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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXXIII

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No. 10

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA *

श्रीरामकृष्णोपदेशावलिः ।

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

अयस्कान्तगिरिगुप्तः समुद्रसलिलान्तरे ।

विश्लेषयत्ययःकीलान् पोतेभ्यः क्षणमात्रतः ॥ १ ॥

तथा हरिकृपाकर्षात् नरो विगतबन्धनः ।

तत्प्रेमार्णवगर्भे वै ह्यात्मारामो निमज्जति ॥ २ ॥

1 & 2. Just as a mount of loadstone hidden in the sea pulls out iron nails from a vessel (and sinks it) in minutes, so a person released from bondage due to the power of God's grace and established in the Atman, dives deep in the ocean of divine love.

सिद्धकन्दमूलादीनि भजन्ते मृदुतां यथा ।

असिद्धानि यथा तानि सन्त्येव कठिनानि च ॥ ३ ॥

निष्ठुरोऽपि तथा सिद्धः पुरुषो जायते यदा ।

कोमलत्वमवाप्नोति काठिन्यं सम्बिहाय सः ॥ ४ ॥

असिद्धः स्वल्पसिद्धो वा स्वभावाद् विकृतो भवेत् ।

मृषाचारी मृषाभाषी सुदुष्टो जायते ध्रुवम् ॥ ५ ॥

3 to 5. As well-boiled (*siddha*) vegetables like radish, potato, etc. become soft and the unboiled (*asiddha*) ones remain hard as ever ; similarly, even a cruel person becomes soft when he becomes perfect (*siddha*), by giving up his rude nature. An imperfect (*asiddha*) or a semi-perfect person, however, undergoes transformation in his character and becomes a hypocrite, liar and scoundrel without fail.

[Here there is a pun on the words *siddha* and *asiddha*. The former means both 'boiled' and 'perfect'; and the latter means both 'unboiled' and 'imperfect'.]

* See *Vidyodaya* (a critical Sanskrit monthly journal), Ed. Hrishikesh Sastri, Bhatpārā (24-Parganas, West Bengal) : The Oriental Nobility Institute, January 1897, pp. 11-16. The versified Sanskrit rendering is by Swami Ramakrishnananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The English translation is ours.

BRAIN, CONSCIOUSNESS AND SUPERCONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE—II

(EDITORIAL)

In the first instalment of this editorial a rough outline of the nervous system and its mechanism was given; and it was told that Swami Vivekananda was the first amongst the Yogīs to apply the knowledge of Western psychology and physiology to explain the disciplines of Rāja-Yoga to Western audiences. It was also seen how the brain and spinal cord are responsible for all our conscious experiences; the latter forming a sort of launching-pad for the rise of Kuṇḍalinī and thereby for the super-conscious experience. In this instalment will be studied the nature of consciousness and some related topics.

CONSCIOUSNESS

The Concepts :

Without consciousness, life has no meaning; for man's life in the waking state is the real life, as he is then conscious of all his activities. Therefore, before entering into other details, it will be worthwhile to see what consciousness means. According to the Western concept, consciousness is a field, rather than a point. William James is of the opinion that consciousness is not an entity but a function of knowing.¹¹ He says: 'Consciousness is what we might expect in an organ, added for the sake of steering a nervous system grown too complex to regulate itself.'¹² He calls consciousness a stream. Paul Schilder, after making a series of observations on eidetic imagery and hypnogogic visions,

came to the conclusion that 'consciousness is the attempt to bring experience within a context, we may call this context the ego, from an analytic point of view.'¹³ Regarding consciousness, Penfield says: 'It seems to me in a sense we are looking at consciousness as though it were a static, stationary thing. Consciousness is a stream. It is a changing phenomenon, continuous except during sleep and coma. It is never twice the same thing; it is a flowing onward of awareness.'¹⁴ While in the opinion of G. Moruzzi: 'Consciousness is usually defined by the ability: (1) to appreciate sensory information; (2) to react critically to it with thoughts or movements; (3) to permit the accumulation of memory traces.'¹⁵

According to W. H. Thorpe, although the term consciousness has 'innumerable overtones of meaning, it can be said to have the following three components: 'First, an inward awareness of sensibility—what might be called "having internal perception." Second an awareness of self, of one's own existence. Third, the idea of consciousness includes that of unity; that is to say, it implies in some rather vague sense the fusion of the totality of the impressions, thoughts, and feelings which make up a person's conscious being into a single whole.'¹⁶

All these views reveal that Western psychologists are not yet quite clear regarding the exact meaning of the term 'consciousness'.

11. See *Brain and Conscious Experience*, ed. John C. Eccles, New York, Springer-Verlag, 1966, (hereafter *Brain*), p. 240.

12. *Brain*, p. 473.

13. *Brain*, p. 243.

14. *Brain*, p. 253.

15. *Brain*, p. 345.

16. *Brain*, p. 471.

According to Vedanta, the Reality of an individual (the Ātman) is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss—Saccidānanda. It is the consciousness among the conscious—*cetanaścetanānām*.¹⁷ 'It shining everything shines; through Its luster all these are variously illumined.'¹⁸ Regarding the nature of the Ātman, Ācārya Śaṅkara says: 'Now I am going to tell you of the real nature of the Supreme Self (the Paramātmān : ... There is some Absolute Entity, the eternal substratum of the consciousness of egoism, the witness of the three states, and distinct from the five sheaths or coverings ... which Itself sees all, but which no one beholds, which illumines the intellect etc., but which they cannot illumine—This is that. ... By whose very presence the body, the organs, mind and intellect keep to their respective spheres of action, like servants.'¹⁹ All these statements go to show that Ātman, being of the nature of consciousness, is reflected in the mind, intellect, organs, body and so on, due to Its proximity, as the colour of a flower may be reflected in a crystal kept in its vicinity.

The harmony between the Western and the Vedantic concepts will be revealed in Swami Vivekananda's teachings. He expressed his views on this subject during the course of his lectures as follows:

Consciousness is the name of the surface only of the mental ocean, but within its depths are stored up all our experiences, both pleasant and painful.²⁰ The consciousness is of three sorts—the dull, mediocre and intense—as is the case of light.²¹ Consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the subconscious and the superconscious.²² Is it not the

multitude of cells in the body that make up the personality, the many brain-centres, not the one, that produce consciousness?...Unity in complexity! And why should it be different with Brahman? It is Brahman. It is the One.²³ The two great nerve-currents of the body start from the brain, go down on each side of the spinal cord, but they cross in the shape of the figure 8 at the back of the head. Thus the left side of the body is governed by the right side of the head. ...Consciousness and subconsciousness work through these two nerve-currents. But superconsciousness takes off the nerve-current when it reaches the lower end of the circuit, and instead of allowing it to go up and complete the circuit, stops and forces it [energy symbolized by a serpent—the Kundalinī] up the spinal cord as Ojas from the sacral plexus.²⁴ There can be no perception without consciousness; perception has self-luminosity, which in a lesser degree is called consciousness. Not one act of perception can be unconsciousness; in fact, consciousness is the nature of perception²⁵

Thus has Swamiji given a new meaning to the term consciousness keeping the Vedantic and the Western views intact. None but a genius like Swamiji could bring about this harmony.

Bimodal Consciousness:

Psychologists believe that the brain of the higher animals, including man, is a double organ, consisting of right and left hemispheres connected by an isthmus of nerve tissue called the corpus callosum. 'Bogen stresses that the right hemisphere

17. *Katha Upaniṣad*, II. ii. 13.

18. *Ibid.*, II. ii. 15.

19. Ācārya Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 124, 125, 127, and 129.

20. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, (hereafter *Complete Works*), IV, 1972, p. 189.

21. *Complete Works*, V, 1970, p. 206.

22. *Complete Works*, VIII, 1971, p. 276.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

24. *Complete Works*, VI, 1972, p. 130-31.

25. *Complete Works*, VII, 1969, p. 55.

of the cortex in man not only subtends different functions from the left, but that its very mode of information-processing is different.²⁶ Gazzaniga and Bogen put more emphasis on the neurological level to present the biological basis of the two modes of consciousness. It was observed by the neurologists that although one of the hemispheres was destroyed, the other hemisphere was enough to preserve the personality of the person. As early as 1844 Dr. A. L. Wigan wrote: 'The mind is essentially dual, like the organs by which it is exercised. . . . I believe myself then able to prove— (1) That each cerebrum is a distinct and perfect whole as an organ of thought, (2) That a separate and distinct process of thinking or ratiocination may be carried on in each cerebrum simultaneously.'²⁷ Recent tests also have shown that separating the two big hemispheres of the brain by surgery produced two distinct minds—the right and the left—under the same skull, with different qualities. According to Nigel Calder, 'this discovery renews the question of how the conscious mind is related to physical activities of the brain.'²⁸

In his lecture on 'Brain Bisection and Mechanisms of Consciousness' R. W. Sperry puts his observations with regard to the bisected brain as follows: 'The surgery has left these people [whose brains were bisected by the surgeon Philip Vogel at the White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles] with two separate minds, that is, two separate spheres of consciousness. 'What is experienced in the right hemisphere

seems to be entirely outside the realm of awareness of the left hemisphere. This mental division has been demonstrated in regard to perception, cognition, volition, learning and memory. One of the hemispheres, the left, dominant or major hemisphere, has speech and is normally talkative and conversant. The other, the minor hemisphere, however, is mute or dumb. . . .'²⁹

Thus the psychologists opine that there are two modes in which consciousness functions at the conscious level. They affirm that consciousness is regulated by its physiological basis.

The Planes of Consciousness :

As early as the beginning of the present century, William James declared that our normal waking consciousness is but one special type of consciousness; and parted from it there lie potential forms of consciousnesses entirely different in nature. Hereby James gave a hint to the forthcoming psychologists about the altered states of consciousness, which C. T. Tart defines 'as a qualitative alteration in the over-all pattern of mental functioning, such that the experiencer feels his consciousness is radically different from the way it functions ordinarily.'³⁰ According to him, the altered states of consciousness experienced by almost all ordinary people are dreaming states and the hypnogogic and hypnopompic states, the transitional states between sleeping and waking. Some people may experience altered states of consciousness under the influence of alcohol, or powerful intoxicants like marijuana and LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide).

In his *Principles of Psychology*, William James says that one cannot generally attend to a number of things at a time, but by

26. *The Nature of Human Consciousness*, ed. R. E. Ornstein, San Francisco : W. H. Freeman and Company, 1973, (hereafter *Human Consciousness*), p. 64.

27. Quoted in *Human Consciousness*, p. 113.

28. Nigel Calder, *The Mind of Man*, London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1970, p. 243.

29. *Brain*, p. 299.

30. *Human Consciousness*, p. 43.

habit, one may be able to attend to two or three things without much oscillation of attention. This is because attention is the mental faculty which narrows down the field of consciousness to a focus by withdrawing the mind from irrelevant objects in the margin. Consciousness which is normally spread over many things is brought to a focus and is redistributed as it were, by the faculty of attention. Sully, Stout and Angell regard the sphere away from the centre to the margin of consciousness as the *subconscious* level of the mind. They say that the subconscious is neither clearly conscious nor wholly unconscious, but intermediate between the two. This indistinctly conscious state of the mind is called the subconscious state. A distinguishing feature of this state, according to Stout, is that the contents of this state of mind can be brought back to consciousness under suitable circumstances, or by the efforts of the person. The *unconscious* state of the mind is one which is outside the field of consciousness yet within the field of the mind. It is the deepest level of the mind according to the psychologists. In the opinion of Freud, there is a state of mind in between the subconscious and the unconscious states called *preconscious*. The memory and recognition of completely forgotten persons and objects prove the existence of this level of mind. So, the preconscious state is one which is 'neither vaguely conscious nor subconscious nor strictly unconscious, but for all practical purposes unconscious.'³¹

While explaining the different planes of consciousness Swami Vivekananda said in his lecture on 'The Claims of Religion':

I move my hand, and I feel and I know

³¹. P. N. Bhattacharya, *A Text-Book of Psychology*, Calcutta: A. Mukherjee & Co., I, 1965, p. 196.

that I am moving my hand. I call it consciousness. I am conscious that I am moving my hand. But my heart is moving. I am not conscious of that; and yet who is moving the heart? It must be the same being. So we see that this being who moves the hands and speaks, that is to say, acts consciously, also acts unconsciously. We find, therefore, that this being can act upon two planes—one, the plane of consciousness, and the other, the plane below that. The impulses from the plane of unconsciousness are what we call instinct, and when the same impulses come from the plane of consciousness, we call it reason. But there is a still higher plane, *superconsciousness* in man. This is apparently the same as unconsciousness, because it is beyond the plane of consciousness, but is above consciousness and not below it. It is not instinct, it is inspiration.³²

Hereby Swamiji tells us of an additional plane of consciousness, the superconscious, in which mind can function, but which is found only in the great sages and prophets of the world. If an ordinary man wants to attain that, he has to perform spiritual disciplines for that purpose.

Thus, in the waking state one can differentiate the various planes of one's consciousness—unconscious to superconscious—as described above. Besides these, one may have different types of experiences in dream, deep sleep and swoon. In all these states it cannot be said that the individual is devoid of consciousness. The *Paingalopanishad* (1.12) describes the various states of a living being as waking, dream, deep sleep, fainting and death. A person becomes completely devoid of consciousness after death, but when he faints there is some consciousness in the person concerned. But this suspended consciousness of his is entirely in a

³². *Complete Works*, IV, p. 212.

different state than that in deep sleep. For instance: in deep sleep, all the bodily functions are normal—the pulse, heartbeat, respiration and so on. Moreover, the facial expressions of a sleeping person are quite normal, while those of one in swoon might become distorted and fearful. From such physiological differences the states of sleep and swoon can be said to be different.

Some Hindu thinkers believe that 'the waking, dream and deep sleep states are the (three) states of the mind, following from the preponderance of the (three) *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). The Jīva (self), however, is conclusively known to be distinct from them as being their witness.'³³ Generally the Yogīs and the Samkhyas believe these three states to be the modifications of the mind, while the Vedantists are of the opinion that they are the three different states of the Ātman. For instance, it is said in the *Sarvopaniṣad* (1-2) :

When the self, by means of its four [internal organs—mind, intellect, egoism and memory] and ten organs of sense...

and benignly influenced by the sun and the rest which appear outside, perceives gross objects such as sound etc., then it is the Ātman's waking state. When, even in the absence of sound etc., (the self) not divested of desire for them, experiences, by means of the four organs (*antahkaraṇa*—mind, etc), sound and the rest in the form of desires—then it is the Ātman's state of dream. When the four and ten organs cease from activity, and there is the absence of differentiated knowledge, then is the Ātman's state of deep sleep.

When the essence of consciousness which manifests itself as the three states is a witness of the states, (but is) itself devoid of states, positive or negative, and remains in the state of non-separation and oneness, then it is spoken of as the Turiya.

In this way, the *Upaniṣad* clearly indicates that the states of waking, dream and deep sleep are the manifestations of the Ātman, which is nothing but the 'essence of consciousness', and the Witness of these three states (*avasthā-traya-sākṣī*). These three states being the different states of consciousness, they will be discussed in the next instalment of the editorial.

33. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, XI. xiii. 27.

(To be continued)

ACHARYA SHANKARA AND THE CONCEPT OF DAKSHINAMURTI

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

In a brief article in *Bhavan's Journal* of June 19, 1977, on the 'Significance of Refrain in Dakshinamurti Stotram', the author has given his own meaning of the name 'Dakṣiṇāmūrti' in the refrain '*Tasmai śrī gurumūrtaye nama idam śrī dakṣiṇāmūrtaye*'.¹ In support, he has quoted the

nineteenth verse from the *Mūrti (Dakṣiṇāmūrti) Upaniṣad* with his translation :

*Śemuṣī dakṣaṇā proktā
sā yasya abhikṣaṇe mukham ;
Dakṣiṇābhimukhaḥ proktaḥ
śivo'sau brahmavādibhiḥ.*

'Lord Shiva, whose dexterous intellect serves as His face in perceiving (the universe) all around, i.e., the Omniscient

1. Acārya Śankara, 'Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram', 1-9.

Supreme Lord is called Dakṣiṇāmūrti—by savants knowing Brahman, the Supreme Being.²

While the attempt to clarify the meaning of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is appreciable, the arguments advanced in the article rejecting the orthodox interpretation by commentators of Dakṣiṇāmūrti as 'Śiva facing south', saying that such a view of Śiva as a Deity militates against the Advaita of Śaṅkara, are likely to cause misunderstanding in the general mind since the Journal is widely read. As such, we may here have a look into the concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti in the traditional context and see how far that meaning is justified, and whether it militates against Śaṅkara's philosophy.

It is well known to all those who are acquainted with Indian thought that it recognizes generally three ways of interpretation of the same religious texts, as per necessity and where applicable: the *ādhibhautika*, the *ādhidāivika*, and the *ādhyātmika*—i.e. the natural, the mythical and the spiritual. When interpreting naturally, we may take into account the physical, social, historical, evolutionary and scientific aspects, as it is meant to give us intellectual knowledge in the empirical context. When we come to the mythical aspect, the considerations are quite different. There we do not subject it to the natural criteria, but interpret it on the basis of the mythology, for the purpose of these myths is to familiarize our minds with supernatural concepts and lead us on gradually from the gross to a higher subtler stage by providing divine formulations for *upāsanā* (devotional or personalistic meditation); that is, to train our minds for the

next higher stage of abstract spiritual or impersonal meditation on the Absolute Reality or Self. As such, at the *ādhyātmika* stage, we shed the natural and mythical aspects and interpret the same text in a spiritual way.

That is what the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Upaniṣad* does with regard to the concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti by providing the latter two aspects. And it is nothing strange or new; for we find such interpretations throughout our religious literature. And it was not unknown to our religious savants, as the above verse itself shows, for the very concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is that of a Supreme Guru who bestows the highest philosophical knowledge and Truth.

Further, it is not only as intelligence (*śemuṣī*) that the word 'dakṣiṇā' can be interpreted, but also as 'pleasing, amiable, 'benign'. The cognate words 'dakṣa' and 'dakṣiṇā' (from the root 'dakṣ') also mean 'able, expert, dexterous, skilful, competent, strength of will, impartial', etc., and *dākṣiṇya* signifies 'concord, harmony', etc.³ So 'Dakṣiṇāmūrti' can also signify an embodiment of all these qualities (as in Veda-mūrti, Dharma-mūrti, Satya-mūrti, etc.). In fact 'dakṣa' and 'dakṣiṇā' are epithets of Śiva as also of Viṣṇu.⁴ The Lord, under any of His names and forms, being already Omniscient, nothing in particular is gained by saying 'whose dexterous intellect serves as His face', except that it can be used for a type of meditation.

That the word 'dakṣiṇā' is also used in senses other than south, we find in other texts as well. In the Upaniṣads, the Atman is referred to as the Purusa in the 'dakṣiṇa-akṣi' (right eye). *Dakṣiṇā* not only refers to the right side of an entity (cf. *dakṣiṇa-*

2. A better rendering would be: 'The Lord Śiva, whose vision is absorbed (*yasya abhikṣaṇe mukham*) in Supreme Knowledge (*śemuṣī*) designated *dakṣiṇā*, is termed *dakṣiṇābhimukah*, south-facing (that is, Dakṣiṇāmūrti), by the knowers of Brahman.'

3. & 4. See V. S. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Poona; Prasad Prakashan, II and III, 1958 and 1959 respectively.

hasta; *dakṣiṇe Lakṣmaṇo yasya vāmetu janakātmajā*), but also to the right or pure path as in *dakṣiṇācāra* as against *vāmācāra*. So we may say Dakṣiṇāmūrti is the embodiment of the Supreme Guru who leads mankind on the right path of spirituality by His *upadeśa* (teaching). That is why He is shown with *jñānamudrā* (fingers held in the attitude of imparting instruction).

There is also the famous prayer to Śiva: '*Rudra yat te dakṣiṇam mukham tena mām pāhi nityam.*'⁵ Here the devotee prays to Śiva, who is also the destroyer of the universe in His terrible Rudra aspect, to protect him always, looking at him with the 'benign countenance' (*dakṣiṇam mukham*) of His tranquil form. So Dakṣiṇāmūrti being the Guru aspect of Śiva, it is but natural He is depicted with a benign countenance.

The whole of the 'Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra' itself is a high tribute to the supreme wisdom of Dakṣiṇāmūrti who is saluted as the 'Import of Praṇava (*Om*), the unique embodiment of Pure Knowledge, the Ever-Pure and the Deeply-Peaceful' (*Om namaḥ praṇavārthāya śuddhajñānaika-mūrtaye, nirmalāya praśāntāya dakṣiṇāmūrtaye namaḥ*).

Then why has Śiva been called here the 'South-faced One' by the commentators and devotees, inspite of all the other sublime epithets, while being aware of all that the words '*dakṣiṇa*' or 'Dakṣiṇāmūrti' can signify as described above? The evident answer is that it is for personalistic *upāsana* purposes. When Śiva assumed the role of the Dakṣiṇāmūrti as per the Purāṇas can be learnt in detail from those who are well versed in the relevant Purāṇas. Here our objective is to give only a general idea of it based on the Stotra itself and some general knowledge.

Before we go into this aspect, let us

make clear a few points. Firstly, though the article mentioned by us earlier refers to the significance of the 'refrain', it does not deal with the whole refrain, which is very important, but only with the word Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Thus the aspect of Śiva as the Guru-mūrti (guruhood embodied or concretized) in the actual form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is overlooked *as part of the refrain*.

Secondly, simply because a Deity is represented as 'facing south', it does not become sectarian as contended, as it has to face one direction or the other. Further, if Śiva be a secretarian Deity, He cannot be made universal, simply by interpreting a name in a particular way. In fact, Dakṣiṇāmūrti is an aspect of Śiva and He is represented with all the other personal attributes of Śiva in the very Upaniṣad quoted in the article. Four or five *dhyāna-śloka*s (verses for meditation) are given there, with a more or less similar description, of which I quote one :

*Bhasmavyāpāṇḍarāṅgaḥ śaśīśakaladharo
jñānamudrākṣamālā-
Vīṇāpustairvirājat karakamaladharo
yogapatābhirāmaḥ
Vyākhyāpīthe niṣaṇṇo munivaranikaraiḥ
sevyamānaḥ prasannaḥ
Savyālah kṛttivāsāḥ satatamavatu no
dakṣiṇāmūrtirīśaḥ.*

'The Supreme Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti, whose body is white with the smearing of *bhasma* (ashes), on whose crest the crescent moon shines, who is wearing the rosary of *rudrākṣa* beads, whose lotus-hands the Vīṇā and the Scripture are adorning, who is wearing the antelope skin and is decked with serpents, and who is seated (under the banyan-tree) immersed in Himself in the highest state of Yoga on the Expositor's Seat in the *jñāna-mudrā* pose, with a beaming countenance, and who is being attended

5. *Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, IV, 21.

to by a group of venerable sages—may He ever protect us.’⁶

What is more, in that very Upaniṣad it is stated twice ‘*devatā dakṣiṇa-āsyah*’ (the Deity is facing south). The Upaniṣad gives both the mythical and spiritual meditations. Even if the word ‘*dakṣiṇā*’ is interpreted as Intelligence (*śemuṣī*), the Deity remains Śiva; and it is left to the people whether they will accept Him as a sectarian Deity or Universal God—one of the forms in which the same Infinite is symbolized for meditation purposes. Everyone is free to make use of it, or any other form of his choice. For that matter, no form is accepted universally; and even with regard to principles people take a sectarian attitude and accept them only when propounded in their own way and in their own language, and often by persons belonging to their own sect.

Thirdly, Ācārya Śaṅkara did not newly coin the name and conceive the form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti for his Stotra. He accepted the already existing beautiful conception and name, as the guru aspect of Śiva, and dedicated the Stotra to Him, to the Guru-mūrti—the Guru of gurus. This is evident from the adoration verses on Dakṣiṇāmūrti towards the end of the Stotra which are based on the Purāṇic conception of Dakṣiṇāmūrti. The figures of Dakṣiṇāmūrti can be seen in many of the Śiva temples of South India. It was not essential for Śaṅkara to change the concept to suit his Advaita, for the simple reason it did not contradict his Advaita, which is all-comprehensive. If anyone desired, he could easily superimpose the highest spiritual concept on the Deity according to his own understanding and taste.

It is not clear what the author means when he says that it falls short of the

Advaita doctrine if the Supreme Lord is represented as a ‘Deity’, how it becomes sectarian if it is south-facing, and how that sectarianism is cured by interpreting only the word ‘Dakṣiṇāmūrti’ in the way he does. In fact, Advaita recognizes that the same incomprehensible and immutable Infinite Supreme Spirit (Brahman) is manifesting, on the relative plane, in and through every name and form, conceived in myriads of ways, by its power of Māyā (*devātma-śakti*). It is because of the background of this comprehensive Advaitic vision that Ācārya Śaṅkara could compose numerous beautiful and soul-stirring hymns on the different deities—Śiva, Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Devī, Gaṇeśa, Subrahmaṇya, Pāṇḍuraṅga, and others, and even on Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Narmadā, Kāśī, Puṣkara, Maṅikarnikā, and so on. He gave support to all the dualistic forms of religion, the necessity of which he recognized, for they are comprehended by Advaita. That is why he is known as *Sanmata-sthāpanācārya*. In and through these forms he pointed to the all-pervading Advaitic Unity of Reality and discouraged sectarianism.

In this sublime, pithy, and highly philosophical hymn of Ācārya Śaṅkara dedicated to Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the adoration verses commencing from—

*Vaṭaviṭapi samīpe bhūmibhāge niṣaṅgaṁ
sakalamunijanānām jñānadātāramārāt,*

and ending with—

*Ācāryendram karakalitacin-
mudramānandarūpaṁ
Svātmārāmaṁ muditavadanaṁ
dakṣiṇāmūrtimīde⁷—*

6. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Upaniṣad*, 13.

7. ‘I adore the great Teacher of teachers, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, who—sitting under the cluster of banyan trees, with the fingers in *cin-mudrā* (pose of imparting highest Knowledge), of the form of bliss and immersed in Himself, with a pleasing

presents a picture of Dakṣiṇāmūrti which is rather contrary to the description of Him in the said article as 'Lord Śiva whose *dextrous intellect* serves as His face in perceiving (the universe) all around.' It is only human beings who have to use their intellects and gain knowledge by perceiving the universe and not the Omniscient Lord, at whose glance millions of universes roll forth. Here Dakṣiṇāmūrti *teaches through silence* (*mauna-vyākhyā*), deeply immersed in Himself. Therefore, it is evident that if Dakṣiṇāmūrti is characterized as 'facing south', it in no manner comes in the way, as contended in the article, of applying epithets like '*tribhuvana-gurum īsam, or vyomavat-vyāpta-dehāya*', for when the Deity is a manifestation of the Supreme Lord, all epithets become relevant, though for *upāsana* and meditation purposes certain fixed forms are accepted. This is so in the case of all deities, whether Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Kālī, Śiva, Muruga, Gaṇeśa or others, as we can find from religious hymns. As such it is not *absolutely essential*, giving up the traditional idea, to interpret Dakṣiṇāmūrti in this hymn, in the way the article seeks to do, to understand its sublime meaning, though *it is also acceptable* as one of the ways in which the word can be interpreted and understood on the authority of the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Upaniṣad*. That is why the commentators and the devotees have stuck to the interpretation of 'facing south' as per mythology.

According to this mythological understanding, Lord Śiva, the Great Yogīśvara, the embodiment of Knowledge and renunciation (*jñāna* and *vairāgya*), who resides in Kailāsa in the snowy Himalayas, took the

form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, out of compassion, to teach mankind the supreme Self-Knowledge. The Lord assumed the form of a young yogī and was seated in the sylvan surroundings of the Himalayan forest under a wide-spreading banyan tree, immersed deeply in Himself (as depicted above). Several venerable sages of perfect self-control, long-devoted to the knowledge of Brahman and mellowed with age, went in search of Śiva to get their doubts cleared regarding Self-knowledge (*Ātma-jñāna* or *Brahma-jñāna*), which they were to communicate to mankind. In their search, they came to the place where Śiva was seated immersed in Himself in *cin-mudrā* or *jñāna-mudrā*, drawn by the brilliance that He shed around. The venerable old sages sat around the seraphic young Ascetic, waiting for Him to come to the normal plane. But there was no stir to break the calm of that intense peace, except the beatific smile playing on the benign face of the young yogī. Yet lo! even as they sat there expectant, the silent waves of the Spirit of Yogīśvara slowly permeated their minds and bodies, melting away all their doubts and enlightening their minds and exhilarating their hearts. Silence was His teaching, the Silence of the unfathomable depths of the Spirit, 'the Peace that passeth understanding', the *Paramā-Śānti*. That is the great wonder that Ācārya Śaṅkara describes in those wonderfully beautiful verses. The Ācārya exclaims:

*Citraṁ vaṭataror mūle
vṛddhāḥ śiṣyā gurur yuvā ;
Guroḥ tu maunaṁ vyākhyānaṁ
śiṣyās tu chinnaśaṁśayāḥ.—*

countenance, is communicating directly (through silence) to the great sages (gathered round Him as disciples) the Supreme Knowledge (and dispelling their doubts and ignorance).' 'Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram', 11, 15.

'Ah! what a wonderful sight is this under the banyan tree! The disciples are old, and the Teacher is young. And the greater wonder, the Teacher expounds through

Silence and the doubts of the disciples are dispelled!’

How can one exchange this wonderful sight of the Lord, for His abstract *dextrous intellect*! which can easily apply to Ācārya Śaṅkara himself? What the great Teacher taught and what the noble sages communicated to mankind, Ācārya Śaṅkara, as it were a second embodiment of Śiva, in the form of the eloquent Dakṣiṇāmūrti (the Mūrti hailing from the south as compared to the Silent One from the north facing south), has expounded to us in his profound ‘Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram’.

There is nothing strange nor anything to be perplexed at by Śiva being called the ‘One facing south’, in addition to His being the embodiment of the other qualities comprehended by the word ‘*dakṣiṇā*’. He was seated under a banyan tree in the Himalayan forest with the mighty snow-capped Himalayas as the background. Naturally he was facing south, for the disciples seek-

ing knowledge were coming to Him from the country south of the Himalayas. They faced north and He was face to face with them. As such He is depicted as facing south, welcoming all to Him to gain Supreme Knowledge. This is mythology. So far as the highest Advaita is concerned there is neither location in time or space for the Spirit, nor any form or attributes—even of Intelligence. Neither is there anything other than It, nor can anything be without It. Everything is a projection of the Self, appearing as it were outside as in dream (*paśyan ātmani māyayā bahir-ivodbhūtaṁ yathā nidrayā*).

Let us offer our hearts adoration to the great Guru Dakṣiṇāmūrti, who gave to mankind the Supreme Knowledge of the Self through the noble sages, which Ācāryendra Śaṅkara, who is described as the embodiment of Śiva moving in the world among mankind (*saṁbhor mūrtih carati jagatyām śrī śaṅkarācāryarūpā*), is distributing through His Stotra.

LOST JEWELS: THE BAUL SONGS OF BENGAL

NAVANIHARAN MUKHOPADHYAYA

It was once a common happening in Bengal villages that in the morning a Bāul would come into the courtyard of the house, sing a few of their typical songs, exchange a few words enquiring of each other's well-being, and then go away with alms. But the Bāuls are not simply beggar ballad-mongers. They belong to a particular religious sect of Bengal (seventeenth century onwards—now gradually becoming extinct), into which both Hindus and Muslims found their way. They have a definite religious life, their own peculiar

customs, traditional subtle religious practices, and a philosophy of religion in which there are traces of Buddhism, Hinduism and Sufism.

Different currents and cross-currents in the society, together with the economic, social and political undercurrents—interacted to give rise to this sect. So a close examination of their philosophy of religion gives us an insight into such interactions which are otherwise difficult of assessment. They are followers neither of the Vedas nor of the Koran, but their

teachings embrace the essence of the teachings of the scriptures of all sects—not eclectically but spontaneously. They do not believe in any revelation or any particular prophet, nor do they have any one religious book. All their thoughts and philosophy found expression in their innumerable religious songs—known as Bāul songs—composed by some of their respected preceptors. The Bāul songs form a very important class of Bengali folk songs—rich in philosophy, literary value and musical content.

The Bāuls do very little besides their religious practices and begging for livelihood. Invariably a Bāul has a spouse, but that is purely for the attainment of the religious goal and not for procreation, as is the case with the common people. Their religious practices are based on esoteric love, the modes of which are just the reverse of those of carnal love or lust. These intricacies, they assert, are not to be found in the Vedas.

No philosophy in India is worth its name unless it has a practical side for verification in actual human life of the truths propounded, whence comes the necessity of a preceptor or guru to help in practical spiritual progress. In the life of the spiritual aspirant of a sect, which attaches utmost importance to practical experience and less to the philosophical or metaphysical niceties, the place of the preceptor or guru is supreme. The real guru is indeed the supreme Lord, the object of attainment of the Bāul. God (Sāin) Himself, he believes, guides the Sādhaka (aspirant) to taste His *līlā* or divine play, which is valued more by the Bāul than the Lord Himself. The human preceptor outside is nothing but a representative of the real guru inside. He has no hesitation in accepting this human guru also as the Lord; for the Lord, he believes and ex-

periences, resides in this tabernacle.

The small human body-bowl, the Baul claims, holds everything that is in the universe. The human body and the human life are the most precious things that man may possess. For human birth gives man the human body which is the medium through which to have a taste of the esoteric divine love, the highest that may be realized. It is the instrument for *sādhana* or spiritual practice, the only raft that crosses the ocean of life, fraught with dangers of the senses. The existence of gods and goddesses is mere guesswork of man. But the real God, the supreme Being, the Lord, the Man of the Heart, the Dearest, actually lives in this human body. It provides the way to the realization of the self. It is indeed a great fortune to have a human frame. Even gods and goddesses strive to be born as men, for the sweetness of the Lord can be tasted through devotions based on divine love only in the human body.

As the sweetness of love cannot be experienced without duality, the Lord, residing in the human heart, has split himself into two principles—the male and the female—the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti. The Bāul testifies that this divine conjugal love in the union of these two principles of the same Man of the Heart can be experienced in the body of the striving man. The Jīva or the moving human being without experience of the sweetness of the Lord is *ṭala* and the non-dual Lord is non-moving or *aṭala*. Through love alone the *ṭala* can call the *aṭala* from the inner recesses of the heart to the outer parlour of the Lord, where He receives cordially the moving man in the street. The meeting of the *aṭala* and the *ṭala* in the parlour of the heart is what the Bāul calls *suṭala*, the *summum bonum* of human life. As all this happens in the human body, to

the Bāul it is sacred and the thing of highest veneration. And here lies the fulfilment of human life.

Fakir Lalan Shah (1774-1891) was one of the foremost composers of Bāul songs and preceptors of the sect. A Hindu by birth, he was initiated into the sect by a Muslim guru, Siraj by name. Here is a very representative composition by Lalan, eulogizing Man, which is the centre of the philosophy of their religion:

Wilt thou have such a human life again?
Doest quickly here whate'er thou canst,
O my mind!
Sāin, the Lord, created these endless
forms.

Who says: Man has nothing sublime?
All the gods and goddesses
Strive to be born as men.

What a great good fortune, O my mind!
That thou hast this human raft.
Rowest thou hurriedly in a genial
stream,
And seest that it does not sink!

In this Man, will be the worship
of His sweetness:
And so the Dirtless made the form of
Man.
If the chance that's here goes,
There's no reaching the shore—
So ponders Lalan, thy humble servant!

VIVEKANANDA, NIVEDITA, AND TATA'S RESEARCH SCHEME*—I

SANKARI PRASAD BASU

1

Swami Vivekananda was a great modern mind; and it is doubtful whether there

* About five kilometres north of the Bangalore City and Cantonment Railway Stations is situated the Indian Institute of Science. It is essentially a post-graduate Institute imparting knowledge in science and engineering leading to M.E./M.Tech. degrees, besides offering research facilities leading to Ph.D. in these faculties. Some post-graduate diploma courses are also conducted by the Institute. As a matter of fact, many might have heard about this grand educational achievement of the Tatas, many might have even availed themselves of its training and benefited by it; but probably very few are aware of the fact that Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita gave vital support while the seed of the Institute was being sown. Sri Sankari Prasad Basu, Reader, Calcutta University, Calcutta, has, as a result of his tireless research work, brought to light many hitherto unknown facts in connection with the part played by Swami Vivekananda

was any renowned Indian at the time who could outrival his modernity in the sphere of social and political thinking. As regards imperialism and socialism, it can be claimed that his views in these fields were the most progressive in the India of his day. The same can be said about his views on arts and literature, and also on the philosophy of education. In this article we propose to relate an interesting episode occurring at that time which throws a flood of light on his attitude towards scientific and technological education and the industrialization of India.

and Sister Nivedita in this scheme. Although Swami Vivekananda and Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata did not live to see the scheme materialize, Sister Nivedita must have been happy to learn that the Institute had started functioning from July 1911.—*Ed.*

A letter addressed to Swamiji by Jamsetji Tata, the well-known Parsi business magnate, has been printed in the *Life*.¹ The biographers mention nothing about the context of this letter, yet the circumstances which occasioned it were indeed important. For this letter was associated with a subject which threw up great controversy at the time.

Swamiji met Jamsetji on board the S.S. *Empress of India*² when he was sailing from Yokohama for America to attend the Parliament of Religions as an unknown monk without any credentials. From whatever little is known of this meeting, it is clear that Vivekananda was not one requiring credentials from others. When Sister Nivedita met Tata later, he told her 'that when Swami was in Japan everyone who saw him was immediately struck by his likeness to Buddha.'³

Swamiji's discussion with Tata ranged over various subjects. Mr. Mahendra Nath Datta writes :

The well-known Mr. Tata was in the same ship. It is known from Swamiji's letter that he enquired of Mr. Tata why he imported matches

from Japan for sale in India ; for that meant a heavy drain on national wealth, and all that was for nothing more than a small income that Mr. Tata earned by way of commission. Swamiji then pleaded with Mr. Tata with all impetuosity that if, instead, he set up a match factory in India, that would not only give him a handsome profit, but create employment for quite a number of men and prevent the national wealth from going out of the country.⁴

Swamiji's letter mentioned here by Mr. Mahendra Nath Datta has not been included in his *Complete Works* ;⁵ but it was very much in the nature of Swamiji to speak such words. Besides, in his letter addressed to Mr. Alasinga and others on July 10, 1893, Swamiji made a reference to the match factories of Japan. We shall quote certain portions from that letter later on.

2

When this unknown monk, who reminded everyone of the Buddha, suddenly came into the limelight in America, and the Indian newspapers were agog with news about him, he must have attracted the attention of Mr. Tata ; and certainly the latter noticed how this young monk conquered the hearts of the Indian masses after his return to India. Soon after this, in 1898, Jamsetji Tata shook the country by making a sensational announcement which appeared in the *Times of India* on September 28 :

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

MUNIFICENT OFFER BY MR. J. N. TATA

Mr. J. N. Tata the well-known millionaire and merchant of Bombay has, we hear, offered under certain conditions to put at the disposal of a

1. Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, 1965, (hereafter *Life*), pp. 620-21.

2. From a news item published on July 26, 1893, in the *Daily News Advertiser* of Vancouver, it is learnt that S.S. *Empress of India* reached Vancouver on the 25th evening at 7, and the list of saloon passengers includes the names of 'Mr. C. Lullobhoy, Mr. Tata and servant, and Mr. S. Vivekananda.' The voyage from Yokohama to Vancouver generally took eleven and a half days for this ship in normal weather. From Sister Nivedita's letter of October 3, 1901, to Miss MacLeod it appears that Swamiji met Mr. Tata in Japan, perhaps as a co-boarder of the Oriental Hotel Restaurant at Yokohama, before embarking for America.—*Ed.*

3. Letter of Nivedita to Miss MacLeod, October 3, 1901.

4. Mahendra Nath Datta, *Swami Vivekanander Jivaner Ghatanavali* [Bengali], III, Calcutta : Mahendra Publishing Committee, B.S. 1367, p. 3.

5. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, (hereafter *Complete Works*).

properly-constituted body landed property which is calculated to bring an annual income of about Rs. 1,25,000 for the purpose of maintaining an institution for post-graduate studies. Mr. Tata is known to value higher education even as a preparation for industrial and commercial vocations, and he frequently selects a number of graduates to undergo training for about three years to one or other of his mills, the graduates, contrary to the prevalent custom, being paid during the period of their apprenticeship. ... Mr. Tata, however, has felt for some time the need of making an advance in our University education....

He felt that it was no small disappointment that while Japan could produce men whose researches brought them world-wide renown, and while two Japanese gentlemen have been even appointed Professors at Chicago, that the Indian Universities should have no such record to show. The development of the resources of the country, too, Mr. Tata is persuaded, in a large measure must depend on a number of talented youths working at the scientific problems which arise in industrial pursuits. ...

To induce the students of this country to undertake researches on the problems of tropical diseases or tropical chemistry, to investigate the vast and neglected materials of our national history and Indian philology, it is necessary to found laboratories and libraries, where students may work under the direction of great teachers.

It was suggested to Mr. Tata that either a new University, or a development of some one of our existing Universities on the model of the post-graduate Universities of the United States, like the Johns Hopkins or Clarke, would be the first step towards the creation of the spirit of research in India; and after preliminary investigations made in Europe, and advice sought and obtained from the highest educational authorities of England and the Continent, he has decided to make the above-mentioned offer. ...

That this news would create a flutter among the educated Indians can easily be imagined. A donation of thirty lakhs of rupees!—certainly a stupendous sum then for a poor country like India. What is more, it came from a businessman and for no other purpose—not even for buying favour of the foreign rulers—than the advancement of learning!! The timing of

the announcement lent special significance to it, for it came at a time when the stage was being set by the British rulers for launching a policy calculated to restrict higher education in India. It was an act of great courage and generosity on the part of Mr. Tata; for through this seemingly innocuous and noble offer, he threw a challenge to the government.

The British did virtually nothing for the spread of education in India. Whatever little they did, had the sole object of creating an army of clerks, necessary for running the bureaucratic machinery. Naturally, the whole system was totally barren and highly superficial. It was absolutely unrelated to the needs of life and in no way did it help the promotion of the nation's prosperity. (We see from Swamiji's letter of October 30, 1899 to Mary Hale how strongly he felt about it.) The teaching of science, both practical and theoretical, was neglected. When such was the state of affairs Jamsetji came forward with the promise of huge financial assistance for clearing the way to the introduction of a new system of higher education tailored to the needs of the nation. It was all too natural that the whole of India would greet him in a chorus of commendation.

In a few days the *Bengalee* published the Tata-scheme in some detail, adding that the plan along which the proposed university would function was for a Committee to determine after careful investigation of relevant data. The *Bengalee* of October 8, 1898, wrote :

(1) It is proposed to found an Institution which shall be or correspond to the Teaching University for India, its primary aim being to teach, and not to examine. The Diplomas, therefore, will be conferred on those who have completed a certain course of higher education; (2) This work of higher instruction will be conducted on the principles, followed now in Europe, e.g. in the German Seminaria, the French confer-

ences, and the English and American research classes. These courses will be the beginning of a purely specialist training; (3) In order not to interfere with the existing agencies, the new Institution will take up teaching where the Colleges of the Existing Universities leave off:

The new courses will be Post-Graduate: The new specialist Courses which are Post-Graduate will naturally be professional and Technical rather than simply liberal: A School of Sanitary Science and practical for qualified Medical men, a School of Pedagogies for those intending to be Higher Secondary teachers (Inspectors, Head-Masters, etc.), and a School for higher Technical Studies are some of the obvious reductions [?] of development; (4) It is not proposed to take up all these at once. The order in which they may be proceeded with, will be best arranged by a Committee. It is not intended to cut off Post-Graduate students from education in Europe; it is contemplated to select the best for further training in Europe or America with a view to their further return to this country; (5) It will be necessary to make ample provisions for scholarships and fellowships both for the students in the Institution, and for those who proceed from it to Europe and America; (6) The development of a scheme so complex must entail a vast capital and annual expenditure. The construction of libraries, laboratories, and museums—the invitation to specialists to teach and prosecute research, all this must require large sums of money; (7) To secure the necessary financial support by making a general appeal for funds and to take the preliminary steps in connection with the scheme, and obtain a short legislative enactment enabling the Institute to be held properly.

It was indeed a big challenge for the foreign rulers! And they took it just in the manner that was most natural for them. For all these years what they had been keeping away from the Indians, they could not now give up to them. Naturally, the government had no scruples in resorting to all sorts of low cunning to frustrate this nobly conceived plan. Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy, came out in open criticism of the scheme, though not forgetting to maintain the simulated air of sympathy, so usual with his class. In this connection, the *Bengalee* of January 14, 1899, wrote:

Lord Curzon, while fully sympathizing with Mr. Tata's scheme, appears to have certain serious misgivings. His Lordship is not sure whether there will be a sufficient supply of students. Surely it will not do to secure the services of highly-paid professors to lecture a beggarly array of empty benches. Then, His Lordship is doubtful as to whether the students, who may successfully go through the final course, will find ready employment, having regard to the large number of educated Indians who find it impossible to obtain suitable, or indeed any, employment. Mr. Justice Candy who volunteered information on the points desired by Lord Curzon explained that all that was intended in the beginning was to make a fair start and to extend the scope of the proposed institution gradually as funds came in. Dr. Machichan was of opinion that there were many directions in which students of an institution like the one proposed would be able to find a career. The Dewan of Mysore has offered on behalf of the State to contribute a sum of about rupees five lakhs and a half. Inaugurated under such excellent auspices, the scheme bids fair to become ere long an accomplished fact.

In the meantime, Prof. Ramsey, who was commissioned by Mr. Tata to investigate the prospects of the proposed university, submitted his report. This report, was, in fact, an echo of the official voice. It not only stressed the need for greater financial assistance as a condition of success for the scheme but expressed the view that the prospect of employment for the educated Indians in the proposed university was not quite bright. In the same breath, however, the report pointed emphatically to the miserable state of affairs prevailing in the field of scientific teaching in the country.

When a rumour soon spread that, discouraged by official opposition and unofficial apathy, Mr. Tata was, somewhat helplessly, thinking in terms of revoking his proposal, the whole country naturally began to wail over it. 'It goes without saying that the proposed Institute is admirably calculated to hasten the dawn of that industrial revival in India, upon which depends the salvation

of her teeming millions. ... The old industries of India have become things of the past. The New Age demands the creation of new industries, the exploitation of untapped resources and the fullest utilization of the raw materials which lie abundant in the land, waiting only the magic touch of inventive genius.⁶

The same paper wrote on April 6, 1901:

Mr. Tata's Institute is destined, in the times to come, to be the centre of high intellectual culture—the arena where the best and the noblest of our young men, smitten with the divine frenzy of original investigation, will vie with each other in extending the bounds of knowledge and establishing the empire of man over matter. All these great hopes centre round Mr. Tata's Institution. He has been the inspirer of these hopes. He cannot now withdraw. His public-spirit—his care for the welfare of his countrymen—will not permit him to withdraw. Let him begin with the thirty lakhs; God willing, his noble example will stimulate others when the scheme is in working order, and the people, in rearing up this noble temple of science which contains in it the promises of such unspeakable good.

3

The reader must have realized that we are dilating on the Tata-scheme because Swamiji had taken a very keen interest in it. Nay, *interest* is indeed too mild a word for the intensity of desire with which he wanted to see the implementation of the scheme. It represented, as it were, a living hope for the actualization of a cherished dream of his life. Readers may know how terribly upset Vivekananda became by the economic misery of the Indian masses and how the restless Parivrajaka (wandering monk) dashed for America in quest of an economic solution to this problem. The Parliament of Religions offered him an opportunity. We have a lot of evidence of this fact in Swamiji's letters. With painstaking re-

search, Marie Louise Burke has collected from American newspapers quite a number of speeches which Swamiji had delivered previous to the Parliament of Religions—speeches in which Swamiji spoke of this object of his visit in very clear terms. About Swamiji the American newspapers wrote :

The speaker explained his mission in his country to be to organize monks for industrial purposes, that they might give the people the benefit of this industrial education and thus to elevate them and improve their condition.⁷ [*Daily Gazette*, August 29, 1893.]

The poverty of the majority of the masses was strongly dwelt upon. India with an area much smaller than the United States, contains twenty three hundred millions of people, and of these, three hundred millions earn wages, averaging less than fifty cents per month. In some instances the people in whole districts of the country subsist for months and even years wholly upon flowers produced by a certain tree which when boiled are edible.

In other districts the men eat rice only, the women and children must satisfy their hunger with the water in which the rice is cooked. A failure of the rice crop means famine. Half the people live upon one meal a day, the other half know not whence the next meal will come. According to Swami Vive Kyonda [Vivekananda], the need of the people of India is not more religion, or a better one, but as he expresses it, 'practicality', and it is with the hope of interesting the American people in this great need of the suffering, starving millions that he has come to this country.

... He said the missionaries had fine theories there and started in with good ideas, but had done nothing for the industrial condition of the people. He said Americans, instead of sending out missionaries to train them in religion, would better send someone out to give them industrial education.⁸ [*Salem Evening News*, August 29, 1893.]

If immediately after having set foot on the American soil, Swamiji could say these

6. *Bengalee*, March 15, 1901.

7. *Complete Works*, III, 1973, p. 468.

8. *Complete Works*, III, pp. 465-66.

things, it would, perhaps, not be too much to think that when he met the munificent and patriotic Mr. Tata on board ship on his way to America, he must have told him about his various plans, including the one for organizing 'monks for industrial purposes'. Perhaps it was Swamiji's inspiration which was responsible for the germination of the desire that lay in Mr. Tata's mind merely in seed form all these years. The following facts would justify this conclusion.

On November 23, 1898, Mr. Tata wrote a letter to Swamiji recalling the whole gamut of discussion he had with the latter on this subject about five years ago. The letter reads :⁹

Dear Swami Vivekananda,

I trust you remember me as a fellow-traveller on your voyage from Japan to Chicago. I very much recall at this moment your views on the growth of the ascetic spirit in India, and the duty, not of destroying, but of diverting it into useful channels.

I recall these ideas in connection with my scheme of Research Institute of Science for India, of which you have doubtless heard or read. It seems to me that no better use can be made of the ascetic spirit than the establishment of monasteries or residential halls for men dominated by this spirit, where they should live with ordinary decency, and devote their lives to the cultivation of sciences—natural and humanistic. I am of opinion that if such a crusade in favour of an asceticism of this kind were undertaken by a competent leader, it would greatly help asceticism, science, and the good name of our common country; and I know not who would make a more fitting general of such a campaign than Vivekananda. Do you think you would care to apply yourself to this mission of galvanizing into life our ancient traditions in this respect? Perhaps, you had better begin with a fiery pamphlet rousing our people in this matter. I should cheerfully defray all the expenses of publication.

With kind regards, I am, dear Swami,

23rd November, 1898,
Esplanade House, Bombay.

Yours faithfully,
Jamsetji N. Tata.

Tata could perceive very well that money was not enough for the success of his scheme. What was needed was 'Man'; and if the object was to launch a campaign for attracting men of character, Tata could not think of 'a more fitting general of such a campaign' than Swami Vivekananda. It is not known whether Swamiji circulated the pamphlet proposed by Tata; perhaps he did not. But the following observation appeared in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of April 1899, by way of a reply to Mr. Tata's appeal:

MR. TATA'S SCHEME

We are not aware if any project at once so opportune and so far-reaching in its beneficent effects was ever mooted in India, as that of the Post-Graduate Research University of Mr. Tata. The scheme grasps the vital point of weakness in our national well-being with a clearness of vision and tightness of grip, the masterliness of which is only equalled by the munificence of the gift with which it is ushered to the public.

It is needless to go into the details of Mr. Tata's scheme here. Every one of our readers must have read Mr. Padshah's lucid exposition of them. We shall try to simply state here the underlying principle of it.

If India is to live and prosper and if there is to be an Indian nation which will have its place in the ranks of the great nations of the world, the food question must be solved first of all. And in these days of keen competition it can only be solved by letting the light of Modern Science penetrate every pore of the two giant feeders of mankind—Agriculture and Commerce.

The ancient methods of doing things can no longer hold their own against the daily multiplying cunning devices of the modern man. He that will not exercise his brain, to get out the most from Nature, by the least possible expenditure of energy must go to the wall, degenerate and reach extinction. There is no escape.

Mr. Tata's scheme paves the path of placing into the hands of Indians this knowledge of Nature—the preserver and the destroyer, the ideal good servant as well as the ideal bad master,—that by having the knowledge, they might have power over her and be successful in the struggle for existence.

⁹. *Life*, pp. 620-21.

By some the scheme is regarded as chimerical, because of the immense amount of money required for it, to wit about 74 lacs. The best reply to this fear is : If one man—and he not the richest in the land—could find 30 lacs, could not the whole country find the rest? It is ridiculous to think otherwise, when the interest sought to be served is of the paramount importance.

We repeat : No idea more potent for the good of the whole nation has seen the light of day in modern India. Let the whole nation therefore, forgetful of class or sect interests, join in making it a success.

This might have been written either by Swamiji himself or by someone at his behest. Those who have acquaintance with the *Prabuddha Bharata* of that time must have been struck by its strictly restrained style of writing. Yet, it remains a fact that in giving its support to the Tata-scheme, it had, at least for once, thrown away all restraint. Twice in that short comment it was emphasized that '*no idea more potent for good to the whole nation has seen the light of day in modern India.*' This remark clearly revealed Swamiji's attitude towards industry and science.

On two more occasions during the lifetime of Swamiji *Prabuddha Bharata* commented on this scheme. The comment in the March number of 1901 was very significant. It wrote boldly but, to be sure, obliquely, that the best way of preserving the memory of Queen Victoria after her death was through making a princely donation to the Tata-scheme. The editorial comment read :

In the ancient days of India, when a great king or queen died, the state coffers were emptied and the money gathered during the years from the people, was freely distributed to the poor and the needy among them. That was the ideal form of memorial in those days. But with change of time and conditions the custom is reversed. It is the people now who find the money for the memorial.

The Indian ideal, however, of the highest form

of memorial to the great, is bound up with the alleviation of misery. With the spectre of famine stalking over the land we cannot think of a worthier memorial to Victoria, the Great and the Good, than the inauguration of some effective and permanent measure for strengthening the people against the ravages of the scourge. Everybody is agreed that this can be best done, by founding a large and thoroughly well-equipped central institution for the industrial development of the country. We all know very well that the Indian people cannot take the initiative in this matter. In her gracious proclamation of 1858, her Majesty expressed an '*earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India.*' Could there be a better time than the present to do this? We submit, therefore, that no memorial could be more fitting, more in accord with the traditions, needs and wishes of the Indian people, and we doubt not, more acceptable to their late beloved sovereign, than the founding, on a firm financial basis, of an institution such as we have suggested. It would be an exceedingly happy arrangement if the Tata Research University scheme could be combined with this, for the princely gift of the Parsi patriot is fully deserving of the honour of being associated with her Majesty's memorial. Thus the path of a new era of prosperity, a new lease of life and happiness for India could be paved. Would not our farseeing and sympathetic Viceroy seize this supreme opportunity?

In March 1902, *Prabuddha Bharata* published a bit of news¹⁰ regarding the form in

10. 'The Government of India have expressed approval of the proposal that the Institution about to be founded at Bangalore by Mr. J. N. Tata, shall be called the "Indian Institute of Science", instead of the Indian Institute of Research. Government acquiesce in the suggestion that there should be three distinct schools in the Institute : a school of Chemistry, a school of Experimental Physics, and a school of Experimental Biology, in the last named of which Physiological and Bacteriological work will be carried on. The establishment for these schools is to comprise three Professors and three Assistant Professors, while six Instructors are to be subsequently selected from amongst the most successful and capable students. The Government of India suggest, subject to the approval of the Mysore Durbar, that Bangalore should be selected for the site.' *Prabuddha Bharata*, March 1902, pp. 55-56.

which the scheme had been accepted by the government. And when Mr. Tata died about a couple of years after Swamiji's demise, it published an obituary which was, in the main, an echo of Swamiji's feeling about the man.

India has suffered an irreparable loss in the passing away of her truly good and patriotic son, the first great captain of Indian industry, Mr. J. N. Tata of Bombay. We all know of his magnificent gift for a Post-Graduate Research Institute. The making of a prosperous Indian nation depends on the qualities of head and heart like those possessed by Mr. Tata. A few more Tatas would change the face of India. Let our wealthy countrymen imitate the Parsi patriot in the direction and munificence of his charity.¹¹

4

Prabuddha Bharata took the path of open support for the interest Swamiji evinced in the Tata-scheme; his friends and disciples undertook to work behind the scene to secure fulfilment of his desire. Sister Nivedita and Mrs. Ole Bull are names deserving special mention in this connection. Swamiji's friend Miss Josephine MacLeod also became acquainted with Mr. Tata. When, later, she wrote about it to Swamiji, the latter replied 'I am so glad you saw Mr. Tata and find him so strong and good. I will, of course, accept an invitation if I am strong enough to go to Bombay.'

In this project, however, the role of Nivedita was the more important. When she realized that the Tata-scheme was the embodiment of a cherished desire of her Master Swami Vivekananda, she devoted every ounce of her energy for its imple-

mentation. We quote here certain facts from her letters, which will throw some light on her activities in England for making the Tata-scheme a success.

By the middle of 1899, Nivedita came to know Mr. Burjorji Padshah, described as the right-hand man of Jamsetji Tata during his last days. This Padshah and his sister became very much devoted to Swamiji; and Nivedita, too, in some of her letters, referred to Mr. Padshah with admiration. In one such letter addressed to Miss MacLeod on January 30, 1899, she wrote :

So you see Mr. Padshah *did* turn up and made his due impression. Apart from questions of business and importance, he is liked for his own sake, and I hope to have him always for a friend. It appears that he and Mr. Mohini [Mohini Mohan Chatterjee] went to Europe together and that he, on finding out that Theosophy was a fraud, tried to commit suicide. But that is his great fault I think to this day. He cannot see round a corner. He stops at details and will never see the forest for the trees. Yet he is of the stuff of which heroes—but not great men—are made and his sister is a saint.

And again to Miss MacLeod on February 7:

Mr. and Miss Padshah are simply angels. . . . You were angelic to bring us such friends. But the funniest thing happened. They were here last Thursday to tea, sitting at Swami's feet, listening to a discourse on idolatry. He—my Durga picture in hand—was on the highroad to Kali, when in walked two missionaries to thank me for my history lecture and ask for more.

Here it is, perhaps, not too much to infer that Mr. Padshah had discussed the Tata-scheme with Swamiji, and Nivedita must have participated in that discussion.

(To be concluded)

11. *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1904, p. 115.

GOLD IN DOMESTIC RITUAL*

DR. SMT. SINDHU S. DANGE

The common man's desire for gold is well known ; but, it has to be remembered that gold is not restricted only to the 'show off' value. Well, it is right that everybody wants to show that he possesses gold as a mark of social distinction ; and, at critical times it serves as a source of income. But the real use of gold cannot be appreciated without going into the beliefs associated with it in ritual tradition. We take some examples from the Hindu tradition. The word 'domestic' is used here for rituals from the *Gṛhyasūtras* ; and, as we shall presently see, gold has had a very long and hoary tradition, both the strictly Vedic sacrificial and the domestic one.

From birth to death gold has been used in various rituals, not for itself but more as a representative of the sun and immortal life ; also as a proof against evil powers. It has been customary to feed the newborn babe with honey and clarified butter (ghee) in which gold has been rubbed. This mixture was to be given to the child on its tongue to lick. The belief behind this act can be clear from the *mantra* that is said to be recited at this time : 'I give you the wealth (*veda*) of honey and ghee, produced by the bountiful *Gāyatrī* ; protected by the gods, may you live a long life of a hundred years.'¹ At the end of the verse the name of the child was to be inserted. The stirring of the liquid that is to be offered to the newly born babe by a gold-piece is mentioned by another authority,² which states that the liquid should be the

mixture of yoghurt, clarified butter (ghee), honey and water. Prior to it twenty-one spoons of ghee are enjoined to be offered into the sacrificial fire, kindled specifically for this purpose. The *mantra* to be recited at this occasion is : 'Be a stone ; be an axe ; be insuperable gold.' The symbolism is clear. The babe is desired to be firm as the stone, sharp as an axe and shining as the gold. In another text³ these things appear in a slightly different position. The father lays an axe on a stone ; and on the axe a piece of gold is placed. Keeping these things upright, he holds the babe upon them.

Gold was used in one of the rites connected with the rituals of marriage. This was in the context of the lustration of the bride. She was made to sit under the yoke, in such a way that the right hole of the yoke would come above her head. On her head was placed a small circle of twisted *darbha*-grass. Inside the yoke-hole a piece of gold was placed in such a way that water poured through the hole would touch the piece of gold, and then would fall on the head of the bride. Various *mantras* were recited as the water was made to fall on the head, one of them being from the *R̥g-Veda*, indicating that the bride would now be made sun-skinned (*sūrya-tvacam*).⁴ After the lustration she was made to wear a new piece of cloth and was tied (girdled) by the leather-strap used for the yoke (*yoktra*).⁵ This practice is still in vogue in some parts of Andhra Pradesh. The *mantra* at the rite and the piece of gold used is apt to make clear the point that the piece of

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1. *Asvalāyana Gṛhyasūtras*, I. 15. 1.

2. *Mānava Gṛhyasūtras*, I. 17. 1-17.

3. *Hiranyakesi Gṛhyasūtras*, II. 3. 2.

4. *R̥g-Veda*, VIII. 91. 7.

5. *Apastamba Gṛhyasūtras*, II. 4. 8.

gold is the symbol of the sun. The belief that the sun is the receptacle of waters is very old;⁶ and as the waters come here touching the piece of gold, they are sun-waters, and make the bride sun-skinned.

Gold is used in the ritual for propitiating the deity of the place whereupon a new house is built (that is, the *vāstupuruṣa*). In this ritual the householder puts a piece of gold in the water containing rice and barley; he sprinkles this water on the house, going thrice round it in the *pradakṣiṇa* way (that is, by the right side of the house); and while thus taking his round he mutters relevant *mantras* (which comprise the hymn called *Śantātīya*).

In the rite of cremation, gold has a unique place. The dead body is placed on the funeral pyre; and seven pieces of gold are placed on the seven opening of the face, after getting them dipped in ghee or honey. If the gold-pieces are not available, drops of melted butter take the place of the gold-pieces. The idea seems to be to make the body complete with the life-breath prior to being consigned to the flames. As gold is believed to be the metal of the sun and a symbol of immortal life, these pieces stand for life; and, as such, the body goes to the fire (or into the earth) with full life.⁷

Gold is connected with various other rituals, and is not restricted to the ones mentioned above. Various ancient rituals of the Vedic sacrifice employed gold. Thus, for example, in the rite of 'Piling-of-the-altar' (*agnicayana*) where the ancient Vedic sacrificers and priests enacted the construction of the cosmos, and which had various layers, in the lowest layer the figure of a man in gold was placed upon a plate made of gold. In another rite, that of *Rājasūya* ('the ritual-birth of the king') the king was required to tread upon a piece of gold. A

gold-piece was offered upon a gambling-ground. For cleansing the hands, the priests used a piece of gold held over the pit in the sphere of the altar (this pit is called *cātvāla*). Water touching this piece was made to fall on the hands of the priests. This was obviously to save them from contamination, and to give real purity. We have seen how a gold-piece was believed to bestow life to the dead; this was the belief behind placing the seven pieces. Now, while preparing the sacrificial post, a tree was to be cut; and it was believed that the tree-branch would be without life when cut off from the parent tree. But such a lifeless branch could not be used in the sacrifice. Hence, to get it endowed with life, a piece of gold used to be placed at the spot where the cut was given, with the *mantra*: 'O tree, grow with a thousand shoots.' Gold and fire are already identified; and it is well known that fire is called '*hiranya-retas*'; but in the context of the sacrificial ritual we have an interesting detail. According to the tradition, all oblations to the gods are to be offered into the fire called *Āhavanīya*. Now, if the *Āhavanīya* fire gets extinguished due to the oblation, it is said that a piece of gold was to be placed on one of the embers of the first fire; and a second oblation was to be offered upon it. This clearly identifies the fire and the piece of gold.

The long tradition of beliefs associated with gold obviously was instrumental in giving the metal an important place in the domestic rituals. Not only is gold identified with the fire and the sun, but it was also sought to be identified with the essence of *Prajāpati*, the very god who created the world and the cosmos, according to the faith of the Vedic people. It is said that once *Prajāpati*'s vigour went away from him in the form of gold; it went and settled in the sun. When the sun sets, and the

6. *Rg-Veda*, I. 23. 17.

7. *Vaikhānasa Grhyasūtras*, V. 1-6.

Āhavanīya fire is not taken out, a piece of gold is placed there ; because, the piece of gold is the One that shines yonder (the sun). This ritual noted in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁸ identifies the sun and the fire on the one hand ; and, on the other, it identifies the gold and the sun, both being said to be the aspects of the god Prajāpati. Another interesting detail that identifies the sun and the shining metal (gold) is to be had in the ritual of carrying water from the stream or the reservoir. This water is required in the sacrificial ritual ; and it is called Vasatīvārī, sometimes, in which the pressed out shoots of the Soma plant are placed ; it is also called Praṇītā in another context. Now, this water is said to be collected on the previous day prior to sunset. But if the sun has already set and the water is not collected? Then the texts enjoin that a piece of gold be made to touch the water and then it be collected ; for in this way the sun is present.⁹ If gold is not available, then a lighted firebrand may be held over the water.¹⁰ This clearly shows that the sun, the fire and gold are identified.

The touch of gold to the tongue of the newborn babe gives it the shining principle that is characteristic of the sun. The bride that is lustrated by the gold-water imbibes the same essence for the gain of fructified womanhood. But we may note another interesting detail. It is said that one should not study in a forest ; but if one has to study, one must have a fire kindled ; and if that also is not possible, one may manage to keep by his side a piece of gold.¹¹ The same text enjoins that anything that is obtained in times of drought, (that is, in an improper way due to calamity) becomes pure if touched with gold or fire.¹² In such critical times there is no harm in taking food even from a person of a low caste ; but the food should be touched with gold or fire.¹³ And, there is hardly any doubt that even to this day we follow the same ancient belief, noted above, when we touch the left eye (or the right one in the case of a woman) when it throbs, to drive away the evil by the 'light of the sun' in the form of the gold-ring !

8. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (hereafter *Śatapatha*), 12. 4. 4. 6.

9. *Śatapatha*, 3. 9. 6. 9.

10. *Śatapatha*, 3. 9. 6. 9.

11. *Apastamba Dharma Sūtra* (hereafter *Apa. D.S.*), I. 3. 11.

12. *Apa. D. S.*, I. 6. 18. 6.

13. *Apa. D. S.*, I. 6. 18. 15.

Those who surrender their hearts and souls to God, those who are devoted to Him and have taken refuge in Him, do not worry much about money.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA WHOSE HEART BLED FOR THE INDIAN MASSES*

(A Letter)

Srī Srī Rāmakṛṣṇa Saranam

Nathdwara,
Mevad, Rajasthan,
[1895]

Dear Sahji Mahashaya,

Your letter and one pound tea reached here in due time. I am very happy to read the news of Swami Subodhanandaji's reaching the Math.

How are you getting on with your service to Sri Sri Guru Maharaj [Sri Ramakrishna]? Are you getting news from the Math regularly or not? Who amongst your brothers are undergoing their education now? How are you faring in your business? Educate your brothers in right earnest.

Do not waste your time. Idleness is the seed of all evils ; beware of it. In almost all the rich people of India, this seed of evil is growing in plenty. Those who are well-to-do care the least for anybody, and they consider the earth like a bowl. But those fools do not know that whatever happiness they are seeing today in India is just like a show of magic ; actually many do not even get a piece of bread to eat today. What is the duty of the Indians under such precarious circumstances? Firstly, I think, we must try to bring about the uplift of the peasants, because in India the masses are mostly farmers. Out of twenty-five crores (250 million) Indians, eighty-three per cent are cultivators. Now think, how many peasants there will be amongst twenty-five crores? And these people are the givers of food and clothing to everybody. But there is such a paradox in India today that these people alone are seen naked and are dying of hunger.

Alexander the Great was astonished to see the condition of the Indian peasants. In those days the political situation in India was such that even during the days of national calamity the masses were always free from danger and care. Today it is the masses who are facing various types of difficulties. Two classes of men are responsible for this sin—the landlords and the money-lenders. These two big demons are attacking the masses from two sides, but

* This feelingful letter was written by Swami Akhandananda, a brother-disciple of Swami Vivekananda, to Lala Badri Sah, a landlord and businessman of Almora, U.P., who very devoutly served Swamiji and his brother-disciples at Almora in various ways during the days of their itineracy and even later. The letter reveals how the Swami's heart bled for the Indian masses. The original letter, which is written in Hindi, became available to us through Mrs. Boshi Sen of Almora. She also supplied us at her expense the photograph of Lala Badri Sah, reproduced in this number. We are thankful to her for her kindness. Swami Achyutananda, who was then at Almora, took great pains for getting this photograph copied from the original.

those desireless, pure-hearted peasants are not leaving their duty. Oh ! Blessed is their selflessness ! Blessed is their patience ! And blessed is their labour ! Just imagine, what will be the condition of the city-dwellers and the landlords if these farmers become enraged and leave their ploughs and work ? Whence will the soft mattress come then ? Whence will this tasty food come then ? Whence will these silk wrappers come then ? All this wealth is the fruit of their labour alone. But the tyrant landlords and the city-dwellers are depriving them of the fruit of their labour. Still it is not possible for the germ of revenge to enter into the pure hearts of these docile farmers. Hope you have no doubt that these peasants and labourers are the real foundation of the society, and that they form the nervous network of the body of the society. Without them, the society cannot exist even for a moment. Therefore, it is my request to you that you lend money to the hill farmers at the least interest possible ; and after giving one of your brothers education in modern agriculture, let him train the farmers there with modern agricultural methods. Indian peasants are so ignorant of agricultural knowledge that they do not know the proper methods. Now please think, if the foundation itself is so weak, how can the building be strong ? It is never possible. Therefore I tell you that you should not leave your duty of life (*svadharma*). Bhagavan Krishna says in the *Gita*, 'Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the Vaishyas.' Amongst these, agriculture and cattle-rearing are more important, because without proper growth of the cows there can never be proper development of agriculture, and without the development of agriculture there can never be proper flourishing of trade. Therefore, get one 'Agricultural Gazette' ; and after studying it, apply the methods given therein to make the land of those regions more fertile. Thereby, you will get more yield ; and if the Indian peasants are taught such methods it will be a great gain to the country.

At the behest of Swami Vivekananda, I am trying to spread education amongst the masses of this region, but here there are no patriots who would help me in my work. Since about a month back a Bengali gentleman, who has come from Bombay and is a devotee of my Master, is here, and is helping me in teaching some children. But he alone is not enough for this work. Do you know any good soul who will be able to sacrifice his life for spreading secular and ethical education from village to village and city to city ? What more should I say ; accept my blessings and please convey the same to others as well.

Yours,
AKHANDANANDA.

RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA, JNANIN OR BHAKTA? PATTERNS IN RECONCILIATION

ARVIND SHARMA

1

There are scholars who are inclined to regard Ramakrishna primarily as a *jñānin*;¹ on the other hand, there are several other scholars who are inclined to regard him primarily as a *bhakta*.² No sensitive scholar

1. See : Harold W. French, *The Swan's Wide Waters*, London : Kennikat Press, 1974, pp. 30-31; T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism*, Bombay : Chetana Ltd., 1956, p. 222; *The Cultural Heritage of India*, ed. Haridas Bhattacharyya, Calcutta : Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1956, p. 674; V. S. Narvane, *Modern Indian Thought*, New York : Asia Publishing House, 1964, chap. III; P. T. Raju, *The Philosophical Traditions of India*, Pittsburg : University of Pittsburg Press, 1971, p. 230; Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952, (hereafter *Great Master*), p. 704; *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*, ed. R. C. Zaehner, Boston : Beacon Press, 1959, p. 257; and perhaps also Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Indian Tradition* Vol. II, New York : Columbia University Press, 1958, p. 85. The portrayal of Ramakrishna as an Advaitin may also in part be due to the influence of his famous disciple Swami Vivekananda. See : Amaury de Riencourt, *The Soul of India*, London : Jonathan Cape, 1961, (hereafter *Soul of India*), p. 243; K. M. Sen, *Hinduism*, Baltimore : Penguin Books, 1973, (hereafter *Sen, Hinduism*), p. 110.

2. See : F. Max Muller, *Ramakrishna : His Life and Sayings*, Bombay : Longmans, Green & Co., 1893, p. 94; R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, London : Oxford University Press, 1966, (hereafter *Zaehner, Hinduism*), p. 165; Thomas J. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, Belmont, California : Dickinson Publishing Co., 1971, p. 137; S. C. F. Brandon, *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, New York : Charles Scribners Sons, 1970, p. 529; Arthur Osborne, *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*, London : Rider & Co., 1959, p. 52; Agehananda Bharati, *The Ochre Robe*, London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1961, p. 220.

can ignore the fact, however, that if Ramakrishna is regarded only as a *jñānin*, a considerable body of evidence which attests to the contrary has to be satisfactorily explained. Similarly no conscientious scholar who investigates the life of Ramakrishna regarding him as a *bhakta*, can ignore the fact that a considerable body of evidence points in the direction of his being a *jñānin*.³

This paper is an attempt to see what patterns of reconciliation have been employed by hagiographers, biographers and scholars to accommodate the divergent pieces of evidence.

2

Two disciples of Ramakrishna seem to regard him primarily as a *jñānin* : Swami Vivekananda and Swami Saradananda. They seem to explain the apparent emphasis on *bhakti* in the teachings of Ramakrishna in terms of his *upāyakaūśalya* (expediency of means). Thus Swami Vivekananda explicitly states :

Devotion as taught by Nārada he used to preach to the masses, those who were incapable of any higher training. He used generally to teach dualism. As a rule, he never taught Advaitism. But

3. See : *Great Master*, passim; 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1964; Romain Rolland, *The Life of Ramakrishna*, trans. E. F. Malcolm-Smith, Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1960; Christopher Isherwood, *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, London : Methuen & Co., 1965; Claude Alan Stark, *God of All*, Cape Cod, Mass. : Claude Starke, Inc., 1974, (hereafter *God of All*).

he taught it to me. I had been a dualist before.⁴

Thus Ramakrishna's teaching, on this view, varied according to the person involved, as he 'used to see that different people required different treatment.'⁵ Thus the answer to the question whether Ramakrishna was a *jñānin* or a *bhakta* depends not only on whom we are talking to; it might also depend on whom Ramakrishna was talking to! Vivekananda clearly speaks also of an 'inner circle'⁶ of Ramakrishna with whom he *may* have shared insights different from those he shared with others.

Similarly Swami Saradananda remarks :

Although he was of the opinion that Advaita knowledge was the ultimate truth, he always taught the general public with its hankering for worldly objects, the truth of qualified monism, and not unoften, the love of God after the manner of a dualist.⁷

Thus one pattern of reconciling the two strands in Ramakrishna's teaching—of *jñāna* and *bhakti*—can now be identified. *Jñāna* constituted the esoteric message, *bhakti* the exoteric one.

3

R. C. Zaehner is one of those scholars who regards Ramakrishna as a *bhakta* and not a *jñānin*. While those who regarded

4. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama (hereafter *Complete Works*), VII, 1972, p. 414.

5. *Complete Works*, VII, p. 414. Compare : 'As a mother, in nursing her sick children, gives rice and curry to one, and sago arrowroot to another, and bread and butter to a third, so the Lord has laid out different paths for different men suitable to their natures.' (Quoted in Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man*, New York : Harper & Row, 1958, p. 87.

6. *Complete Works*, VII, pp. 413-14.

7. *Great Master*, p. 704.

Ramakrishna as a *jñānin* explained Ramakrishna's talk of *bhakti* in terms of the temperament of his disciples, R. C. Zaehner, who regards him as a *bhakta*, explains this position in terms of Ramakrishna's *own* temperament. Thus he writes :

Ramakrishna was by nature a *bhākta* [sic], not a *jñānin*, a worshipper of God rather than an introspective seeking the One within himself. Despite his Advaitin teacher, however, his trances did not reveal a static Monad, One without a second, they showed rather that 'God has become all things.' Intellectually he may deny this on occasion but Ramakrishna set no store by the intellect.⁸

Thus this second pattern of reconciliation of the two strands in Ramakrishna's teaching—of *jñāna* and *bhakti*—reconciles them by regarding the former as representing an external influence and the latter a personal preference.

4

Another pattern of reconciliation adopted by some scholars is not pedagogical as in the first case, nor personal as in the second, but rather historical. It is pointed out that while Ramakrishna was really a *bhakta*, he was made out into a *jñānin* by his disciples.⁹ Thus R. C. Zaehner says that though Ramakrishna was a *bhakta*, 'his followers, however, developed philosophic-

8. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, p. 165. The last statement is true but can cut both ways. Swami Saradananda tells us that 'he used to be greatly annoyed at persons who, having no high spiritual experience, not even love of God, would, nevertheless bandy arguments in favour of non-dualism or qualified non-dualism.' (*Great Master*, p. 704).

9. One must contend here with Vivekananda's remarks about Ramakrishna : 'Outwardly he was all *bhakta*, but inwardly all *jñānin* . . . I am the exact opposite.' (Quoted in *Soul of India*, p. 243).

ally in a purely monistic direction.¹⁰ K. M. Sen, too, thinks that while Ramakrishna 'preached pure *bhakti* without theological complications,' his disciple, Swami Vivekananda 'spread this Vedantic doctrine of *advaita* (non-dualism) in India and abroad.'¹¹ Unlike some views which recognize both *bhakti*- and *jñāna*-oriented elements in the experiences of Ramakrishna himself, on this view the *jñāna* element is seen as more or less a posthumous graft on Ramakrishna. There is, however, enough biographical evidence to show that Ramakrishna himself had the experience of *jñāna*, and hence this view is hard to support, though it may contain this element of truth, that the followers of Ramakrishna may have chosen to emphasize the *jñāna* element of his experience.

5

One further pattern can be traced, through which attempts are made to reconcile these two aspects—*jñāna* and *bhakti*—of Ramakrishna's life and teachings. On this view the key lies not in the nature of his following, or in his own nature or that of his followers, but in his voracious appetite for spiritual experience. The explanation of the co-existence of the elements of *jñāna* and *bhakti* in him is neither peda-

gogical, nor temperamental or apostolic, but simply spiritual. This spiritual versatility was such that in a twelve year period he meditated like a yogi, worshipped like a *bhakta*, practised Jainism [sic], Buddhism [sic] and Shaktism, and experienced the reality both of Brahman without attributes (the impersonal Brahman) and Brahman with attributes (i.e. the personal God). Dressed like a Moslem, he prayed until he knew God as Allah. He turned to Christianity and found God in Christ.¹²

6

To conclude : Writers on Ramakrishna have tried to reconcile the presence of the elements of both *jñāna* and *bhakti* in his experience and teachings in terms of his pedagogy, his personality, his disciples and his multi-faceted spirituality. On the whole, while all of the points seem to possess some force, the most cogent explanation of the simultaneous presence of elements of *jñāna* and *bhakti* seems to lie in his spiritual versatility.

12. The case for Ramakrishna having practised Jainism does not seem to be as strong as John B. Noss seems to suggest in his book (*Man's Religions*, New York : Macmillan Co., 1956, pp. 300-01). See *Great Master*, p. 297. For a detailed account of Ramakrishna's spiritual versatility, see *God of All*, passim.

10. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, p. 165.

11. Sen, *Hinduism*, p. 110.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA* —XIII

To Sister Christine

65

The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,
14th June 1902.

My dear Christine,

Your letters had to wait a few days as I was out of town in a village.³⁶ Well, many thanks for all the information I got. Mr. Okakura has been to the Math, but I was away. He will be in Calcutta a few weeks more and then goes to Bombay. He intends taking a house near the city to learn intimately the customs of Bengalis. I am so glad to learn Margo's [Nivedita's] intention to stop at Mayavati longer. She really requires good rest, and she had none in Europe; I am sure of that. If she were amenable to my advice as of old, I would take away every book and every scrap of paper from her, make her walk some, eat a lot and sleep a lot more. As to talking, I would have the merriest conversation all the while.

I have a beautiful letter from Mrs. Sevier, and so happy to learn that she loves you more and more. But plumpness is the criterion, *mon amie* [my dear], for a' that [all that].

So there was a great flutter in our dove-cote owing to my letters, but things must have assumed their old form by this time. The boy, my nephew, is going to be sometime yet in the Ashrama; make him talk English with good accent, do. No foreign language can be learnt properly unless you talk it from childhood.

Mr. Bose³⁷ is still there, I hope; and you must have liked him immensely. He is a *man*, a brick. Tender him my best regards, will you?

Have you any water in the lakes now? Do you get the snows clear? It has been raining all through this summer here—We had very few burning days, only a number of stuffy ones. Our rains also have nearly set in—in a week the deluge will commence in earnest.

As for me, I am much stronger than before; and when seven miles of jolting in a bullock-cart and railway travel of thirty-four miles did not bring back the dropsy on the feet, I am sure they are not going to return.

But anyway, it is the Math that suits me best just now.

With all love,
VIVEKANANDA.

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

³⁶. From Swami Brahmananda's diary it is learnt that Swamiji left for Boro Jagulia on June 6. Firstly, he travelled by train from Sealdah to Kanchrapara, a distance of about thirty-four miles, and from there he went to Boro Jagulia village, a distance of about seven miles, by bullock-cart. From the information collected by us it is learnt that Swamiji went there at the request of his disciple Srimati Mrinalini Basu, and stayed at her house. Her descendants have preserved the room where Swamiji stayed. We recently learnt from Swami Jitatmananda that Swamiji's sister stayed in that village.

³⁷. Mr. A. M. Bose, President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, had come to Mayavati on May 23.

66

The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,
15th June 1902.

Dear Christine,

Just now received your note. I am quite easy in my mind so long you live with Mrs. Sevier at Mayavati. You know, anxiety is one thing I must avoid, to recover. I will be very anxious if you are in Calcutta at Baghbazar. I am slowly recovering. Stay with Mrs. Sevier as long as you can. Don't come down with Margot.

With love,
VIVEKANANDA.

67³⁸

The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,
21st June 1902.

My dear Christine,

You have not the least cause to be anxious—I am getting on anyhow and am quite strong. As to diet, I find I have to restrict myself, and not follow the prescription of my doctor to eat anything I like. The pills continue, however. Will you ask the boys if they can get 'Amalaki' [*Emblic myrobalan*] fruits in the place now? We cannot get them in the plains now. They are rather sour and puckery eaten raw; but make marmalade of whole—delicious. Then they are the best things for fermentation I ever get.

No anxiety on the score of Marie Lousie's³⁹ arrival in Calcutta. She has not yet made any noise.

Things go on the same. I am trying to go to Monghyr—a place near to Calcutta and said to be very salubrious.

We will think of your coming to Baghbazar after Nivedita has fairly started;⁴⁰ till then keep quiet and lay on food.

With all love to yourself, the boys and Mother.

VIVEKANANDA.

PS—I am laying on adipose tissues fast, especially about the abdominal regions: 'It is fearful to see'!

38. This is the last known letter of Swamiji's written to Sister Christine. It is well known that he passed away thirteen days later.

39. Swamiji's sannyasin disciple. She was French by birth, and had settled in America. At first she was a spokesman for ultra-radical groups and later on became Swamiji's disciple. She was given sannyasa in July 1895 at the Thousand Island Park, N.Y., U.S.A., by Swamiji, and named Swami Abhayananda. After coming to India in 1899, she openly turned hostile to Swamiji and joined the Vaishnava movement of Bengal.

40. Sister Nivedita was preparing to start a school for Bengali girls at Baghbazar, Calcutta, and Sister Christine was expected to join her sooner or later.

ATMAN ALONE ABIDES

(A Review Article)

[Conversations with Swami Atulananda, recorded by Swami Dhireshananda, edited by Swami Vidyatmananda and published by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, 11 Ramakrishna Math Road, Madras-600 004, in 1978 ; pages : viii+228 ; price : ordinary Rs. 10/-, deluxe Rs. 20/-.—Ed.]

This welcome addition to Ramakrishna-Vedanta literature concerns one of the first Westerners who became a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order.

Swami Atulananda (Gurudas Maharaj) was privileged to have come in contact with Swami Vivekananda and the brother-disciples Swamiji sent to America, and subsequently he met all but two of Sri Ramakrishna's other monastic disciples. His reminiscences of his close association with several of them, and of their teachings, are a frequent topic of the conversations in this book.

Also, Gurudas Maharaj's many references to his younger days in New York and California are of special interest, because his recollections provide information concerning an early period of the Vedanta movement in America about which relatively little is known.

Moreover, Gurudas Maharaj was a man of considerable spiritual attainment, and his observations on a variety of religious subjects, recorded in these conversations, are based on a lifetime of Sadhana. He was fond of discussing the non-dualistic aspect of Vedanta, and one of his favourite sayings, 'Atman alone abides,' provides the title of this book.

Many who knew Gurudas Maharaj have made appreciative mention of his wry humour, which he often focused on himself. He had an injured back, and for more than fifty years he wore a steel and leather brace.

He used to joke about this, wondering aloud whether the brace would outlast his body, or his body the brace. With similar detachment he endured a painful cancer on his forehead during the last ten years of his life. He would take his mind off his physical problems by reading the *Ashtavakra Samhita*, a well-known text on Advaita. In his conversations he speaks of these 'Ashtavakra injections' which he used to administer to himself.

Gurudas Maharaj was born Cornelius Heijblom, in Amsterdam, Holland, in 1870. In his twenties he emigrated to America, where he took up an active life of farming. When he was still a young man, he fell from a horse and injured his spine, and this forced him to turn to sedentary work in the city. During this period he met Swami Abhedananda, whose lectures he attended at the Vedanta Society of New York, and from whom he received the vows of Brahmacharya and the name of Gurudas in 1899. In the same year he briefly met Swami Vivekananda, whom he regarded as 'a lion amongst men'. Soon thereafter he joined the group of devotees who were receiving intensive spiritual training from Swami Turiyananda at the Shanti Ashrama, a retreat in a remote valley in Northern California.

In 1906, Gurudas Maharaj came to India for the first time, but he was unable to make the physical adjustment and at the end of two years was forced to return to the United

States. He went to India for the second time in 1911, and during this visit he received initiation (*mantra diksha*) from Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother. Again he became ill and returned to America. Finally, in 1922, Gurudas Maharaj came to India once more, received the vows of Sannyasa in 1923, and remained in India until his death at the age of ninety-six.

The conversations with Gurudas Maharaj were recorded by a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, Swami Dhireshananda, at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama in Kankhal, between the years 1958 and 1966. Swami Vidyatmananda of the Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna at Gretz, France, has edited the conversations and has written a brief biographical introduction. He met Gurudas Maharaj in India and talked with him on more than one occasion. Both the editor and the publisher have provided helpful notes.

Gurudas Maharaj's style of conversation is engagingly informal; and his subjects are varied. They include, for instance, Swami Brahmananda's instructions 'on service' to an attendant of Swami Turiyananda; a description of Gurudas Maharaj's pilgrimage to the Himalayan shrine of Amarnath in the company of Swami Premananda and Swami Shivananda; a frank discussion of his early struggle to overcome anger; and candid comments about books he has read.

Perhaps the greatest service that the publication of these conversations provides is the preservation of Gurudas Maharaj's memories of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna with whom he had associated. Gurudas Maharaj recalls, for instance, that Swami Abhedananda once consoled him when he felt discouraged by saying: 'The mind acts in a spiral way. Even the downward course presupposes an upward motion. Never mind.' On another occasion Gurudas

Maharaj remembers a day at Shanti Ashrama when Swami Turiyananda was helping to chop wood for fuel. A bit of wood flew up and cut the Swami's face. Gurudas Maharaj told him: 'Swamiji, we will do all physical work; you only do the teaching.' 'No,' the Swami replied, 'Thakur's children must know how to do every type of work.' And then there is Gurudas Maharaj's recollection of Swami Vivekananda's statement: 'A particle of Truth can burn a mountain of ignorance.' Such teachings of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna will be treasured by devotees for many years to come.

At times, a Western reader may find himself in strong disagreement with Gurudas Maharaj's occasional disparaging remarks regarding the appropriateness for the West of Hindu rituals and ceremonies, some aspects of the doctrine of Avatara, and Indian methods of training disciples.

Since the days when Gurudas Maharaj was first exposed to Eastern thought, the Vedanta movement has become firmly established in the United States of America and Europe, and Hindu ritual has become an integral part of the daily routine at Western Vedanta centres. Most spiritual aspirants in the West today find that a devotional attitude toward the Ishtam and the practice of devotional disciplines do not conflict with the acceptance of the principles of Vedanta philosophy. In fact, such an approach is supported by the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and many of his disciples.

However, at the turn of the last century, the Swamis who came to preach in America felt that the non-dualistic aspect of Vedanta should be emphasized for Westerners at that particular time. And Gurudas Maharaj himself was temperamentally well suited to a stricter Jnana approach.

As already mentioned, the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta was Gurudas Maharaj's

support for many years of his long life. Only six months before his death he reaffirmed its sustaining truth in the following words: 'The ulcer near my eye is extending, and I may be blind in both eyes. But that is all a matter relating to the body, which changes. But I, the Atman, never change. I am always the same. What I was in the past, so am I at the present, and I will be the same in the future, no matter

whether this body came from this country or another.'

As Gurudas Maharaj came from outside the religious tradition to which he adapted so well, his memories and comments add uniquely to the information available to the Vedanta student and devotee.

PRAVRAJKA ANANDAPRANA
Sarada Convent, Hollywood, U.S.A.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Brain, Consciousness and Superconscious Experience—II (Editorial): In the first instalment of this editorial, a rough outline of the nervous system and its mechanism was given, and it was shown how it is the basis of conscious experience. In this instalment the concepts regarding consciousness according to some Eastern and Western schools have been discussed. Although the thinkers of the East and the West interpret consciousness in their own way, a synthetic study of their views would surely prove beneficial. Swami Vivekananda was the first who made such an attempt, and some of his observations have been discussed in this part of the editorial.

Ācārya Śaṅkara and the Concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti: In this learned article Swami Mukhyananda, Acharya, Probationers' Training Centre, Belur Math, W.B., very lucidly puts before the readers his views on the subject, in the light of his vast fund of scriptural knowledge. When the author read the article 'Significance of Refrain in Dakshinamurti Stotram' by Sri G. G. Purandare in the *Bhavan's Journal* of June 19, 1977, pp. 16-18, he felt that it is 'likely to cause misunderstanding in the general mind.' Therefore, on the last Guru-

Purnima Day (1 July 1977), he took his pen in hand to write this article not only to clarify the misunderstanding but to throw a little more light on the subject. He emphatically points out that Śaṅkara's concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is in no way contradictory to his Advaita philosophy.

Lost Jewels—the Bāul Songs of Bengal: The Bāuls of Bengal are neither the followers of the Vedas nor of the Koran; but their teachings comprise the teachings of various Hindu and Muslim sects. Their philosophy is expressed through their songs which form part of the Bengali folk songs. There was a time when the Bāuls would go from door to door in the villages of Bengal and sing their deeply inspiring songs and thereby bring about spiritual awakening in the masses. Looking to their philosophical, literary and musical value, the author of this short article Sri Navaniharan Mukhopadhyaya, the Secretary, Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal, Calcutta, calls them jewels. These days, the Bāuls are seldom seen in Bengal, and rarely are their songs heard. Thus have these jewels been lost to the common man of Bengal.

Vivekananda, Nivedita, and Tata's Research Scheme—I: Mr. Jamsetji N,

Tata was a well-known industrialist of India who took deep interest in the industrial and educational development of the country, which was then under the British rule. He visited the United States in the year 1893, and was a co-passenger of Swami Vivekananda on board ship on his way from Yokohama to Vancouver. Swamiji must have talked with him about the industrial and educational development of India *en route*; and later, on November 23, 1898, he wrote a letter to Swamiji about his scheme. Sister Nivedita, Swamiji's English disciple, who worked for the cause of India, also took interest in Tata's scheme and played some role in giving a shape to it. Sri Sankarj Prasad Basu, a renowned research worker on Swamiji, writer of many Bengali books, and a Reader in the Calcutta University, has beautifully narrated the role of Swamiji and Nivedita in actualizing the scheme. He obviously has taken immense pains to write this learned article.

Gold in Domestic Ritual: The value of gold in the field of economics is well known; but for the Hindus gold is of great value in their domestic rituals as well. In this short and learned research paper, Dr. Smt. Sindhu S. Dange, lecturer in Sanskrit,

Elphinstone College, Bombay, has well narrated how gold is or was being used in the Hindu rituals performed on various occasions from cradle to grave. Dr. Sindhu Dange is a Springer Research Scholar, and this paper is being published in this number, under the tenure of the same Scholarship.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Jñānin or Bhakta?—Patterns in Reconciliation: The biographers of Sri Ramakrishna have painted his personality according to their own understanding. Some say he was a *jñānin*, while others call him a *bhakta*. In this short but learned write-up Sri Aravind Sharma, a professor, Department of Studies in Religion, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Australia, has tried to reconcile the various views. Regarding Sri Ramakrishna, the author is of the opinion: 'While all of the points seem to possess some force, the most cogent explanation of the simultaneous presence of elements of *jñāna* and *bhakti* seems to lie in his spiritual versatility.'

Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda—XIII: We are publishing in this issue Swami Vivekananda's letters to Sister Christine from 14 June 1902 to 21 June 1902.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SRI RAMA TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA:
BY K. G. WARTY, Publishers: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 11 Ramakrishna Math Road, Madras-600 004, 1977, pp. 8 + 208, Rs. 7/-.

It is one deep-based and endless tradition that all the Avatars and Godmen of India have followed, vivified and repeatedly established with the necessary enlargements that are demanded by the Time-Spirit: the foundation of the values of the Divinity and the constant elevation of man to statuses nearer God. The learned author of this wide-ranging book begins with Sri Rama, whose stamp on the memory of the Indian race is indelible. He has become another name for

Truth, Obedience and Renunciation. Dr. Warty recalls the observation of Swami Vivekananda how the *Ramayana* holds up the ideals of nobility and service for the rest of the world.

Next comes Sri Krishna. The author discusses the question of the historicity of this Incarnation of the Lord and other allied topics. He rightly holds that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is an integral part of the *Mahabharata*, and the fact that many of his contemporaries treated him as human does not make Sri Krishna a mere chieftain. The work of every Avatar takes time to be assimilated in the consciousness of the people among whom he lived, and the deification of Krishna in later ages is part of this process. Discussing the

life and legends of Bhagavan, the writer examines the truth of the symbol of *rasalila*, the significance of the hues and apparels of Radha and Krishna, and raises the whole episode to sublime heights of spirituality. He takes pains to bring out the integral character of the teaching of the *Gita* combining the elements of Jnana, Karma and Bhakti in the path of surrender to the Purushottama.

The chapters on Buddha and the Christ are models of studies in this field; history, legend, hagiography, philosophy—all these are examined in depth, as far as possible in this brief range, and both the founders are brought nearer to the mind of modern man, even made dearer to his heart.

The chapter on Mohammad, the messenger of God, disabuses the reader's mind of many common notions regarding the exclusivism of the Prophet. The historical background of the religion of Islam, its essential message, and the service done by Mohammed to the tribes in the Middle East in that period, are brought out with force. He ascribes many of the horrors inflicted on non-Muslims ('infidels') to the over-enthusiasm and fanaticism of the followers of the Prophet.

Accounts of Kabir and Nanak underline their efforts to bring about harmony between different religions, notably Islam and Hinduism.

The last chapter is on Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa whose contribution is quite unique. He demonstrated in his life not only the unity of all religions but also of the various Yoga Sadhanas. He brought God to the door of the common man, the illiterate man and the humble housewife. He exploded many of the common notions of morality and punditism and forged a link between God and man in a manner that has not been surpassed in the history of our land.

A most satisfying book written with a broad perspective. A book that builds character.

M. P. PANDIT

Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry

DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN: By A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR, Publishers: Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai-606 603, 1977 (second reprint), pp. iv + 318, Price: Rs. 12.50.

The life of a great saint is always an open book for a spiritual aspirant. But everyone is not so fortunate as to be in the company of a living saint. The author Sri A. Devaraja

Mudaliar, had the good fortune to be with Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and he has advantageously used this opportunity for the benefit of other devotees. In the present volume, he has captured the fleeting events at the Ramanashramam which reveal an almost divine personality of the Maharshi. The events cover a period of about two years—from March 16, 1945 to January 4, 1947. These events have been narrated most authentically in the form of the devotee's diary.

The inquisitive devotees used to put various questions to the Maharshi. These dialogues have been recorded verbatim, leaving little scope for misinterpretation. At times the Maharshi narrated remote events of his early life. These throw light on the formation of his divine personality. Many distinguished visitors with a real hunger for knowledge had been to the Ashrama during the said period. The Maharshi often blessed them, setting at rest their vexatious doubts and removing impediments in their spiritual progress. He insisted that the spiritual aspirants should delve deep into their own beings and trace the Self within themselves. On one occasion, on being asked 'What is the easiest way to attain one-pointedness of the mind?' he answered, 'The best way is to see the source of the mind. See if there is such a thing as mind. It is only if there is a mind that the question of making it one-pointed will arise. When you investigate by turning inwards, you find that there is no such thing as mind' (p. 69). On another occasion he said, 'The self cannot be found in books. You have to find it out for yourself, in yourself' (p. 1). The diary is interspersed with similar dialogues and makes wholesome reading. Maharshi was a man of few words, but his few words always told the truth. This had a tremendous impact on the personalities of the devotees.

At one or two places, certain miracles are referred to, but miracles do not have any prominent place in the book, the stress being on the knowledge of the Self.

The serene, unconcerned personality of the Maharshi reveals itself throughout these pages, and the book goes a long way in quenching the thirst for knowledge, not only of the devotees of the Maharshi, but of other seekers also.

The Glossary and the Index have added to the utility of the volume as a reference book.

DR. N. B. PATIL, PH.D.

Deputy Director of Languages, Bombay

MIND—THE SUPREME MASTER: BY VIDYA BHUSHAN, Publishers: Atmaram & Sons, (H.O.) Kashmere Gate, Delhi, 110 006, 1977, pp. 8+262, Price : Rs. 25/-.

Mr. Vidya Bhushan has done a good piece of independent work in this book. The question as to what mind is and what its relation is to the self and to matter, if both exist, is one of the perennial and most important questions—philosophically and psychologically. The author's idea behind this work is to present the obvious truth about our total existence, and thereby to infuse fearless morality into fear-distorted human society; to make our own deluded and demoralized selves shed off their ignorance and rise into the ever-compassionate realm of undefeatable positivity. To achieve this positive understanding, there is nothing so important in life—and yet there is nothing so neglected in the present structure of education—as the knowledge of the mind, which is the basis of personality integration and the unfoldment of the latent powers of the Spirit.

