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Prabuddha Bharata

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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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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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No. 4



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:0:—

LETTERS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

(119)

Sri Ramakrishna Math
Belur, Howrah
11 October 1922

Dear Sriman—,

I received your letter; the other letter too reached me. You need not have any doubt in any way. By having the Master as the root you can take the name of all the gods or goddesses and if you so desire, you can worship them too. There is no harm in doing this. Sri Ramakrishna has verily become all these or to tell in other way all the gods and goddesses have manifested themselves in Sri Ramakrishna in this modern age. The gods and goddesses are ever present, the scriptures too are there all through. Yet, notwithstanding all these, the religions degenerate, men fail in their proper worship of the gods and goddesses, devotion and faith dwindle down, perversions in behaviour and misinterpretations of the scriptures come to prevail and all become forgetful of the Supreme Truth. For all these, God, the all-merciful incarnates Himself in every age to revitalize the religions. The same all-loving, all-kind, all-blissful and ever conscious Lord has incarnated Himself in the name and form of Sri Ramakrishna in this age with all His companions. Verily it is your great fortune that you have taken refuge in Him. I bless you heartily so that you may make a complete self-surrender at His feet. You need not worry about your liberation. For you, it is as sure as the fruit in one's palm. Pray to Him sincerely and dive deep with His name; you will attain to peace and the life will be blessed. I do assure you—there is nothing to worry about.

My love and blessings to you and to all the members of your family.

Well-wisher,
Shivananda

(120)

Sri Ramakrishna Math
Belur, Howrah
28 October, 1922

Dear Sriman—,

I learnt all from another long letter that I could receive from you. You will surely be able to comprehend most of those that I could write to you through the Master's grace. One should not tell anybody anything about one's dreams unless there is one who asks with great eagerness. But you can tell before person or persons who are particularly dear to you and who, according to you, would experience an increase of faith, devotion and love to hear such things.

With regard to meditation on the Master in the heart, follow that process about which I instructed you before. You can easily change the seat of the Master i.e. in your meditation you can have Him seated on snowclad high mountain peak, on the turbulent waves of the ocean, amidst the effulgence of light or on the lotus. Verily all these are no idle imaginations. Afterwards you will experience many more things which are beyond the range of your intellect.

It is very helpful at initial stages to track the count of the *japa*. Later on, as your *japa* ripens into meditation, you will forget about the number and others. Bear this in mind that *japa* becomes best when the same is repeated mentally; it becomes mediocre when it is done with the help of fingers and the *japa* in beads is the ordinary one.

About *japa* I would repeat what I had told you previously. It is the depth of the mind that makes the difference and not the number. It is the extent of love, joy, hope and inspiration to which one needs to be mindful while one repeats the Lord's name. The number may be more or it may be less but by repeating the Lord's name slowly one experiences at heart a greater extent of joy and love than what one would have in quick practices. It is however a general rule that without beads one does not attain to the devotion in *japa*. But for those few or many who have progressed in this realm there is no such binding rule. One who has developed love and devotion for the Lord, needs to have nothing of beads or whatsoever. I cannot understand why you require beads. The teachings of Saint Tulasīdāsa include one verse :

One who repeats *japa* in beads is but ordinary,
mediocre is he who does it with fingers ;
And tributes go to one who can repeat *japa* in mind.

It means that *japa* in mind is the best of all.

Have my heartfelt blessings to you and convey the same to all the devotees.

Your well-wisher,
Shivananda

THE NEW GOSPEL AND THE OLD BELIEF

[EDITORIAL]

Two men stood looking through the bars,
One saw the mud, the other saw the stars.

The Truth and the Testimony of time : Dreamers of great truth always look upward and strive to reach the skies and the men around them often regard their dreams as mere folly. Whether in the realm of natural sciences or in the domain of spiritual truth any such dreamer runs ahead of his time and environment and so he is scoffed at. What people do not experience is generally branded as abnormal. The ordinary human mind does not like to see anything which is not customary or traditional. This 'customary' or 'traditional' is a complex of customs and traditions which grow up more or less unreflectively and, which, with the passage of time, acquire many meritless outgrowths that also gain the currency of tradition. This complex of growth and outgrowth constitutes the environment of any age to which a person is born. It becomes the standing habit of his mind or fixed set of mental tendencies according to which he interprets any particular experience or appreciates a particular person. None of the common men and few of the thinkers and scholars could estimate the impact of the early experimental researches of the Royal Society in Great Britain. Even King Charles II who was a patron of the Society is said by Pepys to have 'mightily laughed at Gresham College, for spending time only in weighing ayre and doing nothing else since they sat'. Thales of Miletus, who was the first of the Greeks to study the stars was on one occasion so intent upon observing the skies that he fell into a well and to this a maidservant laughed and remarked,

'In his zeal for things in the sky he does not see what is at his feet'. 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' asked the people of Jerusalem derisively when they first heard about the revelations of Christ. But the Truth never goes under. It waits for an auspicious moment to flower forth as a way of life which brings in something to the variegated pattern of human adventure.

The Gospels of Sri Ramakrishna : The extraordinary spiritual visions and experiences of Sri Ramakrishna, therefore, were looked upon by the customary mind as abnormal. His intense God-intoxication appeared to be too much even before many, educated people of his time. They had no experience of the state of *samādhi*, the divine communion and the other subtle realities of the realm of spiritual world. Accustomed to think in a customary way, they had long forgotten the taste of a kinetic mind that might do and see the things. It was therefore difficult for them to comprehend the breadth of vision that Sri Ramakrishna could enjoin in his new gospels of God-realization and the harmony of the faiths. To the old belief God was either to be with form or formless. If one religion was true, the other was to be false; if one was right the other was wrong. But Sri Ramakrishna spoke in a different vein. God, to him, was both with form and formless at the same time. He saw all religions as equally true. Spurning the limits of human speculation and repudiating and ridding himself of any dogmatic yoke he would not remain confined to any sect. God is one and His unity is never a numerical singularity. Not only immanent but identical in essence are God and man. Be the

endless and immeasurable scene we are part of created or evolved, no solution of the tangle will answer which does not include the entire panorama, the foreground and background as well as each and every figure in the picture. Controversy of sect and faith would therefore leave in him no muddy sediment or malign heat. All dispute was to him a breaking bubble, the froth of narrowness. He welcomed science but looked upon materialism as an organic anomaly. In the realm of his spirituality there was no sin but mistake, no darkness but only ignorance. For his brave harmony of the Religions he did never ask any body to accept any thing new. What he required of us was only the sincerity of purpose where a Hindu was to be a sincere Hindu, a Christian, a sincere Christian and a Mohammedan a sincere Mohammedan. Only by being sincere in our respective strands of faith can we compose a real harmony of the Religions. The symphony becomes perfect when the tuning of each and every individual note is perfect. These gospels of catholicity and broadness were not of the customary run and the world of Sri Ramakrishna's time was yet to become ready for them. Romain Rolland in his *Life of Vivekananda* says: 'Man is not yet. He will be'. In making the remark Rolland evidently refers to these gospels for the interpretation of which the world is yet to evolve and perhaps many more apostles are yet to be born. No doubt, the scattered and divided world has begun to crystalize since the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. There has, no doubt, been a big shifting in the centre of gravity of our outlook to make us visualize his gospels more vividly. But much is to be accomplished as yet.

Sri Ramakrishna was born in 1836 and passed away in 1886. Although major part of his life was spent at a place just about seven miles away from Calcutta, the

then London of the East, few however came to know about him during his life time and still few realized his message truly. Worst of the jargons of a new sectarianism i.e. the agnostic materialism had been sweeping over the intelligentsia of the land when the most fervent of the prophets was plodding his way through the paths of the metropolitan city of the then British India with his message of synthesis and sectlessness. Perhaps many scholars of the orthodox school bypassed the God-man of the century in those dusty paths of the city unaware. But the processes of history are something different from what we think them to be. 'Facts are stubborn things', said Agassiz, 'until they are connected by a general law.' Even a known fact has to wait hundreds of years before its true significance is truly understood. King Herod was perpetrating the worst of the crimes when the God-man of Galilee was born with his divine mission on earth. Pharisees and Saducees failed to comprehend his great message although they knew him well. Buddha met with the bitterest of the denouncements from some of his own near relatives. Mankind cannot bear the veracity of a scientific truth! Bernard Palissy, one simple potter but one of the earliest followers of the experimental method of studying the aspects of Nature offended the alchemists and astrologers of his time, as well as the priests and philosophers, by his denial of the customary opinion with regard to natural objects and phenomena and he had to die in prison in consequence of his appeal to observation and experiment for the basis of every speculation. 'Who is Cuvier?' asked Louis Philippe, King of France, when told that the illustrious naturalist, the founder of comparative anatomy and the most celebrated man of science in France was dead. (Vide R. A. Gregory: *Discovery*, Macmillan and Co.

Ltd., London, 1917, pp. 15 and 21) Napoleon III was once asked by a German guest to be introduced to the eminent physiologist Claude Bernard. 'Claude Bernard?' 'Who is Claude Bernard?' the Emperor asked. 'He is the most distinguished savant in your Majesty's dominions', was the reply. (ibid) Sri Ramakrishna, too, remained undiscovered amidst the men of his time.

The more the old synoptic views developed new cracks the more there was a return to vagueness and indeterminacy, inflated ego and show of religion for the men. By the name of shedding the hangover of the outmoded past their mind cluttered up in the irrelevant trivia of hundred other traits emphasized to show one's difference from the another. The prevalent outlook was far from scientific, one should say, and the leaders of thoughts, particularly those with Western education, sought to make a compromise with the new spirit of agnosticism that was in the air. Compromise, whatever it may be, is never a synthesis. The dictionary meaning of the word 'compromise' is the 'settlement by mutual concession' whereas that of 'synthesis' is the 'building up of separate elements especially of conception, proposition or facts into a connected whole'. (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1959) The one can never be the substitute for the other. New occasion creates new duties. Time makes the ancient good uncouth. Hence is the necessity of synthesis to lay bare the ancient truth in the language and accent of any new age. In that way the prophet of synthesis is a scientist who is neither hasty in his conclusions nor eager for any temporary victory. Since his is an original creation, he is not afraid of any enquiry or test which may be demanded from any quarter. His involvement is total and it is complete with the testimony of experiences and, therefore, he is neither ruddy in

his assertions nor pale in his negations. He does not say: 'Be my brother, or I will kill you' but 'Follow me and light shall be given to you'. He does never assert that the Bible of the humanity is complete but would rather say: 'Friend, as long I live so long I learn'. The spirit of compromise among the generation of new intelligentsia, since it was a complex of the East and West, could provide no lasting solution to the problem in a world where the line dividing the East and the West had begun to vanish in the wake of the findings of the natural sciences. In the West this compromise had taken the form of imitation of the natural sciences in religion and the Indian reformers brought in here another brand of imitation which was but a modified version of the same. The Westernized Indian would not therefore like to look to the emerging horizon behind him in any way. Like King Charles of England he would laugh at any thing that was unfamiliar; like Napoleon III of France he would remain ignorant of the greatest of the savants of the time. Old orthodoxy looked upon the spiritual visions of Sri Ramakrishna as profane and the votaries of the reformist zeal regarded him as mere unlettered temple priest suffering from the maladies of a monomaniac.

It is also not necessary that the prophets of great truth should be understood by the men of their times. The more the truth is far reaching the more its true comprehension is belated. The more a synthesis is enduring the more it takes time to strike its roots into the mind of the people and the flowering is consequently delayed. For, great discoveries are not patents but principles the inspiring warmth of which incubates new sets of persons who translate the principles into a reality. The revelations of Christ

generated the great Christian spirit of love and self-dedication that inspired many to become martyrs for his cause. Einstein's theory of Relativity was revolutionary in the realm of physical sciences but to usher in the revolution it required years till inspired new generation of scientists came forward. The warm spirit of the new gospels of Sri Ramakrishna, therefore, was to help incubate a new generation of enquirers who, dedicated to the great spirit of God-realization, would boldly hold aloft the new banner amidst many fond hopes, broken and defeated vows and the outward alliance checkmated with inward impulse where stalked the assumed virtue of the age. It is this assumed virtue which the sages and saints pronounce as vice and only those who desire God in their heart of hearts can have the patience or the power to effect a conquest over it. The true seekers of God could alone call men from the debasing pleasures of lazy hours to the indulgence of a new life of broad conviction and enlarged existence.

In the processes of history Sri Ramakrishna played one distinct and definite role by his great gospels and the revelations. He did not have the education of the sciences, yet one could find a true spirit of science revealed in his entire methodology. Unlike any of his contemporaries of the orthodox school he did not study the scriptures; the conclusions of the scriptures, on the other hand, came to be verified by revelations. His practice of the different paths of different religions was never motivated by any predetermined plan and his universalism was not consequent upon any extensive travel in lands far and wide. Had he read the sciences the posterity would perhaps have found no accent of scientific spirit in his search for God. Had he gone through the scriptures beforehand people would have

taken his revelations as indoctrinated postulations and had there been any compromise in his principles and experiences his gospels would have long died down however mighty might have been the voice of their upholders. Whenever any of his experiences was put to any objective test, it appeared to be more potent than what it looked like from a distance; wherever one compared his revelations with the authorities of the scriptures, one only became astonished to find an exact correspondence persisting between them. Doubts only burnished his image, disbeliefs added a lasting vitality to his message and the records of objective verifications of his experiences made the subjective halo around his character brighter than ever before.

The other significant characteristic of his role is that his earthly ministration was too brief. He did not take up any mission to preach his gospel and to this respect his role was different from those of the other God-men of the past. Buddha passed away at the age of eighty and the entire latter half of his life was devoted to the ministration of his gospels. Christ too took up the mission of ministration after his return from the solitude, although the period was only three years. It lasted upto the days of his crucifixion. Sri Ramakrishna, on the other hand, had completely hidden himself up from the public eye. He was born in 1836 and he passed away in 1886 but not till 1881 when Narendranath visited him, he was truly discovered. Not till 1879 did any of his devotees come to him. Perhaps his was a mission that was to become so. It has been said that twenty-four silent Buddhas passed away one after the other before the Lord Buddha of history could manifest himself before the world. He was the dynamic counterpart of all his

predecessors who were far more powerful in their potency of realizations than him. Looking in this way one notices a deep historical significance in the silent role of Sri Ramakrishna. It was but one phase of his historic mission the dynamic fulfilment of which was to be achieved by another dynamic Sri Ramakrishna.

