



VOL. LXXXIII

MAY 1978

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI
HIMALAYAS



Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

MAY 1978

CONTENTS

Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna	201
The By-Ways and Ways to God—I — <i>Editorial</i>	202
Early Days at Shanti Ashrama—VII — <i>Gargi</i>	208
Ramakrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramakrishna—III — <i>Swami Budhananda</i>	213
The Compassionate Return — <i>Dr. Wilbur M. Fridell</i>	219
What is Living and What is Dead in Indian Philosophy (<i>A Review Article</i>)	226
Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda—IX	230
Notes and Comments	236
Reviews and Notices	237
News and Reports	239

Editorial Office

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

Publication Office

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



[Rates inclusive of postage]

Annual Subscription

India, Nepal & Bangladesh	Rs. 10.00
Sri Lanka	Rs. 24.00
U.S.A. & Canada	\$ 6.00
Other Countries	£ 2.00

Life Subscription (30 years)

Rs. 180 \$ 140 £ 40

Single Copy

Re. 1/- 60 cents 25 P.

Information for contributors,
publishers, subscribers, and
advertisers overleaf

Cover : Mount Everest

By courtesy : Nepalese Consulate-General, Calcutta



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXXIII

MAY 1978

No. 3

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

श्रीरामकृष्णोपदेशावलिः ।*

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

सहस्रवत्सरव्यापि तमः-पूर्णगृहोदरम् ।
सर्वत्र द्युतिमद्भाति दीपयोगाद्यथा जवात् ॥१॥
मनोमलं किल्बिष्याख्यं सहस्रजन्मसञ्चितम् ।
श्रीहरेः करुणालेशात् तथा तूर्णं पलायते ॥२॥

1 & 2. Just as a room full of darkness for thousands of years becomes flooded with light the moment a lamp is lighted therein, in the same way the impurities accumulated in the mind in the course of thousands of births as a result of karma, at once vanish due to even a bit of God's grace.

त्यजन्ति सात्त्विकाः सर्वं कथं गोविन्दमानसाः ।
धनं धान्यं यशोमानं पुत्रदारगृहादिकम् ? ॥३॥
विस्मृत्य निखिलान् भोगान् विहाय जीवितस्पृहाम् ।
पतङ्गोऽयं यथा याति प्रदीप्तज्वलनं प्रति ॥४॥
यथा हि मक्षिका तूर्णं तुच्छीकृत्य स्वजीवितम् ।
परमानन्दमास्थाय मधुभाण्डे निमज्जति ॥५॥
तथैतररसान् सर्वान् विस्मृत्य सम्बिहाय च ।
श्रीविष्णुमुपगच्छन्ति भगवत्-परमायणाः ॥६॥

3. [Question:] Why do the Sattvika devotees with a God-intoxicated mind, renounce wealth, property, fame, honour, wife, children and home?

4 to 6. [Answer:] Just as a firefly rushes towards a burning flame forgetting all its enjoyments and giving up even the attachment to its own life; or just as a housefly maddened by joy dives into a pot of honey, not caring a bit for its own life; similarly, the God-intoxicated men, forgetting all worldly enjoyments and renouncing them for good, strive for God-realization.

* See *Vidyodaya* (a Sanskrit monthly), Bhātpāra : The Oriental Nobility Institute, September-October (Bhādra), 1896, pp. 193-99. The Sanskrit rendering is by Swami Ramakrishnananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The English translation is ours.

THE BY-WAYS AND WAYS TO GOD—I

(EDITORIAL)

Although powerful materialistic thought-currents, bent upon rubbing out religion from the face of the earth, prevailed from time immemorial, men had never been wanting who believed in God, and took pride in belonging to some religion. In the last century, both science and the communistic philosophies made such an attempt; but in spite of their being constantly at war with religion, religious men—both rational and superstitious—are seen all over the world, even in the communistic countries. Religion has taken so much possession of the human heart that even the Government of the most scientifically and technologically advanced United States, does not hesitate to mention on their currency notes 'In God we trust'. The reason why religion has so much hold on mankind, has been pinpointed by Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on the 'Necessity of Religion'. He says : 'Every human being, whosoever and wheresoever he may be, has an ideal of infinite power. Every human being has an ideal of infinite pleasure. Most of the works that we find around us, the activities displayed everywhere, are due to the struggle for this infinite power or this infinite pleasure. But a few quickly discover that although they are struggling for infinite power, it is not through the senses that it can be reached. They find out very soon that infinite pleasure is not to be got through the senses, or, in other words, the senses are too limited, and the body is too limited, to express the Infinite. To manifest the Infinite through the finite is impossible, and sooner or later, man learns to give up the attempt to express the Infinite through the finite. This giving up, this renunciation of the attempt, is the background of ethics

[and so of religion too].¹ . . . Religion is the greatest motive power for realizing that infinite energy which is the birthright and nature of every man.'² Man's craving for the Infinite goads him to go beyond nature ; and 'man is man,' says Swamiji, 'so long as he is struggling to rise above nature, and this nature is both internal and external.'³ This is what makes man religious, or in other words, a theist—believer in God.

Even though man is just a speck in the vast solar system, his desires are infinite. In the heart of his heart he always desires unending happiness, eternal peace, everlasting life (immortality), absolute freedom, sovereign power and cessation of misery ; and he discovers sooner or later that religion is the only means for attaining that 'cherished goal'. Man's craving for all these is a natural outcome of his potentially Divine nature. The Divinity within him being of the nature of Absolute Existence (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*), and Bliss (*ānanda*) ; Eternal (*nitya*) and Free (*mukta*), it is but natural, though wrong, for him to aspire for everything infinite in this finite world. His aspiration can only be fulfilled if he takes recourse to religion, because according to Swamiji, 'Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man,' and so the only means to achieve the 'cherished goal'. In support of this truth the Upaniṣads declare : 'By knowing Him [God] alone a man can transcend death ;

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, (hereafter *Complete Works*), II, 1971, p. 62.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

4. *Ibid.*, IV, 1972, p. 358.

there is no other way for freedom.’⁵ ‘One who knows Him becomes immortal in this world.’⁶ ‘The knower of the Atman overcomes all misery.’⁷ ‘By knowing that God men become immortal.’⁸ ‘Eternal happiness is for those and not for others, who are discriminating and who realize Him in their hearts. . . .’⁹ ‘Eternal peace is for those, and not for others, who are discriminating and who realize Him in their hearts. . . .’¹⁰ Thus the Vedanta emphatically proclaims that the only way to realize the ‘cherished goal’, is the realization of the Divinity within and without. That is why Sri Ramakrishna often told the devotees—householders or sannyasins, men or women, young or old—that ‘the only purpose of life is to realize God ;’¹¹ for, his ‘cherished goal’ can only be attained by realizing God. And ‘religion’, according to Swamiji, ‘is [this] realization.’

As a matter of fact even the atheists seek the same ‘cherished goal’ in life, though through materialistic means. But sometime—perhaps in this birth or in some later birth—they will be convinced that it is not possible here. Their keen aspiration for the ‘cherished goal’ will gradually bring them to religion. Let them wander now here and there on the forest-paths. Of course, even amongst men who call themselves religious, all are not conscious of why they should be so. Religion for some is just a matter of routine, a sort of hereditary something to be followed with fanatic devotion, or just a convention and socially necessary thing for getting married or for the last cer-

emonies (cremation). They do not know that religion, rightly practised, helps them to realize their ‘cherished goal’. Such men run after the world with the same feverish attachment as the atheists, and seek worldly prosperity and enjoyment. For convenience, they can be called ‘theistic materialists’; that is, those who believe in God, but want the world or at the most heaven. A Hindu name for such people is ‘*abhyudaya-prārthīs*—those who seek material prosperity taking the aid of God.’ Three types of devotees—the distressed (*ārta*), the seeker of knowledge (*jijñāsu*) and the seeker of enjoyment (*arthārthī*) described by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*,¹² come under this category; and also those who follow the Karma-kāṇḍa (work portion) of the Vedas and seek heavenly enjoyments.

In the opinion of Swami Vivekananda, unless man gives up the plane of matter and rises to higher spheres to seek the expression of the Infinite, that is, unless the power of intuition manifests in him and he becomes a Rishi, he cannot be said to be truly religious. He says, ‘The attainment of this Rishihood, the seer-ship, of the immediate knowledge of the “Veda” is the true realization of religion. Until the aspirant’s life opens out to it, religion for him is a “mere meaningless word” and he cannot be said to have set his foot even on the threshold of religion.’¹³ So, in the light of these words, those who call themselves religious but are hankering after worldly pleasures are not at all religious. One need not, however, feel discouraged by these words, because all that Swamiji expected of such men was that they should struggle for their higher spiritual evolution instead of remaining satisfied with the outward

5. *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, VI. 15.

6. *Nṛsimha-Pūrvatāpanīya Upaniṣad*, I. 6.

7. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII, i. 3.

8. *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, III. 7.

9. *Katha Upaniṣad*, II. ii. 12.

10. *Ibid.*, 13.

11. ‘M’, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974, (hereafter *Gospel*), p. 213; also see p. 406.

12. See *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā* (hereafter *Gītā*), VII. 16.

13. See Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna: The Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1970, p. 323.

glamour of religion. Swamiji no doubt knew very well the weakness of the human mind. What he hated most was a superstitious and stagnant life. Once he said, 'I would rather see every one of you rank atheists than superstitious fools, for the atheist is alive and you can make something out of him.'¹⁴ On another occasion he observed, 'The vast mass of those whose religion is like this, are conscious or unconscious materialists—the end and aim of their lives here and hereafter being enjoyment, . . .'¹⁵ By all these fiery words, Swamiji meant to make of these theistic materialists, real spiritual men; because unless and until one develops real dispassion for the worldly life and moves Godwards, one can never realize the 'cherished goal'.

The By-Ways:

Although according to Swamiji's definition of religion, the theistic materialists are far away from true religion, the Veda takes them in the lap like a compassionate mother, and calls them religious men. Ācārya Śaṅkara says in the Introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā* that the religion of the Vedas is twofold: *pravṛtti-lakṣaṇa*—with a tendency towards the world, and *nivṛtti-lakṣaṇa*—with a tendency away from the world, that is, towards the Ultimate Truth or God. The former is for the material prosperity (*abhyudaya*) of men, and the latter for the attainment of Liberation (*niḥśreyasa*). Both these types of religion are necessary in this world for men of different temperaments. So Ācārya Śaṅkara defines religion as follows: '*Jagataḥ sthiti-kāraṇam prāṇinām sākṣāt abhyudaya-niḥśreyasa-hetuḥ yaḥ sa dharmah*—that which is the cause of this world's stability, and the means for the material prosperity (*abhyudaya*) as well as the spiritual libera-

tion (*niḥśreyasa* or *mokṣa*) of men, is called Religion.'¹⁶ According to this definition of religion, therefore, the theistic materialists also come under the banner of religion.

It should be remembered, however, that by recognizing them as religious men, the Vedic Rishis did not mean that they should remain contented with their present state of life. They too wished that these men should gradually cultivate dispassion and real devotion for God, and sooner or later come on the path of *niḥśreyasa*. As a matter of fact, theistic materialism (*abhyudaya*) is a step in the course of man's spiritual evolution. Today a person may seek material prosperity through God out of weakness; but someday through the blows of the world and his constant attachment to God, there should be a spiritual evolution in him. That is why such theistic materialists can be said to be on the 'by-ways to God'. By-ways are always expected to meet the highways at some point. So those who are on the by-ways now need not lose hope, but should continue their march Godwards, keeping Swamiji's life-giving words in mind.

Ācārya Śaṅkara very lucidly outlines how a man on the by-way (*abhyudaya prārthī*—the theistic materialist) gradually comes or at least is expected to come on the highway (*niḥśreyasa*) leading to God or Liberation. He says: 'Although the *pravṛtti-lakṣaṇa-dharma* prescribed by the Vedas for men [the theistic materialists] leads to material prosperity—for instance, attaining Devahood and the like—, it also causes the purification of one's mind, if the same is performed with a spirit of surrender at the feet of God and without any desire for the fruit thereof. Such a purified soul gradually becomes fit for higher knowledge (*niḥśreyasa*) after passing through the stage of fitness for higher knowledge (*jñāna-niṣṭhā-*

14. *Complete Works*, III, 1970, p. 278.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

16. *Gītā*, Ācārya Śaṅkara's Commentary (hereafter *Gītā-Bhāṣya*), Introduction.

yogyatā), and ultimately he attains the highest illumination.¹⁷ Hereby Ācārya Śaṅkara has not told anything new, but has explained what the Vedic Rishis actually expected by prescribing twofold religion to man. They were fully aware of human weakness. In course of time, however, the theistic materialists forgot this spirit of the Vedas, and their lives became like stinking, stagnant pools of water. And it was to infuse right dynamism and strength in them and to make them move Godwards that Swamiji threw some bombshells on them. Swamiji did not mind if one starts from a by-way ; all he wished was that one should not die on it. It is a sure sign of 'degradation and death' if one does not march forward, if one does not try to make one's life more and more pure morally even after taking recourse to religion.

