



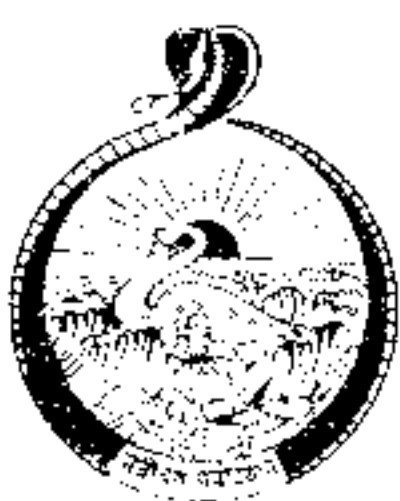
VOL. LXXXII

AUGUST 1977

# **PRABUDDHA BHARATA**

OR

# **AWAKENED INDIA**



ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI  
HIMALAYAS





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

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5 Dehi Entally Road  
Calcutta 700 014  
Phone : 44-2898



[ Rates inclusive of postage ]

*Annual Subscription*

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

*Life Subscription (30 years)*

Rs. 180      \$ 140      £ 40

*Single Copy*

Re. 1/-      60 cents      25 P.

*Information for contributors,  
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# Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE  
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

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AUGUST 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. 8

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

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

'Trailanga Swami once said that because a man reasons he is conscious of multiplicity, of variety. Attaining Samadhi, one gives up the body in twenty-one days. Spiritual consciousness is not possible without the awakening of the Kundalini.'<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

'How long does a man reason and discriminate? As long as he is conscious of the manifold, as long as he is aware of the universe, of embodied beings, "I" and "you". He becomes silent when he is truly aware of Unity. This was the case with Trailanga Swami.'<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

In Benares I saw a young sannyasi who belonged to the sect of Nanak. He was the same age as you [*i.e.*, 'M', author of *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*]. He used to refer to me as the "loving monk". His sect has a monastery in Benares. I was invited there one day. I found that the Mohanta was like a housewife. I asked him, "What is the way?" "For the Kaliyuga," he said, "the path of devotion as enjoined by Narada." He was reading a book. When the reading was over, he recited: "Vishnu is in water, Vishnu is on land, Vishnu is on the mountain top; the whole world is pervaded by Vishnu." At the end he said, "Peace! Peace! Abiding Peace!"

'One day he was reading the *Gītā*. He was so strict about his monastic rules that he would not read a holy book looking at a worldly man. So he turned his face toward me and his back on Mathur, who was also present. It was this holy man who told me of Narada's path of devotion as suited to the people of the Kaliyuga.'<sup>3</sup>

Comp.—Swami Sarveshananda.

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1. 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, (hereafter *Gospel*), trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969, p. 183.

2. *Gospel*, p. 110.

3. *Gospel*, pp. 238-9. Cf. p. 386 for a somewhat similar saying in a different setting.



# PERSONALITY : CONCEPTS AND DEVELOPMENT.—II

(EDITORIAL)

In the last part of the editorial we have studied the views of the Western psychologists about Personality and its development. In this part, we shall mainly restrict our attention to the views of the different schools of Indian Philosophy. These views depend upon their conceptions regarding the Atman, which forms the central core of the personality of every individual. One's conception of the Atman differs according to the intensity of ignorance functioning in the person. The grossest of these conceptions are those of the Cārvākas, and the subtlest is that of the Advaita Vedantists.

## 2. *The View of the Cārvākas :*

Amongst the Cārvākas there are four schools of thought. One school believes in the physical body as the real self—the Person; because when anybody becomes fat or thin, he thinks 'I am fat; I am thin'; and so on. Another school of the Cārvākas believes that the sense-organs are the real self of man; because one experiences so in his life. If anybody is blind or deaf, he feels 'I am blind; I am deaf'; and so on. Still another school of the Cārvākas thinks that because one experiences hunger, thirst, etc. in his life, and feels, 'I am hungry; I am thirsty'; and so on, the Prāṇa or the vital force functioning in man is the real man. Yet another school of the Cārvākas says that because one experiences in his life: 'I am thinking; I am feeling'; and so on, the mind of man is the real self—constituting his real personality.

All these views are very gross, and it is evident that each one of them speaks out of his own experience. The philosophy of life according to the Cārvākas is :

While life is yours, live joyously ;

None can escape Death's searching eye ;

When once this frame of ours they burn,  
How shall it e'er again return?<sup>1</sup>

Cārvākas were the most materialistic people, who did not believe in the Vedas, and the higher life. It obviously follows from their philosophy that the development of one's personality depends upon the development of one's physique, vitality, power of organs, and mental capacities. In the modern world as well, we find people whose thoughts are similar to the Cārvākas, and they spend more time and energy in developing their body, vitality, and mental faculties, than on building up their spiritual life.

## 3. *The Buddhist View :<sup>2</sup>*

Buddhists in general do not believe in the existence of the Atman as the ultimate Reality. According to them man's present state of existence consists of a perpetual change. They say that life is a continuous stream of becoming, and there is no permanent existence as the self. The empirical self, which a man experiences, is a combination of perception, feeling, past impressions, intelligence, and the form. In other words, it consists of five aggregates or *skandhas*, viz, the aggregate of matter—*rūpaskandha*, the aggregate of ideas—*saṃjñāskandha*, the aggregate of feelings and sensations—*vedanāskandha*, the aggregate of instincts—*saṃskāraskandha*, and

1. *A Source Book of Indian Philosophy*, Ed. S. Radhakrishnan, and C. A. Moore, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, (hereafter *Source Book*), p. 228.

2. For details, *vide* Source Book, pp. 272-345.

the aggregate of consciousness—*viññāna-skandha*.

The Buddhists do not believe so much in the relative life of man, and mainly emphasize on his ethical remaking. They preach the eightfold path of morality in order to get rid of ignorance, and to attain *Nirvāṇa*. They trace the cause of human sufferings in ignorance and the selfish cravings of the senses. They believe in the ethical building up of man's life as the only way to be free from misery and transmigration. According to them Buddha was the Ideal Person, and attainment of Buddhahood is the real ideal of human life.

#### 4. *The Jaina View :*

According to the Jaina metaphysics, the world consists of *Jīva*—the spirit or the soul, and *Ajīva*—the matter. Man, according to them is nothing but the *Jīva* bound by what is called the Karmic matter, and is never separated from it until his final release. Till then the *Jīva* is susceptible to birth and death. For the salvation of the *Jīva*, the Jainas prescribe the three fold method, viz, right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. Belief in the real existence is the right faith; knowledge of one's real nature is the right knowledge; and the practice of the five virtues, viz, (1) *ahimsā*, non-violence, (2) speaking the truth, (3) non-stealing, (4) chastity, and (5) non-attachment to worldly things, comprise the right conduct.

Thus according to the Jainas the present personality of man is a degraded personality, and the ideal is to develop him spiritually by ethical and moral disciplines in order to attain his higher Personality. They believe that in the state of liberation one attains perfect tranquility, perfect knowledge, and perfect power, which are the characteristics of man's real Personality.

#### 5. *The Sāṅkhya and the Yoga Views :*

Both Sāṅkhya and the Yoga philosophies

accept two eternal principles : *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, that is, Spirit and the Primordial Matter. *Puruṣa* is a conscious entity, and *Prakṛti* is inert, consisting of *gunas* or the attributes—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* (purity, dynamism, and inertia). According to them, the empirical self or the *Jīva* is bound by the threefold *gunas*, and is made to suffer and transmigrate. In order to get rid of this bondage the Sāṅkhya system prescribes the practice of knowledge—*Tattvābhyāsa*, which means, discriminating between the *Puruṣa* and the *Prakṛti*. When ignorance is dispelled by real knowledge, the *Jīva* regains his inherent freedom, because the true self is always free. This state is called *Kaivalya*, in which the *Puruṣa* alone exists without any contamination of the *Prakṛti*.

According to Yoga system some psychological disciplines—the *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* and others—have been prescribed, by practising which man ultimately attains *Kaivalya*.

Thus both Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems believe that the present man is degraded in nature, and his true personality is attained after attaining *Kaivalya*.

#### 6. *The Vedantic View :*

According to the Vedantists, man's personality as it appears today is not his real personality, because it is constantly changing, and is subject to misery and transmigration. The unchanging Reality—the *Atman*, is the real Man. The *Atman* is the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss absolute. In the *Upaniṣads* it has been called as the *Sodāśakala Puruṣa*<sup>3</sup> or the '*Aupanīṣada-Puruṣa*'.<sup>4</sup> This subject has been very lucidly discussed in the *Ātmopaniṣad*, according to which the *Puruṣa* is threefold, viz, the *Bāhyātmā*—the outer self, the *Antarātmā*—the inner self, and the *Paramātmā*—the in-

3. *Vide Praśna Upaniṣad*, 6.1.

4. *Vide Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.9.26.



most Self. (*Trividhaḥ puruṣastadyathā bāhyātmāntarātmā paramātmā ceti—Ibid.*, 1).

In the *Gītā*, the personality of man has been divided into two : the changing personality—*Kṣara Puruṣa*, and the unchanging personality—*Akṣara Puruṣa*.<sup>5</sup> The changing personality consists of the five sheaths, viz, the *Annamaya kośa*—the Alimentary sheath, *Prāṇamaya kośa*—the Vital sheath, *Manomaya kośa*—the Mental sheath, *Vijñānamaya kośa*—the Intelligent sheath, and *Anandamaya kośa*—the Blissful sheath. All these *kośas* constitute the empirical personality of man.

These sheaths are, as it were, the five layered mask of the real Man—the Atman, which makes him appear what he is really not. And Vedanta aims at discarding this mask by spiritual disciplines, and realizing the real Personality. We have seen in the last part of the editorial that in Latin the word *persona* means a mask worn by the actors in the drama. According to this meaning personality means : the false appearance of a person. To a Vedantist, what the psychologists call personality is nothing but a mask—a false appearance. The fivefold sheaths constitute the gross, subtle and causal bodies of a man. The Blissful sheath forms the causal body, the Intelligent, Mental and Vital sheaths form the subtle body, and the Alimentary sheath forms the gross body of a man. The Atman is beyond these three bodies, or the five sheaths. In this connection Ācārya Śaṅkara has said : ‘This self-effulgent Atman which is distinct from the five sheaths, the Witness of the three states, the Real, the Changeless, the Untainted, the everlasting Bliss—is to be realized by a wise man as his own Self.<sup>6</sup> . . . Attaining That (Atman) one should cease to identify oneself with one’s false bodies,

like an actor giving up his assumed mask.’<sup>7</sup>

The Vedantists, like the former schools of philosophy discussed before, have no plan for the development of our empirical personality, except for enabling us to progress spiritually. For instance, the peacchant of the *Kenopaniṣad*—‘May my limbs, speech, vital force, eyes as also strength and all the organs, become well developed’, is for this purpose ; because the Upaniṣads declare that ‘the Atman is not attainable by the weak’.<sup>8</sup> According to the Vedantists, the spiritual disciplines bring about the manifestation of man’s real Personality. They use the word ‘manifestation’, and not ‘development’, of the personality. This real Personality becomes fully manifested in a *Jīvanmukta*—one who is free while living. Such a person realizes his identity with the Cosmic Personality—the *Īśvara*, who has been called in the *Gītā* as the *Puruṣottama*<sup>9</sup>—the Supreme Puruṣa. On realization he experiences : ‘I know the great Puruṣa, who is luminous, like the sun, and beyond darkness. Only knowing Him does one pass over death ; there is no other way.’<sup>10</sup> He remains in the body till his *Prārabdha-karma* is fully fructified; and then his body drops off like a dried leaf. Thereafter he completely merges with the Absolute Reality and attains *Kaivalya*.

Thus according to Vedanta, a man transcends his ‘mask-personality’ by spiritual practices, and attains his spiritual Personality by gradual integration of the spiritual qualities. Such a state is called in the *Gītā* as *Yogārūḍha*<sup>11</sup> state or *Sthitaprajña*<sup>12</sup> state. These spiritual qualities,

5. *Vide Bhagavad-Gītā*, XV, 16.

6. *Vivekacūdāmani*, 211.

7. *Ibid.*, 292.

8. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.2.4.

9. *Vide Bhagavad-Gītā*, XV, 17.

10. *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, III, 8.

11. *Vide Bhagavad-Gītā*, II, 54-72.

12. *Vide, Bhagavad-Gītā*, VI, 4.

which have been cultivated by intense spiritual disciplines become natural and steady in a man of realization. But after he leaves his body, he attains Kaivalya, that is, he becomes absolutely free from the fivefold covering, consisting of these qualities.

Like the Western psychologists, the Vedantists also emphasize the necessity of nervous strength for the integration of the personality. The only difference is that the former prescribe it for the integration of the empirical personality; while the latter preach it for the integration of the spiritual Personality—which is also called *Bhāgavatitanu*. For this purpose the Vedantists lay stress on the practice of continence in order to transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. They say that sex control leads to the formation of *ojas*, which in turn makes the nerves strong, and refined; and enable one to grasp the subtler spiritual truths. It also gives the aspirant the strength to stand the stresses and strains of the spiritual struggle, and saves him from the disintegration of the higher spiritual qualities. Vedantists also believe that by leading a pure life, and practising spiritual disciplines, the whole psycho-physical constitution of the aspirant becomes changed and purified. The secretions, blood, flesh, fat, nerves, and bones become strong and pacified; and help the aspirant in bearing the impact of higher spiritual experiences. In this way, Vedanta provides a definite method for gradual unfoldment of the spiritual Personality of man.

#### 7. *The Views of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda :*

Even though both Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were Vedantists, it will be interesting to see what they have said regarding Personality.

Sri Ramakrishna had actually perceived in an ecstatic state that the bodies of all

beings are like the sheaths (pillow-cases) of the same God. Still he believed that human beings differ amongst themselves in their physical strength, intellect, power of influencing others, and so on. For this, he had his own explanation. He used to say: Though the same Reality abides in all, there is a difference in the power of Its manifestation in different beings. Once he told this truth to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar saying: 'As the Omnipresent Entity He [the Reality] is in all beings, down to the ants. But there is a difference in the manifestation of power, How else can one man defeat ten while another flies from a single opponent? If it were not so, why do people respect you? Have you a pair of horns on your head? You have compassion, you have scholarship, which others have not. Therefore people respect you and come to see you. You admit this?'<sup>13</sup>

This throws a flood of light on the Western conception of the personality. The psychologists are of the opinion that education and various other factors can help in developing man's personality. We remember them to have said that physically well-built, tall, and fair persons easily influence others. According to their conception Mahātmā Gandhi stands nowhere. Still we see that he had influenced millions of people, when he was alive. Sri Ramakrishna's explanation alone can help us to explain, why Mahātmā Gandhi was a great personality. Sri Ramakrishna's statement shows that it was not due to the power of matter, but that of the Spirit. He was rightly called a Mahātmā because the manifestation of the power of the Reality in him was much greater than ordinary men.

Swami Vivekananda, without contradicting the statement of his Master, throws further light on this phenomenon. While

<sup>13</sup>. *The Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, Mayavati; Advaita Ashrama, 1971, p. 349.



speaking on 'The Powers of the Mind', he says : 'Part of our energy is used up in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect, and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing others ; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is going on all around us. Now, to take a concrete example : A man comes ; you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful, and he speaks to you by the hour ; but he does not make any impression. Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well arranged, ungrammatical perhaps ; all the same, he makes an immense impression. Many of you have seen that. So it is evident that words alone cannot always produce an impression. Words, even thoughts contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, *the man*, two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the man—that is what goes out and impresses you.

'In our families there are the heads ; some of them are successful, others are not. Why? . . . you will find that the difference is owing to the man—his presence, his personality.

'Coming to great leaders of mankind, we always find that it was the personality of the man that counted. . . . the personality of the man is two-thirds, and his intellect, his words, are but one-third. It is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs through us. Our actions are but effects. . . .

'The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is

ready, he can do anything and everything he likes ; that personality put upon anything will make it work.

' . . . It is the real man ; . . . it is that man that influences, moves his fellow-beings, and passes out, and his intellect and books and works are but traces left behind. Think of this. Compare the great teachers of religion with the great philosophers. . . . In the philosopher it is a faint personality that influences ; in the great prophets it is tremendous. In the former, we touch the intellect, in the latter we touch life. . . .

'The science of Yoga claims that it has discovered the laws which develop this personality, and by proper attention to those laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his personality. This is one of the great practical things, and this is the secret of all education.'<sup>14</sup>

We find a sort of harmony between the Eastern and the Western concepts of personality in these words of Swamiji. Like the Eastern philosopher, he emphasizes the real Man ; and at the same time stresses the need of education for the development of personality, like the Western psychologists. But unlike the psychologists he proclaims the need of a 'man-making' education ; and not the so-called education as it is ordinarily understood.

#### *Conclusion :*

Thus from the above discussion, and the sayings of the great prophets, philosophers, and the psychologists, we find that there is a great difference in their concept of personality. The Western psychologists lay more stress on the development of the psycho-physical aspect of man, while the others call it as man's degraded state, and have suggested the necessity of the mani-

14. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati ; Advaita Ashrama, II, 1968, pp. 13-16.



festation of the real Personality in man. transcend misery and transmigration; but  
 They say that even if a man develops his if he realizes his real Personality, his life  
 empirical personality, he won't be able to will be blessed.

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## EARLY DAYS AT SHANTI ASHRAMA—I

### GARGI

There are four primary sources of information<sup>1</sup> regarding the early days at Shanti Ashrama in California. Two of these have been published: Swami Atulananda's chapters on the Ashrama in his book *With the Swamis in America*, and Ida Ansell's 'Memories of Swami Turiyananda', printed in three issues of *Vedanta and the West* (September-October 1952, November-December 1952, and July-August 1955). The third source is to be found in Thomas J. Allan's unpublished 'Early History of the San Francisco Vedanta Society', and is based almost wholly on detailed information Mr. Allan obtained from Ida Ansell in 1932 through a correspondence that is preserved in the archives of the Vedanta Society of Northern California and that includes notes Miss Ansell had written at the Ashrama itself at the request of Swami Turiyananda. The fourth source, and in many respects the most important, is the heretofore unpublished letters of Swami Turiyananda written to Mrs. Alice Hansbrough and others from either Shanti Ashrama or San Francisco. During the course of the following narrative, all such letters that are available have been

included; for not only are they all pertinent, each at least in part, to our story, but no other material can give so moving and so realistic, if undetailed, a picture of the Swami's work in California than his own letters—particularly those written to Mrs. Hansbrough, whom he evidently found sympathetic and in whom he confided freely.

In addition to these four primary sources one finds references to the first year of the Ashrama scattered here and there. In his published conversations, for instance, Swami Turiyananda occasionally mentioned his work in California; again, in her old age Eloise Roorbach, one of the students at the retreat, wrote down what she could recall of those early days; and from the Minutes of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco (now the Vedanta Society of Northern California) one gathers odds and ends of information.

The unpublished sources mentioned above are all contained in the archives of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, and for the purpose of the following narrative, the Society has given the present writer permission to make use of them. She has done so liberally, for the primary purpose in writing this story is not to repeat what has been often told before but—in the hope that new material will throw new light on the old and familiar—to present what has not heretofore been known at all.

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1. For further information on this subject following references will be helpful: *Prabuddha Bharata* (hereafter *P.B.*), 1900, 169-72, 183-85; *Brahmavadin*, 1900, p. 815; *P.B.*, 1916, pp. 37-41; *P.B.*, 1918, pp. 107, 131, 156; *P.B.*, 1927, pp. 410, 457, 510; *P.B.*, 1929, p. 182.—*Ed.*

Inevitably there are discrepancies between various accounts of the Ashrama both published and unpublished, and where these have occurred, the earliest, on-the-spot version has always been chosen as the most accurate. The Vedanta Society Minutes and Swami Turiyananda's letters, for instance, have been considered more reliable than, say, Mrs. Roorbach's fifty-year-old memories.

## 1

During his first visit to the West Swami Vivekananda had often spoken of the need in America for a Vedantic Ashrama or retreat. But it was not until early in 1899, when a student of Swami Abhedananda's renounced the world and received the brahmacharya name of Gurudasa, that the need became real. When it was discussed in the New York Society, of which Swami Abhedananda was in charge, another of his students, a Miss Minnie C. Boock, offered a solution. She possessed, it so happened, a homestead in Santa Clara County, California, that had been issued to her some eight years earlier by President Harrison and that contained, according to the Official Plat of the Survey, 'one hundred and fifty-nine acres and eighty-nine hundredths of an acre'. This property could, she thought, serve the purpose of an ashrama. 'It had its disadvantages,' Gurudasa (then Swami Atulananda) later wrote; 'it was fifty miles from the nearest railway station and market, but it would do to begin with. It would be solitary anyhow. And she very generously offered this place to Swami Vivekananda. . . .' On June 25, 1900, when the Swami was in New York, Miss Minnie Boock formally deeded her homestead to him, 'to have and to hold', the record reads, '...in trust, for the general use and benefit of the Vedanta School of Philoso-

phy.' Thus came into being Shanti Ashrama the first Vedanta retreat<sup>2</sup> in the Western world.

Toward the end of June Swami Vivekananda sent off the following letter to Mrs. Alice Hansbrough, who was then in southern California :

102 E. 58th  
The Vedanta Society  
[New York, N.Y.]

Dear Mrs. Hansborough—

I have not written you a line since you left San Francisco. I am well and things are going on well with me.

I am in New York once more, where they have got now a home for the Society and their headquarters. I and the other Swamis also live there.

A San Francisco lady now here—owns a plot of land near Mt. Hamilton 12 miles east of Lick observatory 160 acres in all. She is going to make us a present of it. It would be nice for a Summer gathering for us in California if friends like to go there *now* I will send them the written authority. Will you write to Mrs. Espinol [Aspinall] and Miss Bell etc. about it. I am rather desirous it should be occupied this summer as soon as possible. There is only a log cabin on the land for the rest they must have tents.

I am sorry I can not spare a Swami yet.

With all love to you and Mrs. Wykoff and the baby of the family.

Ever yours in the Truth  
Vivekananda.

P. S. Tell Helen—I thank her for her kind invitation but so sorry can not accept it now. After all you three

2. If we take into consideration the Vedanta Retreat at the Thousand Island Park in New York State, where Swami Vivekananda had stayed for about seven weeks with his students, in the summer of 1895, Shanti Ashrama can be said to be the second Vedanta Retreat in the West.—Ed.



sisters have become a part of my mind forever.

(The Helen of Swamiji's postscript was Helen Mead, the youngest of the three Mead sisters, at whose house in South Pasadena (in southern California) he had stayed in January and February of 1900. The other two sisters were Mrs. Carrie Wyckoff and Mrs. Alice Hansbrough. Mrs. Aspinall was a leader of one of the Homes of Truth in San Francisco; she was also one of the two women—Mrs. Hansbrough was the other—who had kept house for him during most of his stay in that city. Miss Lydia Bell was also a Home of Truth leader. It was she who had been Swamiji's hostess for three weeks in May of 1900 at a camp in Marin County, northern California.)

In the meanwhile Swamiji asked Swami Turiyananda, to whom he had already assigned the California work, to establish the Ashrama. 'It is the will of the Divine Mother that you should take charge of the work there,' Swamiji told him. Swami Turiyananda smiled, 'Mother's will? Rather say it is *your* will. Certainly you have not heard the Mother communicate Her will to you in this matter.' But Swamiji grew grave. 'Yes, brother,' he said. 'If your nerves become very fine, then you will be able to hear Mother's words directly.' He spoke with such fervour that Swami Turiyananda's doubts were stilled. Even as a year or so earlier he had agreed, out of love for Swamiji, to come to America, so he now agreed to try to establish a retreat in far-off California.

He and Miss Minnie Boock travelled in Swami Vivekananda's company as far as Detroit, where they evidently stopped<sup>3</sup> over for a day or two. It was there, it seems,

<sup>3</sup>. To the best of our knowledge Swami Turiyananda and Miss Minnie Boock did not stop at Detroit on their way to California.--Ed.

that Swami Turiyananda received directions from Swamiji regarding the future work. Speaking of these later, the Swami enumerated them: '(1) Forget India; (2) go to the land; (3) establish the center; (4) Mother will do the rest.' Thus instructed, Swami Turiyananda, accompanied by Miss Boock, proceeded on to southern California where he arrived on Sunday, July 8. The two travellers went directly to the small town of Alhambra (near Los Angeles, where they became the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lister, Miss Boock's sister and brother-in-law. How many days Swami Turiyananda remained at the home of the Listers is not certain, but he carried with him an introductory letter from Swami Vivekananda to Mrs. Hansbrough, which he evidently sent to her at once and which read:

3rd July 1900  
102 E. 58th Street  
New York

My dear Mrs. Hansborough—

This is to introduce Swami Turiyananda. The lady who gave the piece of land for Vedanta work belongs to Los Angeles. She has taken Turiyananda with her. He is a great spiritual teacher—but has no experience in platform work.

The best thing would be to help him to start a center for quiet and rest and meditation in the land near San Jose.

With all love to the holy Trinity

Ever yours in the Lord  
Vivekananda

Mrs. Hansbrough's nephew, Ralph Wyckoff, came to call, bearing a message from his aunt, to which the Swami responded with the following note:

Alhambra  
The 10th July 1900

My dear Madam,

Many thanks for your kind letter. I have been exceedingly happy to see your nephew Mr. Ralph Wyckoff. I

will be very glad to come and see you on Thursday at one o'clock noon and will feel delighted on your calling in here in the morning if not inconvenient. Thanking you again. With kindest regards.

Yours Sinely  
Turiyananda

In no time Swami Turiyananda found himself living at the Meads' house in South Pasadena, occupying, almost certainly, the room that Swami Vivekananda had lived in for so many weeks and feeling, it would seem, as much at home with this sympathetic family as had Swamiji. During his stay the three sisters were filled with spiritual fervour—'rather too much so', as Swami Turiyananda was to write in a letter which will be given in full later on; for the nervous systems of those unaccustomed to dwelling on so high a level could not, and did not, easily bear it.

But however that may be, after a time Mrs. Hansbrough wrote to the San Francisco Vedanta Society, which Swami Vivekananda had founded the previous April. Its members, it would appear, had been in the dark about Swami Turiyananda's plans. The Society's Minutes for July 19 state in part:

Dr. Mary Plumb [then vice-president] read a very interesting communication from Mrs. Hansbrough of Los Angeles, acquainting the Class of the Swami Turiyananda's intention of sojourning two months in the 'Shanti Ashrama' & then teaching in the cities. In this letter Mrs. Hansbrough requested each one to appoint himself or herself a Committee of one to collect money to help the work. The land where the 'Shanti Ashrama' is, is to be cultivated though it will take several years ere it will yield a harvest. During that time the Vedanta Students will have to support the Swami who will need only simple food and clothing. Upon the arrival of

the Swami in San Francisco, the class will give him a reception.

(Oddly, no interested person, not even Minnie Boock, seems to have been familiar with the conditions prevailing in the San Antonio Valley where the Ashrama property was located. It would take several years indeed ere the land would yield a harvest; for lack of water it had never done so and at the time of this writing has not done so yet.)

Swami Turiyananda arrived in San Francisco on Thursday, July 26, and that evening was greeted by the Vedanta Society, which met, as usual, at Dr. Logan's office at 10 Geary Street.

The Swami was very cordially received [the Minutes read] and explained the reason of his visit. He gave full particulars of the 'Shanti Ashrama'—the mode of getting there & invited all cordially to come and live the life. He said he would stay with his followers there and advised them (those who would sojourn there) what necessities they would need there. Afterward discussion ensued.

This discussion, one learns from Thomas J. Allan's 'Early History of the Vedanta Society', revolved around the question of whether the Swami could accomplish 'most good by going away to the mountains with a few who would be able to go with him or by remaining in the city and shedding the influence of his life and teaching among the many he would be able to reach.' Swami Turiyananda's reply was that he would do both; 'that his work was with the few and with the many. But now he felt that he should go to the mountains, as the land had been given and "Mother" was propitious, and that after starting the Ashrama he would return to teach in San Francisco and also go to Los Angeles. "I am your servant", he said: "I have come all the way from India to serve you, and I will do my best."'



From various sources we know that during this first visit in San Francisco the Swami lived and held classes at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Carl F. Petersen at 3109 Buchanan Street (only a block or so from the site on which Swami Trigunatita was a few years later to build a temple). At the turn of the century this neighbourhood, known as 'Cow Hollow', was still partly rural, with open fields, small dairy farms, and truck gardens, and the Petersen's house (a drab two-story building which still stands) was only a few blocks from the then unfilled tidelands of the Bay along which Swami Turiyananda liked to walk. It was on the shore that Mrs. Petersen took his picture one morning while, oblivious of her camera, he was reading a letter said to be from India.

Another glimpse of the Swami during this week comes from Mrs. Clinton French, who wrote of her first meeting with him in her memoirs of those days. Earlier in the year, Cara French had attended almost all Swami Vivekananda's San Francisco lectures and classes but had been too timid to speak to him.

Keenly aware that much of what Swami Vivekananda expounded was over my head [she wrote], still I craved it more than I had ever wanted any knowledge. After he left, I said to [Miss Lydia Bell]: I feel as though a door had been opened, then shut in my face. Some time later, she sent me word by postcard: Swami Turiyananda is at 3109 Buchanan street. Go and see him.

I did not know who Swami Turiyananda was; but I went. Mrs. Petersen announced me, telling him I was shy and afraid to meet him; then almost dragged me into his presence.

Rising from his chair, both hands outstretched, Swami Turiyananda came toward me:

'What! afraid of me!'

Tears began to course down my

cheeks. In spite of my efforts to control them, they continued to trickle during the entire time he talked to me in the kindest, most gentle way.

It was soon after this, Mrs. French went on to say, that the plans for going to Shanti Ashrama took shape. My heart longed to be one among the initial group of students who were to go with the Swami to this isolated area amid the cattle ranges back of Mt. Hamilton, but it was not possible for me at that time.' (She did not, in fact, go to the Ashrama until several years later.)

Swami Turiyananda's first week in San Francisco was a busy one, but he found time between holding classes and talking with various students to write to Mrs. Hansbrough. It is from the following letter that we learn something of his stay with the Mead sisters—an experience invaluable, as he acknowledges, to one about to take a group of spiritually immature Westerners to an isolated religious retreat:

c/o Mrs Petersen  
3109 Buchanan St.  
San Francisco, California  
The 31st July 1900

My dear Mrs. Hansborough,

Excuse me please for not being able to write to you ere this. I have been kept very busy with my classes & meeting with peoples here. You know from my letter to Helen that I met the students of Vedanta here in the Vedanta Society rooms the very evening I reached this place. Mother made it a success and the people approved very enthusiastic. Since next morning I have been holding meditation class for about two hours every day and the attendance has been on the increase and the people feeling interested & benefitted. Mother knows. She is doing Her work. The atmosphere is peaceful and harmonious. Mother taught me a great lesson when

with you and that is "Never to get excited" [*twice underscored*]. It is balance, equipoise that is necessary for success especially in matters religious. We were very much enthusiastic rather too much so and the result was the disturbance of balance. You showed the symptoms first, but my poise brought you round. But the inebriation was excessive for Mrs Wyckoff. She took the contagion and as she was not strong rather weak she lost all control and felt unbalanced. The enthusiasm was little too much for her state of health both body and mind. I am glad to know from Helen's today's letter that she is feeling better and that is all right. May Mother keep you all strong and steady. The wave that flowed in your place will sure to do a good deal of good when it is settled down. You will feel that afterwards, I need not say. Now my dear friend how are you doing? I hope you are feeling well. The people here inquire so much about you and they like you so much. Miss Boock and Miss Bell have already left for the land and we start on next Thursday that is day after tomorrow. I shall write to you again when there. Mother, seems to be propitious and the Ashrama is going to be a success I believe. My best wishes and kind regards to all. Hoping to hear from you soon all about

Mrs. Wyckoff and other members of the family. With affectionate regards and heartfelt gratitude for your help I remain

Yours Sincerely  
Turiyananda

('So three persons are getting spiritual trances,' Swamiji wrote to Swami Turiyananda from Paris on August 13, in reply, it would appear, to a letter from South Pasadena; 'well, it is not bad. Even out of that much good will come. Shri Ramakrishna knows! Let things happen as they will. His work He knows, you and I are but servants and nothing else.

('I am sending this letter to San Francisco,' he continued, '—care of Mrs. C. Panel [surely Mrs. Aspinall, whose name Swamiji spelled variously]. . . . Write in detail about your health and work in San Francisco. And don't be indifferent to the question of sending money to the Math. See that money goes certainly every month, from Los Angeles and San Francisco. . . . By the grace of Mother, go on doing work, brother. Mother knows and you know—but I am off! Now I am going to take a rest.')

(To be concluded)

## SCIENCE AND RELIGION—III

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

### 22. Philosophy: Synthesis of Science and Religion

If twentieth-century physics is thus turning its face away from thoroughgoing materialism, twentieth-century biology is not behind it in this orientation. The whole of modern scientific thought is in the throes of a silent spiritual revolution with the emergence, on the horizon of scientific thought,

of the challenge of mind and consciousness, and the consequent need to develop, what Jeans terms, *a new background of science* in the light of what he says further (*The New Background of Science*, pp. 2-6):

'The old philosophy ceased to work at the end of the nineteenth century, and the twentieth-century physicist is hammering out a new philosophy for him-



self. Its essence is that he no longer sees nature as something entirely distinct from himself. Sometimes it is what he himself creates or selects or abstracts; sometimes it is what he destroys.

'Thus the history of physical science in the twentieth-century is one of a progressive emancipation from the purely human angle of vision.'

Julian Huxley and Chardin find the spiritual character of the world-stuff successively revealed in the course of organic evolution. Biology, in its theory of evolution, they hold, reveals what Chardin calls a *within* to nature, over and above and different from the *without* of nature revealed by physics and astronomy. Vedānta terms the 'within' as the *pratyak rūpa* and the 'without' as the *parāk rūpa* of one and the same nature.

When the significance of this *within* of things is recognised in modern science, the scientific 'background material' will undergo a spiritual orientation and thus come closer to Brahman, the 'background reality' of Vedānta. *The synthesis of the knowledge of the within and the without is philosophy*; and this was what India achieved in her Vedānta ages ago as *saṁnyak-jñāna*, comprehensive or perfect knowledge of total Reality. Reality itself does not know any distinction between a *within* and a *without*. These distinctions are made only by the human mind for the convenience of study and research and daily life.

As the different branches of the physical sciences are but different approaches to the study of one and the same reality, namely, physical nature, and as all such branches of study, when pursued far enough, tend to mingle and merge into a grand science of the physical universe, *into a unified science of the 'without' of nature*, so the science of the 'within' and the science of the 'without' mingle and merge in a science of Brahman, the total Reality. This is how Vedānta viewed its *Brahmavidyā*, science of Brah-

man, the term Brahman standing for the totality of Reality, physical and non-physical. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.i.1) defines *Brahmavidyā* as *sarva-vidyāpratiṣṭhā*, the *pratiṣṭhā*, or basis, of every *vidyā*, or science. Says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XIII.2) :

*Kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor jñānam*

*yat tat jñānam mataṁ mama—*

'The knowledge of *kṣetra*, the not-self (the 'without' of things), and of *kṣetrajña*, the knower of the *kṣetra* (the 'within' of things), is true knowledge, according to Me.'

Dealing with the all-inclusiveness of this Vedāntic thought as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, Romain Rolland says (*The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 289) :

'But it is a matter of indifference to the calm pride of him who deems himself the stronger whether science accepts free Religion, in Vivekananda's sense of the term, or not; for his Religion accepts Science. It is vast enough to find a place at its table for all loyal seekers after truth.'

In his lecture on 'The Absolute and Manifestation' delivered in London in 1896, Swami Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol. II, ninth edition, p. 140) :

'Do you not see whither science is tending? The Hindu nation proceeded through the study of the mind, through metaphysics and logic. The European nations start from external nature, and now they, too, are coming to the same results. We find that, searching through the mind, we at last come to that Oneness, that universal One, the internal Soul of everything, the essence and reality of everything. . . . Through material science, we come to the same Oneness.'

### 23. Sri Kṛṣṇa's Synthesis of Science and Religion

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* refers to this complementary character of physical science and the science of religion, with respect to



human knowledge and fulfilment, in a profound utterance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (XI. vii. 19-21):

*Prāyeṇa manuḷā loke  
loka-tattava-vicakṣaṇāḥ ;  
Samuddharanti hyātmānam  
ātmanaivā-śubhāśayāt—*

‘Generally, in the world, men who are efficient in the investigation of the truth of the external world or nature, uplift themselves by themselves from all sources of evil.’

*Ātmano gururātmaiva  
puruṣasya viśeṣataḥ ;  
Yat pratyakṣānumānābhyām  
śreyo-sau anuvindate—*

‘For a human being, particularly, his *guru* (teacher) is his own self; because he achieves his welfare through (inquiring into) direct sense experience and (inductive-deductive) inference based on the same.’

*Puruṣatve ca mām dhīrāḥ  
sāṅkhya-yoga-viśāfrwāḥ ;  
Āvistarām prapaśyanti  
sarva-sakty-upabrīṅhitam—*

‘In this very human personality also, wise men, who have mastered the science and art of spirituality, clearly realise Me (God, as the one universal Self of all) as the infinite reservoir of all energies.’

#### 24. The Vedānta Vision of Evolution

Vedānta views the entire evolutionary process as *progressive evolution of structure and form, and as greater and greater manifestation of the infinite Self within*. It is evolution of matter and manifestation of spirit. Twentieth-century biology recognises, in the first appearance of living organisms, the emergence, in a rudimentary form, of the unique datum of *experience*, through the unique datum of awareness. The living cell, described by biology as *self-*

*duplicating matter*, discloses the emergence of *experience* as a new value which the immense cosmos never revealed in its billions of years of history.

This spiritual value of awareness ‘grows’, as it were, in richness and variety as we move up the evolutionary ladder, defining and enlarging progressively the datum of experience with its two poles of experiencer and the experienced. The evolution of the nervous system discloses progressive development of awareness in depth and range, and consequent increase in the grip of the organism on its environment.

This awareness achieves a new and significant breakthrough with the appearance of man on the evolutionary scene. ‘Man is unique in more ways than one’, says Julian Huxley. The field of awareness of all other organisms is, largely, the external environment and, to a small extent, also the interior of their bodies—the ‘without’ of nature. Man alone has awareness of the self, as the *subject* of experience, along with awareness of the not-self, as the *object* of experience, of both the *within* and the *without* of nature.

That is the uniqueness of man, according to both twentieth-century biology and ancient Vedānta. Self-awareness, which neurology considers as the source of the dominance of man over all nature, and which nature achieved through the evolution of the human cerebral system, and which remains a minor and hazy pole of experience in the early stages of human evolution, is a new dimension of awareness containing tremendous implications, says Indian philosophy, for man’s further evolutionary destiny as much as for his philosophy of man and nature.

The Vedāntic view of evolution and of man’s uniqueness finds a unique statement in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (XI.9.28) :

*Sṛṣṭvā purāṇi vividhā—  
nyajayātmaśaktyā*



*vr̥kṣān sarī-sṛpa-paśūn  
khaga-darśa-matsyān ;  
Taistaiḥ atuṣṭa-hṛdayaḥ  
puruṣaṁ vidhyāya  
brahmāvaloka-dhiṣaṇaṁ  
mudam āpa devaḥ—*

‘The divine One, having projected (evolved), with His own inherent power, various forms such as trees, reptiles, cattle, birds, insects and fish, was not satisfied at heart with forms such as these ; He then projected the human form endowed with the capacity to realise Brahman (the universal divine Self of all), and became extremely pleased.’

## 25. India’s Religious Urge: Realisation and Not Speculation

Evolution has revealed that the mystery of the universe stirs in man as the mystery of the self. The mystery of the universe will ever remain a mystery until this mystery of the self is cleared. Till then, all our conclusions about the truth of the universe, proceeding from science or philosophy, theology or logic, will be speculative ventures yielding mere postulates and conjectures. The Indian mind was not content to remain at the stage of mere speculation or conjecture in so important a field as the knowledge of the ultimate truth about man and nature. Her thinkers boldly penetrated into the world within, taking the facts of awareness and the ego as the clue, as the *footprints*, in the words of the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (I.4.7). And when they penetrated to the depth, they discovered the one infinite and eternal reality behind the finite and the time-bound, and designated that reality as *anubhava svarūpa*, ‘of the nature of (infinite) Experience’, *cit svarūpa*, ‘of the nature of Pure Consciousness’, of which the infinite varieties of objects and subjects in the world are but passing configurations. The *Bṛhad-āranyaka* registers

this approach, and the object of its search, in another significant passage (III.4.1) :

*Yat sākṣāt aparokṣāt brahma,  
ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ—*

‘The Brahman that is immediate and direct, the Ātman that is the innermost Self of all.’

‘That thou art’ (*Tat tvam asi*), proclaims the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.viii.7), aligning mortal man with the immortal divine. Again and again, the Upaniṣads reiterate this great truth. If man as scientist has such a profound dimension that he can comprehend the vast universe in a formula given by his thought, what must be the dimension of man as the Ātman, as Pure Consciousness, as the unchangeable infinite Self? The Reality that ‘remains undivided in the divided things and processes of the world’, as the *Gītā* puts it (XIII.16). The mystery of the universe was finally resolved through the solution of the mystery disclosed within man himself. The sages of the Upaniṣads discovered the centre of the universe in the centre of man. Through that discovery, man was revealed in his infinite dimension ; and the universe was also revealed in all its spiritual glory. Realization of this truth is the only way to life-fulfilment, say the Upaniṣads. Says the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (II.15) :

*Yadātma-tattvena tu brahma-tattvam  
dīpōpameneha yuktaḥ prapaśyet ;  
Ajam dhruvaṁ sarvatattvair̥ viśuddham  
jñātvā devaṁ mucyate sarva-pāpaiḥ—*

‘When the self-controlled spiritual aspirant realises in this very body the truth of Brahman (the infinite Self of all) through the truth of the Ātman (the Self), self-luminous as light, then, knowing the Divinity which is unborn, eternal, and untouched by the modifications of nature, he is freed from all sins.’

This and similar other verses from the



Upaniṣads communicate a profound joyous discovery, as can be seen even from the language in which it is couched in that immortal literature. In reaching the ultimate Truth of the Ātman, they had reached also the ultimate of being and knowledge, peace and joy, the unifying *Field of Infinite Experience* itself. Hence they communicated their discovery as the discovery of the inexhaustible mine of *satyam* (truth), *jñānam* (knowledge) and *anantam* (infinity), or of *sat* (existence), *cit* (knowledge) and *ānanda* (bliss). In the struggle to realise this truth and the life-fulfilment it involves, they saw the true meaning of the entire course of cosmic and organic evolution, especially of human evolution.

The organism seeks fulfilment; that is the end and aim of all its activities and processes, says modern biology. In the Upaniṣads, we have the beautiful concepts of *mukti*, freedom, and *pūrṇatā*, fullness. We are bound now; we are fragmented now. We want to become free; we want to become integral, and experience fullness. Jesus Christ calls it 'perfection': 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (Matthew, V. 48). To experience the delight of freedom, to enlarge the bounds of man's awareness, to get *bodhi*, complete enlightenment, as the Buddha expressed it, is the great aim of human evolution. Education, science, culture, socio-political processes, and religion are meant to increase and enlarge the bounds of human awareness and the range and depth of human fulfilment, by increasing man's knowledge of, and control over, not only the outside world, but also the deep recesses within himself. Knowledge is power, in the positive sciences; it is still more so in the science of religion, the science of the inner nature of man, where the power that is gained is not only greater in human terms of quantity, but also higher in terms of quality.

## 26. Dharma as Social Ethics

Man cannot advance on the long road of his spiritual growth, or psycho-social evolution, without *disciplining* his urges for organic satisfactions; he has to bring a certain measure of stabilisation in his inner life through such discipline by his own knowledge and efforts; this is the second homeostasis to be achieved by him, over and above the first homeostasis achieved by nature for him, and to be dealt with in more detail later. It is this second homeostasis that is emphasised by the first of the two definitions of *yoga* given by the *Gītā*, namely, *samatvam yoga ucyate*—'Yoga is called *samatvam*, equanimity'; this is the spiritual equivalent of the dictum of the great French physiologist Claude Bernard to be dealt with later: *A fixed interior milieu is the condition for the free life.*

It is this discipline that is indicated in the Indian concept of *dharma*, or ethical sense, which is inseparable from any ordered human society. Bereft of it, man becomes reduced to a beast, says Indian wisdom: *dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*. *Dharma*, as the principle of integration between man and man in society, does not mean religion in the sense of creed, doctrine or ritual, nor any scheme of an other-worldly salvation. A mere accumulation of bricks does not constitute a building; it needs cement to unite brick to brick to make for its integrated structure. Similarly, a mere aggregation of individuals does not constitute a society; there is an integrating principle that makes for the evolution of a dynamic and expansive *personality* out of a static *individuality* and that helps to hold its members together; and that principle is *dharma*; it stresses the idea of mutuality, inter-dependence. Man needs the context of other human beings for his very humanisation. This is how Śrī Kṛṣṇa expounds *dharma* in the *Mahābhārata*:



*Dhāraṇāt dharma ityāḥuḥ, dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ.*

### 27. The Puruṣārthas in the Context of Psycho-social Evolution

Indian spiritual tradition does not frown, or look down, upon *kāma*, organic satisfaction, or *artha*, wealth, which is the means to *kāma*, but treats them as valid pursuits, or *puruṣārthas*. But it considers *lobha*, or greed, and *moha*, or delusion, arising from unchecked organic cravings, as unethical, because they are anti-social. And to restrain these two pursuits from becoming anti-social, it presents a third vital human pursuit, or *puruṣārtha*, namely, *dharma*, ethical sense. It is this third *puruṣārtha*, namely, *dharma*, that helps all people, not just a few powerful and clever ones only, to experience the first two *puruṣārthas*, namely, *kāma* and *artha*. The validity and creative role of *kāma* is presented in the *Gītā* by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the human manifestation of the one divine Self in all, in his statement (VII.11) :

*Dharmā-viruddho bhūteṣu  
kāmo'smi bharataṛṣabha—*

'I am that *kāma*, sensual desire, in all beings, which is unopposed to *dharma*.'

Indian spiritual tradition refers to *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, as the *trivarga*, the inseparable group of three, treats them as the universal warp and woof of all ordered human society, theistic, atheistic, or agnostic, and presents *mokṣa*, absolute freedom of the spirit, as the fourth *puruṣārtha*, which is an optional trans-social pursuit meant for those few who desire, and who dare, to go deeper into the spiritual dimensions of reality and realise one's true nature in all its glory. For all the rest, this *mokṣa* experience comes, within the limitations of the social context, as *dharma*. *Dharma*, thus, is the confluence of the secular and the spiritual, of the social and the trans-social; and every sacred and secular literature of

India sings its glory. Indian culture is rooted in, and inspired by, this great value of *dharma*. The mystical heights of Indian, and of all world, religions are the expressions of this trans-social *mokṣa* ideal and value.

It is an echo of this great value of *dharma* that we get in the concept of *psycho-social evolution* of twentieth-century biology and in its corollary concepts of *quality* and *fulfilment* as the criteria of evolution at the human stage. And in the emphasis on detachment from the ego, and from the organic system and its cravings centred in it, modern psycho-social evolution echoes the ancient *anāsakti-yoga* of the *Gītā*.

### 28. Religion: Ethnical versus Spiritual

A scientific study of religion reveals two dimensions to every religion, especially to every one of the highly developed world religions, namely, religion as a socio-political expression and religion as a path to the experience of God, or any value equivalent to it. The first consists of the do's and don'ts of religion and the rules and regulations about food, dress, marriage, and other social disciplines, besides myths and legends and cosmological theories. These constitute the socio-political constituents of religion, which find a place for it in the census registers and which demarcate it from other religions. It cannot constitute the science of religion but only a historically conditioned socio-political expression of religion. A science of religion will classify religions in terms such as of their *bhakti-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *rāja-yoga* and *karma-yoga* contents. This second dimension consists of the truly spiritual part, with its emphasis on personal morality, worship and adoration, and the disciplines designed to ensure the spiritual growth of man. These constitute the essential and the invariable and the universal core of religion, while the former form its variable non-essential part, which



is also relevant, but only when it does not choke the spirit of the latter.

Indian tradition calls the former the *smṛti*, and the latter the *śruti*, constituent of a religion, and considers the *śruti* as eternal and universal in validity and the *smṛti* as local, parochial and temporary in application. Accordingly, the *śruti* represents the *sanātana dharma*, eternal religion, which remains, while the *smṛti* represents the *yuga dharma*, the religion for a particular *yuga*, or age, which changes. India, therefore, considers the *yuga dharma* constituent of a religion not only not applicable for all people universally, but even irrelevant to its own people of a later age, due to changes in conditions of life of the people concerned. So Indian tradition provides for appropriate changes in the *smṛtis* and the *yuga dharma*, to make them relevant for the changed social circumstances which render them obsolete, and often harmful. Sri Ramakrishna expresses this Indian wisdom in a brief and meaningful utterance : The Moghul coins have no *currency* under the East India Company's rule. Human and social distortions are the product of the dominance of these obsolete elements of a socio-religious tradition ; they sustain the rigidities of social customs, anti-human practices, inter-religious and intra-religious frictions, disharmonies, and persecutions, and the stagnation and immobility of human attitudes.

The fundamental message of all religions, however, derives from their central core of essential spiritual truths, which constitute their *śruti* element. These spiritual truths are *apauruseya*, impersonal, and, therefore, universal ; they were discovered by the scientists of religion, the mystics. The authenticity of these truths lies in their being experienced by spiritual experimenters *and in their being capable of re-verification by others*. Explaining this authenticity with respect to the Vedas of the Hindu tradition,

Swami Vivekananda said in the course of his address at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 6-7) :

'By the Vedas no books are meant ; they mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul, and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forgot them.

'The discoverers of these laws are called ṛṣis (sages), and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women.'

The above description can be relevant only with respect to the *śruti* constituent of Hinduism, and of every other world religion. The only difference lies in this, that it is only in the Hindu tradition that this distinction between the universality of the *śruti* and the limited relevance of the *smṛti* is fully recognised and applied ; and that social innovators and religious prophets are not only not persecuted and killed, but are honoured and followed. And this blessing Hinduism owes to its immortal literature of the Upaniṣads, which is all *śruti* and with no touch of *smṛti*. They are the only sacred books, both within Hinduism and outside of it, which addressed themselves *exclusively* to the discovery of spiritual truths and to leading man, irrespective of caste, creed, and race, to their realisation in human life, and to the creation in India of a dynamic and healthy climate of active toleration and harmony as the inalienable characteristic of Indian culture and life.

In the light of this *śruti-smṛti* concept, we see the kinship of science only with that aspect of religion as a spiritual path to God,



the *śruti* constituent, and very little kinship with its socio-political expression, the *smṛti* constituent. The term *ethnic religion* emphasises the dominance of this *smṛti* element, with its group exclusiveness and tribal loyalties. And it is this ethnic religion that stagnates in course of time, resists social change, and collides against physical science and all creative social endeavour. In all religions, the ethnic element, in course of time, becomes increasingly centred in the priest and the feudal power, and the universal spiritual element is centred in the prophet and the divine incarnation. The ethnic aspect of religion will continue to remain; but it must be subordinated, says the Hindu tradition, to the spiritual aspect if it is to aid man in his spiritual growth.

## 29. India and the Scientific Approach to Religion

The methods of investigation in the field of religion are largely the same as in the positive sciences. Collection of facts, their classification, a dispassionate study of these so as to reveal the law or laws underlying them, such knowledge leading to the control over the phenomena concerned, and, finally, the application of such knowledge for the technique of man's spiritual growth, for the alleviation of human suffering, and for the enrichment and fulfilment of human life. This kind of study of religion, as a thorough scientific study of the facts of the inner life, was undertaken by the great sages of ancient India; the insights which they gained were re-tested and amplified by a galaxy of subsequent sages, leaving to posterity the invaluable legacy of a rich and dynamic scientific tradition in the field of religion.

*It is because of this adamant, rational, and experiential base that Indian spirituality, and the culture deriving nourishment from it, have stood the test of time. That also explains its hospitality to modern physical*

*science, and its pride in the remarkable achievement of this sister discipline developed by the modern West.*

Says Romain Rolland about this quality of Indian philosophical thought (*The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 196) :

‘The true Vedāntic spirit does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas. It possesses absolute liberty and unrivalled courage among religions with regard to the facts to be observed and the diverse hypotheses it has laid down for their co-ordination. Never having been hampered by a priestly order, each man has been entirely free to search wherever he pleased for the spiritual explanation of the spectacle of the universe.’

After a thorough investigation into the real nature of man, the sages of the Upaniṣads made a fundamental discovery; man, in his essential nature, is divine; behind the finite man is the Ātman, ever free, ever pure, and ever luminous. The body, the mind, and the ego are merely the externals of the real man who is immortal and divine. This discovery led to the further discovery that the same divinity is the ground of the world as well. This they termed Brahman, the totality of the Self and the not-Self, which they characterised as *satyam, jñānam, anantam*—‘Truth, Consciousness or knowledge and Infinity.’

## 30. Para Vidya and Apra Vidya

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, we find this question put by an earnest student to a great teacher (I.1.3) :

*Kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati—*

‘What is that reality, O blessed One by knowing which we can know all that there is in this manifested universe?’

Is there such a unique reality by knowing which we can understand all the manifestations of nature, internal as well as



external? Is there a unity behind this diversity, a one behind the many? To this question, the teacher gave a very significant reply (*ibid.*, I.1.4) :

*Dve vidye veditavye, iti ha sma yad brahmavido vadanti, parā caiva aparā ca—*

‘Two are the *vidyās*, or sciences, to be acquired by man ; so say the knowers of Brahman. One is called *parā vidyā*, higher science or knowledge ; the other is called *aparā vidyā*, ordinary science or knowledge.’

Both these must be investigated. Of these, the *aparā* or ordinary knowledge, says the teacher of the Upaniṣad, consists of the sacred Vedas, phonetics, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody, and astronomy. In fact, it includes, what we would today call, the entire gamut of positivistic knowledge, including the *second-hand* knowledge of the experience of religion, contained in the sacred books of all religions.

Here, we have a scientific mind of the highest order—impersonal, objective, and detached. There is no desire to put forth a pet opinion ; truth alone is the motive power, even if that truth goes against one’s pet attachments and aversions. The teacher says that even the Vedas, the sacred books of the whole people, belong to the category of ordinary knowledge. Who would dare to say that his own sacred books are ordinary, except he who is of a detached and scientific frame of mind, and is in search of truth and not a dogma—he who has no truth to hide, no opinion to uphold, no prejudice to defend, who just wants to know the truth and is prepared to sacrifice everything else into the bargain? No religion except that derived from the Upaniṣadic tradition has practised this bold detachment. The follower of every other religion, if asked what is ordinary knowledge, would unhesitatingly reply : All the sacred books of all the religions except my own. But this teacher of

the Upanisads had the detachment and boldness, proceeding from love of truth, to say that even the Vedas, held in such veneration by himself and by his people, were secondary ; all the sacred books and all the positive sciences and the arts are but lower knowledge—*aparā vidyā*.

Sri Ramakrishna, in our time, re-emphasized this spirit when he said: The Vedas and all other sacred books do not contain God, they contain only *information about* God. They are like the Hindu almanac which contains forecast of the rainfall of the year. But, added Sri Ramakrishna, by squeezing the almanac you won’t get a drop of water ! Similarly, by squeezing the sacred scriptures, none can get God ; but by squeezing one’s own experience, all can realise God ; for He is the one Self of all.

What, then, is left to be included in the category of *parā vidyā*, higher knowledge? The teacher proceeds to indicate this elusive theme. There is a tremendous field of knowledge, area of experience, still left, he thinks ; but it belongs to a different order. So he says (*ibid.*, I.1.5):

*Atha parā, yayā tad akṣaram  
adhigamyate—*

‘That is *parā vidyā*, or higher science, by which the imperishable (Reality) is realised.’

Physical science and all the rest deal only with things that change, that are perishable. As Sir Arthur Eddington has put it, science gives us ‘knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content’. The sacred books give us, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna referred to above, only *information about* God, and not God Himself. And yet we feel that, in the words of Eddington, ‘all through the physical universe runs that unknown content’. What is that content? And how can we get at it? If the positive sciences cannot get at it, there must be another discipline, another line of inquiry, which must be able to give us that truth.



If the sacred books contain only information about God, there must be a discipline which gives us God and not merely information about Him. It is this inquiry that pervades the Upaniṣads and that has made them immortal even as literature. And the nature and scope of that inquiry, and the way it was conducted, and the truths gained therefrom, have something superb about them. There is no effort to uphold a mere opinion, however dear; no struggle to pronounce a dogma and cling to it, and thrust it upon others; there is no trace of tiredness, or laziness of mind, seeking a resting place on the way. Truth, and nothing but truth, is the watchword. Suffused with the spirit of truth, they declared (*ibid.*, III.1.6):

*Satyameva jayate nāṅṛtam*  
*Satyena panthā vitato devayānah—*

‘Truth alone triumphs, not untruth; the path to the luminous Reality is spread out with truth only.’

And this path to the luminous Reality is strewn with the debris of discarded opinions, pleasing dogmas, broken hypotheses, and even dethroned gods! Thought was not

allowed to rest on any of them for long; it forged ahead on the two wings of *critical discrimination* and *inner detachment*, *viveka* and *vairāgya*, and wafted by the current of a single-minded passion for truth. One sage puts forth his conclusion about the data of the internal world gathered by him; another shows it as inadequate; this stimulates further inquiry, leading to a deeper pronouncement. There was this unwearied and joyous search, and graceful conflict of thought between the most gifted minds, through which thought forged ahead. There was no national dogma or authoritarian church to suppress or arrest it. The whole process reached its consummation in the profound discovery of the imperishable Self of man, the Ātman, and its spiritual unity with the Self of the universe, the Brahman. The entire process was a joyous voyage of discovery; looking back, they saw that the steps left behind were also valid, and that man travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth.

(To be concluded)

## SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA—II

TRANS. SWAMI YOGESHANANDA

### Sundara Kanda

#### Chapter two

Hanumān then made his way through that opulent city of Lanka. In a minute body he roamed by night all over the city. Dazzled, but ever seeking news of Sītā, he entered the palace. Investigating every part of it but not seeing her, he then remembered what the rākṣasī had told him, so he quickly sought and found

the beautiful Ashoka grove, abounding in divine trees, which had a pool with jewelled steps. It was inhabited by all sorts of birds and beasts, and ornamented with golden settees encircled by trees the ends of whose branches were bowed low with fruits. There was Sītā, in front of a tree that touched the clouds! Hanumān saw too a superb temple with a hundred jewelled columns. Seeing all this filled him with awe.

He passed by and went a little distance away. Now he examined the Singsapa tree of very dense foliage, which formed an umbrella such as he had never before seen, and harboured birds of a golden colour. At its base was Sītā, surrounded by rākṣasīs. What he saw beneath the tree was a deity, as it were—but one who fastened her hair in a single plait<sup>1</sup>, one grown thin and wretched, and wearing soiled clothes. Emaciated through fasting, but still resplendent, she lay on the ground piteously repeating 'Rāma, Rāma', for the deliverer who did not arrive.

This was the sight that greeted Hanumān, most excellent of monkeys, as he sat among the leaves at the end of a branch of a tree. And seeing Sītā at last, he exclaimed: 'I have succeeded. The will of Rāma, the Supreme Self, has been carried out by me and no one else.'

Suddenly there was a hullabaloo outside those palace grounds. 'What is that?' thought Hanumān, lurking in the leaves. It was Rāvana of ten heads and twenty arms, like a hill of *nilanjana*<sup>2</sup>, who had arrived accompanied by his women. The monkey was filled with dismay and clung closer to the bunches of leaves.

'But how can my death at the hands of Rāma be imminent? Rāma does not come, even for the sake of Sītā. Why is that?': this was at that moment the secret thought of Rāvana, who, in his heart, was always thinking about Rāma. Just the night before, he had had a dream in which Rāma had appeared and assured the rākṣasa king that a certain monkey who could take any shape at will, would, in a miniature form, be observing him from the top of a tree. As he had been experiencing this remarkable dream, Rāvana had thought within himself, 'I wonder if there

is any truth in this dream. Let me do this: let the monkey see me make Sītā completely miserable by piercing her with the arrows of my words; then he will inform Rāma.' So thinking, he had gone quickly into the presence of Sītā. She, that fair-waisted one, had heard the tinkling of the little bells on Rāvana's anklets, and, shrinking into herself through fear, kept her head bowed down. Inwardly she was offering herself to Rāma.

Looking at Sītā Rāvana said, 'Fair-browed maiden, why do you shrink within yourself at the sight of me? Rāma is living among the forest-dwellers with his brother. He is nowhere to be seen. Who ever lays eyes on him? What concern can you have with Rāma, who is always indifferent to you? Even though you are forever embracing and attending on him in your mind, in his heart no affection for you arises. Even while he was enjoying the delicacies prepared by your hand, ungrateful Rāma did not know your fine qualities—he, that vilest one devoid of virtues. Here you are, a faithful wife, abducted, and overcome with grief and sorrow: even now he does not come, so weak is his devotion. See his ignoble behaviour—careless, proud, oafish, self-conceited. Beautiful one, what need have you of this worst of men who has turned his back on you? Grant me your favour, for I am utterly devoted to you, and I am chief of the *asuras* [demons]. Accepting me you will preside over the *devas*, *gandharvas*, serpents, *yakṣas* and *kinnaras*.' Thus Rāvana finished his shameless boast.

Sītā listened with all her fortitude to those words of Rāvana. Bowing her head and placing a straw<sup>3</sup> between her lips, she made her reply: 'Because you were naturally afraid of Rāma, you assumed the

1. A sign of mourning.

2. Antimony, blue-black in colour.

3. As a gesture of chastity, a married woman used to put some object in between while speaking with men other than her husband,



guise of a beggar when he and his brother were absent from our cottage. Like a dog snatching the offering at a sacrifice you have stolen me, O low one, and before long (so you think) you will have me, the fruit of that theft. But when your body will be in shreds as the target of Rāma's arrows, you will know that Rāma is the Lord, and off to Yama you will go. Whether he has to dry up the ocean or cover it with arrows, Rāma will come with Lakṣmaṇa to kill you in battle, one way or another. You will see, O lowest of the rākṣasas : he will smite you and your sons with all his power and take me back to his city.'

The demon king, on hearing Sītā's proud and angry words, was overcome with rage, and to slay her swiftly drew his dagger. But his wife, Mandodari, whose eyes were like the colour of copper, was much devoted to her husband's welfare. Restraining him she said, 'Come away from this emaciated woman, wretched, sorrowing and weeping. There are, among the *devas*, *gandharvas* and *nāgas*, many fair women with ardent desire for you and you alone—women whose glances are distraught with longing.'

[Rāvaṇa then pronounced upon Sītā this sentence: if at the end of two months she would not accept him, she should be devoured for his breakfast. He returned to his palace. Now the rākṣasīs guarding Sītā jeer at her and taunt her, until one of them relates a dream she has just had, in which Rāma is seen to invade the city and burn it, kill Rāvaṇa and all his tribe, and rescue Sītā. The latter, however, has heard only of her terrible fate, and flooded with tears of sorrow, casts about for a means to end her life.]

### Chapter Three

'Why not give up the body by suicide?' thought Sītā. 'Without Rāma, what is life

among the rākṣasas worth to me? Well, my long hair can serve as a rope.' Seeing Sītā determined to take her life, Hanumān reflected a moment and in his tiny form slowly approached within her hearing.

'The great Daśaratha, king of Ayodhyā, born in the line of Ikṣvāku, has four renowned sons,' he whispered, 'all of them endowed with the "special marks"—Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna. The noble-minded eldest brother, Rāma, having retired to the Daṇḍaka forest at his father's behest together with Lakṣmaṇa and his own wife, Sītā, lived in the Pancavati on the bank of the river Gotami. When she had been brought to that spot, the illustrious Sītā, daughter of Janaka, was separated from Rāmacandra by the evil-minded Rāvaṇa. Rāma, searching for her and grieved beyond measure, saw the vulture Jatāyu, king of the birds, who had fallen to earth, and granted him at once the boon of attaining heaven on Mt. Rīṣyamuka. Then Rāma in his wisdom formed a pact with Sugrīva, killing Vāli who had stolen Sugrīva's wife. Sugrīva, now king of the monkeys by the favour of Rāma, summoned all his subjects and sent them off in all directions in search of Sītā. And I, the king's minister, quickly crossed the sea, one hundred yojanas in width, searching for the city of Lanka and the lovely Sītā.'

'Gradually I discovered the Ashoka grove and the Singsapa tree, and here I saw the sorrowing Sītā, overcome with grief. I have reached Rāma's divine Queen and my mission is accomplished.' With this, the wise Hanumān concluded his speech.

Sītā was astonished at hearing this tale gradually unfold. 'What have I heard coming out of the air, uttered by the wind?<sup>4</sup> Is it the fancy of my mind—a mere day-dream—or is it true? Weeping so much, I

4. A pun here; Hanumān is the son of Vāyu.



have no sleep: that I know. How comes this illusion, that words so sweet are spoken in my ear? Let him show himself, this sweet-speaking illustrious stranger!

Descending then from his shelter of leaves, Hanumān slowly came into her presence measuring the ground with the length of his body, and gently prostrated himself. Before her in salutation was a red-faced light-brown monkey. Alarmed, Sītā thought: 'It is Rāvaṇa who has come. By magic, to deceive me, he has come in the form of a monkey.' With her head bowed she sat in silence. So he spoke to her once more:

'Devi, I am not what you suspect. Mother, give up your suspicions about me; I am the servant of Rāma, King of Kosala, who is the Supreme Self; I am the minister of Sugrīva, the monkey king; and I am, O peerless one, the son of Vāyu, life-breath of the universe.'

'Salutations to Hanumān,' ventured Sītā. 'How did the monkeys come into league with men, since you say you are Rāma's messenger?' Delighted, Hanumān gave his reply. [He relates to her how he came to be entrusted by Rāmacandra with the commission of finding Sītā, and tells her that Rāma has given him one of his rings as a token of recognition. 'Give to Jānakī,' Rāma had said, 'this ring engraved with my name.']

'At great cost I have come with it, Devi; now behold that ring.' He placed in her hand the signet-ring, and made namskāra; then stood at a distance, joining his hands respectfully. Sītā, seeing the ring with Rāma's name engraved upon it, was uplifted in heart, and bore it on the top of her head. Tears of joy streamed from her eyes.

'O monkey, O saver of my life! You are indeed wise; you are certainly devoted to him, serviceful and trustworthy; otherwise how could Rāma send another man into my presence? You, Hanumān, have seen

all this, my miserable condition; tell it all to Rāma, so that pity for me will dawn in his heart. For at the end of two months my life will be snuffed out. That demon will eat me if Rāma does not arrive. If the Lord comes with Sugrīva and his troops and fighting Rāvaṇa, cuts him in half along with his sons and releases me, then, O hero, will Rāma's heroism meet the expectations of everyone. Therefore, O Hanumān, do your very best by means of speech, and move Rāma to come and rescue me and thus fulfil dharma.'

'Just as I have foreseen, Mother,' answered Hanumān, 'Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa will quickly come with Sugrīva and his army and through their strength kill Rāvaṇa. Rāma will take you with him to Ayodhyā, without a doubt.'

'But how will Rāma (the immeasurable Self)', asked Sītā, 'cross the wide ocean with the monkey army?'

'They may have to climb on my shoulders, those two bulls-among-men; Sugrīva and his army, as well. In a moment we shall cross, through the air, the broad ocean, and burn up the hosts of demons. But have no more doubts. Give me your leave, Mother. In haste I am off to see Rāma and his brother. Now let me have something of yours to take with me, so that when he recognizes it, he will believe me; for then he will be eager and will spur himself.' Lotus-eyed Sītā reflected a moment. Releasing from the band on her hair a crest-jewel, she gave it to Hanumān.

'Let Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa believe you through this, O chief of monkeys!' [Then she also related to him an incident, known only to Rāma and herself, which had occurred on Mount Chitrakūta.]

Said Hanumān, 'Devi, if Rāma only knows that you are waiting here, he will reduce Lanka and its rākṣasas to ashes in a moment.'

'My child,' replied Sītā, puzzled, 'how



will you and all the honourable monkeys, small as you are, fight with the demons?' In answer, he took on his previous size, looming large as Mount Meru, sure to raise fear in the rākṣasa hosts. Seeing him then resembling a mountain, she was filled with great joy and declared, 'You have that capacity; and you are righteous. The rākṣasīs will look upon you as a storehouse of power. Go swiftly to Rāma, and may your way be clear!' The monkey, feeling by now very hungry, said:

'Now that I have seen you, let me eat, in your presence, some of the fruits of these trees.' And Sītā assented and let him go. After prostrating himself, he went away. But when he had not gone very far he began to think:

'Any messenger who goes out for the sake of some particular task and returns without doing something additional—something not incompatible with his master's mission, is just the lowest grade of servant. So I should go and see Rāma after doing a little extra something, such as seeing Rāvaṇa and speaking to him.' Thus Hanumān, sitting on the branch, hatched his plan. Then he began to uproot the precious Ashoka grove, and in a trice made it treeless. Leaving enough of the woods to protect Sītā, he soon laid waste the remainder. When the rākṣasīs saw the grove torn up like this, they enquired of Sītā, 'Who ever is this extraordinary one who looks like a monkey?' And Sītā replied, 'It may be some chimera; I don't understand all this maya produced by demons: distracted as I am by pain and misery, how can I possibly recognize him?' Hurrying away beset with fear, the rākṣasīs went to Rāvaṇa and reported everything Hanumān had done.

'O Lord,' said they, 'some impressive being in the form of a monkey of immeasurable stride has talked with Sītā, uprooted the Ashoka grove in the twinkling of an eye and shattered the temple. He has killed

the guards and is standing there on the spot.' Rāvaṇa listened with dismay to the news of the destruction of his beloved wood, and rising quickly, sent his servants. There in the midst of the broken platform stood Hanumān, large as a mountain, in his hand as weapon an iron post, his face looking frightful from the smearing of blood. His tail was twitching. As he saw the band of demons approaching, he roared, throwing them into great confusion. Regarding him now with his terrible form as the 'murderer of rākṣasas', they discharged a multitude of various weapons. As an elephant might deal with flies, so Hanumān stood up and crushed them completely at once with his club.

Rāvaṇa heard of it and was filled with wrath. He summoned five proud generals and sent them there; but they too were slain by the iron club. Enraged, Rāvaṇa then dispatched seven of the sons of his ministers. As soon as they arrived the monkey chief finished them off. He then took refuge in his former position and eyed the rākṣasas from where he stood.

Now the mighty demon Kumāra, with his magnificent eye, appeared on the scene. Seeing him, Hanumān flew up into the sky and with his club quickly struck Kumāra on the head, from above. The demon and the power of his infamous eye were totally destroyed. At the news of this slaughter of his son Kumāra, Rāvaṇa became angry beyond bounds. And to Indrajīt he said, 'Son, I am going to meet the enemy, this slayer of sons. I will bind him and bring him; or else I will kill him.'

'Do not say so, father;' exclaimed Indrajīt, 'Why should I remain here? Your words distress me. I will go and soon have him in tow with the "noose of Brahmā".'<sup>5</sup> With this the mighty hero climbed into his chariot. Accompanied by many of the

5. A legendary magic weapon.



rākṣasas, he rode off towards Hanumān. The loud roar that they made came to Hanumān's ear, and raising his club he leapt off into cloud-land. Like Garuḍa flying around in the clouds, he was peppered with arrows—his head by eight, his heart by six and his feet by the same, and his tail was split by another. A horrendous monkey-roar came from his throat and with great exultation he upraised his club. Down it came and powdered in an instant the charioteer with his horse and the chariot. But Meghanāda<sup>6</sup> survived to bring up another chariot, produce the magic weapon Brahmāstra and bind that noblest of monkeys. Thus was he able to haul him into the presence of King Rāvaṇa.

But what, to Hanumān, are bonds such as these—to him who is forever free from all bonds, having emplanted in his heart the lotus-feet of Rāma? Those who, sunk down, repeat that name a hundred times, do they not become totally and instantly free from the bondage of what is done through the action of ignorance, and go to that blessed abode resplendent with a million suns?

#### Chapter Four

Lord Mañādeva said:

Looking round the city in fright, the monkey chief was now led in bonds, followed by the very angry citizens gaping at him and pummelling him from all sides with their fists. Once he had made contact, even for a brief instant, with Indrajit's magical weapon, Hanumān understood its power, and, held by its tiny ropes, went along through respect for the specific quality of its action. Indrajit led him into Rāvaṇa's city where the latter was seated in assembly, and said: 'Here is the monkey; I have bound him with the Brahmāstra. He has killed great *asuras*. What to do with him

is a matter for honourable judgement by your ministers. But let it be well considered, for this monkey is no ordinary one.'

Rāvaṇa then moved about the assembly, looking round him, and stopping in front of prahasta (who resembled Mount Anjana itself) said: 'Prahasta, you ask that one why he has come here, what business he has here, where he comes from and why he destroyed the whole grove and violently killed my men.' Prahasta respectfully questioned Hanuman: 'Why were you sent, O monkey? Have no fear: I will release you. Tell the truth in the presence of the lord of all.'

Then Hanumān, eyeing the foe, the *asura* (Rāvaṇa), who was the thorn of the three worlds, with great joy began slowly to speak holy words about Rāma, remembering him again and again. [Here he tells the story of how he came to be Rāma's ally and went in search of Sītā, found her and became enraged at her plight.] Then he said:

'Indrajit approached and bound me with "Brahmā's noose". Although it merely touched me, I yielded, O Rāvaṇa, to the power of that Brahmavara, becoming as if bound. My mind is now filled with a feeling of compassion and I want to tell you what will be for your welfare: Rāvaṇa, through discrimination consider what is the right path for the world, and employ your intelligence in a manner not destructive. Find the path divine, the source of freedom through remembrance, in order that the embodied soul may have refuge and eternal welfare. For you are a descendant of Pulasti, and are born in the highest line of Brahmā, and a kinsman of Kubera. Even endowed with body-consciousness, see how you are *not* a rākṣasa—what to speak of the falsity of that idea when you are conscious of the Self! Your suffering in the body is not continuous, nor is ignorance your permanent status. This is the truth: Because of non-duality, there is in you neither

6. Indrajit.



modification nor any cause of alteration. Just as a cloud goes everywhere but does not become attached, so, Your Excellency, a person, though dwelling in a body and connected with a subtle body, organs, *prāṇas*, etc., is the experiencer of all such bonds, and understanding 'I am consciousness alone, unborn, immutable, for I am filled with bliss', he becomes free. Also, the body is not the self, as it is born as a modification of earth, nor is the *prāṇa* the self, as it is merely air, nor is the mind, it being a transformation of egoism, nor is intellect, which arises as a modification of *prakṛti*. The Self is the Lord (*īśvara*), made of consciousness and bliss, without change, and different from the conglomeration of body and the rest. Always knowing the Self as stainless and free, one is thereby freed from *upādhis*.

'So I will tell you what will bring about your permanent liberation; listen attentively great-minded one! Devotion to Viṣṇu is an excellent means of purifying the mind; it opens the door to the purest knowledge and the perception of pure truth; through correct knowledge one goes to the supreme abode. So now worship Hari, worship Rāma, husband of Sītā, who is primeval ruler of *Prakṛti*. Give up the stupidity of imagining him in your heart as an enemy, and worship him, for he is ever affectionate to those who take refuge in him. Honouring Sītā and saluting Rāma, you and your sons and kinsmen will be freed from fear. How can a man who does not keep Rāma clearly in view, with devotion, as seated in his heart, as the Supreme Self of blissful non-dual form, gain the final passage over this ocean of relative existence, ringed as it is with the billows of suffering? Otherwise, like an enemy from whom you have no protection, you are conducting yourself to lower and lower levels, burned by the fire of ignorance; there will not be even the suspicion of freedom for you,

from your own misdeeds.'

When the ten-headed *asura* heard this speech of the son of the Wind, like nectar in its sweetness, he was unable to bear it and very angry, and his red eyes blazed. He addressed the monkey:

'How do you dare thus prattle fearlessly before me? You are evil-minded and the lowest of monkeys. Who is this Rāma? Who are those forest-people? I will strike down that villain, the ally of Sugrīva! Killing you too, now, I will then destroy Sītā, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Before long I will kill Sugrīva as well and then King Vāli with all his troops.' Hearing Rāvaṇa's words, Hanumān, burning with greater anger, as it were, said to the *asura*, 'O vilest of a million Rāvaṇas, there is no one equal to me! I am the servant of that Rāma whose stride is immeasurable.' At this Rāvaṇa was filled with rage and said to the *rākṣasas*:

'Come, cut this monkey to pieces; let all the demons, all our friends and kinsmen, behold it.' But Vibhīṣaṇa obstructed his brother whose weapon was already upraised for the slaughter.

'Your Majesty,' he protested, 'a monkey who is a king over others is by no means suitable for murder by those possessed of majesty. If this monkey messenger is killed, who will convey the news to your enemy? Therefore think of something equivalent to death; let him go with some mark upon him, so that when Rāma sees it, he will come quickly with Sugrīva at his side. Then you may have your battle.' Rāvaṇa thought it over and said:

'Well, they say that monkeys take great pride in their tails; so let us wrap his tail carefully with cloth, set it on fire, and parade him around the city, and then douse him. Let him be shamed before all the leading monkeys.' Accordingly Hanumān's tail was firmly wrapped with many strips of hemp and cloths smeared with oil.

Then the powerful demons, setting alight the tip of the tail and holding him firmly bound with ropes, made him move about in all directions while they shouted: 'This is a thief!', accompanying it with the beating of drums which they struck again and again. All this Hanumān bore, as he had in view a certain purpose. But having gone near the western gate, he became small again and got out of the ropes. Assuming his mountain-form once more, he jumped up to the tower of the temple. Taking up one of the pillars, he struck down the guards in an instant, and now decided how to finish his work. From the top of the temple the monkey leapt from house to house, and with his great tail blazing, set afire all Lanka with its eight towers and portals. Cries of 'Alas! My child! My husband!' were heard on all sides, as the women of the demons climbed even to the top of the temple. All the deities, (of the temples), as it were, were falling into the fire.<sup>7</sup>

When he had reduced the whole city to ashes, leaving only the house of Vibhīṣaṇa, Hanumān jumped into the ocean and immersed his tail. At last he became normal and reflective. Sītā, coming to know of all this, had beseeched Agni (through her great friendship with Vāyu) that the monkey's tail might not be burnt. So it had become quite cool. For when the special messenger of Rāma, the remembering of whose name shakes off all

sins, can cross at once over the three fires of torment<sup>8</sup> even in this life, how can he be burnt by that ordinary fire?

[Hanumān now goes to Sītā, takes leave of her and starts for home. Travelling with the speed of the wind he returns to the forest where Sugrīva and the rest are staying. He makes a loud noise which the others recognize, and there is much rejoicing. They all go quickly to Rāma and Sugrīva. Rāma is overjoyed to have word of Sītā, and Hanumān relates all his adventures.] After hearing the whole story, and marvelling, Rāma declared:<sup>9</sup>

'Hanumān, I see no means of repaying you this service you have rendered—a service difficult even for gods to perform. I offer you now my all, O Mārutī!' Drawing to him in close embrace that best of monkeys, his eyes streaming with tears, Rāma poured out his great love. Filled with love for his devotee, he said:

'Very difficult to have in this world is this embrace with Me, the Paramātman; now O Monkey Chief, you are indeed my devotee, my beloved.'

People reach the incomparable sphere of Viṣṇu just by worshipping with tulasī leaves etc. the lotus-feet of Rāma; here was the son of the Wind, with such a store of meritorious action behind him, having his own body embraced by Rāma!

*(To be concluded)*

7. A pun here: 'were becoming Agni'.

8. Three kinds of miseries—Adhyātmika, Adhidaivika, and Adhibhautika.

9. From verse 59.



# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S DISCOVERIES ABOUT INDIA—VIII

SWAMI BHAJANANANDA

## (iii) *Need for Development of Moral Character :*

Closely connected with Swamiji's theory of religion as the 'core-subject' is his idea that the purpose of education is man-making :

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.<sup>90</sup>

Here again there is a superficial resemblance of Swamiji's idea to Herbart's well-known dictum that the goal of education is the formation of character. But while Herbart's concept of morality was based on obedience to social norms and the biblical commandments, Swamiji based his concept on the deeper principle of manifestation of man's potential divinity.

Another important moral principle of Swamiji which is in tune with the ancient Hindu tradition is the practice of Brahmacharya or continence. The sublimation and retention of the creative powers of man is essential for the health and development of the brain and its faculties. Swamiji said :

Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power.<sup>91</sup>

Controlled desire leads to the highest result. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. . . . The stronger this force, the more can be done with it.

Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining.<sup>92</sup>

By the observance of strict Brahmacharya all learning can be mastered in a very short time—one has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country.<sup>93</sup>

The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent, and this is what gave them power.<sup>94</sup>

Every boy should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya, and then, and then only, faith—Shraddha—will come.<sup>95</sup>

It is this lack of faith in themselves and the higher values of life that is the bane of modern youth. Swamiji wanted to restore this faith. Hence he placed great importance on Shraddha or faith as an integral part of education. He said :

The idea of true Shraddha must be brought back once more to us, the faith in our own selves must be reawakened, and, then only, all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves.<sup>96</sup>

This faith in themselves was in the hearts of our ancestors, this faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward and forward in the march of civilization ; and if there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, mark my words, you will find that degeneration to have started on the day our people lost this faith in themselves.<sup>97</sup>

90. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (hereafter *Comp. Works*), *Mayavati* : Advaita Ashrama, III, 1960, p. 302.

91. *Comp. Works*, VII, 1958, p. 67.

92. *Comp. Works*, VII, p. 69.

93. *Comp. Works*, VII, p. 224.

94. *Comp. Works*, I, 1962, p. 263.

95. *Comp. Works*, V, 1959, p. 369.

96. *Comp. Works*, V, p. 332.



To preach the doctrine of Shraddha or genuine faith is the mission of my life. Let me repeat to you that this faith is one of the potent factors of humanity. . . . First, have faith in yourselves. Know that though one may be a little bubble and another may be a mountain-high wave, yet behind both the bubble and the wave there is the infinite ocean.<sup>98</sup>

Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine to your children, even from their very birth.<sup>99</sup>

(iv) *Importance of Concentration :*

One of the chief achievements of the ancient Hindu sages was the development of the science of concentration. The technique of concentration was perfected in India more than in any other place in the world. It is ridge-pole of Hindu spiritual disciplines. Swamiji wanted to introduce the benefit of these discoveries of ancient yogis into the field of education and apply it as a means of quickening and widening the educative process. He said :

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I would collect facts at will. Side by side, in the child, should be developed the power of concentration and detachment.<sup>100</sup>

Even the lowest shoemaker, if he gives more concentration, will make shoes better ; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of

nature, and lets out floods of light. This, the power of concentration, is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge.<sup>101</sup>

(v) *Education for Self-support and Self-help :*

The knowledge and moral character that the student acquires through education should help him in facing the problems of life and to earn a decent livelihood. It should enable him to stand on his own legs. Swamiji asked :

The education which does not help the common masses of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?<sup>102</sup>

Mere book learning won't do. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.<sup>103</sup>

What we want are Western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddha and faith in one's own self.<sup>104</sup>

Swamiji wanted our young men to learn the skills that the Western world had developed, especially their technology, organizing capacity and business efficiency.

What we need, . . . is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language, and Western science ; we need technical education and all else that may develop industries so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves, and save something against a rainy day.<sup>105</sup>

97. *Comp. Works*, III, p. 376.

98. *Comp. Works*, III, p. 444.

99. *Comp. Works*, III, p. 376.

100. *Comp. Works*, VI, 1963, p. 38-9.

101. *Comp. Works*, II, 1963, p. 391.

102. *Comp. Works*, VII, p. 147.

103. *Comp. Works*, V, p. 342.

104. *Comp. Works*, V, p. 366.

105. *Comp. Works*, V, p. 368-9.



## 2. *Practical Means of Spreading*

### *Education :*

Regarding the practical side of education Swami Vivekananda knew only too well that in the first place it was a slow process. He said :

Kings having gone, the power is the people's. We have, therefore, to wait till the people are educated, till they understand their needs and are ready and able to solve their problems. The tyranny of the minority is the worst tyranny in the world. Therefore, instead of frittering away our energies on ideal reforms, which will never become practical, we had better go to the root of the evil and make a legislative body, that is to say, educate our people, so that they may be able to solve their own problems. Until that is done all these ideal reforms will remain ideals only. The new order of things is the salvation of the people by the people, and it takes time to make it workable, especially in India, which has always in the past been governed by kings.<sup>106</sup>

Secondly, Swamiji knew that the educational reform that he wanted to bring about would not come from the British Government. Democracy becomes successful only when it becomes a government of the people, by the people, and for the people—as Lincoln defined it. This means that the masses must be educated and made conscious of their responsibility in shaping their own destinies. In India the people had for centuries been under the rule of kings—native and foreign. The village councils or Panchayats, which for centuries formed the backbone of Indian polity, ceased to be democratic long ago as they were in most cases dominated by powerful local chieftains. Hence education of the masses had been neglected for a very long time. With the attainment of freedom and democracy, India has woken to the dire need of spreading education among its millions of people,

and much has already been done in this direction. But during Swamiji's time educational machinery was controlled by the British Government, and its goal, as openly declared by Lord Macaulay, was the introduction of the values and mores of British society in the life of Indians so as to make them better fitted as the subject race.

Swamiji for sometime seems to have entertained the hope of influencing some of the Maharajas to start educational and social reforms in their states. That was one of the reasons why he contacted several ruling princes and occasionally lived in their palaces, and later on wrote several inspiring letters to them and their Dewans. But with the British Government having its finger in every affair of the native States, the Maharajas themselves couldn't do much. The wealth of the country was being spirited away, and very little of it was directed to spread education in the villages, containing 80% of the population.

All this convinced Swamiji of the need for organizing private bodies for the spread of not only religion but also secular education among the masses. He also knew that a central organization was needed to direct and control the activities of these private bodies. He expressed his wish to start such a self-directing institution in one of his lectures in India :

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106.</sup> *Comp. Works*, V. p. 215-16.

<sup>107.</sup> *Comp. Works*, V. p. 29.



At first, Swamiji had a plan of starting a Vedanta college in Madras (with a temple of Universal Religion attached to it) to train preachers and send them like waves rolling irresistibly all over the country, as he put it. It was the idea of getting money for such a programme of education of the masses that was one of the reasons for his going to America.

Later on, while in America, Swamiji changed his plan and decided to start an extension to the already existing Ramakrishna Order of monks into a philanthropic body called the Ramakrishna Mission. Experience had taught him that without a body of dedicated monks, no philanthropic work can survive long in India. In the Ramakrishna Mission, monks and lay people co-operate in its multifarious activities.

Another reason for the starting of the Ramakrishna Mission was to put into practice Swamiji's idea of *gurukula-vāsa* (students staying with their teacher) for boys. He knew that the ancient ideal of children living with a teacher in his home was no longer possible. The next best thing would be to start hostels run by Hindu monks on the lines of ancient Buddhist monks. The various educational institutions run by the Ramakrishna Mission are trying to put into practice Swamiji's ideal of *gurugriha-vāsa*.

Swamiji knew very well that his ideas and ideals of education could not be put

into practice unless the whole educational machinery of the nation was controlled. That is why he said :

...we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical. Of course this is a very big scheme, a very big plan. I do not know whether it will ever work out. But we must begin the work.<sup>108</sup>

These words were uttered by the great Swami about seventy-six years ago. Now the British have left India and the education is entirely left to a government elected by the Indian people. But has Swamiji's dream of spreading religious education, man-making education, ever been carried out? We are sorry to say : No ! for this, neither Swami Vivekananda nor his ideas are responsible. The blame lies entirely with us.

This has been admitted by several contemporary political leaders in India. Sometime back while delivering the convocation address at the Gandhi Gram Rural Institute, South India, the Ex-Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi said : 'One of the biggest mistakes we made when we gained independence was not to have overhauled thoroughly our educational system and structure. We are paying for it now.'

(To be concluded)

<sup>108.</sup> *Comp. Works*, III, p. 302.



# UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA\*—I

*To Sister Nivedita*<sup>1</sup>

1

Darjeeling,  
3rd April 1897.

Dear Miss Noble,

I have just found a bit of important work for you to do on behalf of the downtrodden masses of India.

The gentleman, I take the liberty of introducing to you, is in England on behalf of the Tiyas, a plebian caste in the native State of Malabar.

You will realize from this gentleman what an amount of tyranny there is over these poor people, simply because of their caste.

The Indian Government has refused to interfere on ground of non-interference in the internal administration of a native State. The only hope of these people is the English Parliament. Do kindly everything in your power to help this matter being brought before the British Public.

Ever yours in the truth,  
VIVEKANANDA.

2<sup>a</sup>

Almora,<sup>3</sup>  
20th June 1897.

My dear Miss Noble,

Many many thanks for your kind letter. . . .

. . . Miss Müller is here ; she is planning various things. Lord knows what will be the results. . . .

Next summer I will be in London after putting the machine here in motion a bit. In two months I go down from these hills and make a lecture tour through the big cities of northern India. That will take up the whole of winter. I have started an organization here and will send you a lot of prospectuses as soon as ready.

By the by, I wrote Sturdy to get up a little reception for my friend the Raja of Khetri and some other Rajput princes who went there for the Jubilee. Do write me please any news about these Indians, as I am very much interested in many of them.

With all love,

Yours in the truth,  
VIVEKANANDA.

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

1. Before receiving the name Nivedita from Swami Vivekananda in the March of 1899, on the eve of her first initiation as a novice of the Ramakrishna Order, she was known as Miss Margaret Noble. Swamiji used to address her as Miss Noble, Margaret, Margot or Margo, in his letters to her.

2. For the published portion, *vide The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, Volume VIII, 1971, pp. 405-06.

3. Almora is a hill station in Uttar Pradesh, in northern India.

Almora,  
4th July 1897.

My dear Miss Noble,

. . . On the one hand Sturdy is silent. His pamphlets show that he has almost washed his hands off the affair, and Abhedananda now and then sends only a dismal groan. On the other hand, your letters are full of life and sunshine and bring strength and hope to my spirits, and they sadly want them now, God knows! . . .

In India lectures and teaching cannot do any good. What we want is Dynamic-religion. And that I am determined to show—'God willing', as the Mohammedans say, or if our embodied human Gods will it, as I should say as a Vedantist,—especially those white Gods of England, as power in the shape of sympathy and gold are both in their hands just now. Moreover, there is very little hope of getting any help from my own countrymen. This Indian octopus made of Jelly-fish material will take years yet to become practical. Do not be deluded by the enthusiasm they are spending on me. It is all froth. When the time will come to pay, most of them will be nowhere. . . .

With all love,

Yours ever in the Truth,  
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. What about Mrs. Johnson? She promised to write me before I left and not a word as yet! Kindly give her my eternal love and gratitude when you next meet her, so to Lady Isabel and all the Sesame friends.

V.

4

Calcutta,  
30th January 1898.

My dear Miss Noble,

This is to introduce Prof. M. Gupta<sup>5</sup> who has been already introduced to you on board the boat that brought you over to shore.

He has very kindly consented to devote an hour or more every day to teach you Bengali. I need not state that he is a genuine good and great soul.

Ever yours in the Lord,  
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. I am afraid you felt badly today.

V.

4. For the published portion, *vide The Complete Works*, Vol. VIII, 1971, pp. 407-08.

5. Perhaps Mahendra Nath Gupta, the writer of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.



5

Math, Belur,  
Howrah, Bengal,  
16th March 1898.

My dear Margaret,

It is needless to let you know, you have fulfilled all my expectations in your last lecture.

It appears to me that the platform is the great field where you will be of great help to me, apart from your educational plans. I am glad to learn that Miss Müller is going to have a place on the river. Are you also going to Darjeeling?—as you will all the better work after a trip up there! Next season I am planning a series of lectures for you all over India.

Ever yours with all love and blessings,  
[ Stamp with Swamiji's portrait ]  
THE CALCUTTA BOY.

6

3 p.m. Sunday.  
[ Early 1899 ].

My dear Margot,

I am sorry, I cannot come to see Dr. Mahoney<sup>6</sup>—I am ill. I have not yet broken my fast.

Have you stopped teaching my little cousin?

Yours with love,  
VIVEKANANDA.

7

C/o Dr. Logan,  
770 Oak Street,  
San Francisco, California,  
17th May [ 1900 ].

Dear Margot,

I am sorry, I cannot come to Chicago yet for a few days. The Doctor (Dr. Logan) says, I must not undertake a journey till completely strong. He is bent on making me strong. My stomach is very very good and nerves fine. I am getting on. A few days more and I will be all right. I received your letter with the enclosed.

If you leave for New York soon, take my mail with you. I am coming to New York direct. If you leave New York before I leave, put my mail in a cover and deposit with Turiyananda and tell him to keep it for me and not to

<sup>6</sup>. Dr. Mahoney was the Dt. Medical Officer who used to inspect the sanitary works conducted at Calcutta by the Ramakrishna Mission under the leadership of Sister Nivedita, during the plague relief of early 1899.

open them on any account, nor anyone of my Indian letters. Turiyananda will take charge. Also see that my clothes and books are at the Vedanta Society's rooms in New York.

I will write you soon an introduction to Mrs. Huntington.<sup>7</sup> This affair should be private.

With love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. As I have got to stop at Chicago for my ticket, will you ask anybody to take me in for a day or two, if Mrs. Hale is gone east by that time?

V.

8

770 Oak Street,  
San Francisco, California,  
18th May 1900.

Dear Margot,

Enclosed find the letter of introduction to Mrs. Huntington. She can, if she like, make your School a fact with one stroke of her pen. May Mother make her do it!

I am afraid, I will have to go direct to New York, as by that time the Hales will be off. I cannot start two weeks at least yet. Give the Hales my love.

With love and blessings,

Yours,  
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. I received your letter including Yum's.<sup>8</sup>

V.

9

6, Place des Etats Unis,  
Paris.  
23rd August 1900.

Dear Nivedita,

The manuscript accounts of the Math just reached. It is a delightful reading. I am so pleased with it.

I am going to print a thousand or more to be distributed in England, America and India. I will only add a begging paragraph in the end.

What do you think the cost will be? With love to you and Mrs. Bull,

VIVEKANANDA.

7. Mrs. Collis Porter Huntington, the wife of one of the enormously wealthy 'Big Four' of the Central Pacific Railroad, of United States.

8. 'Yum' was the nickname of Miss Josephine MacLeod, a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda.



The Math, Belur,  
Howrah District, Bengal,  
4th April 1901.

Dear Margot,

A letter came just now from Mr. R. Dutt<sup>9</sup> praising you and your work in England very much, and asking me to wish you to stop longer in England.

It requires no imagination to learn that I am overjoyed at all the news about you, Mr. Dutt so kindly sends.

Of course, you stay as long as you think you are working well. Yum had some talk about you with Mother,<sup>10</sup> and she desired you to come over. Of course, it was only her love and anxiety to see you—that was all; but poor Yum has been much too serious for once, and hence all these letters. However, I am glad it should happen, as I learnt so much about your work from Mr. Dutt, who can't be accused of a relative's blind love.

I have written to Mrs. Bull already about this matter. I am now at last in Dacca,<sup>11</sup> and had some lectures here. I depart for Chandranath tomorrow, near Chittagong, the farthest eastern extremity of Bengal. My Mother, aunt, cousin, another cousin's widow, and nine boys are with me. They all send you love.

I had just now a few lines from Mrs. Bull, also a letter from Mr. Sturdy. As it would be almost impossible for me to write for some days now, I ask you to thank Mrs. Bull for me for her letter, and tell her kindly that I have just now a long letter from Miss Greenstidel<sup>12</sup> of Detroit. She mentions a beautiful letter from Mrs. Bull. Sturdy writes about the publication of any further edition of *Raja-yoga* by Longmans. I leave that consideration with Mrs. Bull. She may talk over the matter with Sturdy and do what she thinks proper.

Please give Sturdy my best love, and tell him, I am on the march and will take time to reply to his letter, in the meanwhile the business will be looked after by Mrs. Bull.

With everlasting love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

(To be concluded)

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9. Romesh Chandra Dutt had become acquainted with Sister Nivedita in England, where he was staying after his retirement from the Indian Civil Service.

10. Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi.

11. This letter was written from Dacca (now in Bangla Desh), where Swamiji had gone on way of his pilgrimage to some holy places in East Bengal and Assam.

12. Miss Christina Greenstidel, an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She became closely associated with the work of Sister Nivedita in India, and became known as Sister Christine.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

**Personality: Concepts And Development—II (The Editorial):** In the last part of the editorial the views of the Western psychologists regarding Personality and its development were discussed. In this instalment the views of the Eastern philosophers, Saints and Prophets have been told. The Eastern philosophers excepting the Cārvākas are one on the point that the empirical personality of man is a degraded form, and the real personality is beyond it; and to realize that Real man is the goal of all religions. In modern age, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have thrown a unique light on this subject, which, in a way, harmonizes the views of the Easterners and the Westerners.

**Early Days At Shanti Ashrama—I:** During the second visit of Swami Vivekananda to the West, in the June of 1900, Miss Minnie C. Boock gave a gift of land, situated in California, to Swami Vivekananda to start a Retreat for the students of Vedanta in the West. Swamiji entrusted the responsibility of starting this retreat, which later came to be known as the Shanti Ashrama, to his brother-disciple Swami Turiyananda. The Swami went to California in July 1900, and started his work in right earnest with the help of some admirers of Swamiji. Some literature regarding Shanti Ashrama has, no doubt, been published; but here is a lucid description of the same through the gifted pen of Marie Louise Burke—now widely known as 'Gargi'—in the light of much hitherto unpublished material, so long scrupulously preserved in the archives of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco. The author prefers to quote the letters as they are in the original in order to preserve their sweetness and authenticity. We hope, our readers will find this series illuminating and interesting.

**Science and Religion—III:** In this part

of the article Swami Ranganathanandaji clarifies the subject further; and contrasts the Vedantic approach to Truth with that of the modern science. He says: 'India's religious urge is "realization" and not "speculation".' He has shown that it is in India alone that there has always been a scientific approach to religion, which can appeal to the rational intellect of the scientists.

**Selections from *Adhyatma Ramayana*—II:** In this part of the Selections, Swami Yogeshananda covers the chapters two to four of the Sundara Kāṇḍa of the *Ramayana*.

**Swami Vivekananda's Discoveries About India—VIII:** In this part of his learned treatise Swami Bhajanananda is elucidating Swamiji's ideas about the education of the Indian masses and the way in which Swamiji tried in those days of foreign domination to bring his ideas into practice. The author is regretting that even though India has become free from foreign domination, no one has ever made an attempt to give Swamiji's ideas a practical shape.

**Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda—I:** There are many letters of Swami Vivekananda which have remained unpublished so far, for various reasons. Some have become available to us recently for publication in the *Prabuddha Bharata* from Mrs. Boshi Sen of Almora, through the authorities of the Belur Math. We are very much thankful to them for their generosity and kindness. We shall be publishing these letters hereafter in a series, save those which we have reserved for Marie Louise Burke, alias Gargi, for her forthcoming book about "Swami Vivekananda in the West—1895-96: New Discoveries", which will be our own publication. We have edited the letters very moderately,



without spoiling the beauty and sense of the original, and supplied relevant footnotes for the convenience of the readers in general. Hope our readers will find the series interesting and illuminating. These letters are

not open to public domain. The copyright of these unpublished letters is with the President, Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math. Nobody should either publish or translate them without his permission.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**AHIMSA—NON-VIOLENCE IN INDIAN TRADITION :** BY UNTO TAHTINEN, Publishers: Rider and Company, 3 Fitzroy Square, London, W1, England, 1976, pp. xii+148, price: £ 4.95.

This is a very scholarly work on *ahimsā* in Indian tradition from the ancient past upto the present times. The author traces the dim sources of the rudiments of *ahimsā* even to pre-Aryan period, as far back as the Indus Civilisation (3000-2000 B.C.). It continued down the ages and developed on ethical and ascetic lines first in Jainism and later in Buddhism, and in Sāmkhya and Yoga schools. The Vedic tradition, also ancient (about 1000 B.C.) did not eschew killing or violence altogether. It sanctioned animal sacrifice in certain *yāgas* and *yajñas*, and violence under special circumstances to promote social good, while holding on to the highest ethical ideal in general. The Vedic tradition was propagated by the Smṛtis—Dharma-sāstras and Purāṇas. They treated the sanctioned *himsā* as legitimate and tantamount to *ahimsā* itself. There has been, however, interaction and coalescing between these two traditions enriching each other, without obliterating their broad distinctions. The highest ethical ideal is for the furtherance of individual spiritual development (*mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*), while the compromise is to meet the exigencies of social living, as the ascetic ideal cannot be practised by all in society.

The work is concluded with a study of the comprehensive pragmatic thought on and application

of *ahimsā* in the contemporary period by Mahatma Gandhi and his great follower Vinoba Bhave, to the individual, domestic, social, educational, political and economic spheres of life, besides the moral and spiritual, based on the ascetic ideal.

The subject is dealt with in a thorough and systematic manner in all its bearings, giving references to the Vedic, Jaina, and Buddhist original texts as well as to some standard works and the copious Gandhian literature on Non-violence. The author says in the Preface : 'In the contemporary world the need for non-violence has become more pressing than ever before because of its manifold applications. It appears to be an efficient method of settling colonial, racial, and other social problems. It can tackle increasing structural violence of various forms. . . . Today, owing to scientific development, mankind possesses new destructive weapons and new methods of finding still more. The global security does not lie in natural science or technology. These circumstances have created a situation where man should make a choice between peace based on non-violence and total destruction. The need to make this choice did not exist earlier in human history.'

The printing and get up of the book are in keeping with good standard.

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA  
Ramakrishna Math, Belur,  
Dt. Howrah, W.B.

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# NEWS AND REPORTS

## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, KANPUR

REPORT : APRIL 1975—MARCH 1976

Started in 1920 with humble beginning, this Ashrama has developed into one of the notable philanthropic institutions of the city. Inspired by the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, it cherishes the double objectives of preaching the Eternal Religion and serving the poor and the needy without distinctions, as worship of the Divine in man. Its activities come under three heads : Spiritual and Cultural, Educational, and Medical.

*Spiritual and Cultural* : Besides regular worship, prayer and meditation in the Ashrama shrine, religious classes and kirtans were held on Sunday evenings in the Ashrama premises. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji, as well as the Kali Puja were observed as usual, with Bhajan, worship, distribution of prasad, and discourses. The birthdays of Sri Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Sankara, Chaitanya, and Jesus Christ, as also Shivaratri were observed with due solemnity. For the birth-celebration of Sri Ramakrishna, lectures were given at the Ashrama by Swami Lokeswarananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta-29 ; and a public meeting was held, addressed by the Swami and other dignitaries.

The *Public Library and Reading Room* continued to give needed service, as indicated by the 6,365 book-issuances (over one thousand more than in previous year) from the total of 4,602 books available. Daily average Library attendance was 61, including a separate Children's Section. The Reading Room received 8 newspapers, 68 periodicals and several newsletters during the year.

*Educational* : A Higher Secondary School for boys was started in 1947, and has an impressive building of its own. The percentage of passing results in the school final examinations by its boys has generally ranged between 95% and 100%. Beyond its thorough general education in the framework of prescribed syllabi, the School strives to give scope and atmosphere for integrated growth of personality. Thus its programme includes compulsory physical training, games and sports, Junior Red Cross, Scouting, etc. The Proctorial Board, with a monitorial system, fosters healthy discipline ; and moral

education is reinforced by careful vigilance over students' conduct. Withal, the loving care of the teachers, and close contact of School with Ashrama are of greatest value to character-building.

The Students' Dairy System is a unique feature of the school, which relates the School's training to that of the boys' homes, and eliminating any need for corporal or other crude punishments.

In the current year, enrolment averaged 702. Of the 139 who appeared for the School final examinations, all passed, with 85 in First Division. Thirteen got 'Stars' and there were 123 'distinctions' in various subjects. The School topped the State Efficiency grant list of recipient institutions. The School Library with 7,124 books made 2,328 book-loans ; the Reading Room provided 15 magazines ; the School Magazine *Shraddha* continued usual publication ; and no less than twenty co-curricular activities were conducted under various community Programmes.

170 boys (almost one-quarter of all) received full freeship and 66 other scholarships and stipends.

*Medical* : The outdoor Charitable Dispensary, started in 1924 and moved to its own building in 1939, is serving large number of poor patients, using both Allopathic and Homoeopathic systems of treatment. Its five departments—General Diseases, Ophthalmology, Pathology, Dentistry and Radiology, are served by a staff of four qualified physicians and/or specialists ; and in the current year an ophthalmic surgeon and a Radiologist were also in attendance. This year there were 1,89,569 patient-visits, of which more than 70 per cent were by women and children ; of the total, 49,379 were 'New Cases' and the rest, repeat visits. Among these, 152 minor operations were performed.

*Immediate Needs* : Funds are earnestly solicited towards purchase of books and furniture for the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Public Library and Reading Room. As indicated above, this unit is very scantily equipped in proportion to the volume of circulation currently handled.

All contributions should be in favour of Ramakrishna Ashrama, Kanpur, and sent to the Secretary, at Ramakrishna Nagar, Kanpur, 208 012. All such donations are exempted from the Income Tax.