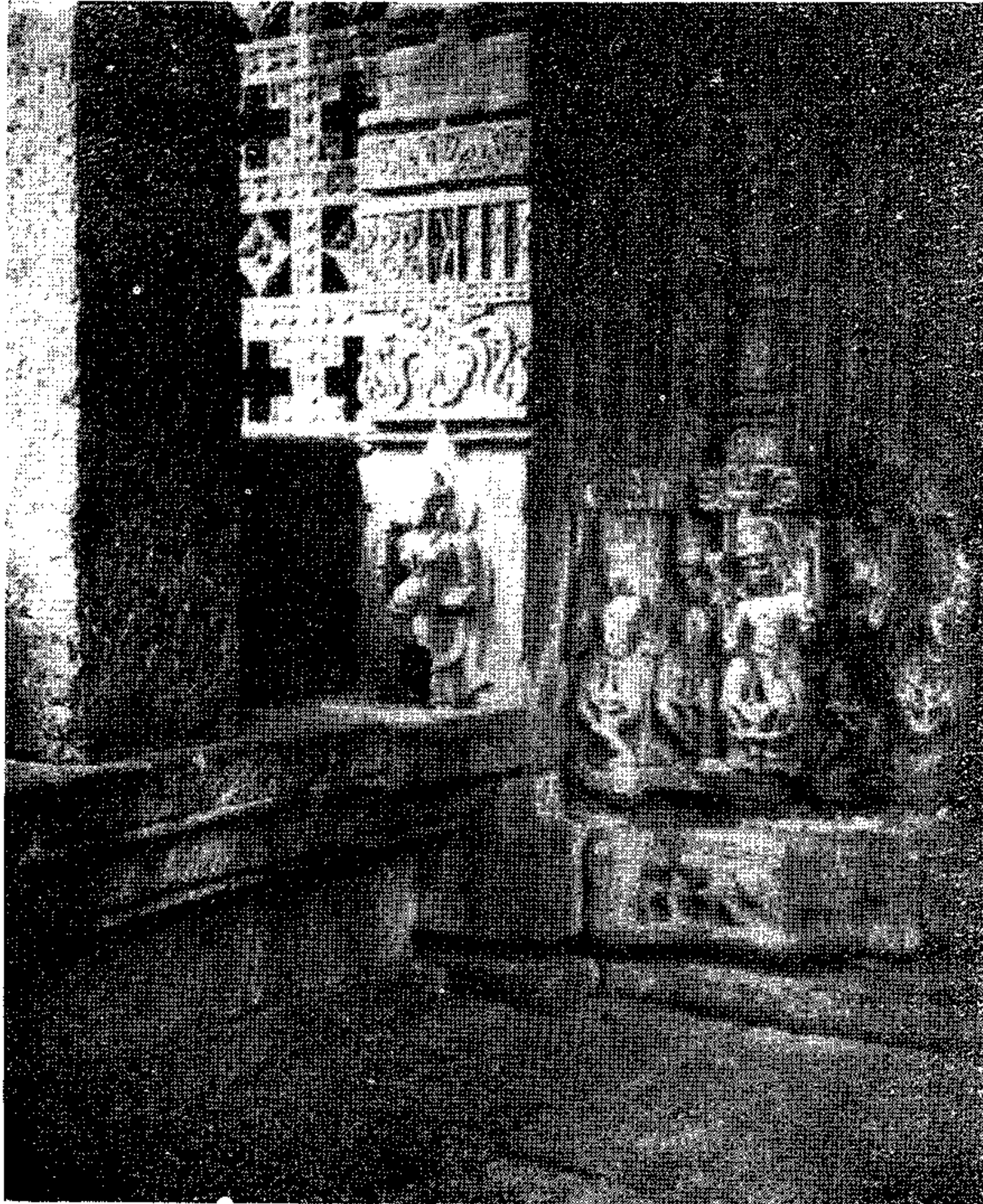
In his work on *Dharma-śāstra*, Hemādri is styled as Mahādeva's 'Śrī Karaṇādhipa' or 'Śrī Karaṇaprabhu'. In a copper plate from Thana of 1194 Śaka (A.D. 1272), Hemādri is called *adhipati* or chief secretary and also *mantrin* or counsellor.

In the fifth book or *khaṇḍa* of *Caturvarga-cintāmaṇi*, Hemādri gives some details of his family. He was a Brāhmaṇa of Vatsa *gotra* and the son of Kāmadeva. His grandfather was called Vāsudeva; and great grandfather, Vāmana. He is also given many extravagant epithets, and he is said to have been a very pious and kind man, greatly given to charity and works of public importance.

Arts and letters were encouraged, and the period is marked for its architectural achievements. Hemādri has left the country rich with many temples and palaces, built in a style called 'Hemādpanṭī'. He is also said to have introduced the *modī* (current shorthand form of writing) script, which, according to tradition, was imported from Laṅkā (Ceylon). It is quite probable that some simple script was introduced to make easy the task of officers and other government institutions. The Yādava dynasty came to an end at the hands of the Khiljī Sultān Mubārak, who succeeded Allā-ud-dīn and killed the last Yādava king Harapāla, brother-in-law of Śaṅkara, Rāmacandra's son, in 1240 Śaka or A.D. 1318.

THE TEMPLE

The Limpangao temple is dedicated to the



I. THE DVĀRAPĀLA AND THE SCREEN

Carving on the right doorway of the second entrance

worship of Śaṅkara or Śiva. It stands right besides the Limpangao village and faces the east.

The entire temple is built of basalt rock, which is comparatively harder to carve than granite, and the walls and pillars contain no mortar—a typical feature of the Hemāḍpantī style.

The temple is divided into the three traditional chambers, viz. the *garbhagrha* or the room where the deity is installed, the *mahāmaṇḍapa* or the *maṇḍapa* containing the Nandi (which, in this temple, is removed and placed outside), and the *ardhamaṇḍapa* and the *mukhyadvāra* or the main entrance.

In the *garbhagrha* is installed the *Śivaliṅga*. The passage or the *antarāla*, which leads to

the *garbhagrha*, is carved with floral designs and human figures. However, the carvings are not symmetrical, and no two pillars contain a similar design.

When we come to the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, we find that the pillars supporting this structure are very well and intricately carved, and present a marked influence of Hoysala architecture. At the top, the pillars are all decorated with geometrical figures and floral designs, while at the bottom of each is a human figure, probably a *dvārapāla* (gate-keeper). Between the four pillars is a large circular platform, probably for the Nandi bull, which at present is outside the temple. Before we come to the *ardhamaṇḍapa*, we have two balconies on the eastern side of the temple, on both sides of the *maṇḍapa*. These balconies have very beautifully carved screens, which let in the light of the morning sun. The screens, though beautiful, are not intricate, and the design is rather rough and bold.

On either side of the door leading to the *ardhamaṇḍapa* are carved dancing human figures, which, again, show a clear and strong influence of Hoysala architecture. The most intricate carvings can be found above these figures and around the second doorway.

The *ardhamaṇḍapa* is comparatively rough, and contains very little carving. The *mukhyadvāra* is also rough and very plain.

Facing the temple and about seven and a half feet away from the main temple is another *maṇḍapa*—a square of about sixteen feet—with an inner platform and four pillars supporting the roof. The pillars are all decorated with floral designs, except for the one on the south-west corner, which has a carving of two *mallas* (wrestlers) wrestling. Inside this *maṇḍapa* is a large Nandi bull facing the temple.

Around the temple are many figures, probably broken away from the outer wall which is rebuilt and replastered recently.

Throughout Maharashtra there are many temples built in the Hemāḍpantī style of architecture, but this temple stands out for



II. NANDI

In the maṇḍapa facing the temple

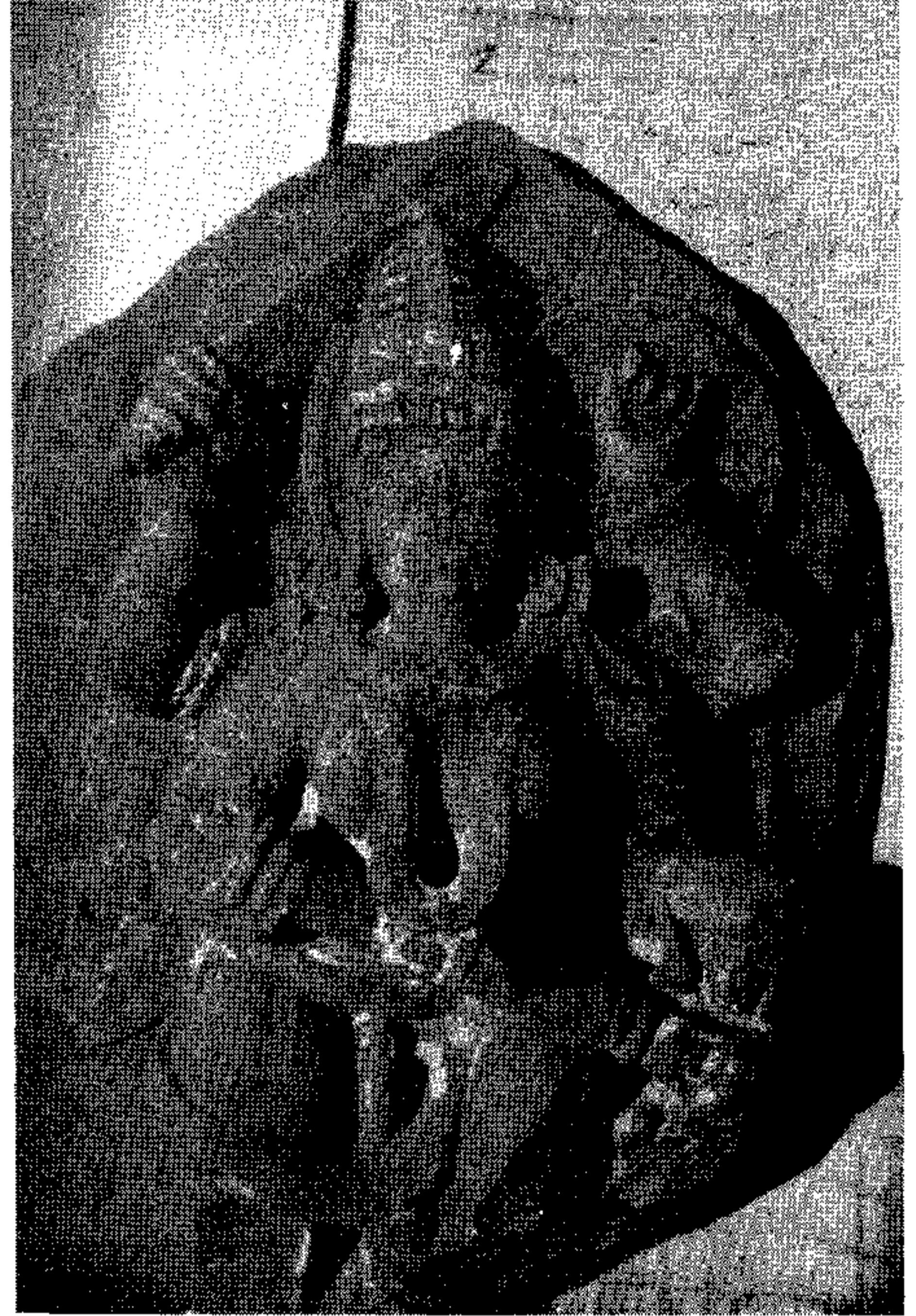
from the Hoysala kingdom. Again, we find close connection between the Yādavas of Devagiri and the Yādavas of Hoysala, and



III. PĀRVATĪ OR UMĀ

A fragment from a larger carving of Śiva-Pārvatī

its marked influence of the Hoysala style. And this is historically justified, as Mahādeva is said to have conquered a king of Karnataka, a Hoysala prince, and he may have then brought back with him some artists



IV. MAHIṢĀSŪRAMARDINĪ

A fragment of a carving from the temple

King Rāmacandra's inscriptions are found in far away Mysore.

The temple is a very apt example of the synthesis of the Yādava and the Hoysala architecture.

These (the Hindu temples) were built to give not merely a form to beauty but a stimulus to piety and a pedestal to faith.

WILL DURANT

SPIRITUAL LIFE: THE GOAL OF HUMANITY

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

At no time in the history of humanity has the need to define the goal of human existence been felt so keenly as today. Humanity the world over has felt the impact of the powerful technological civilization originating in Western Europe in the seventeenth century through the observational and experimental methods of modern science. This impact has been pervasive on thought and belief as much as on life and practice. The methods and results of rational investigation of nature and human experience came inevitably and increasingly into conflict with the untested dogmas and assumptions of the Western man, which had filled a large part of the thought background of his religion for over a thousand years. With the discrediting of that old thought background by modern thought, religion itself became discredited; and the nineteenth century saw modern Western man shifting his loyalties from religion to mundane values. A technological revolution initiated by modern science in the seventeenth century helped to accentuate these mundane values and to sharpen man's worldly appetites during the next two and a half centuries. These impacts were felt with greater or lesser severity in the rest of the world as well, through the worldwide political, commercial, and cultural penetration of the modern West. Today, the whole world is in the grip of forces—physical, mental, and social—initiated by the scientific revolution of the seventeenth-century Europe.

These forces consist of both benevolent and malevolent elements. The former constitute an impressive feature of modern civilization: the annihilation of distance and the physical unification of the world, the theory and practice of democracy based on the dignity and worth of the individual, the plans and measures for all-round social welfare on a worldwide scale, the increase of religious

tolerance, and the gradual emergence of an international outlook. All these are the products of the conquest of external nature by science, and are achievements unparalleled in human history.

The malevolent elements had begun to obtrude themselves from the end of the nineteenth century: an increasing tempo of selfishness, violence, and war. The seventeenth-century Europe had banished religion as the centre of human loyalty, as a reaction against the thirty years of religious wars of that century, and substituted sensate values in its place. But in thus banishing religion, Western man had a keen feeling that he was banishing a thing of deep value from life; but he could not help it, as that value had been presented to him enclosed in elements irrational and anti-social, and alien to his new-found scientific and rational temper, aims, and methods.

'The outburst of moral indignation at the iniquity of the Wars of Religion', writes A. J. Toynbee, a contemporary authority on the subject of world history, 'was the explosion that blew the irreparable breach in the massive fortifications of the Medieval Western Christian *Weltanschauung*. One practical expression of this moral revolt was a deliberate transference of seventeenth-century Western Man's spiritual treasure from an incurably polemical Theology to an apparently non-controversial Natural Science; and the consequent progressive demolition of the intellectual structure of Medieval Western Christianity was thus an after-effect of a previous revolt against its moral pretensions.'¹

The scientific revolution of the seventeenth and succeeding centuries, though it involved the banishment of religion and the secularization of life, gave to modern man a large

¹ *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 169.

measure of control over external nature; but it also led to a diminishing control over his internal nature, resulting in an impoverishment of his inner life and the emergence of those malevolent elements of modern civilization. Religion had held before man a discipline leading to freedom *from* the senses; modern civilization, on the other hand, invited him to a path leading to freedom *of* the senses. Being the easier of the two, man everywhere was attracted by the latter path, as it allowed a free rein to his native impulses and inclinations. The philosophy of modern civilization thus stimulates the native appetites of man, while its ever-improving technology strives to satisfy those appetites. This process of the mutual chasing of appetites and satisfactions, unrelieved by the checks and restraints which religion imposes, merrily proceeded from the beginning of the seventeenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, throwing up philosophies and ideologies aglow with melioristic hopes, and articulated in the slogans of *enlightenment, rationalism, humanism, and progress*.

'In the eyes of Western Man in the later decades of the seventeenth century,' writes Toynbee, 'to try to create an Earthly Paradise looked like a more practicable objective than to try to bring a Kingdom of Heaven down to Earth. Recent Western experience had shown that the specifications for a Kingdom of Heaven on Earth were a subject of acrimonious and interminable dispute between rival schools of theologians. On the other hand, the differences of opinion between practical technicians or between experimental scientists would be likely to remain at a low emotional temperature and would be certain to be cleared up, before long, by the findings of observation, and of reasoning about the results of observation, on which there would be no disagreement.'²

'There was no realization of the truth', continues Toynbee, 'that, by their non-

controversial inventions, these apparently harmless technicians were creating power of a new kind which would be used eventually by other hands, if not by theirs, to upset the existing balance.'³

After two and a half centuries of revolutionary scientific, technological, and social achievements, the nineteenth century closed with the Western man's undimmed hope that a perfect world was just round the corner. 'God is in His heaven; all is right with the world', sang Browning, reflecting this mood of 'the Century of Progress'.

This naive optimism received its first shock from the devastating World War of 1914-18. The malevolent elements of greed, violence, and war, engendered in the heart of a sensate civilization, had begun to assert themselves. The war initiated a movement of self-criticism and heart-searching among modern Western thinkers; the subject 'What is wrong with our civilization?' became a theme of much serious criticism and comment; historians, like Spengler, wrote about the decline of the Western civilization; other thinkers defended its fundamental secular features, advocating only minor adjustments through international co-operative endeavours. But the crisis of the First World War did not clear up at the end of that war; it continued in a chain of crises, through the Bolshevik revolution and the grim Fascist and Nazi interludes, in a mounting tempo of greed, intolerance, and violence, to burst out eventually into the unprecedented crisis of the Second World War of 1939-45, which saw the birth of the Frankenstein's monster of the atom bomb towards its end. The close of this war saw humanity shattered in hope and faith in the promise of an earthly paradise held out by the modern technological civilization; it also saw humanity ushered into the nuclear age of human history, in which hope in a glorious future for man, if wisdom were to guide his thought and steps, alternated with fear in a

² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

final world catastrophe, if folly were to continue to be his guide.

'We are in the middle of a race', says Bertrand Russell, 'between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends'; and he concludes: 'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'⁴

Indian thought had long ago proclaimed that the sensate man is the focus of tension, strife, and sorrow. Secular knowledge only sharpens his animal appetites and deepens his inner tensions. A civilization that knows man only as a sensate individual, and sharpens his animal appetites and panders to their satisfaction, is an unstable structure built on sand; it is bound to topple over sooner or later from its own inner tensions and contradictions. The West had ignored the warning of Jesus contrasting the wise man, who built his house on rock, with the foolish man, who built his house on sand. Discerning and sympathetic modern thinkers were aware of this disturbing feature of the modern civilization.

'The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years,' Swami Vivekananda had warned in the last decade of the nineteenth century, 'if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword. You will find that the very centres from which such ideas as government by force sprang up are the very first centres to degrade and degenerate and crumble to pieces. Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years, if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground and make spirituality the basis of her life.'⁵

India has consistently upheld the idea that spirituality is the bed-rock, on which alone a stable character or civilization can be raised.

It judged a society or a civilization by the amount of spirituality acquired by its citizens. It proclaimed human excellence to consist in the manifestation of the divine within man. And the discipline that makes this possible is religion, and not physical science, technology, or politics by themselves. The latter are secondary, but religion is primary. By bringing order and brightness to the external life of man, they help religion to enrich and deepen his inner life. In the context of human life, there never is or can be any conflict between these two values and disciplines. It was unfortunate that religion in the West was intolerant and anti-science. It was still more unfortunate that religion and science appeared as two conflicting disciplines and values also to the seventeenth-century Western scientist and technician and their successors for these three centuries. The Western religious intolerance does not prove that there is essential intolerance in religion. Indian experience has been otherwise. In the light of its philosophy of all-comprehending unity, India finds and upholds harmony, not only between science and religion, but also between religion and religion, as between people wending their way to the same goal. For the goal is one, but the paths are many.

'Pharisaism has been the besetting sin of the religions of the Judaic family,' writes Toynbee, 'and this sin has brought retribution on itself in a tragic series of atrocities and catastrophes. The fruit of Pharisaism is intolerance; the fruit of intolerance is violence; and the wages of sin is death.'⁶ And referring to the Indian religious spirit, he says: 'It seems to be a matter of historical fact that, hitherto, the Judaic religions have been considerably more exclusive-minded than the Indian religions have. In a chapter of the world's history, in which the adherents of the living higher religions seem likely to enter into much more intimate relations with one another than ever before, the spirit of the

⁴ *The Impact of Science on Society*, pp. 120-21.

⁵ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, p. 159.

⁶ *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 294.

Indian religions, blowing where it listeth, may perhaps help to winnow a traditional Pharisaim out of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish hearts.⁷

Both science and religion have the avowed aim of the enrichment and enhancement of human life. Religion without science is helpless, while science without religion is risky. While both are thus complementary, religion goes deeper into the human problem and sets the direction for all human activity and striving. This direction is the spiritual direction, the liberation of the spiritual value lying embedded in every man and woman. Religion not only sets the goal, but also defines the path. The goal is spiritual freedom—freedom from all bonds, physical or mental, external or internal—so that the human soul may shine in its essentially pure and divine nature. And the path is education, through the understanding and control of nature—external nature through science and internal nature through ethics and religion. Thus life and experience become a continuous school of intelligent self-discipline for man, by which the knowledge of the external and the knowledge of the internal become synthesized and fused into wisdom. This is the *buddhi-yoga* of the *Gītā*, which exhorts man to rise above the sensate level and take refuge in *buddhi*, wisdom.⁸

This teaching of the 'Religion Eternal' of India is expressed in a compressed and comprehensive statement by Swami Vivekananda:

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.

'This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.'⁹

In the dissatisfactions and tensions experienced by modern man, in spite of the immense knowledge and power placed in his hands by modern science and technology, and in his search today for saving wisdom, we get an echo of the story of the much-learned Nārada seeking wisdom at the feet of Sage Sanatkumāra, as narrated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

'Please teach me, sir,' said Nārada; and after recounting all the vast array of knowledge that he had already gained, and confessing that he was still in the grip of sorrow and tension, he added: 'I am only a knower of words and their meanings, but not of the Ātman (the true Self of man); and I have heard from great teachers like you that only the knower of the Ātman overcomes sorrow; help me therefore, O Master, to cross this ocean of sorrow.'¹⁰

The teacher expounds the nature of wisdom and the way thereof, and he concludes in a majestic utterance of spiritual hope for man: 'When the sense impressions are pure, the mind becomes pure. When the mind is pure, the memory of one's divine nature becomes steady. When this memory becomes steady, all the knots and bondages of the heart become destroyed, and man becomes free in this very life.'¹¹ And the Upaniṣad adds: 'To Nārada, who had disciplined himself into utter purity of heart, Sage Sanatkumāra revealed the Light (of God) beyond all darkness of ignorance.'¹²

Indian thought holds that freedom is of the very essence of the spirit of man; man, however, finds that in actual life he is not free; nature without and within thwarts him at every step. The presence of this freedom in the core of his being as well as the consciousness of bondage in actual life makes man the only restless pilgrim among God's creatures, and converts his life into a battle-field for the possession of freedom and peace. This is the

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-83.

⁸ *Bhagavad-Gītā*, II. 49.

⁹ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I. p. 119.

¹⁰ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII. I. 1-3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, VII. 26.2.

¹² *Ibid.*

meaning of history with its ceaseless record of strivings and struggles for material sustenance, social delights, political liberty, intellectual knowledge, moral elevation, and spiritual emancipation.

This striving for freedom has been the most persistent and the most impressive search of man throughout history. The spirit of man refuses to be thwarted by the forces of its environment; when it succeeds in overcoming these forces in the external world, man achieves civilization; this is achieved through the help of science and technology, which have progressed from the primitive to the atomic stage in the course of human history. When the spirit overcomes these forces in the inner world of mind and heart, man achieves culture and spirituality; this is achieved through ethics and religion, which have also progressed stage by stage to reach their highest formulations in the great world religions.

A study of history reveals that this value of freedom, and with it peace and fulfilment, is achieved in its purest and fullest form only in the inner life of man. It can find only a limited expression in his external life, in the fields of his economic, political, social, and intellectual endeavour, even at their highest and best. A measure of external restraint in these fields is inevitable; no romantic philosophy can spirit it away. It will be at its minimum in a civilization where spiritual values predominate; and maximum, to the point of being oppressive and galling, in a civilization where sensate values predominate. With all the contemporary talk about freedom, true freedom seems to be a vanishing quantity in the modern world. Even if a world state were to emerge tomorrow, through wisdom and peace or folly and war, there is no prospect of freedom becoming less illusory and more real, if the present secular *Weltanschauung* were to continue to inspire world civilization.

'In these circumstances,' writes Toynbee, 'it might be forecast that, in the next chapter of the world's history, mankind would seek compensation for the loss of much of its political, economic, and perhaps even domestic freedom by putting more of its treasure into its spiritual freedom.'¹³ 'In a regimented world, the realm of the spirit may be freedom's citadel.'¹⁴ And pleading for a spiritual reorientation of our atomic civilization, Toynbee writes: 'The time has come for us, in our turn, to wrench ourselves out of the seventeenth-century mathematico-physical line of approach, which we are still following, and to make a fresh start from the spiritual side. This is now, once again, the more promising approach of the two, if we are right in expecting that, in the atomic age which opened in A.D. 1945, the spiritual field of activity, not the physical one, is going to be the domain of freedom.'¹⁵

Indian philosophy proclaims that the universe is spiritual through and through. In the heart of its finite and ephemeral manifestations is a reality which is infinite Existence, infinite Consciousness, and infinite Bliss. The end and aim of finite man is the achievement of fullness through the realization of this infinite Being.¹⁶

That spirituality is the goal of human life is an eternal truth for Indian philosophy; it is as relevant in this atomic age as in the age of the Upaniṣads, in which it was expounded in India thousands of years ago. This eternal truth finds a beautiful expression in a memorable verse of the *Bhāgavata*: 'That, verily, is the highest duty of man by which he achieves love of God, a love which is pure and motiveless and steady. By the fulfilment of this duty, man attains fullness and peace.'¹⁷

¹³ *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 244.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-85.

¹⁶ *Vide Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. 1.

¹⁷ *Bhāgavata*, I. 6.

INDIA AND DEMOCRACY

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Each people, like each individual, chooses its own destiny. The choice may not always be deliberate, for circumstances often make a choice imperative, unavoidable. At least in the case of India, her choice of democracy in 1947 was so. History had shaped her for it, and she could not possibly help it. Her long association with Britain did not suit her for any other form of government. Her intelligentsia, who had long been nourished on democratic ideas, would not have tolerated any other form of government. Willy-nilly, India had to choose it, and the choice now seems to be final and complete. It is final, in the sense that the predominant mood in the country today is democratic. Not only the intelligentsia, but the masses also now would not like any other form of government. Democracy has conferred much power on them, and having tasted power once, they are not likely to barter it away for anything. Judging by the evidences in hand, democracy has come to stay. The choice is complete, because democracy now prevails in all the tiers of the country's administration. Not only at the Centre or at the States, but in the villages also, the administration is now committed to be democratic. A Panchayat Raj is slowly taking shape in India. Power really belongs to her people now.

AN EXPERIMENT

It is a big experiment that India has embarked upon. It is big as well as exciting, for not only does it involve hundreds of millions of people, it is full of hazards also. It is the biggest democracy in the East. Some other countries in the East toyed with democracy for some time, but in the end rejected it. A continuing chaos and confusion forced them to do so. And when democracy ended in those countries, people heaved a

sigh of relief, because they suffered most under it. They were glad to be rid of the cruel farce to which they were being subjected in the name of democracy. It is precisely because of the failure of democracy in other countries in the East that the Indian experiment is being watched with great interest throughout the world. The success or failure of the experiment would decide the fate of democracy in Asia. If the Indian experiment succeeds, there is a possibility that other countries also will some day return to democracy. If it fails, it will seal the fate of democracy in the East for good. There is an impression in many quarters that the oriental mind is not suited for democracy. The results of the Indian experiment will determine the truth or otherwise of this.

CONDITIONS OF A TRUE DEMOCRACY

To put it naively, democracy means a people's government—a government by the people and for the people. It is a government where the whole body of citizens rule through their chosen representatives. Clearly, such a government can function if only the people are intelligent and educated. Statecraft, as is well known, has now become extremely intricate; only the brainiest and most enlightened persons can run a government now. But only brains will not do, there must be also ability and a desire to serve. Those who run the administration must be not only capable, but also true representatives of the masses. They must be able to understand the wishes of the people and try sincerely and assiduously to meet them. They must be the true servants of the people. They have no other duty and no other interest than that they will serve the people. They will uphold their rights, secure justice for them, and also safeguard their interests

When the people have their true representatives in the legislature, and when those representatives form a government, there is a true people's government; in other words, there is a true democracy. The people can choose anyone they like, but they must choose right men, for otherwise their own interests will be in jeopardy. Much therefore depends upon whom they choose and how they choose them. They cannot make a good choice unless they know the persons who are wooing their votes. They must know each one of them. They must know something of the problems of the country, too; that is to say, they must know what are the political and economic forces that are at work in the country as well as outside. A fair knowledge of these forces has nowadays become essential for the people, for otherwise they will not know in what directions their interests lie, or who are the people they can trust to look after their well-being. Democracy becomes a mockery where this knowledge is lacking. It becomes a mockery also when they are not able to exercise some check on the activities of their representatives. They must keep a constant watch on them and, where necessary, prod them or pull them up. They cannot remain passive when legislations are being put on the statute-book, or when decisions are being taken by the administration which vitally affect them. They have, in fact, to tell their representatives what they want and see to it that their demands are fully met.

CONDITIONS IN INDIA

Only where there is such an electorate, democracy is a success. The question is if India possesses such an electorate. No one who has any acquaintance with the conditions in India will suggest that she has such an electorate. No doubt, her people are shrewd and intelligent, but these are not enough qualifications to ensure that they will be able to choose right men for the legislature or, after choosing them, will be able to con-

trol them when they go wrong. Similarly, that understanding which is essential to decide what is good and necessary for the country, few in India possess today. And yet, every adult has a right to vote today, and that right is being exercised, too, by a great many of the adults. Obviously, the danger of this giving rise to an all-powerful bureaucracy or a vicious and corrupt oligarchy has been ignored. But the danger is very real in the present conditions of India. This is why many critics cross their fingers and predict an early and ignominious exit of democracy from the Indian scene. They say democracy in India will go the same way as it has in other countries of Asia. They point to the growing discontent in the country and say it is a question of time when an explosion will take place, which will completely destroy the flimsy democracy which now exists in India.

THE REMEDY

Whether the explosion will take place or not, the fact cannot be denied that the climate necessary for a strong and healthy democracy does not exist in India yet. What is the remedy? What must be done to assure the safety of democracy in India or, for that matter, in Asia? What are the constructive steps to be taken in this regard? Clearly, the first and most important step is *education*. Through education the masses should be taught what are the needs of the country and what they are required to do. The people are slowly growing conscious of their power: they realize that, in the final analysis, it is their vote alone that decides everything in the country. If they use their vote discreetly, they can have everything their own way. That power implies responsibilities also, they do not understand. They complain about government's inaptitude, about taxation, about high prices, about many such things. Some of their complaints are certainly genuine, but some are altogether baseless. They often complain, not because there are valid reasons for complaining, but because they are under

the impression that, if they complain, government will become more solicitous, and they will get all they want. The spirit of complaining stems from some basic misconceptions. The people are wont to think that it is the duty of government to give them everything they ask for. If a government cannot give them what they want, it has no right to exist. It will then be open to them to overthrow it. They are only too conscious of their demands. That they have some duties, too, they do not seem to remember.

GOVERNMENT—A SPEARHEAD OF THE PEOPLE

In a democracy, there is no essential difference between government and the people. They have identical interests, identical objects. Government is expected to serve as the spearhead of the people in their efforts towards progress. An enlightened government is the people's leader; it creates enthusiasm in them about its plans and projects; it makes them conscious of their duties and responsibilities; it sees to it that they give it their whole-hearted support and co-operation. The test of a democracy is how far it is able to carry the people with it. It is not too sensitive about criticisms, nor is it too vain to ignore suggestions. It welcomes both, but sticks to its own views unless there are some overriding reasons to the contrary. There may be times when government will find compelled to ask people to practise austerities. Sometimes, it may give directions which are hard to follow. But in their own interests, the people will gladly accept the advice of government, no matter what sacrifice this may involve. A relation based on trust and understanding exists between the two, which is an essential condition for the success of a democracy.

THE ORDEAL OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT

Unfortunately, this relation does not exist between government and the people in India today. Far from trusting government, the

people are suspicious of its bonafides, and blame it for every little misfortune they have. They are not ready to admit that government is well-meaning, and if it fails, it is because of circumstances beyond its control. Similarly, where credit is due, they are not ready to give it. There is no denying the fact that the present government has done some good work. But the people are not prepared to admit it. It is true, at the same time, that government would have achieved more success if the people had co-operated. Unfortunately, that co-operation has not been given. Everyone knows how slow and half-hearted the people are when they have to contribute to a public cause. This makes a sad contrast with the alacrity they show when they have to make a demand from government. They are perfectly justified in making their demands from government. It is a happy sign that they are conscious of their needs, and they can agitate and demand. But they are not equally conscious that, as citizens of a democracy, they have certain obligations, too. Even when government policies and plans are directly for their good, they do not co-operate. Nowadays, government has made it a rule that in all developmental programmes the people will be asked to co-operate. In some cases, they are asked to pay money; in some, they are asked to contribute labour. This is certainly a fair and reasonable arrangement. It is vitally necessary that the people should be associated with these programmes, for otherwise they will not take any interest in them. The paradox about these programmes is that, though they are manifestly for their own good, the people are suspicious about them, or scarcely take any interest in them. What is wrong is that they are not aware of their social duties and obligations. They are extremely individualistic, and think only in terms of their individual interests. This goes counter to the basic principle of democracy, which requires that every individual under it should place the interests of the community

above his own. This social awareness is, unfortunately, absent in India today. This is what constitutes the greatest stumbling-block to her progress.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

The need of education in the circumstances cannot be over-emphasized. If the attitude of the Indian population is to be changed, it must be done through education. Through education, love for the community has to be inculcated. That there is no individual well-being, as apart from communal well-being, should be the first lesson taught. Education broadens a man's outlook and makes him conscious of his social duties and obligations. At the moment, the people are apathetic to what goes on around them. They are much too occupied with their own problems, their own struggles. That they cannot live in isolation, they do not seem to know. Their horizons are limited by their families, their villages, or, at the most, their States. They are scarcely able to think in terms of the country. It is the business of education to make them conscious of the country as a whole. Indeed, education's prime object is to strike at the roots of parochialism—religious, linguistic, or racial. Education is nothing if it does not enable a man to love his fellow-men, irrespective of anything.

NEED TO REVIVE ANCIENT IDEALS

India clearly needs this kind of education today. Not only India, in fact, the whole world needs it. But it must be said that India needs it more than any other country.

Love for the community or fellow-feeling is now practically non-existent in India. No one cares for the country or the community. This is ominous, not only for the future of democracy, but for the future of the country itself. No country or community can prosper where respect for fellow-men or consideration for the community is lacking. India's future is doomed if there is no improvement in the outlook of her people. That, of all countries,

India should be lacking in the spirit of service, love for others, for the community, is surprising. It is surprising, because she has always been a believer in the ideals of service. Her philosophy has always been a philosophy of selflessness, of humility, of the conquest of the ego, of love towards all. It is a strange irony of fate that these ideals should now be forgotten by her people. Somehow or other, these ideals seem to have been forgotten. Some may still give them a lip-service, but most people either know nothing about them, or never care to follow them. What is needed is that these ideals should be revitalized. It may be possible to raise the mental levels of the people through education; it may be possible also to teach them the difficult art of government through education; but this will not guarantee that democracy will be a success in India. There are countries where people are intelligent and educated, and who are also mentally equipped to understand the intricacies of statecraft. Even in such countries, democracy has either never been planted or, if planted, has not flourished. This is because they lacked the zeal for those ideals which alone can ensure the success of democracy, ideals of tolerance, respect for others, humility, and a sense of common well-being. These are the ideals which flow from religion; but because religion is very much at a discount in those countries, democracy has not been popular and has not succeeded, also.

ABUSE OF POWER RAMPANT

As democracy means that power belongs to the people, it is necessary that the people should learn to use that power with moderation and for the common good of all. Abuse of power is already rampant in the world, and the danger is only too real, that democracy will further spread the evil, since it gives power to all and sundry irrespective of their character, irrespective of how they are likely to use it. There is practically no outside agency by which the tendency to abuse power

can be curbed. The only existing check is voluntary, that which the people may exercise out of sheer goodwill, out of consideration for others, for the welfare of the community as a whole. This involves much self-restraint, a spirit of sacrifice, which is not possible unless religion provides the incentive for it. This is why it seems that a condition necessary for the success of democracy is that religion or a suitable substitute should be present to influence people towards these ideals. In the West, the ideal to which everyone owes allegiance is good citizenship. This does for them what religion does for others, though, of course, not to the same extent. Where the true spirit of religion prevails, there is every reason to expect that there will be no abuse of power.

RELIGION—AN ADVANTAGE

The fact that India is deeply religious is therefore an advantage. So long as religion continues to hold its sway over the country, it may be argued that a favourable condition for the success of democracy exists. It is true that religion, that is, dogmatic religion, also, has its pitfalls; it might give rise to intolerance and to factors deterrent to the democratic spirit. But in religion itself lies the corrective to intolerance and such other evils which dogmatism may produce. The true spirit of religion abhors intolerance as well as

all its concomitants. This is why where religion prevails, it is reasonable to expect that the democratic ideals also will prevail. India may be educationally backward; she may be inexperienced in the art of democratic government; but because of her deep religious temperament, she ought to succeed in her democratic experiment. At least, the basic ideas which make for the success of democracy—individual freedom, freedom of opinion, etc.—have always been familiar to India.

The misgivings that one may feel about the success of Indian democracy are therefore groundless. That is, there is nothing basically wrong with India that it may be logically argued that her experiment with democracy is not going to succeed; rather, there are conditions which fully justify the hope that the experiment will succeed. She may lack political education, she may lack also experience in the art of administration; but as against this, she has what constitutes the most important single factor in favour of democracy, namely, love of individual freedom. This she has through her religion. This is a great advantage; this is also a ground for hope that her democracy will succeed. Given that India is truly motivated by the spirit of religion, her democracy may even be better than those hitherto known.

GODĀ

BY DR. K. C. VARADACHARI

Godā¹ is well known as the only woman Ālvār of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. She is said to be a foundling-daughter of Śrī Viṣṇucitta, another Ālvār of the same persuasion. Śrī

¹ Godā is also known as Āndāl. Godā means giver of cows, of light, illuminations, and revelations. This is an ancient appellation or name, as it is found to be a quality or attribute of Śrīdevī; cf. *Śrī-sūkta*.

Viṣṇucitta belonged to Srivilliputtur in the Madurai District. She was brought up by him in the orthodox fashion. Śrī Viṣṇucitta was doing service at the local temple by making garlands of flowers for the deity. Śrī Viṣṇucitta was a hymnist of great reputation. His deity was Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whom he

worshipped in all the accepted ways of *bhakti*. Godā, quite in the *Bhāgavata* manner, began to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the beloved. She sought the love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and wished to be married to him alone.

As Godā grew up, her devotion also deepened, and all those who saw her were won over by her spiritual beauty. Her powers of poetic imagination seem to have attracted her foster-father, who helped her to make them divine. Godā composed two major works, namely, *Tiruppāvai*² and *Nācciyār Tirumoli*. The former is of rare beauty, revealing the preparations for gaining Śrī Kṛṣṇa as husband, and the latter is a composition reflecting her mind, when she imagines and dreams of her marriage with him.

Tiruppāvai is called so because of the refrain at the end of each one of the thirty hymns. This refrain is usually interpreted as calling the help of the Divine Mother Kātyāyanī, for whom this *vrata* or observance is made for securing one's adorable person as husband.

These hymns are sung in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, a month most sacred for an observance.³ Young, unmarried girls get up early in the morning, go to the tank or stream for bath, and then proceed to the temple for worship in the shrine, singing these hymns. It is not known whether this practice was followed earlier. Undoubtedly, Godā's following the path of the *Bhāgavata* created a tradition in South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples. It helped to divinize her love, sublimated her love-hunger into one of soul-hunger, and brought into being a new spiritual force in the life of young women and devotees.

A brief analysis of *Tiruppāvai* is necessary in order to point out the importance of her psychological understanding of love.

The setting of the poem is not original.

² *Tiruppāvai* has been translated into English by several persons. It has become very popular recently in South India.

³ Mārgaśīrṣa is proclaimed as the month beloved to Śrī Kṛṣṇa—*māsānām mārgaśīrṣam*. The *bhrahmī-muhūrta* is chosen for the practice of this *vrata*.

Godā merely utilizes the story of the *Bhāgavata*, where the Vraja girls are stated to have made vows to Durgā Kātyāyanī so as to gain good husbands and love. The aim of the vow is to derive pleasure in the sight of the beloved, delight in his proximity, and ineffable happiness in union with him. The sublime nature of Godā's vow lies in its substituting the ordinary human beloved by the divine Beloved, who has been described as the most Beloved or the Beloved of the beloved. God is the true Beloved, whom all must choose. In this case, He is chosen as *pati* (husband or lord). The divine Lord is the real lord—husband (*pati*)—of all souls.⁴

The vow of Godā is therefore the observance of an ancient custom among youthful maidens, giving it a new orientation. The substitution of God leads to the transformation of the entire psychic attitude, and also to divine mystic union, which is ultimate liberation (*mokṣa*). Union with God is the true aim of the soul yearning for freedom, infinity, perfection, and unmixed bliss.

The first five hymns of *Tiruppāvai* lay down the conditions that facilitate the attainment of the divine presence. The Lord is attainable only by one who is devoted to bodily and mental purity, and has one-pointedness of mind, i.e. one who has bound one's consciousness to the attainment of the end.

The second group of hymns deals with the conditions which should precede the utter surrender to the Beloved. Godā enumerates the different kinds of seekers—a typological study, so to speak—that yearn in different ways and measures for the Divine. All seekers are addressed as girls, as virgins. Indeed, she invites all to accompany her to the shrine, promising them a richer and fuller experience of God. The husband-hood of God is considered to be the most significant to a girl, as it entails total dependence and fulfilment of oneself in and through Him.

⁴ *Viṣṇu Purāna*.

In introducing *Tiruppāvai*, Parāśarabhaṭṭa, the great *ācārya* of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, praises Godā as the wonderful lady who, by her flower garland already worn by her, forcibly awakened Kṛṣṇa, sleeping on the mountain-breasts of the Dark Lady (Nīlādevī), and taught him the transcendent truth of his own being, as taught in innumerable scriptures.⁵

Usually, it is held that this is but an attempt to win God for herself from Nīlādevī. Nīlādevī is considered in Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology to be the third form or personality of the Divine Mother, whose two other forms are Bhūdevī and Śrīdevī. She is described as having a special function of hiding the sins of all souls so as to prevent the wrath of God from falling on them and consuming them. This she does by making Him enraptured by her beauty, the beauty of mercy (*dayā*). Indeed, the great *ācāryas* and saints have been blessed with this grace of God, which overrules *dharma*, so to speak. This shows that God's mercy triumphs over His duty or function of maintaining *dharma* in the world. The impersonal is subordinated to the personal, and it makes God go to sleep on the huge mountain-breasts (illimitable mercy is thus being suggested) of Nīlā. Śrī Veṅkaṭanātha, in his *Dayāśataka*, extols the Nīlā aspect of the Divine Mother.

Godā, to whom praises are amply due, does another thing. She awakens Kṛṣṇa to his duty or *dharma*. The *avatāra* comes to the universe for three purposes, as the *Bhagavad-Gītā* declares : (i) For the protection of the *sādhus* or good men following *dharma* (*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām*) with faith, for the restoration of faith in truth or *dharma* is urgent in respect of the followers of *dharma*. (ii) Destruction of the evil-doers (*vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*) is the second part of the function of an *avatāra*. This is as necessary as the first ; otherwise, the evil-doers may thrive along with the wise followers of *dharma*.

The theory that God enjoys the sin of the evil-doers (*pāpabhogyatva*), which some acclaim as the *vātsalya* (paternal nature) of God, is against the Vedic and Upaniṣadic statements that vice must be punished and the evil-doers should be disciplined. The application of the *pāpabhogyatva* theory to all and sundry, and not only to those who have sought refuge in God, is a gross violation of the principle of mercy (*dayā*). In so far as this theory of universal *dayā* is equated with the toleration of the vicious breaker of *dharma*, it leads to gross dereliction of duty on the part of God. Indeed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself has shown that *dharma* should triumph over *dayā*. (iii) Thus, naturally, the third function of the *avatāra* emerges, namely, the re-establishment of *dharma* on all levels, physical, vital, mental, moral, and spiritual. The universe exists in and through *dharma*. This *sanātana dharma*, so uniquely maintained by God, has to be taught again to the leaders of mankind, so that all may arrive at the highest state of liberation, and have closeness and intimacy with God in His highest state. It is out of this sleep of *dayā* that Godā awakens God Himself. As such, hers is more a call to God to awaken from His stupor than a call to the damsels to attain Him as the Beloved.

Godā's remarkable achievement shows that her becoming the spouse of God is not for seeking forgiveness of the sins of mankind, or of the wicked ones who have made this earth heavy with misery and have themselves become a heavy burden on the earth, but for lightening the burden of the earth by putting down evil (*adharma*) and the evil-doers (*duṣkṛtas*), and for bringing triumph to righteousness (*dharma*) and the doers of good (*sukṛtas*). We should bear in mind this unique feature of Godā's work.

The seers of God, perceiving the harsh darkness of the Kali age creeping, had undertaken the task of bringing down God to the earth, so that *dharma* might prevail. Godā, in a sense, continued the tradition and move-

⁵ Cf. *Tiruppāvai*, 19, which refers to this incident, for internal evidence.

ment that Śaṭhakopa had initiated. Behind the ecstatic and endearing terms used by Godā, we can see her anxiety to restore God to His high place in the minds and hearts of men, as the one object of their adoration, as the one illuminating power in their spiritual darkness. God is accessible in the shrine of the human heart, and can be attained in this very life.

No one who has been touched by the divine light can ever find comfort in mere sleep on the terrestrial bed; maybe he finds his bed in God Himself. Asks Godā: 'Art thou asleep, even though thou heardest the songs of praise of the destroyer of Keśin?' Spiritual awakening is like a dawn or a birth; it is the awakening of the soul to transcendent values and existence. 'Is she dumb or deaf or an ignoramus that she does not get up from her (idle) dreams?' asks she. When reality is before one, who would wrap oneself in imagination?

The sixteenth hymn stresses the need for absolute surrender to God. One should depend on God only, and seek no other refuge or shelter. One should seek to enjoy and be enjoyed by God alone. That is true surrender. That is integral surrender, which means offering of oneself wholly, in all one's parts, to God.

The eighteenth hymn brings out the necessity of seeking the help of Śrī, the Divine Mother, who leads one to transcendence. Here, She is invoked as the well-plaited one (*nappinnai*), assisting God in all His works and grace. The Divine Mother is the supreme teacher (*ācārya*), and God as Mother is the mediator between man and Himself. The Divine Mother is an inseparable companion of God in all His descents (*avatāras*), as well as in His transcendental aspect.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is implored to wake up from his *yoga-nidrā* to receive the praises of his devotees, with words that render them most effective and appealing. The relationship between prayer and praise is, of course, very close; praise reveals the power of God to

grant one's prayers. Praise in respect of God is always elevating and spiritually suitable, whilst in respect of man it always turns out to be flattery. The maidens led by Godā sing thus: 'Like the enemies who have been defeated by Thee, and enfeebled, falling prostrate at Thy feet, we, too, are singing Thy praises at Thy doorstep (defeated or overcome by Thy beauty).'

Godā, then, requests the Lord to ascend His throne, quitting His bed—the throne of the purified heart of the devotee, whose impartial ruler He ever is. Thus she seeks the residence of God permanently in her true spiritual consciousness, as the object of her inward vision.

The supreme mystery of God's nature is exquisitely expressed in the twenty-fifth hymn: 'When Thou wert born as a son of one (Devakī), that very night, becoming the son of another (Yaśodā), Thou wert brought up, making futile the wicked intention of Kāmsa, who could not brook being thwarted, and stood as fire in his vitals. O Nedumāl! we have come to Thee seeking from Thee our goal (*parai*). If Thou grantest us that transcendent fruit, we shall sing Thy wealth, freed from exhaustion, and enjoy bliss.'

The Father of the universe was born as a son to a mortal woman. The Unborn took birth. The Light of the universe, who illumines the sun, the moon, and the stars, was reared in secret. The Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, which is greater than the city of the gods (Amarāvati), was brought up in the cowherd stalls. The fearless Being, who grants to all freedom from fear, was hidden, out of fear. These phenomena reveal the supreme paradox between the human and the divine. Not knowing his divine nature, men have treated him as a human being.

Soaked as Godā was in the mythological tradition of the incarnations of God—not one single incarnation, but many—it would be difficult to understand the many-sided significance of these hymns unless one is acquainted with them all. The whole tenor of the hymns

reveals the glory and kindness of God.

In these hymns, three symbols stand out prominently. The first symbol is that the saints of God are like girls seeking union with God. Here the *śṛṅgāra* motif—love motif of the purest variety—is presented charmingly and innocently. One should love God for the sake of God, even as a woman loves her husband with her whole soul.

The second symbol is the Godā-ideal of seeking God not alone, but together. All should wed one God. All must enjoy God together, which immediately removes any idea of carnality that may be implicit in the first symbol of marriage.

The third symbol is that of bathing in the river. In the search for love, purity is necessary. Indeed, it has been suggested that the supreme Godhead is the ocean of bliss. He is the ocean of mercy, of knowledge, and of bliss. To bathe in that ocean is a purifying act, and it grants release or *mokṣa*.

As the culmination of her hard spiritual practices and devotional yearning, which are reflected in these hymns, Godā found the fulfilment of her aspiration. She became Āṇḍāl, one who has attained God for her husband.

The other composition of Godā, known as *Nācciyār Tirumoli*, comprises fourteen sections, each of which contains ten hymns. This also narrates the course of the vow undertaken to appeal to Kāmadeva (lord of love) to help the increase of love of God for man. Those who know the famous story of how Kāmadeva was asked to help Pārvatī (Umā Haimavatī) secure for her the love of Śiva, and how in the process he was burnt to ashes by Śiva, will recognize that all lovers seek to gain the affection of God for the fulfilment of their love. It is not enough that man should love God, which, of course, is a difficult thing; it is also necessary that God should love the yearning soul. This motif is natural to a woman in love. The divine

desire has to intercede and make God love the soul that has prepared itself through *tapas* for receiving the love of God. Kāmadeva is the high priest of marriage, and spiritual union is a marriage as much depending on the help of Kāmadeva as the ordinary sacramental marriage.

In this work, Godā, in order to become Āṇḍāl, dreams incessantly of her Beloved and prays sleeplessly for the fulfilment of her desire for the Divine. Sleep is conquered through devotional remembrance, and God-hunger replaces the physical hunger. She dreams of her future high estate; she dreams of the coming of the Beloved; she dreams also of the close dalliance that she anticipates; and this anticipation tosses her, awaking her to gloom and distress, frustration and fear. She dreams of the gorgeous marriage ceremony awaiting her—a marriage more glamorous and glorious than that of kings and princesses. The work is a study in rapture—the rapture of contemplation, meditation, and absorption—which is consequent upon the unbroken contemplation and concentration on the transcendent Being. One discerns in this composition the whole gamut of sensory, vital, mental, and spiritual feelings interpenetrating into each other, and the result is poetic creativity of a profound spiritual order. Indeed, Godā reveals that poetry itself is a contemplation that has transformed itself into creativity.

The spiritual marriage of Godā with the Lord was performed by her foster-father in the temple of Srirangam. It is said that she was merged in the image. Āṇḍāl, as she now became, sought not to displace the triple goddesses Śrī, Bhū, and Nīlā, who are stated by Śaṭhakopa as being queens appropriate to the three worlds; on the other hand, she sought to be the companion of the queen of the three worlds and be humble like a shadow of God.

PLOTINUS AND VEDĀNTA

BY SWAMI SMARANANANDA

Even centuries before Kipling made his cynical remark that the East and the West would never meet, intimate contacts did take place between the two hemispheres in the realm of thought. Distance of space or time, indeed, separates men and matter. But thought and spiritual intuition of some may penetrate the barriers of time and clime and find a strange affinity with those of others far removed from them. Plotinus, the neo-Platonic philosopher and mystic of the third century A.D., is one who, in his life and thought, resembles the Indian seers of the Upaniṣadic age, more than any other Western philosopher or mystic.

HIS LIFE AND INFLUENCE

Our main source of information on Plotinus's life is his biography by Porphyry, his disciple. Like the *r̥sis* of ancient India, Plotinus seems to have been unwilling to disclose the details of his life to anyone. Porphyry says that he 'seemed to be ashamed of being in a body, and hence refused to tell anything about his parents, his ancestry, or his country'. How true to the ideal of a *sannyāsin*! His place of birth is unknown, though his name appears to be Roman. Born in A.D. 205, he lived during a century which the historians of Europe consider to be one of the darkest periods in her history. The life of Plotinus is the solitary beacon that lights this otherwise dark period.

Plotinus spent the early years of his life in Alexandria, which was famous in those times for its trade and culture. It is clear that he was in search of Truth from his very early life. He was a disciple of Ammonius, the 'God-taught', for eleven years. He left his teacher after this period, with the intention of obtaining 'direct knowledge of the philosophy practised among the Persians and honoured among the Indians', and accom-

panied Emperor Gordian's expedition against the king of Persia. But as the army was defeated, he had to return to Rome disappointed in A.D. 244, where he opened a school and made many disciples. He even found favour with Emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonia.

Plotinus's life was austere, and he was given to much meditation. Being of a modest temperament, he never talked of his achievements. But his biographer tells us that he experienced the state of intimate union with the Divine at least four times during his life. When on his death bed, he told a friend who had just arrived to hear the mystic's last words: 'I was waiting for you before that which is divine in me departs to unite itself with the Divine in the universe.'

Plotinus was content to teach his disciples orally, and he was averse to putting down his teachings in writing. Perhaps, the persuasions of his disciples compelled him at last to write the fifty-four treatises, which were later edited and arranged into sets of nine by Porphyry, and came to be known as the *Enneads* (sets of nine).¹ In fact, the contents of the *Enneads* are largely the records of his discussions with his intimate disciples. That may be the reason why all passages dealing with the same subject are not strictly grouped under a single *Ennead*, though under each tractate the same subject is dealt with.

It is said that Plotinus had an intention of founding a city on the lines indicated by Plato, but the plan was never carried out. Therefore, the *Enneads* is the only work that stands as an immortal monument to him.

¹ In this article, references to quotations from the *Enneads* are given at the end of each quotation within brackets. In most cases, the translation by Stephen Mackenna and B. S. Page (Vol. 17 of *Britannica Great Books*) has been followed, though, in some cases, the quotations have been taken from W. R. Inge's *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 2 volumes, published by Longmans Green & Co.

The influence that this single book had on succeeding centuries of Christendom is, indeed, tremendous. Dean Inge considers that it is still operative. St. Augustine was deeply influenced by the teachings and spiritual life of Plotinus; it was only later that he changed over to Christianity. Leading writers on Christian mysticism have pointed out the deep influence of Plotinus on Christian mystics, particularly Dionysius the Areopagite and Eckhart, both of whom had a strong monistic bent of mind. E. Underhill says: 'There is hardly one in the long tale of European contemplatives whom his powerful spirit has failed to reach'.² In fact, for the Eastern element in Christianity, the philosophy as well as mysticism of Plotinus is a greater contributing factor than anything else.

PLOTINUS'S METHOD OF INQUIRY

Having been born at a time when a long tradition of Greek thought had already been built up, Plotinus bases most of his thinking on the philosophies of Plato and other Greek philosophers. He shows a marked reverence for Plato and quotes him in support of his assertions. But Aristotle comes in for criticism at his hands. Though he follows the dialectic method of proof, in the tradition of a Platonist, yet his is an attempt to prove the 'soundness of the upward track which he is treading through his inner experience'. Here the method of Plotinus closely resembles the Indian tradition, where the last word in philosophy is inner experience—*anubhūti*.

Plotinus defines dialectic as 'the method and the discipline which brings with it the power of pronouncing with final truth upon the nature and relation of things, also the knowledge of the good and its opposite, of the eternal and the temporal' (I.3.4.). The purpose of the dialectic is to 'pasture the soul in the meadows of truth' and to point the way to the supreme Unity. Therefore, dialectic, for Plotinus, serves the same purpose

as the first step of 'discrimination between the real and the unreal' (*nityānityavastuviveka*) of the Vedāntin in the pursuit of Truth. Very often, Plotinus employs the method of a debate—first raising the question, then examining the possible answers, including those of the opponents, and finally giving his own verdict with the necessary reasoning. This bears a striking resemblance to the method employed by the great Śaṅkarācārya in his commentaries—the method of *pūrvapakṣa*, *khaṇḍana*, and *siddhānta*.

Therefore, as already indicated, the final proof of Truth, for Plotinus, lies in mystic union with the Absolute, which is beyond reasoning. But an aspirant should take the help of the dialectic and the opinions of the ancients in his inquiry into Truth. As Dean Inge puts it: 'We should misconceive the whole character of Plotinus and his circle, if we did not recognize that the intellectual discipline was throughout subsidiary to holiness of life.'³ Nevertheless, Plotinus puts metaphysical inquiry higher than the pursuits of a musician or an artist, inasmuch as they have to be disengaged from their pursuits of earthly harmony or beauty and led towards the absolute Harmony or absolute Beauty, while the philosopher is 'already engaged in the pursuit of Being' (I.3.1.).

THE WORLD-VIEW OF PLOTINUS

Plotinus posits two triads: macrocosmic and microcosmic. The former consists of the Absolute or the One, the Spirit (Nous), and the universal Soul, while the latter makes a tripartite division of man into the Spirit, soul, and body. As we shall see later, these divisions are not watertight; rather, these are arbitrary divisions to explain the universe. For Plotinus ascribes reality only to the One, the All. In the words of Dean Inge: 'The spiritual world is the only real world, the reality of soul and its world being purely derivative and dependent, and the

² E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, Seventeenth Edition, p. 456.

³ W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. I, p. 120.

phenomenal world being an appearance only, not possessing reality.⁴ Like the Advaita Vedāntins, Plotinus, too, considers the empirical world as an image only, and temporary; it is a place from where we have to travel back to our source, the Divine.

To examine the difficult question of how Plotinus accounts for the empirical existence, as to how it derives its existence from the Absolute, we have to understand his lower trinity. The body is called the 'Animate' by Plotinus. He denies any connection between the soul and the body, and quotes Plato in support: 'Compare the passage where we read that "it is absurd to suppose that the Soul weaves"; equally absurd to think of it as desiring, grieving. All this is in the province of something we call Animate' (I.1.4). The body, therefore, corresponds to matter, of which the universe is made. ('Matter' is the nearest equivalent of the Greek word used by Plotinus to explain the substance the world is made of.) Of the other two members of the lower trinity, the soul corresponds to the world interpreted by the mind as a spatial and temporal order. This only means the soul as identified with the world. The Spirit in the human body corresponds to the Spirit of the higher trinity along with the spiritual world, of which the Spirit (Nous) is the Ruler. This Spirit in the human body alone perceives the world as it really is. 'It is only when we exercise this highest faculty of our nature, "a power which all possess, but few use" (I.6.8), that we are ourselves completely real and in contact with reality'.⁵

Now, what is matter? Matter is the recipient of forms the world is made of. It is indeterminate, in the sense that it does not have even 'some existence whereby to have some point in Good'; at the same time, it cannot be called non-existence. Neither does Plotinus agree with the Stoics and Epicureans,

who consider matter as something material. 'For Plotinus, it is, in fact, a mere abstraction, a name for the bare receptacle of forms.'⁶ To quote Plotinus himself on this point: 'Matter is incorporeal, because body only exists after it; body is a composite of which matter is an element' (III.6.7). Again: 'It is an image and phantom of extension, an aspiration to exist. It is constant only in change; it is invisible in itself, escaping him who wishes to see it' (*ibid.*).

Plotinus refutes the atomic and other theories of other Greek philosophers, who explain the substance of the world as something real. And this 'matter', he considers to be the cause of evil, leading men to vice and hiding the vision of the Divine from them. Why is matter considered evil? 'Its evil consists in not having a quality' (I.8.8.), says Plotinus.

Thus Plotinus attempts to explain the phenomena of the world, which he repeatedly maintains to be an image only. It is also interesting to compare with the 'matter' of Plotinus the description of *avidyā* by Śaṅkara in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (108, 109). '*Avidyā* (nescience) or *māyā*, called also the Undifferentiated, is the power of the Lord. She is without beginning, is made up of the three *guṇas*, and is superior to the effects (as their cause). She is to be inferred by one of clear intellect only from the effects She produces. It is She who brings forth this whole universe. She is neither existent nor non-existent, nor partaking of both characters; neither same nor different, nor both; neither composed of parts nor an indivisible whole, nor both. She is most wonderful, and cannot be described in words.' Now, the 'matter' of Plotinus is not considered by him to be the power of the Lord; as such, his 'matter' does not conform to the earlier portion of the passage quoted above. But the latter portion, defining *māyā* as something indeterminate and possessed of the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

power of producing the illusion of the world, comes very near the 'matter' of Plotinus. Swami Vivekananda's definition of *māyā* can also offer an interesting comparison: 'But the *māyā* of the Vedānta, in its last developed form, is neither idealism nor realism, nor is it a theory. It is a simple statement of facts—what we are and what we see around us' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II. Eighth Edition, p. 89).

The 'matter' of Plotinus is something of which he feels the existence, but cannot explain in a definite way. Even the doctrine of *māyā*, as is known to us today, took a very long time to be developed. What needs to be noted is that Plotinus is trying to evolve a doctrine, much akin to Vedāntic *māyā*, in his own independent way; and fully developed, we may make bold to state, his idea of 'matter' would have culminated in a doctrine much nearer to the doctrine of *māyā*.

Speaking of space and time, Plotinus assures us that the soul is not really in them, though they are the field of its activities; they are rather in the soul. He clearly denies any reality to space: 'If space were real, externality would be an ultimate fact, for space is the form of externality' (IV.2.1).

Plotinus does not advocate any clear theory of causation. 'He recognizes, in fact, that the mode of action of the higher upon the lower is mysterious; it is not essential that we should understand it. He concentrates upon what concerns us—the return-journey of the soul to God.'⁷ This reminds us of Swami Vivekananda's statement that questions of why, how, etc. with regard to the Infinite are illogical. All the same, Plotinus considers that material things cannot be causes. 'The only real causes are final causes. So-called efficient causes are parts of the machinery which soul uses. They belong to "Nature".'⁸ The soul alone is the efficient cause, while the 'ideas' in the world of Spirit

are the material causes; for these 'ideas' are transmuted into things in the world of men by the soul. Thus the whole idea of causality is resolved into the soul, which, again, is identical with the One.

Here, it would be relevant to examine some of the answers of Plotinus to the question, 'How does Unity give rise to multiplicity?' He says that it is through the omnipresence of Unity: 'There is nowhere where it is not; it occupies, therefore, all that is; at once, it is manifold—or, rather, it is all things' (III.9.3). In IV.9.4., he says that he holds the One 'to be bodiless, an essential existence'. Again, the question 'How then can a multitude of essential beings be really one?' is answered thus: 'Obviously, either the one essence will be entire in all, or the many will rise from a one which remains unaltered, and yet, includes the one-many in virtue of giving itself without self-abandonment, to its own multiplication' (IV.9.5). In another passage, he comes out with the statement that the soul of man is always one with the Divine, and he was never separated from It: 'We were pure souls, Intelligence inbound with the entire of reality, members of the Intellectual, not fenced off, not cut away, integral to that All. Even now, it is true, we are not put apart; but upon that primal man has intruded another, a man seeking to come into being and finding us there, for we are not outside of the universe' (VI.4.14). From these statements it is clear that while Plotinus is certain about the immutability of the One, he fails to find out how the world of images comes to be created out of it. This precludes him from advocating any definite theory of causation. But if the Absolute is immutable and the universe an image, then causation, too, is reduced to the position of an image, as a logical corollary.

Of course, there are some stray passages in the *Enneads* which state that creation was necessary for the glorification of the Divine or to display His glory. It is for our knowing Him that He creates the world: 'That

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

we show knowledge of the might of God, who, abidingly what He is, yet creates that multitude, all dependent on Him and from Him' (II.9.9). Such passages of dualistic import are found in the Upaniṣads, too; but they are explained in such a way as to be consistent with the Advaitic passages. Compare, for instance, the passage from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II.5.19): 'He transformed Himself in accordance with each form; that form of His was for the sake of making Him known. The Lord, on account of *māyā*, is perceived as manifold, for to Him are yoked ten organs, nay hundreds of them.'

Besides, by 'God' here, Plotinus evidently refers to the second entity in his higher trinity, viz. the Spirit or Nous; for the Ultimate, which he calls the One, cannot be the 'God' here, as he asserts Its immutability. This, too, is in accord with the Vedāntic idea that Īśvara through His *māyā* is responsible for the projection of the universe.

THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL

The soul, says Plotinus, 'is indivisible even when it is divided; for it is all in all and all in every part' (IV.2.1). While dealing with the 'Animate and the man', he says: 'For note, we inevitably think of the soul, though one and undivided in the All, as being present to bodies in division: in so far as any bodies are Animates, the soul has given itself to each of the separate masses; or rather, it appears to be present in the bodies by the fact that it shines into them: it makes them living beings not by merging into body, but by giving forth, without any change in itself, images or likenesses of itself, like one face caught by many mirrors' (I.1.8). He considers the soul as a stranger among the things of sense. In describing its false identification with the sense world, he says that its nature is to look both up and down; it acts as an intermediary between the Spirit and the sense world. It is eternal and timeless. When the soul raises itself to the realm of the Spirit, 'it will see God and itself and All; it will not at first

see itself as the All, but being unable to find a stopping-place, to fix its own limits and determine where it ceases to be itself, it will give up the attempt to distinguish itself from the universal Being, and will arrive at the All without change of place, abiding there, where the All has its home' (VI.5.7). This beautiful passage from the *Enneads* at once reminds us of a similar description of the *jīva*, as looking both upwards and downwards, in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (III.1.2): 'Seated on the self-same tree, one of them—the personal self—sunken in ignorance and deluded, grieves for his impotence. But when he sees the other—the Lord, the Worshipful—as also His glory, he becomes free from dejection.'

The soul, described in this manner, has naturally to be immortal. Plotinus considers so not only the soul in man, but also the soul in brutes. In Dean Inge's words: 'The soul exists in its own right; it neither comes into existence, nor perishes. It is itself the principle of life, the "one and simple activity in living", and as such it is indestructible.'⁹ The Vedāntic idea that one becomes that with which one identifies oneself finds expression in Plotinus: 'All souls are potentially all things. Each of them is characterized by the faculty which it chiefly exercises. One is united to the spiritual world by activity, another by thought, another by desire. The souls, thus contemplating different objects, are and become that which they contemplate' (IV.3.8).

Elsewhere, Plotinus asserts the oneness of the individual soul with the Divine, and compares it to 'a child wrenched young from home and brought up during many years at a distance', which 'will fail in knowledge of its father and of itself; the souls, in the same way, no longer discern either the divinity or their own nature' (V.1.1). How similar is this simile to Swami Vivekananda's comparison of man to a lion cub lost in a flock of sheep and bleating like them! For

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 20.

Plotinus, 'each is a whole and all everywhere, without confusion and without separation' (I.8.2) ; and 'each part of the whole is Infinite' (VI.7.13).

Plotinus, it seems, inherited the idea of rebirth and cyclic existence from Orphic doctrines. Be that as it may, here, too, his ideas are more Vedāntic than anything else. For him, successive incarnations are like one dream after another, or sleep in different beds. After death, the soul 'goes to its own place' (IV.3.13). Real awakening is awakening from the body.

THE UNIVERSAL SOUL

The universal Soul of Plotinus approximates to the conception of Hiraṇyagarbha in Vedānta. But he considers it to be above time and space. In some aspects, Plotinus identifies this with Spirit, the second member of the higher trinity. From one of the passages in the *Enneads*, we find that his universal Soul comes nearer to Hiraṇyagarbha or Virāṭ, rather than to Īśvara : 'First, then, let every soul consider that it is the universal Soul, which created all things, breathing into them the breath of life' (V.1.2.). Elsewhere, Plotinus describes creation as 'an activity of contemplation' (IV.4.2). It 'is an yearning to create many forms' on the part of the universal Soul. And in III.2.3, he says that the energy of the universal Soul descends as low as vegetable life, and slumbers even in inorganic nature. In the Upaniṣads, we find passages describing the welling forth of creation from Hiraṇyagarbha, who, finding himself alone, wants to multiply himself. Some Upaniṣads describe creation as an act of contemplation on the part of the Paramātman, which is explained by the Advaitin as an imagery only (*Vide Aitareya Upaniṣad*, IV.1).

THE SPIRIT (NOUS) AND ĪŚVARA

The Spirit is the God of neo-Platonism. He can be easily compared to the Īśvara of Advaita Vedānta. Plotinus ascribes three attributes to Reality : Goodness, Truth, and

Beauty. These are the attributes through which God is known to man. 'The highest forms in which Reality can be known by spirits who are themselves the roof and crown of things are Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, manifesting themselves in the myriad products of creative activity'.¹⁰ Here, in fact, is an echo of the Indian idea of Saguṇa Brahman—Satyam, Śivam, Sundaram. But Plotinus divests the Spirit of all anthropomorphic attributes. For him, the great Spirit is 'the totality of spirits in actuality and each of them potentially'.¹¹

Plotinus does not say in so many words that the Spirit is one with the Absolute, but he does say that the Spirit cannot hold the first place, as there is duality in its sphere. So there must be something above the Nous or Spirit. Thus, by putting the One above the Nous, Plotinus merges the latter in the former. There are passages in the *Enneads* which hint at this : 'Spirit, in beholding reality, beheld itself ; and in beholding, entered into its proper activity ; and this activity is itself' (V.3.5). 'Therefore, Spirit, the whole of reality, and truth are one nature' (V.5.3). 'Spirit perceives, not as one that seeks, but as one that already possesses' (V.1.4).

Plotinus's two trinities are two universes, one in the divine sphere and the other in the lower sphere. He considers the lower sphere as only an appearance, while in the spiritual or divine sphere, everything is true and beautiful ; and the One or the Absolute transcends both these. Plotinus's effort to describe the Absolute, which he confesses to be indescribable, shows that all existence proceeds from It, and yet, It remains unchanged. How can this happen unless we accept the Advaitic conception of manifestation through *māyā* ? We shall see presently that the Absolute of Plotinus differs in no way from the Vedāntic Brahman.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

THE ABSOLUTE

Plotinus uses many terms synonymously to refer to the Absolute: the One, the All, the Good, the Unity, and so on. In VI.7.33, he says: 'Shape is an impress from the unshaped; it is the unshaped that produces shape, not shape the unshaped.' This 'unshaped' is the One. By 'One', Plotinus does not mean the numerical one, for It is the negation of all number (V.5.6). 'The unity in duality of Spirit and the Spiritual World points decisively to a deeper unity lying behind them. This is the coping-stone of the dialectic'.¹² Plotinus contends that even the term 'One' is not adequate to express the Absolute, which is formless and ineffable. It has no limit or boundary (IV.3.8; VI.7.17); but It is fundamentally infinite (VI.5.12). Though Plotinus talks of the Good in negative language, it is not non-Being. After stating that we are not put apart from the 'All', he says: 'Hence the Good is not to be sought outside; it could not have fallen outside of what is; it cannot possibly be found in non-Being; within Being, the Good must lie, since it is never non-Being' (VI. 5. 1). Again: 'If that Good has Being, and is within the realm of Being, then it is present, self-contained, in everything; we, therefore, need not look outside of Being; we are in it; yet that Good is not exclusively ours; therefore, all beings are one' (VI.5.1). What more testimony is needed to prove that Plotinus means that all the beings are one in the Absolute—*jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*?

It appears that Plotinus is not happy with his own description of the Absolute, for It is indescribable. So, he hastens to assert the inexpressibility of the Absolute: 'In sum: The Unity cannot be the total of beings, for so its oneness is annulled; it cannot be the Intellectual-Principle, for so it would be that total which the Intellectual-Principle is; nor is it Being, for Being is the manifold of things' (VI. 9. 2). To state the

nature of this Unity is not easy. Therefore, the Vedāntic method of '*neti, neti*' (not this, not this) is adopted by Plotinus: 'Generative of all, the Unity is none for all; neither thing nor quantity nor quality nor intellect nor soul; not in motion, not at rest, not in place, not in time; it is the self-defined, unique in form or, better, formless, existing before Form was, or movement or rest, all of which are attachments of Being, and make Being the manifold it is' (VI.9.3). That our individual self is none other than the Absolute is clearly expressed in the following beautiful passages: 'God—we read—is outside of none, present unperceived to all; we break away from Him, or rather, from ourselves; what we turn from, we cannot reach; astray ourselves, we cannot go in search of another; a child distraught will not recognize its father; to find ourselves is to know our source' (VI. 9.7). 'Thus the Supreme, as containing no otherness, is ever present with us; we with it when we put otherness away. It is not that the Supreme reaches out to us seeking our communion; we reach towards the Supreme; it is we that become present. We are always before it; but we do not always look' (VI.9.8). Here, Plotinus compares the individual souls to the singers in a choir, where the singers are not facing the conductor and therefore not aware of his presence. Again, in I.7.1, he asserts that the absolute Good remains unmoved 'as being, in the constitution of things, the well-spring and first cause of all act'. The Good is Good 'not by any act, not even by virtue of its intellection, but by its very rest within itself'. 'For, again, that only can be named Good to which all is bound and itself to none; for only thus is it veritably the object of all aspirations. It must be unmoved, while all circles move around it, as a circumference around a centre from which all the radii proceed.'

These passages are, as it were, an echo of the eternal message of the Upaniṣads. Compare, for instance, the passages in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.4.2; III.8.8,11;

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 168.

IV. 5.15; and so on. In the description of Plotinus's mystic experiences, too, we hear this echo again and again.

THE MYSTIC EXPERIENCE OF PLOTINUS AND VEDĀNTIC REALIZATION

In only one place, Plotinus makes a mention of his realization: 'Many times, it has happened; lifted out of the body into myself, becoming external to all other things and self-centred; beholding a marvellous beauty; then, more than ever, assured of community with the loftiest order; enacting the noblest life, acquiring identity with the Divine; stationing within It by having attained that activity; poised above whatsoever within the Intellectual is less than the Supreme; yet, there comes the moment of descent from intellection to reasoning; and after that sojourn in the Divine, I ask myself how it happens that I can now be descending, and how did the soul enter into my body' (IV. 8.1). This reference to the descent, perhaps, means that it does not refer to the fullness of realization. But the descriptions in the sixth *Ennead* are so vivid that they could be so only as a result of the fullness of realization.

He compares the individual soul to a woman and the Absolute to her beloved, whom she has attained. How is this union? Let Plotinus speak for himself: 'Suppose the soul to have attained; the highest has come to her, or rather has revealed its presence; she has turned away from all about her and made herself apt, beautiful to the utmost; brought into likeness with the Divine—by those preparings and adornings which come unbidden to those growing ready for the vision—she has seen that presence suddenly manifesting within her, for there is nothing between; here is no longer a duality, but a two in one; for, so long as the presence holds, all distinction fades; it is as lover and beloved here, in a copy of that union, long to blend; the soul has now no further awareness of being in body, and will give herself no

foreign name, not "man", not "living being", not "being", not "all"; any observation of such things falls away; the soul has neither time nor taste for them; This she sought and This she has found, and on This she looks and not upon herself; and who she is that looks, she has not leisure to know. Once There, she will barter for This nothing the universe holds; not though one would make over the heavens entire to her; than This there is nothing higher, nothing of more good; above This there is no passing; all the rest, however lofty, lies on the down-going path; she is of perfect judgement, and knows that This was her quest, that nothing higher is. Here can be no deceit; where could she come upon truer than the truth? And the truth she affirms, that she is, herself; but all the affirmation is later and silent. In this happiness, she knows beyond delusion that she is happy; for there is no affirmation of an excited body, but of a soul become again what she was in the time of her early joy. All that she had welcomed of old—office, power, wealth, beauty, knowledge—of all, she tells her scorn as she never could, had she not found their better; linked to This, she can fear no disaster, nor even know of it; let all about her fall to pieces, so she would have it that she may be wholly with This, so huge the happiness she has won to' (VI.7.34). Though this realization is Advaitic, it is compared to the union of man and woman; and we find a similar comparison in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, too (IV.3.21).

Again, Plotinus describes this realization in a direct manner also: 'In our self-seeing There, the self is seen as belonging to that order; or rather, we are merged into that self in us which has the quality of that order. It is a knowing of the self restored to its purity. No doubt, we should not speak of seeing; but we cannot help talking in dualities, seen and seer, instead of boldly the achievement of unity. In this seeing, we neither hold an object nor trace distinction; there is no two. The man is changed, no

longer himself nor self-belonging; he is merged with the Supreme, sunken into it, one with it; centre coincides with centre, for in this higher plane things that touch at all are one; only in separation there is duality; by our holding away, the Supreme is set aside. This is why the vision baffles telling; we cannot detach the Supreme to state it; if we have seen something detached, we have failed of the Supreme, which is to be known only as one with ourselves' (VI.9.10). 'There were not two; beholder was one with beheld; it was not a vision compassed, but a unity apprehended. The man formed by this mingling with the Supreme must—if he only remember—carry its image impressed upon him; he is become the Unity, nothing within him or without inducing any diversity; no movement now, no passion, no outlooking desire, once this ascent is achieved; reasoning is in abeyance and all intellection and even, to dare the word, the very self; caught away filled with God, he has in perfect stillness attained isolation; all the being calmed, he turns neither to this side nor that, not even inwards to himself; utterly resting, he has become very rest. He belongs no longer to the order of the beautiful; he has risen beyond beauty; he has overpassed even the choir of virtues; he is like one who, having penetrated the inner sanctuary, leaves the temple images behind him—though these become once more first objects of regard when he leaves the holies; for There his converse was not with image, not with trace, but with the very Truth, in the view of which all the rest is but of secondary concern' (IV.9.11). Therefore, for Plotinus, the goal of all human beings is to attain 'the likeness of the Supreme', to become 'identical with the Transcendent of Being'. How is the life of the realized one? 'This is the life of the gods and the godlike and blessed among men, liberation from the alien that besets us here, a life taking no pleasure in the things of the earth, the passing of the alone to the Alone' (VI.9.11).

These passages, indeed, reach the acme of monistic realization; and they convey to us the message that the image of this world is no more seen when the Supreme is realized. Elsewhere, Plotinus says the same: 'The image has no further being, when the whole soul is looking towards the Supreme' (I.1.12). Verily, the Upaniṣads, too, preach the same idea—that the world of duality ceases to exist on the realization of Brahman; for one who realizes Brahman becomes one with It; and in that state, the creation (*prapañca*) becomes sublated (*upaśama*).

THE PATH TO REALIZATION

How is this realization to be attained? What method does Plotinus prescribe? 'To attain it is for those that will take the upward path, who will set all their forces towards it, who will divest themselves of all that we have put on in our descent—so, to those that approach the holy celebrations of the Mysteries, there are appointed purifications, and the laying aside of the garments worn before, and the entry in nakedness—until, passing on the upward way, all that is other than God, each in the solitude of himself shall behold that solitary-dwelling Existence, the Apart, the Unmingled, the Pure, that from which all things depend, for which all look and live and act and know, the source of Life and of Intellection and of Being' (I.6.7). Again: 'For whose winning, he should renounce kingdoms and command over earth and ocean and sky, if only, spurning the world of sense from beneath his feet, and straining to this he may see' (*ibid.*). Thus Plotinus asks us to withdraw ourselves and look within so as to come face to face with Truth; in other words, he asks us to renounce all worldly things. And he asserts that only by attaining oneness with Truth can It be realized: 'Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have the vision of the first Beauty unless itself be beautiful' (I.6.9).

Plotinus lays great emphasis on purity. By

'purification', he means the disengagement of the soul from the body, for the soul always possesses this purity. He calls the throwing off of the body's moods as the loftier virtue. But the need for virtue in the path of realization does not imply that the Supreme is endowed with qualities: 'It is from the Supreme that we derive order and distribution and harmony, which are virtues in this sphere; the existences There, having no need of harmony, order, or distribution, have nothing to do with virtue; and, none the less, it is by our possession of virtue that we become like to Them'. 'The principle that we attain likeness by virtue in no way involves the existence of virtue in the Supreme' (I.2.1).

Plotinus gives a metaphorical description of the method of purification: 'Retire into thyself and examine thyself. If thou dost not yet find beauty there, do like the sculptor who chisels, planes, polishes, till he has adorned his statue with all the attributes of beauty. So thou chisel away from thy soul what is superfluous, straighten that which is crooked, purify and enlighten what is dark, and do not cease working at thy statue, until virtue shines before thine eyes with its divine splendour, and thou seest temperance seated in thy bosom with its holy purity' (I.6.9). While he advocates self-discipline and emphasizes the importance of celibacy for spiritual progress, he does not ask one to torture the body. For 'the good man will give the body all that he sees to be useful and possible, though he himself remains a member of another order' (I.4.16).

Happiness, Plotinus asserts, is not in the body, not in things external, not in sense-gratification or violent emotions, but in the good. 'It can only be such pleasure as there must be, where Good is, pleasure that does not rise from movement, and is not a thing of process, for all that is good is immediately present to the sage, and the sage is present to himself; his pleasure, his contentment, stands immovable' (I.4.12). Like the *sthita-*

prajña of the *Gītā*, the man of realization ever remains cheerful and untroubled. Plotinus quotes Plato to say 'that he who is to be wise and to possess happiness draws his good from the Supreme, fixing his gaze on That, becoming like That, living by That'.

Beauty of the soul consists, according to Plotinus, in being cleansed of all desires that spring from the soul's association with the body. So the soul should be 'emancipated from all the passions, purged of all that embodiment has thrust upon it, withdrawn, a solitary to itself again—in that moment, the ugliness that came only from the alien is stripped away' (I.6.5).

Thus Plotinus only conveys the Upaniṣadic message that 'happiness is in the Infinite, not in finite things'.¹³

Whom does Plotinus consider a fit recipient of this mystic knowledge? While concluding the *Enneads*, he says: 'This is the purport of our Mysteries; nothing divulged to the uninitiate; the Supreme is not to be made a common story; the holy things may not be uncovered to the stranger, to any that has not himself attained to see' (VI.9.11). The Vedāntic scriptures, too, conclude in a similar manner. The *Gītā* says: 'This is never to be spoken by thee to one who is devoid of austerities or devotion, nor to one who does not render service, nor to one who cavils at Me' (XVIII.67). The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* also concludes on a similar note.

Those who are acquainted with the Hindu scriptures can at once perceive that the teachings of Plotinus are purely Vedāntic. Whether he had any contact with India or Indian thought cannot be known from available sources. Be that as it may, his philosophy, his contemplative life, and his realization vindicate the fact that the Vedāntic truths are universal, and transcend the narrow walls of time or place.