In the *Gītā*, it has been seen that Lord Kṛṣṇa gives place to the theistic materialists—the distressed (*ārta-bhakta*), the seeker of knowledge (*jijñāsu*) and the seeker of enjoyment (*arthārthī-bhakta*)—at his feet, and says, 'Noble are they all.'¹⁸ But He says that He loves the wise devotee (*jñāni-bhakta*) most. Surely, because he is on the highway leading to Him. Ācārya Śaṅkara accepts that, saying: God grants boons to those (*arthārthīs*) who pray to Him for material enjoyments; He gives knowledge to those (Karma-Yogīs) who aspire for spiritual liberation ; He frees those (Jñāna-Yogīs) who sincerely struggle for Liberation ; and

17. *Ibid.* The Sanskrit version reads :

द्विविधो हि वेदोक्तो धर्मः प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो निवृत्तिलक्षणः च । . . . अभ्युदयार्थः अपि यः प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो धर्मो वर्णाश्रमान् च उद्दिश्य विहितः स देवादिस्थान-प्राप्तिहेतुः अपि सन् ईश्वरार्पणबुद्ध्या अनुष्ठीयमानः सत्त्वशुद्धये भवति फलाभिसन्धिर्वाजितः । शुद्धसत्त्वस्य च ज्ञाननिष्ठायोग्यताप्राप्तिद्वारेण ज्ञानोत्पत्तिहेतुत्वेन च निःश्रेयसहेतुत्वम् अपि प्रतिपद्यते ।

18. See *Gītā*, VII. 16, 18.

He removes the suffering of those (*ārtas*) who pray to Him for that ; thus the Lord responds to His devotees according to their attitude towards Him.¹⁹ These solace-giving words of the Lord will surely save the theistic materialists from being disheartened, and enable them to march Godwards on their by-ways by performing their own duties of life with the spirit of worship to God. Lord Kṛṣṇa assures the devotees, saying, 'Devoted each to his own duty, man attains the highest perfection. How engaged in his own duty, he attains perfection, that hear: From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him [God] with his own duty, a man attains perfection.'²⁰ From this statement it is evident that if the by-way travellers perform their works as worship, they can come on the highway gradually. The examples of a butcher and a woman narrated in the *Mahābhārata*, and quoted in *Karma-Yoga*²¹ by Swami Vivekananda, prove these words of the Lord. Both of them had attained a high spiritual state only by following their own vocations of life in the right spirit.

Hindu scriptures do not condemn any devotee of God irrespective of his station in life (a student, householder, or monk), caste, profession or sex. All that is expected of him is a virtuous life, for morality and ethics form the pivot of higher spiritual life. The Smṛtis prescribe codes of conduct for the student (*brahmacārin*), the householder (*gṛhastha*), the recluse (*vānaprastha*) and the monk (*sannyāsin*) only to make them ethically pure. Even Western Saints like St. Francis de Sales, preached a code of conduct for the married persons, widows, virgins and others, only to make them more and more pure morally. His moral code for the by-way treaders will be very useful

19. See *Gītā-Bhāṣya*, IV. 11.

20. *Gītā*, XVIII. 45-46.

21. See *Complete Works*, I, 1970, pp. 68-70.

for modern men and women of all countries, as they are blindly following the footsteps of Western society, not knowing where it will lead them ultimately. What St. Francis de Sales said can be summed up as follows:

To Married Men and Women : The great Saint points out that 'marriage is a great sacrament' and it is 'honourable to all' persons. The preservation of holy marriage is of the highest importance. Husband and wife should love one another with natural human love. Marriage is meant for lawful birth and bringing up of children. Husbands should have a tender, constant, heartfelt love for their wives, and the wives in turn should love their God-given husbands similarly with respect and reverence. God has created man as the more vigorous and dominant sex ; and it is His will that women should depend on men. If married men wish their wives to be faithful to them, they should teach them by their own example. Wives should also know that their honour vests in their modesty and purity. Both husband and wife should keep the sanctity of the marriage bed. Although procreation of children is the first and principal end of marriage, chastity should be the *sine qua non* of married life. For instance, the elephant is a huge beast but of all animals living on earth it is most decorous, intelligent, and the best example of chastity.²²

To Widows : St. Francis de Sales says that a widow should not only be a widow in body but also in mind. She must have an unshakable resolution to remain in the state of chaste widowhood. She should offer her chaste body to God by means of vows so that her holy vows will protect her from contrary resolutions. She must give up the idea of second marriage. A true widow should keep herself away from all

worldly comforts. A widow who tries out the fashions by which women can entice men, casts the most dangerous bait before her own mind. A devout widow is contented with what God wants her to be. Every holy widow should have perfect modesty and renunciation of: honours, rank, assemblies, titles and all such empty things. She must love no one but God ; and she must speak to no one but God.²³

To Virgins : The Saint is of the opinion that it is their good fortune if virgins prefer to remain virgins for ever, for God is purity itself and loves nothing but purity.²⁴

Pastimes and Recreations : The Saint was naturally aware of the dangers involved in the pastimes and recreations prevalent in Western society. So he gives the devotees a word of caution. He says that although it is sometimes necessary for men and women to relax by taking recourse to some kind of recreation, it is wrong to set our hearts on it. Good and healthy recreations alone are helpful, while games like dice and cards, in which winning depends mostly on chance, are dangerous types of recreation. Similarly, balls and dances are very risky and harmful for devout souls. Even the best dances are not free from poison. Balls, dancing and such nocturnal gatherings usually induce vices and sins ; therefore, things which endanger our souls should never be desired, such as parties, card games or similar amusements.²⁵

Dress : The great Saint has a word to say regarding dress. He says that both devout men and women should dress themselves in 'decent apparel, adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety'. The decency of dress depends upon their material, form and cleanliness. It should be simple, modest and least pompous.²⁶

22. See St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. John K. Ryan, New York : Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972, pp. 219-29.

23. See *Ibid.*, pp. 230-34.

24. See *Ibid.*, p. 234.

25. See *Ibid.*, pp. 207-12.

26. See *Ibid.*, pp. 191-93.

These instructions of St. Francis de Sales will be beneficial to all men and women irrespective of their caste, creed, colour or nationality, if they want to be more moral. They will surely help them to come from the by-ways to the highway of spirituality, by making their lives pure.

Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna :

In the modern age, Sri Ramakrishna has given a very significant message for the travellers on the by-ways. He is more liberal and compassionate to them than his chief apostle. But he too disliked the lukewarm attitude of his disciples in their struggle for higher life. He did not mind even if the householders lived with their wives and children, but if he knew that someone was not struggling hard he would shout, 'Oh, dive deep, dive deep!—*dube jā, dube jā.*' He showed a very practical by-way for modern man. He was fully aware of the fact that 'man cannot renounce the world even if he wishes, because he is thwarted by the karmas that are bearing fruit in the present birth and by the impressions of previous actions left on the mind.'²⁷ To his householder devotees Sri Ramakrishna said :

Whether a man should be a householder or a monk depends on the will of Rama. Surrender everything to God and do your duties in the world. What else can you do?²⁸

Blessed indeed is the householder who performs his duties in the world, at the same time cherishing love for the Lotus Feet of God. He is indeed a hero. . . . But a man must practise some spiritual discipline in order to be able to lead a detached life in the world. It is necessary for him to spend some time in solitude—be it a year, six months, three months or even one month. In that solitude he should fix his mind on God and pray with a long-

ing heart for love of God. He should also say to himself : 'There is nobody in this world who is my own. Those whom I call my own are here only for two days. God alone is my own. He alone is my all in all. Alas, how shall I realize Him?'²⁹

Whatever path you may follow, you must pray to God with a restless heart.³⁰

Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all—with wife and children, father and mother—and serve them. Treat them as if they were dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you. A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as 'my Rama' or 'my Hari'. But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all.³¹

Why should you renounce everything? You are all right as you are, following the middle path—like molasses partly solid and partly liquid.³²

Yes, you can perform them [worldly duties] too, but only as much as you need for your livelihood. At the same time, you must pray to God in solitude, with tears in your eyes, that you may be able to perform those duties in an unselfish manner. You should say to Him : 'O God, make my worldly duties fewer and fewer ; otherwise, O Lord, I find that I forget Thee when I am involved in too many activities. . . .'³³

The renunciation of 'woman and gold' is meant for the sannyasi. He must not look even at the picture of a woman. . . . But this renunciation is not meant for householders like you. It is meant only for sannyasis. You may live among women, as far as possible in a spirit of detachment. Now and then you must retire into solitude and think of God. Women must not be allowed there. You

²⁷. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1971, p. 81.

²⁸. *Gospel*, p. 618.

²⁹. *Ibid.*, pp. 842-43.

³⁰. *Ibid.*, p. 854.

³¹. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

³². *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³³. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

can lead an unattached life to a great extent if you have faith in God and love for Him. After the birth of one or two children a married couple should live as brother and sister. They should then constantly pray to God that their minds may not run after sense pleasures any more and that they may not have any more children.³⁴

Whatever may be a householder's profession, it is necessary for him to live in the company of holy men now and then. If a man loves God, he will himself seek the company of holy men.³⁵

A holy man who has renounced the world will, of course, chant the name of God. . . . But it is a great deal to his credit if a householder utters the name of the Lord. . . . An unchaste woman attends to the minutest duties of the world, but her mind always dwells on her paramour. The constant company of holy men is necessary. The holy man introduces one to God.³⁶

From the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna cited above, it is evident that he did not mind

anybody's being on the by-way, but all he wished was that the person should struggle for his spiritual progress instead of remaining satisfied with his present condition of life. He gave the householders due concession—not licence—to live with their wives and children, but asked them to perform their duties with unselfish attitude. He also taught them not to beget more than one or two children, and urged them to go into solitude and seek the company of the holy from time to time, in order to intensify their dispassion for the world and longing for God-realization.

This was always the principle whenever the scriptures allowed *abhyudaya*—theistic materialism—to the weaklings. March from the by-ways to the highway was always expected of them; otherwise, how could the by-way traveller ever attain the 'cherished goal'? There is no harm in walking on the by-ways, but it is surely discreditable if one prefers to die there. This is the message of all scriptures and the great souls.

(To be concluded)

³⁴. *Ibid.*, pp. 853-54.

³⁵. *Ibid.*, p. 872.

³⁶. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

EARLY DAYS AT SHANTI ASHRAMA —VII

GARGI

(Continued from the February 1978 issue)

7

After the middle of July, there was a coming and going at the Ashrama, best told by Swami Turiyananda himself. His next letter to Shanti was dated July 17 :

Dear Shanti,

Your much wished for letter came duly to hand. Many thanks for the same. I have not heard from Swami Abhedananda again. Have heard from

Dhira. She writes Dr. Logan met S.A. in Chicago. He also invited Abhedananda to be his guest when in S.F. The V[edanta] S[ociety] there [is] going to make fitting arrangement for his reception and lectures. So I am glad and contented on that head. Mrs. Hickok, Sadhu Charan and Mr. Pingri have left the Ashrama for the city of S.F. Sadhu goes to the east to see his old parents. Gurudas has accompanied the party up to San Jose but comes back in a day or two. Atmarama [Dr. Adams] is doing

well. So also Mr. Horning. A new-comer has joined in—Miss Yoark of Sacramento. Another will be coming soon. You know of him. Mr. Whillock. Ujvala [Ida Ansell] will go back to the city soon. Sumati [Margaret McConochie] is not very certain of staying long. Mother knows what She is doing. Why should I question anything? Mother's work one can do from anywhere, why only from the Ashrama? I am sure wherever you might be you will be doing Mother's work. Mother knows what is best so does not care to manage things according to our ways. I have given to Atmarama some money to meet his immediate demands. Have given some to Sadhu also. As long as I have I will not withhold. Mother will see to what takes place next. I heard from Helen too. I am glad your friend is getting interested in Vedanta philosophy. She needs be broadened. I am sorry you suffered so much from Miss Muller's company. I will tell you sometime her history. It is excellent you have burnt her letter. That was as it should have been. I have heard from Miss McLeod again. She is still in Japan. Swamiji may come to Japan soon. But don't tell this to any body. For it is not at all certain. I am getting very much clannish since you have left and feel the necessity of becoming the more so every day. No more wasting time. Let us speak out once for all at once that we belong to Sri Ramakrishna and to Sri Ramakrishna alone because in him is the fulfilment of all the Incarnations of the Divinity in the past. Let this be your daily prayer Shanti that I can prove myself as the true son and servant of Sri Ramakrishna in life and in death.

Hoping to hear from you again soon, with best wishes and love.

Yours in the Mother
Turiyananda

P.S. Did you see Swami (?) Abhoyananda at all? I am told Mrs. Wilmot invited her to come to the city and she is now lecturing there under the auspices of the Theosophical Society. Poor Mrs. Wilmot exerting all her powers in this her old age in wrong direction not

knowing in the least that it is hard for her 'to kick against pricks'. May Mother awaken her. Chintasati [Miss Lucy Beckham] I am very sorry is labouring under false impressions about my attitude towards her. It is the creation of her own mind. She thinks I believe that I have been disappointed in her and as she had a very great opinion about herself she is hesitating coming near me.

This letter calls for some footnotes :

Of Mrs. Frances Hickok, Ida Ansell wrote in 1932 to Mr. Allan, who was at that time collecting material for a history of the Ashrama : '[She] had lovely experiences at the Ashrama. She should have interesting things to tell you. Swami [Turiyananda] said he had given her the best that he had, and she told how she was permitted to live for a few moments in each of the students there. She was one of the two people Swami had met in the West, he said, in whom the Sattva quality was manifesting a little. The other was Mr. [Paul] Militz [the husband of Annie Rix Militz and an independent spiritual teacher in Oakland].' A few months earlier Mr. Allan had, in fact, written to Mrs. Hickok for information about her stay at the Ashrama. Her reply had been disappointing. She had remembered some of the students who were there in the summer of 1901 and named them. 'It was very hot,' she had added.

Of Mr. Horning, whose first name is not recorded but whose initials were F. C., one knows only that he remained at the Ashrama until December of 1901 and was a friend of the Vedanta Society until 1903, after which time he vanishes from the records and from our sight.

Miss Yoark (spelled variously Yoark, Yoerk, and York) of Sacramento is listed among those who were members of the San Francisco Vedanta Society on March 1 of 1903. Her first name was Caroline, and her Sanskrit name (given by Swami Turiyananda) was Nandini ('daughter'). Having arrived at the Ashrama in mid-July,

she remained until September, when she left with the Swami.

Mr. Whillock was most probably Mr. Wheelock, whose first name is unknown to us. It would appear from a following letter that he was a friend of the Aspinalls' and a man of some means. He came to the Ashrama at the end of July and remained until mid-September. Like Mr. Horning, he thereafter disappears from our view.

