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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

'Truth is one : sages call It by various names'

यो नः पिता जनिता यो विधाता
धामानि वेद भुवनानि विश्वा ।
यो देवानां नामधा एक एव
तं संप्रश्नं भुवना यंत्यन्या ॥

1. [The Lord¹] our protector and father, the Ordainer of the universe, the Knower of all the worlds and all beings, the Giver of names to all gods—He is one. All beings come to Him to enquire.²

Rg-Veda 10.82.3

परो दिवा पर एना पृथिव्या
परो देवेभिरसुरैर्यदस्ति ।
कं स्विद् गर्भं प्रथमं दध्न आपो
यत्र देवाः समपश्यंत विश्वे ॥

2. That which is beyond the sky, beyond the earth, beyond the gods, beyond the demons—what is that primordial womb³ from which sprang the waters of life and which held together all the gods?

Rg-Veda 10.82.5

न तं विदाथ य इमा जजाना-
न्यद्युष्माकमंतरं बभूव ।
नीहारेण प्रावृता जल्प्या
चासुतृप उक्थशासश्चरन्ति ॥

3. [O man !] You do not know Him who has created all these beings ; his existence is another, is different from yours.⁴ Enveloped in the fog of ignorance, talking nonsense, caring only for the belly, engaged in rituals, people wander [without realizing the true nature of God].

Rg-Veda 10.82.7

* Another hymn on Visvakarman, known as Virāt in Vedānta, and identified with the Supreme Spirit by Sāyana. As in the previous hymn, in this also the mystery of creation is the main theme.

1. The Lord is Visvakarman.

2. That is, to ask 'Who is the supreme Lord.' Mahīdhara says that the gods come to Him to ask what *their* offices are.

3. The primordial womb is Visvakarman. All the gods are only his manifestations.

4. According to Vedānta, God is the innermost Self, the very substratum and source of the 'I'-consciousness in man. But Sāyana in his rather long comment says that God is beyond the reach of the 'I'-thought (*aham-pratyaya*) and is different from jīvas. Evidently, his intention is to emphasize the transcendent nature of the Supreme Spirit and condemn the pretensions of ritualists.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL discusses the importance of self-renewal in spiritual life and how Yoga helps in it.

In MY WESTERN EXPERIENCE Swami Lokeswaranandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, records his impressions of the people and socio-religious trends in Europe which he visited last year.

Swami Mukhyananda, Acharya, Probationer's Training Centre, Belur Math, offers a brilliant elucidation of the three world views held by different schools of Advaita in his article THE STATUS OF THE UNIVERSE.

The necessity of popularizing Advaita among the common people in India and abroad is the theme of LET THE WORD GO FORTH. Its author Brahmachari Shuddha Chaitanya is an American novice at the

Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST is a compilation of Swamiji's annotated translation of some selected passages from the Imitation of Christ, collated and edited by Jean C. MacPhail of the Vedanta Convent, San Francisco.

The insights into the working of the human mind and the nature of consciousness gained by Hindu mystics, if applied in business management, could greatly facilitate decision making, and enhance administrative efficiency and economy. This conclusion arrived at through research by Dr. S. K. Chakraborty of the Indian Institute of Science, Calcutta, is the main theme of his article BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND INDIAN MYSTICISM.

YOGA AND SELF-RENEWAL

(EDITORIAL)

Need for self-renewal

Look at the flame of a candle. What keeps it burning is the steady supply of molten wax. This is an example of what scientists call a steady state. It is a state of ceaseless renewal. Life is a special form of steady state. If it were nothing but a stream of energy, living beings would not be able to retain their distinct forms. On the other hand if living beings were completely unchanging, they would be no better than a dead stone. It is the combination of change and stability—the constant renewal of a fixed pattern of being—that gives each living organism its distinctive uniqueness. Says the outstanding Canadian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, 'Living forms are not *in*

being, they are happening; they are the expression of a perpetual stream of matter and energy which passes through the organism (or cell or population) and at the same time constitutes it.'

As far as living bodies are concerned, this stream of energy and matter appears to be governed by the same laws of thermodynamics that hold for reactions in test tubes, combustion engines and other 'closed' systems. The first law of thermodynamics states that all forms of energy—chemical, mechanical, electrical or radiant—are interconvertible. It also states that during the process of conversion energy is neither created nor destroyed. Careful experiments have shown that living bodies obey this law. The second law of thermodynamics is con-

cerned with the direction of this energy change. It states that systems in isolation spontaneously tend towards states of greater disorganization. If a drop of ink falls into a cup of water, it will immediately start spreading until the whole water becomes blue.

At first it might appear the reverse process takes place in life, for life always tends to greater organization. Living beings take simpler materials from the environment and build them into complex body tissues. In fact some eminent scientists like G. N. Lewis thought that life was an exception to the second law of thermodynamics. But as Erwin Schrodinger showed, a living organism is not an isolated system but only a part of a larger energy-system presided over by the sun, the ultimate source of physical energy for all living beings.¹ Life is able to preserve its complex organization only by constantly absorbing free energy from its environment and, as soon as this supply is stopped, living beings too proceed spontaneously to the state of disorganization called death—like the drop of ink in the above example.

A constant supply of free energy is alone not enough for the maintenance of life. There must also be an organization capable of maintaining a stable internal environment. The candle flame needs a stable wick in addition to the steady supply of molten wax. It was the great 19th century French physiologist Claude Bernard who pointed out this fact as an essential characteristic of living organisms in his famous dictum, 'A fixed internal environment is the essential condition for independent life.' Later on the American physiologist W. B. Cannon coined the word 'homeostasis' to denote the complex mechanism of self-regulating internal controls by which a living organism pre-

serves a stable internal condition.² A stable internal environment can be maintained only by a ceaseless process of self-renewal. This is what homeostasis really means.

Homeostasis is inseparably linked to the phenomenon of evolution. It is through constant self-renewal that life grows and evolves. Indeed, evolution represents life's perpetual search for newer ways of obtaining energy from the environment and better ways of achieving self-renewal. Homeostasis and evolution are the two most fundamental characteristics of living organisms. All the laws of biology are contained in these two.

Both self-renewal and evolution operate at all levels of life—physical, mental and spiritual. At the physical level self-renewal takes the form of metabolism, elimination of waste products, blood circulation, control of body temperature, blood pressure, etc. It is effected through a complex hormonal and nervous feedback coordination. Diseases are believed to be signs of a breakdown in homeostasis. The function of medicines is only to help the body in recovering its homeostatic equilibrium. When the body fails in this task, as happens in extreme old age and terminal diseases like cancer, death ensues.

