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COVER : On the way to Sri Amarnath—Panchtarni.



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No. 10

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

'Nangta [Totapuri] told me of a certain king who gave a feast to the sadhus, using plates and tumblers of gold. I noticed in the monasteries at Benares with what great respect the abbots were treated. Many wealthy up-country people stood before them with folded hands, ready to obey their commands. But a true sadhu, a man who has really renounced everything, seeks neither a gold plate nor honour. God sees that he lacks nothing.'¹

* * *

'Diverse opinions certainly exist. Nangta used to say that the monks could not be feasted because of the diversity of their views. Once a feast was arranged for the sannyasis. Monks belonging to many sects were invited. Everyone claimed that his sect should be fed first, but no conclusion could be arrived at. At last they all went away and the food had to be given to the prostitutes.'²

* * *

Describing certain sects wherein sensuous pleasures were enjoyed in the name of religion : 'The Bhairavas and the Bhairavis [aspirants] of the Tantrik sect also follow this kind of discipline. While in Benares I was taken to one of their mystic circles. Each Bhairava had a Bhairavi with him. I was asked to drink the consecrated wine, but said, I couldn't touch wine. They drank it. I thought perhaps they would then practise meditation and *japa*. But nothing of the sort. They began to dance. I was afraid they might fall into the Ganga : the circle had been made on its bank. It is very honourable for husband and wife to assume the roles of Bhairava and Bhairavi.'³

Comp.—Swami Sarveshananda

1. 'M' *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969, p. 479.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 533.

SISTER CHRISTINE : THE DEDICATED—II

(EDITORIAL)

In the last part of the Editorial we have narrated the story of Christina's life till the end of 1898; seen her sincere hankering for spiritual life, her quest for the Spiritual Teacher—Swami Vivekananda, her training under his able guidance at the Thousand Island Park Vedanta Retreat, his guidance to her through letters, her life of self-dedication for the sake of her old mother and sisters, and so on. In this part we shall tell the story of her unique relationship with her Guru up to the end of nineteenth century.

Since his return to India in the January of 1897, Swami Vivekananda's health was unwell due to much exertion; and efforts were being made to recuperate it by various means. The best source of knowing about Swamiji's fluctuating health conditions, till the end of his life, is the bunch of his letters written on various occasions to his beloved disciple Christina. Swamiji's illness had taken a serious turn at Deoghar (Vaidyanath) in the December of 1898, and Swami Saradananda had gone there at his call, from the Belur Math in order to attend on him; and he brought the Swami back to the Math in the last week of January 1899. After his return, the Swami wrote to Christina, 'Excuse my long delay in replying to your very beautiful note. The fact is, I was once more in the vale of death. The old diabetes has now disappeared. In its place has come what some doctors call asthma, others dyspepsia owing to nervous prostration. However, it is a most worrying disease, giving one the sensation of suffocation sometimes for days. ... If I get well by March, I am going to start for Europe.'²⁶

26. Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda from Mrs. Boshi Sen's collection (hereafter *U.L.*), dt. 26 January 1899.

And after three months Swamiji wrote to her again about his health, 'My complaint, I do not know what. Some say it is asthma, others, nervous weakness of the heart brought by overstrain. Anyhow last two months the terrible fits of suffocation, which used to remain for days, have not come. Yet unlike other asthmatic people, I feel a little weakness in the heart always.'²⁷

There is a chance of misunderstanding Swamiji by reading such accounts of health in his letters. Some such thing actually happened during Swamiji's life time. After hearing about Swamiji's constant illness, some of his admirers like Mr. Sturdy, Mrs. Ashton Jonson, and Miss Müller of England had left him. They perhaps thought that a spiritual man like Swamiji should never suffer from illness. When Sri Ramakrishna suffered from cancer, he had made a remark: 'Looking to my illness, worthless devotees will run away.' It is very difficult to get the company of real spiritual souls, and if anyone gets one, it is very difficult to understand him. There is always a tendency in man to judge great souls according to his own standard. But Christina accepted the Swami as a spiritual teacher, she accepted his everything—good or bad. That is why she remained loyal to him till the end of her life.

From Swamiji's letter of January 26, 1899, it appears that Christina had a desire to come to India during this period; but Swamiji had written to her, 'I have carefully weighed your plans for coming over. I will be ever so glad to see you, you know it well, but my dear, the Indian summer will not suit you, and if you start now it

27. *U.L.*, dt. 11 April 1899.

will be midsummer when you reach India. Then you must not hope of making any living here.²⁸

Invitation to England :

Christina must have wished to come to India to see the ailing Swami, and the Swami had written in the same letter, 'If I do not get well by March, I will write you to come, for I wish it ever so much to see you once before I pass away.'²⁹ By March 1899, Swamiji's health had improved a great deal, and he had made plans to go to the West, both for the sake of his work in England and America, and for taking some rest and better medical treatment. Miss Josephine MacLeod had seen his shattered health in India, and invited him to America for recouping his health. Accordingly, the Swami was making preparations for his journey. On April 11, 1899, he had written to Christina, 'Anyhow, this summer I am sure to be in England, unless something very unforeseen happens to retard it. Are you coming to England this summer? Can you, for a trip? It will be such a pleasure to see you (fill up all the interjections). Can you get leave from your work, say a month or two? England is much cooler than the United States in summer. You can induce Mrs. Funke to take a trip also. . . . First-rate trip for two months. There you will see old England and I, the best thing on Earth.'³⁰

Trip to England :

Swami's invitation was more than enough for the disciples—Christina and Mrs. Funke, who had once searched him out on a dark and rainy night. Their devotion for him had enhanced by this time by leaps and bounds. They had not seen their beloved Master for about three and a half years.

Christina surprised the Swami by sending a telegram to him *en route* c/o S.S. *Golconda*, by which he was going to England. She had come to know from various sources that the Swami had already started for the West. From her wire the Swami came to know that Christina had come to England at his call. He wrote to her c/o The American Express Co., London, from Marseilles (on board the ship) on July 23, 'Your very very welcome wire just came. By next Sunday, we arrive in London, Albert Dock. We are a party of four. . . . Come to the dock, if that is possible and discrete. . . . Is Mrs. Funke with you? If so, give her my love.'³¹ The S.S. *Golconda* was to reach London by Monday morning instead of Sunday, as Swamiji had informed Christina. So he sent a telegram to her from Camberwell, B.O. : '*Golconda* due docks 6 a. m. Monday'. And the Swami was not surprised to see them at the dock on the morning of July 31, when the steamer reached the Tilbury Dock. Sister Nivedita wrote to Miss MacLeod on August 3, 'We arrived on Monday morning; met at unearthly hours by mother, Nim [Nivedita's sister], Miss Paston, and the two American ladies—Mrs. Funke, and Miss [Christina] Greenstidel.'³² Nivedita, Swami Turiyananda, and Swami Saradananda's brother had accompanied the Swami during this trip. It was summer time, and most of Swami's admirers had been out of London. Mr. Sturdy, once his ardent admirer, was then on the point of leaving him. Neither did he come to the dock to receive him, nor had he made any arrangements for his stay in London.

From Sister Nivedita's letters of this period it is known that the Swami spent the day of his arrival in London with his

28. *U.L.*, dt. 26 January 1899.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *U.L.*, dt. 11 April 1899.

31. *U.L.*, dt. 23 July 1899.

32. *Letters of Sister Nivedita* (in Press), Comp. Sankari Prasad Basu (hereafter *Nivedita's Letters*), p. 190.

American disciples, and tried to find out rooms near their residence. But as he did not succeed in getting any, he went the next day to Wimbledon, where Nim (later Mrs. Wilson) had found two lovely rooms for him near the station, in green and quietness. Sister Nivedita had expected that Mr. Sturdy would bear the lodging and boarding expenses of the Swami during his stay in England; but perhaps he did not. The Swami was in perfect peace here. Mr. Sturdy and Mrs. Jonson came to see him but once during his fortnight's stay in England. Nivedita was, however, pleased to see the devotion of her family members to the Swami. And it must have been like heaven to Christina and Mrs. Funke to get the Swami all at their disposal. About them Nivedita has written to Miss MacLeod on August 12, 'Mrs. Funke and Miss Greenstidel are with him much—and that is a comfort, for he cannot come up the Hill. I feel most awfully cut off from him in some ways. . . . Mrs. Funke and Miss Greenstidel love him as we do, I can see, but they do not trust me much yet. They think, they must conceal Swami's visits to them, and so on. I want to take poor Miss Greenstidel into my heart, because Swami loves her so much; but I fancy, my manner repels her. And then, why tell him of the sins of Landsberg and Abhayananda [Swami's two sannyasin disciples in America]?'³³

During their visit Mrs. Funke and Christina must have told the Swami about the things going on in America in his absence, especially concerning the Vedanta movement. Mr. Landsberg (Swami Kripananda) and Abhayananda (Marie Louise) had already become independent, and were preaching Vedanta in America in their own way. The former did not even hesitate to cast aspersions against the Swami and spoil his image in the American minds. These American disciples must have told the Swami

all about it at Wimbledon, whenever they met him.

It must have been during this visit that the Swami thought of taking Christina into his fold completely to help Nivedita in her work for the Indian women. About this Mrs. Funke has written: 'In speaking to me one day regarding those who wished to have a part in his life work, he said, "they must be pure in heart." There was one disciple [surely Christina] of whom he hoped much. He evidently saw in her great possibilities for renunciation and self-sacrifice. He found me alone one day and asked me many questions regarding her life and environment, and after I had answered them all, he looked at me so wistfully and said: "And she is pure, pure in soul, is it not?" I simply answered: "Yes Swami, she is absolutely pure in heart." His face lighted up and his eyes shone with divine fire;—"I knew it, I felt it, I must have her for my work in Calcutta," he said with enthusiasm. He then told me of his plans and hopes for the advancement of the women of India. "Education is what they need," he would say, "We must have a school in Calcutta."³⁴

*Dedication of Christina to the
Divine Mother :*

The Swami must have been very happy to hear about Christina from Mrs. Funke. As a matter of fact, he was already training Christina for his work through his letters, and had dedicated her to the Divine Mother. In his letter of April 11, he had written to her, 'You have scarcely moved out of Detroit these years, I am afraid. Is your household machinery working smoother now that the sisters are helping some?... Well, "Mother knows best". I dedicate you to her for ever. What more can I do? This is the highest, the best,

³³. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

³⁴. Swami Vivekananda, *Inspired Talks*, Recorded by S. E. Waldo, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1921, (hereafter *Inspired Talks*), p. 23.

the loveliest.³⁵ This dedication of Christina to the 'Mother' was not just casual. He *meant* it. He had dedicated Nivedita to Shiva at Amarnath, when they had been there in the August of 1898. About her dedication, Nivedita had written to Mrs. Eric Hammond on August 7, 1898, 'And now I must tell you something that will startle you. I have been away up in the Himalayas for a week, 18,000 feet high. . . . It was a pilgrimage really to the Caves of Amarnath, where he was anxious to dedicate me to Shiva. . . . I am so so glad to have been there with him. That must be a memory for ever, mustn't it?—and he *did* dedicate me to Shiva too—though it is not the Hindu way to let one share in the dedication.'³⁶

About two years later, the Swami reminded Christina twice about her dedication, and gave her courage. He had written to her from the Belur Math, 'I worry about everything except you. I have dedicated you to *Mother*. She is your shield, your guide. No harm can reach you, nothing hold you down a minute. I know it.'³⁷ And on the eve of the passing away of her mother the Swami had written her, 'You are dedicated to the eternal Mother. Well, the mother phenomenal has merged in the Mother absolute, eternal. Thy will be done.'³⁸

Voyage to America :

After a fortnight's stay in England the Swami, his brother-disciple, and the American disciples started for United States. They went to Glasgow by train on August 16, and thence took a steamer the next day for New York. Of these blissful days on board S.S. *Numidian* Mrs. Funke has written : 'There were ten never-to-be-forgotten days spent on the ocean. Reading and exposition of the *Gita* occupied every morning, also reciting

and translating poems and stories from the Sanskrit and chanting old Vedic Hymns. The sea was smooth and at night the moonlight was entrancing. Those were wonderful evenings; the Master paced up and down the deck, a majestic figure in the moonlight, stopping now and then to speak to us of the beauties of Nature. "And if all this *Maya* is so beautiful, think of the wondrous beauty of the Reality behind it!" he would exclaim.

'One especially fine evening, when the moon was at the full and softly mellow and golden, a night of mystery and enchantment, he stood silently for a long time drinking in the beauty of the scene. Suddenly he turned to us and said, "Why recite poetry when there," pointing to sea and sky, "is the very essence of poetry?"'³⁹

In the United States :

The Swami and the party reached New York on Monday, August 28 morning. The ship had arrived that day two or three hours earlier than scheduled. Still some of his American admirers like Miss Maud Stumm, Mrs. Coulston, and Mr. Sydney Clarke had come to receive him at the dock. Miss MacLeod was little late in coming.

Swami Turiyananda's letter of September 24, 1899, throws a flood of light on the details of Swamiji's programme during this period. It reads: 'We were in England for a fortnight only. Because many of Swamiji's friends were out [of London], it was decided that we should go to America. Boarding a steamer at Glasgow, we reached New York in eleven days. Here we went to the house of one of Swamiji's friends named Mr. Leggett. America is a nation known for its freedom, but I did not see it well enough. In the afternoon of the same day [August 28], we went from New York to a hilly country [Ridgely Manor], about 150 [actually 91, according to the latest calculations of Gargi] miles away. The person in whose house we

35. *U.L.*, dt. 11 April 1899.

36. *Nivedita's Letters*, p. 18.

37. *U.L.*, dt. 6 July 1901.

38. *U.L.*, dt. 25 December 1901.