Miss Müller was undoubtedly Henrietta Müller of England, who had at first followed Swami Vivekananda and later turned against him. Like the conduct of many who betray a once-loved religion and a once-revered spiritual teacher, her action seems to have bordered on the diabolical. Not content with private gossip, she went about giving lectures wherever she could in denunciation of India, Hinduism, Hindu monks in general, and, by implication, if not explicitly, of Swamiji in particular. In 1901 Swami Abhedananda attempted, without success, to calm Miss Müller down. On May 3, he wrote in his diary :

At 10:30 a.m. I called on Miss Müller in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in N.Y. city. Miss Müller was a Theosophist at first [and] became an admirer of S.V. [Swami Vivekananda]. She paid my passage from Calcutta to London [in 1896] S.V. and I were her guests in her house at Wimbledon, a suburb of London. She came to India later on and turned against S.V. called him a Black Magician and publicly denounced him. She came to Boston and lectured against S.V. and Vedanta. Dr. Janes wrote to me what could be done to stop her. I wrote to him not to pay attention to her remarks for she was unbalanced and that I would try to see her when she came to N. Y. Thereafter I called on her & had a long talk with her. She said that India was a God forsaken country & that she had lost her faith in S.V. She believed in the Mahatmas of the Theosophists, etc. When I reminded her that she paid my passage to London and she was so kind and generous to us,

she replied [she had] made a mistake and that she would never do it again.

...

Dr. Janes, who 'had the curiosity' (he said) to attend one of Miss Müller's lectures in Boston in March of 1901, had himself come to the conclusion that she was 'an unbalanced person'. 'The whole address', he wrote to Mrs. Bull, 'was to me a study in pathological psychology.' It would seem that Miss Müller subsequently travelled as far as southern California, there to upset Mrs. Hansbrough, who, one imagines, spoke her mind. Later on, she made her residence in Washington, D.C., where, in January of 1906, she died of pneumonia.

Swami Abhayananda, to whom Swami Vivekananda had given sannyasa at Thousand Island Park in 1895, was, regrettably, of like bent. For reasons best known to herself, she had attempted to do harm to his work. She had been well received in India in 1899 as Swamiji's Western monastic disciple, but while there had taken offence at some fancied slight. Returning to Chicago, where she had a centre of her own, she began her anti-Vivekananda campaign, extending it (in July of 1900) to San Francisco. ('She came to warn us not to have anything to do with Swami Turiyananda or the Vedanta teachings,' Mrs. French later recalled, and added, 'She failed to shake our faith.') A little later Abhayananda, it would appear, similarly attempted to warn the Vedanta students in Los Angeles, with similar results. (In 1902 she returned to India, where she became a follower of Sri Chaitanya—that is to say, a member of a Vaishnava sect.)

Why Mrs. Wilmot, who had resigned the presidency of the San Francisco Vedanta Society in April of 1901 but also remained an active member through 1902, invited Abhayananda back to San Francisco in the summer of 1901 one does not know and cannot begin to guess. One is reminded, however, of a story relating to Mrs. Wilmot's

religious background and Swami Vivekananda. The incident was told by Mrs. Hansbrough.

‘Just as we were preparing dinner in the Turk Street flat,’ she related, ‘a Mrs. Wilmot, a Theosophist who had been coming to Swamiji’s lectures, phoned and asked him if he could come to see her. She said she felt she was losing her mind, that she was having trouble with the “elementals”. “No,” Swamiji said, “we are just preparing dinner. You come over here. Bring the elementals and we will fry them for dinner !”’

Continuing with our footnotes to Swami Turiyananda’s letter : his remark, ‘I am getting very much clannish since you have left and feel the necessity of becoming more so everyday. No more wasting time. . .’ leads one to believe that conflicts between the Home of Truth people and the Vedantins were still arising, that they had, indeed, reached a point where a strong stand was essential, for a babble of ideas was not universality ; at best, it was a distraction from the true purpose of the Ashrama—the realization of oneself as Spirit—at worst, it was disruption of the entire experiment. How this conflict was resolved in Swami Turiyananda’s time—if it *was* resolved—we do not know. And that ends our footnote to his letter of July 17.

On July 28, Swami Turiyananda again wrote to Shanti :

My dear Shanti,

Your very dear letter is to hand. You don’t know how happy I was to find Swamiji’s letter contained in it. May Mother bless you dear Shanti always. I got a letter from Dhira yesterday. Abhedananda has not come to the city yet. They are preparing his way nicely. Mother is working sure. Chetana [Miss Bell] wants to come. I have asked her not to use her own self-will but to ask Mother to arrange everything. Mother’s will be done anyway. Mr. Aspinall has left the Ashrama for San Diego [a then small city south of Los Angeles]. May come back. He saw Mr. Whelock and

pressed him to come here. I clearly see they (Mr. & Mrs. Aspinalls) have the strongest idea in their mind to make this Ashrama a place of public charity. You understand what I mean. The old old thought ‘we must have money to live here.’ But why should we live here for money. Let us live for Mother and money should come and if it does not, She knows. We have not been in want up to this time. You told the truth when you said, ‘Your work needs no money. It will go on without money.’ They cannot understand this, I am so sorry. They won’t leave any stone unturned to make the Ashrama a business principle. Woe unto the business instinct in this land which enters into religious institution even. I leave every thing to Mother. She will direct me rightly. Of that I am confident. I heard from Mrs. Dr. Plumb also. She wrote about your sending some money to her for my books. Mr. Petersen brought me the Webster so I don’t need the dictionary any more. Received a letter from Helen too. She is going to enjoy her two weeks’ vacation with the family in the beach. It will do them good. Sadhu [George Roorbach] did not disappoint me at all. I asked him to go. I would drop the Ashrama altogether Shanti if I have to depend on any *person* for it and not on Mother and Mother alone. Be sure of it. Yes I know Sadhu shall improve by being away from here. Chintasati [Miss Beckham] wrote me to say she was coming to the Ashrama when Abhedananda comes at least to see me if not to stay here for long. Mother knows I do not. I am so glad you have written to Swamiji about our work and place. I think he will be here again before very long. Sri Ramakrishna’s mission is going to do its work in America first and then to the whole world. This faith is growing stronger in me every day. May Mother bless the souls that will help in this universal work. All are doing well here.

With best wishes and love

Yours in the Mother
Turiyananda.

P.S. I have not very well understood Swamiji’s letter. Who is the Madame

he speaks about 'quietly gone back to her Home of Truth work'? Is it Mrs. Aspinall?

The answer to Swami Turiyananda's postscript is yes, Mrs. Aspinall. In asking about her, Swamiji evidently did not know that she had spent and was continuing to spend much time at the Ashrama. The Aspinalls, however, were indeed keeping up their Home of Truth work. It was because of this that Mr. Aspinall had made a trip to San Diego, where, as one reads in *Unity* magazine, he had the previous year reopened the San Diego Home of Truth and installed two directors therein. In the summer of 1901 he was no doubt paying the Home a supervisory visit. Having done so, he returned to the Ashrama, bringing with him Mr. Wheelock, the prospective donor.

The last letter Swami Turiyananda wrote to Mrs. Hansbrough during this second period at the Ashrama was dated August 15, 1901 :

My dear Shanti,

Your kind letter came duly to hand. Swami Abhedananda came here and stayed only for a week. It has been so hot and he left for Yosemite. He goes back to S.F. before he is expected in Los Angeles. I have written to Helen. Miss Boock has written to the Swami and he intends going at her first. I don't think he is going to give any public lecture at all. At least he said he would not. [Swami Abhedananda changed his mind in this regard. He lectured in San Francisco at Union Square Hall, Sunday, September 1, 1901, on 'What is Vedanta?' and on the evening of September 6 before the Philosophical Union of the University of California in Berkeley.] He asked me to go to San Francisco and work there improving the Society and not to waste my time and energy in this Ashrama work. But as I did not see any reason to give it up I could not listen to what he said. I thank you for sending Swami Brahmananda's letter. Please give him my love when you write to him. I hear

that Swamiji and Swami Saradananda are coming to Japan soon. I think Saradananda at least will be in this country before long. I hope you are doing well in every way. We are getting along pretty well. Ujvala [Ida Ansell] has gone back to San Francisco. Chetana [Miss Bell] has come in. She is feeling better. I had a nice talk with Abhedananda. His New York work is progressing fast. He is going to send for a Swami in [from] India next year to assist him. He thinks another Swami in this coast is also necessary. Mother will see to it. It is so hot here. Don't feel like doing much anything. Herewith I send you back S. Brahmananda's letter. With best wishes and love as ever I remain

Yours in the Mother
Turiyananda.

Swami Abhedananda had, indeed, little use for Shanti Ashrama. Later, on October 8 of this same year, he wrote from New York to Swami Vivekananda, expressing his views of the place. 'I was in great despair in finding out the location of the Ashrama,' he wrote. 'It is a very inaccessible place; it is very hot in summer and equally cold in winter. The inmates of the Ashrama live on tinned vegetables and fruits. They cannot grow anything there and nothing is available in the neighbourhood. All their essential things come from San Jose which is at a distance of 40 miles. I think the Ashrama will not be effective at that site.'*

During his stay at the Ashrama Swami Abhedananda had evidently minced no words. 'It was a great shock to us,' Ida Ansell wrote in her memoirs, 'when we discovered that even the Swamis did not always agree. Swami Abhedananda did not approve of the Ashrama. He thought it too far away and not practical for many rea-

* *Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda*, Calcutta : Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, X, 1970, p. 106.

sons. "They are not ready for this," he said. Swami Turiyananda's reply was, "We shall make them ready." And how hard he had tried to do so!

Early in September, exhausted, ill, and badly in need of a vacation, he left the Ashrama for Donner Lake, a rustic resort area in the High Sierra, not far from the

better known and very much larger Lake Tahoe. Accompanied by Caroline Yoark and Dr. Adams, the Swami stayed in the mountains for about five weeks and then went directly to San Francisco, where he arrived on the evening of Saturday, October 12.

(To be continued)

RAMAKRISHNA'S NAREN* AND NAREN'S RAMAKRISHNA—III

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

(Continued from the February 1978 issue)

5

Narendra was most fascinated by the dream of staying immersed in bliss in the cave of Samādhi, but Sri Ramakrishna did not much encourage him to get drowned in the fathomless depths of divine bliss with eyes closed in meditation. Being born perfect in meditation (*dhyāna-siddha*), that was Narendra's natural state. Sri Ramakrishna taught him in a special manner how to see with open eyes God going about everywhere. The purpose in doing so was to see that the treasure he was to keep as trust with Naren, might reach all. Instead of allowing Narendra to become unconscious with the peace of beatitude, he set his heart aflame with supreme love for God and man, God in man. At the feet of the common man he made the offering of this uncommon man. He who deserved worship, him he turned into a worshipper. He made the emperor a beggar.

There is a saying of Sri Ramakrishna which implies that with the knowledge of Brahman in your personal experience, you can go wherever you like and do whatever you like. Wherever you go then and

whatever you do, will be only for the good of all. This he indeed got done by Narendra, making him mad with the all-devouring urge to immolate himself in the service of mankind. This explains the unprecedented phenomenon of a Knower of Brahman (*Brahmajñāni*) hobnobbing with all with such ease in parlours, meetings, societies, and involving himself with problems inner and outer of the common man. Who has ever seen such a *Brahmajñāni* evincing not only abiding interest in eternal values as is expected of him, but taking such keen interest in current day to day brass-tack problems of the common man, of his food and clothes, of social issues, and all for making his highest manifestation possible?

Narendra as Vivekananda once said: 'I am a socialist.' His socialism, however, is the derivative of his *Brahmajñāna*. In that there is no politics or economics that binds, but obedience to the laws of reality, the divinity and dignity of human soul, and the provisions for universal temporal well-being and ultimately realization. The

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

socialism of Vivekananda is verily an expression of God's love for man expressed in those terms of reference. This is also an expression of Sri Ramakrishna's modernity, of his not being a cross-grained sadhu.

The foundation of that social philosophy of Vivekananda which addresses itself to solving the problems of the individual and the masses, is squarely laid on the fact that the individual soul is identical with the Supreme Spirit. Thus he brought the Vedanta of the forest to the habitation of men, like waters of the Ganga through sluice-gates and canals to the fields of farmers for raising a golden harvest. He transformed the forbidding and fruitless scholasticism of Vedanta into the free flow of delicious life-giving nectar.

All strength is within you. And solutions of all problems are in that strength, which is truly yours. Even if the whole universe is pulverized no one can take away that strength from you, because the very universe is the manifestation of the same strength. Why are you weeping? Open your eyes, stand up and declare in thundering voice : Soham ! Soham ! I am He ! Arise, Awake, move on, stop not till the goal is reached ! Awake, move on, do not look back. Look onward and forward, inward, and Godward. Do not yield to unmanliness. Shake off this shameful faint-heartedness. Kick the ground and arise, O conqueror of all opposition. All powerful you are ; how could unmanliness behove you? Throw out this despicable weakness, the root of all sin and evil. Be absolutely fearless, absolutely fearless. Have nothing to do with fear. Be a hero, conqueror of foes, inner and outer. Like a lion breaking the cage and striding out of it, break all bondages and stride out in the forest of freedom. Blast the prison bars of ignorance and emerge into the supreme joy of self-realization. There is no higher expression of love of God than to quicken in the awareness of everyone this call of Freedom.

This was why Vivekananda propagated the life-giving message of Vedanta to the multitude and this, to be sure, was a powerful and clear outflow of God's love for man.

And what a message, that ! Swami Turiyananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to say: 'On hearing the words of Swamiji even a dead man would sit up as it were.' There is so much life-giving inspirational power in his words. Is there even a single man anywhere in the world, who after hearing a few words of Vivekananda, did not feel the powerful inflow of a new strength within himself? All the upward and forward movement in the history of modern India is the proof positive of the power of Vivekananda's words. His words are constituted of the letters of the same alphabet we use. But wherefrom comes so much power in his words? It came from the fact that Sri Ramakrishna transmitted all his realizations and powers to Vivekananda and became a 'fakir'. Words of Vivekananda are the remanifestation of Ramakrishna. This entering into the life of human beings as the power of words is indeed a new frolic of God's love for man ! If 'Word' could become flesh, flesh again could become Words. Vivekananda's message is God become Words.