The human mind too needs constant self-renewal. Some scientists consider mind to be only a special mode of functioning of the brain. But Freud, Jung and their followers regard it as a self-contained energy system with its own independent homeostasis. They divide mind into two main regions: the conscious and the unconscious (often with a preconscious inbetween). The unconscious is the storehouse of the instinctive energy called libido. The conscious is the main seat of the ego. The ego is constantly trying to keep the libido in check and to

1. Erwin Schrodinger, *What is Life?* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

2. In recent years the homeostatic principle has been extended to various other fields like ecology, forestry, cybernetics, digital computers, etc.

attain harmony with the environment. When it fails in this task, certain autocorrective 'defense mechanisms' come into operation. Thus the whole mind acts as a homeostatic system. Its control room is the unconscious. When owing to heavy emotional conflicts the defense mechanisms also fail, the result will be mental diseases like neurosis and madness.

The modern man's life is one of stress. Restlessness of the mind produced by noise and hurry, responsibilities, decision making, emotional excitements—all these drain away a lot of psychic energy. As a result a person may feel exhausted even without doing much physical work. Normally the unconscious, the storehouse of mental energy, replenishes the energy that is lost. But sometimes it does not. One cause of this is repression, that is unconscious suppression, of some of the basic instincts in man. Another is the inability to find a proper ideal or motivation in life or to open new channels for the expression of one's aspirations, talents and creativity. Whatever be the cause, it shows the inability of the mind to renew itself.

Worry, depression, nervous exhaustion and psychosomatic diseases are signs that mental self-renewal is not working all right. However, Western science has not been able to solve this and other psycho-social problems of modern society. This is because it has not yet gained a true understanding of the nature of life and consciousness. In spite of their recent interest in extra-sensory phenonema, altered states of consciousness, biorhythms, Kirlian aura, bio-plasma (discovered by the Soviet scientists Grischenko and Inyushin) and brain waves, scientists know very little about the psychic energy system. Says Dr. Hans Selye, president of the International Institute of Stress, Montreal, Canada : 'Although we have a name for this phenomenon ("adaptation energy"), we still have no precise concept

of what this energy might be. It is certainly not caloric energy because exhaustion occurs even if we eat well.'³ Science has only produced a fragmentary picture of man.

Prāṇa and homeostasis.

There are two views regarding the nature and origin of life. According to some modern scientists, life is derived from matter and is only another aspect of it. The other view is that life is a self-existent primary principle pervading the whole universe and that matter and mind are only its two different manifestations. This was the view that prevailed in ancient times in India, China and Greece. Indian sages called the cosmic principle of life *prāṇa*. The word originally meant breath, and was later on used to mean the life principle in man. As the whole universe was recognized as one single organism, *prāṇa* came to signify the cosmic life-force, and *vāyu* (atmospheric air) was often used as a symbol of it.

In the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* the sage Raikva says that there are two absorbants (*samvarga*), one in man and the other in the universe. In man all organs are absorbed (during sleep) into *prāṇa*; in the outer universe all beings are absorbed (during cosmic dissolution) into *vāyu*.⁴ The individual and the cosmic principles of life were always regarded as one, for the microcosm and the macrocosm were believed to be built on the same plan, and *prāṇa* represented this unitary principle. The *Praśna-Upaniṣad* says that just as the spokes of a chariot wheel are fixed on the hub, so all beings are united in *prāṇa*.⁵ As the system of Vedānta devel-

3. Hans Selye, 'The Age of Stress' in PHP (Tokyo) December, 1979.

4. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 4.3.1-4.

5. अरा इव स्थनाभौ प्राणे सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

Praśna-Upaniṣad 2.6.

oped, *prāṇa* got identified with Hiraṇyagarbha or Lower (*apara*) Brahman who dwells in all beings as the Inner Controller (*antaryāmin*) or the Inner Self (*sūtrātman*).⁶

But *prāṇa* was never considered the ultimate reality. According to the Upaniṣads, *prāṇa* itself is derived from pure consciousness known as Brahman and Atman.⁷ Through psychic *prāṇa* the individual Self controls the body and mind. In the same way, through cosmic *prāṇa* God controls and regulates the whole universe. Just as Brahman is the sum of all individual bits of consciousness, *prāṇa* is the sum total of all forces in the universe. Says Swami Vivekananda, '... and everywhere, all movements are the various manifestations of this Prāṇa. This Prāṇa is electricity, it is magnetism; it is thrown out by the brain as thought. Everything is Prāṇa; it is moving the sun, the moon and the stars.'⁸

In Prāṇa we have a holistic principle of life which brings together body and mind, matter and life, under one common homeostatic regulation. Indeed, Prāṇa is the super-homeostatic system of the universe

governing individual existence as well as cosmic existence.

In the individual a part of the Prāṇa remains at the base of the spinal column in a dormant form called *kuṇḍalinī*. The remaining part of Prāṇa is believed to travel along two main *nāḍis* or channels called *idā* and *pingalā*. From these *prāṇa* in some way percolates into the whole organism, moving freely all over the body and mind, energizing and enlivening every cell and every thought. Indian yogis have found that by controlling *idā* and *pingalā* the flow of Prāṇa in the body and mind can be controlled. *Idā* and *pingalā* are the homeostatic regulators for the whole personality. Prāṇa is known as *chi* in Chinese and *ki* in Japanese. The ancient Chinese masters have mapped the meridians or lines along which *chi* moves all over the body. According to them, diseases are caused by an imbalance in the free flow of *chi*. They found that by inserting needles at certain control points on the meridians the flow of *chi* could be regulated and diseases could be cured. This is the basis of the practice of acupuncture.

In ancient India body and mind were not treated as two separate entities as modern physicians do. Medical science itself was called Āyurveda, the science of life. Śuśruta, a sixth century B.C. writer on Āyurveda, defines disease as union with suffering of all kinds, physical and mental.⁹ According to all the ancient medical authorities, Śuśruta, Vāgbhāṭa, Agniveśa and Caraka, the basic cause of all diseases is the disturbance of the psychophysical energy system composed of the three humours (*dhātu*): *vāta* (wind), *pitta* (bile) and *kapha* (phlegm). They all emphasized the role of mind in causing this humoral imbalance. They had a holistic view of man. Their concept of

6. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* 3.7.2-23.

The Sāṃkhya philosophers did not recognize Prāṇa as an independent principle. The Sāṃkhya conception of Prakṛti includes all the attributes and functions of Prāṇa. When Advaita philosophers converted Prakṛti into Maya, *prāṇa* was reduced to some physiological processes in the human body. The Tantras identified *prāṇa* with *cit-sakti*, the power of consciousness. In modern times Swami Vivekananda has made an attempt to revive the ancient Upaniṣadic concept of *prāṇa* in his *Rāja Yoga*.

