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Cover : On the way to Sri Amarnath.



Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 1

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

श्रीरामकृष्णोपदेशावलिः ।*

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

वियन्मण्डले सूर्यविभाप्रभावात्
यथा दिवा खे न विभान्ति भानि ।
विभुन्तथा मोहबलाददृष्ट्वा
निरीश्वरं केऽपि वदन्ति विश्वम् ॥ १ ॥

1. Just as, by day, the sky appears starless to men due to the overwhelmingly brilliant light of the sun ; in the same way, not being able to perceive the all-pervading Reality in this world, blinded by the power of ignorance, worldly men say, the world is Godless.

अप्यब्धिनीरं लवणेन पूर्णम्
नास्वादनात्प्रागवगम्यते कैः ? ।
इदं जगत्पूर्णमपीशशक्त्या
कस्तां विजानाति विना सुचेष्टाम् ? ॥ २ ॥

2. Can the abundance of salt in sea-water be known by anybody without tasting it a little? Similarly, can anyone experience the presence of the all-pervading power of God in this world, without purifying the mind by earnest spiritual practices?

उड्डीयमानो वियतीह गृध्रो
दृष्टिं यथायं कुणपेषु धत्ते ।
दृष्टिस्तथा यात्यपि पण्डितानां
निरर्थकेष्वर्थयशःसु नित्यम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. Just as a vulture soaring high in the sky, has all its attention focussed on the rotten corpses below ; so, the mind of worldly-minded pundits always seeks delight in the vain and vulgar pleasures of this world, like money, name, fame, etc.

* See *Vidyodaya*, (a critical Sanskrit monthly journal), Ed. Hrishikesh Sastri, Bhātpārā (24-Parganas, West Bengal): The Oriental Nobility Institute, June-July (*āṣadha*), 1896, pp. 144-47. The versified Sanskrit rendering is by Swami Ramakrishnananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The English translation is ours—mostly according to the Sanskrit paraphrasing in prose of the verses by the Editor, *Vidyodaya*.

ON HAPPINESS—I

(EDITORIAL)

A New Year brings with it new life and enthusiasm for the people and urges them to wish 'A Happy New Year' to their dear ones. Heavy loads of greeting cards are carried every year by the postal departments from one place to another for conveying such good wishes. The ship-loads and car-loads of greetings moving to and fro all over the world from one heart to another, and the same thing being repeated devotionally every year like a ritual, may give rise to a question in somebody's mind: Why should one wish happiness to another? Does it mean that happiness is not assured in human life? Is happiness so rare in this world, and is it the best thing that one should wish for his near and dear ones? The answer is : Yes. It is a matter of our daily experience and the experience of all human beings since time immemorial that human life is a mixture of happiness and misery. Man is as it were tossed between this pair of opposites, like a pendulum. One may be rich or poor, a man or a woman, young or old, educated or uneducated ; one has to go through the experience of happiness and misery. This has made some people think that the world is a mixture of these two. One Hindi poet has rightly said : 'Sometimes there is happiness, sometimes there is misery—this is what is called the world.'¹ Similarly, in his commentary on the *Gītā*, Ācārya Śaṅkara has said: 'What is this thing known as the world? The experiencing of happiness and misery is what is called the world (*samsāra*), and one's susceptibility as an experiencer of happiness and misery is what is called worldliness

(*samsāritva*).'² This being the nature of the world in which we live, it is naturally human and noble on one's part to wish happiness to the loved ones.

Whatever titbit of happiness is possible for a man in this world, has been termed differently as pleasure, delight, joy, glee, enjoyment, ecstasy, rapture, elation, gladness, beatitude, blessedness, felicity, exhilaration and so on, depending upon its quality, nature and intensity. All these words, basically signifying happiness, have different shades of meaning, because the field of happiness has become wider and deeper in human life as compared to animals. In addition to physical and mental happiness, man is privileged to enjoy intellectual and spiritual happiness. Even though the intensity and duration of happiness may vary from man to man, there are varieties of means and kinds of happiness available to man. Moreover, the gravity and subtlety of happiness in a human being is more than that in animals ; so much so that happiness has as it were become the ply-wheel of human life, and thereby made it more complicated and full of problems. In order to make life really blessed and beyond problems, it will be beneficial to study the phenomenon of happiness from various points of view.

Man takes pride in his being intelligent and rational. It is, therefore, meet that he should lead his life in an intelligent way. If a man allows himself to be deluded and fooled by the things of the world, it is not the sign of intelligence. One should, therefore, try to see whither so-called worldly happiness is taking one—to doom or to Blessedness. An attempt has been made in this Editorial to keep before the readers

¹ 'कभी सुख है, कभी दुख है,

इसा का नाम दुनिया है ।'

² *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā*, XIII. 20.

the pros and cons of this issue, and enable them to detect the mistake that rational men are committing every moment of their lives. If anyone can detect his folly and follow the way to Blessedness pointed out by the wise men of the East as well as the West, then alone he will be worthy of being called 'a man'.

Happiness As a Motive Force :

It is said that 'for happiness alone living beings make whatever efforts possible—*ānandāyaiva bhūtāni yatante yānikānicit*'.³ That is, the actions of living beings are motivated by happiness. It is in a way true. Leaving aside the quality of happiness one is aspiring for, we find that behind the austerities of a saint, worship of a devotee, research of a scientist, study of the scholars, sensual pursuits of a baser man and so on, the motivating power is nothing but 'the thirst for happiness'. The Western psychologists call it 'pleasure drive'. They are of the opinion that 'the urge to continue pleasure-producing activities is strong in all of us. . . .'⁴

According to some psycho-analysts like Sigmund Freud, a powerful instinctive pleasure drive called the libido rests in the unconscious level of man's personality, and he calls this the fundamental source of energy underlying all human behaviour. This strong urge for 'forbidden apples' in man is like a venomous cobra coiled within the deeper layer of his personality, ready to raise its hood whenever an opportunity comes. The psychologists believe that this ugly urge in man is expressed in his life in various unnatural ways, and if it does not get an opportunity for its full expression, results in various kinds of nervous and mental abnormalities.

³ *Yogavāsistha*, 6.102.20.

⁴ M. A. Wenger and others, *Physiological Psychology*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1956, p. 336.

That is why they suggest catharsis, or discharging of emotional tension as a remedy for such frustrated people. They also prescribe sublimation—transmutation of the baser urge into some higher, purer or sublime type—as a means to overcome frustration. Some people are allergic to terms like libido, catharsis, etc., but there is no reason to be so, because libido may refer to any kind of forbidden and unsatisfied pleasure drive in man. The id, or the unconscious part of human personality is a storehouse of libido. It is the root cause of all irrational and selfish actions of man. It is, therefore, necessary to overcome it by moral and ethical disciplines, to save ourselves from being degraded to the animal level, and from the unavoidable nervous and mental disorders.

Various Grades of Happiness :

One may not know in his waking state what is hidden in the unconscious layer of one's personality; but the psychologists say that these instinctive forbidden cravings are at times expressed in dream, though in a tortured form due to the inborn fear of the society. Of course, apart from such baser joys, man may also experience purer and higher types of pleasures in the dream state.

As compared to the happiness of the waking and dream states, the happiness which an individual experiences in his deep-sleep state (*susupti*), is altogether of a different type. In this state there is neither the enjoyer nor the object of enjoyment, and no physical or mental excitation. In this state the sense-organs, mind, intellect, etc. get merged temporarily in their cause, and the individual experiences the Bliss of the Atman within 'through a very subtle function of ignorance illumined by Consciousness'.⁵

⁵ See *Vedāntasāra*, II. 46; and *Vivekacūdāmani*, 207.

Besides these, there is a higher type of Bliss which the devotees get through their spiritual practices, or when they are blessed with the vision of their chosen Deity. Regarding this Divine Bliss which an aspirant is privileged to enjoy, Sri Ramakrishna has said : ‘ . . . one realizes the consummation of all happiness and of all pleasures in God—the indivisible, eternal ocean of bliss. Those who enjoy Him can find no attraction in the cheap, worthless pleasures of the world. He who has once tasted the refined crystal of sugar-candy finds no pleasure in tasting the dirty treacle. . . . The soul that has tasted the sweetness of Divine Bliss finds no happiness in the vulgar pleasures of the world.’⁶

At times devotees are so much carried away by Divine Bliss that they only desire to taste the Bliss of God intoxication, and not struggle to transcend this state for a higher one. Ramprasad, a well-known saint of Bengal, was one of this category. He prayed to the Divine Mother through his song: ‘O Mother, I do not want to become sugar [Divine Bliss]; I want to taste sugar.’ On the other hand, Sri Ramakrishna prayed: ‘O Mother! I don’t want the Bliss of Divine inebriation.’⁷ Gauḍapāda, the father of Advaita Philosophy, has warned the aspirants saying: ‘One should not enjoy happiness in that state; but one should become unattached through the use of discrimination. . . .’⁸

If one can successfully transcend by discrimination the Bliss of Bhāva-samādhi (Divine inebriation) or Savikalpa-Samādhi mentioned above, one attains Nirvikalpa-samādhi. In this state one realizes one’s

real nature, and becomes happy in the real sense of the term. Ācārya Śaṅkara rightly points out in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*: ‘To remove his bondage the wise man should discriminate between the Self and non-Self. By that alone he comes to know his own Self as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, and becomes happy.’⁹ This happiness is known as Brahmānanda. It is a state of eternal Bliss. It is a joy without any reaction, without any enjoyer and enjoyed. In this, there are no ebbs and flows as in worldly pleasures. Brahmānanda has been described in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* as the highest kind of Bliss as compared to various grades of bliss enjoyed by men, Gandharvas, Manes, Br̥haspati, Virāṭ and Hiraṇyagarbha.¹⁰ While commenting on this Mantra, Ācārya Śaṅkara says: ‘The Bliss of Brahman that is perceivable on the perfection of desirelessness and is also open to the direct vision of one who follows the Vedas, that supreme Bliss, a particle or a bit of which forms the bliss of this Brahmā [Hiraṇyagarbha], . . . is the natural supreme Bliss, and in it there is no bifurcation of the joy and the enjoyer, since It is non-dual.’¹¹

The Concepts of Happiness According to Some Indian Thinkers :¹²

Amongst the Indian thinkers, Cārvākas are the most materialistic. They believe that sense-pleasures are the best type of pleasures in the world. They don’t believe in heavenly happiness or in spiritual Bliss. They say: ‘The blessedness of human life lies in the ecstatic joy arising from embracing a woman—*anganālinganajjanya-sukha-*

⁶ *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1971, saying nos. 243, 244.

⁷ ‘M’, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974, p. 589.

⁸ *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, ‘Gauḍapāda Kārika’, III. 45.

⁹ *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 152.

¹⁰ See *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. viii. 1-4.

¹¹ *Eight Upaniṣads*, trans. Swami Gambhirananda, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, I, 1957, p. 369.

¹² See Sri Dinesh Chandra Shastri, *Prācīna-Bhāratīya-Manovidyā (Sāmanyadhyayah)*, Calcutta: Nagendra Prajñā-Mandir, 1972, pp. 135-45.

*meva pumarthatā.*¹³ In every country the majority of people belong to this category. Cārvākas consider that happiness is in the very nature of the organs and the body. But the Naiyāyikas do not believe this theory. They are of the opinion that when things happen according to the wishes of a person, he becomes happy. For instance, for some, death of an enemy also may be a matter of great joy. Naiyāyikas believe in the Atman as the source of all happiness.

According to the Vaiśeṣikas, 'one experiences either happiness or misery, when the Atman, mind, organs and the object come together.'¹⁴ They call the feeling of love and the blissful experience that one gets by the acceptance of the objects of enjoyment and the application of the mind and the Atman to them, as happiness. This happiness may be possible by merely desiring the objects or remembering them. They too believe happiness as the nature of the Atman; but according to them happiness is not possible unless there is 'acceptance (*grahana*)' of the object of enjoyment and the manifestation of the 'grace (*prasāda*)' of the Atman from within.

Many Eastern as well as Western psychologists believe that happiness is nothing but the absence of misery. But the believers of the Gautamīya Nyāya say that this is never possible, because everything in this world is full of misery. There is not an iota of happiness here. They say: had there been any happiness in the worldly objects of enjoyment, why would the aspirants leave the world and struggle for God realization? However, thinkers like Jayanta Bhatta, Śrīdhara and others do not believe in this theory on the ground that it contradicts the experience of Bliss of the Atman.

According to the Sāṅkhyas, happiness is not the nature of the Atman, but the characteristic of Sattvaguna. They say that whenever there is the manifestation of Sattvaguna in the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa*), one experiences happiness. This manifestation depends upon the good karma of the individual. They believe that everything in the world is composed of three *gunas*—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattva is the cause of happiness (*sukha*), Rajas the cause of misery (*duḥkha*), and Tamas the cause of delusion and infatuation (*moha*).¹⁵ In order to support their theory they say: One and the same woman may be the cause of happiness for her husband, the cause of misery to a co-wife, and the cause of infatuation for another person.¹⁶ According to their theory, happiness is possible because there is Sattvaguna in the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) and the object of enjoyment (*bhogyā*); but happiness, in their opinion, can never be permanent.

According to the Yogis, happiness is the property of the inner organ or *antahkaraṇa*, and man gets happiness because of his good karma. They say that a temporary relief from tension, which the organs get when in contact with the objects of enjoyment, is called happiness.¹⁷ They too do not believe in eternal happiness. The goal of their spiritual discipline is absolute cessation of misery.

In the opinion of the Jains and the Buddhists, because knowledge and happiness are matters of self-experience, they are one; their cause and object is also one and the same. The Buddhists say that this world is full of misery—'*Sarvaṃ duḥkhamayaṃ jagat*'. They count the objects of worldly happiness as the causes of misery

¹³ Sāyaṇa-Mādhava, *Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha*, ed. V. S. Abhyankar, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1924, 'Cārvāka-Darsanam', p. 6.