If all the wealth of the world belonged to one man, even then all his wants and desires would not be satisfied. But if He who stays hidden behind the body and the mind of the individual is awakened, then nothing remains for him unattained. So easy is the solution of all problems. But how difficult have we not rendered them all ! And so the eternal message of India is not the conquest of empire, but that of regaining the sovereignty of Self. He who conquers the Self conquers the world. He who shows the way of attaining the sovereignty of the Self, he is a greater benefactor.

than an ordinary giver of wherewithal for this today and that tomorrow. Through the medium of Vivekananda, Ramakrishna reached every home to teach the skill of actualizing that sovereign gain. Look, and see what has been brought to your heart, and you will be fulfilled. Setting aside all formalities of doctrinal approach, without asking even about the competency for learning, Vivekananda gave to all the essence of all scripture, Veda and Vedanta, finding fullest expression in the form of simple teachings of Ramakrishna. In this our modern age, who else has done such a great act of benefaction to mankind?

6

From the standpoint of God's love for men, there is a strategic significance in the fact that Vivekananda did not find the solution of Indian problems in India. It was indeed Love's strategy. First, through Vivekananda Ramakrishna had spread all over India. Then appearing before him in a vision as walking over the waves of the ocean, the Master commanded his disciple by implication: do not stay confined to India alone; spread out the world over. God's love is not like any of those objects which stays as a closed preserve of a caste, class or country, and rots there. This imparts to man that initiation with fire which augments him from limitation to unlimitedness, from the home to the universe and from the 'I' to the 'Thou'.

In pursuance of this divine command, Vivekananda appeared at the Parliament of Religions as the representative of the Hindu religion. In fact, he represented the eternal essential Religion of Man which is the common ground of all the religions of the world. After the Parliament was over the delegates returned home. Most of them are well-nigh forgotten today. But Vivekananda stuck to the soil of

America for nearly three years. Neither the urgent calls from India nor his own heart-felt agony for the suffering of the Indian people, could shake him. On how many wakeful nights how many tears Vivekananda shed for suffering India, no one really knows. But at the same time, in serving America he employed all his superhuman powers: and in towns and cities, and valleys from coast to coast he moved, preaching in churches, universities, parlours, conferences and societies, and gave away his entire treasure without stint or count. His work shows that the thought 'Why am I working so hard for these foreigners?' might not have arisen in his mind even once. What arose within his heart and soul were the waves of that 'mad ocean of unreasoned love'. He worked in America in the manner of a son of the soil, as though Americans were his dearest and nearest. Indeed, they were very deeply so to him. And thus working like the winds of spring, bringing the fragrance of blossoming flowers to everybody's door, Vivekananda gave to this 'foreign' country, to an 'alien' people, the most precious and fruitful years of his life. Why did he do so? The answer is: the compelling urge of God's love for men flowing through him, made him do so. Was he not an instrument of one who did not know counting?

When, looking through the eyes of the people of America, Vivekananda entered their hearts, he saw for himself how much accumulated pain, agony, doubts and fears were moving about wearing bold masks and costly dresses. And love surged forth from the heart of Vivekananda. But whose was this love? It was of that 'Fakir'. It is a great good fortune of mankind that Vivekananda did not leave that 'Fakir's' love as the exclusive patrimony of India. And so he wrote to those in India who urged him to quickly return to the motherland that Vivekananda the homeless

wanderer belonged to the whole world and was not a bond slave of any nation. Yet who does not know with what reverential love he looked upon even the dust of India. On that score, however, God's love was not a thing to become a prisoner of the selfishness of any nation. Its free flow is for the welfare of all everywhere.

The savants of America have yet to make a serious national evaluation of that stream of God's love which Vivekananda set aflow in the history of America. The pure sparkling streams of the essence of Veda and Vedanta were carried here by God's own messenger, whom we know as Brahman become-Vivekananda. And that too at the behest of the Lord incarnate on earth. The history of this Pilgrim's nation that is America, does not know any greater auspicious occurrence. In this love of God there is no asking for the price, or bargain-counter, there is only anxiety for the well-being of all.

Behind all the brave new progress and prosperity of this great nation America, there is this disturbing question: So what? What next? In America, generally it is seen that in the midst of much 'happiness' there is such acute famine of peace, amidst staggering accumulation of armaments such agonizing piling of fear, amidst much enjoyment so much more of heart-burning; and yet to be sure, this nation is supremely fortunate in that even before the problems of the nation got into shape, there came here through the abundance of God's grace the package of solvents of all those problems.

In fact the message of Vivekananda was primarily addressed to the people of America. Why did it come to be so? No doubt, Lord's grace may not follow man's reason. It is, however, understandable that the greatest urgency of the ministrations of true spirituality is there where material enjoyment has reached its peak. So, Swami Vivekananda planted Vedanta

in the heart of America as the solvent of the inner problems of the nation, and as the inner inspirer for and director of further evolution of the civilization. This may be taken as the hemispherical manifestation of God's love for men. In time great knowers of the Self will arise in this country. And they will herald a new era of this problem-ridden virile nation.

Somehow, in exchange of this supreme gift made at the end of the nineteenth century, material help has been reaching India from that side of the oceans. Vivekananda, in instituting this novel exchange to meet hemispherical needs with dignity, had certain dreams which have been fulfilled only partially. But, if in the meantime Indians discard their ancient Sādhana of searching and finding God through all the thoughts and activities of life, how will this exchange go on?

7

The comprehensive appraisal of the true nature of Ramakrishna's Vivekananda, is perhaps not possible without the help of Vivekananda's Ramakrishna. In the words of Ramakrishna; butter and buttermilk belong to each other.

Many people used to come to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. Among them were quite a few big men, learned men, wise men and men of vast experience. And yet Sri Ramakrishna chose as his instrument a mere lad who had hardly any money to salt his coarse food with. Why did he do so? One of the ways of understanding this mystery is to get at the comprehension of Vivekananda's Ramakrishna. The real purport of Ramakrishna's Narendra-sādhana seems to have been that, in self-giving, Sri Ramakrishna wanted to get himself across to all in the same manner. Did he get it across all right? He alone knows. Self-giving of God means, interestingly enough, self-actualization of God. One Christ on the Cross led to the golden harvest of an un-

counted number of Christs on the altar. If we think God did not know it, we belong to somebody's paradise. God is not a helpless babe on the Mother's lap. Even as a babe he has all power.

Sri Ramakrishna, in his picture, is so simple in the looking. But really he is not that simple. He is tougher than the toughest when business is concerned—which he of course called Mother's business. So, we may rest assured he got it through all right.

The kind of Ramakrishna we received from the hands of Vivekananda, there was no other way of receiving in the like manner from any other source. Perhaps Sri Ramakrishna dispensed it so intentionally. Endowed though with the purest type of intellect which in a trice separates sham from truth, Vivekananda, without stopping to fear contradiction or criticism, declared Ramakrishna as the supreme God incarnate, so bare in person and so near the dust though he was. The power-flow of this Incarnation's love is all-encompassing and all-devouring. He is the Lord of the lowly, Lord made simply of love. And what is more, he is the worshipper of man. He is the *Musafir* (traveller) of diverse paths. This giver of light approaches the darkness of people's ignorance in the manner of the lover meeting the beloved—no frown, no harsh word—only loving and yet more loving. Completely detached though he was, who had been ever more concerned for man and his destiny? A reveller in many tunes, nothing he detested so much as monotony and drabness in the life spiritual. He is sportive in many tunes and cadence. If he were not so, how could his love for all be true? God has not to travel to reach you. He out-reaches your ways and yet He is not out of your reach, however small, stupid or impure you may appear to be. Because you do not have to go to Him, He is home with you all the time. Sri Ramakrishna's play on many tunes is a surpass-

ing benevolence even of the giver of all. Nothing like this was known before.

We received Vivekananda's Ramakrishna as the Ramakrishna Sangha (Order). As the Sangha he is still seated there as it were in his living-room, anxious to receive and help all sufferers and seekers, and about to speak in smiles and in tears with that sweet stammering, in his own unique way. And he is seated there as the ongoing call for the liberation of the self and for the good of all. Vivekananda's Ramakrishna is not a nice happy deity to be constantly adored with flowery panegyric, but warring Kali engaged in ground-fighting with the problems of man for the good of the individual and the many. Vivekananda's Ramakrishna—manifested as the *sangha shakti* (power of the Order) engaged in dedicated service—has become the most powerful Name, both ways—in removing evil and doing good. In various countries, this Ramakrishna-name has become the source of inspiration and sustenance of hope for millions of people seeking or needing succour, physical, mental or spiritual; for the attainment of release from pain, want, ignorance; for growth in well-being and highest self-fulfilment.

Divine Mother Bhavatārini commanded Sri Ramakrishna to stay in the borderland of the Absolute and the relative (*bhāva-mukha*). Could it be that this found mysterious expression in Vivekananda's elucidation of the Ramakrishna phenomenon? In full-throated beholdenness Vivekananda hymned Sri Ramakrishna 'I am thy slave life after life', and yet at Mayavati he did not permit any quarter to worship of the 'Old Man' (Ramakrishna). No place for the Lord of Maya at Mayavati! On the heights of the Himalayas, Vivekananda the Jnāni knocked out Vivekananda the Bhakta, and declared in heartless harshness: only Advaita will be practised here and preached; no Ramakrishna worship.

And again, the very same Vivekananda

sang the glories of Ramakrishna while dancing through the streets of Calcutta. What a love-flushed divinely intoxicated appearance of Vivekananda then! On the day Belur Math was established, Vivekananda carried the casket of 'Ātmārāma' (relics of Sri Ramakrishna) on his right shoulder, in fulfilment of Sri Ramakrishna's fancy: 'I will go and live wherever it will be your pleasure to take me on your shoulders—be it under a tree or in the humblest cottage.'²⁸ What happened to Jnāni-Vivekananda then? On that day he cooked milk-rice (*pāyasam*) with his own hands for offering to Sri Ramakrishna. He even worshipped him ritualistically. Perhaps Sashi (Swami Ramakrishnananda) was not near by anywhere. Otherwise, it could have been highly embarrassing!

The same Vivekananda had scolded Sashi at Baranagore: you have started this ritualistic worship of the Lord, and now who gets you the money for the daily offering of your god—gram, betel leaf, sugar-candy, etc? Nothing frightens me so much as this excess of your bell-ringing. Quiet, retiring Sashi on that day suddenly raised the hood of his faith and hissed mightily in the face of Vivekananda: You have not to bother about it, brother! The worshipped one will know how to get procured the money needed for his offering.

Sashi's words, like a fire-bomb of

²⁸. Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1965, p. 605.

devotion, set aflame explosive devotion that always stayed hard pressed within Vivekananda's heart. Vivekananda could not really cope up with Sashi when this vital point was concerned, for he spoke forth words which stirred the very depths of his soul.

Truly speaking, how long could one really keep the Lord—who stayed permeating the whole being—hidden at the bottom of the heart? The Lord of light, how could he be kept imprisoned in the dark cave of non-recognition? He explodes out into the open, frustrating all attempts at concealment. Vivekananda did not propagate Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna stands self-revealed. Vivekananda is a part of that very self-revelation. Vivekananda propagated Vedanta and unveiled Ramakrishna in people's consciousness. The effulgence of the Ramakrishna-revelation enlightens the entire world of inner seeking. The darkness of ignorance stands volatilized by the fire of knowledge.

Wonderful indeed is this Ramakrishna's Vivekananda, and equally wonderful is this Vivekananda's Ramakrishna. On the one hand this quarrelling with Sashi on bell-ringing, and on the other, this cry of utter self-surrender: 'Therefore, O friend of the lowly, you alone are my refuge!' On the one hand twitting at the ritualistic worship of Ramakrishna, on the other dancing in ecstasy in the name of Ramakrishna!

Thus in Vivekananda we have the rhythmic expression of the Ramakrishna phenomenon.

THE COMPASSIONATE RETURN

A LECTURE BY DR. WILBUR M. FRIDELL

Today I would like to think with you about the compassion that lies at the heart of the universe, focusing on the Buddhist tradition. It was suggested that this would be an appropriate topic for this congregation, especially since we are about to celebrate the birthday of Gautama the Buddha. I have entitled these remarks 'The Compassionate Return', the meaning of which should become clear as we proceed.

The different religious traditions employ a variety of terms to designate the Ultimate Reality which lies in and behind and through all beings and all things. The terms I have in mind are not descriptions, for the Ultimate is indescribable. They are, as it were, pointers at infinity—words such as Brahman, God, the Eternal Buddha.

No matter what the terminology, all of these various expressions seem to reflect a common assumption, and that is that this Ultimate Reality cares for us. In fact, this infinite caring at the heart of the universe is a central theme of the major religious traditions. Whether they speak of compassion or of love, there is a concern that each of us should come to the point where we can open ourselves to this Ultimate Reality; and there is the assurance that, in the process of opening, our hearts will be softened and our lives renewed by this contact with the final source of all life.

Now, in considering the theme of compassion in the Buddhist tradition, my remarks will be divided into three segments. First, we will consider the compassion of the Buddha himself. Then we will briefly examine compassion as it was taught and practised in that early form of classical Buddhism in India, generally known as Therāvāda Buddhism. Then I would like to spend a little more time thinking with you about the compassion of the Buddhist

tradition as expressed in Mahāyāna developments. Mahāyāna Buddhism, as you know, is another main strand in the Buddhist tradition, having evolved approximately around the beginning of the Christian era. Finally, just a few concluding remarks.

First, the compassion of Gautama Buddha himself. This is perhaps best illustrated by his encounter with the figure Māra, who in Indian tradition and legend is known as the Great Tempter and the personification of all evil. According to the rather popular Jātaka tales, which relate in a sometimes rather folksy way the experiences which are credited to Gautama in previous lives and in his final life on this earth, the Buddha had come to the point, after exhaustive meditative and ascetic practices, where he determined to follow the middle path of avoiding both extreme asceticism and indulgence. In such a frame of mind, he committed himself to sitting under the Bo tree until he should achieve the breakthrough of spiritual enlightenment.

This was the crucial time for Māra, for Māra was determined that Gautama should not come to enlightenment. He and his legions did everything possible to prevent it. The record indicates that Māra tempted the Buddha with dancing girls, and that he also showered him with rocks and stones and live coals. All of this symbolized the temptations Gautama went through, temptations designed to deflect him from his determination to achieve a spiritual breakthrough. But we are told that he was not deflected, and that he continued to sit under the tree until the enlightenment experience came to him. From that moment he was the Buddha, the 'awakened one'.