7. आत्मन एष प्राणो जायते ।

Prasna-Upaniṣad 3.3.

स प्राणमसृजत ।

ibid, 6.4.

8. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976), vol. 2, p. 30.

9. तदुःखसंयोगा व्याधयः ।

Susruta-Samhita 3.3.

health is *sātmya* which literally means 'to be in harmony with the Self'. Disease is *vikāra*; deviation from the natural state, or *anātmya*, to be out of harmony with the Self.

This is also the basic view of Yoga. The aim of Yoga is the establishment of *svārājya*, the sovereignty of the Self. For this both the body and the mind must become perfect instruments of the Atman. If the body and the mind are out of harmony, meditative life becomes difficult, and even ordinary life becomes miserable. It was this understanding that led to the development of the system of yoga known as Hatha Yoga. This system considers disease to be a disturbance in the homeostatic equilibrium of Prāṇa, caused by the irregular functioning of *idā* and *piṅgalā*, and tries to set it right through certain bodily postures, control of breath etc.¹⁰ In the hands of incompetent persons some of the Hatha Yoga techniques could produce harmful results, and spiritual teachers have rightly discouraged seekers of God from following these techniques. But it should be remembered that in every yoga harmony of body-mind functions, integration of the whole personality, is considered the first step. Śrī Kṛṣṇa defines Yoga as equilibrium.¹¹ Equilibrium can be attained through purification of mind, devotion to God, self-analysis, or by the control of *idā* and *piṅgalā*, depending upon the type of yoga one follows.

10. This represents a later development of Yoga. Patañjali's idea of *vyādhi*, physical disease, is explained by Vyāsa in his commentary on *Yoga-Sūtra* 1.30 :

व्याधिर्घातु-रस-करण वैषम्यम् ।

'Disease is a disharmony in the humours, body fluids and the ten organs'. According to Patañjali the cause of mental troubles is the preponderance of *rajas* and *tamas* over *sattva*. The idea of Prāṇa as an overall body-mind equilibrater was developed by Nath Yogis and other Yogic and Tāntric sects several centuries later.

11. समत्वं योग उच्यते ।

Gītā 2.48.

We now come to cosmic Prāṇa. As in the individual, so in the cosmos there is a natural harmony, equilibrium. The Chinese sages named it Tao. Rivers carry water to the ocean and rains bring it back to the land. Similarly there are the periodic movements of the earth and the planets, oceanic and atmospheric currents, biorhythms, balance of life in plant and animal worlds, and so on. The *Kāṭha-Upaniṣad* says that this cosmic order, equilibrium, homeostasis, is the work of Prāṇa under the control of the Supreme Spirit.¹² It is this cosmic regulation of the whole Virāt (the manifested universe) that Śrī Kṛṣṇa calls Divine Yoga.¹³ Arjuna gets a glimpse of its terrifying immensity in the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā*.

Yoga—lower and higher

The Sanskrit lexicon gives the following meanings for the word Yoga : 'great preparation (or armour), means, meditation, coming together, union.'¹⁴ Of these it is in the sense of union that the word is widely used in Vedānta scriptures. We have seen that Kṛṣṇa uses it in this sense to indicate equilibrium in the individual and in the cosmos. But it is most commonly used to denote the union of the individual with the cosmos.

As already shown, equilibrium in living beings is a state of constant self-renewal. Air, water, food and other things necessary for the renewal of the body are constantly supplied by the vast self-renewal processes going on in the physical universe. But to

12. यदिदं किञ्च जगत्सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।
महद्भयं वज्रमुद्यतं य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥
Kāṭha-Upaniṣad 6.2.

13. पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
Gītā 9.5 and 11.8.

14. योगः सन्नहन-उपाय-ध्यान-संगति-युक्तिषु ।
Amarakosa.

utilize them properly the body must be in harmony with the world outside. Similarly, ideas and the psychic energy necessary for the renewal of the mind are present in the mental universe, but the former must be in harmony with the latter. Wrong ways of living, hatred, jealousy, fear, doubt and wrong ways of thinking block the channels of contact between the individual and the cosmos at the physical and mental levels. This is the sole cause of all physical and mental illness and suffering. In the same way though the Atman, the individual spirit, is an eternal part of Brahman, the infinite Spirit, egoism and ignorance create a separation between the two. As a result, man is unable to realize supreme bliss and complete fulfilment. Yoga is an attempt to remove the obstacles at *all* the three levels—physical, mental and spiritual. It is an integral discipline which aims at the development of the whole man. Man cannot develop in isolation, and what yoga does is to integrate the individual with the cosmos at *all* the three levels.

Man's whole life is actually a yoga. It is a part of the eternal, self-sustaining cosmic yoga of the Divine. But owing to ignorance we go on tampering with this natural yoga by converting life into *bhoga*, enjoyment. *Bhoga* is the abuse and misuse of nature and living in disharmony with larger life through over-indulgence and egoism. It is the main cause of all the sufferings of man. What we call yoga is only a conscious attempt to recover the natural harmony, to restore the energy balance, by opening the body, the mind and the soul to the rhythms of the cosmic yoga of the Divine. This opening may be done through self-sacrifice (as in Karma Yoga) or self-control (as in Rāja Yoga) or through self-surrender (as in Bhakti Yoga) or through self-analysis (as in Jñāna Yoga).

Our part in yoga is only to do this consciously. Self-awareness is the only thing we

have to maintain in yoga; the actual operations of yoga are all parts of the natural processes of Divine Yoga. Yoga is yoga only to the extent it is done consciously, will-fully. Anything done unconsciously, be it work or japa, is not yoga, whatever else it might be. Eating is satisfying a natural urge. But when it is done with the full awareness that food is a form of Prāṇa and will be converted back into Prāṇa in the body, the act of eating becomes a yoga or *vidyā* known as *prāṇāgnihotra vidyā*.¹⁵ In this way every activity can be converted into yoga by doing it consciously and with the knowledge of the connection between the individual and the cosmos.

If our main contribution to yoga is our awareness, it stands to reason that by intensifying our awareness we can intensify the practice of yoga. This is an important point to note. It is by intensifying awareness that we make spiritual progress quicker. How to intensify awareness? Through two things. One is intense aspiration or longing for God-realization. The other is the extension of consciousness to every department of our life; that is, becoming more and more aware of eating, talking, working and other normal activities of everyday life.