¹⁴ *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtras*, 5.2.45.

¹⁵ See *Sāṅkhya-Kārika*, Gauḍapāda's Commentary, 12.

¹⁶ See Madhusūdana, *Bhakti-Rasāyanam*, 1.16-17.

¹⁷ See *Pātāñjala-Yoga-Sūtras*, Vyāsa's Commentary, 2.15.

and transmigration, and therefore, consider it a sign of wisdom not to be caught in their snares.

Prābhākara Tārkikas believe that happiness is possible in human life due to 'the association of mind and the Atman—*sañnyukta-samavāyalakṣaṇa*'. They do not believe in the Atman as blissful in nature. But the followers of Kumārila Bhatta are of the opinion that happiness depends upon the existence of the mind. They say : worldly happiness is mixed with misery ; heavenly happiness is devoid of misery ; and the Bliss of freedom (*mukti*) is eternal. Still they take heavenly happiness as the goal of human life and emphasize Vedic Karma-kāṇḍa (rituals) as the means to attain it.

The Vedantists on the other hand call a spade a spade. They give due value to both worldly and heavenly happiness, and make men conscious of the fact that both of them are temporary and ultimately lead to misery and transmigration. They believe that Atman is the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; and quote Upanishadic statements to support their view. For instance : '*Vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*—It is Brahman which is [Absolute] Knowledge and Bliss, . . .'¹⁸ ; '*Yo vai bhūmā tat sukham*—The Infinite is Bliss, . . .'¹⁹ ; and so on. The Vedantists are of the opinion that in this world happiness depends upon the fructification of individual's deeds. When the time for their fructification is at hand, favourable objects of enjoyment become available to one ; and the happiness one gets in their association is due to the manifestation of the Bliss of Atman.²⁰ It is the Bliss of Atman which reflects in the Sāttvika state of the individual's mind-stuff. Even though Atman, which is the Reality of every individual, is of the nature of eternal Bliss, an individual experiences

misery and infatuation due to the Rājasika and Tāmasika states of his mind. It is said in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* : 'That which is known as the self-creator is verily the source of joy ; for one becomes happy by coming in contact with that source of joy. . . .'²¹ According to the Vedantists, Atman alone can be a covetable and lovable thing in the world for a wise man, due to its Blissful nature.

The Process of Manifestation of Happiness :

It has been pointed out before that worldly happiness depends upon the fructification of one's good deeds, and is, therefore, momentary and unassured. One may wish happiness for himself or for others, but it is not guaranteed that one's wishes be fulfilled. That is why man always thirsts after happiness and becomes miserable if he fails to get it. His thirst becomes more and more intense and results in an impact of internal tension, if his desire is not satisfied. This miserable state of dissatisfaction however vanishes when the time for fructification of his good actions comes, and the desired object of enjoyment becomes available to him. Due to the vanishing of this miserable state of mind, Sattvaguna predominates in the mind-stuff, and mind becomes as if indrawn. In this psychological state, Atman reflects from within, and the individual experiences joy for some time. This joy is of course temporary, as the fructification of the good karma on which it depends is not long lasting. This is the way in which man experiences worldly happiness.²²

According to the Vedantists, worldly happiness is of three types : *priya*—joy arising from *seeing* such beloved objects as a son, friend, and so on ; *moda*—the joy that follows the *acquisition* of the desired

¹⁸ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III. ix. 28.

¹⁹ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII. xxiii. 1.

²⁰ See *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. iii. 32.

²¹ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. vii. 1.

²² See *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Śankara's Commentary, II. v. 1.

object ; and *pramoda*—exhilaration, that is, when the enjoyment reaches its acme.²³ Thus worldly joy results at the sight, acquisition and enjoyment of the desired object.

Worldly happiness can also be divided into three types as experienced in the waking, dream or deep-sleep states of the individual. The process of getting happiness in the waking state has already been seen above. In the dream state an individual experiences joy due to the fulfilment of the desires of his waking state. Here also happiness is possible due to the reflection of the Atman in the Sāttvika state of one's mind. But the happiness in the deep-sleep state (*susupti*) is different from that in the waking or dream states, as there is neither the presence of the object of enjoyment nor the satisfaction of the desire for enjoyment. As we have seen before, in this state the happiness

²³ See *Ibid.*

is due to a very subtle function of ignorance illumined by the Atman within. But the joy of this state also is not permanent. That is why the Vedantists regard 'the attainment of the Bliss of one's own real nature, *i.e.* Atman—*sva-svarūpa-ānanda-avāptih'*, as the goal of human life.²⁴ Rightly has it been said in the *Kātha Upaniṣad*: 'Eternal happiness is for those—and not for others—who are discriminating and who realize in their hearts Him who—being one, the controller and the inner Self of all—makes a single form multifarious.'²⁵ Knowingly or unknowingly, it is 'eternal happiness' that every individual craves for in life ; but to his misfortune, he seeks it where it is not, and becomes miserable inspite of his intelligence.

(To be concluded)

²⁴ See *Vedāntasara*, I. 29.

²⁵ *Kātha Upaniṣad*, II ii. 12.

EARLY DAYS AT SHANTI ASHRAMA *—V

GARGI

(Continued from the November 1977 issue)

5

On the whole, things went fairly well at the Ashrama during the first period of Swami Turiyananda's stay there—a period of six months, less a week or so, extending from August 3 to January 23 or 24. In all, sixteen students found their way over Mount

* *Erratum*: The author informs us that the photograph of Swami Turiyananda published along with her article in the September 1977 issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata* (p. 379), was taken at the Shanti Ashrama, and not at the Bay-shore in San Francisco as mentioned. We very much regret the mistake.—*Ed.*

Hamilton and down to the little cluster of tents in the valley. But of these, only six (Dr. Lucy Chandler, Mrs. Petersen, Miss Bell, Mrs. Aspinall, Miss Beckham, and Mr. Roorbach, the last four of whom were Home of Truth people to the end) were present the entire time. Three (Ida Ansell, who left at the beginning of December, and Margaret McConochie and Fannie Gould, neither of whom arrived until mid-September) were there almost the entire time. The remaining seven students stayed for periods varying from two to four weeks : Five of the original group left before the end of August ; Mr. Aspinall arrived in early November and, to

Swami Turiyananda's regret, left on December 2; Gurudasa arrived from New York a week or so later and, to the Swami's joy, stayed on indefinitely.

In addition, a young Dr. Adams, unknown and unlooked for, providentially appeared toward the end of the year. He had simply and improbably walked into the Ashrama one cold winter evening at a time when Swami Turiyananda's arm was swelling alarmingly from the bite of a poisonous beetle. One pictures him arriving briskly, with black medical satchel in hand—as though summoned. And indeed it is said that he at once opened his kit, lanced the wound, and applied an effective medicine—without which timely treatment the bite could have been fatal. Dr. Adams had heard of the Ashrama in New York and had come all the way, walking the last forty miles from Livermore, a town to the north, to arrive in the nick of time. He stayed at the Retreat only a week or so but was to return in March of 1901 to remain (except for a short absence) until early September.

During this first period those who lived at the Ashrama for any length of time plunged into the new and difficult way of living with a zest and vigour that in the presence of Swami Turiyananda they could not but feel. They were carried, as it were, in the current of his spirituality. The Swami, Gurudasa later wrote, 'never spared himself: he did not think of his own health or comforts; he had only one object, namely to bring these eager students to the feet of his Divine Mother. ... The students *had* to respond; the Swami's ardour was infectious. At the Shanti Ashrama characters were changed, lives were changed. The very atmosphere of the place began to breathe a different spirit. It was as if the minds of the students variously constituted as they were, gradually came under the spell of a new charm.'

And the Swami watched carefully over

his charges, observing their weaknesses, correcting their faults, helping them to break obstructive habits and attachments. He destroyed, for instance, Ida Ansell's 'very strong personal attachment' for Miss Bell with, as Miss Ansell relates, 'a combination of gentle ridicule and wise counsel...and a little exaggerated imitation.' And later, by several days of stern aloofness, he prevented her from becoming attached to himself with the same clinging dependence.

But the cost to Swami Turiyananda of this constant vigilance was great. He worked continuously to keep the minds of the students at a high level—yet not too high lest (as at the Meads') the impact of spiritual thought and emotion be too great for nerves and brain cells totally unaccustomed to supporting it. Even cautious as he was, were not some students having premature spiritual experiences at the Ashrama? It would seem to have been in reply to Swami Turiyananda's alarm that Swamiji wrote to him in October: 'Through Mother's will all work will go on; don't be afraid. ... Sit firm and free from worries. Everything will be all right. If hearing the Nada, etc. does anyone harm, he can get rid of it if he gives up meditation for a time and takes to fish and meat. If the body does not become progressively weak, there is no cause for alarm. Practice should be slow.'

But most of those who spent more than a few weeks at the Ashrama in 1900 were headstrong women whose ideas and characters were solidly set in diverse moulds. Several, moreover, were professed religious teachers with their own settled ideas in regard to their spiritual capacity and practice. They were inclined to disregard Swami Turiyananda's instructions. There was, for instance, Miss Lydia Bell, to whom he had given the Sanskrit name Chetanā ('conscious of the Self'). As we have read in his letter of September 29, Chetanā was then 'living in retirement.' That is, she had taken to

her tent for a prescribed period of three days. 'She is doing well,' the Swami had commented. But on another occasion Miss Bell, in an excess of enthusiasm, did not do so well. Fifteen years later on a Christmas day in India Swami Turiyananda told of the near disaster!

The American devotees coming up and living [at Shanti Ashrama] used to call [the practice of retirement] 'talking with the Self'. It helped them much spiritually, and they used to acknowledge it. But it was a rule that none was to remain with himself for more than three days. Once a lady, Miss Bell, retired without my knowledge. I myself was then living like that, occupying an out-house of the Ashrama at a distance. Gurudasa was the only other male inmate at that time, and he used to bring me a cup of tea, a little toast, etc. for my food. Of course, I made an exception in my case and was to be in retirement for a week. That lady made up her mind to be in seclusion for a week and observe the vow of silence and constant meditation with scanty food like myself. The seclusion soon became too much for her, and she was about to be out of her mind. I was then observing the vow of silence in my solitary cell. But something like a premonition told me that an untoward event was going to happen. I felt uneasy and had to come out on the fifth day of my retirement. Miss Bell was being served by a young woman. Her condition was really serious. I sent for her, and when she came I gave her a good scolding. She admitted her mistake and begged to be pardoned. I was thinking of asking her to go away. But afterwards finding that she was repentant I let her remain.

She herself said afterwards, 'I was about to die. Had I not been made to come out I would have actually died.' The lady was a woman of exceptional parts. For fourteen years she had been a platform speaker, addressing various audiences. At the age of sixty-two she had founded an institution called 'The Home of Truth' and conducted it for some years. But she was very conceited

There were many like her, distinguish-

ed, but self-opinionated. Of course, they were all sincere. They would wonder and say, 'Swami! How can you manage to keep together so many conflicting temperaments and train them? We watch carefully every movement of yours, but find nothing defective in your conduct.' This is as it should be. To manage an organization well, one must behave like a mother, full of love and consideration.

As winter came, the Vedanta Society in San Francisco grew restive. Except for a period of one week, the members of the Society in the city had been without a teacher since Swami Vivekananda had bade them good-bye at the end of May. They were perhaps remembering that Swami Turiyananda's original plan had been to return in two months after starting the Ashrama. Thus on December 20 at the regular weekly meeting of the Class 'a motion was duly made and seconded [and presumably carried] that the sum of \$10 be sent to Swami Turiyananda for the purpose of having him come to San Francisco.' 'Mrs. Stanley', the Minutes went on to say, 'was delegated to hand the money to the Swami as she was about to leave for the Ashrama.' Swami Turiyananda did not drop everything and rush back to the city. 'I am going to write to Mrs. Wilmot definitely when I shall be there—as soon as I come out of retirement,' he wrote to Ida Ansell on January 5 of 1901. 'Tomorrow I go to retirement for one week, if it does not rain. It has been raining here since last few days. ...'

About three weeks later the Swami returned to the city, leaving behind eight hardy souls: Gurudasa, Mr. Roorbach, Mrs. Aspinall, Mrs. Stanley, Lucy Beckham, Miss Bell, Margaret McConochie, and Fannie Gould. Dr. Lucy Chandler and Mrs. Petersen went with him to San Francisco.

Thus ended the first and happiest period

of Swami Turiyananda's work at Shanti Ashrama. 'There seems to be something special about beginnings,' Ida Ansell wrote in her memoirs of those early days. 'Swami [Turiyananda] spoke of it several times: "It will never be the same again."' And it never was.

'The class met at Dr. Logan's office, 10 Geary St., at 8 p. m.,' read the Minutes of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco for January 24, 1901. The entry continued:

The Swami Turiyananda who had come from the Ashrama gave the lesson and was most heartily & joyously welcomed. Afterward the Swami answered questions put to him by members of the Class. It was unanimously resolved to hold the classes in future at Dr. Logan's residence, 770 Oak St., and the Secretary was instructed to notify all absent members and friends to this effect. It was furthermore decided to hold meditations at 10 a. m. at Mrs. C. F. Petersen's residence, 3109 Buchanan St., including the following Wednesday daily—thereafter at Dr. Logan's where the Swami would move to.

This arrangement more or less set the pattern of Swami Turiyananda's city work. The Society's records for the month of February and most of March were condensed, it would seem, into as few lines as possible. The Minutes for those months read in full:

Regular lectures by Swami Turiyananda were delivered at Dr. Logan's residence, 770 Oak St., on Tuesday and Thursday evenings on Raja Yoga and the Gita. On alternate evenings lectures and meditations were held by the Swami in Oakland and Alameda.