Characteristically, Māra did not give up even after the Buddha's enlightenment. We may come to the point where we have a spiritual breakthrough, but that does not mean the end of temptations or spiritual struggle. Māra was still on the job. He had failed in preventing the Buddha's enlightenment. But now he thought that, if he could only get him to go ahead and leave and not communicate this experience to other people, perhaps he could still salvage something according to his purposes. He therefore put a temptation in the mind of the Buddha that, having experienced full Nirvāṇa, there would be no point in his staying around and trying to communicate this to other people. Perhaps they would not understand. Why not just depart from the body and go on into full Nirvāṇa and leave it at that? This was the temptation that was given the Buddha. At this moment of temptation we are told that Brahmā, one of the high gods in the Hindu tradition, addressed the Buddha under the tree, pleading with him, 'Open for all men the door of the Immortal. Let them hear the doctrine proclaimed with pureness.' In other words, don't give in to this temptation to keep the doctrine to yourself, but communicate it to other people who stand in need.

And so we are told that the Buddha made a great resolution. I quote from the Jātaka tales: 'The resolution was to embark on the ship of Dharma (the teaching, the insight, the knowledge) and to take great multitudes across the ocean of transmigration and *then* attain Nirvāṇa.' In other words, before he left the flesh and attained what we sometimes call Parinirvāṇa, leaving this earth, he determined to stay around and take great multitudes of people across the ocean of transmigration, sharing his experiences with them. It is thus that Buddha committed himself to share with

other people. This we might call his compassionate commitment.

The Buddha established an order of monks, whom he sent out to preach. In the Pali scriptures we have what might be called a Great Commission to these monks. I quote from the scriptures as follows: 'Go ye, O Bhikṣus, and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikṣus, the doctrine glorious; preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure.' Thus he addressed his followers, urging them to communicate the new insight and breakthrough to as many as possible. Again, we are told that he said to his followers: 'As reckoning not of self, a mother's love enfolds and cherishes her only son. So, through the world, let thy compassion move and encompass living creatures everyone, soaring and sinking in unfettered liberty, free from ill-will, purged of all enmity.'

So there is no question that the Buddha himself was a man of unlimited compassion, and that he passed on this spirit of compassion, of sharing what he had discovered, with all people. In his spirit, in the instructions which he gave to his followers, we have a model of what the Buddha's compassion is all about.

* * *

I would like next to consider very briefly compassion in Therāvāda Buddhism. It has sometimes been said that Therāvāda has not been as compassionately outreaching, as warm-hearted you might say, in spreading the news and trying to reach out to other people, as compared with Mahāyāna Buddhism. The charge has been made that the Therāvādins have not been as missionary-minded as the Mahāyāna Buddhists who followed them. But I think we have to be very careful here, because in the early period when what we now call

Therāvāda was operating, prior to the later evolution of the Mahāyāna forms, the monks were active in service and teaching the people within India and even beyond. We know that they carried the Buddhist teaching to Ceylon, where it is established today as the major religious faith—and also to Burma, Tibet, China and other countries.

From an early source we have the record of a conversation between the Buddha and one of his followers, a man by the name of Pūrṇa. It seems that Pūrṇa wants to go as a missionary to a rather barbarous country, a dangerous place named Śroṇāparānta. The Buddha knows that Pūrṇa will run into all kinds of difficulties if he goes to this place. He will have to have a very strong commitment. So, in order to test his resolve, he engages him in the following conversation. First the Buddha comments, 'The people of Śroṇāparānta are fierce, violent and cruel. They are given to abusing, reviling and annoying others. If they abuse, revile and annoy you with evil, harsh and false words, what would you think?' Pūrṇa replies, 'In that case I would think that the people of Śroṇāparānta are really good and gentle folk, as they do not strike me with their hands or with stones.' Well, the Buddha goes on to say, 'But if they should strike you with their hands or with stones, then what would you think?' 'In that case', says Pūrṇa, 'I should think that they are good and gentle folk, as they do not strike me with cudgels or with weapons.' The Buddha persists, saying, 'If they should strike you with cudgels and weapons, what then would you think?' 'In that case', replies Pūrṇa, 'I would think they were good and gentle folk, as they do not take my life.' Then the Buddha puts the big question, 'But if they take your life, Pūrṇa? What would you think?' Pūrṇa replies, 'In that case, I would still think they were good and gentle folk, as they release me from this rotten carcass of the body without much difficulty! I know that there are monks

who are ashamed of the body and who are distressed and disgusted with it [this was one theme, you know, of classical Buddhism, to be free of things physical] and who slay themselves with weapons, take poison, hang themselves with ropes, throw themselves down from precipices.' The Buddha finally concedes, 'Pūrṇa, you are endowed with the greatest gentleness and forbearance. You can live and stay in that country of Śroṇāparānta. Go and teach them how to be free as you yourself are free.'

This is just one example of the compassionate outreach, of the determination to share in a loving concern for other people as reflected in the classical period of the early development of the Buddhist tradition which we now call Therāvāda.

* * *

We must move on to consider compassion in the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism, which developed some centuries later in India and then spread into China and East Asia and today is the major form of Buddhism in Japan, Korea and such countries.

It is true that there were certain developments in Therāvāda in India which caused it to lose some of its compassionate fervour, its missionary outreach. It tended to become ingrown, wandering from the Buddha's own compassionate example and spirit. Consequently, it became somewhat scholastic and monk-centred. It was against this background that Mahāyāna Buddhism developed around the beginning of the Christian era, still in India itself, as a kind of renewal movement. From the very beginning, one of the major emphases in Mahāyāna was that the teaching be communicated to lay people in ways which they could understand. The Mahāyānists prided themselves that they were the Great Vehicle, *Mahāyāna*. In a rather disparaging way they looked back and called the earlier form of Buddhism the *Hinayāna*, the Small

Vehicle. They said that the Hīnayānists or Therāvādins only took a few monks across the ocean of transmigration to the farther shore of liberation and enlightenment, but that we, the Mahāyānists, had a great raft and could take so many more people of all kinds. The Mahāyānists were really very outreaching in their concern, and in their conception of liberation.

Thus, in Mahāyāna, compassion comes to a point of fulfilment and becomes a really major theme. There had been certain limitations on it in Therāvāda, perhaps. But in Mahāyāna we generally say that the two pillars of teaching and practice have been *prajñā* (transcendent wisdom) and *mahākaruṇā* (the great compassion). Wisdom or enlightenment, and the life of compassion, go hand in hand.

So much can be said about Mahāyāna that we must be extremely selective. Perhaps the first comment that should be made is that, according to Mahāyāna teaching and experience, those who come to the enlightened state of transcendent wisdom will *naturally* live a life of compassionate outreach, following the example of the Buddha himself. According to Mahāyāna, the Buddha did not merely teach and demonstrate compassion when he walked this earth in the flesh. Having attained full Nirvāṇa, he is the eternal living Buddha, ever concerned about the welfare of sentient beings in all worlds, and ever working through 'skillful means' to teach people, to communicate the Truth to them, that they likewise may come to the enlightenment experience.

This theme of compassion is illustrated in various parables in the *Lotus Sutra*, one of the most striking of which is the Parable of the Burning House. Those of you who are familiar with this story will remember that it is about a father who had many little boys. In fact, he had fifteen or twenty boys, and they all lived together with the father in this big house. One day the house

caught fire and the father, of course, realizing the danger, immediately left the house and told his children to escape with him. But the children were so young that they were not aware of the danger. They didn't realize that the house was burning or that the fire represented a danger to them. Of course, the story is symbolic: the burning house is this world on fire, and we are supposed to escape the dangers of the world. And so the father's problem was how to save his children from the burning house, how to get them to come out so that they would not perish.

Now, the father knew the children intimately, each one as an individual; and he knew that one child had this particular favourite toy, another child had that particular favourite toy, and so on. Using this knowledge, he devised a skillful means of saving the lives of his children. From outside the house he called back inside and appealed to the children, each by name, 'You know, you love such and such a toy. I have taken it outside. If you want to play with it, you will have to come outside to get it.' He thus spoke to each child in the appropriate fashion that would generate a response, in a way that each child could understand. And so the children hurried outside to get the toys they expected to find. But then an added feature of this story is that, when the children got outside, they discovered that the father had an even greater gift for them, and they were delighted with what they received. The father gave them more than he promised. Of course, this is a parable. The children were enjoying the Therāvāda type of enlightenment experience in their family home. But when they escaped the burning house on the father's instructions, the father gave them great toys and treasure, representing the superior Mahāyāna Truth.

The principal part of this parable is that the father loved his children and that he resorted to various skillful means to save

them out of his intimate knowledge of each child—its disposition, desires and potentiality. That is the teaching, that the Buddha knows each one of us in the same intimate way, and has a compassionate concern to lead each of us, according to his wisdom, to the full experience of release.

One of the central teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* is that the Buddha, who is understood to be the Living Eternal Buddha, returns from time to time to this world in the form of an historical Buddha. He does this again and again whenever there is a special need. It is a fundamental understanding in the *Lotus Sutra* that Gautama Buddha was just one of many historical Buddhas, manifestations of the Living Eternal Buddha, the Ultimate Reality of the universe, reaching out in compassion to communicate the Universal Truth to people in all worlds and all universes. There is a point in the *Sutra* where the Buddha is asked why this is so. The historical Buddha Śākyamuni replies in his role as the manifestation of the Eternal Buddha: 'What reason should I have to continually manifest myself? When men become unbelieving, unwise, ignorant, careless, fond of sensual pleasures, and from thoughtlessness, run into misfortune, then I, who know the course of the world, declare, "I am so-and-so" [i.e. I am such-and-such an historical Buddha; Gautama for instance], and I consider, how can I incline them to enlightenment? How can they become partakers of the Buddha's law?'¹ This passage is one of the first illustrations of the theme of the compassionate return of the Eternal Buddha who animates the heart of the universe and who, out of his concern for us, comes back to the world to teach and to guide.

Another way in which the compassionate return to the world is illustrated in the Buddhist tradition has to do with the Bodhi-

sattvas. Many of you will recognize Bodhisattvas as Buddhas in the making, shall we say. Serious-minded Buddhists have set themselves on the ten stages of the Bodhisattva course. Over the last several stages they become high celestial beings, and they can then go on into full Buddhahood—in other words, they can then become Buddhas. But they refuse to take this last step into Buddhahood because of all of the people back in the world who have not yet found release. And so they vow a great vow. The Bodhisattva vow which has become very fundamental in the development of Mahāyāna is that the Bodhisattva will not go on to full and complete enlightenment, will not become a Buddha, until he can bring all other suffering beings into enlightenment along with him. He delays his own enlightenment for the sake of the rest of us.

Now, how does the Bodhisattva save? One of the basic ways in which the Bodhisattva does this is through the transfer of merit. In Therāvāda, although there were some exceptions to this, generally speaking each person's karmic history was limited to himself. Each person was on his or her own, and there was no transfer, shall we say, of karmic credit (from good deeds, good thoughts, etc.) from one person to another. Each person had to develop his own good karma. But there developed the concept in Mahāyāna that karmic credits or merit could be transferred from one person to others to help wipe out their accumulation of evil karma and speed their release and enlightenment. The Sanskrit term for this is *parivarta*, which literally means 'turning over' or 'turning over merit from one person to another'. The great Bodhisattvas vowed to do this. I will not take the time to read an example of this, but there are many illustrations in the Mahāyāna scriptures of the Bodhisattva vow.

The most popular form assumed by the Bodhisattva vow is found in that form of

1. *The Lotus of the True Law*, trans. H. Kern, XV. 22-23.

Mahāyāna known as Pure Land Buddhism. Pure Land saints took the Bodhisattva vow of turning over merit, which was really a kind of supplementary aid to enlightenment as the Bodhisattvas used it, and they blew it up into an entire system, you might say. As a consequence, the average person could receive merit from Amitābha by placing his faith in this great Buddha, who presides over the Pure Land, or Western Paradise. Through faith, eons of accumulated karma could be wiped out, and one could be transported at the moment of death to the Pure Land of the West. This became an exceedingly popular form of Buddhism in East Asia.

Both the Bodhisattvas and the Buddhas, out of their compassionate concern, have used various means, which we call *upāya*, or 'skillful means', to save others. We are assured that, not only can the various Buddhas make the compassionate return to the world to work for the salvation of others, but the Bodhisattvas can do the same thing. Chief of the Bodhisattvas in this respect is Kannon (Sanskrit : Avalokiteśvara). In the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* we are told that Kannon returns to the world in various forms (as a man, woman, teacher, dragon and so forth) to rescue people from fire and flood, grant safe childbirth, and in other practical ways minister compassionately to human need. Belief in such practical benefits has made this form of Buddhism highly popular among the masses of East Asia over the centuries. The highest function of the Bodhisattva Kannon, however, has been to lead individuals to have faith in the Buddha Amitābha of the Western Paradise, or Pure Land; and in this capacity Kannon has been known as 'guide of souls'.

* * *

I have spoken of the historical dimensions of this subject. How about the Buddhists today? There is a very nice little book known as the *Buddhist Handbook for Shinshu Followers*. Shinshu is one form of

Pure Land Mahāyāna Buddhism, and this little book is printed in English and is primarily for the use of Pure Land Buddhists in this country [U.S.A.]. As a part of their service, Pure Land Buddhists love to quote a passage from Vasubandhu, one of the great Indian Mahāyāna philosophers of the Consciousness-Only school, who lived in the fifth century. He is quoted as follows in services used even today in Buddhist temples throughout this country:

If a man attains this faith, [faith in Amitābha Buddha—or Amida, as he is known in Japan] he enters into the Great Ocean of Amida's merit and becomes one of the great assembly of people who are destined to be born in His Land without fail. In the future he will be born into the world of the lotus, the Pure Land, and having acquired the true body of the Holy Existence [in being reborn there, one will become a Buddha and will have the powers of a Buddha], he will then return to the forest of human passion by his divine power, and in the desert of life and death he will manifest himself in various transformations for the salvation of his fellow beings.

This Pure Land faith continues, even today, as a very active form of Mahāyāna belief and practice.