Admittedly, it is difficult for a beginner to do all activities, or even his spiritual practice, consciously with full self-awareness. He can at best maintain this kind of alertness only intermittently, for he is carried away by the unconscious stream of his thoughts most of the time. To do sādhanā with full self-awareness becomes possible only when the *buddhi* awakens and the light of Atman begins to illumine the mind. Then

¹⁵. For details see, *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 5.19-24. Before beginning to eat, an orthodox Hindu throws five morsels of food into his mouth as an offering to the five Prāṇas, while uttering: *pranaya svaha, apanaya svaha, vyanaya svaha, udanaya svaha, samanaya svaha*. These mantras are also uttered while offering food to a deity. See, *Mahānarayana-Upaniṣad*, section 69.

yoga becomes fully conscious, fully self-directed. To distinguish this true yoga from the natural yoga of ordinary life, Śrī Kṛṣṇa calls it *Buddhi Yoga*.¹⁶ It is yoga guided and controlled by the *buddhi*, the true spiritual centre in man. By it Kṛṣṇa does not mean a particular system of yoga. It is the higher stage of every yoga. Any yoga—Karma, Dhyāna, Bhakti or Jñāna—done with an awakened *buddhi* becomes *Buddhi Yoga*.

From the above discussion it is clear that yoga is of two types: lower (*apara* or *gauṇa*) and higher (*para* or *mukhya*). Lower yoga is that done with an unawakened *buddhi*. It is an attempt to rid consciousness of lower instincts and mental automatisms. The first step in it is the purification of body and mind. A body subjected to overeating, sex and irregular habits is impure and out of equilibrium; so also is a mind filled with impure thoughts. Both are to be purified through austere habits, brahmacharya, selfless work and the observance of virtues like truthfulness and non-violence. The next step is to harmonize the working of the *idā* and the *piṅgalā* through simple forms of concentration like prayer, worship, repetition of a divine name, regulated breathing, etc. Every yoga has its *apara* or lower stage. In Rāja Yoga it consists of *yama* (virtues), *niyama* (conduct), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (regulation of breath), *pratyāhāra* (detachment) and *dhāraṇā* (concentration); in Bhakti Yoga it consists of serving devotees of God, prayer, worship, etc.; in Jñāna Yoga it consists of selfless work, study of scriptures, discrimination, etc. Similarly, every yoga has its *para* or higher stage when it becomes *Buddhi Yoga*.

At the stage of lower yoga the aspirant is almost wholly in the realm of *Prāṇa*. He is like a man who has fallen into a river and is struggling to save himself. When lower yoga is practised with intense aspiration it leads to the awakening of the *buddhi*,

the dawn of higher consciousness. Like a man standing on the bank of a river, the aspirant is now able to witness the river of *Prāṇa* flowing by in deep silence. At the lower stage he was aware of only universal life, cosmic *Prāṇa*, the evolutionary cycle of plant and animal life. But now, at the higher stage, his *buddhi* opens to universal consciousness, and he enters the path of a new evolution, the spiritual evolution. Self-renewal attained through lower yoga is the renewal of *Prāṇa*; self-renewal attained through higher yoga is the renewal of consciousness. In spiritual life both the types of self-renewal are important. If one of them is defective, spiritual progress will be checked.

Spiritual stagnation and renewal

The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* says, 'Yoga rises and falls'.¹⁷ The path of yoga is full of ups and downs. In the life of every spiritual aspirant occur periods of stagnation when his devotional fervour diminishes and he finds further progress blocked. He finds little joy in prayer or meditation, is assailed by doubts and feels forlorn and uprooted. In Christian ascetical literature such 'dry' periods are known as 'accidie' or 'trials' or 'dark nights'. The cause of this spiritual stagnation may be described in many ways. From the standpoint of yoga the main cause is that the spiritual centre has become inactive. It is the spiritual centre that regulates the spiritual renewal processes in us.

According to Vedānta the personality of man consists of five *kośas* or sheaths. Each sheath has its own centre of control known as the *bindu*. In worldly life only the first three sheaths are fully operative. The *bindu* of the physical body is said to be in the brain, while that of *Prāṇa* or vital sheath is,

17. योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ।

¹⁶*Bhagavad-Gītā* 2.49; 10.10; 18.57.

according to yogis, at the base of the spinal column. The *bindu* of *vijñānamaya kośa* or the sheath of intellect is in the *buddhi* which is generally felt in the region of the heart. This is the spiritual centre. True spiritual life begins only when this centre becomes active.

The lower *bindus* are under control of higher *bindus*. As the spiritual centre becomes active, it begins to exercise control over the lower centres. When this supervisory control is lost or when the spiritual centre itself becomes inactive, spiritual self-renewal becomes defective. This is the chief cause for stagnation in spiritual life. One of the important tasks in spiritual life is to keep the spiritual centre always active and open. For this Brahmacharya (chastity) and intense aspiration are necessary.

Another cause for spiritual stagnation is the disharmony produced in the body and mind by wrong ways of living and thinking. Through introspection it is usually possible to detect the disturbing factors. But often some strong emotions or desires get repressed and work in the dark depths of the unconscious where the conscious mind is unable to deal with them.

There is a third cause. As fire is put out when wet wood is dumped on it, so spiritual aspiration dies when the mind is overcrowded with junk. The modern man is continually bombarded with all sorts of useless ideas and information emanating from people, newspapers, radio and books. A mind over-stimulated by excitements and distractions loses its vigour and creativity, and becomes heavy and immobile. The spiritual centre is then unable to activate such a mind.

Yet another cause of spiritual stagnation is sin consciousness. A nagging sense of guilt darkens the soul and chokes the spiritual centre. Condemning oneself as a worthless sinner inhibits spiritual aspiration. It is actually a form of escapism, an attempt

to avoid the responsibility of maintaining constant self-renewal of body, mind and spirit.

Then there is a fifth cause. Some over-zealous spiritual aspirants try to intensify their prayer and meditation beyond their capacity, neglecting food, sleep, exercise and other basic needs of the body. This results in the exhaustion of mental energies, and the aspirant then finds himself without any spiritual initiative.

All these causes of spiritual stagnation are only symptoms of a breakdown in the self-renewal process. This can be corrected by the diligent practice of the lower yoga described earlier. The company of holy men and the guidance of an experienced teacher are a great help in dealing with such difficult periods. St. John of the Cross has classified all these lower obstacles under what he calls the Dark Night of the Sense.