On Fridays the Swami would cross the Bay to Oakland, as Swami Vivekananda had done so often before him. He would stay overnight at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rhodehamel, filling the house with 'Hari Om, Hari Om' as he paced, chanting in his deep voice, through the rooms. Every Friday even-

ing and Saturday morning he would hold a well-attended class at the Rhodehamels'. He also lectured in Alameda, possibly on Wednesdays, at the house of a Mr. and Mrs. George E. Magee (2149 San Antonio Avenue). The Swami, young, gentle and yet blazing with inner light, made a deep impression on all who knew him. 'Though [he] was not a lecturer in the popular sense of the word,' Mr. Rhodehamel wrote in his memoirs, 'he was a speaker of persuasive power, frequently rising to heights of impassioned utterance. He soon became known to a large circle of students, friends and admirers.'

But Swami Turiyananda did not find work in the city congenial. He longed to return to the Ashrama in the San Antonio Valley and to the 'few earnest souls' he had life there, wanting only to take with himself some truly dedicated students. (When asked in San Francisco if there was anything he needed for the Ashrama, he had replied, 'Yes; souls, consecrated souls.') Two letters written early in February betray his homesickness for the Retreat. The first was to Dr. Lewis G. Janes. (All the Swamis who had known Dr. Janes—Swamiji, Swami Saradananda, Swami Abhedananda, Swami Turiyananda—felt an affection for him, and he for them; he was indeed, as Swami Turiyananda addressed him in the following letter, a dear friend.)

c/o Dr. Logan M. D.
770 Oak Street
San Francisco
California

The 3rd February 1901

My dear friend Dr. Janes

Your very kind letter was redirected to me here from the Ashrama the other day. I thank you ever so much for the same. They have got the books you have sent and though I have not seen them yet what I understand from their letter I feel sure they are the Maha-

bharatas you were requested to send to me. I have come here at the invitation of the Vedanta Society and am lecturing and holding classes on their behalf. I left a few earnest souls in the Ashrama who shall practise in life what they have learnt during the time I was with them in my absence. This is a nice country and the people very simple and ready for accepting the Truth. I am sorry you have no Conference [at Mrs. Bull's house in Cambridge, Massachusetts] this winter but hope will have a grander one the next. I am glad S. Abhedananda's work in New York is growing so excellently well. Perhaps you know that S. Vivekananda has gone back to India and is in the Monastery now in his completely recovered and restored health. I hope you all are doing well. Please convey my best wishes and kindest regards to Mrs. Jones and love to the children. Kindly remember me to Mrs. Briggs [a close friend of Mrs. Ole Bull's] and other friends there and give them my greetings and love. I think I got some papers some time ago which you so kindly sent but which I forgot to acknowledge. I hope you will excuse me for that.

Wishing you all well with affectionate regards

Yours Sincerely
Turiyananda

On the same day Swami Turiyananda wrote to Mrs. Hansbrough—a more intimate and more revealing letter:

The 3rd Feby 1901

My dear Mrs. Hansbrough,

Excuse me please for my delay in replying to your letter I received some time ago. I could not very well make time for it. You see I am engaged in my work here of a nature which I do not quite agree with. Nevertheless Mother's will must come to pass, and I must be up and doing for any thing She wants me to do. I must not have any choice of my own. I think I wrote to you that Swamiji is now living in the monastery at Calcutta in excellent health. I am doing well again too. I do not know how long I shall stay here. I am sorry you could not come to the Ashrama as you liked for want of in-

come. But Mother knows what is best for us. We are only to be patient and content under all circumstances. What we need most is not to forget Her. If we can only remember Her we don't care under what circumstances we might be put. I am holding classes of meditation every morning besides explaining Gita and Raja Yoga in Thursday and Monday evenings every week. I am feeling accustomed to it gradually. I hope you all are doing well. My best wishes and love to all the friends and students there please. With loving regards.

Yours Affly
Turiyananda

A month later Swami Turiyananda, still at Dr. Logan's, wrote again to Mrs. Hansbrough:

The 5th March 1901

My dear Mrs. Hansbrough,

Your affectionate letter is to hand. I have been expecting to get it very much. I thank you heartily for this. I am glad to know you are feeling strong. Mother's child wherever and under whatever circumstances we might be put we must not change our internal conviction. Work is worship. All work is sacred only we need do it in the right spirit and faithfully. It is my childishness Mrs. Hansbrough to say this work is agreeable and this is not. But I have been taught better since I wrote you last. I am doing all that is coming in my way to the best of my ability and knowledge. The work is getting along pretty well. The people are seemed to be interested in general. Some are feeling very much benefited. Mother knows, I do not. I stay here a few weeks more then go to Los Angeles if possible before going back to the Ashrama. I heard from Helen and Mrs. Kelly few days ago. Mrs. Kelly has kindly invited me to be her guest when there. I have seen Mrs. Whelen here in my class. She looked stronger and better than I expected her to find. She stood the loss very bravely. I had a nice talk with her one afternoon in her place. I have heard from the monastery in India the other day. Swamiji is doing splendidly well. He went to the

Advaita Ashrama in the Himalayas to settle matters there and meet Mrs Sevier before she leaves for England. You have heard perhaps of the death of Captain Sevier. He was a true Western Friend of Swamiji's. It is gratifying to learn you have heard from Mr. Hansbrough. I hope every thing is well with him. Never mind where you be or what you doing. You are Mother's child and doing what is right. I am sure of that. The people in the Ashrama are doing well. Mrs. Aspinell has come up and living in Alameda with a friend of hers. She comes to my class here from time to time. Dr Logan is taking great care of me and I feel so much thankful to him. My eternal best wishes and love to you.

Yours in the Mother
Turiyananda

Toward the end of March the Swami finished his two months' work in San Francisco and, as we learn from the following letter of March 22 to Mrs. Hansbrough, he delegated Miss Lucy Beckham, who was not a member of the Society, to carry on in his stead:

770 Oak St.

My dear Alice,

Your kind letter has been received. I have finished my work here for the present. Last evening I have introduced Miss Beckham to my audience. She will teach in the class in my absence. She came up from the Ashrama for the purpose. The spirit was excellent. Mother's work is going on most assuredly. I start for Los Angeles day after tomorrow by boat. Before I leave I shall write to Helen. I have heard from her yesterday. They all are happy and prosperous. Dr Logan is excellent now. He asked me to send you his greetings and love. Mother willing I shall see you soon again. Mrs. Whelen of Los Angeles was present in the meeting here last night. She attended classes many times. She seems to be quite strong. I met her sister yesterday she too is very nice indeed. I shall see Mrs. Aspinell today. I will ask her to write to you. Mother's children we are, wherever we might be we must be doing Mother's

work. You are doing all right Alice. Mother knows where to keep us and how. Our business is not to forget her but see and remember her in all conditions and at all times. My best wishes and loving regards to you as ever

Your Afftly
Turiyananda

According to *The Pacific Vedantin*, Miss Beckham lectured to the Vedanta Class until late in the summer, but on the subject of her classes the Vedanta Society Minutes maintained a total silence. Between the February-March entry given above and the Minutes for April 18, 1901, one finds only the following, dated impossibly March 26th, 1901 Sunday' (March 26, 1901, was a Tuesday), and written, obviously, in retrospect: 'Swami Turiyananda left for Los Angeles [Sunday, March 24th?] to take charge of the Class there. In the early spring, he returned to the Ashrama with several disciples.' (The Minutes for the summer of 1901 equally ignored Miss Beckham.)

Mr. Allan's 'Early History' tells us that the Swami, accompanied by Mrs. Petersen, did indeed travel to Los Angeles by boat; but beyond this we know as little of his visit in southern California during this period as we know of Miss Beckham's San Francisco classes. No available records tell us whether he stayed with the Meads or accepted Mrs. Kelley's invitation (or both); nor do we know what classes he held, what lectures he gave, or what response he received. Mrs. Hansbrough, to whom he might have written of these things, was close by, and his correspondence with her naturally stopped.

Swami Turiyananda did not, in fact, write to Mrs. Hansbrough again until the end of June, for she was one the two students (Ida Ansell was the other) who were with him at the end of April when, after an absence of three months, he returned to the San Antonio Valley, now festive in its springtime finery.

(To be continued)

SRI SARADA DEVI : THE DIVINE CONSORT OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

A majestic tree or a magnificent structure rises up into the sky and attracts the minds of people, and everyone is full of admiration for it; but rarely does anyone speak or even take notice of the roots which nourish the majestic tree and keep it firm in its place, or of the enduring foundation which bears the magnificent structure on its bosom. Similar is the case with a nation. We see a mighty nation building up a grand civilization and culture and an imposing array of great personalities adorning the pages of history and captivating the minds and hearts of people. But the silent forces that work at the bottom unnoticed, bringing forth all this manifest grandeur, are rarely appreciated or appraised. Of all such silent forces, woman—the Shakti, the mother—is the most potent and living force, though she remains unnoticed like a fragrant flower that blooms and fades in a forest. A poet has sung the glory of woman: 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'. Too true; for a nation in which the woman is happy and cultured prospers in every way, for she moulds the nation from its childhood. As Manu says: '*Yatra nāryastu pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ*—Where the women are honoured, there the gods rejoice'. The Matsya Purāna also says:

*Tasmāt sādhyah striyah pūjyāḥ
satatam devavat naraiḥ ;
Satīnam tu prasādēna
dhāryate vai jagat-trayam—*

'The noble women should be ever honoured and worshipped like gods themselves; by the grace and soul-power of virtuous women are the three worlds upheld.'

Many such great women—Sādhvis like

Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayantī, Gāndharī, Anasūyā and Lopāmudrā; Brahmavādinīs like Gārgī, Maitreyī and Sulabhā; learned women like Bijjākā, Ubhayabhāratī and Ramābāi; devotees like Āndāl, Avvaiyār, Akkā-mahādevi and Mīrabāi; Jijābāi, Ahalyābāi, Chāndbībī, and Rānī Lakshmībāi in statecraft and military prowess; and Kānnakī and Padminī in self-sacrifice—have appeared now and again on the Indian scene embodying the many-faceted ideals of womanhood, and have remained as models for the woman to mould her life and character and that of the nation. Sri Sri Sarada Devi, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna, familiarly called the 'Holy Mother', was one of the greatest of Indian women, combining in herself the highest ideals of a house-wife, a mother, a spiritual *sādhikā* and a great Guru. About her, Sister Nivedita wrote: 'To me, it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood.' Let us pay our homage to her, and through her to Indian womanhood and its ideals which have silently but steadily sustained and nourished the nation throughout the ages.

Sri Sarada Devi was born on 22nd December 1853 of pious Brahmana parents at Jayrambati, a remote village in the Bankura District in West Bengal, about four miles from Kamarpukur—the birthplace of Sri Ramakrishna, the great spiritual genius and prophet of religious harmony. In May 1859 she was married to Sri Ramakrishna who was then passing through a state of God intoxication. While she grew up at Jayrambati, imbibing and assimilating the Indian ideal of divinizing the conception of the spouse, and eagerly looking forward to the

day when she would be by his side to pour out her devotion and love in his service, the divinely mad Sri Ramakrishna was engaged in intense spiritual Sadhana at Dakshineswar near Calcutta. The rumours that Sri Ramakrishna had gone mad and was behaving strangely did not depress her, nor did she bemoan her lot. Instead she felt anxious about his health and decided that her place was by his side and she should go to Dakshineswar to serve and look after him. When she first came to Dakshineswar in 1872 Sarada Devi was about nineteen (Sri Ramakrishna was thirty-six) and, except for some brief intervals, she remained with Sri Ramakrishna, till his passing away in 1886, in the role of a true Saha-Dharmini (spiritual partner), serving him in every way and becoming a helpmate and a participant in his intense spiritual life.

This period of about fourteen years of her association with Sri Ramakrishna is unique in the spiritual history of India and the world, a period when two great souls, rising above all mundane considerations, led an immaculately pure and chaste life, lifting all relations and activities to a sublime spiritual level. This indeed is the true ideal of married life at its highest, where two souls are in spiritual communion far beyond the reach of any corporeal relations and wend their way towards God. This was also the time when Sarada Devi exemplified in her person some of the great qualities of Indian womanhood—qualities of patience, calmness, fortitude, contentment, and loving service. And this again was the period when she equipped herself for the spiritual ministration of thousands of people who came to her for guidance, either disciples or laity. Theirs was a sublime life which set up the ideal of the householder and the sannyasin at the same time, and it also revealed what should be the mutual relations between husband and wife, and the proper attitude towards each other.

Of this period one may recall the auspicious Shodashi Puja (25th May 1872), when Sri Ramakrishna in an exalted mood worshipped Sarada Devi, seating her in the place of the Divine Mother, with all the rituals—and when the Puja was over both were lost in Samadhi. One may also recall the day on which Sri Ramakrishna talked to her of God the whole night. Both were so completely absorbed in the Divine that they had lost all consciousness of time and environment, so much so that only the dawn could remind them of the passing of the night. One may further recall how Sri Ramakrishna trained her in every way—from the ordinary art of trimming a wick to the highest art of meditation and spiritual Sadhana; and from ordinary social obligations and behaviour with different relatives and different types of persons to spiritual ministraton to varied types of men and women. Was it not this that enabled her in later life to receive calmly and graciously several learned Western ladies like Nivedita, Christine and Devamata, who came to her, and even guide and bless the great disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, never for a moment losing her simple dignity, grace and poise?

The noble sentiments exchanged between Sarada Devi and Sri Ramakrishna during this period fill our hearts with a divine emotion. When she first came to Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna asked her straight: 'Have you come to drag me down to the worldly level?' 'Why should I do that?' came the noble reply promptly, 'I have come only to serve you in the path of religious life and to learn from you.' And she in her turn, one day while massaging his feet, put the question: 'How do you look upon me?' Sri Ramakrishna replied without the least hesitation, 'The Mother who is the Deity in the temple, the mother who gave birth to me and now resides in the Naha-bat—even she is now massaging my feet.' 'My very devotion to God will take wings',

Sri Ramakrishna would say, 'if her feelings are even slightly hurt.' Sri Sarada Devi used to say later: 'Ah, how Sri Ramakrishna treated me! Not even one day did he utter a harsh word to wound my feelings! He never struck me even with a flower.' 'There are dark spots even on the moon, but do Thou, O Lord, make me absolutely spotless' was her constant fervent prayer during these days. Sri Ramakrishna had high regard for her and acknowledged her purity and his debt to her: 'Had she not been so pure,' he said once, 'who knows whether I might not have lost my self-control.'