39. *Inspired Talks*, pp. 34-35.

are staying here [at Ridgely Manor] is a thorough gentleman, and his whole family is devoted to Swamiji. ... I have not started any work here. I am always with Swamiji. Though he is better than before, he gets attack of illness from time to time. He is now under the treatment of one world-famous osteopath [Dr. Helmer]. I was very glad to see Swami Abhedananda after a gap of three years. He has now become a Vedanta preacher of a very high grade, and has done many big works here. He is making an effort to start a permanent Vedanta Society in New York this year.'⁴⁰

From this letter we come to know that Swamiji and his brother-disciple went to Ridgely Manor in the afternoon of their day of arrival in New York. What happened to his two American disciples Christina and Mrs. Funke is not known. It can be assumed that they went to Detroit from New York.

In Touch Through Correspondence :

Though Swamiji was to meet Christina again only after about eleven months, he was always in touch with her through correspondence,—sometimes training, sometimes chatting, sometimes planning to meet her, sometimes cheering, sometimes giving her the report of his health, and so on. From Ridgely Manor, Swamiji had sent her two poems on September 13, and September 20, which have been published in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*⁴¹

40. *Udbodhan* (A Bengali Organ of the Ramakrishna Order), Vol. I, pp. 725-26.

41. The dates and the persons to whom these poems were sent were not known so far. Here they have been mentioned for the sake of information. For the published version of the poems *vide*: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, Vol. VIII, p. 170; Vol. IV, pp. 395-96; and Vol. VIII, p. 169, and p. 168 respectively. From the photostat of the poem 'Peace' (*Complete Works*, IV, 395-96), which has been recently sent to us by Swami Chetanananda of Hollywood, it is revealed that Swamiji had sent this poem to 'Mrs. S. Ole Bull'

under the names 'To My Own Soul' and 'Peace'. He had sent her one poem earlier on January 6, 1895, which has been published in the *Complete Works* under the name 'To an Early Violet'; and a poem later on August 14, 1900, published therein under the name 'Thou Blessed Dream'. The poems must have given Christina some inspiration and relaxation too.

In early September the Swami had written to Christina from Ridgely, 'Life is series of fights and disillusionments; is it not? ... The secret of life is not enjoyment, but education through experience. But we are called off, the moment we begin to learn. That seems to many a potent argument for a future existence.'⁴² And in order to give her courage he had written to her later from Los Angeles, 'Cheer up Christina! This world has no time for despondence, none for weakness. One must be strong or pass out. This is the law. Mother will find out a way for you out of drudgery, I am sure. I pray for it always. She listens to my prayers many times. Cheer up Child! The dark night is rolling back. Not a good deed is lost. You have many.'⁴³

From the Swami's letters to Christina written in the November of 1899 from Ridgely and New York, it is known that he had invited Christina to Cambridge, Mass., in order to stay with him at Mrs. Ole Bull's house, where Christina would cook the 'Battle Creek' food for him, and also teach

as well. And from one more photostat of this poem (which differs from those of Mrs. Bull and Christina) published in the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1965, p. 660), it appears that the Swami had written the same poem for Sister Nivedita also. There is very little difference in the versions of the three photostats.

42. *U.L.*, dt. 2 September 1899. (A part of this letter is published in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V, p. 150; but here the version is as in the original.)

43. *U.L.*, dt. 24 January 1900.

the Swami French and German languages. Mrs. Bull had also extended an invitation to Christina to be her guest at Cambridge. But the Swami could not go there as he was called by Miss MacLeod to Los Angeles for his medical treatment, and also for doing some Vedanta work, for which she had made arrangements there at his behest. The Swami went to New York from Ridgely on November 7, 1899, and from there to Los Angeles via Chicago on November 22. And according to Mrs. Bull's invitation, Christina had gone to Cambridge in the December of 1899 for about three weeks.

After her sister's marriage, Nivedita went to United States, reaching Ridgely on September 20, 1899, and stayed with the Swami till November 7, after which she went to Chicago. The Swami had brought her to America to deliver some lectures and gather funds for the education of women in India. She went to Detroit sometime in the second week of January of 1900, about which Christina had written to the Swami. At Detroit, Christina helped Nivedita in collecting funds for her work,⁴⁴ and had become the Secretary of the Detroit Committee of the 'Ramakrishna Guild of Help in America' founded by Mrs. Betty Leggett.⁴⁵

From southern California the Swami went to San Francisco in the northern California, where his friend Mrs. Hansbrough had made arrangements for his Vedanta work. One Mr. Benjamin Fay Mills had also invited the Swami to Oakland to speak before the 'Congress of Religions' on February 25, 1900. After working in northern California for nearly four months the Swami came to New York on June 7, 1900. He had many a time written to Christina from San Francisco that he would go to Detroit on his way, but, for one reason or the other, he could

not go. The Swami stayed in New York for about a month, sometimes at the Vedanta Society's House on the 58th Street, and sometimes at Mr. Leggett's house at 21 West 34th Street. During this period many a time he planned to go to Detroit to see Christina, but it was not till July 4 that he could go there.

Third Visit to Detroit :

On July 3, the Swami left New York with his brother-disciple, Swami Turiyananda, and one Miss Minnie C. Boock, who were bound for Los Angeles in order to start a Vedanta Retreat in northern California. The Swami got down at Detroit, and his co-passengers continued their journey to the other end of the continent. (According to some, Swami Turiyananda and Miss Boock broke their journey at Detroit, but recent findings reveal that the information is not correct.) By this time Christina had changed her house to 528 E. Congress Street,⁴⁶ of Detroit. About this visit Mrs. Funke writes, 'The next time I saw him [Swamiji] was on July 4th, 1900, when he came to Detroit for a short visit among his friends. He had grown so thin, almost ethereal,—not long would that great spirit be imprisoned in clay. Once more we closed our eyes to the sad truth, hoping against hope.'⁴⁷ The Swami stayed in Detroit from July 4 to 9, returning to New York on the 10th. He had written to Swami Turiyananda on July 18, 1900, 'I stayed in Detroit for 5 days only.'⁴⁸

46. In Marie Louise Burke's *Second Visit (Swami Vivekananda: His Second Visit to the West, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama)*, p. 671, the address is given as '418 Alfred Street', but recent researches have revealed that it was '528 E. Congress Street' during this period. The former was her old address.

47. *Inspired Talks*, p. 35.

48. Here the version has been taken from the photostat of the original. The version given in the *Complete Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 527, needs correction. *Vide* the discussion on this subject in Marie Louise Burke's *Second Visit*, p. 673.

44. *Vide Pravrajika Atmaprana, Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda*, Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1967, p. 134.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

From Sister Christina's Memoirs we understand that she went to New York during this period, maybe with the Swami on July 9, or later; and spent some days in his company there. Recalling an incident in New York she writes, 'Walking along Fifth Avenue one day, with two elderly forlorn devoted creatures walking in front, he [the Swami] said, "Don't you see, life has conquered them!" The pity, the compassion for the defeated in his tone! Yes, and something else—for then and there, the one who heard, prayed and vowed that never should life conquer her, not even when age, illness, and poverty should come. And so it has been. His silent blessing was fraught with power.'⁴⁹

The Swami left New York on July 26, 1900, reaching Paris on August 3. There he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Leggett; but he stayed with Mr. Jules Bois and M. Nobel for some period. At Paris, he spoke at the 'Congress of History of Religions' on the morning of September 7, 1900. From here, he had written some letters to Christina, one of which was in French. His letter of August 3, was redirected to Christina from Detroit to Brooklyn c/o Miss S. E. Waldo, which shows that from New

⁴⁹. *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1961, p. 217.

York, she had gone to Brooklyn for a week or so.

After staying in France for about twelve weeks the Swami left Paris on October 24 evening with some of his French and American friends; and visited Turkey, Greece, and Egypt on his way to India. He reached suddenly one night at Belur Math without anyone's knowledge, late in the evening of December 9, 1900. In his last letter of the century to Christina, from the Belur Math, he had written, 'Just a voice across the continents to say how do you do! Are you not surprised? Verily, I am a bird of passage. Gay and busy Paris, grim old Constantinople, sparkling little Athens, and pyramidal Cairo, all left behind, and here I am writing in my room on the Ganges, in the Math, ...'⁵⁰ Really, how fortunate must have been Christina, on whom Swamiji showered so much love and blessings through his letters!

(To be continued)

⁵⁰. *U.L.*, dt. 19 December 1900. We get the same version of the letter in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VI, p. 440; but it has been addressed to Sister Nivedita. To our mind, it is the portion of *U.L.*, dt. 19 December 1900 addressed to Sister Christine, the photostat of which in our archives.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION—V

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

41. Science and Religion versus Magic and Miracles

Some of our people, especially among our educated sections, including our administrative personnel, run after all sorts of magic and miracles, puerile and sterile, in the name of religion and *yoga*. In this age

of the marvels of physical science, *such religious magic and miracles appear infantile*. What magic and miracles, performed in the name of a cheap religion and *yoga*, and held in secret by the performers, can compare with the 'miracles' performed by the physical sciences, *verified and verifiable, open and communicable*, whether in the

field of curing of diseases, and that too, on a mass scale, *increasing of food production*, or putting a man or a vehicle on the Moon or the Mars and bringing both back to earth!

The great Buddha discouraged all miracles and secrecy in religion. What is secret may not be sacred. What is sacred need not be secret. His teachings were profound, but were open, *ehi passa, ehi passa*, 'come and see, come and see', as he picturesquely expressed it. Addressing his disciple Ānanda, he said: The Tathāgata has no secrecy; secrecy belongs to three things, O Ānanda: to priestly knowledge, to false knowledge, and to prostitutes.

It is imperative that our people turn away from the cheap and *secret* miracles of *yoga* and religion, indulgence in which had kept our people weak and superstitious and in political slavery for centuries, and turn to master the marvellous and beneficial and *open* 'miracles' of physical science for our individual and collective welfare.

The only 'miracle' that can match, *and also over-match*, the great miracles of modern physical sciences is the 'miracle' of character produced by pure religion, by the science of spirituality. Purity, love, compassion, work-efficiency, dedication, and service—these are the wonderful fruits which are produced by the science of religion in us. Gandhiji wrought, and taught, the miracles of transmuting hatred into love and violence into non-violence.

Dependence on the cheap miracles of religion and *yoga* weakens the human mind; *they are hypnotic in their effects*. Vedānta and all the great spiritual teachers of the world, therefore, always discouraged them. Vivekananda preached Vedānta to *de-hypnotise* such and other already hypnotised people in the East and the West; 'Strength, strength, is what the Upaniṣads preach to me from every page,' he proclaimed. He preferred people becoming atheistic and

agnostic to becoming superstitious fools; for the atheist and the agnostic, he said, can still attain freedom, but not those who are weakened by superstition. That is why Śrī Kṛṣṇa, preached in the *Gītā*, *buddhi-yoga*, the *yoga* of Reason, as the unfailing guide in life.

Vedānta has provided the science of religion with an intelligible and international framework of terms and concepts, which help the various religions of the world to understand themselves, to understand and welcome each other, and to understand and appreciate the physical sciences. This is precisely the service that modern physical science has rendered to all physical or positivistic knowledge. Both thus become, though developed in different countries and in different periods of history, human contributions to knowledge and life fulfilment. In the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the 'without' of nature as the aspect of *aparā prakṛti*, or ordinary nature, and the 'within' of nature as the aspect of *parā prakṛti*, or higher nature, of the one total divine Nature VII. 5):

*Apareyam itastvanyām
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām;
Jīva-bhūtām mahābāho
yayedam dhāryate jagat—*

'This is (My) ordinary nature; but, other than this, know My higher nature, O mighty-armed (Arjuna), which is of the nature of intelligence and by which this whole universe is sustained.'

Commenting on this statement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in his comment on the next verse, verse 6, Śaṅkarācārya says:

*Prakṛti-dvaya-dvāreṇa ahaṁ
sarvajña īśvaro jagataḥ kāraṇam—*

'Through this twofold Nature, I, who am God the all-knowing (being of the nature of pure Consciousness), am the cause of this universe.'

The combination of these two, namely, religion, or the scientific approach to the 'within' of nature, and modern science, or the scientific approach to the 'without' of nature, constitutes the complete education for fulfilment for all humanity today. Echoing this conviction in the concluding portion of his *Autobiography*, astro-physicist R. A. Millikan says:

'It seems to me that the two great pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest are first, the spirit of religion, and second, the spirit of science—or knowledge. Neither can attain its largest effectiveness without support from the other. To promote the latter we have universities and research institutions. *But the supreme opportunity for everyone with no exception lies in the first.*' (italics not by the author).

42. Rationalism and the March of Reason

I have discussed earlier the limitations of physical science as well as the limitations of dogma-bound religion, and have referred to Swami Vivekananda's strong plea to subject religion to rational scrutiny. In the wake of the materialistic world picture of nineteenth-century science, religion came under the attack of not only physical science, but also of a philosophy and of a movement known as rationalism, which has done good work to encourage clear thinking. But post-war rationalists and rationalism have become somewhat anachronistic by continuing to swear by a physical science which is now no more what it was in the last century. The humility of twentieth-century science is yet to invade the citadel of that rationalism. That wholesome invasion will be accomplished when rationalism recognises the distinction between religion, on the one side, and superstition and obscurantism, on the other. But, today, its fight against all religion, in the absence of this recognition, has itself become an irrational venture. It can overcome this irrationality only when it

grasps the limitations of the reason it handles, *and recognises the truth of the march of reason.* It will then find all the forces of religion also on its side in its fight against all superstition and obscurantism.

