



VOL. LXXXII

MAY 1977

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI
HIMALAYAS



Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

Editorial Office

P.O. Mayavati, Via Lohaghat
Dt Pithoragarh 262 524, U.P.

Publication Office

5 Dehi Entally Road
Calcutta 700014
Phone : 44-2898



[Rates inclusive of postage]

Annual Subscription

India, Nepal & Bangladesh	Rs. 10.00
Sri Lanka	Rs. 12.00
U.S.A. & Canada	\$ 6.00
Other Countries	£ 2.00

Life Subscription

Rs. 180 \$ 140 £ 40

Single Copy

Re. 1/- 60 cents 25 P.

Information for contributors,
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VOL. LXXXII

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No. 5

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

'At Kamarpukur I have seen the mongoose living in its hole up in the wall. It feels snug there. Sometimes people tie a brick to its tail; then the pull of the brick makes it come out of its hole. Every time the mongoose tries to be comfortable inside the hole, it has to come out because of the pull of the brick. Such is the effect of brooding on worldly objects that it makes the yogi stray from the path of yoga.'¹

* * *

'At Kamarpukur I have seen the women of the carpenter families selling flattened rice. Let me tell you how alert they are while doing their business. The pestle of the husking-machine that flattens the paddy constantly falls into the hole of the mortar. The woman turns the paddy in the hole with one hand and with the other holds her baby on her lap as she nurses it. In the meantime customers arrive. The machine goes on pounding the paddy, and she carries on her bargains with the customers. She says to them, "Pay the few pennies you owe me before you take anything more." You see, she has all these things to do at the same time—nurse the baby, turn the paddy as the pestle pounds it, take the flattened rice out of the hole, and talk to the buyers. This is called the yoga of practice. Fifteen parts of her mind out of sixteen are fixed on the pestle of the husking-machine, lest it should pound her hand. With only one part of her mind she nurses the baby and talks to the buyers.'²

* * *

'One day He (God), showed me the Maya of Mahamaya. A small light inside a room began to grow, and at last it enveloped the whole universe.

'Further, He revealed to me a huge reservoir of water covered with green scum. The wind moved a little of the scum and immediately the water became visible; but in the twinkling of an eye, scum from all sides came dancing in and again covered the water. He revealed to me that the water was like Sachchidananda, and the scum like Maya. On account of Maya, Sachchidananda is not seen. Though now and then one may get a glimpse of It, again Maya covers It.'³

Comp.—Swami Sarveshananda

1. 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, (hereafter *Gospel*) trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras: Ramakrishna Math, 1969, p. 297. 2. *Gospel*, pp. 314-5. 3. *Gospel*, p. 815.

THE WORLD : AS IT APPEARS TO MEN—I

(EDITORIAL)

The world is indeed a wonderful place to live in. It is more so because of its perpetually changing nature. What a man hates most is monotony; and the changing world, in a way, is a blessing to humanity. The world appears to men in different ways, according to their psychological constitution. To scientists, it appears in one way; while to ordinary men in another way. Many poets have painted the picture of this world in their songs and poems, as it appeared to them. It is only to the men of realization, that the world appears in its true form. An attempt has been made here to discuss some world-views as presented by some thinking men.

The riddle, as to how the world has come into existence, remains unsolved even to this day. Many scientists and philosophers have advanced their theories regarding the origin and evolution of this world, but none of them have been universally accepted; moreover, they even contradict and tend to refute each other. Attempts are still being made by philosophers and scientists to arrive at some satisfactory cosmology. But as man is lacking the proper means to fathom the subtle workings of nature, there is hardly any hope of the riddle being solved.

1. World View of the Advaita Vedantists:

According to Gauḍapāda,¹ there is no creation anywhere from the absolute point of view. He says, whatever theories about creation one finds in the scriptures, have been put forth by the sages for the sake of those who, from the facts of experience and

adequate behaviour, vouch for the existence of substantiality, and who are ever afraid of the birthless entity.² Although Gauḍapāda himself is the expounder of the *Ajātavāda*—a Vedantic school believing in the birthless nature of the Reality, and non-reality of the world,—he mentions the views of some thinkers about creation in his *Kārikas* of the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* saying: 'It is a well-established fact that origination belongs to all entities that have existence. Prāṇa creates all (objects); Puruṣa (Reality) creates separately the rays of Consciousness (that are the living creatures). Others steeped in cognition about creation, consider origination as an exuberance (of God), while by others it is imagined that creation is comparable to dream or magic. With regard to creation, some have the firm conviction that creation is a mere will of the Lord. People engrossed in the thought of time (to wit astrologers) consider that birth of beings is from time. Some others say that creation is for the enjoyment (of God), while still others say that it is for (His) sport. But it is the very nature of the Effulgent Being, (for) what desire can One have whose desire is ever fulfilled?'³

There is no end to theories regarding creation; but for an Advaita Vedantist, there is no world anywhere. So what to speak of its creation? Gauḍapāda says: 'Just as dream and magic are seen to be unreal, or as is a city in the sky, so also is this whole universe known to be unreal from the Upaniṣads by the wise.'⁴ The Vedantists say: How

1. Gauḍapāda is well known as a pioneer of the Advaita school of Vedanta. He lived in the seventh century A.D., and was the guru of Śankarācārya's guru Govindapāda.

2. Cf. *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* with Gauḍapāda's *Kārikās*, IV, 42.

3. *Ibid.*, I, 6-9.

4. *Ibid.*, II, 31.

can one ever find the egg, and describe the embryology and development of a (rope-) snake, which never exists? They cite an example to explain this: In darkness, a man at times mistakes a rope for a snake, and is frightened. He shouts aloud for help, and brings a light and a stick to kill the snake. But when he focusses his torch on the snake, to his surprise he discovers that it was never a snake, but a rope. His heart may be still palpitating, but his fear disappears the moment he sees the rope. And he is convinced of the fact that it was never a snake. What he was seeing all the while was the rope, which was appearing to him for a while as the snake. Since the snake never existed, what to speak of its parents, egg, embryology or development? That is altogether out of question. In the same way, says the Vedantist, one can never find out the origin and put forth any satisfactory cosmology of this mysterious world. Any attempt in this direction will be only relative, and ever open to refutation in the light of further findings.

The riddle, therefore, would never be solved in spite of man's so much intellectual gymnastics and scientific developments. From the time immemorial, those who attempted to solve it, and also succeeded in their endeavour to some extent, have realized at last that there is no world as such. They experienced that: just as the rope-snake disappears, when seen in a torch light, the world also disappears for those in whose hearts the light of knowledge has flashed; and their efforts to solve the riddle automatically stops. Due to ignorance, the Absolute Reality appears as the universe, to ordinary men. Such men always think in terms of time, space, and causation, because of the ignorance functioning in them. Swami Vivekananda says, 'Time, space and causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen, and when it is seen on

the lower side, *It appears* as the universe.'⁵ Swamiji further says: 'We have to understand this, and impress upon our minds, that what we call causation begins after, if we may be permitted to say so, the degeneration of the Absolute into the phenomenal, and not before; that our will, our desire, and all these always come *after* that.'⁶

When one goes to solve the riddle on Vedantic lines, and approaches the Absolute face to face, the aspirant experiences:

'My mind has vanished, and all its activities [thinking, feeling, willing, and so on] have melted, by realizing the identity of the Self and Brahman (the Absolute); I do not know either this or not-this; nor what or how much the boundless Bliss (of Samadhi) is!'⁷ 'Where is the universe gone, by whom is it removed, and where is it merged? It was just now seen by me, and has it ceased to exist? It is passing strange!'⁸ 'I neither see nor hear nor know anything in this [state of Realization]. I simply exist as the Self, the Eternal Bliss, distinct from everything else.'⁹ This is how the world appears to a man of realization.

Another Vedantist, Jñāneśwar¹⁰ by name, narrates his divine experience in his letter to Chāṅgadev, a Hatha Yogi, as follows: 'O Srivatesh Chāṅgadev! blessings be unto you! [Know that] the Reality covers Itself [by Its veiling power of Maya] and appears

5. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, II (1971), p. 130.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 130-31.

7. *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, 481.

8. *Ibid.*, 483.

9. *Ibid.*, 485.

10. Jñāneśwar was an Advaita Vedantist of poetic temperament, who lived sometime in the thirteenth century A.D. He was born in Maharashtra, and has written a very beautiful commentary on the *Gītā* in Marāthi. He is also famous for his another treatise in Marāthi named *Amṛtānubhava*. Chāṅgadev was his contemporary, but too much elder in age.

[to men of ignorance] as the world; but when It becomes manifest [to a man of realization] It swallows the world, i.e., the world vanishes for him. Whenever It becomes manifest to an aspirant, the world vanishes from his sight; and whenever It becomes covered, the world appears. But from the absolute point of view, the Reality neither covers Itself nor does It manifest. As a matter of fact, the more the Absolute appears to become many, It actually does not become so; and although It really does not become many, It is everything [that we see in this world]. Just as, gold appears as an ornament without losing its goldness, in the same way the Absolute appears as the world, without losing Its real nature. Just as, water appears as waves without losing its water-ness, in the same way the Absolute appears as the universe without losing Its real nature.¹¹

Thus we see that when a man of realization looks at the world, he sees nothing but the same Absolute Reality in another form. Saint Jñāneśwar says, 'The world is nothing but the manifestation of the Absolute. The Vedas say : "It shining everything shines." As a matter of fact, the world is a mere hollow sound like belching.'¹²

All men of realization experience the world in the same way. For them: 'Brahman alone is real; the world as such is illusory; and all the living beings are nothing but Brahman Itself in manifestation—*Brahma satyam jagannmithyā, jīvo Brahmaiva nāparaḥ*'.¹³ 'All this is verily Brahman—

11. *Cāngadev Pāsasti* (Marāthi), 1-5 : Chāngadev being very senior in age to Jñāneswar (about 1400 years), and a guru of numerous disciples, did not know how to address Jñāneswar, who, though younger in age (about 16), was superior to him in knowledge. Being confused, Chāngadev sent a blank letter to Jñāneswar, to which he wrote a highly philosophical reply, known as *Cāngadev Pāsasti*.

12. *Amṛtānubhava*, (Marāthi), 7 : 280-90.

13. *Brahmaīñānamāla* of Śankarācārya, 20.

Sarvam khalvidam Brahma'.¹⁴ On being touched by his Master Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, in his young age also had the same experience. Reminiscing it to his brother-disciple, Swamiji had said: 'There was a complete revolution in the state of my mind in a moment at the wonderful touch of the Master. I was aghast to see actually that there was nothing in the whole universe except God. But I remained silent in spite of seeing it, wondering how long that state would last. . . . I returned home; . . . I sat for my meal when I saw that all—food, plate, the one who was serving as well as I myself—were nothing but He. . . . I was always overwhelmed with a sort of indescribable intoxication. When I walked along the streets and saw a carriage coming along before me, I did not feel inclined, as at other times, to move away, lest it should collide with me. For, I thought, "I am also that and nothing but that." My hands and feet always remained insensible at that time. . . . When that overwhelming intoxication diminished a little, the world appeared to me to be a dream. Going for a walk on the bank of the Hedua tank, I knocked my head against the iron railings round it to see whether what I saw were dream-rails or actual ones. . . . I could not escape that terrible intoxicating mood and overwhelming condition for some time. When I came to the normal state, I thought that that was the indication of non-dual knowledge. So what is written in the scriptures about it is by no means untrue. Since then, I could not doubt the truth of non-duality.'¹⁵

This is how the world appears to the men of realization, irrespective of their caste, creed, nationality, or time. And once they attain this realization, it can never be con-

14. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III, 14.1.

15. *Śri Ramakrishna : The Great Master* (hereafter *Great Master*), Madras : Ramakrishna Math, 2nd Edn., pp. 765-66.

tradicted or displaced by any other type of vision about the world. That is why it is known as the Correct Vision—*Samyaktarśana*; in contrast with the false vision—*Mithyādarśana*. For instance: In the dark, a stump of a tree by the roadside appears differently to different men. Mr. A may see it as a thief; Mr. B, as a friend waiting; Mr. C, as a policeman; and Mr. D, as a ghost. The same stump appears differently to A, B, C, and D, because they are focussing their own imaginations on it; and each one's notion about it contradicts the other. Now suppose a car passes by and a powerful beam of light falls on the stump, then naturally A, B, C, and D will know the real nature of the thing (tree) and they will realise that their visions were wrong. Once they see the stump in bright light, they will never again see it as a thief, friend, policeman or a ghost. Thus the correct vision of a thing automatically nullifies the false visions; and once the correct vision dawns in a man, it is never contradicted, nor replaced by any other vision.

So the Vedantists, on the basis of their correct vision of life, declare: '... the whole universe, being the effect of the real Brahman, is in reality nothing but Brahman. Its essence is That, and it does not exist apart from It. He, who says it does, is still under delusion—he babbles like one asleep. ... If the universe as it is be real, there would be no cessation of the dualistic element, the scriptures would be falsified, and the Lord himself would be guilty of an untruth. None of these three is considered either desirable or wholesome by the noble-minded. ... If the universe be true, let it then be perceived in the state of deep sleep also. As it is not at all perceived, it must be unreal and false, like dreams. Therefore the universe does not exist apart from the Supreme Self; and the perception of its separateness is false like the qualities (of blueness etc. in the sky).

Has a superimposed attribute any meaning apart from its substratum? It is the substratum which appears like that through delusion. ... All this universe which through ignorance appears as of diverse forms, is nothing else but Brahman which is absolutely free from all the limitations of human thought.'¹⁶

On another occasion Swami Vivekananda, as Narendranath, experienced, how the things of the world gradually disappeared into a void. The Swami narrated to his brother-disciple later: '... I reached Dakshineswar at last and went direct to the Master's [Sri Ramakrishna's] room. I saw him sitting alone, merged in himself on the small bedstead placed near the bigger one. There was no one with him. No sooner had he seen me than he called me joyfully to him and made me sit on one end of the bedstead. I sat down but found him in a strange mood. He spoke indistinctly something to himself, looked steadfastly at me and was slowly coming towards me. I thought another scene of lunacy was going to be enacted. Scarcely had I thought so, when he came to me and placed his right foot on my body, and immediately I had a wonderful experience. I saw with my eyes open that all the things of the room together with the walls were rapidly whirling and receding into an unknown region and my I-ness together with the whole universe was, as it were, going to vanish in the all-devouring great void. I was then overwhelmed with a terrible fear; I had known that the destruction of I-ness was death and that death was before me, very near at hand. Unable to control myself, I cried loudly and said, "Ah! What is it you have done to me? I have my parents, you know." Giving out a hoarse laugh to hear those words of mine and touching my

16. *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, 230, 232, 234, 235, 227.

17. *Great Master*, p. 733.

breast with his hand, he said, "Let it then cease now; it need not be done all at once; it will come to pass in course of time." I was amazed to see when he touched me in that manner and said those words, I came to the normal state and saw things inside and outside the room standing still as before.'¹⁷

This is a significant incident, which shows that the names and forms that we see in this world have no real existence. It is the One-without-a-second Reality which appears as the various names and forms due to Its mysterious power of Maya. This is how this world appears to men in their higher stages of spiritual realization.

(To be concluded)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S DISCOVERIES ABOUT INDIA—V

SWAMI BHAJANANANDA

(Continued from the February '77 Issue)

VEDANTIC PRINCIPLE NO. 3 :

The Principle of Harmony

Swami Vivekananda said :

Another peculiar idea of the Vedanta is that we must allow the infinite variation in religious thought and not try to bring everybody to the same opinion, because the goal is the same.⁶⁰

What is this goal? It is direct spiritual experience (*Aparoksha anubhuti*) which we have already discussed. This Vedantic concept of the common goal of life tends to foster the spirit of harmony. The proof of one religion depends upon the proof of all the others.

As soon as a man stands up and says he is right or his church is right, and all others are wrong, he is himself all wrong. He does not know that upon the proof of all the others depends the proof of his own.⁶¹

After fixing the goal of life to be the direct supersensuous experience, Vedanta tries to fit every other aspect of life to this

inner core. The result is a relativistic approach to reality. Vedanta accepts three degrees of reality—the *Vyavaharika* (empirical), the *Pratibhasika* (apparent), and the *Paramarthika* (Absolute)—and, by implication, three degrees of truth. It was basing himself on this fact that Swamiji declared:

Man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lesser truth to higher truth—but it is never from error to truth.⁶²

This relativistic view of reality had been tacitly understood in ancient India and had formed the backdrop to all creative activities of the people. Shankaracharya gave this doctrine a firm philosophical basis with his theory of the non-dual nature of consciousness.

However, the practical significance of this relativistic approach especially in the field of religion was Sri Ramakrishna's discovery. By practising disciplines prescribed by the various sects of Hinduism and also the disciplines of Islam and Christianity, Sri Ramakrishna came to the

^{60.} *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, (hereafter *Comp. Works*), I (1970), p. 390.

^{61.} *Comp. Works*, I, p. 325.

^{62.} *Comp. Works*, II (1971), p. 365.

conclusion that they all, when sincerely followed, lead to supersensuous experiences of various kinds, all giving the aspirant spiritual bliss and fulfilment, and ultimately leading to the experience of non-duality. Just as Einstein used the constancy of the velocity of light as the basis of the Principle of Invariance in his Special Theory of Relativity, Sri Ramakrishna used the non-duality of consciousness as the basis for his theory of harmony of religions (*dharma-samanvaya*).

Swami Vivekananda has elaborated this doctrine of his Master and converted it into a powerful instrument of cultural change. According to him this has opened up three fields of cultural integration especially in India.

(i) *Integration of Hindu Religion :*

Hinduism always has been a loose federation of sects. Various ideological controversies, though seldom violent, have nevertheless weakened the unity of religion. Some of these controversies are about :

- (a) the nature of ultimate Truth : whether it is dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, or non-dualistic.
- (b) the comparative superiority of Jnana and Bhakti.
- (c) the comparative superiority of various deities : Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi.

The life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna should set at rest all these controversies. Dwaita (dualism), Vishishtadwaita (qualified non-dualism), and Advaita (non-dualism) are according to him only different stages in the soul's progress in spiritual experience.

Again, Sri Ramakrishna has conclusively showed that Bhakti and Jnana both lead in the end to the same goal and, as such, there is no question of superiority of one over the other. Swami Vivekananda has stated further that the ideal method was a synthesis of all the four yogas—Karma, Dhyana, Bhakti and Jnana yogas. Swamiji has

pointed out that each yoga represents the sublimation of one of the faculties of man—will (through *karma*), emotion (through *bhakti*), and reason (through *jnana*). Since these faculties are only various aspects of the same mind, an all round development of man would necessitate the practice of all the yogas. It was this original idea of Swamiji that Sri Aurobindo later on elaborated and developed into his well known doctrine of Integral Yoga.

Regarding the question of superiority of various deities over one another, Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings have given the answer that they are all aspects of the same supreme Spirit. This is only a modern variation of the ancient Vedic dictum 'The one Reality is called by different Names by the sages.' Here again the relativistic approach to Reality holds good.

Religion is the life-blood of the nation. Quarrels and lack of mutual understanding and co-operation have long weakened its force in national integration. Very few Hindus have ever thought deeply about the basic ideas of their own religion. Most of them are satisfied with certain ceremonies and the doctrines and creeds of the sects to which they belong. Swami Vivekananda was one of the first to point out the need for integration of Hindu religion on a broad basis. Unlike his predecessors Dayananda Saraswati, Raja Rammohan Roy and others who insisted on a thorough reformation of the old Hindu religion, Swamiji insisted on the unification of the existing sects. He said :

The first plank in the making of a future India, the first step that is to be hewn out of that rock of ages, is this unification of religion. All of us have to be taught that we Hindus . . . have certain common ideas behind us, and that the time has come when for the well-being of our race, we must give up all our little quarrels and differences.⁶³

⁶³. *Comp. Works*, III (1970), p. 287-8.

National union in India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces.^{63a}

In fact, the credit of providing a common foundation for Hindu religion should be given to Swami Vivekananda. Sister Nivedita expressed this in her Introduction to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* when she said :

Of the Swami's address before the Parliament of Religion, it may be said that when he began to speak it was of the 'religious ideas of the Hindus' but when he ended, Hinduism had been created.⁶⁴

(ii) *Harmony of the Religions of the World :*

Swamiji's ideas about the harmony of religions may be summarised as follows :

(a) Swamiji dreamed of a universal religion. However, his concept of universal religion is not to extend Vedanta into all parts of the world converting people to its fold as Christianity and Islam have been attempting to do all these centuries. His idea of a universal religion is the coexistence of all the religions, each accepting the best elements in the others. There is no need to create a new religion. Said he :

And that universal religion about which philosophers and others have dreamed in every country already exists. It is here. . . . If the priests and other people that have taken upon themselves the task of preaching different religions simply cease preaching for a few moments, we shall see it is there. They are disturbing it all the time; because it is to their interest.⁶⁵

Further he said :

What, then, do I mean by the ideal of a universal religion? I do not mean any one universal philosophy, or any one universal mythology, or any one universal ritual, held alike by all; for I know that this world must go on working, wheel within wheel, this intricate mass

of machinery most complex, most wonderful. What can *we* do then? We can make it run smoothly, we can lessen the friction, we can grease the wheels, as it were. How? By recognizing the mutual necessity of variation. Just as we have recognized unity by our very nature, so we must also recognize variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes.⁶⁶

(b) According to Swamiji every religion has a special contribution to make to world culture. Each religion stresses one particular aspect and the time has come for people to accept all these dominant motifs of religions. As Swamiji put it :

My idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind, and that not one can become dead, not one can be killed.⁶⁷

According to Swamiji, renunciation and spirituality are the central ideas, the dominant motif, of Hinduism. The focal point of Islam is 'practical brotherhood'. Swami Vivekananda had much admiration for Islam even though he knew of its weaknesses. He was deeply impressed by the spirit of equality and brotherhood prevalent among its adherents. He once told an American audience :

If one of your American Indians becomes a Mohammedan, the Sultan of Turkey would have no objection to dine with him.⁶⁸

On another occasion he said :

The Hindus may get the credit of arriving at it (Advaitism) earlier than other races, they being an older race than either the Hebrew or the Arab; yet practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, was never developed among the Hindus universally.

Therefore, I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam,

63a. *Comp. Works*, III p. 371.

64. *Comp. Works*, I, p. x.

65. *Comp. Works*, II, p. 367.

66. *Comp. Works*, II, p. 382-3.

67. *Comp. Works*, II, p. 366.

68. *Comp. Works*, II, p. 371.

theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. . . . For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope.⁶⁹

And Swamiji dreamt of 'the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body.'⁷⁰

If the dominant motif of Hinduism is renunciation and spirituality, and that of Islam is 'practical brotherhood', the central theme of Christianity is prayer and sacrifice. The Christian wants to emulate the love and martyrdom of Christ, in his daily life. Hence social service, running schools and hospitals, etc., have been the main focus of Christian religion. The dominant motif of Buddhism is rationality.

(c) There is no need for any man to change his religion and embrace another. What is needed is to understand the good points in other religions and try to practise them within the framework of his own religion. In his famous talk at the final session of the Chicago Parliament of Religions Swamiji said :

Do I wish that the Christian would become a Hindu? God forbid! Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become a Christian? God forbid! . . . The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.⁷¹

In a memorable talk which is unrivalled for its poetic beauty and emotional richness, Swamiji expressed his dream of the universal religion as follows :

I accept all religions that were in the

past, and worship with them all; I worship with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhist temple where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of everyone.

Not only shall I do all this, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still continuous revelation, going on? It is a marvellous book—those spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them. We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future.⁷²

What this message of universal religion holds for the world is yet difficult to predict. But as far as India is concerned, there is the urgent need for immediately implementing this great message of Swami Vivekananda. The way to social harmony and cultural integration in India is not through a false secularism but through insisting on the mutual understanding of the various religions and sects and accepting the good features of each of them. This any way is Swamiji's solution to the problem of communalism in India.

We have spoken of the two fields of human life where the 'religious relativity theory' of Vedanta can have practical application. There is a third field.

69. *Comp. Works*, VI (1972), p. 415-16.

70. *Comp. Works*, VI, p. 416.

71. *Comp. Works*, I, p. 24.

72. *Comp. Works*, II, p. 374.

(iii) *Harmony of Science and Religion :*

The term 'science' is used in two senses. (a) It means the scientific method, which consists of accurate collection of facts, their classification, and the discovery of their inter-relationship based on unbiased judgment and experiment. (b) Secondly, it is used to denote the corpus of systematic knowledge, including hypothesis, theories, and laws, concerning the physical universe. We have already seen that science in either of these two senses is inadequate to give us the ultimate Truth or the meaning of existence. How then can we justify Swami Vivekananda's repeated assertions about the harmony of science and religion? The key to the answer lies in the advaitic concept of three levels of truth, the Pratibhasika, the Vyavaharika, and the Paramarthika.

In the first place, Vedanta has no difficulty in accepting the accuracy of the scientific method and its authority over the Vyavaharika (empirical) truths of the physical universe. But regarding the Paramarthika (Absolute) truth, Vedanta is independent of empirical beliefs and follows the subjective methods of enquiry and deep introspection called Dhyana and Nididhyasana. As a result, Vedanta does not clash with the scientific method. Both deal with different planes of reality and have different criteria of truth. Science does not derive its authority from Vedanta, nor has Vedanta to derive its authority from science. Both are independent disciplines but supplement each other in giving the total picture of truth. It is this attitude that made Swami Vivekananda assert :

Art, science, and religion are but three different ways of expressing the single truth. But in order to understand this we must have the theory of Advaita.⁷³

So then, this is one way for science and

Vedanta to coexist together—without crossing each other's path.

There is a second type of harmony between science and Vedanta. Religion deals with the three fundamental categories: God, soul and the universe. Science omits the first two but is accurate and thorough-going in its study of the third category, viz., the universe. Here again many of the discoveries of science like the law of conservation of matter, the theory of evolution, the theory of relativity, etc., are very similar to the Vedantic concepts about the universe. Hence there is not only no clash between Vedanta and most of the modern scientific discoveries, but there is a close agreement. This was pointed out by Swamiji :

Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages in going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light, from the latest conclusions of science.⁷⁴

But it should be remembered that science has nothing to say about God and the soul; it even denies their existence. Vedanta, however, has the magnanimity to overlook this defect and give science the credit which it deserves. Swamiji expressed this attitude of accommodation thus :

Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world, just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book—the book without.⁷⁵

Why then do we hear so much about the

⁷³. *Comp. Works*, I, p. xvi.

⁷⁴. *Comp. Works*, I, p. 15.

⁷⁵. *Comp. Works*, VI, p. 81.

conflict between science and religion? This refers mostly to the age old conflict between science and Christian Church. The main causes for the conflict between these two are given below :

(a) Christian theology tries to 'prove' the existence of God through rationalisation of physical phenomena. This means intrusion into the world of science whose demand for empirical verification, religion cannot give. Several Christian mystics like Nicolas of Cusa and Richard of St. Victor have pointed out the futility of trying to 'know' God through reason, but their views have so far not become the official church dogma.

(b) God in Christianity is extracosmic, the prime mover and the creator of the world which is different from Him. This supernaturalism clashes with the scientific principle of naturalism, that is, finding out the cause of the phenomena. According to Vedanta, God is immanent in the universe as the substratum or 'ground Being'. This concept avoids the extremes of naturalism and supernaturalism.

(c) The Christian insistence of 'faith' conflicts with scientific methods of careful investigation of empirical facts and impartial judgement. When at the beginning of the present century, some of the 'modernists' like Maurice Blondel, Baron Von Hugel, Alfred Loisy and Edourd Le Roy tried to reconcile Catholic intellectual tradition with freedom of research and the use of progressive ideas, their attempt was branded as 'a synthesis of all the heresies' and suppressed by a Papal Encyclical in 1907.

(d) But the most difficult point is the unwillingness of the Church to give up its old concepts of the world and accept the theoretical discoveries of science. To say that the earth is round and that it revolves round the sun or that man and ape had a common ancestor was for a long time considered a blasphemy. A number of liberal

Protestant theologians like Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultman, Bonhoeffer, etc. have tried to remedy the above situation. But their views are yet to be accepted as the official doctrines of the Protestant churches.⁷⁶

Vedanta while accepting the supremacy of science in deciding empirical questions, does not submit to its hegemony in the transcendental plane. It has its own independent means of realizing the ultimate truth. It is this experiential independence of Vedanta and its tolerant relativistic attitude towards science that have made the harmony between science and Vedanta possible.

Now to recapitulate: the three cardinal principles of Vedanta according to Swami Vivekananda are :

1. Potential Divinity of man,
2. the principle of direct experience (*anubhuti*), and
3. the principle of harmony.

From our discussion about these principles it is clear that Swamiji meant by them not some credal formulas but certain attitudes and approaches to the problems of life. He wanted these principles to be spread among the masses and made a part and parcel of their lives. That was what he meant by applying Vedanta in practical life. With the fervour of a prophet he exhorted his countrymen :

These conceptions of Vedanta must come out, must remain not only in the forest, not only in the cave, but they must come out to work at the bar and bench, in the pulpit, and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fisherman that are catching fish and with the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman, and child, whatever their occupation, wherever they may be. . . . How can the fishermen and all these carry out the ideals of the Upanishads? The way has been shown. . . . If the fisher-

76. Vide John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, London : S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1969,

man thinks that he is a spirit, he will be a better fisherman ; if a student thinks he is a spirit, he will be a better student.⁷⁷

Influence of the Ideas :

Here a pertinent question comes up. What can ideas accomplish? This kind of question is probably asked only in our country. We in India have not yet realized the power of ideas to change our individual lives or the destiny of the nation.

The founding fathers of our Republic thought that they could solve all the problems of our nation by building more dams, power houses, factories and by producing more tools, cloth, fertilizers and food. They did not realize, as Mao Tse Tung had done even when he was quite a young man, that if a country was to achieve economic progress it needed the self-generating power of a philosophy of life, a basic outlook on life. The activities of the people must be given a clear direction. This is especially true in the case of poor and developing nations. To depend on matter more than on ideas is nothing but materialism and it was this materialistic outlook that has plagued the socio-political life of India for the last two hundred years.

It is not matter that rules the world but ideas. When a poor monk by name Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of a village church in Germany it shook the whole Christendom, split it into two rival groups, and the thirty years' war that followed ravaged the whole of Europe. The ideas of an obscure German Jew by name Karl Marx made two backward nations reorganize their socio-politico-economic structure and achieve the status of Super Powers in a relatively short time. The atomic holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had their origin in a simple mathematical formula of Einstein. All the great technological advances of the modern world

have had their origin in the theories of great scientists. Power comes not from the barrel of a gun but from the minds of geniuses. That is why Swami Vivekananda said :

Doing is very good, but that comes from thinking. . . . Fill the brain, therefore, with high thoughts, highest ideals ; place them day and night before you, and out of that will come great work.⁷⁸

The part that Swami Vivekananda can play in the rejuvenation of India is in the field of ideas. He has given us powerful ideas, or rather, he has re-discovered for us the power hidden in the ancient ideas of Vedanta.

There is at present a philosophical vacuum in our country. Our nation is being catapulted from the Pauranic age to the jet-age. The masses are getting educated and are coming up, but they are not given proper orientation to life and reality. They are asked to shoulder heavy responsibility, but they do not know how to shape the destiny of the nation. If the philosophical vacuum in India is not filled up with the life-giving principles of her own ancient indigenous philosophy, it is likely to get filled up with a powerful alien materialistic philosophy.

This was what Karl Marx predicted. He pointed out that the economic activities of a community or a nation are centred on the production, and they form the infra-structure of society. But closely connected to this and depending on it there is a super-structure of non-economic activities of man like, customs, laws and regulations, police, state, values, and beliefs. Marx showed that owing to the inevitable progression of history, when the infra-structure of economic activity changed, the superstructure of socio-political ideas too should change ; otherwise, conflict and struggle would be the result. This has to some extent hap-

⁷⁷. *Comp. Works*, III, p. 245.

⁷⁸. *Comp. Works*, II, p. 86.

pened in India. With the help of modern science and technology India is now trying to change her infra-structure of economic production but her superstructure of ideas are unsuitable for these changes. The superstructure of Hindu society in India has been guided for the last few centuries not by the life-giving principles of Vedanta of which Swamiji spoke but by scores of village customs and superstitions. Swamiji once said after travelling all over India that he did not find the code of Manu followed anywhere. Everywhere he saw people quarrelling over local customs which have very little to do with spiritual life.

Now, should we discard the old ideological super-structure, as Marx said we should, and adopt a new materialistic philosophy? No, said Swamiji. He pointed out that the super-structure of Hindu society has a sound core of powerful spiritual ideas which are so resilient and comprehensive that they can be adapted to any change in the infra-structure of economic activity. The life-giving principles of Vedanta, about which

Swamiji spoke, are of eternal value. They are based not on the speculation of philosophers but on the direct superconscious experience of the seers. Though they can be adapted to changing social needs, they themselves are based on the unchanging Reality behind the changing phenomena. These principles, transcend the vagaries of time and space and are, therefore, universally and perennially true. We do not have to invent a new philosophy or borrow one from the West. We have our own philosophy of life which can adapt itself to any socio-politico-economic change. Not only that, this philosophy, which is nothing but the *philosophia perennis* of the ancients, the *sanatana dharma*, is essential for the integrity and strength of the nation, as pointed out by the great orientalist and art critic Ananda K. Coomaraswamy : 'The greatest danger for India', he warned, 'is the loss of her spiritual integrity. Striving after a political integrity without giving importance to spiritual integrity is a pathetic endeavour.'

(To be concluded)

REALITY AND THE CATEGORIES OF THOUGHT : AN ADVAITA PERSPECTIVE

DR. K. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

1. *Introduction : Kant's Analysis of 'Discursive Understanding'* : Any reasonable account of 'understanding Reality' should first concentrate on the meaning of the faculty of understanding. It is this which made Immanuel Kant enter into a 'critique' of 'reason' or 'understanding', and arrive at a conclusion that *all understanding is limited to sensibility*. The analysis of Kant, regarding the problem, forms a welcome introduction to the topic on hand.

What does he mean by such a conclu-

sion? He means by it that understanding, though a non-sensuous faculty, and only indirectly related to perceptual objects through the *a priori* conceptions of space and time, is not far removed from sensibility. For, as he pointed out, unrelated to perceptions conceptions become empty, and lose all their objective value. The faculty of understanding, according to him, is the unitary or synthetic apperception of the varied perceptual objects rendered into a harmony of what otherwise would be a dis-

arrayed medley of sensations. Because of synthetic apperception, we get the ideas of quantity (unity, plurality, totality), quality (reality, negation, limitation), relation (inherence and subsistence, causality and dependence, community), modality (possibility and impossibility, existence and non-existence, necessity and contingency). These are the 'categories' of thought (and being), which bring order to things 'through knowledge', and therefore, form the very structure of what is called 'discursive understanding'.

Now, the problem is, does this mode of discursive understanding through the categories directly take us to *the Reality*? In answering this, we will have to distinguish between two things. To say that what is available to understanding (as defined above) is Reality, is one thing, and to ask, if that is itself Reality, is another.

Extending the enquiry into Reality, Kant himself raises this question, and shows that Reality is something, which he calls the thing-in-itself, that passes beyond the grasp of the faculty of understanding, with which human knowledge is necessarily bound, and so limited to the categories. And he is emphatic when he declares about them thus: 'They can never be employed transcendently, but only empirically.' He writes: 'The Transcendental Analytic has brought us to this important conclusion... that understanding cannot possibly transcend the limits of sensibility, beyond which no objects are presented to us. The principles of pure understanding are merely exponents of phenomena . . . ' and 'categories are necessarily limited to phenomena'.¹ If pressed to go beyond sensibility, he says, they lead us to 'antinomies' and 'paralogisms'. What is not available to understanding or the categories he calls the 'noumenon'. And

what is this? '... noumenon is not a special kind of object for our understanding, namely, an *intelligible object*; on the contrary it is problematic whether there is any understanding that could have such an object actually before it. Such an understanding would not know its object discursively by means of categories, but intuitively in a non-sensuous perception; and how this is possible we cannot have the faintest conception.'²

Does this smack of agnosticism? Kant himself did not doubt the existence of the noumenon, but only said that it is unknowable through the forms of understanding which are made use of for building up our knowledge.

It is evident that Kant has rendered great service by pointing to the limits of understanding and of rational methods at knowing Reality. It is a pointer to the truth, which can be expressed thus: 'the limits of reason or understanding are not the limits of *Being*.' The problem now is, how is that *Being* (which is beyond the phenomena) known or understood, if not by knowledge through understanding?

2. *The Indian Perspective*: The Indian answer to this is: It is *pratibodhaviditam*. That is, it is known by its own revelation to us as *our own being as Consciousness*. (*Kena Up.* 2.4). As the Upaniṣad says: '... not that I do not know—I know and I do not know as well' (*Kena.* 2.2). One knows it not through the mind, but as the principle, which makes the mind know (*Kena.* 1.6). One who does not know it (through mind) knows it; and one who says he knows (through thought) does not know (*Kena* 2.3). This is not mere playing with words, but an expression of utter helplessness to communicate the incommunicable. But that which is beyond and above the means of knowledge and understanding can

1. John Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant*, Glasgow, 1901, p. 131.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

only be 'experienced' by *other means than understanding through knowledge*. The Upaniṣadic seers are never tired of making such statements about this 'Reality', which is : *ayam ātmā brahma, tattvamasi*. This one cannot understand through reasoning (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.9), even as it is ungraspable by mind, and incommunicable by word (*Taitt. Up.* 2.4.1).

The Indian seers knew quite well that discursive knowledge, wherein the categories of thought operate, belongs to a realm of pure practicality, ruled by a myopic and piecemeal view of reality, which otherwise is infinite and indivisible. By bringing in the analytical notion of the knower and the known, or subject and object, one introduces the idea of a dualism in the realm of being, which is in itself beyond dualism. All systems of philosophy and theology, which speak in these terms, serve only a limited purpose, as they are confined to the limits of rational understanding and sensibilities, beyond which to imagine the shape of Reality would be wrong. This is cosmism, which grasps only the glimmer of the Infinite, which is the Real, but not the whole of it. A rational system of Reality is of a limited kind, either always trying to be reasonable to man, or reasoned out by man. However, following the vision of the Upaniṣads, Advaita stresses the importance of the acosmic perspective, and with a humility directly proportional to the Infinity, which is Reality takes it to be extraordinary, or as being an entity transcending all knowable possibilities of it. And so indicates the knowability of it *via negative: neti neti*. Is it positive? No. Is it negative? No. Is it positive-negative? No. Is it neither positive-negative? No. None of these is true in itself, none of these is false in itself. This is the meaning of the Upaniṣadic vision of Reality, which, it says, is beyond the known and the unknown. One of the earliest systematisers of the Advaitic-acosmic vision

of Reality, Gauḍapāda, said, it is beyond the *catuṣkoti* (the four modes of assertion) of the sort mentioned above (*Māṇḍukya Kārikā*, 4. 83-84). What can be said of it? Nothing positive, nothing negative, both being relative to our limited understanding. Expressing it through any formal proposition, commits one to a discursive position, which is untrue of Reality. The Real is not a category of our currency ! And so, when Bādhva wanted to discuss and know Brahman, *Bāṣkalī* kept silent. (cf. Śaṅkara's *Brahma Sūtra Bhaṣya*, 3.2.17). The Dialectics of acosmism is fully vindicated by Śaṅkara, when he said : 'A thing which is perceived by the senses can be taught to another through categories denoting class, quality and action. But Brahman is not possessed of these categories, viz., class, etc. Hence, it is very difficult to convince the disciples about it through instruction' (*Kena. Up. Bhaṣya*, 1.3). It is with profound significance that the modern thinker, Wittgenstein (whose philosophic insight is yet to be understood) remarked : 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent !³ As per him the realm of 'what cannot be said', forces the language of silence on us. Sri Ramana said, this silence is indicative of the force with which Truth speaks to us with such immensity and intimacy, that words lose their bearing and significance. And Gauḍapāda said : '*yatra varṇā na vartante, vīvekastatra no'cyate*' (where words do not function, wisdom does not speak. *Māṇḍukya Kārikā*, 4.60).

Does this mean, then, that Reality is understood by a mystic or intuitive or direct apprehension, i.e. by a means other than thought and its categories? The perspective of the Upaniṣadic Vedānta seems to be that it is so. However, there is a difference, which we perceive, in their attitude : If the faculty of understanding

3. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Tract. 7).

through categories of thought cannot be employed transcendentally to know or express the Reality, they point out, the reason is that we have put the cart before the horse. What makes understanding understood is the Reality, and so 'the knower cannot be known'. 'How can the knower be known?' asks Yājñavalkya (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 4.5.15)

With such a formidable question, we are in the ontological field, leaving the epistemological far behind, with which Kant was primarily interested in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Following Yājñavalkya, Śaṅkara declares: 'The knower is presupposed even before the idea of the means of knowledge' (*Br. Sū. Bhāṣya*, 2.3.7), and points out that all philosophical attempts at knowing Reality are self-deceptions (*avidyā* or *ajñāna*). They arise out of a 'false notion of Reality, by superimposition of the unreal on the Real, and vice versa' (*adhyāsa*), i.e. as something that we empirically see and know, like the body, mind, world, etc., all of which require to be illumined, whereas Reality is self-revealing (*svaprakāśa*) on each occasion of awareness. Why? Reality is Awareness, which is eternally awake.

3. *Advaitic Mode of Inquiry into the Real*: For the Upaniṣadic tradition—which Advaita assimilates and follows—philosophy should be distinguished from *anubhava*, or properly *aparokṣānubhava*, i.e. being the Truth directly. If philosophy is inquiry, *anubhava* is being. Being what? Being one's own true Self, which the Upaniṣads (Vedānta) call Atman or Brahman. The Upaniṣads mean to point out philosophies about Atman or Brahman. But the philosophies may change depending upon the reasonings of the philosophers about Atman or Brahman: but Atman or Brahman does not change depending on one's reasoning, reasoning mistaken for intuition, and intuition for the result of self-enquiry, thus rendering the subject to be the object

of enquiry. True to the vision of its tradition, Advaita does not enquire about Brahman or Atman, for none of these is accessible for inquiry, and shows that what is inquired into is a lesser Reality or no Reality. It marks a distinction between the 'transcendental, beyond the discursive reasoning' and 'what can be inquired into', and with an avowed practical motive only, entertains inquiry (*Upadeśādayam Vādah'*, as Gaudapāda says, *Mā. Kā.* 1.18), but orients its inquiry only to sift the material as eternal and non-eternal, changing and unchanging, finite and infinite (*nityānitya vastu viveka* as Śaṅkara calls it. *Br. Sū. Bhāṣya* 1.1.1), and presents to understanding—even as understanding may understand—that the Real is eternal, unchanging infinite principle of Being (*satyam*), Consciousness (*jñānam*) and Bliss (*ānandam*). While it does so, keeping in view the limitations of understanding and sensibilities, it distinguishes between defining the Real and indicating the Real. Defining Reality, one cannot do, for it is *sui generis* and *summum genus*, but indicate one can.

Keeping the distinction of the two realms clear from each other, the Advaitic tradition identifies thus: the Real is *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam*; *satyam*, *jñānam* *ānandam*. Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1) makes a remarkably significant exposition of these *svarūpalakṣaṇas* (indicatory marks), and shows how they point to the non-dual, indivisible, infinite Real. Writing on *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* (4.1) he says that the splitting of the Transcendental Reality into the Knower, known and knowledge is not to see the transcendental truth. It is *jñāna-jñeya-jñātṛ rahitam*, *paramārtha tattvam*, as he calls it. To experience the infinity (Bhūma) where the division is not is to attain bliss and immortality, as Sanatkumāra propounds, and Nārada aspired to be an *ātmavit* (knower of the Self) by experiencing the

Infinite (*Chand. Up. 7*). Yājñavalkya draws our repeated attention to a state, when everything has become one's own Self, and asks us to find out if duality, i.e. split could be in the realm of the Atman. With a conclusion, which is a climax, he asks: 'Him, with whose consciousness one understands all this, with what can one understand that?' (*Br. Up. 4.5.15*). No wonder, here the discursive operations of understanding are frozen!

4. *Advaitic Conception of Discursive Thought*: On the foundations of the Upaniṣads, Advaita Vedānta recognises, no doubt, categories of understanding, but limits their use to the practical or empirical field. Śaṅkara calls discursive thought *buddhi*, and defines it as 'hiding within its bosom the categories of knowledge, knowable and the Knower, (*Tait. Up. 2.1*), and says, whatever is known in this field, is done through the intellect by applying the forms of understanding such as space, time, cause, non-contradiction (*Br. Sū. Bhāṣya, 3.2.3*), class (i.e. the generic quality), specific quality and action (*Kena Up. Bhāṣya, 1.3*; *Bhagavad-Gītā Bhāṣya, 13.12*). However, he points out, that to know the Real (i.e. the Self) as involved in this realm, is to know it in so far as it is represented in conformity with the forms of intellect, and so we find the distinction of the knower, known and the knowledge. Though in itself, the Real is beyond these categories, and is the foundation of all knowing as its pre-supposition, being the principle of Consciousness, and bereft of the distinctions of the Knower and the known, etc., yet is described as the 'subject' with reference to things it knows, which are called 'objects,' relatively (*Br. Up. Bhāṣya, 2.1.16*).

To give relevance to practical life and considerations, Advaita allows the distinctions of the *tripuṭī* (the triad), but warns: to mistake what the empirical or rational inquiry reveals to be the transcendental

Self, is to reduce it to objectivity and ultimate materiality. 'The Self-illuminating can never be illumined by others' is a maxim, which, according to Advaita, should shut away the possibilities of Self-knowing or Self-awareness through psychological introspection, which philosophers may put forth as theories of understanding the Self.

From all this, we may draw the position of Advaita regarding the Real, which is beyond the categories of understanding and thought. But the Self is not to be doubted, for the very fact that it is the very foundation of all our thinking—asserting and doubting as well. This Reality, which is the Atman or Brahman, is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. It is Infinite. In its transcendental condition, it is not experienced as we experience an object. And so, to call *anubhava* as experience in the ordinary sense may not be proper. To be more proximate, we may say, that it is a state of no-experience, a state of not-thinking. What we know empirically is not the Real, and therefore the categories of knowledge can at best present an appearance of Reality, as limited by the conditions of thinking. Even here, the *a priori* truth of Self-existence is undeniable. Its indivisibility and infinity is to be grasped by wisdom which unifies what the dichotomising intellect may sunder into different things.

Thus the epistemological analysis of Advaita, which recognises the distinction of *pramātr* (knower), *prameya* (known) and *pramāṇa* (knowledge) for practical purposes has an orientation at the background, which should not be missed. The development of Post-Śaṅkara dialectics loses much of its inner significance, if we do so. The recognition of the above three as forms of *Āitanya* (consciousness) as *pramātr-āitanya*, *prameya-āitanya* and *pramāṇa-āitanya* (cf. *Vedānta Paribhāṣa, Ch. 1*) is a pointer to this. Advaita epistemology explains *jñāna* or

knowledge as overcoming the ontological split between the subject and the object by the epistemological knowing. Knowledge is a case of *abhedābhivyakti* or *āvaraṇābhībhava* (expression of the non-difference or cutting the veil of separation) between the knower and the known, as Madhusūdana Saraswati explains (*Siddhānta Bindu*. Ch. 1; *Advaita Siddhi*). Even as per Śaṅkara true knowledge, i.e. *vidyā* is 'knowing a thing as it is' (*tadvivekena vastusvarūpāvadhāraṇam vidyāmāhuḥ—Adhyāsa Bhaṣya*).

As Madhusūdana says, 'knowing a thing as it is, is to know the Brahman behind the object', or re-discovering one's identity or unity with Reality. It is a truism to say that no true knowledge is possible if the subject and object are basically or ontologically distinct and different. The epistemological process of knowing has an ontological overtone of discovering the unity of being or non-duality of the Real beyond the changing phases of the unreal. No doubt one who has this *bodha* or revelation exclaims *tattvamasi* or *sarvaṁ khalvidam brahma*.

5. *Conclusion and A Note of Comparison*: We may conclude with a note of comparison. Though Advaita, like Kant, speaks of the realms of 'the noumenon and the phenomenon', unlike Kant—who does not comment on or stress about the unreality of the phenomenon, and does not enlighten us further on the the nature of the noumenon except that it is a check to the presumption of sensibility—points out that all phenomena is *false* but fakes itself to be *real* (*bhāvarūpa mithyā*) till its falsity is sublated by the light of the noumenon, which is the undeniable ground of all experiences including the false appearance, a ground which is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss in one. In European philosophy, following Kant, Hegel took the phenomena as integral to Reality, and built up his system of the Phenomenology of the Spirit, and F. H. Bradley accommodated the appearance in the Real, without minimising the importance of the former. We have Indian parallels too to these phases in the theistic and realistic system of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, and of late in the System of Sri Aurobindo, which is called Integral Advaita.

DETERMINISM AND FREE WILL

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

I

The problem of free will has received a fresh impetus on account of the recent trends in micro-physics. It is a patent fact that our understanding of nature influences greatly our philosophical views. When science held mechanistic views of nature and thought that the whole universe was in the grip of causal laws, materialistic philosophers taught that mind was also subject to causal law and there is no free will whatsoever, as

mind was only a product of matter. On the other hand, those philosophers who wanted to make a case for free will put forward the view that mind was of an entirely different category than matter and that though external nature was strictly governed by causal laws, the internal world of mind was not subject to these laws and therefore human actions were free. But they were faced with the difficulty of explaining how matter and mind could interact if they were of entirely different categories.

However, recent discoveries in micro-physics seem to strike a blow at the mechanistic theory of the universe. Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy has given rise to rethinking in scientific circles regarding the universal applicability of the law of causality. It is thought by some scientists that it is possible that nature in its depths is not governed by strict causal laws and that causality is more of a statistical nature in the 'man-sized' world. Further, the inevitable mix-up of subject and object in all our knowledge, and the predominance of the role of the mind in our understanding of nature as we go deeper into it, matter seeming to melt away leaving only mental constructs, have also given rise to scientific speculations that there may not be an absolute barrier between matter and mind and they may be two ways of manifestation of one and the same entity. Thus, physics seems to be coming closer to philosophy, and some scientists, throwing light on the philosophical implications of the modern trends in physics, suggest that the advocates of the free will theory may find support from science. As against this, others have held that the Principle of Indeterminacy does not abrogate the law of causality, but points only to our inability to determine the workings of nature. Indeterminacy may not be a part of nature.¹

We do not as yet receive any definite support from science in favour of freedom in nature, and therefore for free will. The law of causality itself is an assumption and it stands neither proved nor disproved by science. Nor has any proof of universal causation yet gained general, or even considerable, measure of lasting assent among philosophers. However, we have in us, deeply ingrained, both the idea of causality

and the sense of human freedom, and arguments may be advanced to uphold or refute either universal causation or human freedom. In any case, absolute free will is possible only where there is absolute existence, omniscience and omnipotence. As applied to human beings, the concept of free will cannot but be restricted in its scope to the possibility of choosing alternative ends, and alternative courses of action towards their fulfilment, though the exercise of freedom may be fraught with limitations. In other words, the free will theory denies absolute determinism.

II

The problem of free will, as Henry Sidgwick understands it, is 'Whether a man's action at any moment is completely determined by his character and the external influences, including his bodily condition, which act on him at the moment, or is there always a possibility of his choosing to act in the manner that he at the moment judges to be reasonable and right, whatever his previous actions and experiences may have been?'²

Now, we always feel a sense of freedom of action within ourselves and think that our activities are characterized by free choice, while the habit of thinking in causal terms with regard to things external is so ingrained in us that when we analyse happenings external to us, whether material phenomena or mental activity of *others*, we always find or think that they are causally determined. 'We always explain,' says Sidgwick, 'the voluntary action of all men except ourselves on the principle of causation by character.'³ And T. H. Green emphasizes, 'The action is as necessarily related to the character and

1. For a detailed discussion of the bearing of modern physics on philosophy, see Sir James Jeans, *Physics and Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1948; Ch. VII—'Some Problems of Philosophy'.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 209. Based on Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*.

3. *Op. cit.*, Bk. I. Ch. V.

circumstances as any event to the sum of its conditions.'⁴

Thus the problem of free will is a maze and it is extremely difficult to find a way out of it. But the difficulty arises because it is involved in the very approach to the problem. Every one of us acts on the basis of the feeling of free will, though we may experience limitations in exercising it. But when we try to find out if the will is really free, i.e. if it is free from the operation of causation, we have already pre-judged the issue by assuming that there is determinism. Once we begin to examine in this way, we cannot help casting the net of determinism far and wide. For instance, in the above definition of free will, when Sidgwick says 'to act in the manner that he at the moment judges to be reasonable and right', this judgement of an act as reasonable and right itself may be said to depend on one's knowledge and experience, which again are determined by other previous causes. Thus there is no objective condition to which we may refer a particular activity to decide whether it is free or not. Unless we can define properly what we mean by the exercise of free will, in a verifiable manner, how is it possible to decide whether an action is free or not?

We must also remember that causality itself is an unproved assumption. 'Now I must insist at once,' writes A. C. Ewing, 'that this "determinist" view, as it is called, though it has some considerable plausibility, is not clearly self-evident and has by no means been proved true. No proof of universal causation has as yet gained general, or indeed any considerable measure of, lasting assent among philosophers. And its truth is certainly very much doubted by many contemporary scientists. As is well known, there has been a strong reaction against the belief in recent physics, though I should not

like to lay much stress on this, since, of such a view, there cannot be either a scientific proof or scientific disproof. Even if all events are caused, no scientist can give all their causes, and even if some are uncaused, there are no scientific means of distinguishing between the cases where there is really no cause and the cases where we merely cannot find the cause.'⁵

Thus, under these circumstances, either we have to grant that there is freedom of the will on the basis of our inner feeling, or accept that everything is determined on the basis of external analysis, which however, is inconclusive as already pointed out. We see that both these attitudes are based on our own imperfect reasoning, and may or may not correspond to reality. In the very nature of things it is impossible to decide the question either way from the point of view of reality. As such, since the problem is ours, that is phenomenal, the answer also must be from the phenomenal point of view, i.e. as it affects us. We must, therefore, make a different approach to the problem and try to make sense out of the feeling of freedom universally experienced in the midst of the surrounding bondage.

III

We all act on the basis of free will and the same criteria apply to all. In the sphere of morality and ethics, determinism or indeterminism does not affect the issue, because if a thief steals out of compulsion, then the magistrate also punishes him out of compulsion. Further, from the moral point of view, as Pringle Pattison remarks, 'Action is not referred backward in time to the circumstances and predispositions of which as motives it is the legitimate outcome, but the man brings his action face to face with a "Thou shalt" which he finds within him,

4. *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 126.

5. *Ethics*, London: The English University Press, p. 152.

and according to its conformity or want of conformity with this law, he approves or condemns his conduct.'⁶ If there is pure determinism, only metaphysically our responsibility ceases, not ethically. Sometimes we excuse our own actions on the principle of causation by character and circumstances; yet if one, as Pringle Pattison says, 'really seeks to excuse himself in the sequel, by trying to show that it was impossible for a man with his particular antecedents to act otherwise than he did, he is regarding the action entirely from an external and non-moral (which for him in the circumstances is an immoral) point of view.'⁷ In the moral sphere, the sense of right and wrong and the feeling of freedom are sufficient grounds for the exercise of free will.

However, we may make a distinction between determinism and limitations or conditions that beset our exercise of free will. Determinism connotes inevitability and if one could see into the future, one can accurately predict coming events in all their details. Not so, if it is a case of only limitations. Limitations can be overcome by effort. Further, limitations do not preclude alternative course of action. As such a far-seeing person can only guess at the future course of events with no certainty about its correctness in its entirety. If everything is determined, the fact that we are presented with alternative courses of action carries no meaning. In the very nature of things we take the help of our faculties and past experience to decide upon a particular course of action. We have several courses of action open to us before we actually act. But once we act, we act in one way only. The question of the determinist, 'Why that particular way and not any other?' is not significant. Because that question can be raised even if another way

was chosen. It may be relevant here to refer to the distinction between knowledge and action made by the great philosopher Acharya Shankara. Action, he says, can be done, not done, or done in different ways, because it is not a pre-existing entity. But not so in the case of knowledge. We can know existing things only in the way they are presented to our cognition. A tree can be seen only as a tree and not as a building. We cannot have a conscious alternative course with regard to it. Thus in action we are presented with various alternatives. But our choice of action may be restricted depending upon our knowledge, experience, and outward circumstances. Restriction does not connote determination. It only means there are barriers to the exercise of freedom.

When we act we visualize a future or consequence and try to direct our activity to the fulfilment of our ends. Again, the fruition of the activity also may depend upon so many factors, but that does not necessarily mean that the end was determined to be in that particular way. The material world, no doubt, seems to work under the causal law. But this does preclude effecting changes in the world without infringing the general law of causation. What may be precluded is what is called a miracle.

So far as inanimate nature is concerned, the eternal flux in nature constitutes its freedom; but the law of causality that it seems to obey gives a stability and direction to it and makes it amenable to purposive activity by intelligent beings. If the changes in nature were to be capricious, without obeying any causal law, no purposive activity would have been possible. Life itself would be impossible. So determinism in nature is a very necessary factor to endow it with order and stability in the midst of change. We cannot expect to act upon human minds in the same way as on material nature because there is an element of freedom in human behaviour,

6. *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 322.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

however much that freedom may be restricted. In individuals the freedom is more expressed, and it gets more and more circumscribed as we come to large groups. Exercise of free will may be guided by our knowledge, past experience, etc. and restricted by circumstances. On this account we will not be justified in declaring that this is not true free will. Because this is the only possible way of expressing human free will directed to purposive activity in the phenomenal world. Absolute free will, directed to nothing and guided by nothing, is a mere caprice.

If we have no absolute free will, there is no absolute determinism either. The world process involving animate and inanimate activity, even if moving towards a definite end, may not be a completely pre-determined thing like the unrolling of a cinema film where everything, every detail, including the apparent free activity and the sense of freedom, is fixed. It is quite possible to liken it to the script of a drama. The whole play may be pre-written. But there is freedom in enacting it; and sometimes in adapting it, or improvising innovations even. The theatres may be of different types, with varying types of equipment, scenery decoration, and so on. The team of actors too may be different. The way in which it is acted may be different; and the actors, too, without breaking the general tenor of the script, may introduce novelty in acting and improvization in dialogues. Or, thirdly, as in cooking, the ingredients used and their properties may be fixed, but varieties of dishes may be cooked by making different permutations and combinations.

It is true, we act on the basis of our knowledge and past experience. But does not the fact that we have the capacity to look back upon our past experiences, examine and evaluate them, and accumulate wisdom for future application, constitute human freedom? Human life is a journey through the

dark passage of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The will is an instrument with which we conduct our lives, and the more we advance in knowledge, the more efficient is the functioning of the will. It gains more and more freedom as we advance towards knowledge. Knowledge should not be equated here with mere intellectual knowledge, but assimilated knowledge, that which becomes a part and parcel of our lives. Knowledge is virtue. As we gain in knowledge of the workings of nature, both internal and external, we acquire self-mastery and advance towards greater freedom.

IV

We may here briefly consider the Vedantic view of the problem of free will. Vedanta holds that everything that is phenomenal is subject to law. The whole universe is governed by law and order, and in its special application to living beings, especially human beings where mind is developed, the causal law operates as the law of Karma and the cosmic order as moral order. The law of Karma states that man acts on the basis of his character which itself is the resultant of his past actions and thoughts. And in its moral aspect it operates as the principle, 'As you sow, so you reap'. The *Gita* says that even the learned act according to character which is formed by impressions of past actions.⁸ The will, according to Vedanta, comes into existence only when the mind comes into contact with phenomenal objects and there arises desire in the mind. Before this contact no will is produced in the mind. Will is a compound, a mixture of the internal and the external. Therefore will is phenomenal and cannot be really free. It is subject to the same law of causality which the phenomenal universe is subject to. Further Vedanta holds mind itself is material, only

⁸. *Bhagavad-Gita*, III. 9.

it is fine matter. Therefore it is subject to law.⁹

Though the law of Karma is deterministic in its nature, it also asserts the freedom of the individual. Whence then is this freedom? What is the explanation of the sense of freedom in man? Vedanta answers: True, nothing phenomenal is free. But as the substratum of the universe there is the non-material Reality, which is untouched by nature and therefore absolutely free. This Reality is called Brahman, It is pure Consciousness and is the source of all phenomena. Brahman, in association with its inscrutable power called Maya, veils Its real nature and projects the phenomenal universe endowed with law and order, just as we project the dream universe when we veil our waking personality in sleep. This Brahman, which is behind the whole universe, therefore behind every one of the objects in it, is also behind every human personality, as the true Self of every man, endowing human personality with consciousness. Brahman as Self behind the individual is called the Atman. Now, apart from Atman, the principle of consciousness, the whole psycho-physical personality, consisting of the mind stuff, senses, and the body is phenomenal and is subject to law. The Self is reflected as the psyche or living soul in the psycho-physical being. It is thus the soul, the reflected Self, which is caught up in the meshes of the phenomena. And it also derives its freedom from the Self. If one can free oneself from phenomena by identifying oneself with the true Self, one realizes oneself as eternally free. But until then the nearer one is to the Self, the greater is the freedom that he feels, and the farther away he is from it, the lesser is the freedom that he feels. The light and freedom of the Self permeates through

the different layers of our psycho-physical personality, that which is more proximate to the Self, reflecting more of it. The finer the layer, the more interior it is, and therefore more proximate to the Self. Mind being a very subtle matter, the freedom of the Self is reflected in it more than in the body, and in the body more than in inanimate nature. Again, a pure mind reflects the Self more than a mind tinged with worldly desires. Therefore, it is the freedom of the Self that enables us to feel the sense of freedom and it is in association with this higher Self, or true Self, that we exercise freedom. Gibson echoes this when he says, 'Freedom is a permanent attitude of the conscious subject's relative independence in relation to the object that conditions but does not necessarily regulate its activity.'¹⁰

The will is not free, but that which is behind the will is free, and the will derives its freedom, limited though it be, from the Self. Thus Karma always goes hand in hand with the freedom of the Self, and this is the factor which gives rise to moral responsibility.

Henry Bergson seems to have caught a glimpse of this idea when he says, 'Hence there are finally two different selves, one of which is, as it were, the external projection of the other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation. We reach the former by deep introspection, which leads us to grasp our inner states as living things, constantly becoming, as states not amenable to measure, which permeate one another and of which the succession in duration has nothing in common with juxtaposition in homogeneous space. But the moments at which we thus grasp ourselves are rare, and that is just why we are rarely free. The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves. . . . We are "acted" rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover pos-

9. *Vide Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, Vol. V. p. 207 ; also I. p. 93 ; II. p. 282 ; III. p. 14 ; VI. p. 31.

10. Boyce Gibson, *Personal Idealism*, p. 345 f.

session of oneself, and to get back into pure duration.'¹¹

We realize greater and greater freedom as we advance towards our true Self, the higher Self, i.e. to the extent we are able to set aside the lower self and allow the higher Self to act, we gain in freedom and when the lower self is completely eliminated, we realize the fullness of freedom in our true Self. Moral struggle would be impossible, and meaningless, if there were pure determinism and no freedom of the Self. As things stand, it is only our phenomenal personality, the psycho-physical personality, which is affected by imperfection and our true Self is ever free and perfect (*nitya shuddha-buddha-mukta svabhāva*). Therefore the *Gita* advises us to take our stand on the Self and fight the moral battle. Says the *Gita*, 'Knowledge (of the true Self) is covered by this, the constant foe of the wise, the unappeasable fire of desire. The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its abode: through these, it deludes the embodied by veiling his wisdom. . . . The senses are said to be superior¹² to the body; the

mind is superior to the senses; the intellect is superior to the mind; and that which is superior to the intellect (as the source of consciousness and freedom) is He (the Self or Atman). Thus knowing Him who is superior to the intellect, and restraining the self by the Self, destroy, O mighty-armed, that enemy, the unseizable foe, desire (the cause of bondage).'¹³

Finally, it is well to remember that it is we who pose the problem of free will and examine it as detached witnesses, thus asserting the freedom of the human soul. The real man is not the machine, but its operator. The working of the machine is strictly determined by the design, but its movements can be controlled and guided by an operator. The working of the car is determined, but the driver can control it and keep it to the road, and guide it in different directions to reach the destination. Similarly human will is an instrument, strictly determined, but amenable to control and guidance in its operation to serve moral and spiritual ends.

¹². Superior, i.e. in subtleness and in point of proximity to, and in the capacity to reflect the consciousness and freedom of, the Self.

¹³. *Bhagavad-Gita*, III. 39-43.

¹¹. *Time and Free Will*, Eng. Tr., London, 1910. p. 231 f.

VIVEKANANDA LABORATORY : A DREAM REALIZED *

MRS. GERTRUDE EMERSON SEN

It was raining heavily in Darjeeling on the fourth of July 1924, when Boshi Sen declared to himself that the one-man Vivekananda Laboratory had come into existence. He had no money of his own, and nearly all

his friends had warned him it was a crazy idea. Why resign from an assured position at the Bose Institute in Calcutta? Yet having worked with Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose for twelve long years, he felt an irresistible urge to do something entirely on his own. India was far behind the West in scientific development. If it was ever to catch up in the world of modern science, a few big institutions, located in a few big

* This article is a shortened version of an account published in the Golden Jubilee pamphlet *50 years of the Vivekananda Laboratory, Almora (U.P.), India* (pp. 1-15), issued on July 4, 1975.

cities, would never create scientific awareness among the people. Many small centres of dedicated research scattered all over the country would be needed. Having no professional equipment at hand at the moment, he took the pH of the rain-water, as symbolic gesture ! At the same time, he made a secret pact with Vivekananda (whom he had never known but who had long been his ideal): 'I am willing to work without sparing myself, and you will provide me with all that is good for me.'

After his own death in August 1971, a strange little hand-written document in the nature of a testamentary letter came to light among his papers. It was addressed to Vivekananda and it read: 'Swamiji Maharaj, I have dared to associate your name with this undertaking. You know what I can do and cannot do. My prayer to you, the blessed and one beloved of my Guru, is that I may not discredit your good name. Please *destroy* me before that. They say you are the friend of the destitute and suffer fools gladly. Befriend me in this undertaking. May I have Love for Thee and thine, and Faith, is the prayer which you have taught. *Pranams* and *Sastanga*, Boshi.'

The Vivekananda Laboratory was not, after all, founded as some might suppose on intangible and airy nothingness. Besides love and faith, Boshi Sen was gifted with an enthusiastic and joyous disposition which had brought him many friends, both Indian and Western. He had an infectious sense of humour, unswerving loyalty to those to whom he had given his love or who had ever helped him in any way, compassion, willingness to face hardships and privations, and last but not least, considerable scientific training and experience.

As soon as he returned to Calcutta from Darjeeling, unexpected donations began to arrive from his well-wishers. Vivekananda, it appeared, was going to carry out his part

of the bargain, and Boshi Sen, with untiring zeal, set about fulfilling his part.

There is always a fascination in tracing the sign-posts pointing the way to the ultimate goal of any individual. Born in an upper middle class family in Bishnupur, Bankura district, Bengal, in 1887, Boshi Sen was the fourth among five brothers and five sisters. When Boshi was a mere boy, his father Rameshwar Sen died suddenly. No longer was there any ready cash in the house; nor were his elder brothers yet earning. At the age of twelve, Boshi passed the highest class in the local elementary school. His sister arranged for him to be sent to Ranchi, where another married sister lived, and there he finished high school. He went on to the free college at Burdwan, and finally to St. Xavier's College in Calcutta. Then, in 1909, when he was about half way through St. Xavier's, a momentous event took place—he met his Guru.

A friend from Bankura, Bibhuti Ghosh, studying law in Calcutta, asked him if he would not like to meet an old Sadhu of the Ramakrishna Mission. He was already familiar with the name of Vivekananda, one of whose small books of lectures he had read, but he knew nothing of the Ramakrishna Mission which Vivekananda had founded five years before his death. At St. Xavier's, Thursdays and Sundays were observed as holidays. This was a Thursday and the two young men hired a country boat to take them the four miles up the Hooghly to the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at Belur. Boshi Sen stopped to take off his laced shoes at the door of a ground floor room, while his friend went inside and was telling Swami Sadananda that he had brought a boy with him who would like to ask some questions. A strange welcome, indeed, then greeted him. Sadananda, the first disciple of Vivekananda, was lying ill on a cot. Sunken burning eyes seemed to pierce right

through the new-comer. With no preliminaries, he began to criticize him from top to toe—oil in his hair, pan-juice staining his mouth, grease on his coat-collar when obviously he could not afford to send his coat to a dry-cleaner's, Western style shoes, which probably brought all the dust of the street into his house, instead of Indian *chappals*, so easy to slip on and off. Thoroughly abashed, Boshi Sen could make no reply. Sadananda went on, 'People come here as if it were a picnic-ground! Don't you know that this place was built with the very blood of Vivekananda!'

When Bibhuti Ghosh asked him on the following Sunday if he would go out again to see Sadananda, anybody else would surely have said 'No, thank you,' but Boshi Sen said 'Yes.' Naturally he could not afford to change his offensive clothes, but this time as he was again taking off his shoes he heard a voice inside asking, 'Where is that boy who came with you last time? I am afraid I was too severe with him. I could not sleep all night.' And to Boshi, 'Do you smoke, brother?', handing over his own hookah! As they were leaving, he said quietly to Boshi Sen, 'Everything I have is yours!' Thus, in a flash, Guru and disciple had recognised each other.

In those early days, the Ramakrishna Mission had no adequate facilities for taking care even of one of its own sick Swamis. Though not yet fifty, Sadananda now needed constant attention. He had worn himself out nursing plague patients, lepers, sweeping the lanes of Calcutta during an epidemic, unhesitatingly performing every possible menial service for the poor and needy, as Vivekananda had thunderingly demanded of his brother monks and followers. In the emergency of his illness, Sadananda now simply announced, 'Boshi Sen will take care of me.'

A telegram was sent to Bishnupur, where he had gone for the summer holidays, ask-

ing if he could arrange for Sadananda's care, and without a moment's hesitation he wired back 'Yes', not knowing in the least how he was to manage it. Vivekananda's Irish-English disciple, Sister Nivedita, promptly came to the rescue. On her first arrival in India to organise the school for young widows and girls that Vivekananda wanted, she had been placed in the charge of Sadananda. He was her brother disciple. She offered to rent a house at 8 Bosepara Lane just opposite the school, and Sadananda, Boshi Sen and his younger brother, Motiswar Sen, moved in. Two years later, after Sadananda's death, it was Nivedita again who introduced Boshi Sen to Jagadish Chandra Bose, thus forming an important link in the mysterious workings of his destiny.

The two years spent with the Guru were a time of unremitting and often harsh discipline and character-building. There were no fine lectures on religion or philosophy, but daily emphasis on doing every small thing perfectly—how to light the fire, how to cook, how to keep things in order, how to support the Guru in a half-sitting posture, sometimes by the hour, so he could breathe more freely. The brother attended to his needs by day, and Boshi, still attending his classes at St. Xavier's, had the self-appointed night duty. Should Sadananda ask for a glass of water at 3 a.m., and it was handed to him a bit sleepily, a sharp rebuke would come. 'Either you watch me, or I watch you! Is life for sleeping? Be awake!'

Bengal was seething with discontent over the foreign rule, and the underground terrorist movement was already in the making. At the time of the projected division of Bengal in 1905, Boshi Sen, like other students, had joined demonstrations and strikes and had once even thrown his clothes of foreign-made cloth into a bonfire. Seeing how the mind of his disciple was leaning, Sadananda one day asked, 'How many

Britishers are here?' 'About 200,000.' 'And how many of you are here?' 'About 300,000,000.' 'Then is it their strength or your weakness that makes you slaves? Mere talk and oratory won't do. Be a man and do some constructive work. This is what Vivekananda gave his life for.' A surgical operation went on to remove false sentiments and wrong ideas, and then to replace them by a living ideal of disinterested service to India.

In spite of the constant hammering, never for a moment did either of the two brothers cease to be aware of the Guru's abiding love. Once Boshi was awakened at night by a hand gently stroking his hair as Sadananda softly chanted a famous hymn of Shankaracharya. At another time, after a particularly devastating hammering, he took Boshi's hand and placed it over his heart. 'I ought to cut my breast open and keep you here,' he said, 'but, you see, my time is very short. I haven't time to take you by the easy, pleasant path. I have to push you straight up into the line.' When Sadananda died, in 1911, the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission thought the 'dogs of Sadananda', as everybody affectionately called them, would be totally crushed. 'Not at all,' said Boshi Sen. 'You know his name means "eternal bliss." He left his joy with us.'

Having passed his B.Sc., he had some thought of joining the Mission, but Nivedita arranged the meeting with Dr. Bose, then Professor of Physics at the Presidency College, Calcutta. 'Two more years of scientific training will not jeopardise your soul,' Bose told him. Those eleven words gave a new direction to his life! He registered for the M.Sc. course in science under Bose, but suddenly Nivedita also died at the end of the same year in which Sadananda had died. She had all along been paying the Rs. 20 a month rent for his little house, and he did not wish to ask his brother for more money. Bose then offered him his choice—a personal

recommendation for a good teaching position, or joining him as a research scholar on Rs. 20 a month. It was a foregone conclusion that he would choose the second alternative.

An exciting new world of scientific experimentation now opened before him. There was no Bose Institute as yet (that was still six years away), and Bose's laboratory consisted of only a room and a half in the old building of the Presidency College, plus a glassed-in space under a fire-escape. Here five young research workers jostled one another for space to set up their experiments. Yet precisely under such conditions Bose had conceived and was carrying on his remarkable experiments with plants.

First known as a distinguished Physicist who had already made an international name for himself for his important contributions to the knowledge of electrical waves in ether, and for his development of a Coherer of extreme sensitivity contrived from a simple arrangement of galena crystals which was capable of detecting wireless signals, perhaps not yet known to Marconi, Bose had discovered that the vibrations of invisible electromagnetic waves—ten million times longer than light waves—produced a stress and strain in the molecular action of so-called inert matter comparable to muscle strain in animals. A thorough study of metals followed. They were given electric shocks, struck with repeated blows, frozen, made torpid under the application of narcotics, inactive under poisons. Depending on the intensity or dosage of the stimulus, the automatic needle of his recorder twitched, showed fatigue, swung to zero, or indicated recovery, after a period of rest. Inevitably, the next step was to begin experimenting with plants, occupying a place half way between inorganic matter and the animal world. Bose the physicist became Bose the physiologist. He proclaimed and demonstrated that there

was a common physico-chemical property in all matter, both living and non-living, and that plants and animals alike exhibited a universal response to external stimuli. No one could say with finality, 'Here the physical ends and the physiological begins.'

Plants were systematically subjected to investigation, and all parts of a plant—stem, leaf, petals, even the inside and outside of the petals. Though all plants were sensitive in different degrees, all responded to sun, heat, cold, gases, poisons, alcohol, or shock, some were so sensitive that they even responded to one three-millionth part of a standard electric impulse, in comparison with the inability of the tip of the tongue, for example, to perceive an impulse ten times stronger. With his inventive genius, Bose developed several ingenious instruments for the automatic registration of plant tissue reactions—contractive, nervous, rhythmic. He did not attribute a brain or a soul to plants, but he showed that their reaction to external stimuli was parallel to the reaction of animal muscle.

Bose's enthusiasm and indefatigable energy, always seeking to synthesize his scientific observations and facts, were highly infectious. For Boshi Sen, he had become his Guru in Science, to whom the same sort of devotion and service were to be rendered as he had given Sadananda. There was no such thing as 'work to rule.' Hours were never counted.

In 1914, the Imperial Government of India decided to send Mr. Bose abroad, in compliance with request to lecture and give demonstrations at various scientific institutions and universities in England and on the continent. Boshi Sen was selected to accompany him as assistant and demonstrator. While Dr. Bose and his wife sailed from Bombay with the instruments, Boshi took the long route from Calcutta around Ceylon, charged with the guardianship of precious plants of *Mimosa pudica* and *Des-*

modium gyrans. These gave dramatic responses for demonstrations, but they might not be easily picked up abroad. Keeping the plants alive and healthy in view of all the vicissitudes of changing climates was no easy task, yet eventually two of the same plants, having travelled round the world with Bose's party, were brought safely back to India, at the end of fifteen months.

The Bose Institute for fundamental research in physiology was opened in Calcutta in 1917. Boshi Sen continued to work at the Institute for several more years. He owed everything connected with his scientific career to Bose, he well knew, yet he found himself growing a bit restless—or was it that he was only a little tired? Great as he was, Bose could not be compared with a Vivekananda. He was less warm at heart and more self-centered. After all, it was not the size of an institution that mattered, but its spirit, Boshi Sen reflected. Perhaps some day he might start a little laboratory of his own, with greater freedom to put some of his deeper ideals into practice. The dream became disturbing. In all the twelve years of working with Bose, Boshi Sen could not remember ever having taken a single day's holiday, not even a Sunday off, except once when the brother who had helped educate him fell ill with *Kala-azar* fever. When he asked for a period of long leave, Bose coldly told him he seemed to have lost all interest in his work, and if the place didn't suit him, he had better look elsewhere. Taking this as a practical dismissal which freed him from further obligations, Boshi Sen sailed with the Overtons for San Francisco via the Pacific in March 1923. Was a new door opening, he wondered?... Apparently, yes.

A few weeks later in New York, he met his old friend Sir Patrick Geddes, whom he called his Guru in Sociology. Geddes had spent a number of years in India as a town planner and lecturer in sociology and civics,

including one lecture term at the Bose Institute: He was very insistent that Boshi should go to Woods Hole, near Boston, and meet Leonard Elmhirst and his financial backer, Dorothy Straight, who was soon to become Mrs. Elmhirst. In America, he chanced to meet one Miss Emerson, an editor of the magazine *Asia*. Their acquaintance was renewed in India four years later, and exactly nine years after their first meeting they were married in Calcutta.

In England, on his way home, a pleasant surprise awaited him. He learned that his first independent research paper, 'On the Relation Between Permeability Variation and Plant Movements,' communicated

nearly a year before, had been accepted for publication and was due to appear in the *Proceedings* of the Royal Society before the end of 1923. This inspired a new self-confidence.

Back in India, he formally resigned from the Bose Institute. The time had come to realise his dream of a little laboratory of his own. The kitchen at 8 Bosepara Lane was transformed for the purpose. To begin with, two big boxes on wheels served as laboratory tables.

Since Sadananda's room upstairs had become a shrineroom, and his younger brother now occupied the other upstairs room, the laboratory boxes, rolled together



*Boshi Sen in his one-man converted
Kitchen Laboratory, Calcutta.*

at night, became Boshi Sen's bed. An open cemented courtyard provided space for keeping plants. Informed of his decision not to accept the Tagore proposition after all, since he now planned to start his own laboratory, the Elmhursts most generously asked him to keep the instruments for his own use, and simultaneously promised a small contribution for one year. And as already recounted, the Vivekananda Laboratory was officially born on July 4th, 1924.

Obviously the early years were filled with innumerable difficulties, but they were accepted as obstacles merely to be overcome. With limited equipment, he began a serious study of the effect of temperature on plasma membrane. Bose's researches dealt with plant tissues, Boshi Sen's, with single plant cells. Older scientific friends took an interest in the new laboratory, and younger ones, too, were presently dropping in for a few hours of voluntary work. He was even able to offer one of them a regular salary of Rs. 150 a month, S. M. Sircar—who subsequently became the Director of the Bose Institute!

Happily, friendly relations were re-established with Bose himself, and maintained as long as Bose lived, though the latter could not altogether hide the fact that he missed the devoted co-operation of his former assistant. He wrote in one letter, 'Having not heard from you for a long time, I was worried'; in another, 'I dreamt yesterday that Vines had organised a great reception for us at Oxford, where there was an enthusiastic crowd to welcome us, the essential mechanism of life processes being now better understood. Vines was in great form, and was asking *Boshi* what additional things would be wanted for a demonstration.' He also expressed gratification over the new Laboratory's progress: 'This has been due to the whole-hearted devotion with which you followed advanced research. On another occasion he wrote, 'Great things

grow from small beginnings, provided there is a steadfast purpose behind.' Once there was a more personal note: 'Is there anything that could give me greater happiness than the fact that my trust in some of my disciples has been fully justified and that the light that has been enkindled will continue to burn with undiminished brilliance?' Boshi replied: 'Beloved Master, my little contribution to physiology is from the sparks which emanate from you. Those sparks are enough to keep me busy through the rest of my life.... So long as life endures, wherever I might be or whatever fate may bring, you will have at least one disciple. I ask for your blessings.'

The kitchen laboratory of Calcutta before long seemed to be outgrowing its restricted quarters, and a cement courtyard, after all, was not a very good place to raise plants. In the summer of 1926, he moved most of his equipment to Almora in the Himalayas, but brought it back again to Calcutta for the winter. After several seasonal migrations back and forth, the Vivekananda Laboratory was permanently shifted to Almora in 1936. Why Almora? many persons asked. Vivekananda had visited the place three times and found the atmosphere inspiring, with its magnificent view of the high snow peaks. So had other Ramakrishna Swamis, including Sadananda. On the practical side, it had an excellent all-year round climate, and was about the cheapest place to live of any hill stations in India.

It was not the kitchen but the drawing-room of Kundan House, acquired on long lease, that now became the Vivekananda Laboratory. True, there was no electricity as yet, no gas, no running water in Almora—inconveniences to be remedied in due course—but Boshi Sen had imbibed inventiveness and ingenuity in the long years with Bose. A home-made insulation device kept hot water on tap all day. Under his super-

vision, a local carpenter built solid laboratory tables and stools, and packing-boxes were converted into presentable shelves for holding chemicals and books. What was most badly needed, however, was the adjustable gas flame of a Bunsen Burner, for drawing the fine glass pipettes for injecting different solutions into living cells, which were then to be observed under a powerful microscope, or for making platinized glass electrodes to study with the help of a galvanometer the electric charge of the colloidal particles. A hollow glass tube bent to shape, a microscopic plug of cotton stuffed in at the pointed tip, and the tube then filled with sand and finally alcohol poured in at the open end, produced a tiny steady blue flame, as good as that of any manufactured Bunsen Burner.

Fascinating as pure physiological research with living plant cells was, the agonized cry of Vivekananda on behalf of the starving millions of India could never be forgotten. It echoed in the back of his mind. 'Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a god who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven!' Inevitably fundamental research was expanded to include many aspects of practical agriculture—better crops, improved techniques of cultivation, introduction of new food and fodder crops from the United States, Europe, and Africa, production of palm-sugar for the first time from the wild date-palms growing in the region, training of farmers here and there in the villages around Almora.

Many people now began to take notice of the Vivekananda Laboratory, but it still had to depend for its entire support on private donations, mostly from foreign friends. Often there were times of worry, stress and strain. It was not for twelve years after the Vivekananda Laboratory was founded that the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in Delhi made a first small grant of Rs. 2,500 for a scheme of fundamental

research in plant physiology for one year, afterwards extended for three more years. The Uttar Pradesh State Government (then the United Provinces) followed suit with a separate grant for a fodder scheme on Giant Star Grass. This official support from India was particularly providential since it came at a time after the outbreak of the Second World War when the Elmhirsts were compelled to suspend their regular annual grant so generously continued from the very start of the Laboratory. Then, after a period of altogether eighteen years, the U.P. Government actually offered Boshi Sen himself an unsolicited personal honorarium of Rs. 500 a month!

The British Governor of the Province visited Almora and, seeing that the Vivekananda Laboratory needed more land than a private compound or the small plots borrowed from neighbours for its agricultural experiments, approved the acquisition of a couple of acres of vacant land directly adjoining the residentially housed laboratory. A much larger area was also acquired for a big farm at Hawalbagh, eight miles from Almora. At last, in 1943, the first real laboratory building, built and dedicated as such, came up, overlooking the next-door fields.

Land, grants, buildings, staff—all were now available. Recognition of other kinds were also to come his way. After Independence, as Director of the Vivekananda Laboratory, Boshi Sen was asked to serve on the Seed Multiplication Committee of the Planning Commission. In 1955 he was selected as one of two Indians to joint the first short course to be opened in the United States to foreigners for training in the peaceful uses of atomic energy, his interest being in its use for agriculture. At the suggestion of Prime Minister Nehru, in 1960 a trained scientist from the Vivekananda Laboratory was sent to Leh (at an altitude of over 11,000 feet), in Ladakh, to see if

any profitable agricultural work could be started in that barren border area. Two highly successful farms were developed, which were later turned over to the Defence Ministry, but high altitude work has continued to be carried on in co-operation with the Laboratory. Recently three such farms have been created at Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Uttarkashi, in the U.P. He also received the award of Padma Bhushan, a Watumull award, and eventually an honorary doctor's degree from Pantnagar University. To ensure the continuation of the work in the event that some day—perhaps not too distant—he himself should no longer be present, and also in the future interest of his

loyal colleagues and workers who had helped to build the Vivekananda Laboratory, he decided in 1959 to transfer the Laboratory with all its valuable equipment and scientific library to the U.P. Government. In its Golden Jubilee year 1974-75, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, of the Central Government of India, took over the Vivekananda Laboratory from the U.P. Government, placed under its new Director, Dr. J. P. Tandon, and declared it a National Institution.

Dr. Bose had said, 'Great things grow from small beginnings, provided there is a steady purpose behind.' Also, one may add, love and faith.

EXPERIENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

PROF. P. S. SASTRI

Let us first consider the problem of experience: A valid cognition refers to a positive veil covering its object, and this veil is removable by the cognition itself and it is different from the negation prior to existence. It refers to the veil because it illumines the hitherto unillumined object, like the first ray of light from a lamp in pitch-darkness.¹ This is a valid inferential cognition which involves the epistemic act of the mind. The manifestation of a hitherto unapprehended object implies that the object was previously covered. This veil is called the *āvaraṇa śakti* of Avidya (veiling power of nescience) by the thinkers of the Advaita school of philosophy. Since the veil is only inferred or implied, there is an inexplicable effect which requires a causal principle that has a similar inexplicable character. This

cause is taken to be Maya or Avidya (nescience).

The products of Avidya or its manifestations cannot claim to be absolutely real. That the object is unreal is established, when the knowledge it offers is negated. But the negation of knowledge does not arise from the unreality of the object, but from some other knowledge based on experience.

What is the status of Avidya? What is its ground? Here we have a variety of views. The Absolute, the finite God of religion, and the individual soul are all said to be the ground of Maya or Avidya by some thinker or the other. Each has offered arguments in favour of his theory, and attacked the views of the others.

The Absolute, it is said, is the ground of cosmic ignorance by Its mere being. This accounts for the continuous transformations of ignorance. These modifications cannot

¹. Vide *Vivarāṇa Prameya Sangraha*, 17.

depend on the will of the Absolute because the will itself is a modification of ignorance, and there can be no Absolute possessing ignorance or controlled by ignorance. This ignorance cannot be innate in consciousness because the latter is self-luminous and non-relational. The Absolute cannot have the inherent property of being the ground or the object of ignorance. But because ignorance and inexplicable forms are facts of our empirical experience, and because no appearance can be the appearance of nothing, we presume from our finite point of view that the Absolute must be the ultimate ground of everything. That which has predicative existence must be grounded in the substantial existence; otherwise it will be absolutely non-existent.

This cosmic ignorance is a principle of conditioning, not that it is a condition of itself. It is a dynamic principle initiating the process of conditioning. But it cannot condition that which is greater than itself. When we speak of consciousness being conditioned, we only mean an apparent conditioning. It is a mental construct which facilitates an interpretation of the phenomena. This however does not mean that ignorance being imaginary, it imagines itself. This imaginary relation comes from the individual. If I imagine a being with a hundred hands it does not mean that these hands have imagined themselves. Moreover, an imaginary relation is not an actual relation.

In the absence of Avidya it is impossible to explain the non-manifestation of the soul's absolute freedom, and to explain the material cause of all sorts of phenomenal appearances. We have therefore to assume the existence of Avidya.

If cosmic ignorance gets itself modified, it must undergo a transformation. In getting itself transformed, it cannot be said to be transforming a part of itself. If it is totally transformed, it becomes one with the

changing, evolving universe. That is, with the origination of the world, this ignorance is not destroyed because it is present as the world. The causal principle operates in a series and ignorance as identical with the forms goes on producing ever new diverse forms. The causal law then does not speak of the destruction of the cause when the effect originates, but it speaks of the abiding continuity of the causal essence. Thus the inexplicable snake arises when the given is only a rope. The rope is not the cause, and its similarity of form somehow begets another form that is similar. This is an inexplicable product like every other object in the universe. The erroneous snake is produced on the substratum (rope) as an effect of the modification of ignorance. The production of the illusory object is not prior to, or posterior to the perception, because it was not there before I saw; and it could not have originated after I saw. My perception and the object appear to emerge together. It is not the contact of the sense with the object that determines a perceptual act. What is required in a perceptual apprehension is the emergence of an epistemic act, and this can arise even independently of any contact with the senses. As such my perception and the production of the object can be and are simultaneous.

Avidya is a positive, beginningless principle which can be removed by knowledge.² Consider the statement, 'I do not know what you say'. Here we are asserting both knowledge and ignorance.³ This is not possible if ignorance is the contradictory of knowledge. Avidya as the cause of the phenomenal universe points to the positive character of the material cause of the universe;⁴ for the material cause is invariably the constituent

2. *Vide Tattva Pradīpikā* of Citsukha, 57; *Advaita Siddhi*, 544.

3. *Vide* Nrisimhāsrama on *Sankṣepa sārīraka*, 1.20.

4. *Vide Iṣṭa siddhi*, 49.

character of the existence or appearance of its effect. A negative entity cannot be the cause of a positive product since the real does not emerge from the unreal. We can know neither unreality or the negation of reality.⁵ In other words Avidya is positive in the sense that it is not negative.

This Avidya cannot have a beginning. An entity that has a beginning is caused, and its cause must have a character essentially identical with it.⁶ This will lead to a regress; and to avoid this, it is necessary to assume that Avidya is uncaused.

If Avidya is a positive entity causing the rise of the appearances, the material cause of the absence of the pot on the ground must be traced to Avidya.⁷ Then the positive Avidya becomes the material cause of the negation of the pot, and this is self-contradictory; for in such a case the unreal can also be the material cause of the real. Moreover, the awareness of the phenomenal object has a beginning in time, and as such Avidya too must have a beginning. Can we not however argue that the statement 'I am ignorant' expresses a direct or immediate experience of Avidya? If we do not admit a positive principle like Avidya, such a statement remains inexplicable.

Before we take up this, it may be better to consider whether Avidya is removable by knowledge. Avidya prevents us from apprehending Reality as it is. Since Reality is not an object of cognition, this prevention has to endure. Even if we have a true cognition of the ground in an erroneous cognition, Avidya has to remain undestroyed. We may thus have a true cognition of a tree and yet its reflection in water still continues to present the tree as upside down.

Avidya is said to be different from being and non-being. Then how can it be begin-

ningless? A beginningless entity cannot be destroyed, if it is other than non-being. But if the fact of beginning implies the possibility of destruction, how does the non-existence of the pot prior to its origination cease to be? And how does its non-existence emerge after the pot is destroyed?⁸

But an existent can be terminated or destroyed if there is a competent force opposing it. It is immaterial whether the existent has a beginning or not. Avidya moreover is not positive in the sense in which an existent is positive. The positive is that which is other than negation⁹ and which can be destroyed. Different from negation has a character different from that of negation.

The judgment that I am ignorant is the experience of the negation of knowledge.¹⁰ It is the experience of the absence of knowledge, much in the same manner as I cognise the ground having no pot. Moreover, how can the statement 'I do not know pleasure' be explained? The removal of Avidya in the case of an object needs an epistemic act, and there is no such act in the cognition of pleasure and pain. But the awareness of pleasure and pain is rendered possible by the witnessing consciousness (*sākṣin*). The *sākṣin* apprehends both the cognition and the ignorance. As such there is no need to postulate an epistemic act here.

Avidya distorts the one Reality and presents it as many. If the objectivity of the Avidya of a physical object is a distortion of the Real, then the same would apply to the cognitions that are erroneous and otherwise.

In the knowledge of negation, we have also the knowledge of its counter-entity. Then the ignorance of the knowledge of the Absolute necessarily involves the knowledge

5. *Vide Gītā*, 2.16.

6. *Vide Pramāṇamala*, 11.

7. *Vide Vyāsa Tīrtha, Nyāyamrita*, 299.

8. *Vide Advaita Siddhi*, 545.

9. *Vide Advaita Siddhi*, 544.

10. *Vide Nyāyamrita*, 308.

of the Absolute. But the counter-entity of the negation prior to the origination here is not actually the Absolute but the knowledge of the realization of the Absolute.¹¹ The counter-entity is to be known not in a general way. In the negation of the pot the counter-entity of the negation is the pot which is apprehended through a cognition other than the perceptual one.¹²

Causal relation is not possible between entities that are absolutely similar or between those that are absolutely dissimilar.¹³ The effect cannot then be the same as the cause both in form and matter; and if it is totally dissimilar, it cannot be related to that which is said to be its cause. Causal relation implies that the two are both similar and dissimilar. The cause is similar in the nature of existence and dissimilar in the form of manifestation. Thus Avidya and illusory negation have a causal relation. They have similarity in the inexplicable nature of existence they possess. They are dissimilar in the form of manifestation. Avidya is primal while the illusory negation is the manifestation of Avidya.

The ground of Avidya which makes an object appear as a rope is not the consciousness conditioned by the rope, but the pure Absolute consciousness. This Absolute consciousness is conditioned by the rope-appearance without involving any limitation of consciousness. This is similar to temporal limitation of absolute negation which limitation is only conceptual.¹⁴ Thus even the conditioning of Absolute Consciousness is only conceptual. This Absolute consciousness as conditioned by Avidya becomes an object to the epistemic act.

Can we establish Avidya as a logically convincing entity? In our experience we are acquainted with Avidya only as the

negation of knowledge. By Avidya we normally mean the prior non-existence of knowledge or its posterior non-existence. Avidya may mean the negation of knowledge, or the contradictory of knowledge. As the negation of knowledge, it is not inexplicable. As the contradictory of knowledge, it can be doubt, error, or some such thing. This Avidya then does not appear as inexplicable.¹⁵

Avidya cannot be defined, nor can it be established by any valid means of cognition. If it is defined as that which is removed by knowledge, then the prior knowledge, which is removed by a subsequent one, will have to be Avidya. If it is defined as that beginningless entity which is removed by knowledge, then it will have to explain the difficulty that arises in the case of the prior non-existence of knowledge. It may be defined as the beginningless positive entity which is removed by knowledge. But that which is beginningless and positive is eternal and hence not removable. It cannot be defined as the beginningless, inexplicable ignorance, because it is explicable and because it is not possible to conceive of an entity which is neither being nor non-being. Can Avidya be the ignorance which is the material cause of error? Then the self as the ground of the universe of appearances will be a case of Avidya. If the material cause of error is real, then the error will not be real; and hence it may be argued, the universe does not have the self as its material cause. But the Absolutist does claim a certain degree of reality to the object of the erroneous apprehension. The existence of an object, and not the essence of the given, is apprehended erroneously. The being of the object is admitted in erroneous apprehension. If we deny the being of the object, there cannot be any reference to

11. *Vide Advaita Siddhi*, 552.

12. *Vide Vivaraṇa Prameya Sangraha*, 16.

13. *Vide Advaita Siddhi*, 544.

14. *Vide Laghucandrikā*, 544.

15. *Vide Tattva Pradīpikā* of Citsukha, 54.

this.¹⁶ As such, we cannot deny the reality of Avidya, if it were to be assumed; and this reality would not be different from that of the self.

Even if we admit the possibility of defining Avidya, how can it be established? One may say that I experience I am ignorant. But this can be explained as absence of knowledge. When I experience my ignorance, I am not aware of this Avidya as beginningless and positive. When one gets up from sleep, he says that he was ignorant in his sleep. This experience too cannot establish the reality of Avidya because even this negation of knowledge is said by the Absolutist to be revealed by the witnessing consciousness; and one can only infer the absence of knowledge in the state of sleep.¹⁷

The negation of knowledge is dependent on the knowledge of the counter-entity of the substratum. In deep sleep this may exist as pure unqualified consciousness. Such a consciousness does not apprehend Avidya. Then how can we infer the absence of knowledge in sleep? But even the prior indeterminate or unqualified experience can become an object of determinate apprehension. In the stage of determinate apprehension the negation of knowledge becomes a specific object by being dependent on the knowledge of the counter-entity of the substratum.¹⁸

Still the inference of the absence of knowledge in deep sleep is impossible because the self that had the deep sleep belongs to a time prior to that of the inferring moment. That self is not experienced now, and hence it is not possible to infer the absence of knowledge in that self. But this is not an insuperable difficulty. The person had some knowledge prior to his sleep; and when he wakes up after some time, he finds

out that some time did elapse without his having any knowledge. This he would attribute to the state when he was asleep, and thus he can infer the absence of knowledge during the interval. We cannot say that there was an indeterminate apprehension during deep sleep because the instruments of cognition not then active.¹⁹

These arguments are neither logical nor convincingly logical. *Ajñāna* (nescience) is the beginningless, positive entity which is sublated by knowledge. All forms of ignorance have these three characteristics. The definition does not apply to the self because, though the self too is beginningless and positive, it is not liable to be sublated or negated. Even the point instants do not come under this definition because they have a beginning. That *ajñāna* is liable to be sublated is not impossible. Even if it is positive it can be destroyed because it does not have an absolutely positive character. It is not positive in the sense of being a particular, because particularity itself is only conditioned being. It is different from non-being.²⁰

Assume that B has a knowledge brought about by a valid means of cognition. This knowledge negates the absence of knowledge. In so doing it destroys the beginningless Avidya which is other than the non-existent.²¹

The experience of not knowing anything in deep sleep is itself a basis for establishing Avidya. This is not a negation of knowledge since it is an actual experience. The apprehension of non-being is dependent on the awareness of the counter-entity of the substratum; and when this is absent, there is no possibility of experiencing it.²²

We cannot say that there is an indeter-

18. *Vide Ibid.*, 54-55.

17. *Vide Ibid.*, 55.

18. *Vide Ibid.*

19. *Vide Ibid.*, 55-56.

20. *Vide Ibid.*, 57.

21. *Vide Ibid.*, 58.

22. *Vide Ibid.*, 58-59.

minate apprehension of the absence of knowledge because of a similarity of difference; for, like similarity, there will accrue the character of being since the indeterminate apprehension is said to apprehend being.²³

After waking up when I say that I did not know anything in myself, this cannot be an inferential cognition, because the middle term is not available. The absence of the activity of the instruments of cognition gives rise to the inference of the absence of knowledge, and the latter gives rise to the former. Because of this fallacy of mutual dependence, the inference is invalid.²⁴

23. *Vide Ibid.*, 59.

24. *Vide Ibid.*, 59.

Implication too establishes *ajñāna*. The statement that 'I do not know what you said', can be explained only if we necessarily assume *ajñāna*. That I do not know is an actual fact of experience, and that you said has an intelligible import is also a fact. I am aware of my ignorance. Then the two parts of the statement appear to be self-contradictory. It is not that I have only a general idea and not a specific determinate knowledge. The *ajñāna* that I have is not capable of being apprehended through any of the valid means of cognition, because it has its ground in the witnessing consciousness.²⁵

25. *Vide Ibid.*, 59-60.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The World As It Appears to Men—I: Although all men appear equal from the humanistic point of view, they vary so much in their psychological constitution, and everyday experience of life, that the world appears differently to them. We find scientists, philosophers, poets, and others presenting their own views regarding this world as it appears to them. To the men of realization alone the world appears in its true form. In this part of the editorial the world view of the Advaita Vedantists has been mainly discussed. The world views of other great men will be discussed in the next.

Swami Vivekananda's Discoveries About India—V: In this instalment of the series, Swami Bhajanananda discusses the 'Third Vedantic Principle of Harmony'. He has shown, how Hinduism and other religions are harmoniously integrated in the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, and how Swami Vivekananda also has pointed out the same through his speeches and writings.

Reality and the Categories of Thought: An Advaita Perspective: All the philosophies, Eastern or Western, aim at knowing the Reality, even though they differ in the method of their approach to It. Most of the philosophers believe that the Knower, known and knowledge are three different entities. With such a basic conviction they make an attempt to conceive the Reality. But the religious history has shown that all such efforts ended either in utter failure, or in partial experience of the Reality. Sri K. B. Ramakrishna Rao, Head of Dept. of Hindu Philosophy, University of Mysore, has thoughtfully discussed the Advaitic way of approach, and contrasted it with the Western methods.

Determinism and Free Will: The problem of free will has long been exercising the minds of philosophers and social thinkers all over the world, for, on free will depend ethics and morality and responsibility for one's actions. However, from a merely empirical point of view, the ques-

tion, as is seen, can never be solved as all phenomena seem to be bound by the law of causation. Yet, how to account for the sense of freedom everyone feels within oneself, and on the basis of which all our activities in life proceed? In answer, Swami Mukhyanandaji, who is at present an Acharya in the Probationers' Training Centre of the Belur Math, and known for his learning, says: It is only Vedanta that points to the transcendental free Self in man—which is intuitively perceived and is realizable—as the source of freedom of the will. Will being a part of the phenomena is bound by the law of causation; but, in association with the free Self, it has derived freedom and can strive to manipulate the law of causation to accomplish the purpose of man.

Vivekananda Laboratory: A Dream Realized: Swami Vivekananda had written to Mrs. Ole Bull on 5 June 1896 from London, 'What my nation wants is pluck and scientific genius. . . . Pluck is what my nation wants now and scientific education.' And here is a story of such a genius, who

built up a laboratory of his own, dedicated to Swamiji, and for the service of his own nation. Today the laboratory is carrying on researches on various problems of Agriculture, and has proved to be a boon to India.

Experience and Consciousness: According to Advaita Vedanta, our present experience of the world is not the correct experience, as it is regulated by *avidyā* (nescience), having two formidable powers of veiling (*āvaraṇa*) and projection (*vikṣepa*). Due to *avidyā*, the Reality is covered by means of its veiling power and in its place 'the subjects' are projected. Our today's experience, therefore, is not the correct experience, because when *avidyā* is removed by real knowledge, the experiencer realizes the same Reality everywhere. This *avidyā* differs from what is generally known as 'ignorance'. It has a special significance and explanation in Vedanta. In his scholarly treatise, Dr. P. S. Sastri, of Nagpur, has deliberated in detail on the various aspects of *avidyā*, and its effect on our 'experience and Consciousness'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE POWER AND MEANING OF LOVE : BY THOMAS MERTON. Publishers: Sheldon Press, London, 1976, pp. 151, Price: £ 1.95.

A collection of writings of Thomas Merton, the well-known Catholic monk whose studies in Eastern Religions are characterized by a rare insight. Speaking of Love, he points out that while 'the function of natural love is to perpetuate man in time, the function of spiritual love is to give man possession of eternity.' True love awakens oneness of spirit. The value of solitude for inner life is the theme of another article. In spiritual solitude one can reach out to others more effectively than 'in company'. In the last chapter, 'Christianity and Totalitarianism',

Merton examines and rebuts the charges of Karl Marx against Religion.

M. P. PANDIT,
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Pondicherry.

LIGHT ON YOGA : BY B. K. S. IYENGAR, Mandala Book, Unwin Paperback, 1976, pp. 544. Price : £ 3.75.

A reprint in paper back edition, this standard work of Prof. Iyengar deals with the tradition of the Hatha Yoga and the Raja Yoga generally, and with Asanas and Pranayama techniques particularly. About 200 Asanas and 14 breathing exercises are described in detail (with over 600

illustrations). The writer rightly treats both the Hatha and the Raja Yogas as not two separate disciples but as one leading to the other—in fact one finding its completion in the other. The therapeutic values of the different asanas are separately listed. The presentation has been designed to serve as a guide book for those who wish to pursue a systematic practice of the Yogasanas. The glossary and the index add to the value of the publication.

M. P. PANDIT,

CULTURE AND SOCIETY : BY BALAKRISHNA N. NAIR. Published by Thomson Press (India) Ltd., Publication Division, 29, Netaji Subhas Marg, Delhi-110006, 1975, pp. 326, Price: Rs. 58 and £ 5.

Prof. Nair, an economist, social analyst, and the author of some noteworthy books is the editor of this volume which has been brought out to felicitate the great Indian anthropologist and the former Vice-Chancellor of the Kerala University Prof. A. Aiyappa, who has made solid contribution to South Indian anthropology in his study spread over four decades.

In Part-I of this treatise, the life and achievements of Prof. Aiyappan have been stressed in a useful and lucid manner; while Part-II contains 15 detailed papers on themes of Indian anthropology by famous Indian and foreign scholars.

The book is indeed a contribution on *Culture and Society* as the title of the book suggests. Almost every aspect of importance connected with social anthropology that has a meaning or message for not only the present, but also for the future, has been touched. The book is thus important not only for students of anthropology, but for all who are connected with society and culture.

To treat society and culture, and correlate them in a manner to be meaningful is a difficult task. As George Santayana has suggested, culture 'if profound and noble it must remain rare, if common it must become mean'. How can then high and noble culture be brought to the masses without making it mean and vulgar? The answer is to be found in the study of this excellent work.

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SANSKRIT

SRI RAMAKRISHNA-VARNANUKRAMA-KIRTANAM (with English Rendering): BY SWAMI VIMALANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Mission and Ashrama, Mangalore, 575 001, 1976, pp. 56, Price : 1.50.

As it is well-established by now that Sri Ramakrishna combines in himself three principles, the Brahman of the Vedanta, the Bhagavan of Vaishnavism and the guru of all Spiritual traditions, it is fitting that works in adoration of him in the combined perspective of Jñāna and Bhakti should appear in large numbers. The publication under review is a magnificent achievement in that direction. Swami Vimalananda is a senior monk of the Sri Ramakrishna Order, one of the top-most Sanskrit Scholars and that, a scholar with a rare width of modern learning and power of exposition.

In the present composition, he has poured forth his profound devotion towards the Great Master, in choicest Sanskrit lines, with classical purity and saintly sensitiveness. The garland is modelled on great Rāmanām, but does not follow any biographical chronology. Nor does it follow any mantra as the *Lalita-Trisati* does. It follows the Sanskrit alphabet. There are 366 lines so that material for a full year's meditation may be furnished therein. There is a complete explanation rendered in English. This aid is very useful in the case of lines such as the 229th and 248th and 253rd. The last word in every line is 'Ramakrishna' felicitating the requisite devotional stress in chanting. The word does not have always the same case-termination. Sometimes two lines form one sentence as the numbers 242 and 243 do. The opening and concluding verses are splendid. The composition is a precious gift to devotees.

The publication also contains the felicitous and moving Astottara-Satanama-stotra addressed to Sri Ramakrishna.

The printing and get up of the booklet are superb and its price is almost nominal.

The Mangalore Ramakrishna Ashrama is to be heartily thanked for this lovely presentation.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA

REPORT : APRIL 1974—MARCH 1975

Founded in 1922 and affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission in 1926, this Ashrama has a continuous record of service to the area through its permanent institutions as well as frequent Relief activities. The current work may be outlined as follows :

Charitable Dispensary : Both sections, Allopathic and Homoeopathic, are in the charge of qualified physicians, and the former was weekly visited by a reputed paediatrics specialist with his assistants. The extent of services rendered (medicines and even minor surgery being free of charges) can be appreciated from the following data for the year under review : (1) *Allopathic* : 6,483 new cases treated, with 84,145 repeated visits ("old cases"). (2) *Homoeopathic* : 5,328 new cases with 51,378 repeated visits. These figures have generally been rising markedly in recent years.

Library and Reading Room : The library, with its attractive Children's Corner, had 11,365 volumes by the end of the year during which 528 had been added : The 288 library-members took 7,091 book loans during the year. The Reading Room, with 67 periodicals and nine dailies, had average attendance this year of 92 readers.

The Students' Home remained closed this year due to political disturbances.

Religious Activities : In the Ashrama Temple, daily morning puja was performed ; evening service was open to all. Each Ekadasi day Ramana Sankirtana was held. Of annual celebrations, Durga Puja was especially notable ; Kali Puja and Saraswati Puja were also performed in image ; and special Pujas were performed on Shivaratri, Sri Krishna, Janmashtami, Holi and Rama Navami. The birthdays of Sri Sankara, Buddha, and Jesus Christ were observed with services and appropriate discourses by prominent devotees. The birthdays of Holy Mother and Swamiji were observed with Puja, Homa, and

Prasad-distribution in the mornings, discourses by the Ashrama Secretary ; and in the evenings, large public meetings. Sri Ramakrishna's birthday was the occasion of a week-long programme including the Puja, Homa, Prasad-distribution, then various musical performances—devotional, classic, dramatic—, lectures, prize-distributions for students' competitions, and lastly showing of a noted devotional film.

Classes, Lectures, Discourses : (1) *In the Ashrama* 29 Hindi discourses on the *Gita* were given, weekly, by a professor-devotee. The Secretary gave 28 weekly discourses on the *Bhagavatam*. Frequent classes were held by other monastic members on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. A visiting Pandit expounded the teachings of the *Bhagavatam* for twelve days ; another gave talks on the *Ramacharitmanas* for eleven days. Among the others, discourses were given on the Gita Jayanti Day and the Kalpataru Day (1st January). During this year also, an outside professor taught Hindi to Ashrama inmates. (2) *Outside the Ashrama* : The Secretary spoke at about three meetings sponsored by outside groups ; and other monastic members at several more.

Relief Work : This year the Hayaghat Block of Darbhanga District was devastated by flood. From 23rd August to 19th October, the Ashrama worked to organize the medical relief, with unstinted help from the local doctors and medical students ; and medical supplies from the Bihar Government, as well as public donors. A total of 4,324 (new) cases were thus treated, with 34,460 repeat treatments ; and 6,967 cholera inoculations and 4,401 vaccinations were given. Powdered milk, sick diets and baby foods were distributed to 78,809 people ; 500 Kg. of bleaching powder for disinfection of wells, etc. In addition, basic foodstuffs were distributed to thousands ; the wheat alone came to 3,450 Kg. ; and clothing (new) to over 800 persons plus old garments to over 2,200.

Further, during this winter, 68 pieces of thick khadi chadars were distributed to the needy.