These are only a few of the memorable glimpses of that ethereal conjugal life. The other aspects of the life of Sarada Devi are not less inspiring. How she lived day after day and year after year in the very small room in the Nahabat at Dakshineswar without the least complaint or annoyance, almost shut off from the outside world and most of the time alone, serving Sri Ramakrishna and his numerous disciples and devotees amidst innumerable difficulties and hardships; and how she would get up every day early about 3 a.m. and having bathed in the Ganga, used to attend to her spiritual practices and to the daily routine until late at night—but always keeping herself pure, calm, balanced and contented—, are details for a description of which the reader may turn to her biography. 'During these days,' she said, 'I felt, a pitcher of joy was always in my heart.'

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi successfully filled the void created by his absence in the spiritual realm. Her true worth and her spiritual greatness were manifested during the course of about thirty-four years of her spiritual ministrations—after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, until she left the mortal world and joined her divine consort on 20th July 1920. To her turned for guidance and advice not only thousands of men and women de-

votees from all over India, and some from the West, among whom a large number became her initiated disciples, but also the great monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who held her in high esteem and reverence and sought her permission and advice in their important undertakings. She was like a mother unto all—nay, she was the very embodiment of the ideal of motherhood—and was lovingly addressed as 'mother' by all, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Sri Ramakrishna that she would be addressed as such by thousands of pure souls. (That was when Sarada Devi's mother had complained that her daughter being married to a madman like him had not had the happiness of being addressed as 'mother' by her children). Her immaculate purity and her spontaneous motherly love have earned Sarada Devi the epithet 'The Holy Mother' by which name all her devotees refer to her.

It was Swami Vivekananda's intention to start a women's Math centring in the Holy Mother, even before building the Math for men. He writes in 1894 from U.S.A. to one of his brother-disciples: 'You have not yet understood the wonderful significance of Mother's life—none of you. But gradually you will know. Without Shakti there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries? Because Shakti is held in dishonour there. Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her the nucleus, once more will Gārgīs and Maitreyīs be born into the world. Dear Brother, you understand little now. But by degrees you will come to know it all. Hence it is her Math that I want first.'

Swami Premananda, another great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, writes in a letter: 'Who has understood the Mother? Who can understand her? You have heard of Sītā, Sāvitrī, Vishnupriyā and Rādhā. But how far above them the Mother has risen! ... What a mighty power is she. ... Don't you

see how many people flock to her? The poison [devotees with past sins who come for initiation] which we cannot ourselves digest, we are sending on to her! But the Mother takes everybody into her lap! Infinite power and infinite mercy. Leave us alone—we have not seen even the Master [Sri Ramakrishna] doing this! Even he used to examine minutely and select disciples! ... But here what do I see? A wonder, a great wonder! She gives refuge to all—she eats the food of all—and everything is digested.'

The Holy Mother was intensely Sattvic. The external manifestations of greatness, which alone people generally understand, are so few in her that her real greatness is hidden from the ordinary eye, like the captivating beauty of a princess behind a veil. Though in a sense the Holy Mother may be considered as the first disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, her renunciation and purity matched that of Sri Ramakrishna and her spiritual realizations were of the highest order, and in some respects she is peerless. All distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, caste and outcaste, man and woman, Indian and foreigner, were absent from her mind. To her all were her children and her love flowed in torrents without any consideration and without stint, breaking through all barriers. Though literally worshipped by hundreds, including Sri Ramakrishna himself and though she had been ministering unto the spiritual needs of thousands, she always maintained utter simplicity and lived like an ordinary woman doing all the household work. Often she used to cook for the devotees and feed and serve them. She cleaned the leavings after Amjād, a Muslim, had taken his food; and the vomitings of another low-caste woman, though she herself came from a very high caste and orthodox Brahmana family, and in spite of her high spiritual status in the eyes of the devotees and disciples. She gave shelter to Western ladies under her own roof without the least

hesitation. The Holy Mother saw the divine in all equally, and her understanding of men and affairs was simply remarkable, though she had hardly any school education. She always encouraged the education of girls and exhorted them to develop character, which is the real beauty in life.

The Holy Mother's teachings are simple, deep and instructive. Here is a sample: 'One must perforce work. It is only through work that the bondage of work will be cut asunder and one will get a spirit of non-attachment. One should not be without work even for a moment'—a teaching which she exemplified in her life. To one who threw a broomstick carelessly after sweeping, she said, 'Even a broomstick should be treated with respect. One should perform even an insignificant work with respect.' This 'treating with respect' even an inanimate thing is indeed a unique idea pregnant with great significance and possibilities. She forbade another to touch a cat with her foot and asked her to make amends by saluting it, for the Divine resides in all. What love even for insignificant creatures! Silence and unobtrusiveness were characteristic of her, and she transformed all those that came to her through her infinite motherly love. Whoever has approached her has felt these characteristics immediately. Sister Nivedita writes to her, in a happy reminiscent mood: 'Dear Mother! You are full of love! And it is not a flushed and violent love, like ours, and like the world's, but a gentle peace that brings good to everyone and wishes ill to none. It is a golden radiance, full of play. ... Surely you are the most wonderful thing of God. ... the "wonderful things of God" are all quiet—stealing unnoticed into our lives—the air and the sunlight and the sweetness of gardens and of the Ganges. These are the silent things that are like you!'

Not to see the faults in others and to appreciate the least good in them was natural to her and was one of her important teachings. The last message of the Holy Mother,

given just five days before her passing away, when she was lying ill and could hardly speak, is very pithy and significant: 'But I tell you one thing—if you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others, rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; this whole world is your own.'

Such is the great life of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna. If Sri Ramakrishna embodied in himself the ideals and aspirations of religious India, Sri Sarada Devi was the very incarnation of the ideals of Indian woman-

hood—of chaste and pure wifehood; of loving motherhood; of calm, balanced, self-reliant and practical attitude to life; of fortitude in suffering; of self-sacrifice and service; of finding happiness in the happiness of the served; and of depth, steadiness and devotion to spiritual ideals; and of imparting them to others without appearing to be a Guru. She ever remained the mother supreme, the Holy Mother. Let us hope Indian women will follow in her footsteps and that the country will see once again the emergence of Gārgīs and Maitreyīs, and Sītās and Sāvitrīs in large numbers.

RAMAKRISHNA'S NAREN* AND NAREN'S RAMAKRISHNA—I

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

I

'It is God alone who has become everything',¹ says Sri Ramakrishna.

It is His becoming which constitutes the whole universe. He has become smaller than the smallest, and greater than the greatest, and whatever is in between. There is nothing whatsoever which is not Gods' becoming.

Amidst the entire gamut of God's becoming, there is a special personal becoming of His. And that we call the Avatar, or incarnation of God.

In the language of Girish Chandra Ghosh, a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, the Avatar is the Divine Outlaw, God could not incarnate Himself on earth, if He were to act according to Law. Law would frown that it did not look nice for God to 'become', for it creates difficulties for philosophy! But God

has His own fancies, fantastic fancies. Hence some kind of artifice became necessary. And this artifice is called 'Maya'. Outwardly the Avatar looks like a man, but the inner content is God Himself. He moves and behaves just like a man—smiling, weeping, hungering, thirsting; or even stumbling and getting an arm fractured—yet he remains the all-knowing Lord.

If God did not imitate man, how could man imitate God?

That especial becoming of God, known and adored by us as Sri Ramakrishna—what is the master-note of the vibrations of his soul? 'The protection of the good, the destruction of the wicked, the establishment of dharma'²—these do not over-much appear to constitute the master-note of this emanation of the Most High. It appears that the main note of this manifest Divinity is to convey to man the all-powerful curative and creative feel of God's love for man. Out of this dynamic feel were to come the fulfilment

* 'Naren', short for Narendranath, was the pre-monastic name of Swami Vivekananda.

¹ See 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras; Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974, p. 345.

² See *Bhagavad-Gita*, IV. 8.

of God's mission on earth. For men to know that the living God is also the loving God, is to have a world metamorphosed. God does not conform or reform; He informs and transforms. He gives his love in a mad way, his blood without asking for price—and salvation as if it were an autumn leaf.

Swami Vivekananda hymns Sri Ramakrishna as the breaker of the world's bondage. In that hymn, which reveals a living, limitless Ramakrishna, there is this expression: '*Chira unmada prema pāthāra*—ever-mad ocean of divine love'. In these few words Vivekananda has given expression to the innermost agony-surge of the Ramakrishna-heart, which is comprehensible only through an inner process of being and living—believing. And Vivekananda who brings us this invaluable intimation is himself a most wonderful expression and conveyor of God's love for man.

But we cannot really grasp the fact of God's love for man unless we accept the truth of God's especial becoming as Man, which is called the Avatar.

We may not be able to comprehend the antecedents of God incarnate, how love propelled His man-making of Himself. But the love He gave to man after being born as a Man, is a fact of history, through acts performed before the watching eyes of men. That this stream of love flowed out of a beginningless, endless source, we come to know from Sri Ramakrishna's own declaration: 'He who was Rama and Krishna, is now Ramakrishna in this body. . . .'³

And why did he come? He came through the compelling force of his own love for man. Shiva became Jiva. What was the necessity of so much love? Now, who is to answer this question? To be sure, however, he is the 'ever-mad ocean of divine love'!

The first act of this divine drama no doubt remains beyond our ken, for we cannot really trace the origin of God's love for man. But when, as man, Sri Ramakrishna became love-mad for God, it all happened before the watching eyes of human beings. What other words but 'ever-mad ocean of love' could faithfully portray that state!

Sri Ramakrishna could not continue the ritualistic worship of the Divine Mother Kali for long. How could he? The great question exploded in his whole being: Was the Divine Mother only a sculptured piece of black stone, or was She also the Mother of the child? 'Mother, Mother, O Mother,' he cried madly—his soul's cry—day in and day out. And the stone image was thrilled and startled into becoming the living loving Mother. And when he thus became God-mad, it came to be known that this 'disease' had no cure. True love of God could only feed on itself and become mad love of God. It could not stay normal or formal. So Vivekananda hymned Ramakrishna as 'ever mad'. No other words could better describe the quality of the Master's divine love.

Being God-mad, Sri Ramakrishna continued more and more to relish communion with God in diverse ways. There was no awareness of how days came or nights went. To be livingly aware of God is to stay in the timeless, undivided by days and nights. Long before, body-consciousness had been blown off like a bit of paper before a tornado. This ever-raging God-madness finally soared into the empyrean of transcendental stillness in *nirvikalpa samadhi*. The sportiveness of the relative, when it reached the Absolute, became like stone—non-breathing, non-seeing, unmoving.

It appeared indeed that now everything would be quiet. But this was not to be, for now again a new storm would arise in Sri Ramakrishna's life. And this happened at the command of the Divine Mother, who urged him to stay on the frontiers between

³ *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1964, (hereafter *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*), p. 594.

the Absolute and the relative for the good of the world.

When, as if like a man, he had become God-mad, at the end of a day he would rub his face on the ground and cry, 'Another day is spent in vain, Mother, for I have not seen Thee! Another day of this short life has passed, and I have not realized the Truth!'⁴ This self-naughting agony was the most powerful capturing aggression on the Divine.

Then at the end of his Sadhana, when the Master realized the fact of his being God incarnate on earth, he became love-mad again. The very same agony returned, but expressed itself in a different sort of a cry. This time instead of rubbing his face on the ground at the end of the day, at vesper-time he would rush to the terrace of a building in the temple premises and cry his heart out: 'Come, my boys! Oh, where are you? I cannot bear to live without you.'⁵

That impetuous, reckless love which for twelve years had madly flowed Godward, now turned manward—the same kind of agony, the same flow of tears, the same feeling of unbearable pain at the denial of vision, and the same sparkling joy when the objective was attained.

In common parlance, when we say 'Godward' and 'manward' we imply two different directions. But he who knows that God has become everything, in his all-embracing love there is no differentiation, direction-wise or object-wise. Still, for the unilluminated, the difference does exist. Hence we think that after the period of the fulfilment of his 'spiritual realizations', Sri Ramakrishna's love turned 'manward'. But, for Sri Ramakrishna it was *one* developing spiritual rendezvous.

Of his love for God, Sri Ramakrishna himself is his own standard. Being com-

pletely devoured by that love, he discovered himself as the very object of worship, as being the Lord incarnate on earth. Loving God therefore amounted to loving the Self. Sri Ramakrishna did worship his own portrait as a symbolic act.⁶ And this loving the Self so much, was only for self-giving.

But if Sri Ramakrishna were God incarnate on earth, what is the meaning of his performance of spiritual practices? The meaning is divine self-giving. Through his own Sadhana Sri Ramakrishna gave himself away to man. How? The goal Himself became the ways, and reached down to you and me, so that by treading the ways, we may reach the goal. If the Lord did not show us the way to reach Him, left to ourselves we could never find Him. The Incarnation, the Avatar, is the self-giving of God to man in a special way—a supremely needed way.

It was for self-giving that Sri Ramakrishna came; and in this self-giving of God to man, Vivekananda was to be his chief instrument. Before Narendranath came to him, the Master had a most revealing vision. And this vision explains more of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda phenomenon and their divine mutuality, than many overt incidents of their lives.

Fortunately for mankind there is a record of Sri Ramakrishna's own narration of this vision. As no summary could wholly convey the impact of Sri Ramakrishna's report we shall fully quote his own narration:

One day I found that my mind was soaring high in Samadhi along a luminous path. It soon transcended the stellar universe and entered the subtle region of ideas. As it ascended higher and higher, I found on both sides of the way ideal forms of gods and goddesses. The mind then reached the outer limit of that

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁶ See Swami Tapasyananda, *Sri Sarada Devi. the Holy Mother*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967, pp. 342-43.

region, where a luminous barrier separated the sphere of relative existence from that of the Absolute. Crossing that barrier, the mind entered the transcendental realm, where no corporeal being was visible. Even the gods dared not peep into that sublime realm, and were content to keep their seats far below. But the next moment I saw seven venerable sages seated there in Samadhi. It occurred to me that these sages must have surpassed not only men but even the gods in knowledge and holiness, in renunciation and love. Lost in admiration, I was reflecting on their greatness, when I saw a portion of that undifferentiated luminous region condense into the form of a divine child. The child came to one of the sages, tenderly clasped his neck with his lovely arms, and addressing him in a sweet voice, tried to drag his mind down from the state of Samadhi. The magic touch roused the sage from his superconscious state, and he fixed his half-opened eyes upon the wonderful child. His beaming countenance showed that the child must have been the treasure of his heart. In great joy the strange child spoke to him, 'I am going down. You too must go with me.' The sage remained mute, but his tender look expressed his assent. As he kept gazing on the child, he was again immersed in Samadhi. I was surprised to find that a fragment of his body and mind was descending on earth in the form of a bright light. No sooner had I seen Narendra than I recognized him to be the sage.⁷

Subsequent enquiry elicited from the Master the fact that the divine child was none other than himself.⁸

It was through the power of love that Sri Ramakrishna brought down this luminous spirit immersed in Samadhi, in order to leave him behind as the symbol, the proof positive, power positive of God's love for men. At the very first sight, the Master recognized the sage in Narendra.

⁷ Swami Saradananda, *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa-Līlāprasanga*, (Bengali), Calcutta: Udbodhan Office B. S. 1342, pp. 91-92 (author's translation).

⁸ *Ibid.*, footnote.

He had descended from the supernal altitudes, in response to the Lord's appeal of love.

From the very first day of their meeting on the terrestrial plane, Sri Ramakrishna remained apprehensive lest he should lose this invaluable treasure. When Narendra came to Dakshineswar for the first time, the Master took him aside from his companions and led him to the northern veranda of his room. Then, shutting the door behind him, he stood before Narendra worshipfully and said with folded hands:

Lord, I know you are that ancient sage, Nara—the Incarnation of Narayana—born on earth to remove the misery of mankind.⁹

Viswanath Datta's son, 'Bile', as Narendra was then called, was completely dumbfounded; he thought within himself: Whom then have I come to see! He seems to be a perfectly mad man!

Indeed he was perfectly 'mad'! How could Naren then know that he himself was also a mad constituent of a grand divine design for the fulfilment of the mission of the Supreme in this world?

The single-mindedness, energy and absorption which Sri Ramakrishna had once employed for the realization of the Divine Mother Kali, he now applied for the sake of Narendra to fulfil the supreme mission of his life. One really does not know for whom he shed more tears—for Kali or for Narendra. As he had spent sleepless nights calling on the Divine Mother, so did he spend nights of agony for Narendra, when the latter failed to come for a few days to him. He felt as if his heart were being wrung at the separation from the disciple. Yet there was not the slightest tinge of worldliness in that relationship.

The intensity of Sri Ramakrishna's love for Naren and the agonies he felt at his separa-

⁹ *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 332.

tion from him, intrigued not only other devotees but also Naren himself. Sometimes he would be greatly embarrassed at the Master's inexplicable love for him. He even scolded him once, warning that, if the Master became so much attached to him, his would be the fate of King Bharata of the old legend, who doting upon his pet deer was born in his next life as a deer!¹⁰

Some of the devotees, again, could not resist expressing great annoyance at Sri Ramakrishna's preferential attention to Naren. 'You are always busy feeding Naren, as if we were of no consequence', said one such piqued devotee.

Hazra who used to live at Dakshineswar and have his seat in the veranda of the Master's room, used to criticize Sri Ramakrishna saying: if he became attached to these youngsters he would forget God. When Sri Ramakrishna once heard these words, he entered in a trice into such deep Samadhi that Hazra became flabbergasted and began to wonder about the possible deep meaning of even the cultivation of 'attachment' by the Master. Why Sri Ramakrishna—who was same-sighted, *samadarshana*—why in relation to Narendranath he evinced special love, began to be appreciated by the people at large, only long after the Master's passing away.

The point was—and nobody at that time knew it, not even Narendranath—that Vivekananda was to be the divinely chosen instrument for bringing about the regeneration of mankind.

And Sri Ramakrishna, who knew this fully well, was not prepared to take any risk in this matter. He knew that this boy was endowed with rare potentialities, a fraction of which was sufficient to make of him a powerful figure in the world; but if this tremendous energy were not directed in a spiritual channel, it might be misused.

Hence, as during his Kali-Sadhana, Sri Ramakrishna now did Narendra-Sadhana, with all the devotion of his heart and dedication of his soul; and everything he offered on the altar of man. That was God's supreme salutation to *Homo sapiens*.

Fear was one thing unknown to Sri Ramakrishna. And yet a real fear once visited his life: this was in relation to Narendra. He was afraid lest he should lose him, lest the world should snatch this darling sage away from his mission in life, the sage whom he had brought down from the supernal regions for the good of mankind. This fear once Sri Ramakrishna expressed in a tearful song which he sang holding the hands of Naren:

I am affraid to speak
And am equally affraid
not to speak
The doubt rises in my mind
Lest I should lose you
(Ah, my Rai,
lest I should lose you.)¹¹

And the initiation with his soul's fire which Sri Ramakrishna gave to Narendra was that of absolute renunciation—without which his life's mission could not be fulfilled.

That Sri Ramakrishna loved Narendranath in a special way was really because the Master was *sama-darshana*—same-sighted. He knew fully well that whatever he placed in Narendra's keeping would eventually reach all mankind. Hence his particularistic attention to Naren, which irked some others so much. It was because Sri Ramakrishna was to make all mankind heir to his accumulated treasure, he loved Narendranath in a special manner. His same-sightedness had to work in a way which would be spiritually fruitful in the lives of millions, over milleniums. He could not afford to be polite and correct: so much was at stake in

¹¹ Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1970, p. 806.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 342.

capturing and harnessing this radiant lad, in terms of the spiritual destiny of mankind!

In fact, such was the intensity of Sri Ramakrishna's love for mankind, that he had grown impatient with himself as well as with time. So, even on the very first day that Narendra came alone (during his second visit) to Dakshineswar, the Master felt strongly inclined to endow Narendra with all the spiritual experiences through a spiritual initiation known in the scriptures as Śāmbhavī-dīkṣā.¹² But Narendra cried out: Oh what are you doing to me? I have my parents at home! What he wanted to

give instantaneously, Narendra was not yet ready to receive so quickly. So he had to wait.

Maya, to be sure, could not bind Narendra; yet having come to stay in the realm of Maya which is this relative world, one was surely required to pay some kind of tax. Otherwise, it would not look right; it would seem quite unnatural.

Thus, what the Master wanted to give on the day of Narendra's second visit to Dakshineswar actually took nearly five years in the giving, which culminated at Cossipore. Then, having given away everything, Sri Ramakrishna became 'only a fakir'.

(To be continued)

¹² See *ibid.*, p. 741.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S INFLUENCE ON SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE *

NANDA MOOKERJEE

Of Subhas Chandra it is said that had he not involved himself in politics, he would have become a great spiritual leader of modern India. This is not a mere speculation; for his words and deeds clearly point to his becoming a great spiritual hero had he not been inspired by Swami Vivekananda's definition of true patriotism which runs as follows: 'Do you feel that millions and millions of descendants of gods and sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about

your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.'¹ To set an example, Swamiji, to quote his own words: 'travelled twelve years all

* The author has recently published an eighty-page booklet entitled *Vivekananda's Influence on Subhas*. In his letter of March 6, 1936, quoted in this booklet (p. 54) Subhash himself acknowledges: 'How shall I express in language my indebtedness to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda? It is under their sacred influence my life was first awakened. Like "Nivedita" I also regard Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as two aspects of one indivisible personality. If Swamiji had been alive today, he would have been my Guru (Master) or I would have accepted him as my Guru. It is needless to add, however, that as long as I live, I shall be loyal, and devoted to "Ramakrishna-Vivekananda".'—*Ed.*

¹ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama (hereafter *Com. Works*), III, 1963, pp. 225-26.

over India, finding no way to work for my countrymen, and that is why I went to America. Most of you know that, who knew me then. Who cared about this Parliament of Religions? Here was my own flesh and blood sinking every day, and who cared for them? This was my first step.²

Not only was Subhas Chandra an introvert, but he was in some respects precocious. Consequently, at an age when he should have devoted himself to sports and games, he was brooding over problems which should have been left to a mature age. This period of acute mental crisis, which caused untold sufferings and agony to adolescent Subhas, lasted for five or six years. His higher self wanted to revolt against the natural attraction of a worldly life and of worldly pursuits.

The questions that tormented Subhas Chandra in his early teens have found very eloquent expressions in his letters to his beloved mother. In one of such letters to her, Subhas writes: 'The essence of human life—a continuous cycle of birth and death—is dedication to Lord Hari. Life is meaningless without it. The difference between me and an animal is that the latter cannot feel the presence of God, or pray to Him, while we can, if we try. So my coming into this world will be of no avail, if I fail to sing His Glory. Knowledge is vast—much too vast—my limited intellect cannot grasp it all; therefore, I must have Devotion now, not Knowledge. I do not want to (reason) argue—because I am utterly ignorant. I must therefore have only Faith—unquestioning Faith—Faith in the existence of the Lord; I want nothing else. Faith will bring Devotion and Knowledge will come from Devotion. ... True Knowledge comes from realisation of God. The rest is not knowledge. I do not wish to lionize the learned. ... I worship the man whose heart is over-

flowing with the love of God. Even if he be of low caste, I am prepared to accept the dust of his feet as something sacred. And, one who shows all the signs of ecstasy at the mere mention of "Durga" or "Hari"—namely, perspiration, weeping, etc.—is undoubtedly God Himself.'³

At that age Subhas realized the hollowness of human efforts to become wealthy. Deprecating this attitude, he adds: 'For nothing we hanker after riches, but we never care to think who is truly wealthy. In this world, one who is endowed with love and devotion to God and such priceless attributes, is the wealthy person. Compared to him even the big kings are like beggars. That we are alive even after losing this priceless treasure is a wonder!'⁴

Questioning the purpose of our education, in another letter young Subhas writes: 'Mother, what in your opinion is the purpose of our education? ... I am unable to understand. After finishing our education we shall lead the life of activity, then go on toiling the rest of our lives like beasts of burden and thereafter depart from this world. ... I am most anxious to know what you would most like your son to be. Merciful God has given us this life, a sound body, intelligence and strength, which are all so precious, but why? He has given us so much, of course, for His worship and His work—but Mother, do we do His work? We hardly pray to Him with all our heart once a day. ... We weep over unimportant worldly things but have not a tear to spare for Him. Mother, are we not more ungrateful and heartless than even animals? Shame on this Godless education! One who does not sing His Glory has been born in vain!'⁵ Arguing further he adds: 'No, it is never

³ Subhas Chandra Bose, *An Indian Pilgrim*, Calcutta: Asia Publishing House, 1965, pp. 117-18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

² *Ibid.*, p. 226.

possible to quench spiritual thirst completely. That is why our sages have said: "O Ignorant Man! Take refuge in Him. Resign yourself completely to Him."'⁶

At that tender age, Subhas came to believe that 'India is God's beloved land. He has been in this great land in every age in the form of the Saviour for the enlightenment of the people, to rid this earth of sin, and to establish righteousness and truth in every Indian heart.'⁷ But being mortified to see the degrading condition of Indians, teen-aged Subhas writes to his mother: 'Where are those high-souled seers today? Do we hear their prayers any more? There is no more of their yoga, their prayers, their worship, etc. It is a heart-rending situation. We have lost our religion, and everything else—even our national life. We are now a weak, servile, irreligious and cursed nation!'⁸

Ideas came surging from within him from time to time, and Subhas offered at his mother's feet the outpourings of his heart. At that stage, he did not know in whom to confide the thoughts that came rushing inside him as untimely clouds in the horizon, and so he sent them far away to his mother. Apparently, his mother could not quench his thirst for spiritual knowledge. The cravings for spiritual upliftment on the one hand and worldly instincts on the other, continued to torment his mind.

When Subhas was a schoolboy, Sri Benimadhav Das, his Headmaster at the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, made a tremendous impression on him. From him Subhas learnt how to love nature and be inspired by her aesthetically and ethically as well. But this was not enough for him. Moreover, Sri Das stayed at Cuttack for a short period, and with his departure Subhas felt very desolate and dejected.

What Subhas required at this time, was a central principle which he could use as a peg to hang his whole life on, and a determination to have no other distractions in life. He was in desperate need of an ideal, which was no mean a job to discover, but he would not give in.

At the height of this mental crisis, Subhas stumbled upon, what turned out to be his greatest help. He came across the works of Swami Vivekananda and found what he was longing for.⁹ Hereby, he got an ideal to which he could give his whole being.

Swamiji's letters as well as his speeches from Colombo to Almora, full of practical advice to his countrymen, inspired Subhas most. The quintessence of Swami Vivekananda's teachings: '*Ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca*—nor one's own salvation, and for the good of humanity'—appealed to him as life's goal.¹⁰

The queen of Swami Vivekananda's adoration was his motherland. His clarion call to his fellow countrymen: 'Say brothers at the top of your voice—the naked Indian, the illiterate Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother'; and his prophetic utterance that the Brāhmana (religious caste), the Kshatriya (warrior caste) and the Vaishya (trader caste) each had had their day and now came the turn of the Sudras, the down-trodden masses, inspired dispirited Subhas whose heart bled at the sight of the deplorable state of Indians.¹¹ Swamiji's concern for the well-being of the masses, his fearless and indomitable spirit, his pride for being born as an Indian, and love towards humanity, enthralled Subhas's heart.