* * *

I should like to conclude very briefly. In one form or another, whether by historical example, scriptural authority, or myth and legend, the theme of love and compassion is taught by the world's great religious traditions. May we close today by underscoring the universality of this fundamental theme?

We have already noted that Buddhist passage from the *Lotus Sutra* where the Buddha explains why he returns to the world from time to time : when people become unbelieving, unwise, careless, etc., he takes a particular historical form and leads them to the truth.

A similar Christian theme can be illustrated by quoting the Bible :

When we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.²

Here is the faith that God, at the appropriate moment in time, 'returned', as it were, to the world, in compassion, in the form of His Son, to communicate the truth to those who stand in need.

Finally, there is that very expressive passage from the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which quotes the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, who is an Avatar of Viṣṇu, the Ultimate Reality, is speaking as Viṣṇu, and is explaining why it is that he descends to the earth from time to time, to communicate the truth :

When goodness grows weak,
When evil increases,
I make myself a body.
In every age I come back
To deliver the holy,
To destroy the sin of the sinner,
To establish righteousness.³

The basic similarity between these three passages, representing three major religious traditions, must come through to you very clearly. In all three it is affirmed that love and compassion are at the heart of Eternal

2. Galatians, 4 : 3-5.

3. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, trans. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, New York : The New American Library, 1954, p. 50 (cf. IV. 7-8).

Reality, and that when we experience that Reality universal compassion becomes a part of our lives. When this happens to us, we are possessed by a desire to communicate with others.

How will we know that we have come in touch with the Heart of the Universe? We will know it when we find ourselves reaching out in compassion to our fellowmen—for it is the nature of God to reach out. If we are in touch with Him, we likewise will feel compelled to do the same—to make our own compassionate return from the mountain-top experiences to the daily life where we come in touch with our fellows—to share the love of the Heart of the Universe, in whatever way is natural and appropriate to us.

May we close with a short poem by that great Hindu poet, Rabindranath Tagore. This is a celebration of God's love, and I hope it may also be our own hymn of thanksgiving to God for the love and compassion that He continually shows us.

Yes, I know this is nothing but thy love, O beloved of my heart—this golden light that dances upon the leaves, these idle clouds sailing across the sky, this passing breeze leaving its coolness upon my forehead.

The morning light has flooded my eyes—this is thy message to my heart. Thy face is bent from above, thy eyes look down on my eyes, and my heart has touched thy feet.⁴

4. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gītāñjali*, London : MacMillan & Co., 1946, 59.

WHAT IS LIVING AND WHAT IS DEAD IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

(A Review Article)

[The book has been published by People's Publishing House, Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi, 110 055, in 1976; pages : xv+656; price : Rs. 55/-.—Ed.]

The book under review is manifestly a very significant work. The author Dr. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya is a scholar of remarkable width and keen comprehension. His powers of analysis and clarity of expression are of the highest order. But he has a commitment to Marxism, and hence this book is argumentative in its central thesis in the specific direction of Marxian thought.

The title of the work is in imitation of Croce's great work *What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel*. But the canvas of the present work is very much vaster, for it does not confine itself to the critical evaluation of a single philosopher or a single system of thought, but includes the entire field of Indian philosophy in its long history. It constitutes a project of great daring. It attempts a critical review of the whole field it surveys and advances a Marxian judgement on it. Considering the intrinsic competence of the author and his enormous equipment, he may be safely regarded as the best representative of the Marxist writers in criticism of Indian thought. Hence the work is to be welcomed unreservedly.

The theme of the book can be easily summarized. The author argues that the whole of Indian philosophy is built around a single issue. That is the reality or otherwise of the external world. The schools of Indian philosophy are divided into two opposed camps: The Idealists, whose best representation is found in the

later Buddhist schools and Advaita Vedanta, refute the reality of the external world and affirm the sole reality of consciousness or spirit. The opposite tendency, preferentially named Materialism, rather than Realism, finds its embodiment in the Lokāyata philosophy. This is the basic contradiction or dialectical situation in which the whole of Indian thought is engaged. Of these two, the author claims that Idealism is a failure in philosophy and runs contrary to science. Its social implications are also reactionary. Hence it is 'dead'. But the Lokāyata system is sound and it is said to be 'living' in Indian philosophy. It is also claimed that it enjoys the backing of science and that its social function is admirable. The work as a whole is a prolonged demonstration of the failure and 'death' of Idealism. The main schools of Buddhist Idealism and Advaita are subjected to detailed criticism in so far as they attack materialism, and the conclusions are solemnized by pronouncements from Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Though this summary is a poor sketch of a bulky thesis, it serves our purpose.

Two preliminary observations are called for about the author's affirmation of the core of philosophical dialectics in Indian thought :

1. In the first place it oversimplifies the case. The reality of the material world is no doubt a central problem. But there are other equally fundamental

problems that have divided the schools of thought. The problem of pluralism and monism is one such. The nature of causation is another. The reality or otherwise of a transcendent supreme principle is also a crucial problem. The author seems to have economized his historical data excessively to suit his dialectical convenience.

2. Indian philosophy presents not merely the materialistic thesis and the idealistic antithesis; but has given rise to major systems of synthesis too. In fact the largest number of Indian philosophical systems belong to this category. Mīmāṃsaka, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Jainism and the theistic schools of Vedānta illustrate strong and well-developed formations of synthesis, admitting the reality of matter and also entities transcending matter. They defend the reality of matter as staunchly as is wanted in materialism, and also go beyond it in defending with equal power the reality of the transcendent and the super-physical. Dr. Chattopadhyaya is aware of them, and actually uses them against Idealism; but does not countenance their central and comprehensive stand in metaphysics. If there is a fallacy to be called illegitimate simplification, he seems to be falling a victim to it.

In his survey of the idealistic schools and anti-idealistic schools, there are very many minor controversial valuations and it is not possible to take note of them in detail. Some of his major judgements require serious consideration:

1. On Vijñāna-vāda of Buddhism, he has written a great deal. It is Idealism of a strong type and negates the reality of matter. The author does not examine the philosophical worth of the arguments. He sees an inconsistency in the Vijñāna-vādin's interest in and contribution to logic, particularly by Dignāga and Dharma-kīrti. Logic deals with the knowing of objective

reality and Vijñāna-vāda repudiates the objective reality. How could logic be a right occupation for a philosopher repudiating the object? This is a naive objection, however scholarly the presentation. One must enter into the very deeper levels of Buddhist logic to see how profoundly the very logical doctrines of Dignāga and Dharma-kīrti contribute to the strength of the idealistic argument. The modes of knowledge are divided into perception and inference. Perception in its primitive phase does not use any conceptual categories and is pure sensation. In it there is no bifurcation of experience and the object experienced. The identity of the sensing and sensum is established in the account of pure perception itself. It is the later intellectual categorization that introduces the division into subject and object. This is the strongest epistemological basis for Idealism. Stcherbatsky, for whom the author evinces great respect, notes this fact very prominently. "The 'own-essence' is the external thing as it is in itself... The corresponding internal 'thing' is pure sensation. But pure sensation and the corresponding pure object are not two things. ... They are one ultimate Reality dichotomized into subject and object by that same faculty of constructive imagination' (*Buddhist Logic* Vol. II, p. 202). So the analysis of pure perception not yet conceptualized substantiates Vijñāna-vāda. In the plane of conception and inference, the situation is even better. The concepts are applied to sense-presentation in this stage. The concepts or categories are subjective constructions and have no ontological counterparts. They correspond to the Kantian 'a priori' categories. Hence the external world they construct can have no reality in itself. It is thus obvious that Dignāga and Dharma-kīrti, though starting almost like the Sautrāntika realists, arrive at conclusions which substantiate fomidably their Idealism. The major criticism of Vijñāna-

vāda indulged in by the author is a cardinal error.

2. Dr. Chattopadhyaya is very critical of Śaṅkara's criticism of materialism. He holds that Śaṅkara has not succeeded in showing the absence of consciousness in spite of the presence of the body as he tries to do. Only that separability between the body and consciousness could establish the independence of consciousness. Be that as it may, Śaṅkara advances a major argument. It may be that body and consciousness are found together in our experience in the ordinary course of our mundane existence. But this invariable association is not enough to prove, argues Śaṅkara, that consciousness is a product or function of the body. Body may after all be a necessary instrument or medium or transmitting apparatus for the exercise of consciousness. All the invariability observed can be adequately accounted for by this hypothesis. The generation theory and transmission theory seem to be equally possible and no special ground exists for choosing the first. If there is a single other reason in favour of the transmission-theory, the claim of the other gets dissolved. Śaṅkara points to several other reasons.

3. One of them is the nature of memory and recognition, implying the continuity of consciousness, thus distinguishing it from the physical organism admitted on all hands as subject to ceaseless mutation. This is an argument used by the author of the *Brahma-Sūtras* according to all commentators. Śaṅkara adduces it in his criticism of materialism also. Dr. Chattopadhyaya hopes that fuller knowledge of the brain than we have at present, will surely solve the contradiction; and we will discern in the brain the basis for the process of continuity of consciousness. This is just a hope. Not stopping with this he draws attention to a few experimental findings and observations of scientists like H. Hyden,

W. G. Penfield and Y. Saporina, which indicate the possibility of the hope being fulfilled in future with the growth of connected scientific research. It has to be remarked that Dr. Chattopadhyaya avoids, rather completely, the connected thought of the philosophers of the West throughout, and more particularly on the present problem. There may be physical traces in the brain which explain what is normally called habit-memory. But there is another kind of memory which is singled out by Bergson as incapable of physical explanation. It is deliberate recollection of specific events. The distinction between the two types of memory is fundamental, and even Russell, a habitual adversary of Bergson's thought, fully endorses it. (*Analysis of Mind*, p. 166). Our learned author's hope of reducing memory to physically engineered processes faces considerable difficulties.

4. Now we must consider the major doctrine in the Lokāyata philosophy which our learned author thinks is the only living part of Indian philosophy. We have just noticed the unfairness, incompleteness and the untenability of his criticism—understandably in an abridged manner—of Vijnāna-vāda, Śaṅkara's refutation of Materialism and the use of memory of proving the super-physical character of consciousness. What we pass on to now is the core of Materialism, and it is the affirmation that consciousness is just an effect or function of the body itself and the body is nothing but a specific configuration of matter. This is a thesis that bristles with insurmountable difficulties. All that we can do is to state them as briefly as possible, and in doing so we need not confine our reference in Western philosophy to only Marx, Engels and Lenin:

(a) The theory assumes a particular view of causation and therefore the idea of causation in general. There is no possibility of proving the principle of

causation within the limits of Empiricism to which the Lokāyata is irrevocably committed. The moral of the philosophy of Hume can be ignored only at our philosophical peril. If causation is somehow resurrected from the debris of Empiricism, it should be only on lines initiated by Kant and developed fully by later idealists, such as the British philosopher T. H. Green. Green is a bold and sharp thinker, and he asserts that even if consciousness were proved to be the product of matter, the implied causal process must be founded on a basal consciousness. Without going into details, we may quote his considered and weighty observation: 'The question, can the knowledge of nature be itself a part or product of nature? must not be confused with that commonly supposed to be at issue between spiritualists and materialists. We may have admitted most unreservedly that all the so-called functions of the soul are materially conditioned, but the question how there came to be for us those objects of consciousness, called matter and motion, on which we supposed the operations of sense and desire and thought to be dependent, will still remain to be answered' (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 13). An utterly materialistic universe cannot sustain the objectivity ascribed to it and much less the causal order. This point of view should be reckoned with by the materialist. In Indian thought, Śankara, in his criticism of Sāṅkhya and other Vedāntins also, such as Vedānta Deśika—of whom our author does not seem to have even heard—points out that causal power itself implies consciousness as a pre-supposition and also a transcendence of Empiricism.

(b) Admitting causation for the sake of argument, we can go forward. How are we to conceive of the relation of cause and effect? Some kind of continuity has surely to be admitted, otherwise the necessity linking cause and effect can hardly be maintained. The effect must be the working

out, explication of the causal matrix. If the effect is consciousness, surely its beginnings must be posited in the causal matter. It has to be considerably more than matter to bear that promise and potency. Matter has to be a little spiritualized to be the birth-place of soul. An English writer puts the case magnificently: 'Such extremely clever matter—matter that is up to everything, even to writing *Hamlet*, and finding out its own evolution—may fairly be regarded as a little too modest in its disclaimer of the attributes of mind.' (Martineau, quoted in the *Philosophical Bases of Theism* by Daws Hicks, p. 202). Another writer says that matter which could produce mind must have been more than mere matter. The cause in its pre-causal state appears less than what it really is. It acquires its completeness of authentic stature through its creative self-manifestation.

(c) 'Emergent evolution' is a fine expression and it seeks to do justice to the production of novelties in the causal process. The idea is not new. It is there already in the famous line of Browning that a musician creates 'out of three sounds, not a fourth, but a star'. It has been pointed out by many critics of emergent evolution that novelties emerge only in the teleological process, where the material base may not have given any hint of the emergent novelty, but the creative conception shaping itself through the causal process, contains the novelty. This is a transfer of a vision into a reality in a material which does not forecast the consequent. There is no literal novelty, no absolute emergence. In the order of actualization the cause precedes the effect and in the order of conception the end precedes the means. The chemical illustrations of emergence do not register so striking a novelty, to serve the purpose of indicating the possibility of the emergence of so radically novel a factor as consciousness from what is bereft

of it absolutely. If the new is no continuation or amplification of the old on the same qualitative level, it amounts to a virtual creation out of nothing. Such a creation is the negation of the causal process itself, and on such a basis the hope of reducing consciousness to a function or product of matter stands wholly wrecked. *Either we must enlarge the boundaries of the cause or abandon the idea that the effect in question is its effect.* It is not necessary that the effect must be a simple repetition of the cause. It must be of the nature of a revelation of what the cause really is. The great British philosopher, Bosanquet, puts the case with admirable sharpness, 'All causation has an element of revelation; if it were not so, we could make anything into anything'. (*Meeting Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 81). The old Indian description of the

cause as Avyakta (unmanifested) and the effect as Vyakta (manifested) cannot be better expressed.