What is the meaning of the statement that logical reason, which is the instrument of logic and scientific method, is limited in scope and feels baffled by the mystery of the external universe? Logical reason is inconclusive—*tarka-apratiṣṭhānāt*—is also a famous statement of the *Brahma-sūtrās* of Bādarāyaṇa. Reason is a precious value thrown up by evolution and the source of much human progress in culture and civilisation. The discovery of its inadequacy is itself the fruit of man's insatiable love of truth, and his passion to push forward in its search. *The discovery of the limitations of reason, therefore, is not, and should not be allowed to become, a signal to revert to unreason or less reason.* It has to be further developed into a more adequate instrument for pursuing the quest for truth. This is what Vedānta achieved in its *buddhi*, or philosophical Reason, as I have discussed earlier. This is conveyed in a lucid utterance of Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, eleventh edition, p. 185):

'On reason we must have to lay our foundation; we must follow reason as far as it leads; and when reason fails, reason itself will show us the way to the highest plane.'

Vedānta sees the chief basis of this limitation of scientific reason in its sole dependence on the observed sense data of the external world and neglect of the observer or experiencer of the inner world. Within the field of sense experience, scientific reason is the most versatile instrument of knowledge of truth. Man has, by slow degrees, developed this instrument, along with its most important tool, namely, language, in precision and range, and has successfully dealt with the baffling and confused

mass of data pouring in upon him from his external world. With these great achievements to its credit, how can anyone speak with finality about the limitations of human reason? Have we not seen reason's limitations being overcome by reason itself in the brief course of human history? What a distance has reason travelled, from an uncertain tool in the hands of primitive man to an efficient instrument in the hands of twentieth-century scientist! Can we not expect, therefore, that reason itself will overcome whatever limitations have come into view in its scope and function?

The answer of Vedānta to these doubts and questionings is bold and clear and positive; and behind that answer lies an impressive record of human endeavour, as I have shown earlier, to develop human reason and human language as instruments to secure for man satisfaction in his insatiable hunger for truth, for knowledge for its own sake and, to a lesser extent, in his search for general human happiness and welfare. Vedānta holds that reason is the most precious possession of man and that it should be kept bright and pure, and that nothing should be indulged in which weakens or destroys it.

The truth of the march of reason is revealed in the history of reason's confrontation with experience, with deeper and deeper layers of experience. Reason as experienced in formal logic is under the most rigid framework, and has very little to do with experience. And this fact explains its static and formal nature and its incapacity to give new knowledge. In all formal logical deductions, the conclusion is only the re-statement of the proposition itself. Reason achieves a direct confrontation with experience in the logic of scientific method. It was this discipline of experience that enabled scientific inductive reason, with the help of disciplined deduction, to achieve its great successes, from the seventeenth to the

nineteenth century, in unravelling the mysteries of external nature. But, by the end of the nineteenth century, scientific reason also began to feel even the erstwhile framework of classical physics too rigid for its expansive mood. Says physicist the late Heisenberg (*Physics and Philosophy*, p. 169):

'The nineteenth century developed an extremely rigid frame for natural science, which formed not only science, but also the general outlook of great masses of people. This frame was supported by the fundamental concepts of classical physics, space, time, matter, and causality; the concept of reality applied to the things or events that we could perceive by our senses or that could be observed by means of the refined tools that technical science had provided. Matter was the primary reality. The progress of science was pictured as a crusade of conquest into the material world. Utility was the watchword of the time. . . . This frame was so narrow and rigid that it was difficult to find a place in it for many concepts of our language that had always belonged to its very substance, for instance, the concepts of mind, of the human soul, or of life.'

The breakdown of this rigid framework of classical physics, and of its reason, became inevitable at the end of the nineteenth century with the discovery of a mass of new facts regarding the physical world, more especially of the sub-atomic world. The development of the quantum and relativity theories accelerated this process through the early decades of the present century, until the old framework became utterly untenable. The most revolutionary aspect of this change lay in repudiating the exclusively 'objective' character of the so-called objective world studied by science, and the consequent change in its concept of reality. Pointing out the significance of the quantum theory in this connection, Heisenberg says (*ibid.*, p. 33):

'It is in the quantum theory that the most fundamental changes with respect to the

concept of reality have taken place, and in quantum theory in its final form the new ideas of atomic physics are concentrated and crystallised. . . . *But the change in the concept of reality manifesting itself in quantum theory is not simply a continuation of the past; it seems to be a real break in the structure of modern science.* (italics not by the author).

The history of modern science reveals the distance travelled by reason from the sterility of formal logic, through the fruitful, though rigid, framework of classical physics, to the revolutionary and expansive heights of quantum and relativity physics. *Every advance in the march of reason, every step forward in achieving reason's clarity and effectiveness, has been the product of increase in detachment, in subtlety, and in the range of facts.* The reason of formal logic rose beyond its own limitations by developing into the reason of classical physics with its stress on induction and verification; the reason of classical physics similarly transcended its own limitations by growing into the reason of twentieth-century physics.

In this latest development, reason has achieved an evaluation of experience and a criticism of itself far surpassing anything that was ever achieved in the whole range of Western thought, scientific or philosophical. It is obvious that neither the reason of formal logic nor the reason of classical physics, which is the reason handled by rationalists and their rationalism, can handle the values that lie beyond the sensate level. For, that reason, as shown by modern depth psychology, is a fugitive in the hands of the unconscious and the subconscious. Their limitations proceed from what Sir James Jeans calls their 'purely human angle of vision'. Vedānta expresses the same idea by saying that *their limitations proceed from their confining themselves to the data of the waking, or jāgrat, state only.* In quantum and relativity physics, as also

in other branches of science like twentieth-century biology and Freudian psychology, reason has broken through this rigid framework of the waking state, with its sense data and the ego, its synthetic *a priori* concepts, its limited ideas of subject and object, its notion of substantiality as the criterion of reality, and copy, correspondence, and coherence, etc., as criteria of truth. It has thus released reason from its sensate tether, or to use the Vedāntic language, from its *waking state* tether, and set it on the high road of adventure into the mystery of the unknown in man and nature, through the study, in Vedāntic terminology, of the data of the waking and dream states in correlation.

The reality that confronts reason in twentieth-century physics is not static *objects* in space and time, but dynamic *events* in a space-time continuum, in which all objects and subjects of the waking state become just passing *configurations* of that space-time. It is significant to note that it is this dimension of experience that is revealed in the dream state. If science finds that the subject or observer enters into its knowledge of the objective world, and if the purely objective is nowhere to be found—and this is the situation in nuclear physics—it will be only true to itself if it enters into an inquiry into the unique datum of the subject, or observer, or the self, with a view to investigating the reality underlying all events or phenomena. With this widening of the field of investigation, the development and sharpening of reason has also to keep pace, in order to make it subtler and subtler, clearer and clearer, to cope with the subtler and subtler dimensions of reality. This is achieved through greater and greater intellectual detachment and moral purity, arising from the liberation of reason, according to Vedānta, from thralldom to man's sensate nature.

When this is done, the logic of the con-

conscious and the logic of the unconscious, the logic of the waking state and the logic of the dream state, become fused into the grand logic of all *drśyam*, or the totality of all percepts and concepts. The reason that comprehends this grand sweep of all *drśyam* is the *buddhi* of Vedānta, which alone has the capacity to turn its searchlight to the *drk*, or subject, or seer, or observer, behind all *drśyam*. The answer to the question, what is the 'known'? cannot be found until the answer to the question, who is the 'knower'? is found. Scientific reason has already established the relative character of all objects experienced in the waking state, as also of its ideas of time, space, and causality. As configurations of space-time continuum, these had been interpreted by relativity physics as possessing some reality which, in their separate forms, was denied to them. The study of dream similarly reveals the unreality of the separate dream presentations and the reality of the *citta* or mind-stuff. It is this investigation, and its further pursuit, says Vedānta, that opens the way to developing scientific reason into *buddhi*, or philosophical Reason.

Philosophical Reason not only discovers the relativity, finitude and changeability of all *drśyam*, including the egos of the waking and dream states, but it also asks the fundamental philosophical question whether there is a changeless reality somewhere in the depth of experience, and if there is such a reality, what is its nature and what is its relation to the entire world of the *drśyam*. Knowledge and memory are data which demand the unity and unchangeability of the knowing subject or the self; but the egos of the waking and dream states are changeable and mutually exclusive.

Does experience disclose a changeless subject beyond the egos of the two states? For seeking an answer to this vital question, Vedāntic reason finds it necessary to investigate the philosophical significance of the

third state, or *avasthā*, apart from the two, waking and dream, namely, *susupti*, or dreamless sleep, in which all the subjects and objects of the other two states disappear and merge in the one eternal subject, of the nature of pure Consciousness, the Ātman or Brahman, and of which the whole world of presentations, with their subjects and objects, are but passing configurations. Vedānta insists that this insight into what *susupti* reveals comes to reason only when it becomes pure by shedding its last and persistent attachment, namely, the causal notion of the waking state, a notion, which, even in the waking state, is found to be untenable by quantum physics. The Reality that then shines is described by Vedānta as the *turīyā*, which the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, in its verse 7, describes as :

Adrśyam, avyavahāryam, agrāhyam, alakṣaṇam, acintyam, avyapadeśyam, ekātmapratyaya-sāram, prapañcopasamam, śāntam, śivam, advaitam, caturtham manyante, sa ātmā sa vijñeyah—

'Unseen, not caught in the network of relativity, ungrasped (by speech and all other sense organs), without any indicating marks (which alone makes logical inference possible), ungrasped by thought, without any name (for identification), of the essence of the consciousness of the unity of the Self, the tranquilisation of the ever-changing world phenomena, (all) peace, goodness, and non-duality that is considered as the Fourth—He is the Ātman; He is to be realised.'

The Ātman is thus the unity of all experience : this entire universe is the Ātman, which is 'of the nature of *cit*, or Pure Consciousness. Being the Self of all, Ātman is *cit-svarūpam* and *advitīyam*, of the very nature of pure Consciousness and infinite and non-dual'. Says the nuclear physicist Erwin Schrödinger on the nature of consciousness (*What is Life?* pp. 99, 91) :

‘Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular. ... Consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown; that there is only one thing and that, what seems to be a plurality, is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception (the Indian *Maya*).’

It was this *lokottara*, (i.e., transcendental, beyond cause) Consciousness that the great Buddha realised on that blessed full moon night over 2,500 years ago. Referring to this realisation, he told his disciples later : (*Sutta Pitaka, Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 26 : Ariya-pariyeṣaṇa Sutta*) :

‘I attained the supreme peace of an ego-extinction not affected by decay, ... disease, ... death, ... grief, ... and defilement. And the *jñānam*, or Knowledge, now as a thing seen (*darśanam*), arose in me : My *vimukti*, or liberation, is established ; *jāti*, or subjection to the causal chain, is terminated here (in this birth) ; there is not now *punarbhava*, or re-birth.’

And, again :

‘Hearken, monks, the *amṛtam*, or the Immortal, has been gained by me. I teach, I show, the Truth.’

In the course of another discourse in the Jeta grove of Śrāvastī, Buddha uttered these solemn words clarifying the *nirvāṇa* experience of this *Lokottara*, or *Turiyā*, state (*Udāna*, Woodward’s translation) :

‘There is, brethren, an unborn, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. If there were not, brethren, this that is unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, there could not be made any escape from what is born, become, made, compounded.’

‘But since, brethren, there is this unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded, therefore is there made known an escape from what is born, become, made, compounded.’

In his *Māṇḍūkya’paniṣad Kārikā*, Gauḍapāda refers to Brahman as pure Conscious-

ness and as above causality (III. 33) :

*Akalpakam ajam jñānam
jñeyābhinnam pracakṣate ;
Brahma jñeyam ajam nityam
ajenā-jam vibudhyate—*

‘The *jñānam*, i.e. reason or knowledge, which is beyond causality, and free from all conceptual limitations, is ever inseparable from the knowable (Reality). Brahman is the sole knowable (Reality), eternal and beyond causality. The unborn or the non-causal (Brahman) is realized by the unborn or the non-causal (reason or knowledge).’

And, giving his obeisance to the human guru who has realised the highest truth (of the unity of all experience as the Self), which is beyond all cause and effect relations, Gauḍapāda says (*ibid.*, IV. 1) :

*Jñānenā-kāśa-kalpena
dharmānyo gagano-pamān ;
Jñeyā-bhinnena saṁbuddhaḥ
tam vande dvipadām varam—*

‘I bow down to that best among human beings who, with his *jñāna*, reason or knowledge, which (as pure Consciousness) is (infinite) like the void, has realised the non-separateness of the objects and entities of the universe, which are also (infinite) like the Void, from the Knowable (i.e. Brahman).’

In the words of Sri Ramakrishna :

‘*Śuddha manas*, or pure mind, *śuddha buddhi*, or pure reason, and *śuddha Ātman*, or pure Self, are one and the same Reality.’

The *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* in a majestic passage (II. i. 20) describes the *prāṇas*, or the energies of the world, as *satyam*, or truth, and presents the Ātman as *satyasya satyam*, or the Truth of truth :

*Sa yathorṇanābhīḥ tantunocaret,
yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranti;*

*Evam eva asmāt ātmanah
sarve prāṇāḥ, sarve lokāḥ,
sarve devaḥ, sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti.
Tasyo'paniṣat—satyasya satyamiti;
prāṇā vai satyam, teṣām eṣa satyam—*

'As a spider moves along the thread (of the web produced by it from itself), and as from a (blazing) fire, tiny sparks fly in all directions, so from this Ātman emanate all energies, all worlds, all (luminous) sense organs, and all beings. Its mystical name is—"the Truth of truth". The cosmic energies of the world are truth; and This is the Truth of those (energies).'

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (I. ii. 11) refers to the *tattva-vidāḥ*, i.e. the knowers of Truth, who present the *tattvam*, or Truth, as *advayaṁ jñānam*, non-dual *jñānam*, i.e. pure Knowledge or Reason or Consciousness or Experience-field.

The scientific method which reason pursues to realise this ever-present Unity is described by Vedānta as the *avasthā-traya-prakriyā*—the methodology of the three *avasthās*, or states. This is reason comprehending all reality, external and internal, objective and subjective, the 'without' and the 'within' of all nature. It is because of the very limited nature of the reason of rationalism that it is unable to distinguish between spirituality and superstition and, with a sense of cock-sureness, fights with both; and it is because reason in twentieth-century science has become expansive that it stands in reverence before the great mystery of the unknown and is drawn towards it irresistibly. Reason that sunders reality into scientific, artistic, and religious fields shows only its own limitation, and not of reality; such separation is permissible, as in the case of the different names of the one ocean surrounding the earth, as a provisional approach for purposes of study and analysis; but, if pursued too far, and treated as final, it distorts reality. It is the supreme function of philosophical Reason, says

Vedānta, to synthesise the conclusions of the various branches of human knowledge and experience and achieve a vision of the total and integral reality. Reason in Vedānta achieved this comprehensive vision of reality and discovered, thereby, the ever-present harmony, not only between religion and religion, but also between religion, art, and physical science. The Vedāntic vision of unity became, accordingly, the meeting ground of faith and reason, love and knowledge, poetry and philosophy, art and science. Referring to this sweep of the *buddhi*, or philosophical Reason, of Vedānta, as presented by Swami Vivekananda in the modern age, Sister Nivedita writes (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, eleventh edition, Introduction, pp. xiii-xiv):

'To him, there is no difference between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality. All his words, from one point of view, read as a commentary upon this central conviction: "Art, Science and Religion", he said once, "are but three different ways of expressing a single truth. But in order to understand this, we must have the theory of advaita (non-duality)."'

43. Modern Physics and Philosophical Reason

In countless ways, every department of physical science today is extending the bounds of man's knowledge of fundamental unity behind the manifold diversities of the universe. Physical science started with the exploration of the mysteries of external nature; but at the farthest end of this search, it finds itself face to face with the mystery of man, of his mind and consciousness, the deepest mystery of all. The philosophies of the East, particularly the Vedānta of India, including Buddhist thought, directly faced this mystery of man, more than two thousand years ago, by initiating the exploration of the internal world and

carrying it through to its depths. And today we witness a steady convergence of these two indirect and direct approaches in a common philosophy of the one behind the many.

Physicists of the first quarter of this century, faced with the challenge of the revolutionary discoveries of relativity and quantum physics, turned into bold philosophical thinkers, developing the reason of physics into *buddhi* or philosophical Reason, by transforming it into a critique, not only of the observed sense data of the physical world, but also of man the observer. Starting with Eddington, Jeans, Max Planck, Einstein, Shrödinger, Niels Bohr, Heisenberg, and other great creators of twentieth-century physics, this philosophical trend has grown through the last five decades, culminating, about three years ago, in *The Tao of Physics* of Berkeley University Physics Professor, Dr. Fritjof Capra.

Concluding his *Space, Time, and Gravitation*, Eddington hinted at the emergence of the mystery of man from the study of the mystery of physical nature :

'The theory of relativity has passed in review the whole subject-matter of physics. It has unified the great laws which, by the precision of their formulation and the exactness of their application, have won the proud place in human knowledge which physical science holds today. And yet, in regard to the nature of things, this knowledge is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. *It is knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content.* All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the methods of physics. And, moreover, we have found that, where science has progressed the farthest, *the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature. We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We*

have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At least, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo ! it is our own.' (italics not by the author).

Hints such as these, given by the earlier philosopher-scientists, have developed into positive affirmations in Dr. Capra of this decade. The very title of his book : *The Tao of Physics*, is significant in this connection, apart from the masterly and fascinating exposition he gives, in the course of the book, of his main thesis that :

'the basic elements of the Eastern world view are also those of the world view emerging from modern physics',

and that

'Eastern thought, and more generally, mystical thought, provide a consistent and relevant philosophical background to the theories of contemporary science' (*The Tao of Physics*, p. 25).

Noting that, through the two centuries of association with the philosophy of materialism and mechanism, and the contemporary reactions against the ravages wrought by over-technology, the image of science in the eyes of modern man has suffered much damage, Capra seeks to restore the image of pure science as the discipline in the pursuit of truth and human excellence, not in opposition, but in tune, with the spiritual heritage of man, and more especially, of the spiritual heritage of the East (*ibid.*) :

'This book aims at improving the image of science by showing that there is an essential harmony between the spirit of Eastern wisdom and Western science. *It attempts to suggest that modern physics goes far beyond technology, that the way—or Tao—of physics can be a path with a heart, a way to spiritual knowledge and self-realisation.*'

Echoing the voice of Vedānta and all mystical thought that the fundamental

search for reality takes man beyond the senses and the sensory world of phenomena, Capra says (*ibid.*, p. 51) :

'On this journey to the world of the infinitely small, the most important step, from a philosophical point of view, was the first one : the step into the world of atoms. Probing inside the atom and investigating its structure, science transcended the limits of our sensory imagination. From this point on, it could no longer rely with absolute certainty on logic and commonsense. Atomic physics provided the scientists with the first glimpses of the essential nature of things. Like the mystics, physicists were now dealing with a non-sensory experience of reality and, like the mystics, they had to face the paradoxical aspects of this experience. From then on, therefore, the models and images of modern physics became akin to those of Eastern philosophy.'

Referring to the basic unity of the universe, as upheld in Eastern mysticism and modern physics, Capra says (*ibid.*, pp. 130-31) :

'The most important characteristic of the Eastern world view—one could almost say the essence of it—is the awareness of the unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events. . . . The Eastern traditions constantly refer to this ultimate indivisible reality, which manifests itself in all things, and of which all things are parts. It is called *Brahman* in Hinduism, *Dharmakaya* in Buddhism, *Tao* in Taoism. . . .

'The basic oneness of the universe is not only the central characteristic of the mystical experience, but is also one of the most important revelations of modern physics. It becomes apparent at the atomic level, and manifests itself more and more as one penetrates deeper into matter, down into the realm of sub-atomic particles. *The unity of all things and events will be a recurring theme throughout our comparison of modern physics and Eastern philosophy.*'

Both speak of reality as transcending

space, time, and causality. Referring to this kinship, Dr. Capra says (*ibid.*, pp. 186-87) :

'The space-time of relativistic physics is a similar timeless space of a higher dimension. All events in it are interconnected, but the connections are not causal. Particle interactions can be interpreted in terms of cause and effect only when the space-time diagrams are read in a definite direction, e.g. from the bottom to the top. When they are taken as four dimensional patterns without any definite direction of time attached to them, there is no "before" and no "after", and thus no causation.

'Similarly, the Eastern mystics assert that, in transcending time, they also transcend the world of cause and effect. Like our ordinary notions of space and time, causation is an idea which is limited to a certain experience of the world and has to be abandoned when this experience is extended. In the words of Swami Vivekananda (*Jñāna Yoga*, p. 109) :

'"Time, space, and causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen. . . . In the Absolute there is neither time, space, nor causation."

'The Eastern spiritual traditions show their followers various ways of going beyond the ordinary experience of time and of freeing themselves from the chain of cause and effect—from the bondage of *karma*, as the Hindus and Buddhists say. It has therefore been said that Eastern mysticism is a liberation from time. The same may be said of relativistic physics.'

Again (*ibid.*, p. 211) :

'Subsequent to the emergence of the field concept, physicists have attempted to unify the various fields into a single fundamental field which would incorporate all physical phenomena. Einstein, in particular, spent the last years of his life searching for such a unified field. The *Brahman* of the Hindus, like the *Dharmakāya* of the Buddhists, and the *Tao* of the Taoists, can be seen, perhaps, as the ultimate unified field, *from which spring not only the phenomena studied in*

physics, but all other phenomena as well. 'In the Eastern view, the reality underlying all phenomena is beyond all forms and defies all description and specification. It is, therefore, often said to be formless, empty, or void. But this emptiness is not to be taken for mere nothingness. It is, on the contrary, the essence of all forms and the source of all life. Thus the Upaniṣads say (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, IV. 10. 4) :

“*Brahman is life. Brahman is joy. Brahman is the Void. . . .*

Joy, verily, that is the same as the Void.

The Void, verily, that is the same as joy.””

Atomic physics is confronted with the problem of consciousness through the datum of the 'observer', or, to use the new, and more meaningful, term coined by physicist John Wheeler, 'participator'. Accordingly, Dr. Capra says (*ibid.*, p. 300) :

'In modern physics, the question of consciousness has arisen in connection with the observation of atomic phenomena. Quantum theory has made it clear that these phenomena can only be understood as links in a chain of processes, the end of which lies in the consciousness of the human observer. In the words of Eugene Wigner (*Symmetries and Reflections—Scientific Essays*, p. 172):

“It was not possible to formulate the laws (of quantum theory) in a fully consistent way without reference to consciousness.”

'The pragmatic formulation of quantum theory used by the scientists in their work does not refer to their consciousness explicitly. Wigner and other physicists have argued, however, that the explicit inclusion of human consciousness may be an essential aspect of future theories of matter.

'Such a development would open exciting possibilities for a direct interaction between physics and Eastern mysticism. The understanding of one's consciousness and its relation to the rest of the universe is the starting point of all mys-

tical experience. . . . *If physicists really want to include the nature of human consciousness in their realm of research, a study of Eastern ideas may well provide them with stimulating new viewpoints.*' (italics not by the author).

Confirming Swami Vivekananda's view, quoted in section 22 of this lecture, that the physicist and the mystic reach the truth of unity though following different approaches, Dr. Capra says (*ibid.*, p. 305) :

'In contrast to the mystic, the physicist begins his enquiry into the essential nature of things by studying the material world. Penetrating into ever deeper realms of matter, he has become aware of the essential unity of all things and events. More than that, *he has also learnt that he himself and his consciousness are an integral part of this unity.* Thus the mystic and the physicist arrive at the same conclusion; one starting from the inner realm, the other from the outer world. *The harmony between their views confirms the ancient Indian wisdom that Brahman, the ultimate reality without, is identical to Ātman, the reality within.*' (italics not by the author).

44. Conclusion

Understood in this light, there is no conflict between science and religion, between the physical sciences and the science of spirituality. Both have the identical aim of discovering truth and helping man to grow physically, mentally, and spiritually, and achieve fulfilment. But each by itself is insufficient and helpless. They have been tried separately with unsatisfactory results. The older civilisations took guidance mostly from religion; their achievements were partial and limited. Modern civilisation relies solely on science; its achievements also have turned out to be partial and limited. The combination today of the spiritual energies of these two complementary disciplines in the life of man will produce fully integrated human beings, and

thus help to evolve a complete human civilisation for which the world is ripe and waiting. This is the most outstanding contribution of Swami Vivekananda to human thought today. This synthetic vision of his finds lucid expression in a brief but comprehensive testament of his Vedāntic conviction (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, eleventh edition, p. 124; words in brackets not by Vivekananda):

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal (of life) is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external (through physical sciences, technology, and socio-political processes) and internal (through ethical, aesthetic, and religious processes).

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

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

This science and technique for realising the true glory of man, followed with scientific thoroughness and detachment by the sages of the Upaniṣads, and revalidated by a succession of spiritual experimenters down the ages from Buddha to Ramakrishna, is glowingly revealed in one of the immortal verses of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, which can fittingly conclude this study of science and religion :

*Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ
āye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuh:
Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam
ādityavarṇaṁ tamasah parastāt;
Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti
nānyah panthā vidyate ayanāya.*

The crucial subject of human freedom hangs on the slender thread of the decision between man as nothing more than a texture of cause and effect determinism like all physical nature, and man having a focus of freedom of the spirit within him. Con-

temporary neurological and brain research all over the world is in search of a solution to this problem. India solved this problem in her Upaniṣads, long ago, from the point of view of the science of spirituality. Presenting this solution, in the light of the above verse and in the context of the contemporary discussions on the subject, Swami Vivekananda said, in the course of his historic address at the Chicago World Parliament of Religion in 1893 (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, eleventh edition, p. 11):

'Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect? ... The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of Nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?—was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings: "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion; knowing Him alone, you shall be saved from death over again."

"Children of immortal bliss"—what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss—yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest, and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies. Matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.'

(Concluded)

EARLY DAYS AT SHANTI ASHRAMA—III

GARGI

3

Three days after the party had crossed Mount Hamilton into the valley, Miss Lucy Gow Beckham, a teacher from the Alameda Home of Truth, and a Miss Clark, a member of the San Francisco Vedanta Society, whose first name is nowhere recorded, arrived at the Retreat, bringing the number of students up to twelve. In addition to carrying the two newcomers from the top of Mount Hamilton in his wagon, Mr. Gerber gradually hauled down the tents and other sorely needed supplies, and thus, bit by bit, the Ashrama took livable shape. It was, however, many weeks before each student had his own tent, furnished with a cot, a table, and a little round stove, the last of which was welcome when the nights and early mornings began to turn icy cold. Water was at first carted at the then steep price of seventy-five cents a barrel from a well six miles distant; soon, however, a trickling spring was discovered on the property and enlarged by a helpful neighbour into a deep, self-renewing pool. 'Each morning before breakfast, the members of what we called the bucket brigade walked the narrow half-mile trail to the well,' Miss Ansell wrote in her 'Memories of Swami Turiyananda', 'and returned with a bucket of water in each hand for the day's needs. All laundry operations were performed at the well, the clothes being spread on bushes to dry in the sun. The men went there very early in the morning for their daily bath, but the women bathed in their tents.'

During the first three months the only men students at the Ashrama were George Roorbach and Dr. Logan, the latter of whom returned to San Francisco at the end of August. It was Mr. Roorbach who,

handy with hammer, saw, and shovel, developed the property. He worked hard. From rough boards he built a long refectory table, which was at first set out under the trees and later brought into the 'dining room', an area formed by stretching a canvas awning from the log cabin roof to the kitchen shed. Later, after lumber had been hauled over the mountain in October, he constructed, under Swami Turiyananda's direction, a meditation cabin—a small, square, one-room building with three windows and a door. Inside was a makeshift altar, upon which was placed a photograph of Sri Ramakrishna. At the end of the year, three other cabins were built, and in the spring of 1901 George Roorbach completed the improvement of Shanti Ashrama by digging a cellar under the kitchen shed where supplies could be stored. (Alone of these buildings, the meditation cabin still stands.)

In the meanwhile, Swami Turiyananda devoted his time and energy to establishing the Retreat itself:

Soon after the party got to the Ashrama [Mr. Allan wrote in his brief, unpublished 'Early History of the San Francisco Vedanta Society'] things began to get regulated by the unseen hand of the Swami, and each took up some necessary duty; some gathered the wood required for cooking and the camp-fire, some prepared the meals, some washed the dishes, some cleared up or improved the premises, all were happily busy. The evening camp-fire [which] was inaugurated as soon as Swami got to the Ashrama...was held regularly each evening thereafter, while the class instruction and regular meditation were started during the second week, the routine being as follows: 6 to 7 A.M. meditation; 7 A.M. breakfast; 10 A.M. lesson by the Swami, usually from Raja

Yoga or the Mandukya Upanishad [and later in 1900 from Vivekachudamani]; 1 P.M. light lunch; 6 P.M. dinner; 7-9 P.M. meditation and general conversation around the camp-fire. Swami awakened everyone at the Ashrama by continuously chanting while walking about among the tents and cabins; in fact, Swami chanted from morning till eve and far into the night. He also insisted on helping with all the work, and he did his full share in cutting wood, carrying water, working on the new buildings, etc. etc., all the while keeping in touch with everything and helping everyone. He was very informal; he gave individual lessons as the opportunity presented itself; also, he bestowed Sanskrit names on the different students when the names came to him. . . . He would ask someone to go with him, say, to get water, and on the way he would feed the soul just the food that could be taken at that time; again, he would come into the kitchen while a meal was being prepared, and any small incident would call forth a lesson or story to make clear some question which was in the mind of someone there.

Each day the students had some spare time which gave them an opportunity to do what they, individually, desired to do, or what they felt had of necessity to be done; parties were organized to explore the surrounding country and to note the botanical and zoological specimens which were there; quiet walks and talks interested some; to others it was an occasion to do their required laundry and also their necessary mending; these little duties and pleasures together with a little reading and writing, and also the necessary camp duties, made each day full.

The nearest post-office [a more or less private service, run by an old man named De Forest] was about five miles north, and this was visited twice each week. The sending and arrival of the mail, supplemented by the regular bringer of supplies, an occasional cowboy, miner, prospector or huntsman, kept the camp in touch with the outside world.

The foreboding that seems to have swept over Swami Turiyananda at the top of Mount Hamilton was only momentary. Indeed, the first of his letters from the Ashrama to Mrs. Hansbrough, written eleven days after his arrival, was optimistic. (The Swami's letters as given in this narrative, have not been edited in the slightest, for it has a charm and sweetness about it that conveys what must have been the charm and sweetness of his speech.) The first letter reads:

The Shanti Ashrama
Post Office De Forest
Santa Clara Co.
California
The 14th August 1900

My dear Mrs. Hansborough,

Your very affectionate and instructive letter reached me only yesterday. I thank you heartily for the same. I am exceedingly happy to learn that Mrs Wyckoff is almost herself again. I hope the change of place will restore her to perfect health both of body and mind soon. Does she speak any thing about me? How is Minnie [not Miss Boock] doing? Oh she is excellent. I have come here about two weeks ago, with a few friends to start the Ashrama. This is a nice place in point of health and solitude but there is no water running by. There is water plenty in the mountains around they say. But it must be dug out and if we can do that the place might be turned into great usefulness. Dr Logan is with us now and he seems very hopeful. We are twelve living here in tents, passing most of the time in meditation and so forth, feeling everyone comfortable and happy. There is no population within twelve miles except a very few only. The nearest Ry. Station is more than fifty miles and the Lick Observatory is about fifteen miles from here. I wish you were here to see the place for yourself. I heard from Swamiji the other day. He sent his love and best wishes to you. He is now in Paris. I am glad to know

that you heard from Brahmananda from India. Please give my best regards and love to him when you write him. I am doing well. Hoping this will find you all hale and hearty, With grateful remembrances and love
Yours Sincly
Turiyananda.

Do you know any thing about Swami Abhedananda. He is now in Anderson Indiana. I have received a letter from him. He is very much willing to come to California even for a short visit. Has he written to you anything? I am very sorry I can not do anything for him from here under the present circumstances. I asked the president of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco to communicate with you and with S. Abhedananda when I was in the city and she consented. I do not know how far it is practicable now to do anything for the Swami; for this letter reaches you late and he has very little time at his disposal. But if anything has been done either by you or the president for Swami's arrival I shall feel very much obliged and greatly delighted.

In the interests of history it can be noted here that Mrs. Wilmot, who was then president of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, had brought the matter of Swami Abhedananda's possible visit to California before the Society on the day Swami Turiyananda had left for the Ashrama. Evidently she had failed to inform him of the decision at which the members arrived. The Society's Minutes for August 2 read in part as follows:

The President, Mrs. Wilmot, stated that the class could have the privilege of having the Swami Abhedananda, but that the latter could only stay with us two weeks at longest, and the question was whether the Class could afford to devote its funds toward his coming or to donate it to the 'Shanti Ashrama'. A vote was taken as to whether the money in the treasury should go toward the expense of bringing Swami Abhedananda to the Coast, and it was decided in the negative. Mrs. [Helen] Moore was the only one voting affirmatively. It was therefore

decided to keep the money on hand intact in the Treasury....

Mrs. Hansbrough and the Vedanta Society in southern California had other ideas on this subject. At the next weekly meeting (August 9) of San Francisco Vedanta Society 'the President, Mrs. Wilmot, read a communication received from Mrs. Hansbrough stating that the Los Angeles [Pasadena?] Class had sent the necessary funds to the Swami Abhedananda to Anderson, Nebraska [Indiana, as Swami Turiyananda wrote in the above letter, was correct], for his trip to Los Angeles and that upon his arrival the San Francisco Class would be notified so that it could have the Swami's presence in this city. A Committee was appointed by the President . . . to arrange for the reception of the Swami and attend to all necessary details connected with his sojourn in the City. . . .'

Like many another young religious society, the Vedanta 'Class' found itself with more expenses than funds. There was its need, or at least its desire, which it renounced, for rooms of its own; there were the requirements of Shanti Ashrama: a water pipe and the repair before winter of the leaky log cabin; there was a famine in India, and there was the financial need of the Belur Math; and now there was the necessity to entertain and accommodate in good style Swami Abhedananda, whose 'near arrival' the Minutes for August 30 read, 'would require all the funds now accumulated and those to be received the next two months.' Just at this time, however, Swami Abhedananda changed his plans. This we learn, not from the Minutes, but from Swami Turiyananda's second letter to Mrs. Hansbrough:

The 29th August 1900

My dear Mrs. Hansbrough,

Many thanks for your two very affectionate letters. Very glad to know every thing is going on well with you all. We are getting on pretty well here.

Mother willing it is going to be a success. You will be a great factor here of that I am almost sure. Mother will tell you every thing when she would think right. I am glad to hear about Minnie's well-being. She is excellent! My best wishes and love to her please. I have not heard from Swamiji any more. Abhedananda has gone back towards New York. He is now in Greenacre so I hear. How is Helen doing? I got her letter. I will write to her soon. Give her my greetings and love please. How the children are doing? I was thinking of Ralph [Wyckoff] so much of late. Give him my blessings and love too. He is a nice boy. I like him very much. You hear from Miss Bell and Mrs Aspinall often I believe. They all are doing splendidly well. They all have got new names from Mother. Do you know that?

Hoping this will find you all well and prosperous with best wishes and love

Yours Afftly
Turiyananda

Since Swami Abhedananda was no longer expected, the question came up at the Vedanta Society's weekly meeting of September 6 'as to the advisability of the sending the money in the Treasury to help the Monastery and sufferers from famine in India, or to send it to the Ashrama.' Action was deferred until the next meeting, at which time 'a motion was made and seconded that the money in the Treasury be sent to India for the relief of the poor destitute Hindoos. The motion was carried unanimously and the Secretary and Treasurer [Mr. Albert S. Wollberg] was requested to send the \$ 35 on hand.'

This decision upon the part of the Vedanta Society to send all its accumulated money to India and none to Shanti Ashrama, where funds were so badly needed, reflected a false impression that was growing up among the Vedantins and a certain rigidity of opinion. Taking count of the people at the Retreat and finding that a large percentage of them were members of the Home

of Truth (a religious society of 'New Thought' persuasion, with branches in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Alameda), Mrs. Wilmot and others were not disposed to support the project. 'The place', Mrs. Wilmot is said to have remarked, presumably with some asperity, 'is for the people of the Home of Truth.' To be sure, as Miss Ida Ansell wrote in her 'Memories' (*Vedanta and the West*, November-December 1952: 'Nearly all of the people who accompanied Swami Turiyananda on that first journey to Shanti Ashrama were teachers and healers in the Home of Truth in Alameda.' Further, there were Miss Ansell herself and Mrs. Petersen, both of whom, though associated with the Vedanta Society, were still members of the California Street Home of Truth in San Francisco, where Miss Bell was director. For a period of two or three weeks at the end of August and the beginning of September, six of the seven students then at the Ashrama (five had left on, or before, August 23) were Home of Truth people from either Alameda or San Francisco. About the middle of September two more students arrived, both to stay many months—Margaret McConochie, a member of the Vedanta Society or 'Club' in southern California, and Fannie Melissa Gould, who was living at the Alameda Home of Truth when Swami Vivekananda stayed there. In early November, the arrival of Mr. Aspinall brought the number of the Home of Truth people up to seven (out of ten); but in December Gurudasa, coming from New York, lent considerable weight to the Vedantins.

Actually, the situation was fluid. Several of the Home of Truth members were on their way to becoming unequivocal members of the Vedanta Society, and most of them, whether they became Vedantins in name or not, had sat at the feet of Swami Vivekananda. There were, for instance, Miss Ansell and Mrs. Petersen, both of

whom were soon to be ardent Vedantins. Fannie Gould was also to become a member of the San Francisco Vedanta Society. On the other hand, Miss Bell, Mr. and Mrs. Aspinall, Mr. and Mrs. Roorbach, Mr. William Pingree, and Miss Lucy Beckham, of whom more later, together with some free-lance visitors at the Ashrama, never joined the Vedanta Society. But however that may have been, Shanti Ashrama was without question a Vedanta retreat owned in trust by Swami Vivekananda and conducted by Swami Turiyananda, who, of course, taught nothing but Vedanta. Swamiji, learning of Mrs. Wilmot's discontent, wrote to her to assure her of this fact.

But whether or not the problem was a real one, differences of opinion, perhaps regarding matters of doctrine as well as of finance, seem to have arisen as early as August between the Home of Truth people and the Vedantins. Swami Turiyananda was disturbed enough about these altercations to write to Swamiji, who replied in Bengali from Paris on September 1: 'I learnt everything from your letter. Earlier I had an inkling of some trouble between the full-fledged Vedantists and the Home of Truth—someone wrote that. Such things do occur; wisdom consists in carrying on the work by cleverly keeping all in good humour.'

But Swami Turiyananda was not in close enough touch with the people in San Francisco to keep all of them in good humour. The year began to turn toward winter, and early morning frost often whitened the valley floor; still, no money was forthcoming from the Vedanta Society. Except for the small log cabin, a few tents provided the only shelter, and the camp fire at this time was the only heat. As for the cabin, both roof and walls were full of holes. The morning sun 'shone brightly' Miss Partington had noted, 'through every chink.' Further, as Dr. Logan had pointed out to the Society, 'the laying of a pipe to

bring in water from about three-quarters of a mile away' was a necessity. (The pipe was not laid for over a year, and even then was a poor affair.) A letter written at the end of September to Olea Bull Vaughan, whom Swami Turiyananda had known on the East Coast, reflects his uncertainty in regard to the future:

The 25th September 1900

My dear Mrs. Vaughan,

Your very affectionate letter came duly to hand. Accept my heartfelt thanks for the same. I have been so happy to learn that you are doing well and feeling quite happy with the children. May Mother keep you ever so happy. Our work here is going on pretty well. We are getting better settled every day in every way. Water—we are getting plenty for our use from a newly dug well in the mountains,—so sweet and pure. The weather here is excellent and very healthy and the scenery exceedingly beautiful and grand. The people that are now living in the Ashrama are not at all well to do but they have hearts and are quite sincere and earnest. Most of them were teachers in the Homes of Truth an institution in this part of the country much like the Christian Science in the east. They have given up all connection with healing business and so forth and now taken to Vedanta teaching and practices. They are defraying their own expenses. We have not received any public help yet in any way. The Vedanta Society in San Francisco established by Swamiji, proposed some pecuniary help but hesitating I think under the impression that Home of Truth has some influence here. But this is a place free from all sectarian ideas and principles and started for pure Spiritual culture. We shall try our best to keep that object in our view and I am sure Mother will help us in the undertaking. We are getting along well in our tents but as I am thinking of staying this winter here, I believe we will have need of some better shelter than that and I hope Mother will see to it. I heard

from Saradananda only the other day. He has been suffering from dysentery but I hope he is now doing better. I have conveyed your sympathy and best wishes to him according to your wishes. It gives me immense pleasure to think that you have had a perfect rest and delightful time in prayer and meditation in the new place you have written me from. I have sent your money to Saradananda long ago.

I have not heard from Mrs. Bull for some time and hope to write to her soon. I heard from Swamiji recently and know they are all doing very well. I wish I could come and see you all again soon but

I am afraid it will be some time before I could leave this place. But wherever I might be I am always in good thought with you everywhere. I think of you so often and with such beautiful and nice associations. Please write to me from time to time. I like to know about your well-being so much. I am doing well.

Hoping this will find you hale and hearty, with best wishes and kindest regards.

Yours Affly
Turiyananda.

(To be continued)

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI RAMA

B. K. NANDA

A prince among Vedantins, Swami Rama lived and preached the life-giving truths of Vedanta. According to Vedanta, every soul is potentially divine, and the goal of human life is to manifest the Divine within. That the embodied soul is one with the Absolute is inculcated by the Vedantic dictum: 'Tat Tvam Asi—That thou art.' In the words of Swami Vivekananda, the inspirer of Swami Rama: 'Upon the same tree there are two birds of beautiful plumage, most friendly to each other, one eating the fruits, the other sitting there calm and silent without eating; the one on the lower branch eating sweet and bitter fruits in turn and becoming happy and unhappy, but the other one on the top, calm and majestic; he eats neither sweet nor bitter fruits, cares neither for happiness nor misery, immersed in his own glory. [The bird who tastes the sweet and bitter fruits represents the embodied soul that experiences the joys and sorrows of life. The other bird represents the Supreme Soul that remains immersed in his own glory.] ... If he [the lower bird] be fortunate to

receive hard knocks, then he comes nearer and nearer to his companion, the other bird, his life, his friend; and as he approaches him, he finds that the light from the higher bird is playing round his own plumage; and as he comes nearer and nearer, lo! the transformation is going on. The nearer and nearer he comes, he finds himself melting away, as it were, until he has entirely disappeared. He did not really exist; it was but the reflection of the other bird who was there calm and majestic amidst the moving leaves. It was all his glory, that upper bird's. He then becomes fearless, perfectly satisfied, calmly serene. In this figure, the Upanishads take you from the dualistic to the utmost Advaitic conception.'¹ Emphasizing this Advaitic conception, Swami Rama observes: 'The real man, the true man, is the Divinity, God, nothing else but God.'²

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, III, 1964, pp. 235, 236.

2. *Heart of Rama*, Lucknow: The Rama Tirtha Publication League, 1962, p. 81.

The Real Self of man is designated as Sachchidananda — Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Evolution at the human stage means progressive manifestation of the Divine within until man realizes his infinite nature. Man under the influence of his innate nescience or ignorance seeks the fulfilment of his life in the mundane world. He seeks fulfilment in organic satisfactions, in the pursuit of gold, sex, name, fame, power, and prestige. But perfection or fulfilment is not to be had in the things finite. How can the infinite find full expression in the finite? Real contentment cannot be had unless man realizes his infinite nature. In this connexion, Rama observes: 'Realise the Heaven within you, and all at once, all the desires are fulfilled, all the misery and suffering is put an end to.'³ The surest way to fulfil all your wishes is to realize the Divine within. The Divine within is the sum total, the source of all bliss there is in the world. The bliss of Brahman includes all finite joys. As it is stated in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 'On a particle of this very bliss other beings live.'⁴ To illustrate: if you water the root of a tree, you get flowers and fruit. But if you water the leaves and twigs, you gain nothing. Says the Blessed Lord in the *Gita*: 'All the purpose that small reservoirs serve is served by a vast lake filled with water.'⁵ That is why Swami Rama observes: 'To produce, evoke, or express Rama himself in every man, woman and child, is Rama's mission.'⁶

2

We have seen that to manifest and realize

3. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

4. *The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, trans. Swami Madhavananda, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1965, IV. iii. 32.

5. *Srimad Bhagavad-Gita*, trans. Swami Vireswarananda, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1948, II. 46.

6. *Heart of Rama*, pp. 196-97.

the Divine within is the goal, the ultimate destiny of man. All physical, psychical, moral, social, and spiritual strivings in this universe are nothing but a progressive manifestation of the one Divine urge expressed as man's pilgrimage to perfection.

According to Vedanta, the ultimate Goal is the same, but there may be different approaches to it, to suit different people having different temperaments, aptitudes and environments. In the *Shiva-Mahimna-Stotra* it is said, 'As the different streams having their sources in different places mingle their water in the sea so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'⁷ According to Sri Ramakrishna, the great prophet of religious harmony, 'different religions are but different paths to God-realization.' The Rig Veda declares: 'Truth is one but it is called variously by various sages.' Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi making use of a charming simile conveys the same truth. Says she, 'Take for instance, the different kinds of birds—white, black, red—sitting on the same tree and singing differently. Though the sounds fall on the ear in varying tones, we call them by the common term of chirping; we never say that one of the sounds alone is chirping and the others are not.'⁸

Swami Rama beautifully brings out the harmony in all religions in the following parable: 'Three boys were given a four anna coin by their master to share equally among themselves. They decided to purchase something with the money. One of the boys was an Englishman, one a Hindu and the third a Persian. None of them fully understood the language of the other, so they had some difficulty in deciding what to buy. The

7. *Śiva-mahimnah-stotram*, verse 7.

8. *The Message of Holy Mother*, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1966, p. 6.

English boy insisted on purchasing a water-melon. The Hindu boy said, "No, no, I would like to have a Hindwana." The third boy, the Persian, said, "No, no, we must have a Tarbooz." Thus they could not decide what to buy. Each insisted upon purchasing the thing he preferred, disregarding the inclinations of the other. There was quite a wrangle among them. They were quarrelling and walking through the streets. They happened to meet a man who understood these three languages—English, Hindustani and Persian. That man was amused over their quarrel and said, he could decide the matter for them. All the three referred to him and were willing to abide by this decision. This man took the four annas from them and asked them to wait at the corner. He himself went out to the shop of a fruit seller and purchased one big water-melon. He kept it concealed from them and called them one by one. He asked first the English boy to come, and not allowing him to know what he was doing, he cut the water-melon into three equal slices, took out one part, handed it to the English boy and said, "Is not this what you wanted?" The boy was highly pleased; he accepted it cheerfully, and went away frisking and jumping, saying that, that was what he wanted. Then the gentleman called the Persian boy and handed him the second piece and asked him if that was what he desired. The Persian boy was highly elated and said, "This is my Tarbooz! This is what I wanted." He went away happily. Then the Hindu boy was called, the third piece was handed to him, and he was asked if that was what he had desired. The Hindu boy was satisfied, and said, "This is what I wanted; this is my Hindwana."⁹

As a matter of fact, all religious fights and dissensions in the world arise out of misunderstanding and are as meaningless as the quarrel among the three boys in Rama's parable. In India we have constitutionally adopted secularism as our way of life. But

in our practical day-to-day life, we still practise religious intolerance. The flames of religious bigotry and fanaticism are occasionally fanned by unscrupulous but ambitious elements in the society. Constitutional adoption of secularism and religious intolerance in actual practice go ill together. In order to build up a true secular state we need imbibe the spirit of harmony in all religions as inculcated by Vedanta and Swami Rama.

3

All religions of the world inculcate the spirit of renunciation. In fact, renunciation is the *sine qua non* of all religions. The essence of Vedanta is: Brahman alone is real (i.e. imperishable) and the world is illusory (i.e. perishable). Sri Ramakrishna beautifully sums up the whole of the *Gita* in one word. He said: "The essence of the *Gita* is what you get by repeating the word ten times. The word becomes reversed. It is then "*tagi*", which refers to renunciation. The essence of the *Gita* is: "O man, renounce everything and practise spiritual discipline for the realization of God."¹⁰ Renunciation is essential to cleanse our minds of all impurities. When the mirror of our mind is wiped clean, it clearly reflects the truth of Atman. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God', declares Jesus of Nazareth. Ignorance is nothing but the feeling of 'I and mine' or selfishness. That is why Rama sings:

When shall I be free?

When 'I' shall cease to be.¹¹

'Renunciation', remarks Rama, 'means getting rid of this personal selfish ego, get-

9. P. Brijnath Sharga, *Swami Rama: His Life and Legacy*, Lucknow: The Rama Tirtha Publication League, 1936, pp. 478-79.

10. 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1964, p. 194.

11. *Heart of Rama*, p. 89.

ting rid of this false idea of self.¹² 'Purity of heart', observes Rama, 'means making yourself free of all clingings to objects of the world. Renunciation is nothing short of it.'¹³ 'It is that false ego', affirms Rama, 'which I must give up: this idea that "I am doing this", that "I am the agent", and "I am the enjoyer"; the idea which engenders in you this false personality. These must be done away with, these thoughts: "my wife", "my body", "my mind", "my children"'. Unless these ideas are renounced, realization is not attained. . . . A man of renunciation is one who gets rid of this little appropriating self, this little apparent self.'¹⁴

Today we are endeavouring to establish a socialistic state. According to Swami Rama true spirit of renunciation alone can provide us with the **solid, rocky** base for socialism to build upon. When we come to establishing socialism, we are confronted with the baffling problem of vested interest or selfishness in man. In order to appease their hunger for gold, the selfish people resort to anti-social practices such as hoarding, black-marketing, profiteering and adulteration of food stuffs and medicines. An act of parliament cannot make them unselfish overnight. True spirit of renunciation alone can successfully tackle this problem of vested interest and establish a socialist state on secure foundations.

Not only that, renunciation also confers real enjoyment on man. Says Rama, 'There is no real enjoyment except in renunciation.'¹⁵ Renunciation of the unreal names and forms enables a man to commune with blissful Brahman which is the Self of all. There can be no joy greater than the joy of loving and serving the Jiva as Shiva.

4

The world is a mixture of Self and not-Self, the Reality and the Appearance. What is Real in this world is Brahman that lies as its substratum. So it is not wholly unreal. Says Sri Ramakrishna: 'The Absolute and the Relative are the two aspects of the same Reality.' In other words, God is both transcendent and immanent. There is, therefore, no danger if we live in the world, but worldliness should not be allowed to enter into our minds. As Sri Ramakrishna puts it, 'We may be in Samsara, but Samsara should not be in us. The boat should be in water but water should not be in the boat.'

Swami Rama, himself a dynamic personality, wants us to cultivate Vedantic totality of vision or comprehensive spirituality. We should not only meditate on God in His transcendental aspect but also render worshipful service to man seeking God in His immanent aspect. Observes Swami Vivekananda: 'This is the gist of all worship—to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva.' To look upon the poor, starving Indians as the embodiment of living Narayana, and to do good to them was also Swami Rama's religion. He declares, 'This is my religion; and for an inhabitant of India, this should be the Dharma, Common Path, Practical Vedanta, or Divine Love.' 'Love', observes Rama, 'means practically realizing your oneness and identity with your neighbours, with all those who come in contact with you.'¹⁶ 'Expansion is life; contraction is death.' Says Rama, 'True love, like the sun, expands the self. Attachment like the frost congests and contracts the soul.'¹⁷ According to Swami Rama, nobody can realize God unless

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-43.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

14. *Swami Rama: His Life and Legacy*, p. 511.

15. *Heart of Rama*, p. 149.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

his whole being is metamorphosed into universal Love; unless he looks upon the whole universe as his own self. But before a man attains this state, the unity with the whole nation must throb in every fibre of his frame. Swami Rama lived what he preached. He declares: 'When I walk, I feel it is India walking; when I speak, I feel it is India speaking; when I breathe, I feel it is India breathing. I am India, I am Shankara, I am Shiva.'¹⁸ This realization of oneness with all is the one goal of all religions and is the real basis of all moral ideas in the world.

But before we attain the state of godliness we need cultivate the ideal of manliness. Swami Rama wants us to cultivate virtues like: energy, efficiency, courage, fearlessness, enterprise and self-reliance; because these are the virtues that constitute manhood. Regarding the all-important

18. *Swami Rama: His Life and Legacy*, pp. 622-23.

virtue of Self-Reliance Swami Rama declares: 'If anybody asks me to give my philosophy in one word, I would say "Self-Reliance", the knowledge of Self. Hear, O man! Know thyself. True, literally true it is when you help yourself, God must help you. Heaven is bound to help you. It can be proved, it can be realized that your very Self is God—the Infinite, the Omnipotent. . . . Verily, verily, depend upon yourself and you can achieve anything. Nothing is impossible before you.'¹⁹

Today we are witnessing a crisis of confidence in India. The dark clouds of ignorance, poverty, hunger, disease are hovering over our heads. Enmeshed in the seemingly impenetrable gloom, we are likely to give ourselves up to despair. But if we assert our all-powerful Divine Nature we will emerge out of the prevailing gloom into the sunshine of hope and cheerfulness.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S DISCOVERIES ABOUT INDIA—IX

SWAMI BHAJANANANDA

SWAMIJI'S SIXTH DISCOVERY

We have seen how, in the course of his wanderings, Swami Vivekananda had thought deeply about the problems of India, and how, with his prophetic intuition, he had found out his own solutions to these problems. He might not have worked out all the details we have so far discussed, but it is clear that he had developed all the main ideas before he went to America. This is evident from his early letters to his Madras disciples and also from his addresses at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. In the course of his wanderings he visited in 1892

Prabhas and Dwaraka, both associated with the holy memory of Sri Krishna. But of the ancient grandeur there remained only some of the ruins and the ocean roaring in tumult over the rest. With a heavy heart he repaired to a cell in the Sarada Math belonging to the Shankaracharya of Dwaraka. There, in the silence of his cell in the ruined city of Yadavas, he saw a great light symbolizing the bright future of India. He understood that behind the diversity and degradation of the country there remained the unifying force of Hindu religion and culture, and this was indestructible. It would reassert itself and India

would regain her former glory and grandeur. It was with this vision in his heart that Swamiji journeyed towards southern India.

In the mean time, either at Junagarh or at Porbandar, Swamiji had already heard about the great Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago sometime in the following year. Pandit Shankar Pandurang, the Dewan of Porbandar, had suggested that he should go to the West. Swamiji too had been feeling that India had a cultural message to the West, and he had a vague intuition that it was *his* mission to carry this message across the oceans to land on the other side of the globe. He remembered his Master's words: 'Naren will teach others', and 'My siddhis will manifest through you in time'. He pondered deeply over the significance of Sri Ramakrishna's Avatarhood, which epitomised all the facets of the age-old culture of India. Was it only intended for the spiritual renaissance of India? Could it be that Sri Ramakrishna's life and message were meant for the whole world? It was with these thoughts that Swami Vivekananda arrived at Kanyakumari, the southern most tip of India.

There he swam to a rock in the shark-infested ocean and, sitting on that last bit of Indian ground, he passed into a deep meditation. It was in the course of that contemplation that all the ideas about the cause of India's fall and its remedy became crystal clear to him. Again, it was during that profound silence that his sixth and the last discovery about India took the form of a decision. What was this last discovery? It was that India had a definite cultural contribution to make to the Western world; that he had been divinely chosen to become the messenger of her age-long spiritual wisdom, vindicated and reinterpreted in the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna; and that with the wealth and

technical assistance of the West he could inaugurate a powerful movement for the regeneration of India. The Maharaja of Mysore and Raja of Ramnad had earlier promised to help him financially in going to the West, but he had declined it as he had not yet been sure of his mission. Now at Kanyakumari, everything became clear to him: the rejuvenation of India and her cultural contribution to the West. As he said later on:

Each race...has a peculiar bent, each race has a peculiar *raison d'être*, each race has a peculiar mission to fulfil in the life of the world. Each race has to make its own result, to fulfil its own mission. Political greatness or military power is never the mission of our race; it never was, and, mark my words, it never will be. But there has been the other mission given to us, which is to conserve, to preserve, to accumulate, as it were, into a dynamo, all the spiritual energy of the race, and that concentrated energy is to pour forth in a deluge on the world, whenever circumstances are propitious.¹⁰⁹

For a complete civilization the world is waiting, waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race, which through decades of degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast. The world is waiting for that treasure; little do you know how much of hunger and thirst there is outside of India for these wonderful treasures of our forefathers.¹¹⁰

Therefore we must go out, exchange our spirituality for anything they have to give us; for the marvels of the region of spirit we will exchange the marvels of the region of matter.¹¹¹

This was Swami Vivekananda's final dis-

109. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama (hereafter *Com. Works*), III, 1960, pp. 108-09.

110. *Com. Works*, III, p. 317.

111. *Com. Works*, III, pp. 317-18.

covery about India. When this vision dawned on him he understood that his long search for his own life's mission was at an end. There was no more uncertainty, no more conflict between the desire to remain absorbed in the bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi and the desire to serve the sunken millions of India. Like Buddha, he decided to give up once for all the desire to enjoy the bliss of Samadhi and dedicate his whole life and soul for the welfare of India and the world.

On the last bit of Indian rock, he made the firm resolve to sacrifice himself for the Virat Purusha and this great prayer must have even then welled up in him:

...may I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls—and, above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.¹¹²

Thus it was at Kanyakumari that Swami Vivekananda the unknown monk had been transformed into a great nation builder, awakener of souls, and God's messenger for the whole world. He rose from his meditation, swam back to the mainland and walked away with the light of a new wisdom and courage in his eyes.

CONCLUSION

The last nine years of his life have become a part of history. That history is too recent to allow a proper evaluation of the significance of Swamiji's discoveries and the effects of his great work and sacrifice on the progress of humanity. Swamiji once spoke about the way India influences the world as follows:

Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the

world. Silent, unperceived, yet omnipotent in its effect, it has revolutionized the thought of the world, yet nobody knows when it did so.¹¹³

This may equally be said of Swamiji's influence on world thought. It is so subtle and pervasive that one cannot say with precision how and how much it has affected the ideas of Western thinkers. Only a few great men like Romain Rolland, Arnold Toynbee, and Pitrim Sorokin have openly acknowledged their indebtedness to Swamiji. Fifty years after Swamiji's death, Arnold Toynbee spoke out:

At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is an Indian way. The Emperor Ashoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions: here we have the attitude and the spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow into a single family. ...the whole human race has a utilitarian motive for following this Indian way. ...The survival of the human race is at stake. ...The primary reason is that this teaching is right—and is right because it flows from a true vision of spiritual reality.¹¹⁴

This statement shows that Swamiji's great work and sacrifice have not been in vain, for they were aimed at precisely this kind of vindication of truth. Because he had lived for truth, had given up everything for truth, and had for its sake fearlessly challenged everything including the authority of his own Guru's teaching, and had at last scaled the pinnacles of eternal Truth, the message of Swami Vivekananda, issuing from him like his own precious life-blood, is eternally true. Only its profundity baffles categorization, and as Sister Nivedita wrote:

113. *Com. Works*, III, p. 274.

114. Arnold Toynbee, Introduction to *Sri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message*, by Swami Ghanananda, London: Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 1970, pp. viii-ix.

112. *Com. Works*, V, 1959, p. 136.

...not even yet has it been given to us to understand the vastness and significance of the message that he spoke.¹¹⁵

For the Indian nation, the life and message of Swami Vivekananda have become a precious part of her cultural heritage. Though Indians by nature are not given to much self-expression, some of the eminent men of Indian Renaissance like Sri Aurobindo, Swami Ramatirtha, Bepin Chandra Pal, Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Dr. Radhakrishnan and others have drawn their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda's works and have openly acknowledged it.

Swamiji was the first Indian to beard the Western lion in its own den. By preaching boldly to the intellectual and sophisticated men and women of the West, who were so proud of their newly acquired materialistic culture and affluence, the timeless message of ancient India, Swamiji raised the prestige of his country in their eyes. This greatly increased the national self-confidence of India. As in the case of the individual, so also in the case of the nation, a sense of futility and inferiority comes when it thinks that it has nothing to give to others and has only to receive everything from others. Swamiji was the first Indian to prove to his people that India has a great contribution to make to the world. With that, he made India a nation with a destiny. The distinctive feature of people belonging to the great reform-religions of the world like Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, is that they feel that they have something to give to the peoples of the world, that it is their duty to take the message of their founder-prophets to every corner of the globe. For long Hindus had never had such a global outlook. They had been living for centuries like Kupaman-dukas (frogs in the well) as Swamiji put it. Swami Vivekananda gave his countrymen a

sense of mission, thereby infusing into them a new dignity and strength.

Modern India is definitely marching along the lines that Swami Vivekananda envisaged. Economic competition has forced her to take a plunge among the machines. Desire for knowledge and prosperity are forcing hundreds of men and women to travel to foreign countries. A great deal has been done to rectify social evils and inequalities, and there is greater awareness about the need for social change. There is now greater understanding about India's ancient spiritual heritage. Changing international situations have taught the nation the need for greater self-reliance, unity, and strength to defend her culture. There is a greater understanding about and demand for the spiritual culture of India in the West. A number of Indians, including some of dubious authenticity, are acting as India's cultural ambassadors in foreign lands. Thousands of foreigners are streaming to India to study Hindu spirituality at its source and imbibe its spirit. All this is no doubt true.

But it is also true that a great deal is yet to be done by way of fulfilling Swamiji's vision of a rejuvenated India. There are two main lacunae in the path of this fulfilment :

The *first gap* is the absence of an integrated socio-politico-economic philosophy for the nation. There is at present a philosophical vacuum in the country and this is preventing the nation from determining its own goal. There is at present bewilderment about the future. The nation as a whole lacks self-direction. This had led to the rise of fissiparous forces in social life, politics, education, industry. What India needs now is a new *Weltanschauung*, a new ethos for her people, a new Smriti. One of the main purposes of Swamiji's life was to provide this basic code of life for modern India. But he did not live long enough to weave all his ideas into a well-

115. Sister Nivedita, Introduction to *Com. Works*, I, 1970, p. xvii.

knit, ready-made philosophy of life, a philosophy of work. His ideas lie scattered like nuggets of gold in his vast and varied *Complete Works*. A lot of intense research and experiment is needed in order to convert these ideas into a powerful philosophy for socio-economic change. India must attain all-round prosperity by drawing sustenance from her ancient culture, by applying the life-giving, eternal principles of Vedanta to solve her individual and collective problems. This was what Swamiji wanted. But this has not yet been fulfilled.

The *second gap* in implementing Swamiji's ideas on a national scale is the neglect of the education of children. Swamiji's plan of spreading religious education has not yet been carried out even though the entire education has come into the hands of Indians. What are the reasons for this? In the first place, politics has been the overriding concern of the people who govern the country. The value of education in democracy has not been fully understood. Secondly, people who are responsible for the education of children are themselves either ignorant of or are indifferent to the spiritual heritage of India. But the third and most important cause is the ignorance of the people themselves of the power of ideas. We in India have not yet developed the capacity to convert ideas into power. We are always expecting some miracle to happen by which our country will suddenly become prosperous and great. There are no short cuts to greatness either for the individual or for the nation. Change and progress have to be achieved through hard, and co-operative endeavour.

The hope of spreading religious education in India lies with private organizations. Schools and hostels being mostly under government control, very little can be done through these. What we need more and more are extra-academic cultural centres (like the Vivekananda Balaka Sangha, Sri

Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore)¹¹⁶ already working under the guidance of various religious bodies. For this we have to strengthen the Ramakrishna Mission. Not only that, more and more non-monastic Hindu organizations, without political affiliations, should come forward to take up the burden of spreading religious education among the masses. Already some have come up. But we need more. Above all, we need closer co-operation and understanding among all these organizations and workers. As Swamiji said, we need three things for success: 1) faith in the power of good, 2) absence of jealousy and suspicion; and 3) helping all who are doing good work.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that society has not yet reached such a high level of development and integration so as to make all the ideas of Swami Vivekananda practical for all its members. This however does not mean these ideals are impractical. They are based on his prophetic intuition and are of eternal value. Swamiji did not want to sacrifice high ideals for the sake of social or national interests. He emphatically said: 'Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die.'

The mission of Swamiji's life was to prevent human societies from such a possible death. Such a dismal eventuality had befallen several cultures in the past—Egyptian, Sumerian, Assyrian, Greek, Roman etc. According to Herbert Spencer, every society after a certain period of prosperity disintegrates. And according to Oswald Spengler decline has already set in the West. The search for meaning and the growing interest in Indian yoga that we find in the West in recent years may be an auto-corrective trend. Time alone can show if and how long Western culture will endure. But as far

116. For an account of the activities of this Institution, *vide Prabuddha Bharata*, March 1972, pp. 127-141.

as India is concerned, her future is clear—unless and until the masses are raised to high level of material and spiritual well-being she cannot survive. Free India is all set to face this challenge of history and achieve the status of a Satya-yuga—an Age of Truth. According to Swamiji the birth of Sri Ramakrishna marked the beginning of such a new Age. Whatever may be the deeper meaning of this statement, people emancipated from age-old tyrannies are already turning to the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and are bound to do so more and more when they realize that herein lies the promise and vindication of their noblest aspirations. As long as he lived Swamiji strove his utmost for the fulfilment of these silent aspirations of the millions. And he once said that even after his death he would continue to inspire people everywhere until the whole world realized its oneness with God. His spirit is still throbbing in the body politic of India and his power is flowing in the great cultural arteries of the

nation. People with deeper insight cannot fail to notice this. No less a person than Sri Aurobindo has borne testimony to this fact:

Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, 'Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children.' So it is with all. Not only are the men greater than their definite works, but their influence is so wide and formless that it has little relation to any formal work that they have left behind them.¹¹⁷

(Concluded)

117. *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, vol. 17 : *The Hour of God*, Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, 1972, Ch. IX, p. 332.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA* —III

To Sister Christine

10¹

The Math, Beloor, Howrah Dist.,
Bengal,
15th December 1898.

My dear Christina,

There must have been a terrible misunderstanding on your part of my letter from Kashmir.

Again, since this liver trouble, I get the blues now and then ; and who else to understand and excuse, if not you? Sometimes one is afraid of what one likes most, but that fear is intense enjoyment.

*© The President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math.

¹. A line from this letter has been published in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, VI, p. 417 ; and the letter has not been addressed to anybody. Here the letter is being printed in full.

How are you? Why do you work yourself to exhaustion every now and then? What about Baby?

I am sure to see you this summer, if I live through. Never was a man more bound by Karma on all sides as I am, and never one tried more to be free. What guided me most, do you think : the head or the heart? The 'Mother' is our guide. Whatever happens or will happen will be under Her ordination. Goodbye for the present, and do not worry yourself the least about the three mysterious years. They will all unravel their mysteries, and will be laid to your account and benefit. No good thought is ever lost, and, I am sure, your thoughts have been always very good.

May 'the Mother' always protect you and keep you good and pure and healthy ; and may She fulfil your wishes always, is the constant prayer of

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

PS--Before your reply to this comes, it is most probable, I start for Europe. If the address on the envelope is not correct, excuse. I have lost my new book, I got it from the old.

V.

11

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,
26th January 1899.

My dear Christina,

Excuse my long delay in replying to your very beautiful note. The fact is, I was once more in the vale of death. The old diabetes has now disappeared. In its place has come, what some doctors call asthma, others dyspepsia owing to nervous prostration. However, it is a most worrying disease, giving one the sensation of suffocation sometimes for days. I am best only in Calcutta ; so I am here for rest and quiet and low diet. If I get well by March I am going to start for Europe. Mrs. Bull and others are gone ; sorry, I could not accompany them owing to this disease.

I have carefully weighed your plans for coming over. I will be ever so glad to see you, you know it well ; but my dear, the Indian summer will not suit you, and if you start now it will be midsummer when you reach India. Then, you must not hope of making any living here. It is impossible for me to make a living most times in my own country. Then all the surroundings are so so wretched and different from what you see around you, e.g. you will find me going about in loin-cloth—will that shock you? Three-fourths of the population only wearing a strip of white cloth about their loins—can you bear that?

I must stop here ; I am so weak. If I do not get well by March, I will write you to come, for I wish it ever so much to see you once before I pass away.

Do not be the least anxious, dear. Things must be as 'Mother' wishes. Ours is only to obey and work.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

PS.—Mrs. Bull will reach Cambridge, Mass., soon. You may write to her there on the particulars.

Yours
V.

PS.—I have again lost your address. Please give the correct one in your next.
V.

12²

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah,
11th April 1899.

My dear Christina,

Yours of the 7th March just to hand. My complaint, I do not know what—some say it is asthma, others nervous weakness of the heart—brought on by overstrain. Anyhow last two months the terrible fits of suffocation, which used to remain for days, have not come. Yet unlike other asthmatic people I feel a little weakness in the heart always. Whatever it be, dyspepsia certainly has a great deal to do with it, I am sure. It all depends upon the state of my stomach. The summer this year, strange to say, is bringing me round gradually; and I feel capable of absorbing more heat than ever.

I would have started for England ere long, but this change for the better is tempting me to remain a few weeks more. A sea voyage will be very good indeed, and also just now my conscience is free, having started some work for the plague in Calcutta. Saradananda (who has been to U.S.) is in western India. I have written to him to start for Calcutta as soon as possible. On his arrival I make over to him the Math, and start for England. I have been getting your letters every now and then, but did not look over the cover carefully to ascertain whether it was directed through Mr. Sturdy or not. He too is not in very good health, I learn. Anyhow, this summer I am sure to be in England, unless something very unforeseen happens to retard it. Are you coming to England this summer? Can you, for a trip? It will be such a pleasure to see you (fill up all the interjections). Can you get leave from your work, say, a month or two? England is much cooler than the U.S. in summer. You can induce Mrs. Funke to take the trip also. The crossing costs £ 15, everything included. Two months board and lodging in England, say a pound a week, £ 8. The railway fare from Detroit to N.Y., say £ 4. Contingent expenses, £ 10 in England (sightseeing etc.). Going back, £ 20 = \$ 285. Say \$ 300. First-rate trip for two months. There you will see old England and I the best thing on Earth.

You need not be despondent on my account. I was born with abundance of vitality; but I must confess I have been drawing too much upon it all my

2. A very little part of this letter has been published in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, hereafter *Complete Works*), VI, 1972, p. 418; but it is not addressed to anybody. It seems, Sister Christine did not want her name to be published.

life. Now I am going to be careful—hereafter and ever. Since all the organs are untouched and sound, there is every chance of my pulling up with proper food and rest. What else shall I write you? Chat! There must have been very little change about your person in these three years, but you will scarcely recognize me, when you see me again. I have grown so old, so grey and decrepit. Two years of suffering has taken away twenty years of my age. Well, but the soul changeth not; does it? It is there, the same madcap Atman. Mad upon one idea, intent and intense. Possibly a good bit of this heart business has been brought about by that intense thought wafted across oceans. Nay, I am sure. I am so intense. Can't help it. But strange, I am as intensive and [as?] extensive. My thoughts are as persistent as they are intense.

What about Mrs. Funke? Do you see anything of Baby? Where is she? What is she doing, etc. etc.? Do you correspond with Miss Waldo? You have scarcely moved out of Detroit these years, I am afraid. Is your household machinery working smoother, now that the sisters are helping some? I will write you another letter before I start. Most probably there will be no time for me to get a reply to this letter in India. I will have started before that. Well, 'Mother knows best'. I dedicate you to her for ever. What more can I do? This is the highest, the best, the loveliest.

Ever yours in the Mother,
VIVEKANANDA.

13

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,
10th May 1899.

My dear Christina,

I am getting better again. In my mind the whole of my complaint is bad assimilation of food and nervous exhaustion. The first, I am taking care of; the second will completely pass off when I meet you again. The great joy of meeting old old friends, you know! Cheer up! There is no cause for anxiety. Do not believe a single desponding line I write now, because I am at times not myself. I get so nervous.

I start this summer for Europe anyway, as you say in America. With all love and blessings,

Yours ever in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Sister Christine: The Dedicated—II (The Editorial): In the last part of the Editorial we have covered the story of Sister Christine's life up to the end of 1898. In this part will be narrated some major incidents of her life till the end of the nineteenth century; for instance, Swamiji's invitation to her to meet him in England, her trip to England with Mrs. Funke, her dedication to the Divine Mother, and so on. In addition, some spiritual teachings given by Swami Vivekananda to her through his letters have also been mentioned. For further details the readers are requested to read Swamiji's letters to Christina, which are being published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* since last month.

Science and Religion—V: In this last instalment of the series Swami Ranganathananda discusses many related topics on this subject. He rightly points out that 'some of our people, especially among our educated sections, including our administrative personnel, run after all sorts of magic and miracles, puerile and sterile in the name of religion and yoga.' This is really derogatory for one, who calls himself educated and cultured. The Swami has also deliberated at length on 'Modern Physics and Philosophical Reason' and especially brought to our notice the revolutionary changes taking place in the theories of modern physics. He has drawn at length from Dr. Fritjof Capra's *Tao of Physics* and shown how modern physics is gradually leaning towards Eastern mysticism. Hope our readers have found this series interesting. We are soon publishing this series in a book form.

Early Days at the Shanti Ashrama—III: In this part of her article the author has lucidly narrated how the Ashrama took shape gradually after the party accompanied by Swami Turiyananda reached the place

of the Retreat. Soon after, their daily routine started under the able spiritual guidance of the Swami, beginning with meditation in the early morning and ending at night with meditation and spiritual talks. Thus 'the ground' as well as the lives of the students present, were being made holy day by day in the blessed company of the spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna. Really it must have been a very unique and elevating experience for these students.

We are thankful to the author for bearing the cost of the illustrations of the Shanti Ashrama, published along with her article in the last issue.

The Message of Swami Rama: Swami Rama Tirtha was a well-known preacher of Vedanta, who preached in India as well as in America. When he first met Swami Vivekananda at Lahore in the November of 1897, he was a professor of mathematics in a College at Lahore; and he had made arrangements for Swamiji's Public meetings there, with the help of his students. He was influenced by the personality of Swamiji, and afterwards renounced the world. Sri B. K. Nanda, a Lecturer in the D. A. V. College, Amritsar, has very lucidly told about the 'Message of Swami Rama' in his learned article

Swami Vivekananda's Discoveries about India—IX: In this last instalment of the series, Swami Bhajanananda tells us about the 'Sixth Discovery' of Swamiji about India, which according to the author was that, 'India had a definite cultural contribution to make to the Western world; that he had been divinely chosen to become the messenger of her age-long spiritual wisdom, vindicated and reinterpreted in the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna; and that with the wealth and technical assistance of the West he could inaugurate a powerful movement for the regeneration of India.' Hope

our readers have found this series illuminating and interesting.

Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda—III: In this issue Swamiji's letters written to Sister Christine from December 1898 to May 1899 have been published. It may be said here that some of Swamiji's letters to Christina have been partly published in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama) either in the name of Sister Nivedita (Margot, Margaret, or Miss Noble), or in nobody's name. The mistake has occurred, we believe, because the original letters had not become available to us until recently, and those who had sent the copies—either handwritten or typed—must have mixed them with Swamiji's letters to Sister Nivedita, without making any distinction whatsoever. Or perhaps Sister Christine was shy of publicity and did not mention her

name on the copies of her letters. Even though some are of the opinion that Swamiji must have written the same matter verbatim both to Christine and Nivedita, on studying this problem closely, we have come to the conclusion that it cannot be so; because Nivedita was Nivedita and Christine was Christine. Moreover, amongst the numerous photostats of Swamiji's original letters to Sister Nivedita and Christine, we have not come across a single instance, where Swamiji has written the same matter verbatim to both of them. As to the deviations in the printed versions it may be said that they may have been due to the difficulty in deciphering the handwriting of Swamiji, or that of the one who sent the copies for publication. Now the photostats of the original letters have been carefully deciphered and studied, and a correct version has been placed before the readers as far as possible.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PRACTICE AND THEORY OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM: BY GESHE LHUNDUP SOPA AND JEFFERY HOPKINS, Rider and Co., London, pp. xxviii+164, Price: £ 2.95.

'The mind does not of its own course, unless it is trained, abide in the right path due to beginningless conditioning to the three poisons of desire, hatred, and ignorance. Therefore, practice is necessary. In the beginning, practice is always artificial unless, through training in a previous lifetime, one's predispositions are awakened upon contacting the material again and attitudes sought arise of their own force.'

The present translation of two Tibetan texts along with commentaries provides detailed instructions for meditation on the leaving of cyclic

existence, the aspiration to enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings and the correct view of Emptiness. The second part of the book gives the theory which is to be internalised 'to the point where it becomes spontaneous'.

The instructions are practical. In an interesting passage dealing with the positioning of the body, it is stated: 'If one leans forward, ignorance is increased; if to the right, jealousy; if to the left, desire; if to the back, pride.'

A balanced combination of theory and practice.

M. P. PANDIT
Sri Aurobindo Ashrama,
Pondicherry.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, KISHANPUR

REPORT: 1916—APRIL 1977

The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Kishanpur, has just completed sixty years of its service. It is situated on Rajpur Road at a distance of about six kilometres from Dehra Dun, in Uttar Pradesh.

History in Brief: Sometime in 1915, Swami Karunananda of the Ramakrishna Order, then a young sannyasi, came to Kishanpur after serving for about ten years at the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Varanasi. He was naturally impressed by the serene and beautiful surroundings of the place, overlooking the Himalayas. He settled down there with a view to start an Ashrama, and in 1916 procured a plot of land for this purpose. The Ashrama became affiliated to the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, in the year 1919.

In 1925, another plot of land with two cottages was purchased by the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Varanasi, for aging monks as a retreat. Later, Swami Turiyananda named this new retreat as 'Ramakrishna Sadhan Kutir'. The previous Ashrama thereafter became a part of the Sadhan Kutir, and bore the common name 'Ramakrishna Sadhan Kutir'. For some years, the Ashrama served as a sub-centre of the Home of Service, Varanasi; but in the January of 1934, it came under the direct supervision of the Belur Math, as an independent centre under the Presidentship of Swami Baladevananda. The Swami developed the Centre gradually during his regime of about thirty-three years, till he passed away in the year 1967. After his demise, he was succeeded by Swamis Suddhabodhananda (1967-68), Uttamananda (1968-69), Prajnananda (1969-73), Krishnatmananda (1973-75), and Kshamananda (1975 up to date).

The Ashrama observes, in addition to daily worship, the birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and other religious celebrities. It conducts a Library containing 2,072 books and 11 Journals; and a Charitable Dispensary which was started in 1974. It treated 5,067 cases during 1975-76.

Diamond Jubilee Celebration: To commemorate the completion of sixty years of dedicated service, the Ashrama celebrated the 'Diamond Jubilee' in its humble way on April 3 and 4, 1977. On this occasion, His Holiness Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, and Revered Swami Gambhiranandaji Maharaj, respectively, the President and the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, sent

their blessings and inspiring messages. The former Prime Minister, who had spent a few days at this Ashrama previously, also sent her good wishes befitting the occasion.

The Jubilee Celebrations began with Mangalarati and Bhajans in the early morning of April 3. At 4.30 in the afternoon, Swami Sastrananda gave a discourse on 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'; and at 5.30 p.m. a 'Diamond Jubilee Souvenir' was released by Revered President Maharaj, followed by his benediction. The programme of the day ended with Arati and Bhajans, which started at 6.30 p.m.

On the next day, the programme started again with Mangalarati in the morning at 6.00, followed by Vedic Chanting and Bhajans. At 8.30 a.m. Revered President Maharaj installed new portraits of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda; and this was immediately followed by special Puja, Reading from the scriptures, Havan, and distribution of Prasad. At 6.45 in the evening there was Arati and Bhajans, and the programme ended with Kali Puja, which started at 9 p.m. Including Revered President Maharaj, many monks of the Ramakrishna Order, and lay devotees participated in the function.

The Souvenir: The *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir* published on this occasion, has been very nicely printed on good paper, with a beautiful cover design. Besides advertisements, which formed the golden pillar of the function, the Souvenir contains nice pictures printed on art paper. In addition to a brief history of the Ashrama, it contains articles by learned scholars including the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order, in English, Hindi and Sanskrit languages. It also includes the messages from Revered President Maharaj, the General Secretary, and the ex-Prime Minister; and some letters of Swami Vivekananda written from Dehra Dun, during his stay there in the November of 1897. Amongst other interesting and illuminating articles, 'Swami Vivekananda's Visit to Dehra Dun' written by Swami Kshamanandaji after a lot of research work, is specially significant as it throws light on many hitherto unknown facts about Swamiji's visit to Dehra Dun. On the whole, the editors have done a praiseworthy job to make the *Souvenir* a success.

For further development of the Ashrama, benevolent donors may send their contributions to: The President, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Kishanpur, P.O. Rajpur, Dt. Dehra Dun, U.P., India. All such donations are exempted from Income Tax.