Subhas was barely fifteen when Swami Vivekananda entered his life. 'There followed', to quote Subhas, 'a revolution within and everything was turned upside down.'¹²

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 33.

¹¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 33, 125.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

It took him long to realise the significance of Swami Vivekananda's teachings and the greatness of his personality, but certain impressions were stamped indelibly on his mind from the outset. Swami Vivekananda appeared to him as a full-blown personality. Many of the questions which agitated Subhas's mind, and of which he was to become conscious afterwards, found a satisfactory solution in Vivekananda. He decided to follow the path shown by Swamiji.

Later on, Subhas's mind gradually turned from Vivekananda to Sri Ramakrishna, who preached renunciation of lust and gold as a means for attaining the highest spiritual development.

While Sri Ramakrishna's teachings of absolute renunciation and purity started a battle with all the forces of Subhas's lower self, Swamiji's twin ideal of renunciation and service brought him into conflict with his family, and the then existing social order. His parents wanted to restrain him, but he became more rebellious. He made determined efforts to go on his own way, and practised contemplation and self-mortification. For sometime he went crazy over yogic exercises, but gradually it dawned on him that social service was necessary for spiritual development. Just as Sri Ramakrishna advised Naren (Swami Vivekananda) to serve Jivas (beings) as the veritable manifestations of Lord Siva, so also through the speeches and writings of Swamiji, Subhas learnt the ideal of service to humanity, which included service to one's own country. Since Vivekananda enjoined on everyone to serve the poor—for, according to him, to serve the poor is to worship God—Subhas became very liberal with beggars, fakirs and sadhus; and took to active social service thereafter.

As Subhas approached the end of his school career, his religious impulse began to grow intensely. Here again the teachings of Vivekananda were of great help to him. The religion, which Swamiji preached, was based

upon the rational philosophy of Vedanta, and his conception of Vedanta in turn was based upon scientific principles.

Though Subhas was passing through a period of stormy transition when he left the school, he had by then made certain decisions. He made up his mind to lead a life conducive to his spiritual welfare and the uplift of humanity. He would study philosophy so as to solve the fundamental problems of life, and in practical life he was going to emulate Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda as far as possible and, in any case, he was not going in for worldly career. The philosophy which Subhas found in Vivekananda and Ramakrishna came nearest to meeting his requirements and offered a basis on which to reconstruct his moral and practical life. It equipped him with certain principles with which to determine his conduct or line of action whenever any problem or crisis appeared before him.¹³

For the first two years of his college life he was greatly under the influence of, to quote Subhas: 'the neo-Vivekananda group and our main object was to bring about a synthesis between religion and nationalism, not merely in the theoretical sphere, but in practical life as well. The emphasis on nationalism was inevitable in the political atmosphere of Calcutta of those days.'¹⁴

Politics did not interest Subhas during the early years of his life in the Presidency College. His attention was directed towards two things—meeting as many religious teachers as possible, and qualifying himself for social service. His desire to find a guru compelled him to leave his home quietly with a friend in the summer vacation of 1914 on a pilgrimage to Upper India.¹⁵ Subhas gained valuable experiences, which, apart from opening his eyes to realities,

¹³ See *ibid.*, pp. 45, 47-48.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 60.

persuaded him to give up his craze for finding a guru. If he had found out a guru, he would have merely added to the number of the great ascetics who had never been wanting in the ancient land ; but there would not have been any Netaji as we adore him today. Gradually he turned his attention to emancipation of his motherland first, as Swami Vivekananda had advised a group of youngmen at Dacca in 1901 : '... your duty should be service to motherland. India should be freed politically first.'¹⁶

Although in his adolescence Subhas craved for a spiritual life and prepared himself to undergo all sufferings to realise God, in the prime of his youth he became solely concerned with the liberation of his motherland and his fellow countrymen from the bondage of slavery, ignorance and poverty. Swamiji's advice : '...give up being a slave. For the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote—this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for the time from our minds. This is the only god that is awake, our own race'¹⁷—became his mantra ; and never for a moment did he forget Swamiji's command and deviate from his sacred duty of liberating his beloved motherland and his dear countrymen from the shackles of slavery. Inspiring his country-men to revolt against slavery and iniquity Subhas said : 'Forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the grossest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law : you must give life, if you want to get it. And remember that the highest virtue is to battle against iniquity, no matter what the cost may be.'¹⁸

¹⁶ R. C. Majumdar, *Swami Vivekananda—A Historical Review*, Calcutta: General Printers & Publishers Ltd., 1965 (hereafter *Swami Vivekananda*), p. 119.

¹⁷ *Com. Works*, III, p. 300.

¹⁸ *Crossroads, the Works of Subhas Chandra Bose*, comp. Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta: Asia Publishing House, 1962, p. 343.

Subhas's acceptance of Vivekananda was almost total, and he never forgot the teachings of this Saint-Patriot of India. In the course of his speech as a youth-leader at the Rangpur Political Conference on 30 March 1929, he had said : 'In the work of man-making, Swami Vivekananda did not confine his attention to a particular sect but embraced the whole society. His fiery words —“Let a new India emerge through the workshop and from the huts and bazaars”—are still ringing in every Bengali home.

'This socialism did not derive its birth from the books of Karl Marx. It has its origin in the thought and culture of India. The gospel of democracy that was preached by Swami Vivekananda has manifested itself fully in the writings and achievements of Deshabandhu Das, who said that Narayan lives amongst those who till the land, prepare our bread by the sweat of their brow, those who in the midst of grinding poverty have kept the torch of our civilisation, culture and religion burning.'¹⁹

Swami Vivekananda's heart bled at the sight of abject poverty and ignorance of his countrymen in particular and sufferings of humanity in general. In anguish he roared : 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'²⁰ These soul-stirring words inspired Subhas to declare in his presidential address at the All-India Trade Union Congress Session in Calcutta on 4 July 1931 : 'I have no doubt in my own mind that the salvation of India, as of the world, depends on Socialism.'²¹

¹⁹ *Selected Speeches and Writings of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Govt. of India, Publications Division, 1965 (hereafter *Selected Speeches*), p. 50.

²⁰ *Thus Spake Vivekananda*, Madras: Sri Rama-Krishna Math, 1973 (hereafter *Thus Spake*), p. 55.

²¹ *Selected Speeches*, p. 69.

Although Swami Vivekananda spoke against our blind imitation of Western thought and culture, yet he wanted us to accept and assimilate what was good in the West. Holding a similar view, Subhas said: 'India should learn and profit by the experience of other nations—but India should be able to evolve her own methods in keeping with her own needs and her own environment. In applying any theory to practice, you can never rule out geography or history.'²²

Swami Vivekananda set up the Ramakrishna Math and Mission which is a body dedicated to self-realisation and to the service of humanity. Following Swami Vivekananda's example, Subhas Chandra wanted to establish an association, to be called the Sāmyavādi Sangha, which would 'wage a relentless war against bondage of every kind till the people can become really free. It will stand for the political independence of India so that a new state can be created in free India on the basis of the eternal principles of justice, equality and freedom. It will stand for the ultimate fulfilment of India's mission so that India may be able to deliver to the world the message that has been her heritage through the past ages.'²³

Swami Vivekananda wanted our women to acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. 'In the present day,' he had said, 'it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. See, how grand was the Queen of Jhansi!'²⁴ Even in the most stormy period of his life Subhas did not forget what Swami Vivekananda wanted every Indian

woman to be. He formed within the Indian National Army a women's unit, called the Jhansi Regiment, which had heroically fought the battle for India's liberation in South East Asia during the Second World War.

Swamiji firmly believed: 'India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction but with the flag of peace and love.'²⁵ We find the same note of optimism in Subhas's parting message of 17 August 1945 to Indians in East Asia: 'Never lose your faith in the destiny of India. There is no power on earth which can keep India in bondage. India will be free and, that too, soon.'²⁶

Swami Vivekananda considered India's re-emergence necessary for the benefit of mankind. Otherwise, he said, 'from the world all spirituality will be extinct; all moral perfection will be extinct; all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct; all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force and competition its ceremonies and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be.'²⁷ Subhas also felt the same way, and in his presidential address at the Haripura Congress on February 19, 1938, he declared: 'We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved.'²⁸

To the young men who met Swamiji at Dacca, he had said in a prophetic mood: 'You take it from me, this rising of the Sudras will take place first in Russia, and then in China; India will rise next and will play a vital role in shaping the future

²² *Ibid.*

²³ The presidential speech of S. C. Bose at the third Indian Political Conference at Friars Hall, London, on June 10, 1933. See *The Indian Struggle* (1935-42), Calcutta: Chuckerverty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd., 1952 (hereafter *Indian Struggle*), p. 75.

²⁴ *Thus Spake*, p. 50.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁶ *Selected Speeches*, p. 241.

²⁷ *Thus Speak*, pp. 40-41.

²⁸ *Selected Speeches*, p. 94.

world.'²⁹ Subhas was also convinced of the great role India would be called upon to play in the future, and had said: 'During the twentieth century, Russia has enriched the culture and civilisation of the world through her achievement in proletarian revolution, proletarian Government and proletarian culture. The next remarkable contribution to the culture and civilisation of the world India will be called upon to make.'³⁰

Talking on the future of his mission, Swamiji said: 'If I die tomorrow the work will not die. I sincerely believe that there will be thousands coming up from the ranks to take up the work and carry it further and further, beyond all my most hopeful imagination ever painted. I have faith in my country, and especially in the youth of my country.'³¹

It can be said without any fear of contra-

diction that young Subhas carried forward the task left by Swamiji.

Referring to the policy followed by the then Indian National Congress, Swamiji had ruefully remarked: 'That is not the way to build up Patriotism anywhere. Beggar's bowl has no place in a Banik's (merchant's) world of machine, mammon and merchandise. Everything has got to be controlled and directed by the invocation of human conscience, that is Mahāmāya's voice—the latent energy in man.'³² It is well known that Subhas had rejected the policy of compromise followed by the Indian National Congress, and had adopted a militant path, defying all obstacles, in order to free India from the bondage of slavery. He had urged upon adopting a vigorous and energetic programme for national reconstruction to uplift the Indian masses.

It is really unfortunate that Swamiji did not live to see that at least one Indian dedicated himself fully to translate his dream into reality.

²⁹ R. C. Majumdar, *Swami Vivekananda*, p. 126.

³⁰ *Indian Struggle*, p. 66.

³¹ *Com. Works*, III, p. 320.

³² R. C. Majumdar, *Swami Vivekananda*, p. 119.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA* —VI *To Sister Christine*

27

921 West 21st Street,
Los Angeles,
9th December 1899.

My dear Christina,

After all it is good for me, and good for those I love, that I should come here. Here at last in California! One of our poets says: 'Where is Benares, where is Kashmir, where Khorassan, where Gujarat! O Tulsi [Rahiman?], thus, man's past karma drags him on.'¹ And I am here. After all it is best, isn't it? Are

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

1. When we made an attempt to know the original Hindi verse, some authorities on Tulasidas, at Varanasi, Lucknow, Nagpur and Raipur, were found to be of the opinion that the verse does not belong to Tulasidas. Sri Sandip Ghosh of Lucknow is of the opinion that the verse is a composition of 'Rahiman'—Abdurrahim Khankhana (1556-1627)—who was the Commander-in-Chief and a Minister of Emperor Akbar. The Hindi verse reads:

'कहँ काशी कहँ काश्मीर कहँ खुरासान गुजरात ।
रहिमन ऐसे जीव को परालब्ध लै जाता ॥'

you going to Boston? I am afraid you are not. I have not unsettled any of your plans, have I?—unnecessary expenses? Well, if any, I will make it up. Only the trouble is yours. I am ashamed of my eccentricities. Well, how are you? What are you doing? How are things going with you? Sleep if you can; it is better to sleep than get awakened. I pray that all good may come to thee, all peace, all strength to do and suffer. I have great deal of strength to do, but very little to suffer.

I am so selfish again, always thinking of my own sufferings and paying no heed to others. Pray for me, send strong thoughts that I may have strength to suffer. I know you will. Now I mean to remain a few weeks in this city. After that, 'Mother' knows. I am physically much better now than I have been for months. The weakness of the heart is nearly gone. The dyspepsia is also much better, and very little. I can walk miles now without feeling it in the heart. If this continues, I expect to have a new lease on life. I am so so sorry of asking you to come to Boston and flying away. If you are there, I hope you will enjoy the place and the meetings. If you have given it up—! Well, did you take leave; and neither went to Boston? My! what a bungle! Well, I ask a thousand pardons, if such is the case. Things must look brighter anyway sooner or later. What of this little few days of life!

How is Mrs. Funke? Loads of love for her. How long a leave you get at Christmas? When does it begin? If you feel inclined and willing, write me a long note; will you? But don't tell my friends my whereabouts. I want to be off from the world for a time if I can. Well, you kindly send Mr. Frere's address to Mrs. Bull. She needs it. I had a lecture here last night. The hall was not crowded as there was very little advertisement. But a fairly good-sized audience though. I hope they were pleased. If I feel better, I am going to have classes in this city soon. I am on the business path this time, you know. Want a few dollars quick, if I can.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

28

921 West 21st Street,
Los Angeles,
27th December 1899.

Dear Christina,

So you are awake, and can't go to sleep any more. Good! Keep awake, wide awake. It was good I came here. For, in the first place, I am cured. What do you think of this—able to walk, and every day walk three miles after a heavy dinner! Good! Isn't it? I am making money fast—\$25 a day now. Soon I will work more and get \$50 a day. In San Francisco, I hope to do still better—where I go in two or three weeks. Good again, better say I—as I am going to keep the money all to myself and not squander it any more. And then I will buy a little place on the Himalayas—a whole hill—about say, six thousand feet high with a grand view of the eternal snows.

There must be springs and a tiny lake. Cedars—the Himalayan cedar forests—and flowers, flowers everywhere. I will have my little cottage; in the middle my vegetable gardens, which I will work myself—and—and—and—my books—and see the face of man only once in a great while. And the world may go to ruin round about my ears, I would not care. I will have done with all my work, secular or spiritual, and retire. My! how restless I have been all my life! Born nomad. I don't know, this is the present vision. The future is to come yet. Curious—all my dreams about my own happiness are as it were bound to come to nothing; but about others' well-being they as a rule prove true.

I am so glad you are happy and peaceful under Mrs. Bull's hospitable roof. She is a great great woman. One, whom to see is a pilgrimage.

No snow here; exactly like northern India in winter. Some days, even warmer—cool in the morning and evening, in the middle of the day warm, in the sun hot. The roses are about us, gardens everywhere, and the beautiful palms. But I like the snow, crisp, crackling under the feet, white—white—white—all round white!

I don't think I have anything with the kidneys or the heart. The whole thing was about indigestion and it is now nearly cured. A month more, and I will be strong like a lion and hardy like a mule. The poor English are getting it hot from the Boers. Mourning in every home in England and still the war goes on. Such is human folly. How long will it take for man to become civilized! Will wars ever cease? Mother knows! The New Year is sure to bring about a great change. Pray some good may come to India. I send you all joy, all love, all success for the New Year and many many more to come.

So you did well you think by coming to Mrs. Bull. I am glad. I wanted you to know Mrs. Bull thoroughly. Remain there as long as you can. It will do you good, I am sure. Take heart and be of cheer, for next year is sure to bring many joys and a hundred blessings.

Yours truly,
VIVEKANANDA.

29²

921 West 21st Street,
Los Angeles,
California,
24th January 1900.

My dear Christina,

Just this morning came a short note from you. It tells me the arrival of Miss Noble,³ but nothing further. It was just a how d'you do. Well, I am

2. A paragraph from this letter has been published in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama (hereafter *Complete Works*), VI, 1972, pp. 422-23, wrongly in the name of 'Margot' (Sister Nivedita). The letter has been published here in full for the sake of continuity and original version.

3. Miss Noble (Sister Nivedita), who was then in the United States, was collecting funds for her Indian work by delivering lectures at various places. During the course of her lecture tour she had gone to Detroit sometime in the first half of January 1900; and Sister Christine had helped her there in her work.

not working hard just now, because I cannot get work enough. The first boom is over and people do not want to pay. I am thinking of going to San Francisco. That is a new field. I am tired of working completely, and have lost the zest for work that I had before. Now it is making a living and hardly that too. However, for one thing I am much better in health than I was in the east, not to speak of what I was in England. That is a distinct gain, I hope.

I can walk three miles at least at a stretch. But I am afraid, I have to be careful of what I eat the rest of my days. The healer [Mrs. Melton, the magnetic healer] says I am cured—only a few weeks for nature to work out complete recovery and throw out the poisons for years stocked in the blood. She declares there is no diabetes or Bright's disease. I am inclined to believe her, as she has worked wonderful cures in my presence, and more wonderful diagnosis I saw her perform.

How are you? Moping? I have one other gain more than even health. I am no more despondent. I am perfectly resigned.

I am afraid, I will have to be dependent on others, the rest of my days; and that rest and peace I seek for will never come. But 'Mother' does good to others through me—at least some to my native land; and it is easier to be reconciled to one's fate as a sacrifice. We are all sacrifices—each in his own way. The great worship is going on. No one can see its meaning, except it is a great sacrifice. Those that are willing escape a lot of pain. Those who resist are broken into submission and suffer more. I am now determined to be a willing one. From San Francisco I go to the east. I will call on you in Detroit, if you like it. It will be somewhere in March or later. Don't think I will go earlier east. Even March is very cold. Is it not?

I live with a Chicago lady, Mrs. Blodgett.⁴ She is simplicity itself. She has a little eight-roomed cottage and a kitchen. The life is very simple here. Most time I do my own cooking. I like to fuss about. And poor Mrs. Blodgett sometimes is afraid, things about are too simple for me! If she only knew how we lived in India! The labourers here live in more style than I ever had in my life. Even if I get a million the same style will have to be retained; else, I cannot help the nation. Then we sannyasins must even be way beneath the householders.

What is Margot doing? Do they like her over there? Write all about yourself, Margot, Mrs. Funke, and all other friends.

It is very cold this year in Detroit. I like cold, and it helps me much—except the frightful heating system of the North. It makes my head dizzy. I have no news to tell. Happy I am not, of course, I am not born to be happy—nor do I care for it now. I am so used to the other side. To work am I born, and I will, till I drop down. I am content now, that is all. Even it does not matter if I see my friends ever again or not. I am content and resigned.

4. Mrs. Blodgett had heard Swami Vivekananda's addresses at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, in 1893; and was so impressed by his personality that she had kept a life-size portrait of his in her house at Los Angeles. She had seen with her own eyes the sensation Swamiji had caused in the days of the Parliament.

'Mother knows best', as I always say. How are your sisters ; helping you some? Are you laying by any money? How much did you lose to go to Boston? Write everything.

You liked Mrs. Bull immensely—good. I knew, you would. She is an angel. Bless her soul! They are all going to Paris in April. I am going to cross over sometime in May, and after a month or two of London, will start back for India. You had a funny trip to England! Saw a few streets of London and then back home again. But your landlady made chocolate all right. Very careful wasn't she? Mrs. Funke is a jewel. All blessings on her.

If I haven't got any of this world's goods I have many staunch and true friends ; have I not? Thank Mother for that. That is a great great gain. Cheer up, Christina! This world has no time for despondence, none for weakness. One must be strong or pass out. This is the law. Mother will find out a way for you out of drudgery, I am sure. I pray for it always. She listens to my prayers many times. Cheer up, child! the dark night is rolling back. Not a good deed is lost, and you have many. They will all come out now and bring their fruits.

With all love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

PS—I do not find my address book and have torn up your letter. Awful memory for numbers and streets! So send this c/o Mrs. Funke.

V.

30⁵

1502 Jones Street,
San Francisco,
4th March 1900.

My dear Christina,

How are things going on with you? How are Mrs. Funke and all the other friends? Are you happy or moping or miserable or what? I am getting more and more reconciled to surroundings. My health is better, but not as before. I do not know whether I ever get back to the former vigour. Well, I am glad as it is, as much it is possible to be happy in this world.

Margo has gone to Boston. I am, as you see, in San Francisco, working, working. As soon as I get money enough to pay my passage to the east, I leave this place. It must be very cold there in Detroit now. It is fine here. It is very much like northern India. This month is our spring in India. It is so here. April is your spring, or May—I have forgotten, but April is not so cold as March. Is it not?

5. A little part of this letter has been published in *The Complete Works*, VI, 1972, pp. 428-29, as addressed by mistake to 'Nivedita'. The letter has been published here in full to keep the continuity of thought.

I expect to leave this place in April and start towards the east. I will drop in in Chicago for a visit and would come to Detroit, if you people like it, for a little rest. Thence to New York, etc.

The people here in California have been prepared for me by my writings.⁶ The written words have gone longer it seems. So I find no difficulty in getting crowds. It remains to be seen whether they will retain their eagerness when it comes to pay 50c at the door! When is your vacation to begin? In May, is it?

I don't want to work. I want to be quiet and rest. I know the time and the place, but fate or Karma, I think, drives me on—work, work! We are like cattle driven to the slaughter-house, hastily nibbling a bite of grass on the roadside as they are driven along under the whip. And all this is our work—our fear. Fear, the beginning of misery, of disease, etc.

I am trying hard to become fearless, to be daring as before, and to be careless of everything. By being nervous and fearful, we injure others. By being so fearful to hurt, we hurt more. By trying so much to avoid evil, we fall into its jaws.

What a mass of namby-pamby nonsense we create round ourselves! It does us no good; it leads us on to the very thing we try to avoid—misery. I have been very emotional all my life, and have always suffered myself, and caused suffering to others by my emotions. Now I am getting strong mentally and physically. No emotionalism. It is now doing; now not thinking. Too much of thinking pros and cons leads us nowhere. I am done with that 'treacle', as Goodwin used to say.

What do you do all day—the same routine work? I wish I could have half your patience and perseverance and resignation. Blustering, bustling emotional fool that I am!

This time I am determined to be at rest, within myself first, and, of course, then with the surroundings.

No more work but peace is my quest. I have played my part in life of bustling. Now I take my long holiday and rest and peace. Write me a line now and then; will you? Only even to tell me what you are doing and how you are!

With all love to you, to Mrs. Funke and the rest,

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

PS—I am so silly; got again mixed up between Champlain Street, Congress Street and Alfred Street. So send the letter c/o Mrs. Funke. This time I promise to carefully note down your address, and pen through the old ones. A thousand pardons! This is inexcusable. Is it not? Such bad memory

⁶. The Vedanta Society of New York had published Swamiji's *Jnana-Yoga*, *Bhakti-Yoga*, *Karma-Yoga*, and *Raja-Yoga*, from the material of his class lectures delivered during the year 1895-96. These books had spread in United States, and reached the West Coast as well. From various documents it is revealed that Swamiji's *Raja-Yoga* had become more popular in California than the other Yogas. That is why most of his lectures delivered in California are on various aspects of the *Raja-Yoga*. He must have found this as an easy way of drawing crowds, and earning money for his Indian work.

for places ! Matter has no attraction for me. It is the soul, which I never forget ! !

V.

31

1719 Turk Street,
San Francisco, California,
12th March 1900.

Dear Christina,

Just now received a letter from you through New York. I, the other day, wrote you one c/o Mrs. Funke, as I was not sure which of your addresses in my notebook was the correct one ! Telepathy or foolishness—what is it?

By this time you must have got mine. There is nothing particular about me, except things are going on at the same rate—very little money making ; good deal of work, and moving about. I leave here in April and come to Chicago for a few days, then to Detroit, and then through New York go to England. I hope you are all right. I am very calm and peaceful mentally, and hope to remain so for the rest of my life.

How is Mrs. Funke and the rest of our friends?

With all love,
VIVEKANANDA.

32¹

1719 Turk Street,
San Francisco,
10th April 1900.

Dear Christina,

Hello ! What's the matter with you? Gone to sleep? Have not had any news of you for a long time.

I am getting better every day, and one of these days—say in a few weeks—I am coming straight to say how d'you do. Well, I will be here two weeks more ; then to a place called Stockton ; thence to the east. I may stop a few days in Chicago. I may not.

Beginning of May, I come sure to Detroit. I will, of course, write to you. How is life going on with you? Grinding as usual? Any improvement? Write a chatty letter, if you feel like. I am dying to get news.

Ever yours in the Truth,
VIVEKANANDA.

7. On March 25, Swamiji wrote a letter to Christina, which has been published in the *Complete Works*, wrongly addressed to 'Nivedita'. The letter was written from '1719 Turk Street, San Francisco', and against this address Swamiji has written : 'This will be my address now.' The letter begins: 'I am sorry you are in despondence. You have been bright always. I, the despondent one, am much better. ... etc.' And the postscript reads: 'I am coming to Detroit in April sometime. I am going to Paris ; therefore, must through New York.' For the remaining part of the letter, see *Complete Works*, VI, p. 429.

C/o Dr. Logan,
770 Oak Street,
San Francisco, California,
19th May 1900.

Dear Christina,

How are you? When is your vacation to commence? I am still in California. Hope to start for the east in two or three weeks more.

Write me all about yourself, and how things are going on! How is Mrs. Funke? And the other friends?

Yours as ever,
VIVEKANANDA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna: Swami Ramakrishnananda, a direct disciple of the Master, translated some teachings of Sri Ramakrishna into Sanskrit verse from the Bengali *Ramakrishnadever Upadesh* compiled by Sri Suresh Chandra Dutta, a householder devotee of the Master. These Sanskrit renderings appeared in some issues of a Sanskrit journal *Vidyodaya* during the years 1896 and 1897. This journal published by the Oriental Nobility Institute, and edited by Sri Hrishikesh Sastri of Bhatpara, 24-Paraganas, West Bengal, used to come to the Alambazar Math, perhaps as a complimentary copy, and Swami Ramakrishnananda was its regular reader. It was the Swami's favourite journal, in which he published his Master's teachings, in versified Sanskrit under the title 'Rāmakṛṣṇnopa-deśāvalih' (see Swami Jagadiswarananda, *Swami Ramakrishnananda* [Bengali] Medinipur: Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, B.S. 1355, p. 83). These valuable teachings were copied out at our request by Sri Shoutir Kishor Chatterjee of Calcutta, from the volumes of *Vidyodaya* at the National Library, Calcutta. Sri Sanjay Mandal and his father's friend Mr. Bhattacharya also

helped in hunting up the volumes in the National Library. We are thankful to them for their labour of love. We are publishing these Sanskrit teachings in instalments, along with their English translation. We hope our readers will find them inspiring and illuminating.

On Happiness—I (Editorial): Happiness forms a very vital aspect of human life. On critical analysis it will be revealed that happiness is the motive force behind all human endeavours, in some way or the other. Unending, continuous happiness is what everyone aspires for in the heart of his heart; but due to ignorance man is seeking it where it is not. Just as while traveling in a desert, instead of going to an oasis, one may run after the mirage to quench one's thirst, in the same way man is running after worldly enjoyments to satisfy his 'pleasure drive' instead of seeking it within his own being—the Atman. The Editorial deals with the pros and cons of this subject and places before the readers the words of the wise men, East and West, who have found the way to Blessedness.

Early Days at Shanti Ashrama—V: Again

after a month's gap, we are placing before the readers the story of the 'Early Days at Shanti Ashrama', which has come through the masterly pen of Gargi. During the first six months of the establishment of Shanti Ashrama things went on 'fairly well'. In all, about sixteen students had come there at various times according to their convenience to learn the lofty teachings of Vedanta from Swami Turiyananda, Gurudas, a student of Swami Abhedananda's, and who was later Swami Atulananda of the Ramakrishna Order, arrived at the retreat sometime in the second week of December 1900, and was to stay there indefinitely. As a matter of fact, it was for ardent Vedanta students like him, who wished to renounce everything and practise Vedantic disciplines, that Miss Minnie C. Boock had offered the land.

Sri Sarada Devi—The Divine Consort of Sri Ramakrishna: Sri Sarada Devi has shown by her life the twin ideals of womanhood and motherhood. India has produced many great women in various fields of life; and in Sri Sarada Devi we find the highest ideal embodied. Swami Mukhyananda, Acharya, Probationers' Training Centre, Belur Math, has very lucidly pointed out in this short article her greatness through various incidents of her life and teachings, and through what others have said about her. As her birthday anniversary falls in this month, it is fitting at this time to remember her life and teachings for our spiritual elevation.

Ramakrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramakrishna—I: After a gap of about a year,

we are happy to present to our readers a new series written by Swami Budhananda. Many readers are already familiar with his popular 'Essay on Applied Religion' and other interesting articles. The Swami is at present the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi. This series first appeared in the *Udbodhan* (Pous, B.E. 1370), the Bengali organ of the Ramakrishna Order, published from the Udbodhan Office, Calcutta. The original writing was very much appreciated by Bengali readers, and the Swami very kindly translated the same into English and has contributed it to *Prabuddha Bharata* at our request. In this article the Swami has thrown a brilliant light on the divine personalities of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and their unique spiritual relationship.

Swami Vivekananda's influence on Subhas Chandra Bose: Sri Nanda Mukherjee, who has recently shown his talent to the literary world by his writings on Sri Ramakrishna, Keshab Chunder Sen and other subjects, has nicely discussed in this article how Subhas Chandra Bose's life was chiefly influenced by the soul-stirring ideas of Swami Vivekananda. He has tried to support his view by giving appropriate quotations from the works of these two great souls. We hope our readers will find this article interesting and illuminating. The author has also written a book on this subject of late.

Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda—VI: We are publishing in this issue Swami Vivekananda's letters to Sister Christine from December 1899 to May 1900.

TO OUR READERS

The *Prabuddha Bharata* or *Awakened India* is entering the eighty-third year of its publication with the dawn of the new year 1978. On this blissful occasion we offer our hearty greetings, best wishes and thanks to our readers, contributors, subscribers, reviewers, publishers (who are sending us books for review), advertisers, friends and sympathizers.

Swami Vivekananda's disciples at Madras had started under his guidance and inspiration the *Brahmavadin* and the *Prabuddha Bharata* in September 1895 and July 1896 respectively. Both the Journals were initially financed by the Swami. The former was more scholastic in nature, while the latter, dealing more generally with spiritual matters, has been more suited to a wider readership. Since the *Brahmavadin* ceased publication in 1914, the twin responsibility of providing intellectual and also easily digestible spiritual food, fell on the *Prabuddha Bharata*. Since then this Journal is trying, in its own way and to its best, to satisfy the needs of the intellectuals as well as the general readers and aspirants. Thereby it has made its own place among the Journals of the world, and attained by its efforts a high standard and prestige in the eyes of the readers of various categories.

In addition to bringing home to the readers the lofty teachings of Vedanta and other religions, the Journal is also placing before them the lives and teachings of Sri Rama-

krishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and other direct disciples of the Master for their all-round spiritual and intellectual development. Some articles of general interest are also published in the Journal from time to time for readers who feel that the philosophical matter is over their heads.

The *Prabuddha Bharata* has always served as an authentic reference Journal for research scholars working on the Rama-krishna-Vivekananda Movement in India and abroad. Therefore, many research articles regarding Swami Vivekananda and other important persons connected with the Movement appear in this Journal from time to time.

We have been trying to serve our readers to the best of our ability; even then we are sorry to see that some typographical and other errors have occurred in the preceding volume, which, however, can be easily detected by the readers.

Due to shortage of space many reviews remain unpublished last year. We shall make an effort to publish them during the course of the current year. At our request many scholars and authors of reputation have kindly sent their contributions to the Journal. We hope to publish them during this year. It is a matter of great joy that many, whose opinions count, are appreciative of our services. Our efforts will be really fruitful when every reader feels the same way.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

TANTRAS—A GENERAL STUDY : BY MANORANJAN BASU, Publisher : Shrimati Mira Basu, 50/B, Halderpara Road, Calcutta-700 026, 1976, pp. xvi+131, Price : Rs. 22/-.

Sri Manoranjan Basu in this welcome venture has tried in a short compass of a little over a

hundred pages to present the historical as well as philosophical aspect of the Tantras, and has also attempted to clarify the meaning of some of the technical terms frequently used therein, such as, Tattva, Kalā, Mantra. The attempt is no doubt laudable as no such primer about the

essentials of Tāntrik philosophy is available in English. But unfortunately the author has not authenticated his statements which are in many places very loose and do not conform to the original texts, which are vaguely referred to, but whose actual references are never given. There are, as a result, some gross mis-statements, such as the reference to 'the incident in which Umā, the daughter of the Mountain, riding on a lion in a blaze of light' is said to have appeared before Indra and 'readers of the *Chāndogya* and other Upaniṣads' are said 'to be aware of' it (p. 22). Only the *Kena Upaniṣad* has a reference to Umā Haimavatī but she never rides on a lion there. Similarly the description of Madhavācārya as 'a commentator of the Vedas' (p. 21) is misleading and the reference to the fact of Bhagavān Śankarācārya and his great preceptor, Gauḍapāda as having written a commentary on the *Nṛsimhatāpanīya Upaniṣad* (p. 23) is also disputable.

In a book like this, one naturally expects that the different schools of Tāntrik philosophy will be treated specifically and their mutual distinctions in approach properly highlighted but the expectation is belied. Instead the author sometimes casually mentions 'the Sidhānta theory of experience' (p. 70), or makes a passing reference to Vīra Śaiva (p. 69), or mentions it in addition to the Pratyabhijñā system (p. 95), without enlightening about what these schools actually represent. He also brings in some Western philosophical views such as those of Kant, Husserl and Sartre, which can only delight some students of Western philosophy instead of enlightening the general reader about the philosophy of the Tantras for which the book is proposed to have been written. Even in the delineation of the Tāntrik philosophy the author has sometimes indulged in gross misrepresentation as when he observes that 'Abhinava Gupta characterises the ultimate existence as *sūnyatā*' (p. 90). The author here evidently confounded the concept of *anāsrīta Śiva* with *Parama Śiva*.

In spite of all these drawbacks, the book will serve its primary purpose of enlightening 'the English-reading public both in our country and abroad' by presenting 'the subject in its true perspective' as stated in the Introduction.

It is extremely regrettable that the author has not taken good care in putting diacritical marks which leaves an English-reading public guessing whether it is *Kāla* or *Kalā* that is being dealt with (p. 35ff), and also makes it impossible for him to make out what the actual Sanskrit quotation is, as for instance in page 33 '*mananam*' etc.,

or in page 13 '*sa eṣo*' etc., and again in the same page '*Bhur-ādyan*' etc., with equals sign put in between. We hope the author will apply his mind in correcting these technical mistakes, which have marred this beautiful book, and also give proper references to the actual texts quoted, in the next edition of his book, and thereby turn it out into a really valuable primer of the Tantras for the English-reading public. The author deserves our earnest congratulations for presenting in such a short compass and in the most lucid language the essentials of the Tāntrik Philosophy for the modern age.

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DATE OF MAHABHARATA BATTLE : BY
S. B. ROY, Publishers: The Academic Press,
Gurgaon, Haryana, 1976, pp. 18+226, Price :
Rs. 50/-.

A lot of dust has been raised recently regarding the historicity of the Mahabharata war. The *Date of Mahabharata Battle* is, therefore, a timely publication from the able pen of Shri S. B. Roy. He has critically examined the various methods of chronology, both Eastern and Western, and has rightly cautioned scholars against chronological ankylosis which vitiates a good many historical studies. The author has drawn a fine thread of history through various Puranas and has pointed out their evidentiary value. The author believes that Vyasa, the compiler of eighteen Puranas, had realized the supreme importance of recording contemporary events and with the help of his able disciples, did record the genealogies from Manu Vaivasvata to Parikshita. This record, according to the author, is fairly reliable. The *Mahabharata* from 'Shantanu to Sarpasatra' is a detailed account of events witnessed by Vyasa himself, and is of considerable authenticity.

In the chapter on 'Chronological Framework of Indian Protohistory', the author synthesizes all the techniques, viz, literary, astronomical and radio-carbon and correlates the dates of kings and rishis of the pre-battle period with those of the kings of other countries. He points out that Max Müller, Keith and a host of other Western Indologists erred in fixing the Sutra period as 600 to 200 B.C. in as much as astronomical observations show that all the Sutrakas (from Yaska to Baudhayana) were contemporary and belonged to the period 1400 to 1300 B.C. Here,

the author exploits the astronomical events of visibility of pole stars, only as a mark of certain distant epochs. This substantiates the author's view that the Mahabharata battle must have been fought between 1424-1414 B.C., as it was an event, according to the Western Indologists, of a pre-Sutra period.

In chapter VI, the author draws an elaborate list of kings based on the analysis of the Puranas by Pargiter (*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*). Here he exploits the technique of the simple first order statistical formula, so often used in the estimation of average annual yield from Estate Duty. The Rishis' list, in juxtaposition with the kings' list, makes the chronological picture of ancient India more vivid. The author further studies the three traditional recensions of the *Mahabharata* and analyses the various personalities of Krishna occurring in the *Rigveda*

and the *Chandogya Upanishad*. This is followed by a further analysis of astronomical and inscriptional evidence about the date of the battle. In the last chapter, the author indicates some plausible lines of research to arrive at the original *Mahabharata* text.

The author's chronological synthesis is most convincing. He has meticulously sifted all available evidence and has marshalled his arguments with utmost care. The two appendices on (i) Aryan Invasion and *Rigveda*, and (ii) Kurukshetra, add to the value of the book. A curious reader will find his interest sustained through all the pages of this well-documented volume.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, VRINDABAN

REPORT: APRIL 1976—MARCH 1977

The Sevashrama was started in 1907 under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda's message to worship God in man. From a very modest beginning, it has grown into a well-equipped, modern hospital with 103 beds. During the year under consideration, 18 new cabins, each with attached bath, and a room for the patient's attendant, were opened, thus bringing the total number of beds in the hospital to 121.

Indoor Hospital: The total number of cases admitted during the year was 5,386. Of these, 4,847 were cured and discharged, 301 were discharged otherwise, 143 died, and 95 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The total number of surgical operations (including eye operations) performed during the year was 2,633. On an average, 102 beds were occupied daily.

Outdoor Dispensary: During the year a total of 3,10,003 cases were treated, of which 58,537 were new cases. The total number of operations performed, including those of the Eye Department, was 1,322. Outdoor cases averaged 849 daily.

Nandababa Eye Department: Various eye diseases were treated during the year, the total number of indoor patients being 794, and out-

door patients 8,716. Of these, 1,316 underwent surgery.

Rural Work: In order to make available the services of the Eye Department to the rural population, a fortnightly out-patient Eye Clinic is conducted at Kosi-kalan, a small town 38 km. from Vrindaban. Patients from the surrounding villages utilize the services of this clinic, the average number of patients being 130. An Eye Camp was also organized at this place in January 1977, at which many operations were performed.

Homoeopathy Department: A Homoeopathy department is also conducted by the Sevashrama under an eminent Homoeopath. During the year there were 5,256 new cases and 22,348 old cases.

Other Departments: The Seth Sri Maneklal Chinai Cancer Department was started in 1969, when a ward consisting of 8 beds was converted for the purpose. During the year under consideration, 80 indoor and 89 outdoor patients were treated for various types of cancer. Of these, 44 patients underwent operations.

The clinical laboratory provides arrangements for conducting all routine and some special examinations. During the year 28,788 pathological, 107 serological, and 2,549 biochemical examinations were performed. In the X-ray Department 4,443 exposures were taken. The Physio-therapy Department treated 545 cases. In

the Cardiology Department there were 276 E.C.G. cases.

General Services for the Patients : The Sevashrama has a Reading Room and Library for the patients, containing useful books and periodicals. There is as well a small medical library for the use of the medical officers.

General Relief and Welfare Activities : During the year a total of Rs. 3,628.25 was spent on various types of welfare services, such as pecuniary help to the needy, school fees and supplies for poor students, blankets for the poor, pecuniary help to Harijans for house repairs, etc.

Immediate Needs: Due to the ever-rising cost of medicines, foodstuffs, appliances, etc. the financial position of the Institution is not very happy. In spite of our utmost effort to effect economy, the accumulated loan to be paid to the Hospital Permanent Fund is Rs. 1,71,618.98. Therefore benevolent friends and sympathizers may kindly contribute liberally to the Hospital Maintenance Fund. For paying donations and a detailed report of the Sevashrama, please contact: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, P.O. VRINDABAN, Dist. Mathura, U.P., 281 121. All donations are exempt from Income Tax.

Abandoning without reserve all the desires born of mental fancies, and restraining completely by the mind the entire group of the senses from all directions,

With understanding held by firmness, and mind established in the Self, let him (the Yogi) by degrees attain tranquillity; let him not think of anything else.

Wheresoever the restless and unsteady mind may wander away, let him withdraw it from there and bring it under the control of the Self alone.

He whose passions are quieted and mind perfectly tranquil, who has become one with Brahman, being freed from all impurities, to such a Yogi comes supreme bliss.

Bhagavad-Gītā, VI. 24-27