We may put together the results of this discussion. Idealism does not seem to be dead as Dr. Chattopadhyaya fondly wishes. The Lokāyata lives as a possible philosophical point of view. To fancy it as the sole survivor of a colossal Kurukshetra is to revel in a delusion of grandeur.

But this is not to say that the work under review is not great in its dimensions, in its elaborateness of discussion and its masterly erudition. Its style has a captivating clarity. But its central thesis fails in the matter of cogency of substantiation. Perhaps, we will have a fuller but shorter treatise in the near future.

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR
Retd. Professor of Philosophy
Mysore University, Mysore

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA* —IX

To Sister Christine

47

[The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal,]
6th August 1901.

Dear Christina,

Letters are sometimes, dear Christina, like mercy; good to the one that sends and the other that receives.

I am so happy that you are calm and resigned as ever. You are ever that 'Mother knows' indeed; only I know that 'Mother' not only knows but does—and is going to do—something very fine for me in the near future. What do you think will be very good for me on earth? Silver? Gold? Pooh! I have got something infinitely better; but a little gold will not be amiss to keep my jewel in proper surroundings, and it is coming. Don't you think so?

I am a man who frets much, but waits all the same; and the apple comes to my mouth by itself. So, it is coming, coming, coming.

Now, how are you? Growing ever thinner, thinner, thinner, eh? Do have

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

very good appetite and good sleep in anticipation of the coming good time, to be in trim for welcoming its advent.

How did the heat feel this year? We read all sorts of horrible stories about American heat waves. You have beaten the world's records even in heat—that's yankee push surely.

Well, you are right as about taste : I renounce the yellow of gold and the white of silver, but stick to amber always—that is to my taste.

Amber and corals I always hated ; but of late I am awakening to their beauty. One learns as he lives, is it not?

I am going to Darjeeling tomorrow for a few days and will write to you from there. Now *goot nacht* and *au revoir*¹⁹ for the present.

Ever yours truly,
VIVEKANANDA.

48

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal,
27th August 1901.

Dear Christine,

I am expecting a long long letter from you, and, like all expectations of mine, will not be realized, I fear.

Well, I need not bother you with the usual string of questions: How are you? What are you doing all this summer? etc. I am sure the Mother will [do] so much as to keep you in good health at least.

Now Christina, for many reasons this letter happens to be short, very. It is written with the special purpose that as soon as you get this, send me your latest photograph.

Did you write to Miss Waldo about the publication of the books? I get no news and, what is more important, no money (that is between you and me) from the sale.

Did you have any news of Margot, of Mrs. Bull etc.? And are you happy? I sometimes feel I am, other times it is clouded. Well, it is all the body after all—material. Goodbye.

Yours with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

PS—Do send the photo as soon as possible.

V.

49

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal,
2nd September 1901.

My dear Christine,

I have been looking at one of your old photos—the only one you sent four or five years ago ; and then I remember how changed and reduced you looked

¹⁹. In German *gute Nacht* means 'good night'. Swamiji has spelled the word 'gute' as 'goot' according to the pronunciation. In French *au revoir* means 'goodbye'.

last summer ; and it came to me, you must be awfully thin now, as it seems very hard for you to get rid of anxieties. This is simply foolish. Things will of course take their shape ; we only make ourselves miserable by moping. It is very hard to manipulate one's philosophy to contribute to one's daily need. So it is with you as with me. But it is easiest to take the teacher's chair and read a lecture. And that has been my life's business !! Indeed, that is the reason why there are more disciples up to the mark than teachers. The upshot of all this is that you must create a huge appetite, then gorge, then sleep, and grow fat, fat, fat. Plump is the English word, is not it?

As for me, I am very happy. Of course, Bengal brings the asthma now and then, but it is getting tame, and the terrible things—Bright's disease, diabetes—have disappeared altogether. Life in any dry climate will stop the asthma completely, I am sure. I get reduced, of course, during a fit, but then it takes me no time to lay on a few layers of fat. I have a lot of cows, goats, a few sheep, dogs, geese, ducks, one tame gazelle, and very soon I am going to have some milk buffaloes. These are not your American bisons, but huge things, hairless, half-aquatic in habits, and give an enormous quantity of very rich milk.

Within the last few months I got two fits [of asthma] by going to two of the dampest hill stations in Bengal—Shillong and Darjeeling. I am not going to try the Bengali mountains any more.

Mrs. Bull and Nivedita are in Norway. I don't know when they come over to India. Miss MacLeod is in Japan ; I have not heard from her a long while. They all are expected here in November, and will have a 'hot time in this old town',²⁰ etc. I pray you could come, and the Mother will open the door for it. I cannot but say, my prayers mostly have been heard, up to date.

Well now, Christina, send me one of your latest photos next mail, will you? I want to see how much of fat you have accumulated in one year.

Anyhow, I will have to go to America with Mrs. Bull I am sure. [excision]²¹ By the by, *excusé moi*,²² our Calcutta is never so hot as your Detroit or New York, with its added advantages—we are not required by our society to wear many things. The old Greeks used to think wearing too many clothes and shame to show any part of the body a peculiarity of barbarians ! So the Hindus think down to the present day. We are the most scantily clothed people in the whole world. Bless the Lord, how one would live otherwise in our climate !

3rd September—

I left the letter unfinished last night. The foreign English mail starts day after tomorrow. So begin again. The moon is not up yet, but there is a sunless glow upon the river. Our mighty Ganges (She is indeed mighty now, during the rains) is splashing against the walls of the house. Numerous tiny boats are flitting up and down in the dark ; they have come to fish for our shads which

20. The quotation is from a song entitled 'Camptown Races' by the American composer Stephen Foster.

21. As the paper of the original letters has become very old, small portions have fallen off at some places.

22. '*Excusez-moi*', which Swamiji has spelled according to the pronunciation as '*excusé moi*', is French for 'excuse me'.

come up the river this season. How I wish you were here to taste our shads—one of the most delicate fish in the world. It is raining outside—pouring; but the moment this downpour ceases, I rain through every pore, it is so hot yet. My whole body is covered by big patches of prickly heat. Thank goodness there are no ladies about! If I had to cover myself in this state of things, I sure would go crazy. I have also my theme but I am not despondent. I am sure very soon to pan it out into a beautiful essay [excision] I am half crazy by nature; then my overtaxed nerves make me outrageous now and then. As a result I don't find anybody who would patiently bear with me! I am trying my best to make myself gentle as a lamb. I hope I shall succeed in some birth. You are so gentle. Sometimes I did frighten you very much, did not I, Christina? I wish I were as gentle as you are. Mother knows which is best.

I would not take any supper tonight, as I ate rather heartily of the aforesaid shad! Then I have to think think think on my theme; and some subjects I think best in bed, because the whole is made clear to me in dream. Therefore, I am going to bed, and *goot nacht, bon soir*,²³ etc. etc. No no, it is now about 10 a.m. in Detroit; therefore, a very happy day to you. May all good realities reach you today as I am expecting dreams.

Ever yours with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

50²⁴

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,
7th September 1901.

Dear Christina,

I wish ever so much that the camel used its hump to store away water; not only because you wish it, but for the infinite comfort of people like myself, who are condemned to ride him every now and then. Oh! how pleasant it would be if his hump were only a leather cushion full of water, but unfortunately it is only bones and a little fat! The old brute storing away all its supply of water in a special stomach! Is not that exasperating? Well Christine, I have written you a letter this week; again today comes one long letter from you, and having nothing special to do, I write this.

We all work by fits; that is to say, in this cause. I try to keep down the spring; but, but something or other happens, and the spring goes whirr, and there you are—thinking, remembering, squibbling, scrawling and all that! This particular fit was brought into existence by a photograph—the gift of a friend long long ago, who thenceforth found me unworthy of being trusted with

²³. 'Bon soir' is French for 'good evening'.

²⁴. This letter has been partly published in the *Complete Work of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, VI, 1972, p. 442), wrongly in the name of 'Nivedita'. The first paragraph of the *Complete Works* letter, which is actually the second paragraph of the original letter, has been reproduced here in full to maintain the continuity of thought and to correct a few misreadings of the published version. As the remainder of the *Complete Works* version is as in the original, it has not been reproduced, the omission being marked by three dots.

another. (This is the season of ants and white ants etc., and I am busy killing ants with my left as I go on writing with the right ! So excuse bad writing.) To return to the photo, I am like *Oliver Twist*,²⁵ always asking for more ; and my friend knows well, there is no limit to my begging ; yet, the demand remains *ad infinitum*. Let friends become vexed. I as a begging friar must not forget my cult.

. . .

I am rather well ; my great sorrow is that I lose my temper and become at times violent. My boys can scarcely bear seeing me any longer. I wish you would see me in one of those, so that you will keep a safe distance from me ever afterwards.

Well, goodbye for the present ; only don't forget the photo.

With all love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

51

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal,
25th September 1901.

Dear Christine,

I could not write you last mail, *Excusez* [excuse], but I have been expecting one from you for a long time. Hope one will come this mail.

I am just thinking of going over to Japan as Miss MacLeod is so insistent. Perhaps something will be done ; who knows?

From Japan, of course, a peep into America seems inevitable.

Not much news of Mrs. Bull or Margot [Nivedita]. Margot is rested well and strong. She will come to India some day, perhaps. I am soon expecting Mrs. Sevier though. Her work is needing her. Her beautiful home in the Himalayan forests is a temptation, especially now when a huge tiger is roaring in her compound and killed a horse, a buffalo, and her pair of mastiffs in broad daylight ; a number of bears playing havoc with her vegetable gardens, and lots of porcupines doing mischief everywhere !!! She went out of the way to buy land in a forest—she and her husband liked it so much.

There is not much to write this week. Words only tire one, except one which is inexhaustible, infinite.

So goodbye till next week.

Ever with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

PS—Just now comes a telegraph from Miss MacLeod and a letter also. She is so insistent that I am thinking of going over to Japan. In that case, we cross over to America this winter and thence to England.

Yours,
V.

²⁵. The protagonist of Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*.

52

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,
September end 1901.

Dear Christina,

Your very welcome letter just reached. A few days ago a precious little bit of poem also reached. I wish it ever so much you were the writer thereof. Anyhow, most of us feel, though unable to express ; and then 'There are thoughts that lie too deep for tears.' Regularity in anything is not in my line of life, but that need not make you irregular. I pray you to drop a few lines every now and then. Of course, when I am not in this body, I am sure the news will reach you, and then you will have to stop writing.

Miss MacLeod wishes me to join her in Japan ; but I am not sure, most probably I am not going, especially as I expect both her and Mrs. Ole Bull in India in November. Two whole months consumed in coming and going, only one month's stay in Japan—that does not pay, I am afraid.

Say, I am getting enormously fat, about the middle, alas !

Mrs. Sevier, who is now in England, returns in a few months to India. She has invited Mrs. Bull and others to be her guests in the Himalayas. I wish they could be there during summer.

I have manfully borne the terrific heat of my country in the plains, and now I am facing the deluging rains of my country. Do you know how I am taking rest? I have got a few goats and sheep and cows and dogs and cranes ! and I am taking care of them the whole day !

It is not trying to be happy ; what for? Why one should not be unhappy as well—both being nonsense? But just to kill time.

Do you correspond with Mrs. Bull or Nivedita?

Don't worry ; don't be anxious for me ; the 'Mother' is my protection and refuge ; and everything must come round soon, better than my fondest dreams can paint.

With all love,
VIVEKANANDA.

53²⁶

The Math, Belur,
Dist. Howrah, Bengal,
8th October 1901.

Dear Chrinstina,

Yours of September 9 came to hand yesterday. I congratulate you on your successful visit to the Huron Lake ;²⁷ a few more of them (according to your letter) will force you to sympathize with our condition ; oh, the gasping and the melting and the puffing and all the rest of them !

²⁶. A sentence from this letter has been published in the *Bengali Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (Vāṇi O Racana, Calcutta : Udbodhan Office, VIII, B.S. 1369, p. 194)*, wrongly in the name of 'Nivedita'.

²⁷. Lake Huron is one of the five Great Lakes of North America, covering an area of 23,200 square miles on the U.S.-Canadian border.

However, nothing in the world like a plump ripe fruit.

I had to give up my trip to Japan : firstly, because I am not in a working trim yet ; secondly, don't much care to make such a long voyage (one month) alone ; thirdly, what am I to talk to them, I wonder. Our heat too has been fierce and is continuing unusually long this year. I am blacker than a negro by this time. The California work is progressing famously. They want one or two men more. I would send, if I could, but I have not any more spare men. Poor Turiyananda is suffering from malaria yet, and is awfully over-worked.

Do you know whether they published my *Jnana-Yoga* or not? I got a copy of a second edition of *Karma-Yoga* only.

I am bobbing up and down in the current of life ; today it is rather down, so I finish the letter here.

Yours with all love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The By-Ways and Ways to God—I (*Editorial*) : Just as there may be different by-ways and ways to reach the capital city from one's own town, similarly there are many by-ways and ways to God, depending upon one's temperament and fitness for realizing Him. Amongst the devotees there may be some who seek worldly or heavenly enjoyments through God, as they lack due discrimination and dispassion. They are called the *abhyudaya-prārthīs*—seekers after material prosperity, according to Hindu tradition, and in the *Editorial* they have been termed as 'theistic materialists'. There is another class of devotees who desire nothing but God or Liberation. They are known as the *niḥśreyasa-prārthīs*—the seekers after the ultimate good. The former are also called the *pravṛtti-mārgīs*—those with a tendency towards the world—, and the latter as *nivṛtti-mārgīs*—those with a tendency away from the world. The religion of the Vedas is for both these types. The former, if they remain attached to God, will gradually become discriminating and dispassionate and thus become true spiritual

aspirants in the long run ; so they can be said to be on the by-way, while the latter on the highway. All the major religions of the world and the great Saints have messages for both. In this instalment, the discussion is mainly regarding the by-way travellers.