The general idea that the study of mind is only for dry intellectuals should be abandoned. The author Mr. Vidya Bhushan reveals with unusual dexterity and versatility that the study of mind is not only a fascinating subject, but it is also of the utmost importance for anyone seeking enduring happiness, peace and prosperity.

The author is of the opinion that the future of any nation and of humanity depends on the level of evolvement of the 'positive understanding' based on morality in its leaders, its intelligentsia, the masses and its growing generations. He also says that misery is the root cause of instability or the emergence of the feeling of insecurity. It starts with the sprouting up of apprehensions based on our own assumptions regarding the unperceivable (and so unknown) movements of other mental and material factors in relation to various levels of our existence, and then expressing as an upsurge of narrow self-centredness or immorality from within our minds, precipitates a chain of suspicions, jealousies, hatreds, conflicts and sufferings. He says that misery has its roots in our lack of positive understanding or ignorance of 'what actually exists as Reality' in relation to ourselves. The unknown exists as such only because we are afraid to look at it. Our own created fears in relation to it hinder our perception of this reality and in this blindness of ours we accept it as unknowable. Actually the unknowable does not exist. Whatever exists (and

this includes the very basic essence of Existence or the Supreme Reality also), is knowable and experienceable. It is by shedding off all prejudices, preconceptions and fears and directing our perception towards it that it can be seen, known and experienced. The author says that in the face of unhindered and undistorted perception nothing can remain unknown. By entertaining fears, we only develop more fears (weaknesses) and immorality. Strength or character can emerge only through fearlessness.

Our conflicts and misery, which create ignorance, can be dispelled only by our shedding off all self-created fears and thereafter pursuing positive and all-comprehensive understanding and wisdom. This also can create true—that is, stable and undefeatable—morality within us.

Mr. Vidya Bhushan opines that lasting peace and prosperity can emerge only out of fearless morality born of all-comprehensive and prejudiceless understanding; and this true understanding is a consequence of direct, unhindered, undistorted and thus fearless perception directed towards that which is sought to be known, realized or achieved. It can never rise through any other method; through any believing or non-believing; assuming, concept-making or theorizing. By keeping our eyes closed to this truth we not only precipitate sufferings for ourselves, but also sow seeds of additional conflicts and miseries for the generations that would follow us.

For a reviewer, it is hard to identify any group or system to which the book may be recommended, but still it is useful to know what mind is in a condensed manner. That mind is the basic reality and all else is derivative, is the fundamental thesis of the book; but the author has not explained its philosophical utility.

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Mandya, Karnataka.

INDIAN SOCIETY IN THE MAHA-BHARATA: BY DR. S. C. BANERJI, Publishers: Bharata Manisha, D28/171 Pande Haveli, Varanasi, 1976, pp. viii+376, Price : Rs. 60/-.

The *Mahābhārata* is an ancient record of a culture which was alive on this land of ours 2,000 years ago. Although the original text of this great epic is not extant, the one published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, is its nearest approximation. The present book

is based on this edition. The *Mahābhārata* is said to be both *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*. In the course of history it assumed the importance of a Smṛti. The present study deals with the scattered Smṛti material in the great epic. While the Śrutis are the bedrock of our culture, the Smṛtis are the changing code of conduct of a continuing society. The present work studies this code as it existed in those days. The sayings from the *Mahābhārata* are well classified here in accordance with their social significance. Thus the book begins with the true significance of castes. This is followed by chapters dealing with the duties of a man according to his stage in life. Beliefs about food, *srāddha*, etc. are also recorded. The rules of good conduct and modes of atonement for wrongful actions have also been mentioned. A considerable portion of the book deals with polity. This includes rules of governance of a state, political expedients, finance, espionage, taxation, etc. Royal duties have also been mentioned in greater details.

The book brings to our mind earlier efforts of scholars in this direction. Pt. Sukhomoya Bhattacharya had written as early as 1946 *Mahābhārater Samāja* in Bengali—a volume published in the Visvabharati Research Series. This was translated into Hindi by Smt. Pushpa Jain under the title *Mahābhāratakalin Samāja*, and was published by Loka Bharati Prakashan, Allahabad, in 1966. There are a few other titles which have kept this social aspect foremost in view. The treatment in the present volume is not much different.

The first 228 pages of the book contain a translation of stanzas which have a bearing on the topics referred to above. Then the author briefly studies the entire material from the social point of view. This study can serve as a valuable guide for a further detailed study of the *Mahābhārata*. The citation of references to the critical edition has enhanced the value of this volume as a sound research aid. The Glossary

and Bibliography will also prove useful. The book deserves to be well received in the circles of oriental scholars all over the world.

DR. N. B. PATIL, PH.D.
Deputy Director of Languages, Bombay

SANSKRIT

SRI TRIPURASUNDARI VEDAPADA
STOTRA : 1976, pp. xlvii+63, Price : Rs. 3.50 ;
SRI DATTA VEDAPADA STUTI : 1977, pp.
xiii+55, Price : Rs. 2.50 ;

BOTH TRANSLATED BY P. N. SIVARAMAKISHNAYYA,
Publisher: the Author, C-7 Sannidhi Street, Salem-
636 005.

Sri Sivaramakrishnayya has done a great service by placing in the hands of the devotees the translation of these two valuable books of Sanskrit Stotras. While the former is the compilation of Sri Shankara to whom very many Stotras are attributed, the latter is of unknown authorship. The beauty of these Stotras is that they have the Vedic Mantras as the first or the last Pada of the stanza. This adds to the merit of the Stotra and shows the skill of the compiler in matching the ideas with those of the Vedic passages. The former book is of one hundred verses with an Introduction on Sri Vidya in Tamil, and the meaning of each verse in English and Tamil. The latter contains sixty-eight verses and represents all the four Vedas; it has an Introduction and the meaning of the verses in English with transliteration, detailed explanation of verses and notes.

These two booklets of Double Crown size, contain beautiful pictures of Sri Tripurasundari and Sri Dattatraya on the front cover. The devotees will find these books very useful for their daily Parayana and prayers.

SWAMI TANMAYANANDA
Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVA PRATISHTHAN, CALCUTTA

REPORT : 1932—1978

Inspired by the ideal that service to man is service to God as enunciated by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the Ramakrishna Mission set up in 1932 a small maternity-cum-child welfare centre in a rented house in South Calcutta. The aim was to ameliorate, as far as practicable within the limitations of a modest set up, the distressing condition of expectant mothers. This Centre was named the Ramakrishna Mission Shishumangal Pratishthan. Since that time the Centre has been growing, and now serves the people through its three wings : the General Hospital, the School of Nursing and the Vivekananda Institute of Medical Sciences.

General Hospital : From a small indoor section of only sixteen beds in 1934, this Hospital's bed-strength increased from year to year until it had 150 beds in 1954. To respond to the popular demand, it was developed into a General Hospital in 1956 with a bed-strength of 210, and its name was changed to the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan next year.

The Hospital now has over 500 beds, distributed among eleven indoor departments : Medicine, General Surgery, Pediatric Medicine, Pediatric Surgery, Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, Urology, E.N.T., Surgery, Ophthalmology and Family Welfare. There are several other departments which serve both indoor and outdoor patients but do not have indoor beds. These are the departments of Dentistry, Radiology and Radiotherapy, Anaesthesiology and the Laboratories. There are also some special outdoor clinics : Heart Clinic, Nephrology Clinic, Psychiatry Clinic, Cytology Clinic, Speech and Hearing Clinic, Physiotherapy Clinic, Contact Lens Clinic and Diabetic Clinic. A Glaucoma Clinic and a special Clinic for Hearing-Impaired Children are to be opened shortly.

The Hospital is now serving about 16,000 indoor and 2,00,000 outdoor patients every year. About fifty per cent of the indoor patients are given free and part-free treatment. All the outdoor patients get free consultation facilities and about forty per cent of them also get the benefit of free investigations and treatment.

School of Nursing : A primary objective of the Pratishthan from the very beginning has been

to train nurses and midwives on modern lines in an atmosphere worthy of India's traditions, so that they might serve the patients in a spirit of dedication. It started with the training of midwives and gained recognition from the Nursing Council as a training school in 1944. The Auxiliary Nursing-Midwifery Course was started in 1956 and the General Nursing-Midwifery Course in 1957. The school now provides training to about 225 students in these two courses. It is proposed to increase the number to 300 in course of the next three years.

For both the General Course and the Auxiliary Course unmarried girls between seventeen and twenty-five who have passed at least the School Final or an equivalent examination are eligible. These two courses are for three-and-a-half and one-and-a-half years respectively. Students are admitted into these courses twice a year, and each student is given a stipend.

Vivekananda Institute of Medical Sciences : This department of the Pratishthan conducts post-graduate diploma courses of Calcutta University in Child Health, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Ophthalmology, Oto-Rhino-Laryngology, and Orthopaedics, and provides training and research facilities to students for the MD and MS degrees of the same University. Besides post-graduate students, senior doctors of various departments are also carrying out research in different branches of medical science, the results of which were so far being published in Indian and foreign scientific journals and are now published in the Institute's own journal.

Foundation Day Souvenir : On the occasion of its forty-sixth anniversary, the Seva Pratishthan has published an attractive and interesting Souvenir. It begins with several articles concerning Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, accompanied by three beautifully reproduced portraits ; after which follows a short history of the Institution ; while most of the 130 pages are devoted to original articles on the subject 'Adolescence' written by experts in a manner intelligible to the general public. These are sure to be useful to parents in helping them to care knowledgeably for their children. The articles are well illustrated with photographs and diagrams. The price of the Souvenir is Rs. 10/-.

Future Plans : For the General Hospital, construction of the following facilities is urgently needed : (1) Out-patients' Department, Labora-

tories and Blood Bank; (2) a 150-bed Pediatric Department; (3) a twenty-bed Emergency Ward; (4) a twelve-bed Intensive Care Unit; (5) a ten-bed Post-operative Ward; (6) a ten-bed Isolation Ward; (7) a fifteen-bed Plastic Surgery-cum-Burn Unit; (8) a Central Sterilization Department; (9) a Physiotherapy Department; (10) a modern Hospital Kitchen; (11) Staff Quarters; and (12) Central Stores, Workshops and Administrative Block. For the School of Nursing, the following items are required: a separate building with a Library, Reading Room and Auditorium; and a playground for the students. The Vivekananda Institute of Medical Sciences has taken up the construction of a multistoried building on some adjacent land to house a service-oriented research centre, to be named 'Rameswar Tania Research Centre'.

The generous public is requested to donate liberally towards these development schemes, the total cost involved being about four crores of rupees. All such donations, which are exempt from Income-tax, may be addressed to: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, 99 Sarat Bose Road, Calcutta-700 026.

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, MYSORE

Started in 1925, this Centre has been located since 1931 at its present premises on the Vrindaban Gardens Road, Vani Vilas Mohalla, Mysore-570 002. It conducts: (1) daily worship and Bhajan; (2) regular classes and occasional lectures in and outside the city; (3) a Publication Department for Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and Vedanta literature in Kannada; (4) birth anniversaries of various Saints and Incarnations; (5) a Library.

On an extensive piece of land a little distance from the Ashrama stand Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala—a residential primary and higher secondary school, where classes are also held in typewriting, drawing, painting, music and so on; and the Ramakrishna Institute of Moral and Spiritual Education, information about which is given below.

RAMAKRISHNA INSTITUTE

OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

The knowledge that is acquired by our children should enable them to stand on their feet and become worthy citizens, aware of their human dignity and divine nature. But it is now widely recognized that the system of education

presently obtaining in our country is far from satisfactory. Concerned over this situation, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama in Mysore conducted intensive experiments in the field of moral and spiritual education since 1965 with phenomenal success. These experiments called 'Retreats', conducted in the building of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala, were of two types: (1) the Summer Retreat of two weeks' duration of college boys from all parts of the country; and (2) Character Formation Retreat and three days' duration for the boys of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala, Mysore. The former was an intensive course teaching the essential features of the major religions of the world, as also a few practical spiritual disciplines. In the latter course the practical disciplines were maintained while the theoretical lectures were confined to certain selected great personalities from various walks of life and from different countries.

Encouraged by good response from many quarters, it was decided to put this work on a permanent foundation, developing an institution that would train teachers in moral and spiritual education, retaining simultaneously the student Retreats also. With the assistance of the Mysore City Improvement Trust Board, a suitable plot of land adjacent to the campus of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala was acquired and a magnificent building raised. Completed by May 1974, it has been admirably designed to meet the requirements of both administration and comfortable living of the participants, with spacious halls for auditorium, library, museum, a beautiful prayer hall, classrooms, 150 single-seater rooms, dispensary, sick-ward, kitchen, dining-hall and guestrooms. All these have been suitably furnished.

A small beginning has already been made in the setting up of a Theological Museum, the main theme of which is the essential unity of all religions. Since the noblest and best sentiments of a religion are expressed at the time of worship and prayer, this topic has been chosen for the present. The exhibits include models depicting the various forms of ritual worship and prayer found in the different world religions, their great Scriptures, and so on.

A B.Ed course affiliated to the University of Mysore has been started, with Moral and Spiritual Education, Ethics and Retreats as curriculum subjects.

Retreats for the general public have been conducted since 1973 with persistent demands for

holding them at least twice a year. The age of the participants has ranged from 20 up to 80, and a fairly good cross-section of society has been represented.

A three week's Condensed Course for secondary-school teachers has been conducted since 1975 with teachers deputed by several State Governments and private educational institutions.

In 1977 a scheme for a short-term (two months) Diploma Course was inaugurated. This scheme proposes to train fifty teachers at a time with four training courses in a year. Its objective is

twofold : (1) to help the teacher improve his own character and personality by giving him lofty and inspiring ideas from the great religions of the world and by creating an environment which assists him in leading a strictly disciplined life; and (2) to teach him the theoretical and practical methods by which he can impart these ideas to his students.

With the continued help and co-operation of the National and State Governments and the public, the Institute can certainly hope to improve further its quantity and quality of service.

The three gunas—sattwa, rajas, and tamas—belong to the mind and not to the Self. Rise thou above the gunas and know the Self. First, overcome rajas and tamas by developing sattwa, and then rise above sattwa by sattwa itself.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM, xi. vii