There is, however, a higher type of obstacle which comes to advanced spiritual aspirants after they have made some substantial spiritual progress. Some of them have to pass through a period of higher 'dryness' which St. John of the Cross calls the Dark Night of the Spirit. The aspirant after getting glimpses of the interior Light and enjoying the divine Presence, suddenly finds the Light or Presence withdrawn from his soul. Speaking about it Evelyn Underhill says, 'Parallel with the mental oscillations, upheavals and adjustments, through which an unstable psycho-physical type moves to new centres of consciousness, run the spiritual oscillations of a striving and ascending spiritual type... The machinery of consciousness, overstretched, breaks up, and seems to toss the self back to an old and lower level, where it loses its apprehensions of the transcendental world; as the child, when first it is forced to stand alone, feels weaker than it did in its mother's arms.'¹⁸

18. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (London: Methuen and Co., 1926), p. 461.

When the green scum covering the pond is pushed aside one can see the clear water; similarly, when the veil of Maya is lifted, one can see the light of God—says Sri Ramakrishna.¹⁹ But the green scum closes in and covers the water again. The cause of this occasional obscuration of the divine Light lies in the unknown realms of the Spirit.

From what has been said above it is clear that spiritual life needs constant self-renewal. The dust of worldliness gathers on the soul and it is necessary to cleanse and refurbish it everyday. Sri Ramakrishna oneday asked his Guru Totapuri why he still practised regular meditation even after attaining the highest realization. The great monk pointed to his brass water-pot which was bright like gold, and said that if he did not polish it everyday, it would get tarnished.

Methods of spiritual self-renewal

Everything in the universe changes except the Atman, the true Self. Our 'I', ego or lower self, is only a reflection of the true Self on the mind. And since the mind itself is a changing and growing thing, the ego is not a permanent entity. The ego of childhood, of boyhood, of youth and of old age are different from one another. As we grow, our ego goes on changing. Our past is strewn with the egos we had once hugged and cherished, suffered for and fought for. Religion teaches us how to discard the impure sinful ego and build up a new radiant divine Self in the image of God.

The Buddhist monk rids himself of his guilty conscience by confessing his errors before his fellow monks and by reciting the *Patimokka Sūtra*. According to Catholic theology, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, infused through baptism, gets lost through sin. The Catholic purifies himself by confessing to a priest and then, through the

Eucharistic holy communion, recovers the Indwelling. By renewing the divine Presence in him he renews his own self.

In Hinduism sin eradication (*aghamarśana*) is done by simply connecting the individual consciousness to the Universal Consciousness. There are several ways of doing it. One is through the *Saṁdhyā* worship. In the sacred twilight hour the worshipper sits alone facing the Sun, the symbol of Virāt or universal life. He then offers his impure self, through a simple ritual, into the effulgence of universal consciousness which purifies and illumines it. Sipping a little water he chants: 'May the Sun (the Virāt), my will-power (*manyu*) and the presiding deities, protect me from wilfully committed errors. May the Night erase whatever sin I committed during the previous night by my thoughts, speech, hands, feet, stomach and the reproductory organ. I now offer myself, along with the impressions (*samskāra*) of those deeds left in me, as an oblation into light of universal consciousness represented by the Sun, the source of immortality.'²⁰ This ritual may appear to be mere imagination or auto-suggestion. But when done with deep faith by a sincere spiritual aspirant, it gradually purifies his self. Even a thoroughly worldly man will find that it enables him to face the problems of the day with a fresh mind and greater confidence.

The very purpose of Yajña, sacrifice, is self-renewal. In the Vedic period the sacrificial altar was regarded as a miniature replica of the cosmos, and the offering of

20. सूर्यश्च मा मन्युश्च मन्युपतयश्च मन्युकृतेभ्यः
पापेभ्यो रक्षन्ताम् । यद् रात्रिया पापमकार्षं मनसा
वाचा हस्ताभ्यां पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिश्ना रात्रिस्तद्व-
लुम्पतु । यत्किञ्च दुरितं मयि इदमहं माम् अमृतयो नौ
सूर्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा ॥

19. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 199.

A similar mantra is recited in the evening addressed to Fire.

oblation was an act of taking part in the cosmic sacrifice. When a wheat plant matures and produces seeds, it will be sacrificed so that a new wheat plant may grow in its place. In a similar way, the whole universe is renewing itself through a complex cosmic sacrifice. The ritual of offering oblation in the fire was considered an act of sacrificing the old lower self for the creation of a new higher Self which is open to universal consciousness. Gradually, service to holy men (*ṛṣi-yajña*), gods (*deva-yajña*), ancestors (*pitṛ-yajña*), one's fellowmen (*nṛ-yajña*) and other living beings (*bhūta-yajña*) came to be looked upon as an equally effective form of sacrifice. (These five kinds of service were called *pañca-mahāyajña*, five great sacrifices) It was found that through service man could sublimate his lower self into the higher Self. Regarding this Manu makes a remarkable statement: 'By the repeated performance of the (five) great sacrifices (or service), the human body is made divine.'²¹ It was this doctrine of the divinization of the self through service that the Gita developed into the discipline of Karma Yoga. The channels connecting the individual self with the cosmos are blocked by greed, hatred, fear and other feelings in most people. Karma Yoga clears the channels and restores the contact. A true Karma Yogi feels cosmic life freely flowing in and through him, and experiences the thrill of perpetual self-renewal.

As pointed out earlier, every yoga is a means of effecting self-renewal. The Yogi regards his own Prāṇa as a sacrificial fire and offers all actions into it as an oblation.²² In the Tāntric form of worship known as *pūjā*, the worshipper burns up his lower self (*pāpa puruṣa*) in the fire of *kuṇḍalinī* through a process called *bhūta-śuddhi*, and

creates a new divine self. Mental worship (*mānasa-pūjā*), if done with faith and concentration, is as effective as external worship in purifying and renewing the self. For a Sannyasin his own Atman is itself his sacrificial fire, and his whole life is a constant offering of his life into it²³ Hence Śaṅkarācārya in his works describes the Sannyasin as an *ātma-yājīn*, a Self-sacrificer. The ritual of ordination into monkhood called *virajā-homa* is a symbolic act of burning up the lower self and the regaining of one's true Self, the Atman which Sannyasins call the *hamsa*, the Swan. Some Sannyasins perform the *virajā-homa* mentally everyday; this enables them to renew their selves constantly and keep the light of Atman burning bright in their hearts always.

The best form of self-renewal is meditation. If done properly, it will churn the whole unconscious and will open its contents into the conscious. In due course it will break open the door to the super-conscious, and further will connect individual consciousness with universal consciousness. Thus it effects a thorough renewal of the whole personality. When we sit for meditation we should think that the individual spirit is having a dip in the luminous stream of Sat-cit-ānanda. If this awareness is maintained throughout the day, we will experience the joy and wonder of the constant renewal of the self in the depths of our consciousness.