In spite of the highest philosophy preached by Plotinus, he gives a place for the popular

¹³ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII.23.

gods of ancient Greece, because he understood that the masses need them. Again, nurtured as he was in the Hellenistic tradition, and full of reverence for the ancients, he tries to uphold the ideas of Plato and his predecessors. Of course, Plato had a Vedāntic bent in some of his theories; but Plotinus had to accommodate the doctrines of many others, too, with regard to cosmology etc. in the *Enneads*. The passages containing these doctrines do not reach the heights of others having a Vedāntic import. But cosmology etc., after all, come under the world of 'image' of Plotinus.

Romain Rolland says that 'the great path of divine union, as described by Plotinus, is

a combination of *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*'. In his touching tribute to this 'great fellow-yogin', Rolland says that Plotinus 'in the last hour of Greece, in her majestic sunset, wedded Plato and India'.¹⁴ Other modern scholars, who are devoted to a deeper understanding between the Orient and the Occident, have drawn pointed attention to the close affinity of the life and thought of Plotinus to Indian ideals. Indeed, Plotinus deserves a closer attention of all modern thinkers as one who goes beyond the narrow groove of sectarian philosophy or religion to plumb the depths of the ocean of the Divine.

¹⁴ *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, First Edition, pp. 407, 410.

LORENZO SCUPOLI AND THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

BY SWAMI NAGESHANANDA

Christianity, specially the Catholic section, has to its credit many saints of great spiritual eminence. They form a 'great body of witnesses to humanity's experience of God'. The illustrious names of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Teresa, St. Catherine of Siena, and many others are as familiar to the non-Christian world as to the Christian. The spiritual classics associated with them are a legacy they have left for the guidance of sincere spiritual aspirants of all religions. During their own lifetime, they were a source of spiritual wisdom, and they have become immortal by their writings.

Less known than the above-mentioned saints, but no less zealous in its religious fervour and search after Truth, is another group of spiritual luminaries like Thomas à Kempis, Brother Lawrence, etc. Though

not acclaimed as saints of the highest order like the former, they were real seekers of God, greatly advanced in spirituality. And they, too, have left their writings, which have come down to us as excellent guide-books to spiritual life. These inspired writings are the heart pourings of men in whom 'true perfection and religion shined', and are greatly useful for those who desire to enrich their inner life. Lorenzo Scupoli is one among these devout seekers of God. His famous book *The Spiritual Combat*, or *Unseen Warfare* as the revised, enlarged, and more elegant Greco-Russian version is called, and his *Path to Paradise*, which contain his spiritual teachings, are widely read in the West, but less known in the East. The purpose of this article is to present to the non-Christian readers the life and teachings of Lorenzo Scupoli.

LIFE

Lorenzo Scupoli, or Francesco as he was called in pre-monastic life, was born at Otranto, Italy, in 1529, and lived up to the ripe old age of eighty-one. He spent his last days at Naples, where he passed away on 28th November 1610. Not much is known about the first half of his long life. But his books reveal that he must have been deeply imbued with spiritual ideals from his very early days. At the age of forty, Scupoli entered one of the highly honoured religious orders of the time, and was ordained priest when he was forty-eight. After ordination he worked in Milan for some time. As a monk, his life was not a life of action, but he had devoted himself to intense spiritual practices with the sole aim of attaining perfection. As a spiritual guide, he was greatly popular among people. 'His own insight into divine things, his skill in teaching, and his persuasiveness of manner were the secret of his success in his ministerial work' (*The Spiritual Combat* [Methuen, London], Second Edition, p. 49).

The lovers of God are often subject to severe trials. Lorenzo Scupoli also fell a victim to a false accusation, and his community sentenced him for a few years of solitary confinement at Venice and Padua. But these trials are only like passing clouds in the lives of spiritual persons. Scupoli was found innocent, and the community restored to him the lost honour. But to Scupoli himself, the accusation was a boon from the Beloved; for it was an occasion for him to dive deep within himself and reinforce his faith in God and in His saving power. He says: 'He (God) takes care to plant this heavenly seed (i.e. consciousness of one's own nothingness and conviction that all good comes from God) in the hearts of His beloved friends, urging them not to value themselves and not to rely on themselves. Sometimes He does this through the action of grace and inner illumination, or sometimes through external blows and tribulations ... not always

comprehensible to us' (*Unseen Warfare* [Faber and Faber, London], p. 82).

Scupoli was sixty when his great book *The Spiritual Combat* was first published in Italian. It was the fruit of his long solitary life. That the book underwent more than thirty editions in his own lifetime is a testimony to its popularity. Soon it was classed among the best religious classics. Scupoli died in 1610.

The Spiritual Combat and *Path to Paradise* are a record of sublime spiritual thoughts, and the reader constantly feels the presence of a genuine spiritual teacher. Besides, they reflect Scupoli's own personality. As Professor H. A. Hodges says: 'In some of the pages of Scupoli, we can guess that ... he is speaking from personal experience, and the trials which he had to undergo, the experiences of injustice and contempt which he had to endure seem to be visible behind the text. Something else becomes visible too: the uncomplaining patience, the sincere humility, and self-naughting, the dependence on God, the deeply rooted interior peace' (*ibid.*, Introduction). Scupoli was intensely practical and sincere in his approach to spiritual problems. He was well disciplined in spiritual and moral virtues, and strictly followed the rules of a monk. Scupoli's great love for silence and solitude had endowed him with the grace, clarity, and power of expression needed for spiritual writings. His life was marked by extreme poverty and intense prayer. As one of his biographers observes: 'He was so great a lover of poverty that there was nothing in his room but a crucifix, a poor bedstead, a table, and a rotten chair. He was always engaged in prayer, the fruit of which may be gathered in *The Spiritual Combat*.' The appeal which his instructions had in his own time has continued to this day.

PATH TO SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

The teachings of Lorenzo Scupoli are essentially monastic in spirit; yet they decidedly contain enough guidance to men and women

who are inwardly spiritual, though outwardly living a worldly life. The method of developing love of God; the manner of resisting the bodily passions; the way of checking the outgoing senses and using them rightly for spiritual progress; the mode of training memory and imagination; the method of controlling the outbursts of emotions; and the art of prayer—each one of these is beautifully and lucidly dealt with by Scupoli in his teachings.

The main theme of Scupoli's teachings is the attainment of spiritual perfection. This perfection, according to him, does not consist in 'fasts, vigils, sleeping on bare earth, ... saying many prayers at home and in attending long service in church, ... solitude, seclusion, and silence' (*ibid.*, p. 77). These are only virtues that help a pilgrim in his spiritual progress. True perfection consists in coming closer to God and enjoying communion with Him and in feeling His constant presence within. The God that seems to exist far beyond, in the days of ignorance, will, on the dawn of divine knowledge, be felt within one's own heart. Scupoli calls it 'Christian perfection', and considers it to be the goal of Christian life. This is the goal of other religions as well; for the final beatitude transcends all adjectives.

The attainment of this perfection involves strenuous inner struggle. Scupoli aptly calls it 'spiritual combat', and the virtues needed for this combat as 'weapons'. 'To fight with the invisible foes—the varied passions and lusts of the flesh' within oneself—is more arduous than to face the visible enemies outside. A seeker after perfection has to fight like a brave soldier armed with spiritual weapons. 'The arena, the field of battle, the place where the actual fight takes place is our own hearts and all our inner man. The time of battle is our whole life.' We are reminded of the martial metaphors of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*: 'The enemy of the *jñānin*', 'Kill the enemy, the destroyer of knowledge', 'Conquer the wicked foe in the form of desire',

'The sword of knowledge', etc. The Upaniṣads, too, use such expressions. All these only indicate the nature of the spiritual struggle and the qualities that are essential for success.

According to Scupoli, an aspirant in spiritual warfare has to wield four weapons: (1) Distrust of oneself, (2) Trust in God, (3) Practice, and (4) Prayer. These are the basic ideas, and these are beautifully developed in the rest of his teachings.

Scupoli lays much stress on cultivating the first two virtues, viz. distrust of oneself and trust in God. 'Self-esteem', he says, 'is so deeply rooted in us and so firmly enmeshed in us ... that it always hides in our heart as a subtle and imperceptible movement, even when we are sure that we do not trust ourselves and are, on the contrary, filled with complete trust in God alone' (*ibid.*, p. 86).

Distrust of oneself does not mean lack of faith or a spirit of despondency, as it may suggest. It means attenuating the lower self, which is characterized by self-reliance, 'a spiritual disease' which 'closes the very door of our mind, through which alone divine grace can enter'. Much of man's troubles results from too much self-reliance. Scupoli says that a man who studies himself finds that a greater part of his thoughts, words, and actions, which spring from his self-reliant nature, are either bad or sinful. 'This experiment will make him understand in practice how inharmonious and weak he is in himself. And if he sincerely wishes well, this understanding will make him feel how foolish it is to expect anything good from himself or to rely on himself alone' (*ibid.*, p. 84). Hence the need for distrust of oneself. Scupoli prescribes four ways to implant this virtue: (1) realizing one's own nothingness; (2) asking for God's help through humble prayers; (3) being wary and fearing the enemies with whom one has to fight; and (4) being aware of one's own weakness in times of transgressions.

Along with distrust of oneself, one has to develop trust in God. Otherwise, 'if we merely give up all hopes of ourselves ... without having found another support, we are certain to flee immediately from the battle-field or to be overcome and taken prisoner by enemies' (*ibid.*, p. 85). Therefore, Scupoli emphasizes the need for 'perfect trust in God and a complete confidence in Him'. With these two weapons, a devout soul has to progress towards perfection, looking upon the good and bad results of all his actions as blessings from God for his own good. 'Fill your inner man with the conviction', says Scupoli, 'that all that befalls you and happens in you is a test and an education, ... so that, in following them, you may be worthy to receive the crown of truth, prepared for you by God's loving kindness' (*ibid.*, p. 262). This virtue can be acquired either by asking it from God Himself, or by having faith in His protective power, wisdom, and goodness, or by constantly remembering instances where devotees were helped by the Lord in their afflictions.

But to fight valiantly, a soldier in this spiritual warfare has to possess the third weapon, practice. Because 'if distrust of ourselves and trust in God, so necessary in this combat, are alone, not only shall we not have victory over ourselves, but we shall fall into many evils; and therefore, in addition to these, there is need of practice' (*The Spiritual Combat*, p. 98).

Practice chiefly lies in training the mind and the will, since all the other disciplines depend on that. The training of the mind consists in making it pure and clear. A clear and pure mind, possessed with discrimination, can alone grasp spiritual truths. A confused mind, clouded by ignorance and passions, only retards spiritual progress. A mind devoid of discrimination is easily prejudiced by likes and dislikes, and fails to judge things in their proper perspective. So Scupoli advises that a spiritual aspirant should examine things in a detached way. He says :

'Unobscured by passions, the mind then remains in a state natural to it, which is free and pure, and has the possibility to know the truth and to penetrate into depths of a thing, where evil is often concealed under a deceptively attractive exterior and where good is sometimes hidden under a bad appearance' (*ibid.*, p. 91).

The confusion of mind is also the result of pride, which invariably assails an aspirant's mind. When pride pervades, it is almost impossible to cure the mind of its evils. The mind then becomes fully rooted in the idea that its own judgements are correct. Scupoli points this out when he says: "Then everything is so disorganized that there is neither place nor person for applying a healing poultice."

The clarity of mind can be obtained by devout and humble prayers to the Lord, 'bursting forth from the heart', and by 'the continual practice of a deep and loyal consideration of things, to see whether they be good or bad, according as the holy spirit teaches, and not as they appear outwardly ... and as the world judges' (*ibid.*, p. 99). These two roughly correspond to the *bhakti-yoga* and the *jñāna-yoga* of Hinduism.

Similarly, the will needs to be properly trained so as 'not to let it lean towards your own desires, but instead to lead it to be perfectly as one with the will of God'. As will is the spring of all human actions, Scupoli lays much stress on its training. This will is characterized by the power that is manifested on the spiritual plane by subduing one's own will to the will of God in order 'to please Him with pure heart'; and not by the powers that one normally manifests on the physical plane. It is human nature to please itself by seeking pleasure in works, but it should be changed by using the weapon of practice. By continued practice, mind becomes directed to the single aim of pleasing the Lord. As Scupoli puts it: "The inner task which you must practise in anything you do, the task of directing your

thoughts, feelings, and actions only towards pleasing God, will seem difficult at first, but will later become easy and light, if, firstly, you constantly exercise yourself in this spiritual effort, and secondly, if you constantly keep warm your yearning for God' (*Unseen Warfare*, p. 98).

Scupoli distinguishes will into two kinds—the higher will, or the reasonable will, and the lower will, or the sensual will, which are always at war with each other. While the higher will desires to do good, the lower tends to do evil. 'The 'unseen warfare' consists in subordinating the lower will to the higher will. This can be accomplished in four ways: (1) by strong resistance; (2) by creating within oneself an aversion towards that particular evil action; (3) by fervent appeal to God; and (4) by trying 'to incite and establish within yourself other corresponding feelings and dispositions. This would mean driving the passion out of your heart and replacing it by virtue opposed to it'. The last one is the most effective and excellent psychological method.

When the mind and will become thus trained, the devout person finds it easy to proceed with his spiritual practice. A soldier in spiritual warfare who wields the fourth weapon, namely, prayer, speedily progresses towards perfection.

Prayer forms the most important weapon in this 'unseen warfare'. Through prayer, 'the first three weapons are acquired and given full force, and all other blessings are obtained'. Hence prayer should constantly remain within as a 'natural function' of a spiritual aspirant. And it should be the 'refuge in every stress and affliction of the heart'. So Scupoli implores in his *Path to Paradise*: 'No matter how faint-hearted and grieved you may be, you should not abandon it until you reach a state when your *will* is in complete accord with the *will* of God, and, calmed by this, your heart is filled with courageous daring and is joyfully ready to meet, accept, and bear the very thing it feared and

wished to avoid' (p.259). The will of the Lord reflects in a mind that is prayerful, and such a mind acts as a guide unto itself to follow the divine will. The presence of the Lord and His guidance is felt at every step.

According to Scupoli, the prayer can be either vocal or mental. He lays great stress on learning by heart the vocal prayers, the songs and psalms composed by great spiritual souls. Because they are 'poured out of the hearts of saintly men and women, ... and the spirit of the prayer is contained in them; so, if you read them, you, too, will be filled with this spirit' (*ibid.*, p. 207). But the real prayer is the mental prayer, or the 'inner prayer', where the mind is turned inward and an aspirant sends out his prayers not loudly, but silently. Then 'the mind sees and understands clearly what is said in words, and the heart feels what the mind thinks. This is *full prayer*, where the praying words and the praying thoughts are combined with praying feelings' (*ibid.*, p. 205). Then only prayer becomes effective as a weapon in the 'spiritual combat'. As Scupoli expresses: 'Prayer can become a victorious weapon in the unseen warfare only when it becomes real, that is, when it takes root in the heart and begins to act there unceasingly' (*ibid.*, p.220).

These various spiritual virtues are to be gradually developed, according to one's capacity. The enemies often inspire an aspirant to plunge headlong in spiritual practice, just to lead him astray. Hence Scupoli's wise counsel that 'a moderate and orderly mode of life, controlled by reason, which takes into account the requirements of soul and particular constitution of the body, together with its state of health, are less dangerous and more useful for the soul and for the body'. 'For the standard is not the same for every one, although one law applies to all—to keep the body subservient to the spirit' (*ibid.*, p.197).

It is natural that, in a spiritual warfare, violations are apt to occur. But a devout person should not allow these to go deep into his heart to fill him with sorrow and despair. So Scupoli advises: 'You must not aggravate your perturbation by sad thoughts about yourself, for every time you do this, you burden your soul with thousands of other fears produced by faintness of heart and sadness' (*ibid.*, p.277). On the other hand, these transgressions serve one good purpose. In the words of Thomas à Kempis: 'It is good that we have sometimes troubles and crosses; for they often make a man to enter into himself, and consider that he is here in banishment and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing' (*The Imitation of Christ*, I. 12). Constant watching over oneself alone will help to avoid these violations. Scupoli beautifully illustrates how even a spiritual person stumbles in practice through inadvertance. 'If a man does not watch himself well, he may begin some activity with the sole purpose of pleasing the Lord, but later, little by little, introduces into it a self-interest which makes him find in it also a satisfaction of his own desires; ... he becomes so tightly bound by enjoyment of the work that, if God Himself were to hinder him in practice, ... he is filled with indignation ... and murmurs against God Himself' (*Unseen Warfare*, p.97). Also, a mind that is not watchful becomes an easy prey to laziness and negligence, which are a great hindrance in spiritual life. Laziness 'gradually undermines with its poison not only the first small roots out of which virtuous habits may grow, but even those which are already deep rooted and serve as a foundation of the whole order of righteous life. ... Negligence, if it persists, insensibly wears

away and destroys the very nerves of spiritual life' (*ibid.*, p. 127).

The other great danger in the path of spiritual progress is the 'spiritual dryness' that may creep into the minds of devout persons. Scupoli particularly warns against this: 'Take care that on no account you give up your spiritual practices; but follow them with all your energy, however unfruitful and distasteful; they may appear to you, drinking willingly the cup of bitterness, which in your dryness the loving Will of God holds forth to you' (*The Spiritual Combat*, p.277). This can be well avoided by retaining the 'spiritual warmth of heart', which one feels in the beginning of spiritual life. This 'spiritual warmth' is not, as it appears, a single virtue in itself, but a 'fusion of many spiritual movements, just as a ray of light is the fusion of seven colours of the spectrum'. It is a blending of the seven virtues: 'reverence, contrition (penitence), tenderness, prostrating oneself before God, worship, holy zeal, and love of God' (*ibid.*, p. 241).

Possessed of these spiritual virtues and pursued with patience and loving perseverance, the life of an earnest seeker of God will become a life of dedication to the Lord Himself. 'He never prefers one activity to another, even if one is great and lofty and another petty and insignificant; but he has his will equally disposed towards either, so long as they are pleasing to God' (*ibid.*, p. 97). Indeed, it is a hard task. But Scupoli, out of his own experience, assures us: 'If you are resolute, you will day by day learn to manage yourself better and better, and will soon reach a state when you will know how to preserve the peace of your spirit in all storms, both inner and outer' (*Path to Paradise*, p. 259).

IN QUEST OF CERTAINTY

BY BRAHMACHARI AMAL

THE DESIRE TO KNOW

The desire to know, to understand, is one of the strongest motives among men. Ignorance and doubt are painful. Men wish to remove this pain; they seek the warm and comfortable feeling that their views correspond with the 'scheme of things'. This desire to know takes many forms, depending on the level of the mind involved. Ordinary gossip is one form—some people cannot bear that their neighbours should do anything secretly. Many big business organizations have found that the 'small fry', when they do not know the facts behind certain activities, will invent and spread rumours about policies, personnel changes, and so on. This is the desire to be 'in the know', to be informed about the things one finds interesting. Secret societies also cater to this human tendency, for they offer the member the delicious feeling of being one of the select few to really *know* the true facts about life and the world.

On a higher level, the desire to know is the motive power of science and all scholarly activities. Here the ideal, at best, is relatively purer, less bound up with other human desires and egotisms. The search for knowledge becomes disciplined and comparatively impersonal. To the popular mind, science is the last word in proof of almost anything. If 'science says' anything, then there is no longer any doubt.

Still higher is the desire for knowledge of God, or ultimate Truth, or ultimate Reality. This is not theology, nor idle curiosity. It is rather a consuming desire to know what is permanent in a world of ceaseless change. We find great saints and mystics among those who had this desire.

There is, of course, a difference between knowledge and certainty. Knowledge may be tentative or merely probable, as in science.

But this will not satisfy most people. They wish to know and know beyond all doubt. That this is really the motive may be seen in the speculative philosophies and in religion. Those philosophers struggled to bring all phenomena, the universe past, present, and future, the three worlds as it were, within the compass of one all-embracing theory. Most religions, also, have attempted to explain everything, past and future. They offer their adherents the assurance that they know, and are in harmony with, the great forces governing the world. Sometimes, often in fact, the desire for certainty takes the form of fanaticism. Then there is not only a rigid belief that the truth of the universe and its purpose are known, and a closed mind to any other view, but there is also a compulsive desire to convert others to the same view. But the desire for certain knowledge is not necessarily fanatical. It is, rather, the main-spring of all search for truth.

IS CERTAINTY POSSIBLE?

The modern temper, however, is strongly against the possibility of any absolutely certain knowledge. There are many reasons for this. One is the simple observation that theory has followed theory, system has replaced system, and even positions which appeared to be impregnable have been overturned. There is growth, it is true. The new theory may include the old as a special case. But there is no last word in science. Einstein's Theory of Relativity was one major turning point. It replaced Newton's Theory of Gravitation, which was a certain bulwark of the nineteenth-century thought. Not only that, it declared that all motion is relative; we can find no particle or place in the entire universe which we can know to be absolutely at rest. This has cast doubt on

all absolutes. Then, is all knowledge relative? Some believe that it is.

Another support for this line of thinking has been the increasing use of probability and statistical reasoning to attack major scientific problems. This is no longer merely a method; it is a basic approach in its own right. There are not wanting those who will say that reality is basically chaotic, and that the most we can expect to do is to chart probabilities. This approach gives rise to some precise mathematics. But it is statistical mathematics; we cannot speak of cause and effect, nor can we speak with certainty of the individual case.

Other considerations must be placed in the balance. Even direct perception sometimes leads to errors. These range from the famous snake in the rope to the almost equally famous stick which bends as it is thrust into water. Modern psychologists have caused some dramatic incident to be played before a large group of people and have afterwards questioned different individuals in detail. The accounts differ radically, and yet all saw the same thing. We cannot always believe our own eyes.

Moreover, great distortions and limitations are placed on our outlook by our position in time and space. Intellect may compensate to some extent, but it requires great effort and leaves room for error. Our position in the cosmos has given us, except in times of crisis, a feeling of solidity, of stability, and of permanence, and it has taken much intellectual effort to show the flimsy foundation of these feelings. No doubt, there are many such unjustifiable assumptions which have not yet been unmasked. Our society and culture colours our views in ways that are often unseen and unrealized. The very fact that one may speak of the 'modern temper' shows that not only do views and theories change, but that the prevailing mood which produces particular types of theories also changes. The objectivity of science is only partial.

Much more could be said in support of the view that certainty is not possible, but this is sufficient for our present purpose. It is not intended that these considerations are proof of the tentative nature of knowledge. Tomorrow, science may discover some absolutes, and the day after tomorrow discard them again. We leave it at this—that those who want absolutely certain intellectual knowledge appear to be chasing a will-o'-the-wisp.

ABANDONMENT OF DESIRE FOR INTELLECTUAL CERTAINTY

We conclude, then, that science and reason will not give us certainty. A consensus of opinion may be firm, but it is not absolute. Two things should be stressed here. First, this is not an anti-intellectual position. It is, as stated earlier, in accord with the modern scientific temper. Reason itself is used to discover the probable limitations of reason. Within these limits, reason is supreme. Secondly, in emphasizing that it is intellectual knowledge which is limited and tentative, we do not mean to leave the door open to any intuitive or occult means of knowledge opposed to, and superior to reason. Scientific or intellectual insights usually are intuitive, it is true; but the verification and statement of these insights must be in terms of generally accepted standards. In discussing a question of stellar evolution, for example, scientific observations and reasoning are the sole criteria. One may not adduce a vision in support of a particular theory.

We have stressed that it is intellectual knowledge which is tentative and probable, because the word 'knowledge' is used in different senses. Perceptual knowledge comes from physical observations. It is subject to the various limitations mentioned in the previous section. Inferential knowledge comes from the consistency of logical propositions. It may be certain as long as it applies only to the relation of abstract classes and propositions, but it has no necessary connection with

the physical world. When applied to the world, it takes on the empirical limitations of perceptual knowledge. 'Intellectual knowledge' refers to these two types of knowledge. But the word 'knowledge' is also used to denote knowledge of God or Brahman, although the mental processes, if one may even speak of mental processes, are entirely different. According to Vedānta, the first type of knowledge comes from concentration, from a strong mental wave on a particular subject. The second comes from the cessation of all mental waves. We have concluded that the first, probably, can never lead to certainty. It remains to investigate the second.

Before taking this up, however, we should further categorize the different types of desire for knowledge. Principally, these are the desire for knowledge for its own sake, and the desire to use knowledge for some other (worldly) end. In the second case, high probability is almost as good as certainty. The real desire is for power and wealth, not knowledge, and therefore the approach is highly realistic. A person will not worry if the various factors in the situation are too complicated to permit even a high degree of probability. He will weigh these various factors, balance possible gains against possible losses, and reach what seems to be an optimum solution. Statistics is used to make decisions, and, in fact, some of the latest intellectual tools are methods of arriving at optimum solutions in a mass of complications.

Knowledge for its own sake ranges from idle curiosity, through pure scientific research, to the burning desire of the spiritual aspirant to know God. Idle curiosity, of course, is trivial. As for science, it has already been shown that, if one wishes to investigate the nature of the material universe, then he must necessarily accept both the methods and limitations of science and scholarship. One who has a burning desire for Truth will not in the end find satisfaction in the intellect, for he is looking for a certainty and a Truth which the intellect cannot provide. There

are traps. Some will, for a time, become attracted to infallible churches, infallible books, or other false absolutes. But others will not stop until the goal is reached.

REALIZATION RATHER THAN CERTAINTY

The true spiritual aspirant is made of sterner stuff. He is tough-minded, when it comes to his search for something ultimate. He may for a time wish for certainty, but he would not long remain content with absolutely certain knowledge, even if it were possible. Suppose he learned beyond all question the secrets of the origin and destiny of the universe; it would give some intellectual satisfaction. But then what? It is not enough. Even knowledge of a sure path to heaven would not be enough. His instinct is against such things; he is more likely to break certain doctrines than to accept them for long. He is an explorer. He will climb the mountain. He does not want to be taken in a railway carriage, and in his heart he knows that it is not possible.

Certain intellectual knowledge is both improbable, and, even at best, could not bring permanent satisfaction. The conclusion is that the apparent desire for certainty is actually a desire for something else. This something else, we will call realization of ultimate Reality. Realization implies that something theoretical has been made practical, that a speculation about the ultimate nature of things has been turned into an immediate experience. This experience is said to be ineffable, that is, it is of a nature which cannot be expressed in terms of words and intellectual concepts. Those who have experienced this state speak of it in terms of symbols, analogies, paradoxes, and parables. These oblique hints are intended to provide inspiration and practical guidance for spiritual life; they are not doctrinal.

The testimony of sages and saints is the point where the aspirant feels himself to be on solid ground. Here he finds that definite claims are made and that lives are actually

lived in accordance with those claims. There is a power in their life and words, which carries conviction to their hearers as no arguments could ever do.

It must be said, however, that the choice to accept these claims and follow a spiritual path is an individual choice, based on personal experience and understanding. You cannot prove the higher by the lower. There can be no intellectual demonstration of the nature of realization, nor even that such a state actually exists and is genuine. This follows both from the nature of realization and from the limitations of the intellect. If one wishes to pursue such an investigation, he may show consistency but little more. Attempts are sometimes made to show that science leads to the same conclusion which is taught by the saints, but such attempts are bound to prove futile for reasons previously mentioned. Consistency, however, may not only be possible, but is necessary, since we are bound to reject everything opposed to reason.

Swami Vivekananda said in his lecture on 'The Ideal of a Universal Religion': 'So instinct, reason, and inspiration are the three instruments of knowledge. Instinct belongs to animals, reason to man, and inspiration to God-men. But in all human beings are to be found, in a more or less developed condition, the germs of all these three instruments of knowledge. To have these mental instruments evolved, the germs must be there. And this must also be remembered that one instrument is a development of the other, and therefore does not contradict it. It is reason that develops into inspiration, and therefore inspiration does not contradict reason, but fulfils it. ... The first test of true teaching must be that the teaching should not contradict reason.'

Why then should one choose a spiritual life, if one can have no proof in advance that it will not be in vain? Why renounce many of the pleasures in life for an uncertain result? The answer is that the spiritual as-

pirant, as said earlier, is like an explorer. He does not know exactly what he will find, but he believes that there is something there, something which will be missed by those who stick to the broad path and live safe, ordinary humdrum lives.

He will have been influenced first by his contact with the spiritual ideal. While the first awakening may come through books, it is more likely to develop and become intense through the influence of a spiritual personality, someone advanced in spiritual life or who is struggling for spiritual enlightenment without thought for anything else. Such an example shows that spirituality is not merely theoretical, but that it can become even more real than the life and attractions of the senses. Saints of the most transparent sincerity have declared that realization of spiritual truth is as immediate and direct as the perception of a fruit in the palm of the hand, and that this realization will come to all who struggle for it. The scriptures give some idea of the spiritual ideal and of the means to attain it. This becomes fruitful with the touch of someone advanced in spiritual life, for then it becomes clear how spiritual thoughts become a ceaseless current in the personality, always ready to break to the surface. Then the aspirant himself, as he begins meditation and other spiritual practices, will at times experience some peace of mind, some joy, some glimpses which will give him confidence that he is not chasing a mirage.

There is another consideration which may influence one to embrace the spiritual ideal, in spite of its uncertainties. This is a growing appreciation of the hollowness of worldly pursuits. What, after all, is the alternative? It is simply to live a short life in the world, seeking as much as possible of enjoyment, power, reputation, and fame, accompanied by the knowledge that it is in vain, accompanied always by fear.

Bhartrhari in his *Vairāgyasataka* (Hundred Verses on Renunciation) says: 'In enjoy-

ment, there is the fear of disease; in social position, the fear of falling off; in wealth, the fear of (hostile) kings; in honour, the fear of humiliation; in power, the fear of foemen; in beauty, the fear of old age; in scriptural erudition, the fear of opponents; in virtue, the fear of traducers; in body, the fear of death. All the things of the world pertaining to men are attended with fear; renunciation alone eliminates all fear.'

The facts of life are clear enough. Life itself is short. The most intense enjoyments are fleeting. The greatest achievements are not untouched by fear. One should not, of course, become paralyzed by such considerations. Strength in pursuing worldly ends is preferable to surrender. But one who has been touched by the spiritual idea will feel the force of these reflections. He will say that, if realization is uncertain, worldly life is even more uncertain. He will prefer to follow the path which offers the greatest hope and which is the highest ideal. He will give up everything else for this.

These are the two conditions for choosing spiritual life. One is positive, the other negative. It comes to this that one becomes inspired by the immense possibilities of spiritual life, and gives up all obstacles. It can be seen that such a choice must be personal, since it involves personal attitudes, experiences, and values, rather than an intellectual demonstration which can be accepted by everyone with some intelligence. Those who are ready will come to it; those who are not will continue their education in the school of the world. There is no compulsion.

CONCLUSION

We have seen, then, that the goal of spiritual life is realization, rather than any kind of intellectual certainty. This realization

itself is necessarily uncertain from the standpoint of the intellect, but we have seen that there are clear and valid reasons for choosing it as a goal and for adopting a pattern of life and spiritual practices to achieve it. The goal is realization, not a realization of facts or even of one fact. It is, as described in Advaita Vedānta, a union or oneness with all existence. It is not knowledge in the ordinary sense, since it cannot be expressed. Before realization, one tries to understand existence, thinking of oneself as a completely separate entity. After realization, this dream of separateness disappears, and one actually becomes this existence, or rather, realizes that one had never been separate. This is not certainty; this is beyond certainty. The quest for certainty ends not in knowing, but in being.

Swami Vivekananda has expressed this idea in many of his lectures. In 'The Ideal of a Universal Religion', he says: 'We lastly come to the *jñāna-yogin*, the philosopher, the thinker, he who wants to go beyond the visible. He is the man who is not satisfied with the little things of this world. His idea is to go beyond the daily routine of eating, drinking, and so on; not even the teaching of thousands of books will satisfy him. Not even all the sciences will satisfy him; at the best, they only bring this little world before him. What else will give him satisfaction? Not even myriads of systems of worlds will satisfy him; they are to him but a drop in the ocean of existence. His soul wants to go beyond all that into the very heart of being, by seeing Reality as It is; by realizing It, by being It, by becoming one with that universal Being. ... God is his own Self. Nothing else remains which is other than God. All the mortal parts of him become pounded by the weighty strokes of philosophy, and are brushed away. What at last truly remains is God Himself.'

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Swami Satprakashananda, Founder and Head of the Vadanta Society of St. Louis (Missouri), U.S.A., has sent a learned article on 'The Vedic Testimony and Its Speciality' for publication in *Prabuddha Bharata*. The first half of the article is included in this issue, and the second and concluding half will be published in the next issue. The whole article forms a chapter of the Swami's prospective book now under preparation. The copyright of the article belongs to the writer.

...

The interesting story of the beginnings of the Buddhist monastic organization is narrated in the article on 'The Birth of the Saṅgha' by Dr. S. Dutt, M.A., Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Buddhistic Studies at the University of Delhi, and author of several books on Buddhism. ...

Principal Jogiraj Basu, M.A., of H. S. K. College, Dibrugarh, Assam, who is an earnest student of the Vedic literature, makes a brief survey of the scheme of 'Education in Vedic India', and says that it was all-sided, as it 'provided for the physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual development of the pupils'. ...

Gandhiji introduced the technique of *satyāgraha* to solve our social, economic, and political problems. Being essentially a spiritual force, its implications are as profound as they are varied. In her article, Kumari Nasim Tahir Mirza, M.A., Lecturer in Psychology, Women's Academy, Lucknow, discusses the problem of *satyāgraha* with particular reference to 'The Ethical Significance of Non-violent Resistance'. ...

'An Approach to Tantra Art' is by Sri Ajit Mookerjee, M.A., F.R.A.I., Director of Crafts Museum, New Delhi. Sri Mookerjee is an

authority on art, and has written several books on Indian art. The illustrations included in his article are from his own collections. ...

Sri Vishnudev N. Sisodia, B.A. (Hons.), Kāvya-tīrtha, of Poona, gives a description of 'A Yādava Temple at Limpangao', which is built in the Hemād̐pantī style, and says that 'the temple is a very apt example of the synthesis of the Yādava and the Hoysala architecture'. The illustrations given in the article are supplied by the writer himself. ...

The article on 'Spiritual Life: The Goal of Humanity' by Swami Ranganathananda, Head of the New Delhi branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, was originally contributed to the well-known Hindi journal Kalyāṇ. Kalyāṇ translated it into Hindi and published the Hindi version in its Humanity Number of 1958. The original contribution in English is published here for the first time. ...

In his article on 'India and Democracy', Swami Lokeshwarananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, 24-Parganas, West Bengal, examines the workings of democracy in our country, points out the prevailing drawbacks in them, suggests some remedial measures for them, and expresses the hope that because of India's 'deep religious temperament, she ought to succeed in her democratic experiment'. ...

'Godā' or Āṇḍāl is the well-known woman Ālvār of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. In his article, Dr. K. C. Varadachari, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in Philosophy, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, analyses the two major compositions of Godā, *Tiruppāvai* and *Nācciyār Tirumoli*, and brings out the spiritual implications of the 'bridal mysticism' contained in them. ...

'Plotinus and Vedānta' by Swami Smarananda, who is closely associated with *Prabuddha Bharata*, brings out in bold relief the striking similarities that can be found in the philosophy of the Vedānta, on the one hand, and in the spiritual teachings of this great philosopher-mystic, on the other. . . .

Lorenzo Scupoli is one of the less known Christian mystics. His two books *The Spiritual Combat* (or *Unseen Warfare*) and *Path to Paradise* are widely read in the West, and contain instructions greatly useful to earnest spiritual aspirants. Swami Nageshanda, of the Ramakrishna Order, presents in

his article on 'Lorenzo Scupoli and the Path to Spiritual Perfection' some of the essential precepts of the saint which have a direct bearing on spiritual perfection. . . .

In his article on 'In Quest of Certainty', Brahmachari Amal, of the Ramakrishna Order, brings out clearly the distinction between intellectual knowledge and the nature of 'certainty' such knowledge gives, on the one hand, and spiritual knowledge or realization, which is beyond 'certainty', on the other, and concludes that 'the quest for certainty ends not in knowing, but in being'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE SCIENCE OF YOGA. BY I. K. TAIMNI. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. 1961. Pages xiii+446. Price Rs. 17.50.

The volume under review is an excellent exposition of Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtra* 'in the light of modern thought'. The primary object of the author is 'to give to the serious students of *yoga* a clear idea with regard to the fundamental teachings of the *yoga* in a language which he can understand'. This, the author has accomplished ably and admirably.

The volume, which is in four sections, contains the *sūtras* of Patañjali in Devanāgarī script with the transliteration in Roman, word for word meaning, correct and readable English translation, followed by elaborate commentaries, written with clarity and grace. The exposition, though not based on any particular commentary, still does not leave out anything of importance in the orthodox commentaries. Where the author differs from the latter, as, for example, in *sūtra* II.19, he clearly points out and suggests a new line of thought, which is quite meaningful. Some ambiguous *sūtras*, for example, *sūtra* II.27, he has left without much comment, but this in no way mars the continuity. Discussions over 'academic questions of philosophy', which are not of importance to a practical student, are avoided as far as possible.

The author's view that the *Yoga-Sūtra* should be studied 'against a total Eastern philosophy', instead of basing it only on the Sāṅkhya is commendable. Hence he sometimes throws more light on some *sūtras*,

as on III.36, basing his explanation both on the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta. Throughout the book, the author has tried to point out the scientific nature of Patañjali's *yoga*. The parallel references to different branches of modern science, made in the course of the explanation, will appeal to modern mind. The cross references to *sūtras* in the commentary will greatly help the readers, as they give a sense of interrelatedness among the *sūtras*, which otherwise may appear as anomalous to persons not well acquainted with the *sūtra* literature. The diagrams, drawn to illustrate some points for easy understanding, are interesting and instructive. The long note, along with the synopsis, explaining the philosophy of '*kleśas*' in II.3, and on '*siddhis*' in III.16, are very useful to the students of *yoga*.

A few things, however, should be mentioned. The author has referred to occult science and occult traditions in several places. These, together with his remarks on pages 327 and 446 regarding their merit, may induce the zealous readers to make an unhappy alliance between Patañjali's *yoga* and occult science. Thus, the *yoga* may again become 'wrapped up in mystery', which the author himself abhors. On page 208, while strongly emphasizing the need for perfect moral basis for the practice of higher *yoga*, the author casually remarks: 'Not that it is not possible to practise *yoga* at all without giving up these things entirely (meaning the moral disciplines)' etc. For a man who seeks confirmation for making compromises, even these vague suggestions may prove harmful, so far as this *yoga* is concerned. As a great commentator has pointed

out: 'There must be perfect chastity in thought, word, and deed; without it, the practice of *rāja-yoga* is dangerous and may lead to insanity.'

It would have been useful if synopses, similar to the one added to section IV, had been added to the other three sections also. Expressions like 'progressive involution of consciousness in matter', 'involution of consciousness', and 'progressive involution' need more clarification for a layman. In translating the *sūtra* II.30, it would have been more appealing, if the virtues defining *iyama* had been listed in their positive form, following the *sūtra* itself, instead of putting them in their negative form. That is, to say non-violence, truthfulness, continence, etc. is better than saying abstention from violence, falsehood, incontinence, etc. The translation of the *sūtra*, II.54, defining *pratyāhāra* is not very clear. A scheme of transliteration, an alphabetical index for the *sūtras*, a subject index, and a glossary of technical terms would have added to the utility of the book.

Except for these minor points, the book is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the *Yoga-Sūtra* literature, specially because there is, in recent times, a good demand, both in the East and in the West, for books on *yoga*, and the several translations and expositions of Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtra* that have recently been published are either very tough or too poor in their presentation. The present volume is free from both these defects, and deserves to be widely read. It is nicely printed and the get-up is good, but the price is rather high.

SWAMI NAGESHANANDA

FOUNDATIONS OF TIBETAN MYSTICISM. BY LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA. Published by Rider & Company, London, 1959. Pages 311. Price 30 shillings.

Lama Anagarika Govinda, a German by birth but an Indian national by adoption, is a member of the Buddhist faith belonging to the Kargyutpa Order of Tibetan mystics. He has rendered a signal service to the scholarly world by this esoteric work on the Buddhist Tāntricism, which has so far remained obscure and inaccessible outside Tibet, because of its natural isolation and other political factors. It is most refreshing to find many common grounds between Hindu and Buddhist schools in their general approach to *yoga* philosophy, and it is in this context that the book is likely to be well received by every aspirant.

The book is divided into five parts. The first part on 'Om: The Path of Universality' deals with the origin and the universal character of the sacred syllable 'Om'. The magic of words, the power of speech, and the sanctity of the *mantras* are discussed in general. The māntric tendencies of early Buddhism are also well brought out, together with the reasons for the decadence of māntric tradition.

Part Two on 'Mañi: The Path of Unification and of Inner Equality' describes 'mañi', the jewel of mind, as 'the philosophers' stone and *prima materia*'. The relation between mind and matter, according to Buddhist tradition, the five *skandhas*, and the doctrine of consciousness are also explained.

Part Three on 'Padma: The Path of Creative Vision' explains the symbolism of the Tantras, the symbolism of space, colours, elements, gestures, etc., and the distinction between Buddhistic and Hindu traditions.

Part Four on 'Hum: the Path of Integration' explains the distinction between Hindu and Buddhistic psychic centres, the Buddhistic system of Tāntric meditation, and its concept of *yoga*.

Part Five on 'Om Mani Padme Hum: The Path of Great Mantra' discusses the doctrine of Māyā, the significance of the great *mantra*, etc.

The epilogue and the synthesis in the end describe the path of action and of escape from the law of karma and the fearlessness in the Bodhisattva path. The appendix contains bibliography and index of Indian and Tibetan words. The book also contains a selection of beautiful photographs, depicting eleventh century statues of Western Tibet. The author has also taken pains to provide many drawings and diagrams to clarify many complex aspects of Tibetan teachings. The book is moderately priced.

DR. C. K. RAMESH

FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDU FAITH AND CULTURE. BY DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR. Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17, 1959. Pages 160. Price Rs. 6.

This volume, containing fourteen essays and addresses by Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, is published in commemoration of the author's eighty-first birthday. In the first essay, entitled 'Fundamentals of Hindu Faith', he points out the catholicity and universal character of the Hindu faith, and elaborates the same idea in the essay on 'Hinduism and Tolerance', with copious illustrations from the Hindu scriptures and history to show how Hinduism has, throughout its career, tried to live up to the ideal it preached. The second essay on 'Philosophy of Śaṅkarāchārya' is a succinct but beautiful study of the Advaita philosophy of the great Ācārya. 'The spirit of Indian Culture', the author emphasizes in another essay of that name, 'is a spirit based on courage, it is a spirit with a vision of an eternal immutable law governing all the processes of the universe, from the nebula down to the worm and the rock'. In his talks on 'Practical Philosophy', 'The Meaning of Existence', 'What is Culture?', and 'The Peril of the Humanities', the author refers to some of the pressing problems

faced by the modern world in the social, economic, political, scientific, and philosophical fields, and suggests that 'in the work of the readjustment of philosophic and religious beliefs that is now going on around us, the method of approach adopted by Hindu teachers towards problems of life and of thought is an authentic contribution'. The talks on 'Renaissance of India', 'Advice to Young Men', and 'The Future of India' contain valuable hints for the reconstruction of India. In the address on 'The Importance of Music', he traces the development of Indian music from the Vedic period down to our own times, and says: 'Amidst all the variety of technique and theory, the fundamental approach to Music in our country is, nevertheless, that of "a song that's gotten of the immediate soul, and instant from the vital fount of things which is our source and goal".' In 'Influence of Indian Literature on Life', he points out how pen is mightier than sword, and in 'Writers' Responsibility in the India of Today', he gives examples of the right and ennobling type of literature and warns the writers not to neglect the fundamental values of life, 'overwhelmed by the occasional, the incidental, and the temporary'.

It is a book which every lover of India would read, enjoy, and benefit from.

KESHAVA CHAITANYA

SIMILES IN MANUSMṚTI. BY DR. M. D. PARADKAR, M.A., PH.D. *Published by Motilal Banarasidass. Delhi, Patna, and Varanasi. Pages 100. 1960. Price Rs. 6.*

Upamā or simile is one of the important figures of speech that a poet resorts to in Sanskrit literature. Poetry is not the form of expression only for literary works in India; even philosophy, ethics, etc. are clothed in the mantle of poetry. *Manusmṛti*, the monumental work on Hindu *dharmaśāstra*, too, is written in simple verse form. And naturally, similes find a prominent place in it. It is commendable that the author of the book under review should have selected these similes as the theme of his study and thus made a useful contribution to Indological literature.

Manu uses his similes not so much for ornamentation, as for clarification. Therefore, the author points out that Manu is not much interested in expressing his similes in the usual form accepted in poetics. This has given rise to various peculiarities of construction. These peculiarities have been brought together and analysed in the second chapter, in keeping with the accepted principles of works on poetics. The first chapter is devoted to the enlistment of Manu's fields of observation, throwing light on the life in his times, at the same time showing what a keen observer Manu is. In the third chapter, the verses taken up for consideration by the author are translated and explained. In

the last two chapters, other figures used by Manu, like *atīśayokti*, *apahnuti*, *dīpaka*, *dr̥ṣṭānta*, *nīdarśana*, *rūpaka*, as also *kāvyaṅga* and *sāra*, are collected together and investigated, so as to 'complete the information about figures of speech in *Manusmṛti*'.

As Dr. V. V. Mirashi has said in his note of appreciation, the absence of the texts of the verses dealt with is conspicuously felt. We hope that they will find their right place in the book, in a future edition.

The learned foreword by Dr. G. V. Devasthali has enhanced the value of this brochure. Printing and get-up are satisfactory, but the price is rather high.

S. S.

JAPASŪTRAM. BY SWAMI PRATYAGATMANANDA. *Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17. 1961. Pages 79. Price Rs. 4.*

At a time when rationalists and their companions were busy rejecting as meaningless all that they could not understand, Arthur Avalon began presenting before the world the basic texts and tenets of Śāktism. This pursuit led him into the interpretation of the *mantra-śāstra*, which is based on a theory of sound. This work was undertaken by Professor P. N. Mukhopadhyaya, who has subsequently become Swami Pratyagatmananda. Earlier, a voluminous text in Sanskrit under the title *Japasūtram* was given to the public. Now the Swami presents in this monograph some of his basic contentions.

Japasūtram is the science of creative sound. The main function of *japa* is to release the fire or energy latent in the mantra. To this end, there is a *sādhanā* directed to the removal of hindrances and obscurations and to the practice of concentration and contemplation. *Japa* thus needs *vidyā*, *śraddhā*, and *upanīṣad*. And the basic principle of *mantra-śāstra* is the concept of the static sound. There is creative, self-reliant dynamism in such a sound, which is independent of any medium. This is not the same as the concept of the silent sound. The present work offers a valuable exposition of the concept of static sound in a purely scientific manner.

In the five chapters of the work, we are first introduced to the valid distinction between wisdom and knowledge. Then the inquiry proceeds into the nature of *vāk* and *prāṇa*; and we slip into a consideration of *varṇamālā*, the garland of letters, which is at the basis of the expressed *mantra*. In the last chapter, the need for an intensive and integral *sādhanā* is justly emphasized. The work has as an appendix a lecture on 'The Metaphysics of Sound' by the Hon. Mr. Justice P. B. Mukharji.

We wish that the author favours us with the complete rendering of his Sanskrit text.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA COIMBATORE DISTRICT

REPORT FOR 1960-61

The activities of the Vidyalaya during the period under review were as follows:

Teachers' College: In the beginning of the year, 61 students were admitted by the College. Of these, 50 were sent for appearing in the B.T. examination and 36 of them passed, one with a second class. In the practical examination, all the students passed.

The extension service department of the College provides in-service training to teachers in high schools through seminars, study groups, conferences, etc. In the course of the year, 22 such programmes were conducted. Library, audio-visual services, and promotion of science club also form part of its activity. The research section of this department undertook surveys of basic and non-basic schools and socio-economic surveys.

High School: This multi-purpose high school had a strength of 174 students. Fifteen appeared in the S. S. L. C. examination, of whom 12 were declared eligible for university education. Industrial and agricultural training is also provided in the school.

Gandhi Basic Training School: This offers a two years' course of training to teachers of middle schools. Strength in the first year: 39; second year: 34. All the 39 students who appeared in the final examination passed.

Kalanilayam: This senior basic school, which caters to the needs of the surrounding villages, had a strength of 561 students (347 boys and 214 girls) Staff: 17. The library attached to the school had 1,100 books.

Swami Sivananda High School: This school came

into existence on 5th June 1960 to fulfil the needs of the surrounding villages.

College of Physical Education: Sixty-four of the sixty-nine students sent for appearing in the examination passed. In the new session, 65 students were admitted.

College of Rural Higher Education: This college which forms part of the Rural Institute, offers a one year preparatory course and a three year diploma course, equivalent to the degree of a recognized university. Strength: preparatory class: 62; first year: 63; second year: 45; and third year: 37.

School of Agriculture: Total strength: 51.

School of Engineering: Total strength: 175. Thirty candidates appeared in the examination, of whom 23 passed in full, and five in parts.

Certificate Course in General Mechanics: Strength: 58.

Social Education Organizers' Training Centre: This was started nearly four years back. So far, the Centre has trained 229 social education organizers, hailing from various states of India.

Dispensary: Total number of cases treated: 9,643 (new: 6,621; old: 3,022).

Central Library: In all, 18,901 volumes were issued to students, and 5,470 volumes to the staff. Nearly 3,000 volumes were classified, catalogued, and prepared for the shelves.

Industrial Section: Number on the roll: about 400.

Publications: Besides the annual journal called the *Vidyalaya Journal*, five other publications were brought out.

Sri Ramakrishna Utsav: Apart from the usual celebrations, an educational and cultural exhibition was organized.

CORRIGENDUM

February 1962 issue, page 41, line 3: Read 'January' for 'February'.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The 127th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on Thursday, the 8th March 1962.