By his silent and profound life Sri Ramakrishna combined within him not only the entire spiritual thoughts of the past but also the aspirations of a new future that was yet to dawn over the world. The degeneration was great, the doubts were deep and therefore the realizations were required to be extraordinary. Argumentations and speculations there had been enough. What the world needed was an exemplification, a decisive demonstration of the truth in life. No reform, ameliorative, punitive or prohibitive could salvage the soul; no unity for something or separateness for the others could turn the tide. The answer to all vagueness is the clarity of realization that can tell men that God, once realized by our forefathers may again be confirmed in this age and in this very life. So Sri Ramakrishna fought no wordy duel and accepted no cartel. He never posed for greatness or imposed on any body. His was a rare composition to which he gave himself in as an element and was its very organ but not organizer. In and through there was only God with whom he would remain drunk and intoxicated all the while. With God his mind would dive deep or rise high to survey more widely or dredge more deeply the realm of bliss and only when at long intervals it would stretch itself up, basking like an angel in the warmth of love and compassion, that one could find it down in this world of 'mine' and 'thine'. Such God-intoxication seldom preaches God, accepts leadership of the common horde or takes up any active mission on

earth. As Sri Ramakrishna himself would say that pure gold requires some alloy to make itself a fit material for the ornaments. For earthly ministration one must come a step down from such constant God-intoxication. But the thoughts of these silent souls fill the atmosphere of the surrounding. Sri Ramakrishna's powerful thoughts, infantine purity, burning renunciation and infinite heart, too, filled the atmosphere around him with an ever widening influence under whose protective veneer there incubated new souls with young Narendranath at the forefront to carry the new gospels forward towards every corner of the world still divided by the traits of creed, colour, religion and dogma.

The Dialogue with the Representative Men: All great men are the men of original thoughts. They like obscurity. Moses declined to be an orator, Fenelon wanted no monument and Socrates was no forward personage. Sri Ramakrishna too wanted to be unknown. His passing away was only the beginning of his influence. Yet during the concluding years of his life he could have free dialogue with many of the representative persons of his time and we would like to recall a few of them here.

One of them was Brahmananda Kesav Chandra Sen, the celebrated Brahmo leader whom Sri Ramakrishna met in 1875. Knowing Kesav and his disciples to be great devotees of God, Sri Ramakrishna one day came to visit Kesav and asked him humbly: 'Is it true, gentlemen, that you have the vision of God? I have a desire to know the nature of that vision.' Uttering these words he passed into a state of *samādhi*. Kesav at first took this God-intoxication to be mere feigning but in no time he felt greatly attracted towards this uncommon guest. This attraction developed into a deep intimacy that broadened

the outlook of Kesav to a large extent. In fact, Kesav Chandra Sen was the first Brahma Samaj leader who preached Sri Ramakrishna to the public of Calcutta through his journal. On one occasion Sri Ramakrishna asked Kesav in joke, 'Kesav, you charm so many people by your lectures, say something to me' and to this the great orator replied with humility, 'Sir, am I to carry coals to New Castle?' Notwithstanding such intimacy the great leader could not accept Sri Ramakrishna's total realization on the harmony of all the religions. He liked to formulate a new harmony, the 'New Dispensation' by taking only the essentials of all religions.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was the other great luminary of nineteenth century Bengal who met Sri Ramakrishna in 1882. Vidyasagar had a large heart that would always bleed for the poor and Sri Ramakrishna felt very much drawn towards this great savant for this. But even in this great heart of Vidyasagar there was a lack of 'inner vision' that was necessary for the meaningful reconciliation of his charity and selflessness with the realization of God.

Sivanath Sastri, the other Brahma leader too had very intimate relation with Sri Ramakrishna. To Sri Ramakrishna, Sivanath was 'a great devotee of God', 'soaked in the love of God like a cheese cake in syrup'. And to Sivanath, Sri Ramakrishna was 'no longer a *sādhaka* or a devotee but a *Siddha Puruṣa*'. But Sivanath looked upon Sri Ramakrishna's God-intoxication, unimpeachable purity and renunciation as too much. 'Sivanath once remarked', said Sri Ramakrishna, 'that too much thinking about God confounds the brain. Thereupon I said to him, "How can one become unconscious by thinking of Consciousness?"' Sivanath, however, could not tell anything in reply.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the greatest

of the literary figures of nineteenth century 'young Bengal' once came to see Sri Ramakrishna and judge his holiness. It was December 6, 1884. A towering personality of his time and the representative of the renaissance spirit, Bankim, too, could not measure the exact depth of Sri Ramakrishna's thoughts and experiences. Sri Ramakrishna asked him, 'Which comes first, "Science or God?" What do you say?' To this Bankim replied, 'How can we know God without knowing something of this world? We should first learn from books.' By this reply Bankim echoed only the new questioning spirit to which Sri Ramakrishna would say, 'That's the one cry from all of you. But God comes first and then the creation. After attaining God you can know everything else, if it is necessary.'

The other notable figure who met Sri Ramakrishna many times was Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, the famous physician of the then Calcutta and the founder of 'The Association for the Cultivation of Sciences'. This staunch advocate of the natural sciences could even examine the state of Sri Ramakrishna's God-intoxication medically. The incident took place while Sri Ramakrishna was staying at Calcutta for the treatment of his throat trouble. In the state of *samādhi* Sri Ramakrishna's "'I" consciousness disappeared totally; his pulse, heart-beat etc. stopped simultaneously. Sri Mahendralal Sarkar and other doctors examined him with the help of instruments and found no sign of the functioning of his heart. Not satisfied with this his friend another doctor went further and touched with his finger the Master's eye ball and found it insensitive to touch like that of a dead man.' (*Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master*, p. 341) As was typical with the men of the time Dr. Sarkar at first viewed Sri Ramakrishna as superstitious, insane and

even egoistic. He would signify Divine Mother Kālī 'as the old hag of the Soathals'. He said, 'God is everywhere. And because He is everywhere, He cannot be sought after.' But Sri Ramakrishna would never denounce his views in any way. Even in that hard but sincere heart he noticed a 'substance' that only required 'softening'.

Many were thus the persons that came to visit Sri Ramakrishna but few could discover him fully. Few could enter into the core of his Science of the sciences where all diversities and discords stood unified in one great Cosmic harmony.

The Beginning of a new Dynamism: Great mind alone can discover another great mind. It was thus difficult for that ordinary Greek maidservant to understand what Thales of Miletus had been searching for in the skies above. Swami Vivekananda too just before his passing away was heard musing within himself: 'If there were another Vivekananda, he would have understood what Vivekananda has done.' So the real and total Sri Ramakrishna could only be known by another dynamic Sri Ramakrishna and, therefore when in 1882 young Narendranath first visited Dakshineswar Temple garden, the God-man saw in the face of that young iconoclast his own dynamic reflection. The French philosopher Fernand Papillon relates in *Revue de deux Mondes* that once an Englishman having told his groom to go over the way after his friend Shakespeare, the servant enquired how he should know him in the crowd and the master replied: 'He alone looks like a man.'

Sri Ramakrishna too saw in rebel Narendranath the image of a true man, that daring enquirer who was not content to see 'half' or 'almost' of things but was determined to go to the end for himself and desired to convince others of the truth revealed to him and single handed he was prepared to storm the citadel of all old belief. The contemplative philosophers of the Middle Ages or before might perhaps have found in that rebel spirit an unwelcome disturber of peace but Sri Ramakrishna discovered in him an apostle whose torch, once lighted from the divine flame, would never be extinguished. The unrelenting zeal of such an apostle could alone survey the entire structure of Sri Ramakrishna's mind which was Gothic and manifold and built not on a simple plan like a house with one ceiling and room but with rounds and rounds or height above height like a seven storied palace. Narendranath's criticisms were often bitter; his arguments were stubborn and challenges fantastic but Sri Ramakrishna knew the science of the souls. So he would rather find pleasure at Narendranath's turbulent questions. He was like that Great Watcher on the shores of Galilee: One day while Zebedee and his two sons James and John were mending their fishing nets, Christ saw them from a distance. Suddenly he gave them a call and the two sons of Zebedee left their nets and jumped to the shore to join the man of Nazareth. Narendranath had so long known the arguments of western agnosticism, the views of Kant, Hegel, Hume and Spencer. Now Sri Ramakrishna called him in to become a 'Knower' of the Science of all the sciences and a 'Seer' of God.

THE ADVAITIC ART OF RIGHT LIVING

DR. SUDHINDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI

Even granting that as in the West so in India the earliest efforts at philosophizing were directed to the end of satisfying the impulse of curiosity or desire to know, it cannot be denied that in India this interest in mere speculation ceased very soon, and philosophic wisdom came to be sought chiefly for the wholesome influence which it might exercise on man's practical life. The philosophical systems of India originated under the pressure of a practical need caused by the presence of moral and physical evils in life. What troubled the propounders of the Indian systems most is the problem of how to remove evil. Their primary interest was in finding a remedy for the ills of life and with a view to that they had to make an attempt to understand the source of these evils and incidentally the nature and constitution of the world and the significance of life. But it should also be remembered that though moved to speculation by a practical motive, they did not narrow the scope of their systems to Ethics and Theology alone. Each of the Indian systems has both a theoretical and a practical side. What is peculiar to the genuine Indian philosophers is that they do not stop short at the logical establishment of the theory but strive to realize it in their own experience. The Advaitin holds in common with other ancient Indian thinkers that the object of Philosophy is not merely to lead one to consistency of thought but also to show one the right way of living. Far from being purely speculative and absolutely unpractical the Advaita has always kept itself in closest touch with life. It is neither a mere body of precepts divorced from practice, nor a mere belief which lacks verification. *Mokṣa* or liberation which has been set forth by the Advaitins as the real goal of philosophy

is not merely an intellectual conviction but a positive ideal realizable in the present life. Instead of asking us to rest in mere belief or outward observances the Advaitins indicate how life can be best led with far-sight, foresight and insight and exhort us to move forward to the ideal of *mokṣa*. Briefly speaking, the Advaita as a system of philosophy teaches that God, the individual self and the physical world are but seeming derivations from a transcendental entity called Brahman or the Absolute. The diversification of Brahman, the sole reality, is due to the principle of *Māyā*. When one realizes this truth in one's experience, one attains the final aim of life, viz. liberation. Though highly metaphysical, the Advaita is not without an interest in the problems of practical life. It is both a philosophy and an art. The purpose of the present paper is to indicate its bearing on practical conduct.

The central truth of the Advaita is contained in what are known as Upaniṣadic *mahāvākyas* or great sayings such as *Tat Tvam asi, Aham Brahmāsmi* etc. While commenting on the text *Tat tvam asi* or That thou art, Śaṅkara has pointed out that the spatio-temporal world forms no part of the self; nor does any of the states of the mundane life such as being the son or father or husband of a particular person belong to one's essential nature. If one asks 'What am I then?' the answer is 'you are distinct from and unaffected by the world and its various states; Being is the ultimate truth and that thou art.' (*Chāndogya-bhāṣya* VI. xiv. 2) But this lesson, even when imparted by the best of teachers is apprehended only mediately. Such mediate knowledge or *parokṣajñāna* thus attained through the Upaniṣadic *mahāvākyas* like *Tat tvam asi*

or *Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi* does not amount to an actual realization of truth in one's own experience. The Advaitin, however, is never content with mediate knowledge or *parokṣajñāna* of the ultimate truth. He, therefore, insists on the necessity for the discipline to realize in his own life the truth of the *mahāvākyas* so learnt. The word 'That' in the Upaniṣadic text 'That thou art' means Brahman or universal-consciousness while the word 'Thou' means a *jīva* or an individual consciousness. Logically analysed the text reveals a *prima facie* absurdity since the word 'individual' and the word 'universal' represent a pair of incompatible determinants. Theoretically the Advaitin overcomes this difficulty of identifying *jīva* or individual consciousness with Brahman or universal consciousness by negating or deducting the determinants. What the text means is not a relation between two distinct objects but a single object of thought, for when the two incompatible determinants, 'individual' and 'universal' are deducted, what remains is pure consciousness. According to this theory the *jīva* or the individual self appears as the limited finite self because of its association with mind, body and the senses which are the products of *avidyā* or nescience, but in reality it is identical with Brahman or pure consciousness which is self-existent, self-luminous and infinite. In common with other Indian thinkers the Advaitin believes that ignorance of reality is the cause of *saṁsāra* which means the process of birth and rebirth and the miseries consequent upon it. Release from miseries implies the final stoppage of this process for which the knowledge of reality is absolutely necessary. With the rise of knowledge ignorance, the root-cause of bondage and suffering dies a natural death even as darkness vanishes with the advent of light. But the knowledge which dispels ignorance must not be confused with theoretical learning or correct inference, for the ignorance

which presents the world-appearance and causes bondage and sufferings is not of the nature of an intellectual error. The belief in variety caused by ignorance being immediate, cannot be shaken off by the logical understanding of the philosophical truths which have only a momentary effect on the ordinary minds. What is needed for the removal of this wrong belief is an equally immediate apprehension of the opposite truth of unity. *Aparokṣajñāna* or immediate knowledge is decidedly superior to *parokṣajñāna* or mediate knowledge. One may derive *parokṣajñāna* or logical knowledge of the text '*Tat tvam asi*' from books or from teachers but that will not enable one to reach the Advaita goal until one actually experiences that the supreme Self and the individual are one. One must not only know that the finite and the infinite are one but also have the direct or first-hand experience (*anubhava*) of the seer who has completely overcome his sense of separateness and realized his unity with the Supreme. External knowledge imparted through reasoning or assurance cannot cope with the evidence of direct experience. It is well-known that in case of a perceptual error the man who mistakes a rope for a snake in the dark refuses to believe those who rightly assure him of the rope-character of the object perceived, since he himself sees a snake and no rope. No amount of mediate knowledge can convince him that the object in question is not a snake, but a little scrutiny for himself with the aid of light is sufficient to bring the conviction. The Advaitin says that mere logical learning (*parokṣajñāna*) is incapable of liberating us from *saṁsāra* or 'the cycle of births and deaths'. As Śaṅkara has said in his commentary on the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (III. viii. 10), the person desirous of knowing Brahman must raise himself step by step from the state of mere learning (*pāṇḍityam*) to that of a childlike simplicity (*bālyam*) and from that state to

the state of the silent *muni*, and ultimately to the state of the true *brāhmin*, who sincerely renounces all possessions and pleasures which being different from Brahman are likely to bring about subjection. The Advaitin accepts scriptural testimony as the only source of knowledge with regard to spiritual matters. But rightly understood it is not an external testimony from his point of view since he openly asserts that it is reducible to spiritual intuition or religious insight which is another name for *anubhava* or the highest form of immediate experience. No doubt the *mahāvākya* 'Tat tvam asi' is received as an external opinion when a disciple appropriates it from his *guru* or spiritual guide, but he does not merely acquiesce in it. The disciple feels that he is under an obligation to intuit it and make it his own. When he succeeds in his mission the *mahāvākya* far from appearing as an external opinion any more becomes as clear to him as it is to his *guru*.

In order that the enlightenment received from his *guru* may develop into his own immediate experience he has to undergo a long and laborious process of self-discipline. The belief in variety which deludes him is the result of a host of familiar theories and convictions which have become a part of his very being. His habits of thought, speech and action being long shaped and coloured by this wrong belief in the different situations of life, he can not change his mode of living at once. Although he knows that the belief which has struck deep root in him is a wrong one, while the teaching which has been newly instilled by his *guru* is perfectly right, yet he cannot always follow the right course of action. Mere knowledge of what is right cannot be expected to lead one to right actions so long as contrary impulses due to past misconceptions about things and their values dominate one's mind. One's wrong belief regarding the reality of

the world and one's likes and dislikes for the objects of the world have come to be established and deeply rooted in one because of continued adherence to a reverse mode of living. To replace these beliefs and habits by correct ones is not an easy task. It requires continued meditation on the truth learnt from the *guru* and sustained practice of self-control for the formation of new and good habits. All systems of Indian philosophy with the exception of the Cārvāka have laid stress on repeated attempts at concentration and self-control for steadying the truths learnt and removing the passions that obstruct the cultivation of good habits. The need of following some practical method for the realization of spiritual truths was felt even by the seers of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, for it cannot be denied that so long as the intellect of a man remains in an impure and unsettled state he cannot properly grasp the truths of philosophy and religion. There is clear evidence of emphasis on moral discipline in Buddhism and Jainism, though neither of the systems accepts the authority of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. Patañjali, the founder of the Yoga system made a special study of the different levels of consciousness and formulated certain practical methods of purification and self-control for the realization of the true nature of the self. He has begun with the regulation of the will through *yama* (restraint), *niyama* (culture), etc., for he knows fully well that reason cannot establish its supremacy over an unruly and uncontrolled will. Argumentations put forward by the intellect are of no avail so long as the will is allowed to indulge in passions. A perverted will hardly acquiesce in the verdict of the intellect. Hence the will is to be perfected through discipline. If perfectly disciplined, the will finds no opposition between itself and the intellect and consequently the latter attains an easy mastery over all kinds of passions. While the method

prescribed by Patañjali for the attainment of the end is primarily voluntaristic, that adopted by the Advaitins is chiefly intellectual. Like the Sāṅkhya method which seeks to attain the end through reason directly the Advaita method emphasizes the cognitive aspect of man. Another important point in which the Advaita method agrees with the Sāṅkhya method and differs from the Yoga process is that while the Yoga seeks to control the higher by means of the lower, the Advaita proceeds to control the lower by means of the higher. The Yoga seeks to control the mind through the regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*) and the posture of body (*āsana*), while the Advaita seeks to control the sense organs by means of the mind, the mind by means of *buddhi* and so on. The Advaita does not deny the suitability of Yoga for those in whom reason has not yet established its natural supremacy. The end, according to Advaita, is the attainment of *Jñāna* or knowledge. The Advaitin regards Yoga as a discipline preparatory to the realization of that end. While recommending the Yoga method for the majority of people who experience an opposition between reason and will the Advaitin asserts that the purely Advaitic method is meant exclusively for the philosophical type of people who having no opposition of will are guided by reason alone.

Though as a rational animal every man has some awareness of a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, yet it cannot be denied that there are men who ignore the voice of the spirit and behave like mere creatures of impulse and appetite. The final aim of Advaita being the transformation of man into a wholly spiritual being, the Advaitin declares that a man who does not feel the conflict between animality and rationality to be keen and unbearable and has no genuine urge for self-conquest is not qualified to enter upon a course of Advaitic discipline. To transform man into a wholly

spiritual being by killing the animal in him is not very easy. The aspirant has to be led towards the goal step by step. Speaking in general terms, there are three progressive stages of the Advaitic discipline. Amongst those who are qualified to enter upon a course of Advaitic discipline there are many who, in spite of their sincere desire for spiritual development, believe that the good of the world in which they live has a real value for them. They cannot abandon the world and ignore its values altogether. They are determined to serve the interest of the spirit in them but they find no reason for desisting from the pursuit of mundane prosperity so long as they carefully subordinate it to their spiritual welfare. For such people scriptures (Śrutis and Smṛtis) prescribe a life of social morality, a life that contributes to the upkeep of social organization and civic order. The performance of *nitya-karmas* in accordance with one's caste and station in life and that of *naimittika-karmas* which are occasioned by some specific circumstances as also the avoidance of forbidden deeds called *pratisiddha-karmas* are obligatory on a person who has just attained this first stage of the Advaitic discipline. The *nitya* and *naimittika karmas* are intended to secure common as distinguished from purely personal welfare. Though both the varieties of *karma* have a binding character, yet there is a difference between them. The *nitya-karmas* are generally obligatory while the *naimittika-karmas* are so only conditionally. The Advaitin maintains that a man at the first stage of Vedāntic discipline may devote his time and energy to securing mundane objects after discharging his obligation and not before he has discharged his social duties. He may turn down to the objects of worldly interest provided he does so in a way which will not prove harmful to the interest of the society. The charge that the Advaitin weans away men from society and creates in them a contempt for

social life is ill-founded. The first step in the progress of Advaitic life at which a man is asked to work in a manner which is highly conducive to the welfare of the society is regarded as a *necessary* step. What the Advaitin condemns at this stage is not a life of social service but a life devoted to the pursuit of selfish ends.

The life that the Advaitin prescribes for a person in the second stage of discipline is one of the selfless duty and meditation (*niṣkāma-karma* and *upāsana*). He who has advanced to this stage finds it impossible to serve both the higher and the lower interests of his being at the same time. Unlike the person in the first stage of discipline he makes a whole-hearted effort to suppress the lower interests and develop the higher. Recognizing the impossibility of making the best of both worlds he turns once for all towards the higher. His interest is shifted from the pursuit of worldly prosperity to the performance of duty and meditation. While it is commonly admitted that man should do his duties, there is a wide difference of opinion as to why he should perform his duties. A vast majority of thinkers assert that duty means 'duty for duty's sake'. It is that which is performed without any desire for reward or without any hope of deriving any benefit whatsoever from its performance. But the Advaitin denies that duty can be an end in itself. According to him duty, like the rest of our voluntary actions, is a means for securing an end. Duty being a form of conscious activity is always prompted by some desire, for an authority not prompted by desire is neither known nor conceivable. Desire, far from being incompatible with duty, is the very basis of it. While both duty and ordinary deeds are equally prompted by desire the result yielded by the latter is not similar to that produced by the former. The result which a deed yields is a specific one different in each case, but the result produced by a duty is a general one,

it being same in all cases. The object sought to be achieved by the performance of duty is the cleansing of the mind or the purification of the heart (*sattva-śuddhi*). By purification of heart or *sattva-śuddhi* the Advaitin means the removal of *dūrita* or the tendency in our nature to yield to selfish impulses, *Dūritakṣaya* or the removal of the undesirable tendency amounts to *sattva-śuddhi* which is negative in character. Unlike the result which an ordinary deed yields this result is the *same* in respect of all duties. In other words, it is the common result of all duties. The Advaitin admits the possibility of transforming a deed into a duty and raising a secular duty to the level of a religious one by investing it with a spiritual meaning. No doubt every deed is designed to yield a specific result but if the performer of the deed entirely shifts his thoughts and interests from its specific result and performs it with the object of deriving from it the common result of all duties, his deed is transformed into a duty. The Advaitin attaches great importance to *niṣkāma-karma* or disinterested work. It is not through inactivity but through the performance of selfless action that one can gradually advance towards the Advaitic goal. What matters to the Advaitin is not the deed itself but the intention of the doer of the deed. The deed itself is bound to produce its result. Once performed the deed is sure to give rise to a consequent which, however, is its immediate result but not its end. Whatever the deed may be, if the doer's thoughts instead of being occupied with its immediate result are fixed on *sattva-śuddhi*, he can derive an unusual result from the performance of an ordinary deed. It is the attitude towards the immediate result that has to be changed so that he may perform the deed even if he knows that the circumstances in which he is acting would lead to a result detrimental to him. By this art of doing the

deed ordinary deeds called *kāmya-karmas* can be transformed into duties or *niṣkāma-karmas*. It has been rightly pointed out by the author of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (2. 50) that although a *karma* or ordinary deed is by nature binding, yet it abandons its nature when performed with equanimity of mind in regard to success or failure. *Karma* or deed fetters a man when it is performed with attachment to the result. But if it is performed without attachment to the result (*niṣkāma-karma*), it leads to self-purification (*Ātma-śuddhi*). The Advaitin does not discourage activity, for he knows that disinterested activity is necessary for self-conquest. It is in the ordinary activities of our life that our selfish impulses are in full play. The object of *niṣkāma-karma* is to attain liberation from the yoke of the ego and its petty interests by gradually suppressing them.

Another discipline prescribed for the aspirant who is at the second stage of progress is *upāsana* or meditation which is of several kinds. Of all the varieties of *upāsana* the *Ahaṅgraha* is the most important. It means the process of mentally identifying oneself with the object meditated upon, a process which involves two stages, viz. (i) the stage of concentration in which the attention is withdrawn from everything except the object of meditation and (ii) the stage of sympathetic imagination, in which identity with the object is truly realized. The Advaitin maintains that the reality is one without a second and it is equally present in all; what distinguishes one object from another is but a name and form (*nāma-rūpa*). Every individual self and every object of experience being at bottom the same as Brahman, the experience of difference is illusory. The aim of the Advaita is to realize this underlying reality by transcending the limitations of *nāma-rūpa*. In the scheme of Advaitic life *upāsana* occupies an important place since it rightly serves as

an exercise preliminary to the attainment of the goal. The exercise called *Ahaṅgraha upāsana* is of two kinds. In one form of this *upāsana* the meditator identifies himself with one of the objects of the universe, while in the other form he identifies himself with the universe as a whole. The subjective performance of *Aśvamedha* or horse-sacrifice by one who has adopted the Advaitic ideal of life illustrates the first form of *Ahaṅgraha upāsana*. Here the sacrifice is a mere mental operation. It consists in the meditation on the *Aśvamedha* in which the chief animal to be sacrificed for the purpose of attaining the overlordship of the world is a horse. The performer does not sacrifice a real horse nor does he seek the overlordship of the material world. He performs his sacrifice only subjectively. He himself takes the place of the sacrificial horse in meditation and the result which he attains through meditation is a feeling of unity with the whole world. This feeling of unity being a great spiritual achievement is metaphorically described as the overlordship of the world. We have an example of the other form of *Ahaṅgraha upāsana* in the ninth stanza of Śaṅkara's *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra* where the meditator identifies his soul with *Aṣṭamūrti*, the deity presiding over the world. What distinguishes this form of *Ahaṅgraha upāsana* from the previous one is the fact that here the devotee in meditation identifies himself with the universe as a whole and not with a part thereof. The purport of the stanza alluded to above is that the devotee should first identify the five elements in his body with the elements in the universe and the vital airs with the sun and the moon. He should then look upon the self of his elemental body as the Supreme Lord manifesting in eight-fold form. He should meditate on himself as the all-pervading Sadāśiva of eightfold form. Intense meditation will result in his union with Him. It may be noticed that *upāsana*

serves a unique purpose in the scheme of Advaitic training. While *karma* is only negative in its result, *upāsana* yields a positive result. The discipline of *karma* stands for self-conquest and possesses only a moral value. But the discipline of *upāsana* stands for self-sacrifice and possesses a moral as well as an intellectual value. Practice in *upāsana* rids the aspirant of narrowness and leads to the cultivation in him of a new sympathy and a new understanding which enable him to extend his self-sacrificing love to all that breathes or is.

Starting with the initial conviction that the demands of the spirit are more important than those of the flesh the Advaitin disciple purges himself of all that is evil in his nature, first through a life of social morality, and then through selfless activity. In the later phase of the second stage he comes to lead a life of all-embracing love ignoring all individual concerns. This life of incessant work and self-sacrificing love is the highest type of active life that is ordinarily desired. But the Advaitin does not regard this stage as the last stage of progress. According to him this is only the portal through which the disciple is ushered into the shrine of *jñāna*. Although the disciple has so far achieved much, till it cannot be said that he has reached the highest ideal, for he has not yet passed from a notion of *appearance* to that of *reality*. Discovering the inter-relation of part and whole he has ceased to view life from the ordinary, narrow, personal standpoint but he has not as yet realized that the whole is integral and one, and there are no parts in it. The Self alone is the reality and everything else is appearance. Being still under the spell of *avidyā* (nescience) the disciple fails to realize the true character of the self. So long as *avidyā* (nescience) persists he cannot see the ultimate truth, viz., the absolute unity of all existence. So long as he fails to see the ultimate truth he cannot escape from the endless cycle of births and

deaths. Hence *avidyā* (nescience) has to be dispelled. Since the natural antidote for *avidyā* (nescience) is *vidyā* (Knowledge) the disciple has to resort to *jñāna* (knowledge). He has already traversed the arduous path of *karma* and *upāsana*. He has yet to receive a training which will mark the third and the last stage in his spiritual ascent. This stage is called the stage of renunciation or *sannyāsa*. To regard the life of the *sannyāsin* as a life of unmorality is a common error. No doubt the *sannyāsin* looks beyond morality, and life to him means more than moral practice but it must not be forgotten that he has already undergone enough of moral training to reach the present stage of life. He has utilized morality as a means of reaching the truth. Because of previous training in morality virtue is spontaneous with him. It is inconceivable that he who makes cultivation of moral virtue the means of reaching true knowledge should ever grow indifferent to morality. No doubt the Advaitin recognizes a stage in the spiritual advancement of man where morality *as such* ceases to have any significance but he never denies the necessity for whole-hearted adherence to it in the earlier stages of life's discipline. Success in the moral training is indicated by the appearance in the disciple of certain traits which are called the four-fold aid (*sādhana catuṣṭaya*) to the study of Vedānta. They are (1) ability to discriminate between the eternal and the non-eternal, (2) absence of desire for securing pleasure or avoiding pain here or elsewhere, (3) attainment of calmness, temperance, spirit of renunciation, fortitude, power of concentration of mind and faith and (4) desire for release. These traits are mostly negative. But their real aim is self-realization which is undoubtedly positive. It consists in the realization of the true nature of the self by overcoming all narrowness. The suppression of the narrow self is recommended only for the realization of its wider nature through

right knowledge. Broadly speaking the Advaitic discipline consists of two parts of which the first is meant for cultivating detachment (*vairāgya*) and the second is prescribed for acquiring knowledge of the ultimate reality and transforming that knowledge into immediate experience. The first part of the discipline which signifies adherence to duty with a view to perfecting character is only the preliminary stage of Advaitic training. The real training begins at the stage of renunciation. This second part of the training is threefold. It consists in (1) *śravaṇa* or formal study, (2) *manana* or reflection and (3) *nididhyāsana* or meditation.

Śravaṇa means the mental operation by which it is known that the real aim of the Upaniṣads is to teach that Brahman is the sole reality. The object of *śravaṇa* or listening to the *guru* or the proper preceptor is to ascertain the correct import of a *mahāvākya* through a careful study of the whole context in which it occurs. Through *śravaṇa* the Advaitic disciple comes to know the unity of the individual and the ultimate reality. But this knowledge of identity between his own self and Brahman being only mediate, he cannot be fully convinced of the identity. Besides, the teaching that the self is identical with Brahman is so much at variance with the verdict of common experience (*asambhāvanā*) that it is hard to accept it literally. Hence the Advaitin feels the necessity of *manana* which means the mental operation by which arguments are thought out and all apparent discords between revelation and other modes of knowledge are removed. *Manana* is a means of convincing oneself of the truth learnt by *śravaṇa*. It has been prescribed to assist the disciple in convincing himself of the correctness of Advaitic teachings with the help of examples drawn from the realm of ordinary life. But such arguments can hardly prove the Advaitic truth which by hypothesis transcends the domain of common ex-

perience. They can only indicate the probability of the Advaitic truth. But they cannot prove or demonstrate it independently of revelation. Through *manana* the disciple may be logically convinced of the truth of a *mahāvākya* but he will not reach the Advaitic goal until he sees that the individual and the Absolute, the finite and the Infinite, *jīva* and Brahman are one. In spite of the intellectual conviction attained through *manana* old habits of thought (*viparīta-bhāvanā*) incompatible with the present conviction may raise their heads now and again. *Nididhyāsana* or constant meditation is intended to overcome them. It is that mental operation by which one fixes one's attention on the self withdrawing it from all worldly concerns towards which it is attracted by a beginningless habit. The process of *nididhyāsana* consists in meditating upon the truth of the *mahāvākyas*. If one should get a first-hand experience of the central point of the Advaitic teaching one must practise communing with it. It is through constant practice of *nididhyāsana* that one becomes able to see the ultimate truth piercing the veil of ignorance that conceals it. No doubt the vision of the reality appears to be a fleeting one in the beginning but if it is captured again and again, it will eventually come to endure and the truth of the statement 'That thou art' will dawn of itself upon the mind. *Nididhyāsana* or constant meditation leads to knowledge. Śaṅkara has compared knowledge to fire and asserted that the flame of knowledge burns up all the fuel of nescience. (*Ātmabodha*, 42-3) As soon as knowledge dispels the darkness of ignorance the self manifests itself in its intrinsic wholeness and purity. The culmination of the Advaitic training is reached when the disciple attains *mokṣa* by realizing the truth. Realization of Brahman means not merely knowing but being Brahman. At this stage the disciple becomes a *jīvanmukta*. He begins to live the life of

a disembodied spirit while still in the physical form. A *jīvanmukta* is a 'free man' although his body may continue as a result of past *karmas* which have begun yielding fruits. No doubt he is associated with the body but he does not identify himself with the body. The world continues to appear before him until the cessation of life, but he is not deceived by the show. He is in the world and yet not of it. He does not feel any desire for the things of the world. Although he has no end to achieve, still he can work for the good of the society. As he has no narrow attachment, he can work without any fear of bondage. He is the ideal of society. His activity is worthy of being imitated by the majority who are still in bondage. It is not through inactivity but through the performance of selfless activity that they can attain perfection. The Advaitin admits that the *jīvanmukta* need not do any work for himself. In fact he does not work when he remains in *samādhi* or union with the Ultimate. But in the state of *vyutthāna* or reversion to empirical life he cannot help working. Social service is not incompatible with his life in that state, but rather desirable.

The final aim of Advaita is to lead man to the realization of his true nature as spirit by killing the animal in him. He who has given himself up to a life of impulse and appetite has no access to Advaitic culture. The first condition required for the entry upon the course of Advaitic discipline is the recognition of the superiority of spirit over flesh. The preparation for reaching the Advaitic goal begins with the performance of certain deeds and the avoidance of others in accordance with the dictates of the scriptures. The life prescribed at the first stage of Advaitic discipline is a life of social morality. At the second stage the Advaita recommends the performance of unselfish work (*niṣkāma-karma*) and meditation

(*upāsana*). The aim of the performance of unselfish work or *niṣkāma-karma* is self-conquest while that of meditation or *upāsana* is the identification of the self with the object meditated upon. *Upāsana* represents a process of becoming one with the object in imagination. It has a moral as well as an intellectual value. It enables one to shake off the ordinary narrow view of life and place oneself in imagination in the position of others. Practice in *upāsana* helps one in developing one's intellectual habit of intense concentration. It leads to the cultivation of a new sympathy and a new understanding. It enables one to lead a life of self-sacrificing love. Although such a result is the utmost that is commonly desired, yet the Advaitin strives to reach a higher ideal. For him it is not enough to discover the inter-relation of the parts and the whole and to cease to live a self-centred life. The discovery of the inter-relation of the parts and the whole does not amount to the realization of the truth, for the reality is not a whole made up of parts. By reality the Advaitin means the Self or Brahman which is integral and one. All duality including that of the part and the whole belongs to the world of appearance and the non-dual Self is the sole reality. *Avidyā* or nescience is the cause of duality. Until it is dispelled through *jñāna* one cannot realize the absolute unity of all reality. Hence the need is felt for another training which marks the third and the last stage in one's spiritual ascent. This stage is called the stage of renunciation. The keyword to the discipline at this stage is *jñāna* or knowledge which reveals itself through formal study of scriptures (*śravaṇa*), reflection on the truth learnt (*manana*) and constant meditation on it (*nididhyāsana*). With the dawn of true knowledge one becomes a *jīvanmukta*. Although a *jīvanmukta* has no interest in any object of the world, yet he continues to work and help others, the service which he

renders being the natural expression of his realization of the oneness of all. Life to him is more than a moral practice. He does not work under the constraint of any obligation. His work is the spontaneous expression of

his love. He is guided neither by selfishness nor by pity, for he has transcended all feeling of otherness. It is love arising from the discovery of his own self everywhere that inspires his action.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND RABINDRANATH

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It does not require more than ten minutes to reach 6, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane from 3, Gour Mohun Mukherjee Street at Calcutta. Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath were born at a time when the sky scrapers on Chitta Ranjan Avenue could not be seen. Perhaps the ancestral home of Rabindranath could be distinctly seen from Gour Mohun Mukherjee Street, where Swami Vivekananda was born. In the mid Victorian period the population of Calcutta was very small, and the much-boasted metropolis of today was no better than a town. It was inevitable for the *élite* of the time to know one another. Rabindranath was senior to Swami Vivekananda only by a year and a half. It is not a mere idle speculation that the two great men knew each other. Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath were two of the brightest luminaries of the century. Even now we have not been able to assess the great achievements of these two noble sons of India. Their thoughts and writings have completely revolutionized our outlook and instilled a new breath of life into moribund India. More than sixty years have passed since Swami Vivekananda left this world. But even now his resonant voice can be distinctly heard from the snow-clad Himalayas to Cape Comorin. His undying message has been the beacon touch for the oppressed humanity. Rabindranath blazed trails of glory till the middle of the twentieth century. As a poet his distinction is the envy

of the world. Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath were both highly gifted musicians. A master in classical music, Vivekananda enchanted his contemporaries with his divine voice. When he met Sri Ramakrishna for the first time he sang a song (Oh mind, you should now go home) and completely captured the imagination of the Master. Rabindranath was also a highly talented musician. He composed thousands of songs which are delighting us even today. Before coming in contact with Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda was closely associated with the Brahmo Samaj. We have it on record that he used to sing there on diverse occasions. Rabindranath himself was a Brahmo. It is not unlikely that they met and had mutual admiration. The relation of Swami Vivekananda with Jorasanko house was very close and cordial. As a matter of fact the Jorasanko house was the intellectual nerve centre of Bengal. Vivekananda was associated with the Tagore family in different ways. While quite young, he had a yearning for the realization of God. Almost frantically he went to Devendranath Tagore and asked him pointblank 'Have you seen God?' Devendranath could not give a categorical reply. 'You have the eyes of a Yogi,' said Devendranath. That, however, could not console the aching heart of Vivekananda. He then went to Dakshineswar and realized God there at the feet of the Master.

Devendranath, though a Brahmo, always held Swami Vivekananda in high esteem. When at the Congress of Religions the Swami leaped into fame, Devendranath wrote a letter felicitating him. The letter unfortunately is lost. But we have the testimony of the Swami's brother, Mahendranath Dutta. On his return from America Swami Vivekananda went to Jorasanko with Sister Nivedita to meet Devendranath. Both of them paid respects to the grand old man, who blessed them in return. Devendranath said with admiration and gratitude that he had all along kept a watchful eye upon the Swami's activities. Always anxious to avoid public recognition Swami Vivekananda was listening to the words of praise most reluctantly. In course of his talk the Swami said that Raja Rammohun Roy was undoubtedly one of the makers of Modern India. The members of the Tagore family felt happy at this comment. Their conversation drifted towards image-worship. Swami Vivekananda did not record his protest against their deprecation of the worship of the images. Very mildly the Swami said, 'Your religious view is certainly good, but it is never good to be hostile to the religious view of others'. The meeting terminated in a friendly atmosphere.

Swami Vivekananda was the class friend of Dipendranath Tagore, the grandson of Devendranath. We have it on the authority of Abanindranath Tagore, the great artist, that Vivekananda often called at the Jorasanko house to meet Dipendranath. We shall never know what they used to discuss. We are, however, sure that Dipendranath had unstinted regard for Swami Vivekananda.

Rabindranath and Vivekananda were certainly known to each other, but unfortunately we do not know the nature and degree of their intimacy. Swami Vivekananda felt drawn to Rabindranath's songs. He used to sing some of his songs. These songs are suffused with deep spiritualism, Vivekananda

had a spiritual yearning, and these songs found an echo in his heart.

But is it a very strong evidence that Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath had intimate relations? We can only suggest that persons of like characters feel drawn to one another. In many respects Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath had striking similarities. We have already pointed out that both of them were gifted musicians. Both of them were ardent patriots. Vivekananda's patriotism is an unforgettable chapter of our history of the struggle for freedom. While at Chicago Vivekananda jumped down from his cosy bed and lay on the bare floor. He was thinking of the untold sufferings of his fellow countrymen. Once he said to Swami Turiyananda, his brother disciple, 'My dear Hari, I do not know whether I have advanced spiritually, but my heart is dilated with the most unbounded love for my people.'

Rabindranath's patriotism has also been weighed in the balance and it has never been found to be wanting. His songs, poems, novels and essays are a poignant expression of his patriotism. To vindicate the honour of his people he renounced the much-coveted Knighthood in 1919. Though it may sound paradoxical, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath were both citizens of the world, although they had unwavering faith in nationalism. They, in fact, thought in terms of internationalism.

Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath were both poets and litterateurs. Even in his short life Swami Vivekananda made remarkable contributions to Bengali literature. These are achievements which posterity will not willingly let die. He struck a new note and made the soft Bengali language strong, masculine and virile. Rabindranath's contribution to literature is great. Yet the question arises, why Swami Vivekananda did not write anything about Rabindranath. I suggest that when the Swami left this world almost in the prime of his life, he had become a world-

figure and his whole life, short as it was, was dedicated to the cause of suffering humanity. Rabindranath then was struggling for recognition and he had to wait for years for becoming a world-figure. The hurricane monk as Swami Vivekananda has sometimes been called, spent all his life in renovating modern India. Literature and fine arts were, no doubt, subjects of absorbing interest to him, but where could he get so much time for the cultivation of such arts in detail?

Rabindranath who lived long referred to Swami Vivekananda on many occasions. It is foolish to think that they had religious differences. Both of them believed in the religion of man and both of them had faith in the human face divine. Sister Nivedita has been called by Rabindranath '*Lokamātā*' (The mother of the people). She dedicated herself completely to the cause of India, and all this inspiration was derived from her great Master. Rabindranath in his beautiful essay on Sister Nivedita has paid glowing tributes to her, but nowhere is there any reference to Swami Vivekananda, without whom Sister Nivedita cannot be thought of. For Sister Nivedita is the embodiment of what her Master had thought and preached. Lizelle Remaund in her biography of Sister Nivedita has said that once Rabindranath requested Nivedita to teach English to his daughter. Nivedita flatly turned down the request and said, 'You are seeking my help to Europeanize your daughter. You are so much enamoured of western civilization that you do not like the fulfilment of your daughter. You do not understand that the flower is being nipped in the bud'. Sister Nivedita had completely Indianized herself and therefore, Rabindranath's request did not appeal to her.

Rabindranath was a frequent visitor to Sister Nivedita's residence. She also often called at Jorasanko house. Nivedita got everything from her Master no doubt, but

she was essentially a poet and therefore, she would often discuss poetry and fine arts with Rabindranath. Once Nivedita and Rabindranath were discussing a philosophical problem in the former's residence at Bagbazar. A message came that Swami Vivekananda wanted her to see him at Belur. With a face radiant with joy Nivedita said, 'My Master's blessings are always surrounding me. I must leave at once'. For who does not know that Nivedita always believed and described herself as 'Nivedita of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda'?

Two members of the Tagore family often used to come to Sister Nivedita. Both of them were idealists and wanted to do something positive for their country. The youngman was Surendranath Tagore, Rabindranath's nephew and the other was Sarala Ghosal, the poet's niece. Though very much attracted to Nivedita and her robust idealism, they sometimes feared, wrongly though, that Nivedita would convert them to Hinduism. Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita had absolutely no religious parochialism. That is why the Swami had no objection to Nivedita's visiting the Brahmos.

During Swami Vivekananda's life time Rabindranath wrote nothing about him. It is difficult—extremely difficult, to account for it. We may hazard a guess that Rabindranath at that time did not write about his contemporaries, however great. That may explain his silence when Swami Vivekananda left this world on the 4th July, 1902. Some have offered a different explanation, which may also be wide of the mark. Rabindranath, they contend, did not feel very happy when he heard that Swami Vivekananda was reviving Hinduism. Rabindranath was for sometime the secretary to Brahma Samaj and he had eristic bouts with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (the great novelist litterateur and thinker) over Hinduism. Swami Vivekananda under the influence of his Great Master could make a synthesis of all religions. Dogmatism could

never vitiate his religious thought. Rabindranath was perhaps then completely under his father's influence and was an ardent believer in formlessness of God. He could not reconcile himself to image-worship. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were true Vedāntists and made a wonderful synthesis of all the religions. Rabindranath too shed all his parochialism, if he had any. The religion of man became his only religion in the later phase of his life. As Rabindranath became a humanist, the humanism of Swami Vivekananda appealed to him more and more. It was then that he made frequent references to the Swami who was humanism incarnate. Many of the writings of Rabindranath are an eloquent record of his love for man. He, no doubt, felt that Vivekananda embodied his ideals. That is why he very gladly presided over a meeting for condoling the Swami's passing away. In that meeting he spoke eloquently about the Swami's manifold services to the cause of his motherland. Rabindranath is reported to have told Dilip Kumar Roy that if one was to know India one must know Vivekananda, for everything about him was positive, and nothing negative.

In an article published in the Bengali journal *Prabāsi* Rabindranath paid his homage to Swami Vivekananda, and a portion of the same may be quoted here:

'In modern India Swami Vivekananda is the only man who propagated a noble message, which is not based upon time-honoured custom. He called every body of his country and said, "The Divine spirit is within you. You serve the poor, and thereby you serve God". This message has infused a new breath of life into our young men. Stirred to activity, the youngmen of our country are making all sorts of sacrifice. They are serving the country with devotion. The message of Swami Vivekananda has vindicated the glory and honour of man. His message has been one of strength. This strength does not consist in mere physical activities. His message has revitalized the heart and soul of

India. All the adventurous endeavours of the Bengali youths owe their inspiration to Swami Vivekananda's message—the message that has appealed to the human soul.'

Rabindranath had unstinted admiration for Swami Vivekananda's masculinity and humanism. Dilip Kumar Roy who had had the opportunity of free discussions with Rabindranath, has recorded an interesting anecdote. Rabindranath and Dilip Kumar were in London in 1920. A meeting was arranged to record a protest of humiliated India against the Jalianwalabag massacre. Rabindranath who had renounced his Knighthood as a protest against the British atrocities, did not feel very happy about the protest meeting. He said, 'why should we speak about our suffering and humiliation in a foreign country? If we have to speak of India at all, we must speak of her virtues which have made India great. Swami Vivekananda's stand was like that. That is why he could earn their esteem. He came to this country and gave a clarion call to these people, "Arise and awake". He did not snivel and sentimentalize our sufferings. I remember how he had trained Nivedita. Never did he tell her, "we are very poor and miserable and we are objects of pity". He used to say, "you should look at the glorious side of India. Ignore her poverty which is merely extraneous." While in America Swami Vivekananda spoke on the spiritual glory of India. Had he been a snivelling sentimentalist as a beggar, he would have got neither the doles nor any genuine appreciation.'

Greatmen normally are very careful in the use of adjectives, but here the highest appreciation of Swami Vivekananda's ideal is welling out to his heart. Rabindranath has not indulged in the jugglery of words. This appreciation rings absolutely free.

Rabindranath had always the highest regard for the ideal of renunciation, upheld by Swami Vivekananda. Rabindranath sincerely believed in the divinity of man.

The message of the Upaniṣad '*Sadā janānām hr̥daye Sanniviṣṭah*' had been the guiding spirit of his life. In this regard he felt akin to Swami Vivekananda who more than once declared, 'I am ready to go to hell for a thousand times for the liberation of man'. Rabindranath like all great men was never susceptible to all salutary influences. I personally believe that Rabindranath was influenced by Swami Vivekananda in this regard. Rabindranath wrote in one of his letters, 'Vivekananda has said, there is the divine spirit in every man. He also said, God wants to be served through the service of the poor. This can be called a message in the true sense of the term. This message has nothing selfish about it. It has led the human soul to the way of salvation. His message has no dogma. Nor is it a guidance to material welfare. The campaign against untouchability is implied here. Vivekananda has propagated this idea not because it would increase political amenities but because it would vindicate the glory of man. He felt that the dishonour of one person is the dishonour of all. This message of Vivekananda envisages the complete fulfilment of humanity. That is why this message has encouraged our youngmen to move along the holy path of sacrifice and liberation'.

Swami Vivekananda's love of man had attracted Rabindranath. Rabindranath also felt drawn to Swami Vivekananda's ceaseless activity. The Swami was an embodiment of strength. He wanted to electrify the whole country. He wanted to rouse everybody to action. 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached'. He believed that an active robber was better than a passive dreamer. A man of action, Swami Vivekananda inspired Rabindranath to the cult of action. It is foolish to think that Rabindranath was a mere visionary only because he was a poet. Rabindranath was undoubtedly a man of action. His Visva-Bharati is an eloquent testimony to his ac-

tion. He was no doubt a visionary. But at the same time he knew how to translate his vision into reality. That explains why Rabindranath was never tired of praising Vivekananda, the man of action.

Both Rabindranath and Vivekananda believed in the necessity of the union of the East and the West. They had not the jingoism of Rudyard Kipling who said, 'The East is East and the West is West, and the twain shall never meet'. Swami Vivekananda was essentially a lover of life. He felt drawn to the great achievements of science in Europe and America. It is because of his intense desire to synthesize the East and the West that hundreds of American and European disciples sat at his feet. Rabindranath's internationalism is also remarkable. His motto while founding Visva-Bharati was, 'an institution which should be the parliament of men and the federation of the world'. Rabindranath wrote in his essay, *Prācyā O Prāṭicyā* (the East and the West), 'If we have to build a great India we cannot afford to remain isolated. All the great men of modern India realized this supreme truth that the East and the West must be united. Rammohan Roy, Ranade and Vivekananda espoused this ideal'. On another occasion Rabindranath paid his glowing tribute to Swami Vivekananda for his synthesis of the East and the West. 'Recently Swami Vivekananda, the great soul breathed his last. He kept the East on his right side and the West on the left and could synthesize the two. Vivekananda said that if the West was completely ignored in the history of India, she should be doomed to permanent sterility. He had the spirit of acceptance. He knew how to reconstruct on the basis of reunion. He sacrificed his life for offering the fruits of spiritual realization of India to the West and bringing back the realization of the West to India.'

Though an internationalist, Rabindranath was always conscious of the noble heritage of India. The message of India is to find

unity in diversity. Swami Vivekananda achieved this ideal and could, therefore, elicit the homage of Rabindranath. In his essay *Path O Pātheyo* Rabindranath said, 'Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayananda, Keshavchandra, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda and Shibnarayan Swami have realized unity in diversity and eternity in pettiness'.

Even as a maker of modern Bengali prose style Swami Vivekananda earned the praise of Rabindranath. Rabindranath is the father of modern Bengali literature. He found Bengali literature a handful of particles of dust, and left it marble. Yet it must be said that his language had not the virility and masculinity of Swami Vivekananda's. Once Dinesh Sen (a contemporary scholar) heard Rabindranath praising Swami Vivekananda's book *Prācyā O Pāścātyā* eloquently. Rabindranath said to him, 'You must read Vivekananda's work at once. You will understand how colloquial Bengali can be full of life. Its ideas, language, and noble outlook are vying with one another.' Rabindranath must have been impressed by the virility of the Swami's forceful style.

Rabindranath both in India and abroad paid his homage to Swami Vivekananda. While he met Romain Rolland he was drawn into a discussion on the Swami. In reply to a question Rabindranath said, 'So

far as I can make out, Vivekananda's idea was that we must accept the facts of life. ... We must rise higher in our spiritual experience in the domain where neither good nor evil exists. It was because Vivekananda tried to go beyond good and evil that he could tolerate many religious habits and customs which had nothing spiritual about them.'

The catholicity of Vivekananda's religion appealed to both Rolland and Rabindranath. That is why the Christian Rolland wrote two monumental books on Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Rabindranath has written thousands of letters to different people, only a handful of which has so far been collected and put into print. If those letters could be salvaged from limbo we might reasonably expect a few more appreciative references to Swami Vivekananda. If some of the brilliant contemporaries of Rabindranath had recorded his talks with them, perhaps a few more gems could be discovered. Rabindranath was a fine talker, and many great men of the East and the West were his friends. He may have said many things on Swami Vivekananda to them from time to time. But who can rake them up? But if it is done posterity will realize that Swami Vivekananda always loomed large in Rabindranath's vision.

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S VEDĀNTA

DR. P. S. SASTRI

A 'disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world' is the mission outlined for the critic by Matthew Arnold. This is a serious responsibility. To be a true critic one must take the whole of knowledge as his province. His endeavour is to be 'disinterested'; and it is achieved

'by keeping aloof from practice, ... by steadily refusing (the mind) to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations of ideas'. The personal element is to be removed. Then the activity would arise from a state of detachment. Arnold was aware of the source of this principle. In the great essay on *The Func-*

tion of Criticism, he calls it 'the Indian virtue of detachment', 'the serener life of the mind and spirit'. Consequently the critic is asked to have 'a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity'. In this 'Eastern antiquity' he found the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Arnold read the essay of Von Humboldt on the *Gītā* (1826), and the Latin versions of the text made by Von Schlegel (1823) and Lassin (1846). There was an English translation by Sir Charles Wilkins in 1785.

The ideal of disinterestedness is taught in the concept of *niškāma-karma*, in the *Gītā* (II.47):

*Karmanyeva adhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu
kadācana ;
Mā karmaphalahetuḥ bhūḥ mā te
saṅgo'stu akarmaṇi.*

It is more positive than the Kantian categorical imperative since it is firmly based on an ontological truth. This truth relegates logic and reason to a lower level, and points to the reality of the higher immediacy.

In the *Scholar Gipsy* (p. 261) we find Arnold attacking vigorously the new dictatorship of the intellect or reason. He would prefer to be

Still nursing the unconquerable hope
Still clutching the inviolable shade.

The soul cannot be grasped by reason ; 'na medhayā na bahunā śrutena', says the Upaniṣad. Arnold then would accept the validity of the higher immediacy (*aparokṣ-ānubhūti*). This would imply the immortality of the soul. As the *Gītā* (II.20) says:

*Ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yam purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre.*

This statement also refers to the pre-existence of the soul. Arnold writes (p. 4):

The seeds of godlike power are in us still ;
Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes,
if we will.

These lines recall the Vedāntic oneness of the soul and the Brahman. There is neither determinism nor full freedom of the will, because the soul alone can ennoble itself or damn itself. The soul exhorts us (p. 6):

True, the nobleness of man
May be by man effaced ; man can control
To pain, to death, the bent of his
own days.
Know thou the worst! So much,
not more, he can.

Pain and death are ineffective before the soul. As the *Gītā* puts it:

*Nainam chindanti śāstrāṇi
nainam dahti pāvakaḥ*

Equally well does the *Gītā* (II.24) say:

*Acchedyo'yam adāhyo'yam
akledyo'soṣya eva ca ;
Nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthānuḥ
acalo'yam sanātanaḥ.*

Steeped in such ideas Arnold could speak to his friends of the *Gītā*. Writing to his friend Clough he recommends a study of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. 'Indians', he says 'distinguish between meditation or absorption and knowledge.' (*Letters*, 24) Since Clough's poetry is only of the head and not of the whole being, he is to read the *Gītā*. Then he would develop the powers of contemplation to such an extent that there would arise a poetry which would reveal 'a participation of the whole personality, of the non-conscious, a distillation of the complete being.' Such an experience would demand an absorption into one's own soul. In his *Empedocles on Etna* (p. 417) we read:

Once read thy won breast right,
And thou hast done with fears ;
Man gets no other light,
Search he a thousand years.

Sink in thyself! there ask what ails thee,

at that shrine! This absorption in the self will make one realize that one did exist prior to his birth.

But, before we woke on earth, we were,
Long, long since, undowered yet,
our spirit
Roamed, ere birth, the treasures of God;
Saw the gifts, the powers it might inherit,
Asked an outfit for its earthly road.
(p. 209)

This enables us to indulge in 'hopeless straining', in seeking a self-transcendence which is identical with our own real nature:

Ah! *some* power exists there, which
is ours?
Some end is there, we indeed may gain?
(p. 210)

There is a certainty at the end of the process, and it is equally well immanent in the entire process. It beckons us and also guides us.

This is a power shaping us and leading us towards the Good. In order to hasten this process we have to follow the Upaniṣadic and the Socratic 'Know Thyself', the Emersonian 'Trust Thyself', and the austere words of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. This background gave rise to the poem *The Buried Life*. Man is forced, he says here, to 'obey even in his own despite his being's law', and then he yearns for the knowledge of his 'genuine self'.

But often, in the world's most crowded
streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There arises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless
force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which
beats

So wild, so deep in us—to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.
(p. 246)

This is the true *jijñasā*. Even if we are not fully conscious of this process, 'the nameless feelings' 'course on for ever unexpressed'. And when the feelings and imagination are stimulated, the insight comes bringing with it the calmness and the peace of understanding.

And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.

This integration is the true inward contemplation and it is brought about by controlling the outward movement of the mind. It is a kind of *yogic* contemplation taking man to the 'true, original course'. Man, therefore, must seek

... the foundations of that shadowy
throne
Where man's one nature, queenlike,
sits alone,
Centred in a majestic Unity. (p. 4)

The spiritual quest alone can bring tranquility to man. The ancient Roman had all the pomp and luxury that a material civilization could give; but 'its heart was stone'. There is an emptiness in the West which always looks outward. But there is 'the brooding East' which may have been physically conquered, but which was 'plunged in thought again'.

So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit grey;
A conquering, new born joy awoke,
And filled her life with day. (p. 316)

This East commands the West: 'Go, seek it in thy soul'. Since the West grew aware of 'the void which mined her breast', she was forced to obey. There comes to the

poet the note of serene integration amid the peace of nature (p. 324). The goal of happiness is to be realized, says the *Gītā* (II.71), only through practising *niṣkāma-karma*, disinterested activity:

*Vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvām
pumañścarati niḥspr̥hah;
Nirmamo nirahañkārāḥ
sa śāntim adhigacchati.*

The disinterested (*niḥspr̥ha*) activity is a cardinal principle of Indian thought. Arnold saw it in India and in Greece. It is this ideal that makes Arnold describe it as resignation. There is the ignoble resignation of the cloister, and there is the inevitable loneliness of humanity. The latter is Arnold's, and his ideal is embodied in the highly philosophical poem *Resignation*, addressed to his elder sister. He is the dispassionate (*udāsīn*) observer of the cosmos, and he admires 'uncravingly'. He sees life unrolling and it is 'a placid and continuous whole'. In the 'general life' the essence is seen to be *peace*, not joy. The possession of this peace is the same as that of the 'sad lucidity of soul' (pp. 57-58).

When he observes this spectacle tears.
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years. (p. 57)

He sees the 'general life' in a disinterested way. This vision is described in the *Gītā* (VI. 29) thus:

*Sarvabhūtastham ātmānañ
sarvabhūtāni cātmani;
Īkṣate yogayuktātmā
sarvatra samadarśanaḥ.*

That is 'the life he craves'. Since he has an immediate experience of this reality, he sees all. He sees the 'one life within us and abroad'. *Gītā* (VI. 30) says:

*Yo mām paśyati sarvatra
sarvañ ca mayi paśyati;
Tasyāhañ na praṇaśyāmi
sa ca me na praṇaśyāti.*

The 'day's life' may 'hem us all in'. But the poet 'is not bound' by it because he finds no real home in the world of sense. Even the universe would 'seem to bear rather than rejoice' (p. 60).

We mortals are no kings
For each of whom to sway
A new-made world up-springs,
Meant merely for his play;
No, we are strangers here; the world is
from of old. (p. 418)

We are only 'born into life, and life must be our mould'. But the tragedy of human life is to know the way and yet not to practice it:

We would have inward peace,
Yet will not look within;
We would have misery cease,
Yet will not cease from sin. (p. 420)

Life has a bounty and we do not gratefully accept it or acknowledge it (p. 425). We have work to do, duties to discharge truth to be pursued, and soul to be mastered:

I say: Fear not! Life Still
Leaves human effort scope.
But, since life teems with ill,
Nurse no extravagant hope;
Because thou must not dream, thou
need'st not then despair! (p. 426)

Arnold's answer to the great quest is to 'nurse an immortal vigour' and to become 'a devouring flame of thought', even if it means that one develops an 'eternally restless mind' (p. 438). 'Everything will return' to its source in the elements. Thus our bodies, blood, heat and breath will return

because they were born. 'But mind?' 'But thought?' These

Keep us prisoners of consciousness,
And never let us clasp and feel the All
But through their forms, and modes, and
stiffing veils. (p. 439)

This is 'the impossible strife'. But it has been granted to man 'not to die wholly not to be all enslaved' (p. 441). The immortal spark in us outlives the body. But if we are not alert the spark tends to be virtually held a prisoner by the body and its physical properties. Then our primary duty is to see that this prison is destroyed. Then alone can the soul develop to its fullness.

Arnold speaks of the Buddha as 'the great oriental reformer', 'the compassionate teacher'. In his inaugural address 'On the Modern Element in Literature' he seeks to complete the Buddha's idea of moral deliverance with the idea of intellectual deliverance. Thus he observes: 'It was a moral deliverance, eminently, of which the great oriental reformer spoke; it was a deliverance from the pride, the sloth, the anger, the selfishness, which impair the moral activity of man—a deliverance which is demanded of all individuals and in all ages. But there is another deliverance for the human race hardly less important than the first—for in the enjoyment of both united, consists man's true freedom.' The latter is the 'intellectual deliverance'.

With this twofold ideal, Arnold does speak of the continuation of the soul's journey after death. We may be 'depressed' and 'outworn' here. But

... in another world, we say,
The world shall be thrust down, and we
up-borne. (p. 172)

This, however, does not mean that we give up the wheel of life as soon as we die. No, no! the energy of life may be Kept on after the grave, but not begun. (p. 172)

It is *not begun*. The *energy* keeps on and we march ahead in our journey. The destination of this journey is the Absolute:

Roam on! The light we sought is shining still
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our scholar travels yet the loved hill-side. (p. 269)

This is realized if we hold fast to the principle of *Dharma*, the Law. About his *Tragedy Merope*, he said, 'I think and hope it will have what Buddha called the character of fixity, the true sign of Law.' The soul holds fast to the Law. This soul sends

Upon our life a ruling effluence,
and it emanates 'from its lone fastness high'.
And when it fails, fight as we will, we die;
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end. (p. 236)

This is the spirit of religion which Arnold called 'morality touched with emotion'. It is truly Advaitic; and Arnold has not studied the *Gītā* in vain.

IDEALISM AND REALISM IN INDIAN ART.

SRI P. SAMA RAO

'Where dwells enjoyment there is He ;
With still a flying point of bliss remote,
A happiness in store afar, a sphere
Of distant glory still in view.'

—R. BROWNING.

It is said that the Chinese artist Lao-Kung, a centurion lay on his death bed. He had asked his disciples to gather round him so that he may give them his final blessing. They came and found him in his studio sitting before his desk although he was too much weak to hold even the brush. They exhorted him to retire to his couch, but the master said, 'These brushes and these paints have been my steady companions and my faithful brethren throughout these many years. It is only fitting that I should be among them when the time comes for me to depart.' And so the pupils knelt down before him grief-struck and eagerly awaited his words. Finding them shedding tears the master said, 'How now my children? You have been bidden to a feast. You have been invited to share the one sublime experience which the average man is allowed to enjoy by himself! And you shed tears, whereas you should really rejoice.' But one of the disciples who could not control tears said, 'Master, our beloved master, pray forgive us our weakness; but we are sad at heart when we contemplate your fate. You have no wife or children to weep over you or carry you to your grave or give offerings to the gods. All your life-long days you have worked and slaved without monetary rewards. You have given unto mankind with both hands and they have taken everything without bothering about your fate. And gods have shown you no mercy. We beg to ask you has this great sacrifice on your part been really worth-

while?' (H. W. Van Loon: *The Arts of Mankind*)

The old master like a mighty conqueror beamed out his great triumph and said, 'The reward has vastly surpassed my highest expectations. What you say is true. I surrendered all hope of personal gain that I might to better devote myself to my task. In obeying the inner voice that bade me follow my solitary path I have achieved the highest purpose to which any of us may hope to aspire.' When asked about the purpose, 'a strange light came now into the eyes of the master as he lifted himself from his seat. His trembling feet carried him to where stood the one picture he loved best. It was a blade of grass hastily jotted down with the strokes of his mighty brush. But that blade of grass lived and breathed...' It contained the spirit of every blade of grass that had ever grown since the beginning of time. 'There', the old man said, 'is my answer. I have made myself the equal of the gods, for I too have touched the hem of Eternity.' Blessing the pupils with this message the master breathed his last. This gives at once the spiritual descent of a real artist, his great humility, his oneness with creation and finally his realization.

Man is finite in the concrete but essentially infinite and eternal in the abstract, in as much as he is really a reflection of the Divine. So are his thoughts finite when they are mundane and infinite in the supra-mundane. The spiritual thoughts have centres everywhere with circumferences nowhere. An art product of permanent value is an emanation of form from the brain lit by intuitive imagination of a spiritual *sādhaka* who pitches his milestones of his progress from stage to stage. It is reminiscent

of the eternal glory of the Divine embodied within the lusciousness and beauty of nature and in the unsullied heart of man. It is centred everywhere with benign influences non-circumscribed and percolating in the universe. This is Idealism at the highest which is ever the indelible token of the infinite Truth, Beauty, and Bliss. But still the Ideal is not estranged and distant from the factual and the realistic. It is ingrained with what is universally recognized as the beautiful in the realms of thought and action, aspiration and achievement, and dream and its realization—a melodious concretization into form, tint and sound in the extreme limit to which such a concretization can ever go subject to the limitations of both the material and the ethereality of the human mind in the act of creation. Thus a piece of art though a finite be, is infinite in its efficacy because of the Beautiful ever in-dwelling it and its benign influence expands into innumerable rings and rings of entrancing bliss dissipating itself into physical and mental universes.

The art-form or rather the 'Significant aesthetic form' is no doubt derived through a sublimation of its counterpart in nature; but in its aesthetic finality it grows into the stature of the timeless and the eterne. Thus realism at its excellence and shorn of grossness (etherealization of appearance) is none but the simple idealism which is like the unconditioned Absolute conditioning Itself, or, climbing down to the definiteness of form apprehensible to senses. This is realism at its highest, and enduring. This illustrates the 'sea change' of the entire art activity. Thus the edible finite is ever the symbol of the ineffable Infinite and the Eterne. Therefore Idealism conditioned and Realism unconditioned are one and the same in essence. They often meet on the threshold of sense and supersense and clasp their hands in the realization of their oneness in the twilight of artistic creation.

II

The Indian artist secures his ideal forms, the sublimed counterparts of the mundane through an intuitive sense of his own derived from yogic process by invoking the divine to transform himself into the ones he desires to transcribe into his own artefacts. When He creates the divine Creator does it out of His own *ānanda* at the beginning of every *kalpa*. The Indian artist is therefore a reflective bit of *Viśvakarmā*. And these divine forms are not the abstract forms of the modern libertine of an artist which bear no resemblance or relation whatsoever to the mundane existing in nature. The ideal forms differ from real and factual ones only in the degree of perfection and efficacy of suggestiveness of the infinitude of the charm and the spiritual power of the Lord who is verily the Font of every quality. In other words, the Roots of the Tree of Life and the blissfulness which the Indian artist would portray are in the above and not in the below.

Idealists and spiritual poets have all declared that the elements of beauty in nature do often aid in the contemplation of the supernal Beauty which has its compeer only in the above and in the purified heart of man and not elsewhere, and that the earth is a veritable springboard for jump into the liberating realms of the Divine. Besides, the contemplation of what Spenser has called 'Heavenly Beauty' which is abstract and which alone endures, the concrete types of earthly beauty enshrined in nature and apprehensible to physical senses are the first steps of approach to the divine to attain the Divine. It stands to sense therefore that the Idealistic Indian art is mostly suggestive and its specimens in painting sculpture and music are the concretized symbols of the ecstatic experiences of the soul's wanderings in quest of its beloved God, and are not the mere intellectual fabrications of the physical senses. In simple language,

Indian art is idealistic and hieratic in its mysticism and outlook while the western art, the realistic, is objective and secular. In Indian art the 'What of it' is its essential element, the 'How of it' is immaterial. Therefore our sages like Agastya, Kaśyapa, Nārada, Śukrācārya, Bharata etc., are unequivocal in stressing that art is the chief endeavour of humanity to reach God and become one with Him. So the Indian artist is a *sādhaka*, first and any other afterwards. He ever believed that everything he did or omitted to do was at the pleasure of a divine agency that was in him as well as in nature outside of him; and, in consequence he was but a channel to God's creative activity. He could not be a perfect channel unless and until he had wiped out his ego and all his earthly desires and had attained to a perfect state of tranquillity and repose. This meant the purification and emptying of all the undesirable and foreign elements from the mind, a cleansing, as it were, of it to help reflect the divine message. Giving up his ego he breaks away complete from earth's shackles and becomes free with a soul that could effectively contemplate God and pray to Him to form Himself in the speculum of his mind, and into a truly aesthetic form which he desired. These invocations are called *dhyāna* or *mantra*. Wordsworth while explaining the charm of the flower says that 'its revelation was charmingly complete because the plant was free down to its roots'. Art is poetry in the highest sense and is a delectable crystallization of 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'. The Indian artist who conceived the Kailāsa and the Indrasabhā at Ellorā and sculptured great images of Śiva on its walls, the sculptors who modelled the Natarājas at Tiruvengalaḍu and Śrīśailam and Elepantā, and the Dhyānī Buddhas at Jāvā, Anurādhāpurā and Sār-nāth, and the painters who painted in lines and tint Padmapāṇi etc. at Ajantā are

'mighty fine fellows' who 'grasped at the mystery of things, unravelled the tangled web of things, and discovered Truth'. They formed a brotherhood of saints, in as much as they had in them divinity in a great measure.

III

God is an immortal embodiment of Bliss, out of which He creates and maintains the worlds. But He often conceals Himself behind His creation. It is only through a participation of His bliss the human being can also create his own things of 'beauty, a joy for ever', and thereby come face to face with the Lord. (Keats: 'Endymion') But the aesthetic experience of the godhead is as varied as one's own *samskāra* and *samskṛti*. To put it the other way, 'When the canvas is unrolled the picture becomes visible'. Similar is the universe which remains latent in the Lord. He makes Himself manifest in accordance with the work *karmas* of the various beings in their past lives. This explains the difference in the quality of the art-products, for, the aesthetic experience as well as its expression (concretization) is directly proportional to the artist's *adhikāra* to render it in apprehensible terms. Since art is a glamorous expression in adequate terms of Truth which is indivisible, it does not allow itself of any gradation. There can therefore be a masterpiece only in relative terms, but not in the absolute sense. A thing can be a piece of art or none.

The attainment of the Ideal or the Idea as Hegel would have it, in luscious form or phrase or melody or conduct is directly dependent upon the unquestionable means employed to attain it. The object of logical knowledge is Truth; the object of aesthetical knowledge is Beauty. Beauty is therefore the Perfect (Absolute) recognized through the senses physical and intuitional. Truth is the Perfect perceived through reason and

intuition; goodness is the Perfect reached by moral will in conduct. And these triple aspects of the Godhead—Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, mean one and the same ultimately. They all lead to one and the same goal, that of the realization of the Self:

Beauty is Truth; Truth Beauty;
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
know.

(Keats: 'Ode on a Grecian Urn')

Thus the idealistically real and the realistically ideal clasp their hands in the offering of immortality in a betrothed confession to each other, they are one and the same in essence.

'The law and aim of all art is Beauty', but not that beauty which is separated from and independent of goodness as Winckelmann would put it. In order that the Idea may shine through matter and thereby attain to its essential beauty, there ought to be beauty of form, beauty of pose, and beauty of expression all cohering into one another as a condition precedent. The Indian ideal of '*Śāntam, Śivam, Sundaram*' is therefore not only the bedrock of all aesthetic endeavour, but also a springboard for a dive into the Infinite. This primal or primordial idea is at once the basis of all thought and conception of every form and note is beyond description. It is simply the Word. It is a nebulous embodiment, if we could say so in our intellectuality, of every excellence and perfection in all realms of perception. Subtlest logic and clearest intuition could only touch the hem of its immensity. The perfect artist could, however, get glimpses of its all beautiful essence through the chinks of his own spirituality. It is the cosmic consciousness of the divinity in him alone that can apprehend its inimitable and transcendent beauty. To be more exact, the artist's creation, if perfect, is a transliteration, rather pure and simple, of the Ineffable in a script and language of his own. His technique is not a superim-

position over his subject, but a coalescence with it.

All work is an expenditure of energy; but the aesthetic endeavour to an Indian artist is a ritual, a psychological process of imagination which a modern psychologist has called 'concentration'. It is verily so; it is the willed introversion of a creative mind which 'retreating before its own problem and inwardly collecting its own forces, dips at least for a moment into the Source of Life in order there to wrest a little more strength from the Mother for the completion of the work'; and the result of this reunion is a 'fountain of youth and new fertility'. This means aesthetically and in religious practice the cultivation of a perfect void in the mind, a pristine blankness synonymous with 'mindlessness' or selflessness, in order that God's lustrous glory, immanent in creation, might transfigure itself therein in peerless forms of manifold beauty. For God alone is the most Potent, the most Ancient, and the Eterne. Thus the suggestion of the Eternal in either the graphic or in any form is the supreme function of the artist; for it is Bliss that is the Font of all Beauty, which alone can create Beauty. So it is the beauty in the artist's (mind) soul that can alone project itself into forms of beauty, like the spider weaving out its fragile and lustrous gossamer.

In a descent of the Infinite into the realm of finitude, Īsvara represents excellence of every quality. Art may be taken as a representation of excellence in quality through yogic process. As Hsieh Ho, the great Chinese artist puts it, the ideal in every great work of art is 'whether or not the work exhibits the fusion of the rhythm of the Spirit with the movement of living things.' This only means in philosophical language 'whether or not the work reveals the Self (Ātman) within the form (rūpa). The modern critic Holmes amplifies the above test: a

work of art should reveal the qualities of 'Unity, Vitality and Repose' (*Satyam, Śāntam, Sundaram*, or the Rhythm or the 'Economy of the Spirit'. The presence of Spirit is Beauty, it is the content, this movement of the Spirit which is the universal subjectmatter of art. Every thought, every dream, every sound and every act has its own form and rhythm, and bears its own impress of the author when rendered into an artefact. In its own sublimity and blissfulness it is verily the most beautiful representation of a divine quality in an endeavour to merge itself into the Divine. Therefore as Śrī Śāṅkara declares, 'On the huge canvas of the self the self itself paints a picture of the manifold worlds, and the Supreme Self seeing but Itself therein enjoys immense delight.' Thus the ideal Indian artist commemorates his own yogic being in his work of art. The work of art leaves in its trail sweet vestiges of light which enure as real beacons for the storm-tossed world desperately striving to reach its haven of peace and bliss.

IV

While realism is the mere physical and factual vision of the appearance of things, idealism consists in the intuitional grasp of their essential excellences, besides. Since Indian art is mostly hieratic and divine, in that there ought to be suggestion of divinity's infinite power, sweatness and glory, this cannot be achieved except through the employment of perfect and adequate symbols that denote with certainty the unparalleled excellence of things which stand for these qualities. Thus symbolism becomes an indispensable trait in Indian art, and the weapons, and jewels together with others that decorate the divine images depict their essential characters. Some alone of these can be described here. The iconography of all lands is only a symbolic representation of the many ideas of power, edibility and

beauty of the deities and the attributes given to them by people from time to time. The cult of symbolism is therefore a history of culture setting out the means employed for the concrete portrayal of their abstract conceptions of the Supreme Being. The Indian artist therefore builds his abstractions in the first instance upon the basis of his own finite self and its experiences, and projects his own *guṇas*, such as goodness, valour, beauty, cruelty, love etc. into the hearts of others. Thus he radiates his own personality however much he does not desire it. When he has attained to a state of abstraction it may not be necessary for him to think of concrete symbols to denote his abstract ideas to himself; but, it becomes necessary for him to crystallize his thoughts for others. 'The *Yogins* see Śiva in the Self, not in images; the images are created as aids for contemplation to the ignorant.' (*Darśanopaniṣad*) That we rise from the finite to the Infinite or that we make use of the finite to interpret the Infinite is a truth proclaimed long ago.

The ordinary language is not adequate and universal to express ideally our high conceptions of love and life, of growth and decay, of creation and destruction, and of the progress of the individual soul to the Universal. Art alone is the universal language that surmounts all barriers of provincialism and makes a universal thought universally understood. Its primary letter is symbolism, consisting of gestures (*mudrās*) and poses. The idealistic tenor of the *mudrās* that inform the iconography of divinities, and dancers that closely follow them with slight modifications, has been hinted at. They are adopted in Indian art because of their greatest expressiveness (*Naṭarāja, Durgā, Kāli, Veṅugopāla* etc.). In this context it can be said without contradiction that the sculptural *mudrās* and poses though fewer than those of dance are by far the most idealistically pure and best.

Our Tantra Śāstras, Silpa Śāstras and Āgāmās set them down in detail. To put it shortly, in the Indian art which is purely idealistic, 'the scheme of physical sense-perceptions was rejected; it was built on other deeper foundations as alluded to already. In the language of the Upaniṣad again, the Indian artist, be he a singer, or a sculptor, a poet or a painter, 'separates the spirit, the inner soul, from his body, as from a painter's brush a fibre', and dedicates his purified soul to the service of God and His creatures. God is the real theme of the secular as well as of the spiritual songs.

The function of symbolism as conventionalized by our ancients is to heighten besides, the effect of beauty of form or create the atmosphere for the shining forth of the Idea or the content of art. The subject may be an immortal deity or a mortal human, or the nebulous melody or even an abstract thought. Adverting to gesture in the Venugopāla image Sri Gangoly observes, 'Finger plays not in accordance with human gesture but is devised to show refinement of feeling through refinement of external action on the part of a superhuman personality.' This is applicable in all force to the Natarāja image which combines ideally the force of creation, preservation and destruction at a stretch, through the emblems, the posture and the dance of the great divinity, to the basreliefs of Durgā Maḥiṣāsura-mardinī who vanquishes all evil personified by Maḥiṣāsura.

These symbols range from the natural to the arbitrary with transitions in between. Most of them are concerned with the Hindu cosmogeny. In the *amūrta* aspect (Absolute) God is beyond mind and speech, and in the *murta* aspect He represents Puruṣa (Consciousness) and Prakṛti (matter). He then becomes *saguṇa*. On the eve of every fresh creation and in the twilight period He is called Nārāyaṇa, the primeval Creator, who having created Brahmā out of His own

yogic power assigns further creation to him. The spiritualism in Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa projects a world which unfolds itself in a lotus form, and Brahmā sitting therein as the Puruṣa (Spirit) of *rajas* puts or regulates the still unshaped universe (Hiraṇyagarbha) into order and form. Hence the lotus is symbolic of the finite universe. In other interpretations lotus stands for *ākāśa* or space, and its different layers of petals unfolding are emblematic of the different worlds gross and subtle. In this manner the lotus in the hand of Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara (Ajantā) has to be interpreted. The white lotus, like the white swan is symbolic of innate purity which is undefiled by the muddy environs amidst which it is born and has its being. The use of lotus motif on a pedestal to a seat or beneath the feet of standing deities pictures the fact that they are not earthly, while the same employed on a temple dome stands as a symbol of the dedication of the builder's heart that opens out to receive divine grace. The lotus stalk connecting Nārāyaṇa with Brahmā stands for the umbilical cord and is emblematic of the flow of yogic knowledge from the higher to the lower world, without which flow of life all Prakṛti becomes inane. Brahmā is fourfaced, each face representing a Veda. These four faces may represent 'the quadruple rhythms of the universe'.

In the *R̥g-Veda* there is no deity by name Śiva or Viṣṇu. For the first time in the *Yajur-Veda* the name Mahādeva comes into vogue. He becomes symbolized by '*Linga*' which denotes Immanence. Śivam is auspiciousness and *Śiva* as an emblem for it, is therefore a post-Vedic conception. He is said to destroy the worlds at *pralaya* (at the end of every cycle of time) in order that a perfect form out of the disintegrated residue is evolved from his dance thereon. He is the patron of all *yogins* who strive to realize themselves. He is the presiding deity over all arts.

Śiva in his *pratimā* form has either five heads or one head with multiple arms (*Naṭarāja* of Badāmi). With five heads he represents five root races (Śiva at Lepākṣī) like the five hoods of Ādiśesa. Each of these five faces is a characteristic aspect of his divinity. With five faces and multiple arms holding diverse weapons he represents his cosmic type (Lepākṣī Naṭarājas). Corresponding to his five faces he has ten arms bearing symbolic weapons like *triśūla*, *khadga*, *paraśū*, *vāḍavāgni*, and *abhaya-hasta* in his right hands, and *nāga*, *vajra*, *ghaṇṭā*, *pāśa*, and *aṅkuśa* in his left hands. All these weapons have their own symbolical significance in consonance with the divine attributes of creation, protection and destruction of the supreme deity. *Triśūla* (trident) denotes his creative, preservative and destructive nature of his functions. It is with this weapon that he destroys *triguṇas* in Prakṛti while the *aṅkuśa* (elephant goad) and *pāśa* (noose) stand for his non-pareil valour in the destruction of *avidyā* (ignorance). The *vāḍavāgni* swallows up all things at the time of the Finale. The *pāśa* is an insignia too for his lordship over the god of death. *Ghaṇṭā* (the great bell) is symbolic of the eternal *Nāda* while the *vajra* (the thunderbolt) is of eternal wisdom which destroys all evil. As Mahādeva he is the spirit of asceticism and is endowed with the purest transparency. His yogic aspect and primeval preceptorship are celebrated in the image of Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti.

The Ādiśakti is variously known as Mahā Lakṣmī, Mahā Kālī and Mahā Saraswatī. They are the divine consorts of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā respectively, and are endowed generally with the same emblematic weapons and functions. As Śrī, the autumnal goddess, Lakṣmī's complexion is golden yellow and her vehicle is, however, the owl, who symbolizes wisdom rather surprisingly. In her manifestation of Satī, Pārvati stands for ideal beauty, chastity and grace, while Lakṣmī

when accompanied by a pair of white elephants pouring water of ablution over her stands for earthly felicity. The elephants stand for purity and wisdom. She is red-complexioned while Satī is white. As Durgā Mahiṣāsura-mardinī Pārvati is red. As Śakti she is the life-force of the Self. She entices all holding in her arms, *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, and bow and arrows. She is the great wisdom (*Devyopaniṣad*). As Kālī, she is black and terrible, and is the goddess of destruction at the Finale. She has a flaming third eye like Śiva, and is dressed in a girdle of hands and garlanded with black cobras suspended from her neck and waist together with a necklace of skulls. One of her hands holds the bleeding head of a demon she has newly killed. Like the Egyptian Isis 'She can conceal herself in the cloud of her long and abundant tresses'. Saraswatī bestrides a swan and is the patron goddess of all learning. She is pure white: has a *viṇā*, *kamala*, *japamālā* and *pustaka* in her hands which signify her yogic essence.

As expressed already, 'There is a glowing synthesis of creation, maintenance and destruction of the worlds in the Naṭarāja image. He is the composite of the Male and the Female, and the harmonizer of all contradictions and paradoxes. He represents both the *Nāda* and *Rūpa* Brahman at one stroke. If *Rta* (harmony and order) be the great 'plastic force' forging links between the Lord and the creation, between 'being' and 'becoming', then *Rta* articulates itself and becomes the 'be-all and end-all' in the Lord's peerless dance. It is not merely the dance of mortal life or death. He depicts the birth, the continuum and the finale of all life. Naṭarāja is therefore the transfiguration of the Dance of Eternal Life in an overflowing synthesis of the noumenon and the phenomenon, and of all paradoxes striving to solve themselves. Thus the Lord of Dance who is the

primal source of all Life everlasting, is Life itself.

The various conceptions of symbolism are sought to express the rhythmic vitality or the spirit of harmony—the essential quality of an Indian masterpiece. As a Chinese artist has expressed, in a masterpiece, ‘the spirit sets in motion the phenomena of the world, as the hand of the harper sets in motion the strings of an instrument. Rhythm is the motion of Life in life, in the aspect of its manipulation of move-

ment’. The Indian artist being blessed with the spiritual vision is able to see ‘cosmic waves in a drop of woman’s tears’ and realize ‘Eternity in an hour seeing the tree in the bud’. This he achieves through symbolism. In the words of Dr. Cousins ‘the test of artistic achievement is joy (*Ānanda*), and in the work of the Indian artists one can taste abandonment to Love and Beauty in the sure consciousness that the Infinite is leaning with approving tenderness on the finite.’

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Prof. Sudhindra Chandra Chakravarti M.A., D.Litt, Darśanācārya, Bhāgavat-ratna is the Reader in Philosophy, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan. Dr. Chakravarti’s present article ‘The Advaitic Art of Right Living’ is a thoughtful exposition of the Advaitic commands and the processes that ask for a positive ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ in spiritual life.

S. P. Sen Gupta M.A., Ph.D., (London), is the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Head of the Department of English in the North Bengal University of West Bengal. In his article on ‘Swami Vivekananda and

Rabindranath’ he makes a comparative study on the two outstanding personalities of modern Indian history.

P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt, Ph.D. is the Head of the Department of English in the Nagpur University, Maharashtra. In ‘Matthew Arnold’s Vedānta’ Dr. Sastri traces out the sublime ‘Indian virtue of detachment’ permeating the master mind of Matthew Arnold and his all celebrated works.

Sri P. Sama Rao B.A., B.L., (Advocate), Mysore is a noted art critic. In his present article Sri Rao offers an interesting discussion on ‘Idealism and Realism in Indian Art.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE ETERNAL LAW. BY SRI R. KRISHNASWAMI AIYER, FOREWORDED BY SRI C. L. GOSWAMI, Ganesh & Co., (Madras) Private Ltd. Madras-17. Pages 172. Price Rs. 4.

The author has been a devotee of the Sringeri and Kanchi Maths of Śrī Śaṅkara. He has compiled

the teachings of the late H. H. Sri Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati under the titles *The Call Of The Jagadguru* and *Sparks From A Divine Anvil* with great religious unction. The present volume has been justly dedicated to his successor. The study of Vedānta and the Advaitic aspect of it especially

herein is so subtle, analytical and comprehensive; and on that account the book can be deemed as a very rare and precious introduction to Vedānta in general.

The book is a reprint with some enlargements of its original here and there, which had appeared under the caption *Talks On Sanātana Dharma* in the *Indian Mirror* of Bombay three decades ago, and enclosed in a book form in 1937 under the title, *Thoughts From The Eternal Law* with a remarkable insight and intuition into the Truth behind the appearances of things, the learned author has analyzed the 'The basis and the goal of life, the realization of one's own self, as Brahman, the mode of the achievement of Brahman through the nearest and the straightest path (*Aparokṣānubhūti*) after true discrimination between the fugitive and the infugitive (bodies, senses, *guṇas*, the five sheaths, mind, thoughts, actions etc.) and finally, by an utter and unconditioned surrender of the individual self to the Supreme Self, for an absolute merger into It by way of true liberation.'

The definition of Eternal Law as *Sanātana Dharma* partakes very much of the nature of the Absolute Reality, the operative part of the Eternal is concerned with and results in an everlasting life with its own blissfulness, immortality and infinitude. This attainment of Brahman is the true liberation for a *jīva* which being curbed and cabined by the superimposed *avidyā* or ignorance deems itself in its ego as something other than the Absolute Brahman.

The book is made up of 18 chapters dealing with the basis and the goal of life, the Cosmic Person, and the Impersonal Self, the Paths to achieve the goal in the course of spiritual activity having attained all purity of one's own self with the aid of an experience of beatitude in a merger with the Super-Self. This experience of great peace comes of transcendence of both the subjective and the objective knowledge of even one's own self. The consummation of the beatific bliss is conditioned only by the suppression of the ego, and all desire too, and this results in the complete effacement of the complex Knower-Knowledge-Known, and in the birth of the pure untrammelled consciousness that knows not even itself. These are some of the highest truths informing the Eternal Law or *Sanātana Dharma*, which the learned author has so convincingly arrived at in this brief but very precious thesis.

The format of the volume is dainty as is usual with the publishers, but one would desire a sharper proof correction.

P. SAMA RAO

MILITANT NATIONALISM IN INDIA. By BIMAN BEHARI MAJUMDAR. General Printers and Publishers Private Ltd., Calcutta. 1966. Pages 202 (with Index). Price Rs. 10.

The book deals with the period 1897 to 1917, a period of two decades of great importance and vital developments. In ten chapters the author has discussed a brief history of nationalism before 1897, social and political ideas of Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita, militant nationalism in Maharashtra and Bengal, Lala Lajpat Rai, the impact of the First World War and so on.

The Socio-Religious background to militant nationalism in the period 1897 to 1917 has been fully stressed. The chief excellence of the book is that it is thoroughly documented and important sources relating to the subject have been fully utilized.

However, the indexing has been badly done and loses much of its value by reason of being incorrect at places. Thus, Mr. J. M. Chatterji has not been cited on page 135 nor Subhas Chandra Basu on page 54 and on page 179 he is called 'Bose' when the indexing makes him 'Basu'.

Notwithstanding such minor errors and omissions the book is a definite contribution in the field of study and it helps us to understand better the background of modern Indian nationalism which, contrary to popular notions, was not all passive. We recommend the book to all, but particularly to students of history and politics.

DR. P. N. MUKHERJEE

FUNDAMENTALS OF GĪTĀ. By SRI BHUSAN GUPTA. Bharat Printers, M. I. Road, Jaipur. Pages 202. Price Rs. 2.

This book is a masterly analytical study under appropriate heads like '*śaranāgati Prapatti*', *Sāṅkhya Buddhi*', '*Yoga Buddhi*', '*Sthita Prajñā*', etc. with a remarkable religious unction. The synthetic exposition of its fundamentals is simple, clear, and precise supported however, with illuminating title pieces from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. A glossary of spiritual words employed in the *Gītā* sets out their correct sense so as to help a correct understanding of its message. This precious exposition is not a little due to the learned author's devoted and intense study of the *Gītā* for over 'three decades and a half' in a consecration of his all unto the Lord as he modestly claims. Apart from his own intellectual grasp of the subject, it is simple truth when he says, that his own experience of the truth has given him 'solace and sustenance' in his dark hours. The

book is therefore a must to every spiritual seeker.

We would wish, however, the further editions of the book would bear a more attractive appearance, and be free from the numerous printer's devils, which are rather bristling here. The cost is nothing compared to the rich spiritual fare presented.

SRI P. SAMA RAO

BENGALI

YUGANĀYAK VIVEKĀNANDA. VOLS. I & II. BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA. Udbodhan Karyalaya, Calcutta. 1966 (1373). Pages 466 and 483 respectively. Price Rs. 7 each volume.

'A well-written life', says Carlyle, 'is almost as rare as a well-spent one'. If the person written about is truly great, he needs a great man to write about him. Only a Michael Angelo could carve a massive figure out of a vast chunk of marble. Biography is never hero-worship. Nor is it a string of adjectives in the superlative degree. Biography is a truthful record of an individual. But it has to be, at the same time, a work of art. The tone of tedious panegyric in the hefty volumes of a biography may commemorate the dead, but it certainly kills the truth. Sometimes the biographer excludes what is most human and genuine in his attempt to apotheosize the hero. There are also biographers who only debunk and denigrate the persons, they are writing about. Both the courses are dangerous.

Yuganāyak Vivekānanda by Swami Gambhirananda is a biography in the true sense of the term. It is not a mere panegyric. It is the life of a man, who translated into action the imperishable message of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Vivekananda is a maker of modern India. A symbol of holiness and humanity, the Swami never wanted to be a recluse. He did not merely live a life of meditation in the cloisters or the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas. He was destined to instil life into our moribund nation and deliver a new message of the Vedānta to the West, steeped in sordid materialism. Swami Vivekananda is more than an individual. He embodied the spirit of the Renaissance of India and added a significant chapter to our history. Were he only a monk living in a cave, it would have been easier for a biographer to draw his full-length picture. But he was essentially human. In fact, nothing human was alien to him; and yet he had always the beatific vision. An ardent lover of life, he was full of quips and jests. He laughed and the world

laughed with him. And yet the distress of man always compelled his tears. He was a patriot, who loved every particle of dust of his motherland. Yet he was a citizen of the world. He was a great poet and musician. As a social reformer he was no less great. A crusader against all sorts of social and economic ills, Swami Vivekananda wanted to ameliorate human conditions all over the world. And yet he was intensely religious. To write about such a colourful personality is extremely difficult. Swami Gambhirananda has, however, accomplished the difficult task.

So long *The Life of Swami Vivekananda: By His Eastern and Western Disciples* was considered to be the standard biography of the great Swami. A mine of information as it is, it cannot claim to be complete. The life of the Swami in America and England is scantily recorded here. Marie Louise Burke's *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries* and Benisankar Sarma's *Swami Vivekananda: A Forgotten Chapter* have added cubits to our knowledge of the Swami. Swami Gambhirananda has fully utilized these discoveries. Swami Vivekananda's younger brothers—Mahendranath and Bhupendranath wrote a number of books on their eldest brother and brought to light many things hitherto undivined. The biographers of Swami Vivekananda so long never cared to put under contribution all these data. Swami Gambhirananda did. It is, however, not the accumulation of material but the scrupulous selection that has been the primary aim of Swami Gambhirananda. Had the author been a mere historian, his works would have been no doubt, bibliographical treasures. But the author is an artist. The conception of his plan is clear, and the execution is supremely artistic. The first volume of *Yuganāyak Vivekānanda* deals with the life of the Swami till his visit to the Congress of Religions at Chicago. In the nineteenth century quite a number of great men were born in India. Great in their own spheres, only partially they succeeded in their mission. Sri Ramakrishna brought about a synthesis of all religions and presented a new concept of spiritualism, that could be acceptable to all. For the first time in the world's history he preached and practised the philosophy that man is the child of immortal bliss. Swami Vivekananda propagated this philosophy, and the Indians, from the snow-capped Himalayas to Cape Comorin felt that they were not sinners, but the children of immortal bliss. The doctrine of Vedānta was no longer confined to a select few. It became the legacy of humanity.

The second volume of *Yuganāyak Vivekānanda* records the life of the Swami till his return to India. In both the volumes under review the author has utilized all the available materials with meticulous care. Nowhere has he been carried away by sentiment or emotion.

He has retained dispassionateness—a rare achievement for an Indian biographer. He has all along quoted chapter and verse in support of his views. Another remarkable feature of this biography is this, the author has extensively quoted from Swami Vivekananda's writings. And the great Swami is the greatest commentator on his own life and activities.

It is difficult to separate style from content. The content of these books is rich, and the style is no less rich. Obscurity in writing is the proof of the confusion of thought. The greatest learning

is always seen in the greatest plainness. The volumes under review have been written in elegant and yet unostentatious prose. 'If you would write a lucid style', said Goethe, 'let there be light in your own mind; and if you would write a grand style, you ought to have a grand character'. Style is the man. And it is this light in the mind of the present author and the purity of his character that have enabled him to write in a language that has the freshness of an April morning and the grandeur of the mountain. *Yuganāyak Vivekānanda* is a monumental work that posterity will not willingly let die. It is, to quote Milton, 'the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose for a life beyond'.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NEW DELHI REPORT FOR 1965-66

The activities of this branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission during the period under review were the following:

Religious: During the year the Centre endeavoured to broadcast the life-giving ideas of Vedānta and the inspiring message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda through regular religious discourses, occasional lectures, religious celebrations and other suitable means. Worship in the shrine and *Rāmanāma-Saṅkīrtana* were the other regular features in this end.

Medical: The Tuberculosis Clinic (at Arya Samaj Road, Karol Bag) functioned regularly during the period. The Clinic which is the only non-official institution of its kind, is equipped in a modern way both for general treatment and for detailed surgical measures as thoracoplasty, pneumothorax, pneumoperitoneum, pneumonolysis, phrenic nerve operation, ultra-violet ray therapy and chemotherapy. It has its own vertical X-ray set for fluoroscopic examinations, X-ray unit for skiagraphy, an ultra-violet ray apparatus and a Laboratory for clinical and bacteriological work. The Clinic functions in a sixfold way:

(1) to diagnose individual cases;

- (2) to treat cases fit for treatment at the clinic;
- (3) to select suitable cases for admission and treatment—surgical and medical for short periods in its observation wards;
- (4) to get admitted in other hospitals cases requiring prolonged hospitalization or special surgical interference;
- (5) to treat patients at home under the Domiciliary Service Scheme;
- (6) to examine contacts of patients with a view to detecting early cases and as a preventive measure.

The number of outdoor cases treated in the Clinic during the period was 1,32,652 of which 1,777 were new. During the same period 363 indoor cases were treated in the observation wards. Under the Home Treatment Scheme male and female Health visitors and doctors were deputed to localities lying in the zones allotted to its jurisdiction to establish contacts, educate suspects in health rules and to give treatment to those unable to attend the Clinic in person.

Milk and tiffin were supplied free to all free-ward indoor patients. Costly medicines were also supplied free to all those patients as well as to all

outpatients whose monthly income was less than Rs. 300. During the period under review 1,687 such patients received these free medicines.

The Outdoor Homoeopathic Dispensary situated within the Mission premises, rendered regular service to the people of the locality, especially the poor. During the period it treated 35,404 cases of which 6,631 were new.

Cultural, Social and Educational: Discourses in Hindi on *Tulasī Rāmāyana* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* by eminent persons were regularly held at the Centre's auditorium. In all 37 discourses on *Tulasī Rāmāyana* with a total attendance of 20,150 were held during the year. Besides giving regular discourses on Sunday evenings in the Centre's auditorium, the Secretary conducted regular weekly classes, delivered lectures and talks in various institutions including the Vedānta Samiti of the Delhi University and undertook lecture tours in wide areas covering Jammu, Simla, Chandigarh, Jullundur, Bombay, Deoghar, Bikaner, Jaipur, Krishangarh, Ajmer and Sambar Lake.

The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Nānak and Śaṅkara were observed with due solemnity and devotion. Special worships, and public meetings were organized on the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda to stimulate the enthusiasm of the public towards the consideration of their respective spiritual and cultural regeneration.

The Elocution Competition held during the year on the dynamic message of Swami Vivekananda among the college and school students of the capital attracted 2,716 participants and 230 prizes worth about Rs. 940 were awarded to the successful candidates. The Students' Day, observed in this connexion, was presided over by Sri P. N. Kripal, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Nārāyana-sevā was organized on the occasion of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday anniversary when about 600 patients of the Tahirpur Leprosy Colony were fed to their satisfaction. New

clothes were also distributed to all the patients.

Following the programme of regional celebration, birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were also observed at the University of Delhi and at Sarojini Nagar and at other places.

The Library functioned efficiently during the period. In all 1,165 books were added during the year and the number of books reached 17,286 in total. The Reading Room received 14 newspapers and 104 periodicals during the period and the number of books issued was 15,785. The University Students' Section of the Library registered a steady progress during the year. The daily average number of students using the Library was 80 and the number of books rose to 2,288. The total number of students using the Library during this time was 600.

Sri Sarada Mahila Samity, founded in the name of the Holy Mother, worked successfully during the year in its objective to serve the cause of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement involving spiritual, cultural and philanthropic activities among women. In its avowed aims to unite the women spiritually, it organized study circles on scriptures and worked on the programme of Medico Social Service project at the Lady Hardinge Medical College Hospital. The work consisted of monetary help to poor patients, readings from devotional scriptures to the very sick, distributing books to those who could read and also teaching of Hindi, English and the handicrafts to the younger children in the wards. The patients who knew knitting and sewing were asked to knit and sew on payment basis. This kind of programme encouraged the poor patients to work and earn even when they were in hospital. About 250 such poor patients were covered by the programme during the year.

The Samity also continued to conduct its weekly class, known as Sarada Mandir, among the children for imparting religious and moral education and opened another branch centre during the period under review. It also published a prayer book of its own named, *Gīti Saṅcayan*.