Early Days at Shanti Ashrama—VII : At the behest of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Turiyananda was doing the hazardous task of training some earnest students of Vedanta at the Shanti Ashrama. His students were of different temperaments, and the Ashrama life too was rather hard. Still the Swami was carrying on the 'Mother's work'. Swami Abhedananda, his brother-disciple, visited the Ashrama some-time in the first half of August 1901, and looking to the various difficulties, advised the Swami not to waste his time and energy on the Ashrama and to work instead at San Francisco ; but the Swami left everything to the Mother. He wrote to Mrs. Hansbrough (Shanti) : 'She [Mother] will direct me rightly. Of that I am confident. . . . I would drop the Ashrama altogether Shanti, if I have to depend on any person

for it and not on Mother and Mother alone.' It was with this spirit that the Swami worked at the Shanti Ashrama.

Ramakrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramakrishna—III : The life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda (once Naren) are, according to the author, nothing but the rhythmic expressions of the Ramakrishna phenomenon. By the immense life-giving and inspirational power in Swamiji's words 'even a dead man would sit up as it were', said one of his brother-disciples. But wherefrom comes so much power in his words? In the opinion of the author : 'It came from the fact that Sri Ramakrishna transmitted all his realizations and powers to Vivekananda and became a "fakir." Words of Vivekananda are the remanifestation of Ramakrishna.' It is hoped that on studying the series, the readers may also feel the same.

The Compassionate Return : In this learned exposition Dr. Wilbur M. Fridell, Associate Professor, Dept. of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, U.S.A., has very lucidly narrated

the theme of 'Compassionate Return' basing upon the concepts and practice prevalent in the main schools of Buddhism, namely, Therāvāda and Mahāyāna. The author is a brilliant student of East Asian History, and can read and speak Japanese. He spent eleven years in Japan as the Secretary, Waseda Student Christian Centre, Tokyo. He is of the opinion that : 'In all three [Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity] it is affirmed that love and compassion are at the heart of Eternal Reality, and that when we experience that Reality, universal compassion becomes a part of our lives. When this happens to us, we are possessed by a desire to communicate with others.' Great personalities like Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda 'returned' out of compassion from the highest state of realisation, to share their blissful experience with the men of the world with a view to elevate them.

Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda—IX : We are publishing in this issue Swami Vivekananda's letters to Sister Christine from 6 August 1901 to 8 October 1901.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF INDIA : By SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA, Publishers: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 11 Ramakrishna Math Road, Madras, 600 004, 1977 (first Indian edition), pp. 374, Price : ordinary Rs. 10/-; deluxe Rs. 22/-.

Here is a very useful book which presents in a brief compass the salient features of the main stream of religio-philosophic literature of India. It covers : (1) the four Vedas with their subdivisions of Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Araṇyakas and Upaniṣads; (2) the Ihihāsas (epics)—*Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, including the *Bhagavad-Gītā* for which a special chapter is devoted; (3) the Smṛtis, Purāṇas and the Tantras; (4) the philosophies of Jainism and Buddhism, which are outside the pale of Hinduism proper and perhaps are also earlier in time; (5) the six

Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, mīmāṃsā, and Uttara-mimamsa or the Vedānta; and (6) the several Vedāntic schools of thought and their founders and some important exponents, such as : Gauḍapāda, Śankara, Bhāskara, Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva, Vallabha and Caitanya, culminating in Sri Ramakrishna who was the living embodiment of Vedānta in all its aspects.

Thus the book covers a vast heritage of some 5000 years, from the Vedic times to the present day, spread over the whole of India. Written originally in the U.S.A. for Western readers by Swami Prabhavananda with the assistance of Frederick Manchester (published in 1960 by the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood), the language and presentation are precise

and admirable. Obviously in a small compass such a vast literature cannot be dealt with adequately. But the selections are apt and typical and the book does provide in a conspectus a fair idea of the range, essence, direction and goal of this heritage, and is a good introduction and guide to the general and intelligent reader. It will afford him a bird's-eye-view of the whole heritage and the relative position of each of its aspects.

Still, since the title is 'Spiritual Heritage of India', the aspects of Śaiva philosophy in the North and South should have found a place in the book. Further, even with this inclusion, it can be treated only as the first part of that vast heritage, and the second part should cover the equally vast and luminous mystical movements represented by numerous exalted saints and sages all over India from the Vedic to the present times to complete the picture.

However, the book is quite useful and fills a great need. The present Indian publishers may complete the series. The book is furnished with a nice Introduction, a Bibliography and an Index. The printing and get-up are excellent and the price is very moderate; the cheap edition will suit the pockets of all.

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah, W.B.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA UPANISHAD : BY C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, Publishers : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978 (seventh impression), pp. viii+97, Price : Rs. 3.50.

The book is a translation of the Tamil *Ramakrishna Upanishadam* written by the well-known patriot-statesman Sri C. Rajagopalachari. It was considered the best book in Tamil for the year 1952-53 in education, psychology and religion by the Tamil Academy of Madras.

Sri Ramakrishna had lived the whole gamut of spiritual life propounded for over 5000 years by Hinduism and also traversed the spiritual paths of other important religions of the world. As such his teachings are imbued with the spirit of universality and harmony, breadth of vision and depth of experience, and understanding sympathy. They are profound and bring before us the inner essence, the *rahasyam*, of the highest religio-philosophic and spiritual truths, reminiscent of the great Upanishads which were communicated very intimately. Hence the title 'Upanishad' to these teachings is appropriate.

These teachings are not mere dry lectures, on theory delivered in scholarly intellectual language; they are the *amrita* (nectar) churned from

the sea of life, easily assimilable, nourishing, and exhilarating, served through illustrations and parables based on common everyday life in very simple and direct language. They do not propound any new religion, support any sect, or preach any social reform. Mankind is brought face to face with religion itself, in its true essence and form, and everyone is shown the path to rise to life's fulfilment from where one is, according to one's own line of development.

These Upanishad-like teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, covering the different facets and situations of life oriented to spiritual development, are presented here by the author in his own inimitable style under thirty-five headings in lucid, simple and homely language which deeply touches the heart of the reader. As the author has pointed out, 'The teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna are not impractical ideas. They are truths which he verified in his experience and which he passed on to be adopted by Others.' (p. 76).

The printing and get-up of the book are attractive.

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

NAG MAHASAYA—A SAINTLY HOUSEHOLDER DISCIPLE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA : BY SARAT CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY, Publishers : Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1977 (fourth impression), pp. xii+143, Price : Rs. 5.50.

The book is a translation from the original Bengali. About Nag Mahasaya Sri Ramakrishna once said to Narendra (later Swami Vivekananda), 'He is really selfless. He does not feign it.' Sri Ramakrishna himself advised Nag Mahasaya to remain a householder : 'Your life will set up a true ideal for the householders.' Swami Vivekananda also said about him, 'Behold! he is a householder, yet he has no knowledge of the mundane world. He is always lost in Divine Consciousness.'

The life incidents of such a soul will be appreciated by all, for his life is an adventure into the spiritual realm. He step by step proceeded on and reached a point where the world failed to cause any reaction in him. Hereby the devotees will find that the householder's life cannot be a bar to one's spiritual progress; and the monks will discover that spiritual life is a matter of internal growth having very little to do with the outer show. Hence it will have its appeal to all spiritual aspirants irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

Many printing mistakes have been detected; we hope, in the next impression such a resource-

ful book will get better attention in proof-reading. Moreover, words like Pinda, Mandapam and Havishya need some short explanation for the foreign readers.

A photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna would have added lustre to the book.

SWAMI SUHITANANDA
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama
Narendrapur, 24-Parganas, W.B.

GEMS FROM THE UPANISADS: By H. B. PHILLIPS, Publishers: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1977, pp. xii+42, Price: ordinary Rs. 2.52; superior Rs. 4/-.

The illuminating utterances of the Upanisads are the perennial source of inspiration to mankind throughout the world. Innumerable earnest souls have been drawing from these profound teachings succour, peace, and gaining spiritual insight in their inward odyssey. The author has made a commendable effort to select 108 gems from the eleven famous Upanisads, and has arranged them carefully in three main parts: Dualism, Qualified Non-dualism and Non-dualism. The array of these gems is not only intelligent but also of absorbing study to know the amazing fiight of the Indian mind. The exploration begins from the duality of matter and spirit, and finds its consumption in the non-dual infinite dimension of the Atman. These revelations of the sages wisely collected in this anthology lead us step by step to the dazzling height of Oneness.

This competent English translation—specially the use of verse—conveys the spirit and charm of the original text. The well-printed anthology deserves study by all who want to know the evolution of Upanisadic thought.

BRAHMACHARI AMRITA CHAITANYA
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama
Narendrapur, 24-Parganas, W.B.

VIVEKANANDA WRITES TO YOU, Publishers: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1976, pp. iv+51, Price: Re. 1/-.

Swami Vivekananda's words are sparks from a blazing fire. Even a cursory glance at his writings helps in spiritual awakening, in opening of the portals to Life Divine. The irresistible appeal, the sublime splendour of his thoughts expressed in forceful language capture all thinking people, transcending the barriers of time and space. In them one finds an inexhaustible mine of positive ideas, impetus, fresh vigour to shape one's character, and a glimpse into the limitless dimension of life. This slender book is the collection of immortal outpourings of that mighty soul, gushed through the innumerable letters to his friends, admirers and disciples. However, one finds that the lofty thoughts of Swamiji are scattered and not well arranged in the book. If they could have been arranged systematically, it would have added to its value.

This book is for all young and old.

BRAHMACHARI AMRITA CHAITANYA

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA PERIANAICKENPALAYAM, COIMBATORE

REPORT: APRIL 1976—MARCH 1977

The Centre is an educational complex located on a plot of about 400 acres, eighteen kilometres from Coimbatore on the Coimbatore-Ootacamund Road, consisting of many institutions as given below:

Bālwadi: A Nursery cared for 83 poor children in the age group of 2½ to 6 years, to whom free lunch and tiffin were provided. Four meetings were conducted for the parents' education in nutrition, health and hygiene, with the help of films, film-strips and other audio-visual aids.

T.A.T. Kalanilayam Senior Basic School: Strength was 552, of whom 178 were girls. Free

midday lunch was provided for 160 students and free uniforms to 40 children. A pre-basic (Nursery School) is attached to it, with 46 children, 18 of whom were girls.

Swami Shivananda High School: Meant for village children, this School had 272 students including 38 girls, and provided the following electives: Algebra and Geometry, Physics, Chemistry, and History. Free midday lunch was provided for 35 students and free uniforms distributed to the same number.

Residential High School: During the year 195 students were offered the following electives: Algebra and Geometry, Chemistry and Engineering.

Arts and Science College: Offering Pre-University, Degree and Post-graduate courses, this Col-

lege had a strength of 807. The Degree courses provided are in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, History, Commerce and Co-operation; and M.Sc. in Physics and Mathematics, providing Electronics in Physics and Statistics in Mathematics as special subjects; and M.A. in Social Work. A total of 712 adults were benefited through courses in radio engineering, health education and science talent improvement; cultural talks on the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, etc.; Yoga classes; and remedial teaching in English, Mathematics, etc.

Teacher Training Institute: This is a two years' course for Primary School teachers, but in view of the large unemployment among this grade of teachers, the Government of Tamil Nadu ordered that no admission be made in the year. There were 27 students.

Teachers' Training College: The College offered the following courses: B.Ed., 100 students; Diploma in Education, 11; M.Ed., 25; and Ph.D., 6. M.Ed. and Ph.D. courses provided research as part of their study. The electives provided for the M.Ed. course are: Advanced Educational Psychology, Educational Administration, History and Evolution of Educational Thought, and Teacher Education. The Extension Services Department of the College conducted 40 workshops, seminars and other courses as inservice training to 1,347 teachers. Seven adults were schooled in the Literacy Classes, and 31 were trained in Youth Leadership. In addition, Research and Publication Departments, Psychology and Audio-visual laboratories are attached to the College. The College is also conducting a quarterly *Journal of Educational Research and Extension*.

Gandhi Teacher Training Institute: Science experiments were demonstrated at the surrounding Primary Schools to 1,500 persons. In 5 villages cultural programmes were held. The Adult Night School educated 25 people.

College of Physical Education: Certificate was offered to 59 students, Degree to 30, and Post-graduate courses to 8, leading to B.P.Ed. and M.P.Ed., with a total of 97 students. Courses in Yoga were also conducted. A Physiotherapy Section is attached to it which healed 416 patients. Three seminars for Physical Education teachers trained 30 persons.

College of Rural Higher Education: Part of the Rural Institute, this College runs a post-graduate course in Agricultural Economics and Co-operation. There were 32 students during the

year. The College has Extension and Research Departments.

School of Agriculture: A two-year Certificate Course in Agricultural Science was offered to 89 students, as part of the Rural Institute. Through this School, 103 adults were given non-formal training in the care of cattle, and 38 in sericulture. Nine seminars were held for a total of 496 people in the cultivation of coconuts, vegetables, paddy, water management, etc.

Polytechnic: A three-year Diploma Course in Civil and Rural Engineering (217 students), and two six-months' courses in Automobile Engineering (33 students), and Agricultural Engineering and Tractor Servicing (6), were offered. Three courses were offered to 52 adults in electrical work, motor winding, etc. Formerly part of the Rural Institute, it has been affiliated to the Tamil Nadu State Board of Technical Education.

Industrial Institute: Two-year courses in Turning, Fitting and Moulding, and a one-year course in Hand-composing and Proof-reading in Printing Technology, were provided to 70 students.

Institute of Commerce: This is conducted to help the clerical staff and others to improve their qualifications and also to help students learn typewriting (both Tamil and English). Fifteen persons were trained during the year.

Industrial Section: Here, practical training is imparted to Engineering students; and electric motors, pumpsets, etc., are manufactured, with 126 employed workers.

Central Library and Reading Room: During the year there were 45,652 books and 1,282 journals, of which 18,572 were issued. Daily attendance averaged 250.

Vidyalaya Press: The Press gives important training to students of the Industrial School, prints books and pamphlets, and fulfils other printing needs of the institutions. Fourteen workers are employed.

Rural Dispensary: The number of cases treated was 22,279.

Hostels: Ten hostels housed 1,248 students.

Sri Gurumaharaj Utsav: This annual celebration held in honour of Sri Ramakrishna was attended by about 30,000 people, and nearly 10,000 people were fed. A Cultural and Educational Exhibition was also conducted.

Children's Play Festival: Three thousand children from 25 primary schools participated in this annual festival, held in commemoration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth.