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# **PRABUDDHA BHARATA**

OR

## **AWAKENED INDIA**



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HIMALAYAS



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# Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE  
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

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**JUNE 1977**

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**COVER : On the way to Sri Amarnath—Panchtarni.**

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# Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXXII

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No. 6

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

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

'Look here,' (addressing devotees concerned as to whether God was with form or without form) 'in those days I used to imagine the divine Lord to be an ocean filling the whole universe and me to be a fish diving, floating, swimming in that vast sea of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. And again, sometimes I considered myself to be a pitcher immersed in the water of that indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Infinite pervading me through and through.'<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

'I have the nature of a child. Hriday said to me, "Uncle, ask the Mother for some occult powers." At once I went to the temple to ask Her about them. At that time God had put me in such a state that I had to listen to those who lived with me. I felt like a child who sees darkness all around unless someone is with him. I felt as if I should die unless Hriday was near me. You see I am in that state of mind just now. While I am speaking to you my inner spirit is being awakened.'<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

'This childlike impatience of mine is nothing new. I used to ask Mathur Babu to feel my pulse and tell me whether I was ill.'<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \*

[Mathur Babu's wife, Jagadamba Dasi, to whom he was much devoted, had recovered from hopeless illness, apparently through Sri Ramakrishna's blessings.] 'Jagadamba Dasi was gradually coming round from that day and her sufferings from that disease had to be borne by this body (showing his own). As the consequence of bringing round Jagadamba Dasi, I had to suffer from dysentery and other diseases for six months.'

'Was it for nothing that Mathur served me for fourteen years? The divine Mother showed him various wonderful powers through this (showing his own body). That is why he served so devotedly.'<sup>4</sup>

Comp.—Swami Sarveshananda

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1. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, (hereafter *Great Master*), Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1970, p. 376.

2. 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, (hereafter *Gospel*) trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras : Ramakrishna Math, 1969, p. 723. 3. *Gospel*, p. 340. 4. *Great Master*, p. 254.

# THE WORLD : AS IT APPEARS TO MEN—II

(EDITORIAL)

## 2. *The World View of the Suffering Humanity :*

In the last part of the editorial, we have seen how the world appears to men in higher stages of spiritual development. Coming from the high flights of Vedanta to the everyday realities of life, we see that men who have to undergo endless sufferings in their lives do not see God anywhere in this world. After mixing with varieties of human beings, and facing the stresses and strains in life, the world appears to them like hell-fire. The more they try to live peacefully in this world, the more they discover that they are being cheated by others. They begin to feel that the world is not a fit place for gentlemen to live in. If the condition does not improve in spite of efforts, they turn out to be extreme type of pessimists, and throw cold water on the enthusiasm of young men bubbling with energy.

Even though Swami Vivekananda was not a man of this category, there were moments in his life, when he felt disgusted with this world, and the world appeared to him as a great humbug. In one of his letters Swamiji had written : 'I am very much disgusted with myself. Oh, why the world be so that one cannot do anything without putting himself to the front, why cannot one act hidden and unseen and unnoticed ! . . . I think : How I would like to go out of this piece of painted humbug, they call the beautiful world !'<sup>1</sup> In another letter Swamiji had written : 'Now I am sure, my part of the work is done ; and I have no more interest in Vedanta or any

1. This letter was written on August 23, 1894 to Mrs. G. W. Hale, from Annisquam, U.S.A., and is still unpublished.

philosophy in the world or the world itself. I am getting ready to depart to return no more to this hell, this world. . . . This world will be world for ever and always. What we are, so we see it. . . . There is no world. It is God Himself. In delusion we call it world. Neither I, nor Thou, nor you—it is all He, the Lord all One.'<sup>2</sup> Swamiji had seen the world as God. So in spite of his disgust for the world, he did not forget that true vision, which he had experienced due to the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna, in his early youth.

## 3. *The World View of Bhagavan Buddha :*

It is well known that to Bhagavan Buddha, the world appeared to be a storehouse of pain. He had observed the transitoriness and emptiness of this world. According to the Buddhist philosophy : 'Form is emptiness, and emptiness is indeed form. Emptiness is not different from form, form is not different from emptiness. What is form that is emptiness, what is emptiness that is form.'<sup>3</sup> Buddha also must have felt that the world is not a suitable place for a wise man to live in. In the prime of his youth, he had realized that the world is full of suffering, and he must try hard to go beyond it. He had emphatically declared to the world at large : 'Everything is mere emptiness, everything is transitory, everything is painful—*Sarvaṃ śūnyam, Sarvaṃ kṣaṇikam, Sarvaṃ duḥkham.*' This does not mean that he did not know anything about the pleasures of the world. He was a son of a King, brought up in luxuries ; but he knew

2. Swami Vivekananda to Mrs. Ole Bull, dated August 23, 1896, written from Switzerland. *Vide : The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, VI, (1968), p. 371.*

3. *Vide Prajñā-pāramita-hṛdaya Sūtra.*

that the worldly pleasures so-called are the cause of all human sufferings, and transmigration. He taught his monks : 'Birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful.'<sup>4</sup> Buddha did not bother to teach about the real nature of the world, and God. He knew, ordinary men cannot perceive the Truth with their impure minds. So he taught the negative way. He was of the opinion that if a man is wounded by an arrow, he does not go on examining the make and quality of the arrow, but the first thing he does is to take it out of his body, and arrange for the treatment of the wound. In the same way, when we are suffering so much due to ignorance, our first duty is to get rid of it, instead of discussing as to how, and where from it has come, and things like that. Bhagavan Buddha was not a pessimist, but a practical man—a saviour of mankind.

#### 4. *The World View of Some Poets :*

Of course, there is no end to poetic imagination. It is said, 'Where even the sun has no entrance, there the poet reaches in no time (through his imagination).' But it is interesting to see, how the world appears to these blessed beings :

To Ramprasad, a great saint of Bengal, the world appeared as a den of cheats. In his famous Bengali song he says : 'The world is nothing but a place of deceit. . . . One may feel the worldly pleasures like nectar. They are not nectar, but a cup of poison. One may enjoy them in the beginning, but afterwards one suffers from the agonies of the poison.'<sup>5</sup>

4. *Samyutta-nikāya*, verse 420.

5. This is from Ramprasad's famous Bengali song :

'ए संसार धोकार टाटि ।'

Another poet, who might have been somewhat a fortunate soul, and might have heard of this song of Ramprasad, composed another in reply saying :

This very world is a mansion of mirth ;  
Here I can eat, and drink, and make  
merry,  
King Janaka's might was unsurpassed ;  
What did he lack of the world or the  
Spirit?

Holding to one as well as the other,  
He drank his milk from the brimming  
cup !<sup>6</sup>

To a Hindi saint-poet, the world appeared like a rest-house, where people live for a short time, and pass away without caring for each other. He said, 'This life is but for a few moments. This world is like a rest-house. . . .'<sup>7</sup>

To Ayodyānāth Pākdāsī, a Bengali poet, the world appeared like a foreign land. The human form appeared like a foreigner's dress. The worldly objects appeared as foreigners, and so on.<sup>8</sup> This song was very much liked by Swami Vivekananda ; rather this was the first song, he had sung to Sri Ramakrishna during his first meeting.

To Rabindranath Tagore, the world appeared to be the play of the Cosmic Child—the Lord of the universe. In his famous song he says : 'Oh Cosmic Child ! you are playing with this universe indifferently to yourself, sitting in a solitary place. Creation

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6. 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, New York : Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, 1942, p. 696. This is the translation in part, of the Bengali song :

'ए संसार मजार कुटि ।'

7. The first line of the song is :

'यह चार घड़ी का जीना, दुनिया है मुसाफिरखाना ।'

8. The relevant lines of this Bengali song are :

'संसार विदेशे विदेशीर बेशे भ्रम केनो अकारणे, . . .

सब तोर पर केह नय आपन . . . ।'

and destruction are to you like a play of dolls. You are absorbed in yourself, in the vast empty space (*Mahākāśa*), laughing and playing, Oh Lord, in a lonely place, to yourself. The sun, moon, and the stars, Oh Transcendent One!, are your toys, lying in heaps at your reddish feet. You are always very large hearted, and indifferent to others' pleasure and pain. Every moment, you create and destroy the objects, Oh Lord!, playing in a lonely place.<sup>9</sup>

And to Dwijendralal Ray, a poet and a devotee of the Divine Mother, the world appeared as the image of the Mother. In his beautiful song he says: 'Oh Mother! why should I worship you in an image? The whole universe indeed is your own image! Why should I build, Oh Mother! a temple for you? The infinite blue sky itself is your temple. As a matter of fact, the sun, the moon, the stars, the vast ocean, springs, mountains, the forests, the creepers, the spring breeze, fruits, and flowers, their sweetness, all these are your various images. The honeyed love of a devoted wife to her husband, the smile of a child, the kiss of a mother, the devotion of a saint, the talent of the talented, the power of the powerful, are all your own sweetness, your own glory! Wherever I see in this world, Oh Mother, you alone are existing in hundreds of forms. Your greatness is variously revealed in different seasons like spring, winter, also during the day, and in the night. . . .'<sup>10</sup>

9. This is a free translation of the Bengali song:

‘खेलिछो, ए विश्व ल'ये विराट शिशु आनमने ।  
प्रलय सृष्टि तव पुतुल खेला, निरजने प्रभु,  
निरजने (खेलिछो) ॥’

For full version vide: *Sangit Sangraha*, (Bengali), Deoghar: Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, 4th edition, p. 395.

10. This is a translation of the Bengali song:

‘प्रतिमा दिये कि पूजिबो तोमारे, ए विश्व निखिल  
तोमारि प्रतिमा ।’

For full version vide: *Sangita Sangraha*, p. 375.

Besides these, it is well known that the world appeared to Bhagavan Sri Krishna—or better to say, to Vyasa—as a banyan tree, with its roots above in God, and branches downwards. The Vedas are its leaves. Below and above it spreads its branches, nourished by the Guṇas (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*), the sense-objects are its buds; below in the world of man it stretches forth its prop-roots in the form of actions. Its form is not perceived here as such, neither its end, nor its origin, nor its existence. Having cut asunder this firm-rooted banyan tree with the sharp axe of non-attachment—then that goal is to be sought for, going where they (wise men) do not return again.<sup>11</sup>

Looking to the ups and downs in human life, the world appeared to one poet like a 'water-wheel.' When a water-wheel is in action, some buckets attached to the wheel are filled up in the process, while some are emptied at the top in the reservoir. Some go up for some time while others go down. In the same way the poet says: 'It [Destiny] empties some and fills others; some it raises up, and others it causes to go down; while some it keeps in (anxious) suspense; thus bringing home to the people this course of the world which consists of opposites mutually meeting together, does Destiny play with all creatures, being bent upon following the maxim of "the water-wheel and the buckets."<sup>12</sup>

##### 5. *The World As Power* :

To the worshippers of the Divine Mother, the world appears as the manifestation of power, the *Ādyāśakti*. According to them, this Supreme Power manifests in the world as the Reality, the life (*Prāṇa*), the mind, the matter, and so on. Sir John Woodroffe has written a book on this subject.<sup>13</sup>

11. *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, XV, 1-4.

12. *Śūdraka, Mṛcchakatikanāṭakam*, X, 60.

13. Vide, Sir John Woodroffe, *The World As a Power*, Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1957.

6. *The World As a Dance of Shiva, and the World View of Modern Physicists:*

A renowned modern physicist, and a student of Eastern mysticism, Dr. Fritjof Capra (at present lecturing at the University of California, in Berkeley) in his famous book *The Tao of Physics* says that due to the exploration of the subatomic world in the modern age, intrinsically dynamic nature of matter has been revealed to the modern physicists. To them the world appears to be a ceaseless flow of energy manifesting itself as the exchange of particles. The whole universe is thus engaged in endless motion and activity; in a continual cosmic dance of energy. Dr. Capra is thereby reminded of the Dance of Nataraj Shiva. In the above mentioned book he writes: 'The metaphor of the cosmic dance has found its most profound and beautiful expression in Hinduism in the image of the dancing god Shiva. . . . The Dance of Shiva symbolizes not only the cosmic cycles of creation and destruction, but also the daily rhythm of birth and death which is seen in Indian mysticism as the basis of all existence. At the same time, Shiva reminds us that the manifold forms in the world are *maya*—not fundamental, but illusory and ever-changing—as he keeps creating and dissolving them in the ceaseless flow of his dance.'<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Capra continues: 'For the modern physicist, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter.'<sup>15</sup> The physicist has tried to show in his book 'how the two foundations of twentieth-century physics—quantum theory and relativity theory—both force us to see the world very much in the way a Hindu, Buddhist or Taoist sees it.'<sup>16</sup> He says, 'If physics leads us today to a

world view which is essentially mystical, it returns, in a way to its beginning, 2,500 years ago.'<sup>17</sup> Thus we see, how modern physicists look at the world more like a mystic than like a scientist. The world appearing to a modern physicist like the dance of Shiva, is a very significant development in the scientific field, and a very happy news for the Hindus.

7. *The World As a School :*

To some, the world appears like a School, in which one learns many lessons from his cradle to grave. One Mr. Chimanlal has written a book on this subject, in the Preface of which he writes, 'The world has been my school ever since I started traveling as a journalist thirty years ago. In my twenty-five trips round the world I have realized that the newly developing countries have much to learn from the advanced countries. . . . Many . . . countries offer many useful lessons. . . . The world is full of beauty, love, friendship, and cheer and everywhere I have enjoyed a unique spiritual feast. . . .'<sup>18</sup>

Thus, to a sufferer the world appears like a hell, while to a happy-go-lucky man it appears like heaven. Swami Vivekananda has said: 'There are two extremes into which men are running; one is extreme optimism, when everything is rosy, and nice and good; the other, the extreme pessimism, when everything seems to be against them. The majority of men have more or less undeveloped brains. One in a million we see with a well-developed brain; the rest either have peculiar idiosyncrasies or are monomaniacs.'<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>. *Tao*, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup>. Chiman Lal, *The World is My School*; published by: Chiman Lal (Bhikshu), Summer Hill, Simla, p. iii.

<sup>19</sup>. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, (hereafter, *C.W.*), I, (1970), p. 410.

<sup>14</sup>. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, Fontana/Collins, 1976, (hereafter, *Tao*), pp. 256, 257,

<sup>15</sup>. *Tao*, p. 259.

<sup>16</sup>. *Tao*, p. 17.

### 8. *The World As a Prison :*

A man of balanced brain knows that in this world there is good, as well as bad; there is happiness as well as misery. But the nature of the worldly happiness is such that the more a man enjoys them, the more he becomes attached to the sense-objects and thereby becomes bound to his world. Towards the end of life, some people realize that they have been tied hands and feet to this world like prisoners, and are made to suffer. In this connection, Swami Vivekananda has said : 'That we are all miserable, that this world is really a prison, that even our so-called trailing beauty is but a prison-house, and that even our intellects and minds are prison-houses, have been known for ages upon ages.'<sup>20</sup> But those who feel like this are very few.

### 9. *The World View of the Baser Ones :*

Then there are men living in this world in every age, whose vision of life is very gross and narrow. To them the world appears in its most hideous form. About such people Swami Vivekananda has said, '[For them] what is the world but a combination of stomach and sex. Look at millions of men and women—that is what they are living for. Take these away from them and they will find their life empty, meaningless, and intolerable.'<sup>21</sup> This is, of course, a very ugly way in which the world appears to the lower strata of people in the world. Their philosophy of life is : 'So long you

are living, live happily. Eat, drink, and be merry even by incurring debt, if necessary. There is no return for the dead, after the body is burnt to ashes.'<sup>22</sup> The so-called masses belong to this category.

Besides the various world views discussed so far, there may be many more; but the sum and substance of it is that there are some, to whom the world appears as *One* (God). There is no diversity for them anywhere. They are balanced minded men, who have seen the Truth face to face. They know the worth and utility of the pleasures and pain in this world, and are not disturbed by the stresses and strains in life. Such men who have realized the real nature of their own selves and the world, are really blessed. They are not born again. While others, to whom the world appears as many, are still under the spell of *maya*, and, therefore, subject to sufferings, and birth and death. The *Katha Upaniṣad* declares: 'One who sees multiplicity in this world, goes from death to death.'<sup>23</sup> If a man is satisfied with the present state of life, there will be no end to his misery and transmigration. The only way, therefore, to go beyond these, and to make our lives blessed, is to attain the correct vision of life, that is, to see God in everything, because we know from the Upaniṣads : 'What delusion and what sorrow can remain for him who sees Oneness in this universe !'<sup>24</sup>

22. *Sarvadarsanasangrahaḥ Carvākadarsanam*, 17-18.

23. *Katha Upaniṣad*, II, ii, 10.

24. *Iśa Upaniṣad*, 7.

20. *C.W.* II, (1971), p. 122.

21. *C.W.* VIII, (1971), p. 118.



# SCIENCE AND RELIGION—I

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

## 1. Need to Foster the Scientific Spirit

Modern environmental and ecological problems may be making for the unpopularity of technology, or rather of over-technology, especially in advanced countries; but *pure science, with its passion for truth and human welfare, will always remain as one of the noblest pursuits of man*; and our country, which has nurtured this love and pursuit of truth in the fields of physical sciences, religion, and philosophy in the past, must continue to nurture it in all fields in the modern age. Religion and philosophy in India, as given to us in our Upanishadic tradition, is but the continuation of the scientific search for truth at the sense-data level to the higher aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual levels of experience, as I hope to show in the course of this address. I appreciate this pioneer effort of the Bangalore University to inculcate the scientific spirit among its students and staff and the general citizens. *I wish, however, that the training of our people in the scientific attitude and outlook begins from the stage of primary education itself.* That is the only way to purify and strengthen the rational and spiritual heritage of our country by draining away its impure, weakening and centuries-old contaminations of magic and superstition.

## 2. Relationship of Science and Religion : A New Approach

The subjects of science and religion are getting more and more important to man in the modern age. They are two great disciplines which, in the light of Indian wisdom, reveal that, when relied on separately, can be counter-productive in the long run, but, when combined harmoniously, can bring about an all-round expression of

human genius and total fulfilment. But, unfortunately, for the last few centuries, the relationship between the two in the Western context, and everywhere else also due to the world-wide impact of Western culture, has not been quite happy. In the twentieth century, however, a new approach is becoming evident, and the representative thinkers among scientists and religious people are beginning to discern a close interrelation between them. They are slowly veering round to the point of view that science and religion can heartily embrace each other, without detriment to the cause for which each stands, and work for the good of humanity. It is being realised more and more by both that there are elements in science that religion can adopt in order to fortify itself, and elements in religion that can deepen and strengthen science. I shall here touch upon some of the sources of the discord between the two and the significance of the points of contact between them, and discuss the methods and results of both the disciplines, *against the background, and in the light, of the unity and totality of all human knowledge and the synthetic and synoptic approach and vision of the Indian philosophical and spiritual tradition.*

## 3. The Scientific Discipline

The civilisation in which we live today is the product of the discipline of the human mind known as modern science. When we study science at close quarters, in the way the great scientists have applied themselves to this pursuit, we find two aspects to this discipline. The first is *pure science*, science which tries earnestly to understand the truth of nature through a dispassionate inquiry; and the second is *applied science*,

in which the truth discovered by pure science flows as technical inventions for the enhancement and enrichment of human life. These two, science as *lucifera* and science as *fructifera*, science as *light* and science as *fruit*, are intimately related. Knowledge leads to power and power leads to control and manipulation of the forces of nature, enabling man to condition his life and environment with deliberation. Every new discovery in pure science, at some stage or other, becomes converted into applied science, into control and manipulation of the forces of nature. And the result, as revealed in recent history, is the great saga of modern scientific discovery and invention resulting in the worldwide technological civilisation of today. It is a most fascinating study how the human mind, disciplined in this pursuit of science, develops the capacity to wrest from nature truth after truth, hidden and jealously guarded by her, leading to our extraordinary modern age of nuclear science and space travel.

What is the nature of that movement of thought which has produced these remarkable results? What do we mean by the term 'modern' as applied to thought, and what is the special feature of modern scientific thought which has rendered thought so explosive and revolutionary? An answer to these questions will help us to reassess the role of the other great human disciplines, such as religion, ethics, art, politics, and economics in the modern age.

The architect of the modern world is science, and by modern thought is meant scientific thought. The aim of science is to study nature and human experience objectively. To quote Karl Pearson (*Grammar of Science*, 1900, p. 6) :

'The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance, is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgement upon these facts unbiased by personal feeling

is characteristic of what may be termed the scientific frame of mind.'

This quality of the scientific mind, and the mood and temper of its approach, have enabled science to wrest from nature its secrets, first from one field, then from another, and transform nature's forces into agencies for the service of man. The sum total of achievements in the theoretical and practical fields in the various departments of scientific inquiry in physics and chemistry, mathematics and astronomy, biology and psychology, as also in their various subsidiary branches, constitute an impressive record of human development, by the side of which long ages of past achievements in the same fields pale into insignificance. That is modern science in its methods and results.

#### 4. Science versus Departments of Science

Science so understood is not tied up with any particular body of facts. In the words of one of the great biologists, J. Arthur Thomson (*Introduction to Science*, Home University Library edition, p. 58) :

'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterised as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry; it is simply sincere critical thought, which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. *We may get a good lesson in scientific method from a businessman meeting some new practical problem, from a lawyer sifting evidence, or from a statesman framing a constructive bill.*' (italics not by the author).

Objectivity and precision, both as to thought and its verbal formulation, are two important characteristics of the scientific method. Any study possessing these characteristics will be science, whatever be the field of that study. Science as such is, therefore, not tied down to any particular order of facts, though the various departments of science, like physics or chemistry, biology or sociology, are tied down to particular

orders of facts. These departments have limited scope, but science itself is unlimited in scope; and these various departments, starting with the study of separate fields tend, in their advanced stages, to overstep their particular boundaries and merge into one converging scientific search, the search for the meaning of total experience. *In this expansive context, the idea of a science of religion, the science of the facts of the inner world of man, as upheld in ancient Indian thought, and as expounded in the modern age by Swami Vivekananda, becomes also a scientific study of far-reaching significance.*

### 5. The Spirit of Inquiry

The driving force behind this unique modern achievement is the spirit of free inquiry, characteristic of modern science. The mind that questions, and questions with a serious intent and purpose, and tests and verifies the answers it gets, has a dynamic quality about it, which enables it to forge ahead in the world of thought and things. In so forging ahead, it disturbs the way-side calm of untested dogmas and comfortable beliefs, and the magic and miracle and superstition wrongly associated with religion and leading to the vulgarisation of this great discipline. Science is verified knowledge. The explosive character of modern scientific thought is the product of the impact of a rapid succession of verified knowledge against an intractable fund of untested dogmas, assumptions, magic, miracle, beliefs and superstitions. The organised opposition of the latter in the West sought to stifle scientific inquiry, first, at its birth and, later, at every stage of its progress. But the walls of the *bastille* of ignorance and prejudice fell one by one before the onrushing waves of inquiry and illumination, illustrating the great saying of the Upaniṣad (*Munḍaka Upaniṣad*, III, 1.6):

*'Satyameva jayate, nānṛtam—Truth alone triumphs, not untruth.'*

The history of science in recent centuries is thus the history of the triumph of the spirit of free inquiry over mere opinion, untested belief, prejudice and dogma. It is a remarkable adventure of the human spirit which has borne abundant fruits, not only mental but also material; for science as *lucifera* has flowed into science as *fructifera*, giving a bumper crop of discoveries and inventions which has transformed beyond recognition the world in which we live.

### 6. Eclipse of Dogma-bound Religion

The success of science has meant the defeat of its opponent. It is one of the unfortunate episodes of history, especially of modern European history, that the organisation of the forces of prejudice and blind belief against science and its spirit of inquiry came from the side of religion; and that reason, which was the life-breath of science, was viewed as the death-knell of religion. By the end of the last century, science had acquired high prestige and authority, while religion had been discredited, first, as a dangerous error and, later, as a harmless illusion.

The end of the nineteenth century thus saw the eclipse of religion in the West. But there was an uneasy feeling in the hearts of many thinkers that something of deep value to man and his civilisation had been overthrown; and they attempted a reassessment of the meaning and scope of religion with a view to making it accord with the spirit and temper of science. *To this great task of reconstructing the mental life of modern man by bridging the gulf between faith and reason, on the basis of a unified view of man and a truer conception of the spiritual life, the contribution of Indian thought is unique and lasting.*

### 7. Vivekananda on Reason and Religion

Tracing the recurring conflicts of science and religion in the West to the absence of

a broad rational and experiential approach, Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol. II, ninth edition, p. 433) :

'We all know the theories of the cosmos according to the modern astronomers and physicists, and at the same time we all know how woefully they undermine the theology of Europe ; how these scientific discoveries that are made act as a bomb thrown at its stronghold ; and we know how theologians have in all times attempted to put down these researches.'

When religion refuses to take the help of reason, it weakens itself. Alluding to this in the course of a lecture on 'Reason and Religion', delivered in England in 1896, Swami Vivekananda said (*ibid.*, Vol. I, eleventh edition, p. 367) :

'The foundations have been all undermined, and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe". Believing certain things because an organised body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him. There are, of course, a number of people who seem to acquiesce in the so-called popular faith, but we also know for certain that they do not think. Their idea of belief may be better translated as "not-thinking-carelessness".'

And pleading for the application of reason in the field of religion, he continued (*ibid.*) :

'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to science and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion, this must be so ; and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition ; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could

happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific—as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry—but it will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth which religion has.'

A study of the Upaniṣads reveals that the subject of religion was approached in ancient India in an objective dispassionate manner; and the aim of the study was to get at truth, and not to hug pleasing fancies and illusions or to idolise tribal passions and prejudices.

In several of his lectures and discourses, Swami Vivekananda has expounded this scientific approach as upheld in Indian thought. In his lecture on 'Religion and Science', he says (*ibid.*, Vol. VI, sixth edition, p. 81) :

'Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same ; and this becomes law. . . .

'Religion deals with the truth of the metaphysical world, just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truth 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 own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the wrong book—the book within ; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he, too, reads the wrong book—the book without.'

The Indian thinkers discovered by their investigations that there are two fields in which man lives and functions : one, the external world ; the other, the internal. These are two different orders of phenomena. The study of the one alone does not exhaust the whole range of experience. Also, the study of the one from the standpoint of the other will not lead to satisfactory results. But the study of the one *in the light of the conclusions from the study of the other* is helpful and relevant.

Referring to this approach in the course of a lecture on 'Cosmology', Swami Vivekananda said (*ibid.*, Vol. II, ninth edition, p. 432) :

'There are two worlds, the microcosm and the macrocosm, the internal and the external. We get truth from both of these by means of experience. The truth gathered from internal experience is psychology, metaphysics, and religion ; from external experience, the physical sciences. Now, a perfect truth should be in harmony with experiences in both these worlds. The microcosm must bear testimony to the macrocosm, and the macrocosm to the microcosm ; physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world, and the internal world must have its verification outside.'

Thus the sages and thinkers of ancient India said : Here is the physical life of man, and here is the physical universe that environs him. Let us study both in a scientific spirit. But let us also study him in his depths, his nature as revealed by his consciousness, his thoughts, his emotions, his ego, and his sense of selfhood. These latter also constitute a vast group of phenomena that need to be investigated. Every advance in this field is bound to advance man's knowledge about the truth of the mystery of the external world. For, to quote mathematician-astronomer, the late Sir Arthur Eddington (*Philosophy of Physical Science*, p. 5) :

'We have discovered that it is actually

an aid in the search for knowledge to understand the nature of the knowledge which we seek.'

### 8. The Upanisads and the Spirit of Critical Inquiry in India

Ever since the time of the Upanisads, India has tenaciously held to a view of religion which makes it a high adventure of the spirit, a converging life-endeavour to realise and grasp the hidden meaning of existence. Faith, in India, did not mean a cosy belief to rest by, but a torch to set the soul on fire with a longing for spiritual realisation. In the absence of this longing and struggle, the belief of the faithful does not differ from the unbelief of the faithless. Belief with most people is simply another name for mental laziness. Religious earnestness with people of this class means, especially when organised under a militant church or a theocratic state, either the pursuit of aggressive religious proselytism or of *jehads* and crusades. They cannot understand the meaning of that earnestness which proceeds from an inner spiritual hunger. No dogma or creed or frenzied acts can satisfy this hunger of a religious heart. Its only bread is spiritual realisation. Religion is a matter of inner experience, a coming in touch with spiritual facts, and not a matter of belief or dogma or conformity.

Strengthened by the spirit of the Upanisads, no all-powerful church, therefore, rose in India to organise the faithful on the basis of dogma and creed, and claiming divine authority for its opinions and judgements. No such authority could thrive where religion was expounded as a quest and not a conformity. A spiritual view of religion, as different from a creedal or dogmatic view, makes religion not only cultivate a spirit of toleration, questioning, and inquiry in its own sphere, but also foster it in every other department of life. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (VI. 44) declares that a spirit of inquiry into the meaning of religion takes an aspirant

beyond the authority of the words of scripture and mandate of tradition. He becomes an experimenter himself, instead of remaining a mere believer. Indian religious thought emphasises *sādhanā*, experiment, as the dynamics of religion; it has recourse to *jijñāsā*, or inquiry, for the formulation of its views, be it *Brahmajijñāsā*, inquiry into the nature of Brahman, i.e., God as the one Self of all; or *dharma-jijñāsā*, inquiry into *dharma*, i.e., social ethics and personal morality.

This sublime attitude to religion and thought is the fruit of the unified view of the mental life of man which India learned from her Upaniṣads, and which she assimilated into her mind and mood by a universal acceptance of all forms of faith and by showing due regard to all knowledge, whether sacred or secular.

### 9. 'Vidyā Dadatī Vinayam— Knowledge Bestows Humility'

Science in the modern age has lengthened man's intellectual tether, but this has only helped to bring into sharper focus the mystery of the unknown and the significance of the *parā vidyā* (higher knowledge or wisdom) of which the Upaniṣads speak. In the words of J. Arthur Thomson (*Introduction to Science*, Home University Library edition, 1934, p. 205):

'At the end of his intellectual tether, man has never ceased to become religious.'

It is no wonder, therefore, that several scientists during the last few decades, have been forced to overstep the limits of their sciences and tackle the problem of the unknown at closer quarters in a mood of humility and reverence, illustrating the dictum of Indian wisdom: '*Vidyā dadatī vinayam— knowledge bestows humility*', and the saying of Coleridge quoted by J. Arthur Thomson (*ibid.*, p. 208):

'All knowledge begins and ends with wonder; but the first wonder is the child

of ignorance; the second wonder is the parent of adoration.'

Dogmatism and cock-sureness which stifle the spirit of free inquiry are as much enemies of true science as of true religion. There are not wanting scientists today who would, taking a narrow view of the scope and function of science, prefer to go the dogmatic way and cry halt to advancing knowledge and unified experience. That way spells danger to science now, as it has spelt danger to religion before. *A greater devotion to the spirit of free inquiry and a broader conception of the aim and temper of science is our only safeguard against such a pitfall.*

If the nineteenth century was the century of conflict and division, the twentieth century bids fair to become the century of reconciliation and union, as a result of a sincere effort on the part of both science and religion to reassess itself and to understand the other. The humility of twentieth-century physical science presents a sharp and welcome contrast to the cock-sureness of its nineteenth-century counterpart. It has realised that the spirit of free inquiry, on which it has thrived, may find expression in fields beyond its own narrow departments, and that it is this spirit, unbiased by personal attachments and aversions, that makes a study scientific, and not the mere subject-matter of that study.

*This wider view of science as a discipline and a temper enables us to class as scientific, the study of the facts of the inner world which religion has set to itself for inquiry.*

And this has been the Indian approach to religion. It was the absence of this approach that made religion in Europe less and less equipped to meet the challenge of advancing knowledge.

### 10. Limitations of Physical Science

When we go deeper into the nature and scope of physical science, its limitations

become apparent. To illustrate: Two branches of science, namely, physics, including astronomy; and biology, including behaviouristic psychology, have given us a vast body of knowledge regarding the nature of the universe and man. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, physics was warped in its final judgements. It saw materialism and mechanism reigning supreme in the universe. There was then a cock-sureness in its pronouncements; but, in the twentieth century, an element of humility is discernible in the attitude of the great physicists of the age. In the nineteenth century, knowledge of the physical world was not deep enough, and scientists looked only at the surface of things. But, along with the discovery of such facts as radio-activity and insight into the nucleus of the atom, the realisation has come that there is a severe limitation placed on our knowledge regarding the truth of the external world. Science owns today that it deals only with *the appearances of things* and not with *the reality behind these appearances*. Some of the greatest of modern physicists tell us that what science has revealed of the world around us is only the outer aspect of things. Behind this *observable* universe, there is an *unobservable* universe, as well as the *observer* himself. This is a great confession of the limitations of science and its methods. Science is dealing with phenomena revealed by the senses or by apparatuses helpful to the senses. But these senses reveal so little, and what they reveal only tells us that there are realities behind the sense world determining it and controlling it. Physical science restricts itself to the understanding of the observable part of the universe and to controlling its energies for the use of man.

A similar situation obtains in the science of biology. In the last century, it was cock-sure about its pronouncements. By a study of the different aspects of the phenomena of life, it arrived at the great theory of evolu-

tion, from which it drew certain conclusions influenced by the mechanistic materialism of contemporary physics, which directly led to a form of materialism, that equated man with the animal, and both to a machine. Today, scientists tell us that they were not happy titles that Darwin chose for his famous books: *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*. Sir Julian Huxley suggests that these could have been more appropriately titled: *The Evolution of Organisms* and *The Ascent of Man (Evolution after Darwin, Vol. I, The University of Chicago Press, p. 17)*. But, then, these books appeared at a time when a fierce controversy was going on between emerging science and the entrenched Christian dogma of supernaturalism upholding man as a special creation of an extra-cosmic God, and this had its impact even on the choosing of the titles of great scientific books. The science of physics with its thoroughgoing materialism and mechanistic determinism, and the science of biology with its newly discovered evolutionary theory and its domination by the general materialistic outlook of science and scientists of the age, helped to shatter nineteenth century man's faith in that view of religion and spiritual values which was presented to the West as supernatural and anti-science.

The limitations of physical science, admitted by many modern scientists themselves, proceed from the adjective *physical*, but science itself is not limited similarly. Reality may be studied, but not exhausted, by the physical sciences, whose limitations proceed from their dependence entirely on sense-data. This limitation has been pointed out by the mathematician-astronomer, the late Sir Arthur Eddington (*The Philosophy of Physical Science, p. 16*):

'Let us suppose that an ichthyologist is exploring the life of the ocean. He casts a net into the water and brings up a fishy assortment. Surveying his catch,

he proceeds, in the usual manner of a scientist, to systematise what it reveals. He arrives at two generalisations :

1. No sea-creature is less than two inches long ;
2. All sea-creatures have gills.

These are both true of his catch, and he assumes tentatively that they will remain true however often he repeats it. . . . His generalisation is perfectly true of the class of creatures he is talking about—a selected class perhaps, but he would not be interested in making generalisations about any other class.'

Earlier, Eddington, had said in his Preface to the above book (*ibid.* p. IX) :

'I am not among those who think that, in the search for truth, all aspects of human experience are to be ignored, save those which are followed up in physical science. But I find no disharmony between a philosophy which embraces the wider significance of human experience and the specialised philosophy of physical science, even though the latter relates to a system of thought of recent growth whose stability is yet to be tested.'

### 11. 'Materialism an Intruder'

When physical science or scientists forget or ignore this limitation implied in the adjective 'physical', and pronounce judgments on life or reality as a whole, it or they become dogmatic, and forsake truth-seeking ; one such dogma that is stifling the spirit of modern physical science is *materialism*, against which distinguished scientists have protested and warned. After terming materialism *an intruder* earlier in his book *Methods and Results* (Volume I, p. 161), Thomas Huxley, the collaborator of Darwin, repudiates materialism as a philosophy of life (*ibid.*, pp. 164-65) :

'If we find that the ascertainment of the order of nature is facilitated by using one terminology or one set of symbols, rather than another, it is our clear duty to use the former ; and no harm can accrue, so long as we bear in mind that

we are dealing merely with terms and symbols. . . .

'But the man of science who, forgetting the limits of philosophical inquiry, slides from these formulae and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism, seems to me to place himself on a level with the mathematician who should mistake the *x*'s and *y*'s with which he works his problems for real entities—and with this further disadvantage, as compared with the mathematician, that the blunders of the latter are of no practical consequence, *while the errors of systematic materialism may paralyse the energies and destroy the beauty of a life.*' (italics not by the author).

### 12. Physical Science and the Mystery of the Universe

The universe was a mystery to man in the primitive stage ; it has not ceased to be so for civilised man even in this twentieth century. We find scientists like the late Sir James Jeans writing books on the scientific view of the universe with such titles as *The Mysterious Universe*. If, after all these marvellous scientific discoveries and inventions, the scientist still treats nature as profoundly mysterious, if, in spite of all the vast knowledge that he has gained, the scientist feels that he has only scratched the surface of nature, that he is yet far far away from the heart of the problem of the universe, we have to pause and ask the question as framed by Śaṅkarācārya : '*tataḥ kiṁ tataḥ kiṁ*—What else? What next?' Says Sir James Jeans in his *The New Background of Science* (p. 68) :

'Physical science set out to study a world of matter and radiation, and finds that it cannot describe or picture the nature of either, even to itself. Photons, electrons and protons have become about as meaningless to the physicist as *x*, *y*, *z* are to a child on its first day of learning algebra. The most we hope for at the moment is to discover ways of manipulating *x*, *y*, *z* without knowing what



they are, with the result that the advance of knowledge is at present reduced to what Einstein has described as extracting

one incomprehensible from another incomprehensible.'

(To be concluded)

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## THE SEARCH FOR THE ONE IN THE MANY—I

SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

### 1. *It is man's innate tendency to seek the ideal in the real.*

The multiform universe we experience, howsoever real it may appear to be, does not appeal to us as the ultimate or the ideal reality. Even though we try to be content with it and make the best of it, ignoring the beyond, the actual never approximates the ideal. Invariably the ideal proves to be unattainable in the world perceivable by the senses. Time and again there has prevailed in man's mind a misgiving as to the validity of this world of incessant change and interdependence. It does not answer to his innate vision of an ideal existence, but proves to be a panorama of motley events, a medley of opposites—such as life and death, light and darkness, growth and decay, harmony and disharmony, love and hate, virtue and vice, joy and sorrow. From the earliest days, the human mind has called to account the world of experience and investigated its true nature. It is perhaps his dissatisfaction with the sensible universe, rather than fancy, wonder, or curiosity, that has led man to metaphysical speculation as well as religious inquiry.

Be that as it may, man conceives the Ideal Existence or Supreme Reality, though he may not believe in Its actuality, as something that endures forever, that never fails, that is undying, undecaying, unchanging, that is beyond duality and relativity, that is limitless, flawless, all-free, all-good. But his senses cannot reach nor can his thoughts grasp It. He vaguely imagines, or assumes, or infers the Supreme, but has no distinct knowledge of the same. What he experiences after all is the perishable and not the

Imperishable, the changeful and not the Changeless, the finite and not the Infinite, the conditioned and not the Unconditioned, multiplicity and not Unity. The Supreme Reality is beyond his ken. Consequently, there have been among men doubts and disputes with regard to this. The pantheists identify It with the manifold. The agnostics acknowledge It as the underlying existence, unknown and unknowable. The positivists ignore It. The atheists deny It. The sceptics neither affirm nor deny It. The theists and the deists hold that the Supreme is distinct from the world. Advaita Vedanta upholds none of these views. It affirms the Ultimate Reality as absolutely One.

Whether man acknowledges the Supreme Being or not, he has a natural tendency to seek the Permanent in the impermanent, the Unlimited in the limited, the Perfect in the imperfect. This is the intrinsic urge that motivates his thoughts and activities. So he cannot rest satisfied with anything finite, however great or grand it may be. Just as every water-course is constantly struggling to reach the ocean by straight or crooked ways, so is man, knowingly or unknowingly, rightly or wrongly, ever seeking the Eternal, the Infinite, the Perfect, the Divine. Of all his pursuits this is the one ultimate end. Religion provides the direct means to its attainment. It is man's avowed approach to the highest good—the absolute value.

While other pursuits of life are particularly concerned with the temporal, religion is the only pursuit that is concerned

specifically with the Eternal. The essential purpose of every true religion is to lead man to the Supreme Being, his highest ideal or perfection. Spiritual life begins with the deliberate search for the Supreme as the highest end. Deep within the heart of man there is a cry for the Real, the Eternal, the All-perfect One. His innermost feeling has found expression in such a prayer as : 'Lead me from the unreal to the Real, lead me from darkness to Light, lead me from death to Immortality.'<sup>1</sup> Is man's vision of eternal existence, unending light, and unending bliss an illusion? Or even though the goal be real, is his effort to attain it a hopeless quest?<sup>2</sup>

2. *That the Ideal Reality can be attained is evidenced by great spiritual leaders' experiences, words, and deeds.*

The most illustrious of the world's great personages, such as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Zoroaster, Moses, Lao-Tze, the Buddha, and Christ—have been the seekers and discoverers of the Supreme Being. Their teachings are the most valued treasure of mankind. Their message of enlightenment, of complete freedom from bondages of ignorance, delusion, misery, and death is the beacon of the benighted world. Their exemplary lives, radiant with divine wisdom, purity, power, love, and joy have provided humanity with the noblest ideals. Indeed, they are the

greatest benefactors of mankind.<sup>3</sup> They declare in one voice that to seek and reach the Supreme Being is the highest purpose of human life, because this is the only way to freedom from all bondages and sufferings, to absolute peace and blessedness. Throughout the ages the same message has been proclaimed by the seers and saints of the world, who realized the self-existent, self-luminous Divine Being and became free for ever from errors, bondages, and sufferings. Rolling down the vista of centuries comes the clarion call of the Vedic seer echoed and re-echoed in countless human hearts :

Hearken, o ye, the children of immortal bliss and ye that dwell in celestial regions. . . . I have realized this Great One, resplendent as the sun, beyond all darkness. It is by knowing Him that man overcomes death. There is no other way of escape from the cycle of births and deaths.<sup>4</sup>

The seers' pronouncements on the reality of the Divine Being have been substantiated by their whole-souled devotion to, and dependence upon Him, by their marvellous self-sacrifice for His sake, and their spontaneous joyousness at the very thought of Him. Not only did they realize the Truth themselves, but they also laid definite courses for the unillumined to attain illumination. In the present age, the greatest explorer into the unknown beyond was Sri Ramakrishna. He rent asunder the veil of darkness and saw the Light beyond. The ever-shining bedrock of Reality, Supreme Consciousness, the Light of lights, the Purest of the pure, the Fountainhead of all

1. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1 : 3.28.

2. Cf. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York : Macmillan and Co., 1962, p. 275. 'Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest.'

3. Cf. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 156. 'Now who are the greatest benefactors of the living generation of mankind? I should say: "Confucius and Lao-Tze; the Buddha; the Prophets of Israel and Judah; Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad, and Socrates."''

4. *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* II : 5 ; III : 8.

blessedness, was constantly manifest to him. His illustrious, potent, blissful, stainless, and beneficent life testifies to the validity of his supraconscious experiences.

Had the manifold—characterized by pairs of opposites and mutability—been all that exists, had there been no ideal existence beyond, then man's innermost longing for perfection, his constant struggle for freedom, his aspiration after true knowledge must have remained unfulfilled and without meaning. Not only that: there would have been in that case no escape for a human being from the round of birth and death, rise and decline, hope and fear, pleasure and pain, but through loss of consciousness or total annihilation of his existence. Further, even though there might be the transcendent Reality, but beyond man's reach, unknown and unknowable, it would leave him in the same predicament.

### 3. *Vedanta declares the Ideal Reality to be the Goal attainable by all.*

Vedanta not only affirms the Ultimate Reality as the Ideal, as the very perfection of existence, but also declares It to be the Highest End, attainable by all human beings through appropriate methods. It stresses the fact that the fundamental Reality is the very basis and being of the manifold. As such It underlies every form of existence. While the forms undergo incessant changes their inmost essence ever remains the same. All that we deal with are the fleeting forms and not the substance. The forms appear to be real in themselves because of the underlying Reality, the finest of all existences. It is identical with Consciousness pure and simple, *Vijñāna-ghana* in the Upaniṣadic term.<sup>5</sup> As such, It is self-manifest, real to Itself, and manifests all that appear to exist. As a matter of fact, It is the One All-pervading Self of the universe.

<sup>5</sup>. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II : 4.12.

What is innermost in the universe is innermost in each one of us. The Supreme Self shines within every individual as the inmost self. Just as at the back of every wave in the ocean there is the entire ocean, similarly at the back of each centre of finite consciousness there is Infinite Consciousness. By knowing the indwelling self man finds himself in God. He realizes his essential unity or even identity with the Divinity. Thus the direct way to the Supreme Being is an inner approach. It is stated in the *Kātha Upaniṣad* :

Rare is the self-controlled man who, desirous of immortality, discerns the inmost Self with the eyes closed [turning the vision inward].<sup>6</sup>

As we have mentioned before, the real self of man is the central principle of consciousness, ever manifest without subject-object relation. It appears as the knower being in contact with the object. There is but one knower within every individual. That one and the same knower cognizes the external objects, and also the conditions of the physical body, the conditions of the different organs and the conditions of the mind. That very knower is the experiencer of the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. While the objects cognized are multifarious and mutable, the knower is constant, invariable in the midst of the variable. Says the sage Pippalada :

It is He, the indwelling Self of the nature of consciousness, Who sees, touches, hears, smells, tastes, thinks, and ascertains. He is the knower, He is the doer. He becomes established in the Immutable Supreme Self [on the removal of *ajñāna*].<sup>7</sup>

Being associated with the psychophysical adjunct, the one and the same knower has many different functions. So a man can say, 'I see,' 'I hear,' 'I taste,' 'I speak,' 'I work,'

<sup>6</sup>. *Kātha Upaniṣad*, II : 1.1.

<sup>7</sup>. *Praśna Upaniṣad*, IV : 9.

'I sit,' 'I stand,' 'I sleep,' 'I walk,' 'I breathe,' 'I think,' 'I doubt,' 'I ascertain the truth,' and so forth. The same knowing self is responsible for the operations of the body, the organs, and the mind. Being identified more or less with the not-self, such as the body, the organs, and the mind, the self appears as the ego characterized by 'I-ness,' a particular modification of the mind. The ego assumes varied forms in the waking state as well as in the dream state. But behind all these guises shines the same changless Self.

While the objects of knowledge, internal as well as external, are devoid of consciousness, the knower is ever self-aware, pure and free. The knowing self is beyond birth and death, beyond growth and decay, beyond hunger and thirst, beyond pain and pleasure, beyond love and hate. Yet, the indwelling self, although aware of its own existence, being veiled by *ajñāna* or *avidyā*—a peculiar ignorance—does not recognize its true nature. Not only that; it misapprehends itself as a psychophysical being. *Ajñāna* or *avidyā* is at the root of this in-apprehension and misapprehension; but it does not affect the true nature of the self. Like fire behind smoke the luminous self ever shines in its pristine glory behind the veil. The case is somewhat similar to that of a monarch who under the spell of amnesia fails to recognize his royal status, and mistakes himself for a commoner and behaves as such.

Nevertheless by proper disciplinary courses man can eliminate *ajñāna* and its effects, realize the Self, and be free for ever. Truly speaking, the Self is ever attained. But as long as a man is not aware of Its true nature, due to ignorance, It is unattained to all intents and purposes. The 'attainment' of the self therefore means the recognition of the true nature of the indwelling self and its unity with the Supreme Self, consequent on the removal of the veil of ignorance

(*ajñāna*). An earnest seeker can realize the self even through prayer. Sri Ramakrishna remarks :

Let me assure you that a man can realize his Inner Self through sincere prayer. But to the extent that he has the desire to enjoy worldly objects, his vision of the Self becomes obstructed. . . .

Let me tell you that the realization of the self is possible for all, without any exception.<sup>8</sup>

As declared by the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* :

Smaller than the small, greater than the great is the self located in the heart of every being. A man who is free from desires beholds the glory of the self through the purification of the organs and the mind and goes beyond grief.

The wise man who ascertains the self as bodiless in the midst of the bodies, as steady in the midst of the unsteady, as vast and all-pervading, does not grieve.

The Self cannot be attained by the study of the Vedas, or by intellect or by vast learning. The Self the seeker yearns for is attainable through that (yearning). To him the Self reveals Its own being.

He who has not refrained from wicked deeds whose senses are not under control, whose mind is not settled, nor tranquil, cannot attain the self through intuitive knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

That the realization of Brahman is the only gateway to immortality, peace and blessedness has been unreservedly declared by Vedanta :

There is the One Supreme Ruler, the innermost Self of all, who makes the One Being manifold; eternal happiness belongs to the wise who perceive Him within themselves, and not to others. There is One Being, the Eternal in the midst of the non-eternal, who is the consciousness of all conscious beings, and who, single-handed, dispenses the fruits of actions of many; eternal peace

8. 'M', *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, (1942), trans. Swami Nikhilananda, New York : Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, p. 256.

9. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I : 2.20, 22-24.

belongs to the wise who perceive Him within themselves and not to others.<sup>10</sup>

There is the One destroyer of ignorance in the universe. He alone is the fire dwelling in water. By knowing Him alone one overcomes death.<sup>11</sup>

When men shall roll up the sky like leather, then only there will be the end of misery for them without realizing the effulgent Being.<sup>12</sup>

4. *The Vedantic view of the manifold is not illusionism or pantheism.*

According to Advaita Vedanta, multiplicity has only an apparent existence but no ultimate reality. The Supreme one exists transcendently—exclusive of all multiplicity, duality, and relativity. Beyond time, space, and causality is the One Undivided Absolute Being without difference or distinction of any kind. That is the subtle essence of every form of existence. That One is perceived as the manifold by the unillumined through ignorance (*ajñāna*).<sup>13</sup> This multiform universe, physical and mental, is essentially That. It is real not as it appears but as the Supreme Being. The unchanging, undiversified, non-dual Absolute (Brahman) is the sole ground

10. *Katha Upaniṣad*, II: 2.12, 13.

11. *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, VI: 15.

12. *Ibid.*, VI: 20.

13. The term *ajñāna*, usually translated as 'ignorance,' means, basically, the ignorance of the Supreme Reality. It indicates that the unillumined have no knowledge. With all their knowledge of the manifold they are ignorant of the ultimate nature of things. Not only are they unaware of the Ultimate Reality, but know It differently from what It is. So, with reference to Truth, they have only false knowledge. *Ajñāna* is not mere absence of knowledge. It is not non-entity, but something positive that has two distinct functions: (1) to hide Reality, and (2) to present It as other than what It is. *Ajñāna* is at the root of all appearances of Reality. It includes all relative knowledge as well as all forms of ignorance. It has different names—*avidyā*, *mayā*, *prakṛti*—indicative of its different aspects.

and being of the apparent manifold consisting of ever-changing names and forms. It is said in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* :

That eternal Brahman is before, that Brahman is behind, that Brahman is to the right, that Brahman is to the left. That Brahman permeates all above and below; this universe is the absolute Brahman alone.<sup>14</sup>

Brahman is the reality of all that appears to be real. So in the Vedantic view the world is not just an illusion, but a misreading of Brahman.

Nor should the Vedantic view of the world be confused with pantheism, as is often done by some modern thinkers. The difference between the two has been very well pointed out by Swami Vivekananda :

The Vedantist [Advaitist] says the universe is not real, it is only apparent. Nature is God seen through nescience. The Pantheists say, God has become nature or this world. The Advaitists affirm that God is appearing as this world, but He is not this world.<sup>15</sup>

The following remark of Professor Hirianna is pertinent :

It is now usual to represent the monism of the later mantras and the Brahmanas as pantheistic; but it is not correct to do so, since the term as applicable to this teaching connotes the idea not merely of immanence but also of transcendence.<sup>16</sup>

As stated by Dr. Radhakrishnan :

Pantheism is the view which identifies God with the sum of things and denies transcendence. If the nature of the absolute is exhausted completely by the course of the world, if the two become one, then we have pantheism. In the Upaniṣads we come across passages which declare that the nature of reality

14. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II: 2.12.

15. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, VII (1969), p. 50.

16. M. Hirianna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, London : George Allen and Unwin, 1949, p. 16.

is not exhausted by the world-process. The existence of the world does not take away from the perfection of the absolute.<sup>17</sup>

Two of the Upaniṣads thus declare the Supreme Being to be both immanent and transcendent :

Just as the sun which helps all eyes to see is not tainted by the defects of the eyes or the external objects revealed by it, even so the same undiversified innermost Self is not contaminated by

the misery of the world, being beyond it.<sup>18</sup>

One effulgent Being is hidden in all creatures. He is all-pervasive and is the innermost self of all. He presides over the law of karma and all beings reside in Him. He is the Witness and He is Pure Consciousness transcendent and free from relativity.<sup>19</sup>

(To be concluded)

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17. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 202.

18. *Katha Upaniṣad*, II : 2.11.

19. *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, VI. 11.

## BERTOLT BRECHT: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

DR. S. SUBHASH CHANDRA

No other literary figure, not even Thomas Mann or Franz Kafka, has so profoundly influenced the recent trends in German literature as Bertolt Brecht. His writings have provided dynamic impulses to the contemporary German literature in all its ramifications. Poet, dramatist, novelist and author of numerous essays and short stories, Brecht has left scarcely any branch of literature untouched by his genius. Deep and pervasive though his influence was in all the facets of literature, Brecht excelled primarily in the world of drama. He has left an indelible mark on the contemporary drama and has been rightly hailed as the Shaw of the German drama. A staunch communist and a relentless foe of fascism, Brecht was at once a votary of the liberal and totalitarian approaches to life. Like all great personalities, he was not bereft of contradictions. Indeed, at times it seemed as if he thrived upon them! The purport of the present article is to delineate the role

of Brecht in the contemporary German literature. In the interests of clarity, I shall begin my article with a brief account of the life of Brecht and then deal with his political and ideological affiliations. A succinct elucidation of the theoretical foundations of his dramas shall constitute the concluding part of my essay.

Son of a Catholic father and a Protestant mother Bertolt Brecht was born on February 10, 1898 in the historic city of Augsburg in Bavaria, and was christened in the Protestant faith of his mother. Theirs was a well-to-do family, his father being the managing director of a paper-mill and his mother the daughter of a civil servant. Sensitive and reticent, the young Brecht tended to be a rebel and a non-conformist. Bored by the tedious routine of the school education and disillusioned by the mediocrity of his teachers ('During my nine years at the Augsburg Grammar School I did not succeed in imparting any worth-

while education to my teachers!'<sup>1</sup>), he acquired a precocious interest in metaphysics. At the age of sixteen, he came into conflict with the authorities by publishing a blatantly pacifist essay in the wake of the First World War. In 1916 he started studying medicine and science at the University of Munich. Soon thereafter he was called up to serve as a medical orderly in a military hospital and contribute to the war effort of his country. Here he was forced to witness the most gruesome horrors of the war. In the course of tending the mutilated bodies of wounded soldiers, the young Brecht became profoundly aware of the follies of war. Bleeding sinews and shattered bones, crushed muscles and battered brains constitute the groundworks of the pacifism of Brecht. During the November 1918 upheaval that led to the termination of the First World War and the brief spell of Communism in Bavaria that followed it, he espoused the cause of the revolutionaries. The insurrection, as we know, was quelled, and the young Brecht resumed his studies in medicine at the University of Munich. In the meantime, he was irresistably drawn to literary interests, and in 1918 he published his first play. In due course, his literary preoccupations gained such an ascendancy over him that he was constrained to give up his medical studies altogether. In 1920 he joined the staff of playwrights and literary critics of the Munich *Kammerspiele*. In September 1922 Brecht's *Drums in the Night* was produced in Munich and was received with spontaneous applause by the critics. Almost overnight he became a celebrity and was awarded the Heinrich von Kleist Prize for 1922. Late in 1924 he

moved to Berlin, the metropolis of German culture and politics. Here he took over the key post of the 'Dramaturg' of the *Deutsches Theater*. Four years later, he published *The Three Penny Opera*, which soon became one of the milestones of the European drama. Shortly thereafter he married Helene Weigel, who became one of the most intimate collaborators of the distinguished dramatist for the rest of his life. With the seizure of power by the Nazis in 1933, Brecht became a *persona non grata* in his own country. On February 28, 1933 began his political exile that was to last till the end of the Second World War. Travelling over Vienna, Switzerland and France, he reached Denmark, which became the centre of his literary activities for the next six years. During his period of exile in Denmark he published, among others, a scathing denunciation of the barbarities of the Nazi regime in the form of a play dealing with *The Private Life of the Master Race*. In the summer of 1939 the Nazi menace assumed such proportions that Brecht thought it prudent to move over to the United States of America. Travelling over Sweden and Finland, he arrived on July 21, 1940 in California. *The Good Soul of Setzuan* and *The Life of Galilei*—the latter was produced in 1947 at Coronet Theatre, Hollywood with Charles Laughton playing the title role—constitute the two outstanding plays that flowed out of his gifted pen during his American sojourn. Like many other wartime immigrants, Brecht too did not find the American cultural and political atmosphere congenial to his creativity. Soon he came into conflict with the authorities and was summoned to testify before the Un-American Activities Committee in Washington. Although nothing incriminatory could be proved against him, he decided to return to Europe. Aside from brief visits to Zurich, he now came to stay in East Berlin. He collaborated in the foundation of the Berliner Ensemble,

1. Cited by Herbert Ihering in 'Der Volksdramatiker', *Sinn und Form*, First Special Brecht Issue, 1949, p. 5. F. Berteaux, *Litterature allemande contemporaine* (Paris: Editions du Sagittaire, 1928), p. 284 refers to the early impact of Wedekind upon Brecht.

and agreed to take over its management in 1949. On May 26, 1955 he was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize in Moscow. Bertolt Brecht died of coronary thrombosis on August 14, 1956.

Having dealt with the life of Brecht, we would now like to elucidate the historical and cultural perspectives in which he lived and the factors that left an indelible impression on his sensitive mind. A student of the life and works of Brecht cannot fail to notice that throughout his life the distinguished dramatist was guided by a fervent espousal of world peace, by an unwavering adherence to Marxism, and by an undisguised contempt for the social and moral values of the bourgeoisie society. These three objectives, viz. world peace, Marxism and the repudiation of the bourgeoisie form of life constituted verily the watchwords of Brecht. No account of the life and work of Brecht can hope to do justice to his genius without offering a reasonable documentation of the events and elements that occasioned this unflinching affiliation to these three maxims of his life. Hence, I propose presenting here a concise account of the circumstances that led to Brecht's devotion to these three aims.

Brecht was an avowed pacifist. He repudiated war in all forms and was not prepared to accept any extenuating circumstances in its favour. He turned down all arguments in favour of war as being either misguided or malicious or both. According to Brecht, war signifies an unmitigated evil, for it entails a basic degradation of all human values and saps at the very roots of culture and civilisation. No one can ever hope to appreciate the vehemence of Brecht's rejection of war who is unacquainted with the ghastly consequences of the two World Wars. As I have already pointed out, during the First World War young Brecht was required to serve as a medical orderly in a military hospital. Here he

made his acquaintance with war in the form of mutilated limbs and dismembered bodies. To quote him: 'I was mobilised in the war and placed in a hospital. I dressed wounds, applied iodine, gave enemas, performed blood-transfusions. If the doctor ordered me: "Amputate a leg, Brecht!" I would answer: "Yes, Your Excellency!" and cut off the leg. If I was told: "Make a trepanning!" I opened the man's skull and tinkered with his brains. I saw how they patched people up in order to ship them back to the front as soon as possible.'<sup>2</sup> Throughout his life he was haunted by the scenes of suffering that he had to witness in this military hospital. The unspeakable barbarities of the Second World War served only to fortify his resolve to espouse peace and mutual understanding in a world rent by hatred and fear.

As if the horrors of the First World War were not enough, the peace of Versailles was followed by the great inflation that caused a large-scale unemployment and a perceptible debasement of public morals. Germany was pushed to the brink of disaster. Demoralisation, deep and pervasive, was the outcome of the sense of insecurity and helplessness engendered by the chaotic inflation. 'I neither intend nor am able to present a picture of the sudden and overwhelming unemployment and the universal impoverishment engendered by the inflation. Indeed, the most disquieting element of the situation was that the causes of this violent deterioration were nowhere to be seen. The entire civilised world seemed to suffer from inexplicable cramps. Everybody was non-plussed. ... I arrived at the following remarkable conclusion: I realised that life

2. Cited by Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959), p. 7. F. Ewen, *Bertolt Brecht* (Paris: Seuil, 1973), p. 246 refers to the indissoluble link between Brecht's hatred of war and his animosity towards the Hitlerism.



in the centres of civilisation had become so very complicated that even the best brains could no more survey it or venture any predictions concerning it. . . . Human beings had managed to evolve a system of trade that could be guided only by supermen!<sup>3</sup> The great inflation served to expose the profound contradictions inherent in the structure of a society dominated by capitalism. Brecht was disgusted by the unprincipled manipulations of the big business magnates, which, he was convinced, constituted a rape of the legitimate interests of the proletariat. In his *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, published in 1929/30, he has sought to underline the unscrupulous methods allegedly exploited by the American big business to further its own narrow ends.

Embittered though he was by the misery caused by the economic slump, he was even more appalled by the prostitution of morals that accrued therefrom. Corruption became the order of the day and sex was wholly denuded of moral considerations. A man of Brecht's sensitivity was naturally disillusioned by the widespread depravity around him. In his most well-known play *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Three Penny Opera*), published in 1928, he has attempted a portrayal of the moral situation of the inflation era. Frank and uncompromising, *The Three Penny Opera*, involves a scathing indictment of the moral hypocrisy of the day. The tenor of the play may well be illustrated by the following passage: Peachum, a fraudulent businessman, upon being informed of his daughter's intention to marry, exclaims: 'Marriage! My daughter is for me, what a slice of bread is for a starving man. . . . Marriage is an utterly vile

affair. I shall chase out this idea of marriage from her mind.'<sup>4</sup>

Brecht was, then, confronted with the sordid realities of a bankrupt economy and a defunct morality. The roots of the inflation and the moral anarchy, as we have seen, were located by the dramatist in the catastrophe of the First World War. Indeed, Brecht was convinced that all afflictions of the mankind stem from wars. And wars, we are assured, are unleashed by the capitalists to enrich their fortunes. Thus, *Mother Courage*, one of the inimitable characters created by Brecht, avers: 'When one listens to the great men, one is assured that the wars are declared to further the divine will and to promote all that is noble and praiseworthy. But when one carefully looks into the matter one would observe that the wars are rooted in the desire for profit.'<sup>5</sup> Neither the desire for national glory nor the personal ambitions of politicians or militarists could possibly be regarded as the fundamental source of wars. Wars result from the cupidity of the capitalists. The representatives of big business, maintains Brecht, provoke the declaration of wars, for 'one has only to unleash wars to create unlimited business prospects; wars engender the most unexpected impulses, which need only to be exploited and one can do all sorts of business without capital investment!'<sup>6</sup> As a substantiation of the theory of the covetousness of the big businessmen as the root-cause of all wars, Brecht

3. Brecht, *Fluechtlingsgespräche* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1961), pp. 54-55. G. Badia, *Bertolt Brecht: Theatre complet* (Paris: L'Arche, 1959), p. 8 is descriptive of the impact of the most terrible economic crisis that the world had ever known upon the creativity of Brecht.

4. Brecht, *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1962), p. 16.

5. Brecht, *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1962), p. 39. W. Weideli, *Bertolt Brecht* (Paris: Classiques du XXe siècle/Editions universitaires, 1961), pp. [?] provides perhaps a too narrow Marxist interpretation of the *Mutter Courage*. But, *ibid.*, p. 129 Weideli has the brilliant idea of relating the dialectical materialism to the Buddhism.

6. Brecht, *Drei Groschen Roman* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1961), p. 287.

informs us (I have not had the opportunity of checking up the veracity of this information) that during the Second World War the American Congress had resolved to legitimise a profit of 10% in the armament industry.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Brecht was so thoroughly convinced of the validity of this theory that he even wrote a drama, which purported to show that there existed a collusion between the Nazi and Jewish business magnates, and that the latter had no scruples in betraying their racial compatriots, if that happened to coincide with their business interests!<sup>8</sup> In consonance with this theory, he held that the majority of the German people reacted either with sullen but helpless defiance towards the Nazis or they were the unhappy dupes of the ruling demagogues.

We see, then, that the world capitalism was thought by Brecht to be responsible for the wars. It would be generally agreed, I venture to opine, that this theory of Brecht suffers at least from the demerit of one-sidedness. And the assertion that the rich Jews and Nazis collaborated with each other stands in such contradiction with incontrovertible historical evidence that it hardly deserves serious consideration. Why, then, one may justifiably ask, did Brecht propound this theory? The answer to this very pertinent question is to be found in the fact that Brecht was an avowed Marxist. Marxism, as we know, propagates the view that the evolution of the human history has been marked by a ceaseless struggle between haves and have-nots. In accordance with this theory, wars are exploited by the capitalists to consolidate their power at the expense of the proletariat. Brecht, an out-

spoken Marxist as he was, found in this theory a welcome confirmation of his more or less nebulous thoughts over this problem. Naturally the theory stands in flagrant violation with historical facts, and has served to vitiate the trend of some of Brecht's plays. Rightly has John Willet observed: 'The doctrine of the class war, which in Marx's hands was an illuminating theory to explain admitted facts, here becomes a strait jacket into which the facts have to be crammed. Whatever does not fit has simply to be discarded or suppressed.'<sup>9</sup>

And this brings us to the problem of Brecht's affiliations to Marxism. A constellation of circumstances had conspired together to link Brecht and the votaries of Marxism to one another. Brecht, as I have already pointed out, was dedicated to world peace. He had the misfortune of seeing his own country play the major role in unleashing two world wars. He realised early that the roots of these wars were to be traced back to the nationalistic fanaticism of the German people. He was, therefore, convinced that only the eradication of the virus of nationalism could possibly occasion world peace. And as the fate would have it, during the crucial years of political chaos and indecision that followed the conclusion of the illusory peace of Versailles the German Communist Party constituted the only genuine and conscientious opposition to the radicalism of the nationalists. 'It needs to be remembered,' observes Ronald Gray, 'for the understanding of Brecht's later adherence to the Communists, that while Ebert, the newly appointed President, was negotiating with the German General Staff for the continuance of an already corrupt tradition, it was the Communists alone who

<sup>7</sup> Brecht, *Fluechtlingsgespraech* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1961), p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Brecht, *Die Rundkopfe und die Spitzkopfe*. M. Habart, *Bertolt Brecht: Theatre complet* (Paris: L'Arche, 1959), Vol. VIII, rightly honours Brecht for his opposition to all forms of injustice, including racial and colonial forms of suppression

<sup>9</sup> John Willett, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 197. R. Wintzen, *Bertolt Brecht* (Paris: Seghers, 1954), pp. 96-100 deals with the affinities between Brecht and Gorky

refused to accept the blandishments of a professedly democratic regime.<sup>10</sup> Brecht was fascinated by the undoubtedly heroic personalities of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who were assassinated shortly after the First World War. No wonder, then, that the fatal upheaval of the Communists in Bavaria, crowned with a flicker of success, met with the spontaneous approval of Brecht. That he was repelled by the capitalistic form of the society, which he unfortunately knew only in its worst form during the inflationary times, served merely to drive him to the opposite extreme of seeking comfort in the arms of communists. His faith in human goodwill shattered by the two global wars and his optimism driven to despair by the all-devouring inflation, Brecht was faced with the prospect of either sinking into a petrified cynicism or going over to the camp of the Marxists. And he preferred agitating with the Spartacists than to lapsing into an attitude of stupor and ambiguity. In the words of Martin Esslin: 'Brecht's commitment was thus of importance mainly in stabilising his tumultuous personality. It resolved the deep feeling of nihilism and despair which pervaded his early writings, canalised the destructive forces within him, and allowed him to rationalise his poetic impulse by giving it purpose.'<sup>11</sup>

An avowed Marxist though he was, it still remains a matter of controversy, whether he ever became a member of the German Communist Party. According to Ruth Fischer, once a prominent member of the German Communist Party and the sister of Brecht's friend and collaborator, the composer Hans Eisler, the dramatist joined the party in 1930. Brecht himself, in the course of a

testimony before the Un-American Activities Committee in Washington on 30th October 1947, expressly denied his having ever been a member of the Communist Party.<sup>12</sup> Leaving this technical dispute aside, we find that he remained throughout his life sympathetic to the cause of Communism. Returning from his wartime emigration in America, he preferred settling in East Germany to living in the Western part of his country, although Bavaria, as we know, was his home province. An internationally recognised writer, he was clearly a great asset to the not quite so popular Communist regime. The authorities in East Germany hastened to put at his disposal a modern theatre equipped with the required paraphernalia. He was hailed as the foremost representative of the culture and literature of East Germany. That, however, does not mean that his relations with the Communists were devoid of all friction. Thus, the performance of his play *Das Verhör des Lukullus* in 1951 met with the disapproval of the authorities. The play, constituting a repudiation of war, was staged at an inopportune moment. In 1951 the Korean War was at its peak, and the East German communists could not but be perturbed by a literary event meant to prove the futility of *all* war. Brecht was constrained to revise the play, though he took care to get the original version released in West Germany. To tell the truth, Brecht was welcome to the Communists in the same manner in which Picasso or Sartre were useful to them. He represented a very cogent propaganda material for the East German government. But, not unlike Picasso and Sartre, Brecht too was wont to behave like an *enfant terrible*. And Brecht appears to have been conscious of contradictions inherent in his relationship with the Communists as is evidenced by the following three facts:

10. Ronald Gray, *Brecht* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1961), p. 7.

11. Martin Esslin, *op. cit.*, p. 210. Ewen, *op. cit.*, pp. 429-441 provides a transcription of Brecht's testimony before the Un-American Activities Committee.

12. Esslin, *op. cit.*, p. 133; Ewen, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

Firstly, although he decided to settle permanently in East Germany, Brecht took care to acquire the Austrian citizenship. Equipped with the Austrian passport, he could move without restriction in and outside East Germany. Secondly, he sold all rights of publication of his plays to the West German publisher Suhrkamp, who also became one of his intimate friends and advisers. Thirdly, he took care to deposit his money in a Swiss bank, and was evidently not willing to entrust even the money received as Stalin Peace Prize to the East German authorities! Brecht, a victim of the inflation and of the dictatorship of the Nazis, had clearly no confidence in the shaky finances or in the totalitarian nature of the Communist regime, whose cause he was wont to espouse.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Brecht was ideologically linked to Marxism, and his work is to be appraised only in the context of the philosophy of Marxism. In accordance with the fundamental tenets of Marx, Brecht was able to systematically develop a new theory of the function of the dramatic form of literature and its representation on the stage. A discussion of Brecht's theory of dramatics, however, ought to be preceded by a reference to the literary atmosphere in which Brecht worked out his ideas over drama, literature, art, politics, etc. Interestingly enough, the most significant influence on the writings of Brecht was exercised not by a German or a Russian, but by an Englishman! Rudyard Kipling was in many respects the mentor of this votary of Marxism. Kipling was a perpetual source of inspiration for Brecht, whose *The Three Penny Opera*, aside from being based upon John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, is permeated by the spirit of the author of *Kim*. That Brecht was profoundly impressed by the English literature is further borne out by the fact that he wrote a play on *Edward II* based on a work of Marlowe bearing the same

title. Brecht paid his tribute to Russian literature by creating a dramatic version of Gorky's *Mother*. Jaroslav Hasek's *Good Soldier Schweik* constitutes a landmark in the development of Brecht's creativity. From among the German writers Frank Wedekind left a permanent impression on the style of Brecht.<sup>13</sup> Arthur Waley's translation of the *No Plays of Japan* too is an important development in the life of Brecht.

Brecht, like all Marxists, was profoundly convinced of the ceaselessly changing nature of all reality. That change constitutes the hallmark of reality is one of the main tenets of Marx, and Brecht subscribes to this view. Reality is dynamic: permanence, changeless and static, is nowhere to be found. This restless change, this ceaseless dynamism has hitherto been either hap-hazard or has been geared to serve the interests of the capitalist class. With the emergence of socialistic countries, however, the picture has changed. As a result, one may now hope to promote such forms of social and economic change that contribute to the victory of the proletariats. And it is the duty of the artist to contribute to a transformation of the society in favour of the working class. For nobody can stand aloof of the struggle between haves and have-nots. Neutrality here is tantamount to working in favour of the ruling class.<sup>14</sup>

It is the function of the theatre, avers Brecht, to assist in the transformation of the society aimed at by the Communist countries. The theatre is destined to play an important role in the realisation of socialism. The artist should never forget that the theatre is not the maid-servant of the writer or the poet but of the society.<sup>15</sup> Brecht was resolved to make the artist aware of the

<sup>13</sup>. R. Grimm, *Bertolt Brecht* (Nuernberg: Hans Carl, 1959), p. 84.

<sup>14</sup>. Brecht, *Schriften zum Theater* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1961), p. 158.

<sup>15</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

eminently practical function of all art and literature. He wanted the artists to inculcate a deepened awareness of the indubitable supremacy of economic and political factors in the human society. He was bent upon liberating art and the artists from the illusions and phantasies allegedly rooted in the capitalist forms of society.<sup>16</sup> Brecht wanted the artists to recognise the limitations of what he called the 'Aristotelian' concept of drama, and give it up by acceding to his own 'epic' concept of the drama.

The Aristotelian or the traditional concept of the theatre aims at a total absorption of the audience in the enjoyment of the scenes being enacted. It engenders an excess of emotional involvement of the audience in the drama, and deprives him thereby of the possibility of an active and conscious participation. The audience is expected to forget itself in the enjoyment of the drama. The traditional drama requires its actors to create an illusion of reality. The actor is expected to lose himself so thoroughly in his role as to become one with it. He is to identify himself completely with the role that he is playing, and thereby induce the audience to let itself be temporarily duped. The traditional theatre, maintains Brecht, reduces the audience to a state of unworthy passivity. His own doctrine of epic theatre, on the other hand, disdains to engender any illusion of reality. It refuses to serve as the opium of the people. In the epic theatre, the audience is never allowed to forget that it is witnessing something being performed on the stage and not actually taking place before it. The actor is never supposed to fully lose his own identity in the act of performing a role. He remains always fully aware of the fact that he is not Lear, Herpagon, or Schweik, but he is undertaking a faithful portrayal of

these characters.<sup>17</sup> An adherent of the epic theatre would not only expect that the actor plays his role well, but also that (a) he himself must never lose sight of the fact that he is merely enacting a role, and (b) he must constantly remind the audience that they are not participating in an actual event, but are witnessing a stage version of a literary event.

Here one may well ask, how can an actor possibly offer a faithful portrait of a literary character without for the time being losing his own personal identity and engendering in the audience an illusion of reality? The actor, rejoins Brecht, must interfere with such an illusion by resorting to the method of 'estrangement' (*Verfremdung*). The audience must be discouraged from lapsing into a state of passivity by means of introducing discordant elements in the course of the performance of a role. Thus, frequent and more or less unrelated singing could suffice to break the spell and make the audience aware of the artificiality of the situation. One may prevent even a possible emergence of an illusion of reality by allowing the audience to see the prompters doing their job. Brecht ascribed paramount importance to various means of estrangement so that the audience is not reduced to a state of passivity. A socialistic transformation of the society, asserts Brecht, is only possible, when the active participation of the audience is solicited by the actors. Hence, the immense importance that the methods of estrangement richly deserve.

With this, I conclude my essay on Brecht. I have aimed at providing a concise account of the life and work of Brecht. A short study like the present one can only hope to present outstanding points in a nut-shell. Nevertheless, I venture to hope that my

16. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 109. G. Serreau, *Bertolt Brecht* (Paris: L'Arche, 1955), p. 38: 'The epic theater, according to Brecht, ought not to develop actions, but portray conditions.'

article would engender an enhanced interest in the life and writings of Brecht, who is unquestionably one of the outstanding dramatists of the present century. His dramas continue to influence the present-day German language and literature, as attested by the work of two Swiss dramatists, viz. Max

Frisch and Duerrenmatt, probably the most outstanding living representatives of the German drama, who continue to derive their inspiration from Brecht. In short, despite his political *faux pas*, Brecht remains one of the most influential writers of the contemporary Germany.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S DISCOVERIES ABOUT INDIA—VI

SWAMI BHAJANANANDA

### SWAMIJI'S FOURTH DISCOVERY

We now come to Swamiji's fourth discovery about India that the nation needed for its immediate economic progress, the science and technology of the West. He understood that India's culture needed a strong physical basis for its protection and propagation. The spiritual culture of India is still lying dormant because the physical medium for its expression is not yet ready. Swamiji's ideas about the importance of science and technology in preparing this physical medium are outlined below:

1. What millions of people immediately need is food. Swamiji knew very well that religion could not be preached to empty stomachs. That is why he uttered in anguish: 'I do not believe in a religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.' Further, 'So long as even a dog of my country remains without food, to feed and take care of him is my religion, and anything else is either non-religion or false religion.'

2. In a world of cut-throat competition, we cannot get the food we need, by our primitive methods of agriculture and industry. If we want to catch up with the West we must master their science and technology.

Swamiji said:

... we have many things to learn from the West. We should learn from the West her arts and her sciences.<sup>79</sup> We have, perhaps, to gain a little in material knowledge, in the power of organization, in the ability to handle powers, organizing powers, in bringing the best results out of the smallest of causes. This perhaps to a certain extent we may learn from the West.<sup>79a</sup>

Swamiji was one of the first great social thinkers in India to understand the importance of modern technology for the material advancement of a backward nation like India. He was not afraid that machines would ruin India's age-old traditions and social values. In the first place, he knew the clock of history could not be put back. Advancement of science and technology is a historical development, and any nation which refuses to master it, must lag behind the other nations. Spinning cotton with charkā may give emotional satisfaction to a few individuals. But six hundred million people cannot depend on charkā alone. India must mass produce cloth and export it to get valuable foreign exchange to feed

<sup>79</sup>. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, (hereafter *Comp. Works*), III (1970), p. 443, 444.

<sup>79a</sup>. *Comp. Works*, III, p. 149.

her hungry millions and to develop her industries.

3. It is a well-known fact that for culture and religion to flourish, a nation must produce a certain surplus quantity of wealth. India's great cultural attainments were reached, when she was a prosperous and powerful nation. Where scarcity conditions prevail, the dominant concern of the people will be about food, clothing, and shelter, and they will not be able to support a leisured class exclusively devoted to religion and culture. This does not of course mean that a rich man is necessarily religious; the truth is usually to the contrary. But what applies to the individual cannot always be applied to the nation. In order to support a leisured class exclusively devoted to religion and culture, the nation as a whole must have surplus wealth. To force upon a poor society the cultural pattern of an affluent society through tradition was the mistake that India was committing during the last two or three centuries. In his famous lecture delivered at Ramnad Swami Vivekananda pointed out:

Yet, perhaps, some sort of materialism toned down to our own requirements, would be a blessing to many of our brothers who are not yet ripe for the higher truths. This is the mistake made in every country and in every society. . . . the same mistake of forcing the highest truths on people who are not ready for them has been made of late. . . . The sannyasin, as you all know is the ideal of the Hindu's life, . . . We know that this is the ideal—to give up after seeing and experiencing the vanity of things. . . . But that ideal can only be realized after a certain amount of experience. We cannot teach the child the truth of renunciation; the child is a born optimist, his whole life is in his senses; his whole life is one mass of sense-enjoyment. So there are childlike men in every society who require a certain amount of experience, of enjoyment, to see through the vanity of it, and then

renunciation will come to them. There has been ample provision made for them in our Books; but unfortunately in later times there has been a tendency to bind everyone down by the very same laws as those by which the sannyasin is bound and that is a great mistake. But for that, a good deal of poverty and the misery that you see in India need not have been. A poor man's life is hemmed in and bound down by tremendous spiritual and ethical laws for which he has no use. Hands off! Let the poor fellow enjoy himself a little, and then he will raise himself up, and renunciation will come to him of itself. Perhaps in this line, we can be taught something by the Western people; but we must be very cautious in learning these things. I am sorry to say that most of the examples one meets nowadays of men who have imbibed the Western ideas are more or less failures.<sup>80</sup>

4. Machinery and technology are not in themselves bad. What is bad is our relation with them. This was clearly pointed out by Karl Marx, when he said that the world is a field for man's self-expression and not an object of exploitation for the satisfaction of his physiological necessities. Marx warned about the possibility of man's getting lost in the object, if the object has not become a human object, that is to say, if his relationship to the object (say, machines) is not of active self-directed relatedness. This is at the basis of the Marxian concept of 'alienation' or 'de-humanization of the workers' already referred to.

In dealing with machines man need not and should not become a machine himself. This danger can be avoided, if man remains a free and conscious agent looking upon work as a means for 'creative self-expression', as Marx puts it. But Marx failed to understand that such an attitude needs a spiritual orientation. The Vedantic idea of looking upon man as a spirit, and work as

<sup>80</sup>. *Comp. Works*, III, p. 149-51.

Karma, a means for self-realization as interpreted by Swami Vivekananda, is the best safeguard against the mechanization of human life which machines are supposed to bring about. The evils of modern cities in the West and even in India are not due to machines alone, but are mainly due to the unsatisfactory social conditions created by the thoughtless and rapacious way, industrialization has been brought about. A well spaced out and planned industrial programme with the spiritual welfare of the workers kept as the central aim alone can bring prosperity to backward and under-developed nations like India.

5. Another important point to note in man's relationship with machines is the need for a change of attitude towards machines or nature itself. The alleged dehumanizing effect of machines is due to the fact that they are looked upon as dead matter devoid of any direct relationship to life. In the Western world this attitude is extended to cover the whole Nature. According to Arnold Toynbee it is this tendency to look upon nature as an inert field for man's exploitation that is the root cause of environmental pollution, which has become a serious health hazard in the cities of developed countries.

In an article published in the *Reader's Digest*, March 1974, Toynbee traces the origin of such an attitude to the Old Testament injunction to Adam and Eve to have dominion over the 'birds of the air and upon every living thing that moves upon the earth' (Genesis, 1 : 28). Before the advent of monotheistic Christianity the Greco-Roman culture looked upon nature as a goddess, the Mother Earth. He writes:

And the vegetation that sprang from the earth, the animals that roamed the earth's surface, and minerals hiding in the earth's bowels, all partook of nature's divinity. So did all natural phenomena—springs and rivers and sea; mountains;

earthquakes and lightning and thunder. Such was the original religion of all mankind. The god head was diffused throughout—a pantheon, plural, not singular. But when the Greco-Roman world was converted to Christianity the divinity was drained out of nature and concentrated in a single transcendent god. Man's greedy impulse to exploit nature used to be held in check by his awe of her. Now, monotheism, as enunciated in Genesis, has removed the age old restraint. We in the West take unlimited liberties with nature because we think of her as unsacrosanct 'raw material'.<sup>81</sup>

In striking contrast to this attitude is the Hindu's reverence for Nature as the body of the Immanent Divine. God in Vedanta is intracosmic as hundreds of passages in the Hindu scriptures proclaim. The well-known *Iśa Upaniṣad* begins with the injunction: 'Cover all this—the moving and the non-moving—with God and maintain yourself with this detachment.' Even machines are looked upon as partaking of divinity, and are worshipped by the Hindus at least once a year on the last day of the Navaratri festival (Dasera). Every tool and machine is made according to a particular law. Take a simple kitchen knife, for instance. It is made according to a certain law which primitive man took several centuries to understand. A pencil cannot be used as a knife any more than as a pen can be used as a walking stick. Every tool is an expression of a definite law and, as the great seventeenth century Dutch philosopher Spinoza has pointed out, all natural laws are indeed divine laws. When a Hindu worships his tools, garden implements, or his factory machines, he is only showing reverence for the divine laws that govern their construction. He worships not the dead matter, but the all-pervading divine Principle, the source

<sup>81</sup>. Arnold Toynbee: 'Genesis of Pollution', *Reader's Digest*, March 1974.



of all laws, all knowledge. And as long as the Hindus maintain this attitude of reverence towards machinery, and towards Nature in general, there is no fear of his becoming dehumanized and getting ultimately destroyed by the latter. Instead of degrading man, machinery properly handled can enable man to free himself from the hold of matter and manifest his potential divinity more and more. Speaking about this Toynbee said:

Man needs to re-integrate himself into the nature of which he is, in truth, an integral part, and he can do this only through ecstasy or contemplation—through religion or philosophy. The way of ecstasy is illustrated by St. Francis of Assisi's Canticle, the poem in which he expresses his feeling of brotherhood with the rest of nature, which he put into practice in his daily life. The way of contemplation is illustrated by the Hindu conviction that when a human being looks inward, with his mind's eye and plumbs himself to its depths, he finds that it is identical with the ultimate reality that is in and behind and beyond the phenomenal universe. Such is the vision modern man needs to regain.<sup>82</sup>

India can take to machines without damaging her own religion and culture.

6. In spite of the evils of industrialization in the West, Swamiji was deeply impressed by certain aspects of Western society. Among these are:

- (a) Its enormous material prosperity,
- (b) The concern of the people for the poor,
- (c) The freedom and culture of women, and
- (d) Their organizing capacity and business integrity.

And Swamiji found that the above conditions were due to the liberalizing influence of science and modern socio-political ideas

on people. Swamiji wanted to let some of these into the ill-ventilated and narrow Hindu social institutions. He knew that science and democracy were needed to liberalize the rigidity of Hindu social structure. Owing to social tyranny and priestcraft, a vast pile of taboos, superstitions, and cock-and-bull stories had accumulated in Hindu society and people were mistaking them for the true life-giving principles—a mistake still being committed even today. After travelling all over India Swamiji observed that nowhere could he find the codes of Manu (*Manusmriti*) being followed. Everywhere he saw people quarrelling over local or village customs. Swamiji knew that science was a powerful antidote to enervating superstitions and fears lurking in the collective unconscious of the people. He knew that if people were trained in the scientific method, they themselves would find out the truths of religion.

There are educated and cultured people in India, who, still believe that our Vedas contain everything, and we have nothing to learn from other cultures. There are people who sincerely believe that ancient Indians knew the secrets of the aeroplane and the atom bomb. And then there are people who are ready to prove that every village custom in India has some scientific truth and utility. This false self-sufficiency and complacency of the upper classes of India arose, when our people stopped comparing notes with other nations; and this has been an important contributing factor to the downfall of India. Swami Vivekananda saw things in their proper perspective. Boldly he declared that India's doom was sealed when she invented the word 'Mleccha' and stopped communicating with other peoples. He advised his countrymen to go abroad, and sitting at the feet of Western scientists learn their science and technology. He said:

82. *Ibid.*

We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery.... We have paid the penalty; let us do no more. All such foolish ideas that Indians must not go out of India are childish. They must be knocked on the head; the more you go out and travel among the nations of the world, the better for you and for your country.

If you had done that for hundreds of years past, you would not be here today at the feet of every nation that wants to rule India. The first manifest effect of life is expansion. You must expand if you want to live. The moment you have ceased to expand, death is upon you, danger is ahead.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup>. *Comp. Works*, III, p. 272.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN LIMBDI AND MAHABALESWAR—1891-92

PREM. H. JOSHI

After the passing away of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda felt an urge for spiritualizing India, and thereby bringing about her renaissance. For that purpose he wandered throughout the length and breadth of India from the middle of 1890 till his departure to America in May 1893. It is noteworthy that, whenever such an opportunity presented itself, he made an effort to meet the Princes of the then Indian Native States, and reside with them. Obviously, his intention was to influence the Maharajas and turn their tendencies to the religious life, so that they might devote themselves to perform their duties to their States properly for the good of the people. By influencing the Maharajas he could indirectly bring about the good of millions of people.

It was with some such purpose in mind that Swamiji proceeded to Kathiawad towards the end of 1891 after having met some Rulers of the States in Rajasthan. In Kathiawad, there were many small States, among which was the State of Limbdi situated in the Western India States Agency of that time (now known as Saurashtra). Swamiji decided to visit this State of Limbdi first

before proceeding to the other States, because he apparently had heard about the then ruling Prince, the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi, Sir Jaswantsinghji who was an enlightened and spiritually inclined ruler. The Thakore Saheb was well known throughout India for his spiritual outlook and progressive ideas. Along with many of Ravi Varma's pictures of Hindu religious themes, his photograph was also published and kept in the homes of many devout Hindus as a type of spiritual ruler. Hence it is not surprising to find Swamiji proceeding first to Limbdi on his visit to Kathiawad.

The Thakore Saheb, Sir Jaswantsinghji was born on 23rd May 1859. Before he was installed on the throne of Limbdi in 1877, he had received a liberal education, and had just completed an extended educational tour in England, the continent of Europe, and the United States of America in 1876. He had once again visited England, Europe, and America during 1887 and had met some of the leading personalities of the United States. He was one of the few Indians who had visited that country in those days. He had built a palace in Limbdi from a proto-type building plan of a typical Town Hall of an

American city with a unique (at that time) clock tower with musical chimes. In his palace he had a sort of museum of his collections from America and some European countries. It was to such a ruler's State that Swamiji was proceeding one evening very late, much tired and exhausted.

Arriving at the city of Limbdi in the evening, Swamiji noticed a Shiva temple at the outskirts, in a dilapidated condition. He entered and saw an old priest performing the arati (evening service). Asking the priest if he may put up for the night there, he was told that the place was not inhabitable. Showing a place nearby, the priest told Swamiji that there was a place where sadhus were allowed to stay. Swamiji saw that it was a somewhat isolated building, but seeing no other alternative he went to that place. The sadhus living there welcomed him. Swamiji had no idea about the nature of the place. It was the headquarters of a degenerate sect of sex-worshippers. After appeasing his hunger, Swamiji was about to sleep, as he was tired after a long foot journey, when from an adjoining room he heard the prayers and incantations of the sex-worshippers' who had gathered there. There were women's voices also among them. Swamiji wanted to leave the place at once. But, to his horror, he found the doors locked from the outside, and the men were keeping a watch over him. Swamiji felt extremely nervous, but was soon made aware of his predicament. The leader of the sect came to him and said: 'You are a sadhu with a magnetic personality; evidently you have practised Brahmacharya (continence) for years. Now you must give us the fruit of your long austerity. We shall break your Brahmacharya in order to perform a special Sadhana (spiritual practice), and thereby we shall be enabled to acquire certain psychic powers'. The leader also told him that a special ceremony would be performed next night and till then he would be held a pris-

ner. He left him after locking the door. Swamiji was terrified, but he kept the presence of mind, showed no anxiety.

Early next morning a milk boy, who was friendly to the Swami, unlocked the door to deliver milk to him. He told the boy of his predicament and asked for his help. Seizing a bit of charcoal lying near and picking a piece of broken earthen jar he scribbled on it briefly about his plight, and asked the boy to hide and take it to the Thakore Saheb's palace as soon as possible. The milk-boy acted promptly and the Thakore Saheb immediately sent a few of his palace-guards to rescue Swamiji. Thus was he rescued and brought to the palace. The Thakore Saheb requested Swamiji to stay with him at the palace for a few days.

Swamiji stayed in the palace for several days. Sir Jaswantsinghji, the Thakore Saheb, was spiritually inclined by nature. He had no children. Furthermore, his younger brother had recently passed away, and he was in a solemn and receptive mood for philosophic truths. Swamiji's religious discourses gladdened his heart and imperceptibly the guru and disciple relationship developed between them. The Thakore Saheb's palace was always open to spiritually inclined persons, and at that time, His Holiness, the Shankaracharya of Govardhan Math was on a visit to Limbdi. Swami Vivekananda had many discussions with the Shankaracharya in Sanskrit in the Thakore Saheb's palace, in which other Pandits also had joined. Thus the stay of Swamiji in Limbdi was spiritually elevating to all concerned; and before he left the place, the Thakore Saheb became his initiated disciple. The advent of Swamiji gave him a spiritual fillip.

It is interesting to note that the germ of the future visit of Swamiji to America was sown in Limbdi. The Thakore Saheb recalled his two visits to the United States with enthusiasm, and often urged the

Swamiji to make a trip there. He felt that the Americans would be more receptive to his spiritual thoughts and truths, because the Indians were still bound by the impact of orthodoxy and would not be able to appreciate his message.

Swamiji also felt that his unusual experience in Limbdi had taught him a lesson, and he would henceforth be circumspect in choosing his lodging and would exercise discrimination in contacting persons.



*The palace of the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi, where Swamiji stayed in the year 1891.*

After staying for several days in Limbdi, Swamiji expressed his desire to visit other States of Kathiawad. The Thakore Saheb wrote letters of introduction to various Rulers of the States and their Diwans (Chief Ministers). Swamiji was requested by him to visit Junagadh first, as the Diwan there was very enlightened, and then go to Porbandar. The Thakore Saheb further entreated Swamiji to exercise great caution in wandering alone, and putting up at questionable

As a result of Swamiji's visit to Limbdi, the Thakore Saheb made a deliberate effort to study spiritual books, and also began to keep a *Nondh Pothi* (a spiritual diary) in the vernacular Gujarati language, wherein he recorded his thoughts, and also the gist of his discussions with various spiritual persons.

From recorded evidence it is clear that the idea sown in Limbdi about going to America was slowly growing in Swamiji's mind. In Porbandar, Swamiji had studied

the Vedas' interpretation in depth through the help of Pandit Shanker Pandurang. This Pandit also told him that he could not do much in this country, but if he wanted to do anything he should go to the West where people would understand him. In Junagadh also, Swamiji expressed to one C. H. Pandya his desire to visit the West as a preacher.

Swamiji continued to keep in touch with the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi even after he left Kathiawad in 1892. He went to Bombay by 27th April 1892, and from there to Poona. From Poona Swamiji went to Mahabaleswar to spend summer there. To his surprise and joy, he found that the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi was also holidaying there. The Thakore Saheb was much delighted to meet his Guru. Swamiji stayed with him for several days, and they discussed many spiritual topics. This is reflected in the Thakore Saheb's *Nondh Pothi*, from which the following excerpts have been translated. The datewise account is as follows:

*4th and 5th May 1892 :*

'I have deeply pondered over the discussions which took place four days ago with Swamiji on reincarnation and have referred to several books suggested by him. Now I come to agree with him that there is reincarnation from the mundane point of view, but viewing it from the standpoint of Spiritual Truth, there is no reincarnation. In other words, there is reincarnation from the personal point of view, but not from the spiritual point of view. Or, it may be said that from the material standpoint there is reincarnation, but not from the spiritual one.'

*8th May 1892 :*

'Jnana, Karma, and Upāsana—these three are the main Kandas [parts] of the Vedas. They have been mentioned in the Vedas for the evolution of the world, and mankind;

and the manifestation of the Divinity in Man. ...'

*9th and 10th May 1892 :*

'I am pleasantly surprised at Swami Vivekananda's deep knowledge of the Shastras. My knowledge of the Shastras has been much increased through discussions with him. ...'

*11th May 1892 :*

'... Every creature has the sense of feeding, sleeping, fear, and sex-relationship. They are the common knowledge for all, but there is the need for Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas for the manifestation and use of the special knowledge, which man acquires.'

*12th May 1892 :*

'At the end of yesterday's discussion it was proved that in ancient times the caste system was based only upon Guna and Karma. ...'

*13th May 1892 :*

'Without a cause no effect is possible. Without knowing the cause, it is not possible to have knowledge of the effect. Prakriti (Maya) is the Kārya (effect) of Brahman; and Purusha (Ishwara) is the cause of Brahmanda. As the effect in the form of Prakriti is perceptible to the senses and the cause in the form of Purusha is imperceptible, the experiencing of Prakriti (Maya) is natural; and for experiencing Purusha (Ishwara) it is essential to acquire the knowledge of philosophy. Just as a person suffering from jaundice has a wrong notion that all world objects are yellow, similarly owing to the covering (Āvarana) of Maha-Maya (Prakriti), men develop a wrong notion, and forget the real nature of the Purusha—Paramatman.

'Prakriti and Prakriti-mixed Consciousness perform all the work in the Brahmanda (Universe). Prakriti is beginningless, but it

cannot do anything without Consciousness. Pure Consciousness being the motive force, and unifying factor of all, Prakriti is also beginningless. That beginningless, endless, eternal, SAT-CHIT-ANANDA—Pure Consciousness is the PARAMATMAN. Atheists say that Prakriti alone is beginningless; all the activities of Brahmanda are dependent upon Prakriti; there is no Purusha (Ishwara or God). Brahmanda and all its activities have been brought about through the accidental mixture of the five elements of Prakriti; these contentions of the Atheists are not correct because there cannot be any good purpose and law through such an accidental mixture nor can they be maintained. What a sublime purpose of Paramatman is evident in the creation of Brahmanda! Firstly, without Maha-Akasha, the vast creation of the Universe cannot be accommodated. So Paramatman first planned it; thereafter, from Himself, He created the substratum for all creatures. Thereafter he created Vayu as the life for all creatures; then Agni for sustenance and growth of all Jada (material) and Chaitanya (conscious) forms; and then Water. Having created the foregoing, He created Earth to uphold all creatures and lastly all creatures were created. Can there be such a grand purpose for such a creation without an extraordinary Creator? The wonderful natural law which is evident in the rising and setting of the Sun and Moon, the creation of all creatures, the seasonal changes—can they work without the unique Motivator? ... This is an evidence of Paramatman's unfathomable Power. In animals and birds the capacity of understanding is limited, whereas in man it is highly developed. There is an extraordinary symbolic indication of Paramatman's Power. Such an intelligent Power is not possible in an accidental mixture of the atoms of Prakriti. The Pure Consciousness being infinite creates the entire Universe through a mere change in Its condition. ...'

18th May, 1892 :

'There was considerable discussion on Adharma or sin. Any action contrary to the ten characteristics (Lakshanas) of Dharma is to be considered as Adharma, i.e. sin. Such actions are of three kinds : Bodily, oral, and mental actions.'

23rd May 1892 :

'Different dispositions of men are caused due to the effect of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. ...'

25th April [May?] 1892 :

'Swamiji explained today that Prakriti and Purusha are beginningless and the effect caused by their combination is the Jiva. To be affected by Moha (ignorance) is the nature of the Jiva, and to remain merely a witness is the nature of Atman (Purusha). Both these natures appear to be inherent in the Jiva. It is not proper to consider the Jiva beginningless viewing it as separate from Prakriti and Purusha, owing to its defect of being affected by ignorance; because pure factors for becoming unaffected and unchangeable through being a witness are also present. It being so, the Jivatman—through discarding its predisposition towards being deluded by ignorance i.e. freeing itself from the veil of Mahamaya in the form of Prakriti, could experience the Sat-Chit-Ananda nature of the Paramatman through the strength of pure knowledge. That is to say, it could realize its real Swaroopa as the Paramatman. ...'

28th April [May?] 1892 :

'The Belief that the movement, life, etc. in other creatures except men is not Jiva, but only the inspirational power of God seems to me erroneous, because the animals and birds have the sense of self-preservation; they bewail when somebody hurts them; they seek sunshine when they feel cold; and they return to the shade when they feel hot;

when hungry they seek and take food. This proves that like men, animals and birds have volition and knowledge as devoid of Jiva. Jiva is in every creature. Though there is difference in the body and activities of animals, birds, and men, there is no difference in the Jiva. There is no difference in the fire manifesting in the Sun, electricity, torch and a lamp. The fire is the same. But it appears different due to the medium through which it manifests. Similarly the difference of manifestation of the Jiva in different creatures is due to the medium—the bodies. . . .

The *Nondh Pothi* contains such passages written by the Thakore Saheb after discussion with Swamiji at Mahabaleswar. A careful study of this diary indicates that it bears the stamp of Swami Vivekananda's teachings. Thus, it is clear that Swami Vivekananda played an important part in moulding the spiritual life of the Thakore Saheb. It seems that though Swamiji's entrance in Limbdi was painful through his aforementioned ordeal, it ended well in a life-long relationship with the Thakore Saheb.

After spending the summer at Mahabaleswar, Swamiji returned to Poona with the Thakore Saheb by June 15th, 1892, and stayed there for a few days. The Thakore

Saheb became much attached to Swamiji and repeatedly requested him: 'Swamiji, do come with me to Limbdi and remain there for good.' But Swamiji always replied: 'Not now, Maharaja! I have work to do. It presses me onwards. It will not let me rest till I have finished it. *But if ever I live the life of retirement it shall be with you.*'

After Swamiji returned from the West, the Thakore Saheb again invited him to come to Limbdi, and reminded him of his promise. But Swamiji was never able to fulfil his wish to stay with the Thakore Saheb after retirement, as he entered *mahasamadhi* in the harness of work.

The Thakore Saheb also passed away on 15th April 1907.

There is an interesting spiritual sequel to the Master-Disciple relationship between Swamiji and the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi. Years later, in 1968, the present Thakore Saheb of Limbdi, Shri Chatrasalji donated the Palace where Swami Vivekananda stayed in 1891 to a public body which has installed there '*Shri Ramakrishna Prarthana Mandir.*' It would seem that the spirit of Swami Vivekananda along with his Master Shri Ramakrishna is now a *living presence* in this palace!!!

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

**The World As It Appears to Men—II (The Editorial):** In the last instalment of the editorial we have seen, how this world appears to men, who have realized the ultimate Truth according to Advaita Vedanta. In this part, an attempt has been made to show, how it appears to men—through the glass of *maya*. Many mystics, poets, scientists and others have presented their

own world views in their songs, poems, and writings. But they are all seeing the diversity, where the men of realization see Unity. And the scriptures say: 'Where is any more misery for him who sees Oneness in the universe?'

**Science and Religion—I:** Towards the close of the nineteenth century Swami Vivekananda had prophesied: 'Science and

religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future. . . .’ Swami Ranganathanandaji’s illuminating lecture—delivered at the Senate Hall of the Bangalore University on 5 August 1976, on ‘Science and Religion’,—shows that Swamiji’s prophesy is being proved as true. The Swami says: ‘If the nineteenth century was the century of conflict and division, the twentieth century bids fair to become the century of reconciliation and union, as a result of sincere effort on the part of both science and religion to reassess itself and to understand the other.’ We hope, our readers will find this series both illuminating and interesting.

**The Search for the One in the Many—I :** In this article Swami Satprakashananda, the Head of the Vedanta Society, St. Louis (Missouri) U.S.A., has very lucidly discussed the Vedantic doctrine of the One Appearing as the Many, in the light of the Upanishadic texts. He says, ‘Spiritual life begins with the deliberate search for the Supreme as the highest end. Deep within the heart of man there is a cry for the Real, the Eternal, the All-perfect One.’ This article is from the author’s forthcoming book *The Universe, God, and God-Realisation*, which is being published by the Vedanta Society of St. Louis.

**Bertolt Brecht : The Man and His Work :** Bertolt Brecht is a well-known literary figure in German literature. There was hardly any branch of literature that was left untouched by this genius. In his essay

Dr. S. Subhash Chandra, M.A., Dr. Phil., Dr. Phil. of Paris has very beautifully dealt with in brief the eventful life, and the memorable works of this great man.

**Swami Vivekananda’s Discoveries About India—VI :** In this part of his treatise Swami Bhajanananda discusses Swamiji’s ‘Fourth Discovery’ about India. Swamiji had rightly discovered that India ‘needed for its immediate economic progress, the science and technology of the West.’ The author is of the opinion that India’s spiritual culture is still ‘lying dormant’, because the physical medium for its expression is not yet ready. The author quotes from Swamiji’s works at length to prove his point.

**Swami Vivekananda in Limbdi And Mahabaleswar :** As a Parivrajaka, Swami Vivekananda travelled in India for about three years, before leaving for America, to attend the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. During his itinerant days, he freely mixed with the people of all levels, and frequently stayed with some Princes of the then Native States. One such state then was Limbdi in Western India. The Thakore Saheb of Limbdi was very much influenced by Swamiji, and later on became his disciple. Swamiji stayed with the Thakore Saheb at Limbdi and Mahabaleswar during his itinerant days. In this article Sri Prem H. Joshi of Limbdi has very lucidly described the account of these visits, and the influence of Swamiji on the Thakore Saheb in the light of Thakore Saheb’s *Nondh Pothi* (spiritual diary), which was so long unknown to many.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN THE EYES OF BRAHMA AND CHRISTIAN ADMIRERS:** Edited by NANDA MOOKERJEE. Published by Firma KLM (P) Ltd., 257/B, Bepin Behari Ganguly Street, Calcutta-700012, 1976, pp. xxiv+144, Price : Rs. 22.00 ; \$ 4.

God, the Infinite, bestows mercy on weary mortals, when they need it most. To show the beacon-light of eternal bliss, to lead the self-deluded humanity to the discovery of its Omniscient Self, He comes to the earth in human form, so that man can follow the paths marked out by His life and teachings. Sri Ramakrishna is such a God-man. He lived to show mankind: how universal ideals could be translated in life for the attainment of the highest peace and bliss even while living in the world of today.

In this Compilation, the editor has diligently gathered together the observations of eminent scholars and leaders of the Brahmo and Christian folds, on Sri Ramakrishna. This points out clearly

that the modern world, reeling under ignorance and dissension, will find in Sri Ramakrishna the proper path to tread in order to rise above the problems of our time.

By collecting little-known articles on Sri Ramakrishna from different sources, the editor has done a real service to readers, for these articles are not easily available. Indeed some of them might have been lost for ever, if they had not been rescued in time from the old newspapers, and other services. Besides the writings of Max Mueller, Arnold Toynbee and Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, readers will find those of Prof. Nicholas De Roerich, Prof. Dr. Helmuth von Glasenapp, and others, equally interesting. The excellent Introduction written by Sri Nanda Mookerjee, the editor, adds substantially to the value of the book. I recommend that it be kept in every library. It is bound in cloth and has a fine dust-jacket.

SWAMI JYOTIRUPANANDA

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CEYLON BRANCH

REPORT : APRIL 1973—MARCH 1975

This Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission (now the Sri Lanka Branch) was incorporated in 1929. In the present period, its activities continued to expand considerably. It currently consists of : (1) The Colombo Centre, which is its Headquarters; (2) The Ashrama at Batticaloa, and (3) The Madam at Kataragama.

**THE COLOMBO CENTRE :** During the period under review, in addition to the administrative activities of the Mission, this Centre continued its varied activities, as follows:

(1) *Religious* : There was Regular Puja in the Ashrama shrine; Bhajana programmes on Fridays; and classes on the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and on the Bhagavad Gita (by a resident Swami). A Monthly Retreat was also conducted by this Swami, as well as lectures at various institutions and groups of the area, on invitation. The senior Swamis also gave interviews and special instruction on religious subjects to earnest seekers. The Sunday School (religious

classes for children of the city) continued its active work, with 22 honorary teachers. Its 21st and 22nd Anniversary celebrations were held on Ashrama premises, with Elocution, Essay and Speech competitions with suitable prizes. The Mission also continued religious classes at Watupitiwela, 30 miles distant.

The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated with great eclat; proper observances were held on each Wesak and Christmas Eve. Maha Sivaratri was observed with great solemnity, with special Puja, Homa, and Bhajana during the whole night, throughout which hundreds of devotees kept vigil. In each year also, the last three days of Navaratri were observed with special Puja and Bhajana. Special talks were given after evening services; and on the last (Vijaya) day there was 'Vidyarambha' when children were initiated into the first steps of reading and writing.

(2) *Cultural and Educational* : The Library and Free Reading Room continued to serve the public, having available 2790 books, and 36 periodicals in the Reading Room. The Book Sales

department was promoting sales of publications of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. The International Cultural Centre provided accommodation for guests from all parts of the world. The Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall, one of the largest halls in Colombo, was used by the public for lectures, seminars, dramas, musical concerts, dances, etc. Functions were held by Trade Unions, Schools and Government departments, among others.

(3) *Home for Disabled Labourers* : This Home in Kandy, was taken over by the Mission in 1969 at the request of the then Indian High Commissioner. The Indian High Commission continued to meet the expenses of the Home.

**BATTICALOA CENTRE** : The activities here have been as follows :

(1) *Religious* : Regular Pujas were held in the Shrine attached to the Boys' Home (*see* below), and its inmates regularly gathered in the Shrine for half-an-hour, morning and evening, for singing of Bhajanas and recitations from Upanishads and *Gita*. Weekly classes for ladies of the vicinity included congregational prayers, readings from the life of Sri Ramakrishna, and distribution of *prasad*. Congregational Prayers were held weekly in the Ashrama's Public Hall, especially for the inmates of the Home. These included reading of passages from the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, with suitable explanation, plus discussions on the other great world-teachers. Birth Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda were solemnly celebrated, with processions, special Pujas, Akhadanama Bhajana, lectures and dramas. Suitable lectures on these occasions were organized in many local schools and in the Girls' Home at Karaitivu. Wesak, Navaratri, Christmas Eve, and Tiruvempavi were also observed. For the 35 inmates of the Mantivu Leprosy Hospital, weekly religious classes, temple worship and Bhajana were conducted; visits to the wards were organized, as also feedings on all Hindu festival days; religious magazines were distributed. Weekly Sunday School, in the Mission's Hall was this year attended by 385 children of Hindu faith; there

were 19 volunteer teachers in addition to the Mission staff. A broad view of religions is presented, including principles of all sects in Hinduism.

(2) *Cultural* : In addition to the above, a Library and Reading Room was maintained and enlarged: now 731 books are available in the general library and 700 in the children's library.

(3) *Humanitarian* : The Mission conducts three Homes: one for boys, adjacent to the Ashrama; one for girls in another part of the city; another for girls at Karaitivu. The total of inmates was 167, 105 of these being boys. Free boarding and lodging is given to orphans, deserted or destitute children, and training for becoming useful citizens—along with their formal schooling outside. The inmates are helped to take over management of the day-to-day affairs of the Homes, thus cultivating self-reliance, thrift and self-sacrifice. The Homes have earned wide public admiration and support and their students do well in their studies as well as extra-curricular activities, sports, etc. The girls are taught sewing, weaving, etc., spinning, oil-extraction and cookery, while the boys are trained in modern scientific gardening and paddy cultivation—all in addition to school-studies. The boys' gardens are particularly notable, and the vegetable garden has often been judged the best in the area. Currently, almost 30 acres of land at Rugam (some miles distant) is allocated by Government for the boys' training in scientific farming methods, and an irrigation tank is under construction, which will permit second annual crops here.

*Immediate Needs of the Mission* : Permanent fund for maintenance of the Ashrama and Temple at Colombo:—Rs. 1,00,000/-. Permanent fund for the three Homes at Batticaloa:—Rs. 2,50,000/-.

Contributions should be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission (Sri Lanka Branch), Ramakrishna Road, Wellawatte, Colombo-6. Since the Mission is declared an Approved Charity by the Government of Sri Lanka, donors will be given relief in payment of Income Tax provided donations (during any one year) are between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 50,000/-.