Everyday the sun rises over a new world, for the world renews itself constantly. But man alone continues to wander in the dusky chambers of his past, clinging to the shadows of his former self. This prevents him from participating in the unceasing process of self-renewal going on in universal life. Without constant self-renewal our life

²¹. महा यज्ञैश्च यज्ञैश्च ब्राह्मीयं क्रियते तनुः ।

Manu-Smṛti 2.28.

²². How this is done is described in the *Gītā* 4.24-32.

²³. Cf. आत्मनि अग्नीन् समारोप्य ब्राह्मणः

प्रब्रजेद् गृहात् ।

Manu-Smṛti 6.38.

becomes stagnant, monotonous, meaningless. Out of the fire of prayer and worship, out of the fire of sacrifice and service, out of the fire of yoga and meditation, out of the fire

of Sannyasa, let a new effulgent Self arise everyday, open to the rhythms of universal consciousness.

MY WESTERN EXPERIENCE—I

SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Sometime in 1980 I received a letter from Spalding Professor Matilal inviting me to visit Oxford and speak on 'Vedantic Mysticism' I felt flattered by the invitation, but for various reasons I was doubtful if I would be able to go. Soon after this Mrs. Ilse Busch from Berlin wrote to me saying that it would give her and her friends great pleasure if I spent a few days in Berlin teaching them Vedanta and they were prepared to bear all my expenses in this connection. I had met this lady in India, for she had been a delegate to the great Convention which was held at Belur Math in December 1980, but though we talked to each other several times on that occasion, never did she hint then that she might someday invite me to Berlin. In inviting me she said that on receiving my letter of assent she would send me money to cover my passage both ways and proceed to make preparations for the meetings that I would address. She suggested early October for my visit, for she said the climate in that month was cool and pleasant in Berlin.

I accepted her invitation but said that the earliest that I was able to leave India was in the third week of October. Would that suit her? She wrote back that the time was all right so far as she was concerned, but since it was their expectation that I would stay for at least three weeks, I must come prepared for the November chill which sometimes was quite unpleasant. I wrote again saying that since there was no way

of getting away from my work earlier, I would face the cold anyway and it would be a good thing for me, for a change. True to her word, she soon sent me money for my flight to Berlin and back; and asked me to let her know when I was arriving.

I had meanwhile written to Prof. Matilal asking if he would be able to arrange my lectures sometime in November. He promptly replied saying he would. He, however, asked if I would mind speaking on the second chapter of the Gita making a comparative study of its non-dualistic and dualistic interpretations as made by Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja respectively, instead on 'Vedantic mysticism' which he had earlier suggested. I wrote back saying that I would certainly be glad to speak on the subject he had now suggested, but would that not be too technical for a Western audience whose knowledge of Sanskrit and of the Indian system of philosophy was naturally very limited? He replied that an Oxford audience did not care for a speech which was too general, but demanded something critical. My talk, he said, should be accompanied by profuse quotations in Sanskrit, for many in the audience were expected to know it and they would appreciate the talk better if the arguments I made were backed by Sanskrit quotations. Mr. Robin Twite, the Regional Education Adviser, British Council, Calcutta, one of the finest men I have ever met, wrote to his head office in England to treat me as a guest of the British Council.

On his own, he also wrote a letter to Sir Isiah Berlin, the most distinguished scholar in Oxford now, introducing me as a personal friend of his and requesting that he spend sometime with me. He sent the letter direct, but gave me a copy of it asking that I must not miss seeing Sir Isiah, for he was a remarkable man, by any token.

Some of my friends prepared an itinerary for me covering a total period of seven weeks to be spent in five European countries—England, France, West Germany, Switzerland and Italy. We have our Vedanta centres in England, France and Switzerland and there was therefore, no problem about my accommodation so far as those countries were concerned. As regards Germany, I had been assured by those who had invited me that though I would have to stay with families, the arrangements would be quite satisfactory from my monastic point of view. But in Italy I had nowhere to stay except in some hotel. Everybody warned that hotels in Europe were very expensive and in Italy there were also all kinds of rackets. Could I not stay somewhere else? My travel agents said if I could not stay elsewhere, they would book my accommodation in some hotel in Rome where I would be perfectly safe. Someone then reminded me of a group of Italian monks who had once stayed at the Institute and been very friendly to us. Why didn't I write to them and find out if they would be able to accommodate me? Perhaps they could even arrange to get for me an audience with the Pope, if I so desired. With much hesitation I wrote to the leader of the group that I was likely to visit Rome in the near future and, if I did, I would very much like to see him. I also enquired if he could help me get an audience with the Pope. Within ten days I received a reply from him—a miracle, indeed; welcoming me, he said he would be happy to see me, and as regards the audience with the Pope, he advised that I write to the

secretary of the Pope direct with a copy of the letter to him. I wrote to him again enquiring if he could receive me at the airport and if necessary, accommodate me in his monastery for the period of my stay in Rome. I asked him to send his reply to Berlin where I said I would soon be arriving on my way to England.

Thus when all arrangements about my journey had been completed, I sent word to our Swamis in England, France and Switzerland about my impending visit together with details of my itinerary and requested them to arrange for someone to meet me at the airport. They all promptly wrote back welcoming me and said that either they themselves would receive me at the airports or someone else on their behalf would do so. They all, except one, requested me to speak at their centres, which I agreed to do. I had sent a copy of my itinerary to Prof. Matilal also. He offered to receive me at the airport and invited me to stay with him. The British Council also indicated that they would receive me at the airport and provided me with some distinctive tags to be fixed on to my baggage so that their representative could easily recognize me on my arrival at the airport. The travel agents thought I had better take an Air-India flight from Delhi and had accordingly booked a seat for me on a huge jumbo plane which starting from Delhi flies practically round the world.

I left Calcutta for Delhi on 24 October 1981. Before leaving, I went to Belur Math to take leave of the brother-monks and seek the blessings of the elders. Revered President Maharaj said, 'Beware, you do not trip over the interpretations of Rāmaṇuja.' I mentioned the books I had read, adding that his own writings on the subject also had helped me much. After a restful day in Delhi I left for Berlin on 25 October morning. It was a little before midnight when I landed at Berlin. When I emerged out of

the airport, I was given a warm reception by a small crowd of Indians and Germans. After much garlanding and flashing of camera bulbs, Mr. and Mrs. Franke took me to their flat which was to be my home the next three days. They showed me my bedroom and withdrew. Never was bed more inviting.

Next morning I woke up to the twittering of a small black bird close to my window. I tried to identify the bird but could not. It was not like any Indian bird I knew. After a quick bath I came out to the drawingroom to find the Frankes waiting for me. We talked about many things over breakfast and also after. I discovered they had attended the Convention and had also stayed at the guesthouse of the Institute. Both Mr. and Mrs. Franke know English but speak it with difficulty. Mr. Franke is almost always silent and unless spoken to, never speaks. He runs a Yoga school which is very popular. He is not a religious man, and Yoga to him is an affair of the body. He learnt his Yoga from an Indian Sikh in Delhi whose is the only picture hanging on the wall of his school. Yoga is very popular in West Germany, and in Berlin alone there are as many as nine Yoga schools. Mrs. Franke is, however, deeply religious. She is an initiated disciple of Swami Ritajananda, head of the Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna at Gretz near Paris. In my bedroom I noticed a strikingly good picture showing someone in meditation—it was her guru's. Swami Ritajananda had come and stayed with the Frankes several times; lately, however, he has not been coming due to ill-health. This is why Mrs. Franke goes to Gretz once a year and stays for a month. Whenever she goes, she carries with her woollen garments of various kinds for her guru, which she herself has knit. As far as I know, she had once been very active in the world of fashion.

After breakfast the Frankes took me out

on a sightseeing tour. Berlin is beautiful. The roads are straight and wide, and of course spotlessly clear. There are hardly any pedestrians, there are only speeding cars of all manner of shapes and sizes. People are always in a hurry; they have to, for they want to maintain the standard of living they think is the minimum. Only the aged and the sick who live off pensions can afford to live at a leisurely pace. They may often be seen in the side-streets gossiping among themselves, or walking along with grandchildren in tow. Architecture has undergone a radical change after the Second World War. Most old houses have been demolished, but those that remain are a pleasant contrast to modern houses which try to combine, without much success, though, beauty with utility. The Frankes took me to the infamous Berlin wall. Even now, they said, many from East Germany come over the wall despite risks of being shot. A pleasant surprise was a forest within the city limits of Berlin. I later discovered that many German cities had such forests within them where people retired for rest and recreation. Supermarkets are now a common feature in all European cities. I was taken to one of them where Mrs. Franke bought me some odds and ends. I saw some modern churches which hardly looked like churches. This is a change one sees everywhere in Europe today.

Mr. and Mrs. Franke are strict vegetarians at home, but when they dine out they don't mind eating fish and meat. I discovered many families in Germany were vegetarian, not exactly for religious reasons but because they believe vegetarian food is better from the health point of view. Mrs. Franke always surprised me at table, for she never served the same food twice. The food she prepared was always simple but delicious. And how quickly she finished her cooking! I used to ask her if she was not a magician!

Before I left for sightseeing, Mrs. Busch

had called to hand over to me my programme till the end of October. According to this programme, I was supposed to speak at Mr. Franke's Yoga school that evening on 'Science and Religion'. The audience, I was told, would be mostly German, but there might be a few Indians also. There were, however, no Indian at this meeting. I was feeling a bit nervous because this was going to be my first speech and that too on a difficult subject like 'Science and Religion'. I was told that there would be an able interpreter to translate my speech into German. The 'able interpreter' turned out to be Anna, Mrs. Busch's daughter. She is indeed a very able interpreter. She interpreted most of my speeches in Berlin, and although I am no judge, others said she had done her job very well, conveying all my thoughts correctly. Once or twice she was not able to translate my speeches and others were requisitioned. None proved equal to the task except one Indian scholar, Prof. Tripathi. He has been teaching at Berlin University for more than twenty-five years and knows German well. One advantage he has is that he knows Sanskrit and is thoroughly acquainted with Vedantic thought. There are many Indians who have lived in Germany about the same number of years or even more, yet they have not mastered the language. Once a German university student tried to translate my speech, but failed miserably. Members of the audience began to grumble about his translation. He knew German all right, but he was not able to convey my thoughts in appropriate words, not being familiar with Indian philosophy.

Mrs. Busch was responsible for organizing my lectures in Berlin. She is a person both imaginative and dynamic. Wherever I spoke she tried to create an Indian environment by placing Sri Ramakrishna's picture on a decorated altar, burning incense and playing Indian hymns and music on tapes. As I entered the auditorium at the Yoga school,

the audience stood-up and greeted me with folded hands. There were about sixty people present. Mrs. Busch introduced me to the audience and announced the title of my lecture. I thought I would say a few sentences first, then Anna would follow with her translation. Mrs. Busch thought this would be boring to the audience, so I said one sentence, paused for Anna's translation and then said the next sentence. I went on like this. Never used to this kind of speaking, I was never comfortable and, when I finished the speech, I was completely exhausted. Now began the question-answer session. It was a very lively exchange of views that we had between ourselves the next hour or so. I enjoyed it very much. I think the audience also liked my answers. Many came forward to shake hands with me and asked when and where I was going to speak next. They wanted to attend more of my lectures.

The next day was the Diwali Day which the Lugianis, an Indian family, were celebrating. The Lugianis, in business and very rich, had invited many people to their house on the occasion, including the Indian Consul-General Chakravarty and his wife. While in India I had received an invitation from the Lugianis through Mrs. Busch to attend the Diwali dinner at their house and also gave a religious talk. At first, I thought I would speak on Mother Kāli, for the night coincides with the night on which Mother Kāli is worshipped in some parts of India. The Lugianis, however, did not like the idea. They wanted that I should speak on religion in a general way and then answer questions that the audience might like to ask after hearing me. Hardly had I begun when questions began to be shot at me from all parts of the hall where we had gathered. The questions were mostly about Indian poverty and the caste system. What were religious people in India doing about these burning problems? It was the Indian section of the

audience who asked these questions. The Germans, by and large, were silent. The Indians seemed to be indignant about the fact that I should come to the West to preach religion when there was so much to do at home. I answered the questions as best I could. The Indian Consul-General now and then broke in to support me, but it was useless. To them India was doomed.

I spent the next day meeting groups of people interested in Vedanta. Some of them expressed the hope that a Vedanta centre would someday grow in West Germany. If France could have a centre, couldn't West Germany have one? There were some among them who had come under the influence of various religious teachers in India. To them Hinduism had come to mean a kind of witchcraft. I told them religion was a science which would not

countenance anything opposed to reason. Only a mystic of the highest order could transcend reason, others were bound by it.

Almost everyday I spoke at one place or another. Once there was a whole-day seminar in a rented school building. About 70 people attended. It was very much like a spiritual retreat.

The Bharat Majlis gave me a reception on 29 October. About 100 people were present, both Indian and German. I spoke on 'The Ramakrishna Mission: its activities'. There were a few questions after the speech, but nothing offensive.

I left for England on 1 November. Mrs. Busch and other friends made me promise that I would return to Berlin on 15 November to spend a fortnight among them.

(To be continued)

THE STATUS OF THE UNIVERSE

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA

A correspondent from Calcutta wrote to me in Bengali in November 1981 referring to *Srsti-drsti vāda*, *Drsti-srsti vāda* and *Ajāta*

1. In his notes on the *Vedānta-Samjñā-Mālikā*, the author says: *Srsti-drsti-vāda* is the philosophic view that the universe has independent existence, hence it is perceived. *Drsti-srsti-vāda* is the philosophic view that the universe is there, because it is perceived. *Ajāta-vāda* is the philosophic view that the universe has neither existence, nor is it perceived (by a person of perfect realization).

2. Excerpts from the Bengali letter are given below:

'In the *Vedānta-Samjñā-Mālikā*, in Bengali, by Swami Dhireshananda, published by Udbodhan Office, Calcutta, it is said on p. 46—*drsti-srsti-vāda* is the view of the *madhyama* (mediocre) *adhikāri* (aspirant), or one who is a thinker; according to this view, the knowledge of the object itself is the object—the world itself is the object

vāda as given in *Vedānta-Samjñā-Mālikā*¹ with some brief elucidations about them.² He has mentioned that he considers *Drṣṭi-*

of knowledge and the form of the object remains only as long as the perception of it lasts. Hence that which I do not experience, has no existence for me at all. When I close my eyes and do not see before me this temple, then its previously seen form also will not remain any more. When I see the temple again, then what I see is another newly created form, different from the one seen before.

My query is this—do the Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission support this view or not?

Srsti-drsti-vāda or the view that the world has functional validity (*vyavaharika-satta*), in which it is accepted that there is the "objective existence" of the world, it has existence independent of the perceiver. This is for *adhama* (inferior) *adhikāri*. According to the *drsti-srsti-vāda* the form in which we see the world is dependent on the perceiver—

sr̥ṣṭi vāda to be extremely apt and reasonable and that the modern scientific truths also are fully favourable to it, and he has asked if this understanding and belief of his is correct. He has further desired to know if the Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Order support this three-fold view and the gradation into inferior, mediocre, and superior aspirants based on it or not? As the question touches on a philosophical problem, I wish to share my reply with the readers, as it may be of interest to others as well, with some elaboration and references in footnotes.

This is a question with regard to the status of the universe from the philosophic viewpoint of the Vedantic schools. So far as the Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Order are concerned, there is no collective or official view on the subject, as it is left to the interested individual monks to study the orthodox scholastic Vedanta, and they are free to hold any view they consider proper.

Sri Ramakrishna in his teachings often says, 'God alone is real ; all else is unreal'. Swami Vivekananda in his 'Jñāna Yoga', 'The Free Soul' and a few other lectures presents the ultimate Advaitic view of *Ajāta-Vāda* (non-origination of the universe) also, without using the term and without showing any exclusive preference.³ In a poem he says, 'This world is a dream ; though true it seem'. However, these are general spiritual

“subjective”—appearance ; this is the view of the *madhyama adhikāri*.

Ajāta-vāda—in which view neither functional nor even apparent validity (*pratibhasika-satta*) of the world is accepted. This is the view of *pūrṇajñāni brahmavid* (one who has perfect realization of Brahman)—the *uttama* (superior) *adhikāri*.

To me *dr̥sti-sr̥ṣṭi-vāda* seems to be very apt and reasonable. The modern scientific truths are also fully favourable to it. Is my understanding and belief correct?

3. *Jñāna-Yoga*, (Advaita Ashrama : Calcutta, 1972), lectures on 'The Atman', p. 283 ; 'The Real and the Apparent Man', pp. 321-26. See also his 'Song of the Sannyāsīn', pp. vii-xi.

statements without advocating any particular philosophic view. In the circumstances, I can give you only my personal thoughts on the subject as moulded by the literature of the Order and other studies.

Since all philosophizing is possible and necessary only in the realm of duality when we are experiencing the universe and our own individuality as well as that of other beings, *ajāta-vāda* in the sense of not accepting any *vyāvahārika* (functional) or *prātibhāsika* (apparent) *sattā* (validity), cannot be rationally maintained, for then there is no place for philosophizing at all. The author of the book in his notes says that *ajāta-vāda* accepts *pratibhāsa* (appearance), but not *prātibhāsika-sattā* (apparent validity), which does not seem to connote any real difference, for in any case, the appearance of the universe as a whole, including the perceiver's individuality, disappears only in the state of realization of the absolute non-dual spiritual Reality or Brahman. After all, in Advaita, everything that exists, or absolute Existence (*sat*), is the Infinite Brahman alone and the appearances derive their *sattā* (validity) from Brahman in all the states—whether *vyāvahārika* or *prātibhāsika*. The validity spoken of is *for us* of the appearance, and not of the appearance itself. Hence the contention of the author that, if *prātibhāsika-sattā* is accepted, the appearance cannot be removed, does not hold water, for when Brahman alone is there, what is there to be removed and by whom? And as long as the appearance of the individual's personality is there, the appearance of the universe will continue, for both are integral parts of one total appearance.

Ajāta does not mean that the apparent universe is not experienced or is not amenable to activity on the relative plane, but that it is not really born or originated, that is, it is not an active creation or manifestation by the absolute infinite Reality or Brahman which is changeless. We may exemplify the

universe-appearance like this: when we say, 'light shines', it is not to say that light is doing any activity, but it is its very nature to shine.⁴ And the shining appears *to us* in the dualistic state. The universe appears spontaneously due to Brahman's imponderable Power designated Maya, giving rise phenomenally to the appearance of the triad of *jīva-jagat-īśvara* (soul-universe-Godhead), on the substratum of Brahman, which have mutual relative validity in themselves as they have the same phenomenal or empirical status. They all derive their validity from the absolute Reality—Brahman, their common substratum. So the statement of *ajāta* is applicable to Brahman's changeless nature, to the fact of non-origination, and not to the universe-appearance;⁵ otherwise, there was no necessity to assert, and there would be none to assert, that it is not born. The validity of the universe refers to its phenomenal validity *to us* in the dualistic state. In this context, *prātibhāsika-sattā* of the whole universe is the same as the *vyāvahārika-sattā* (cf. the dream world in the dream state) within which also we experience another type of *pratibhāsa* (appearance) like the mirage, which too has a type of *sattā* or validity in life;

4. Cf. *Mandukya-Kārikā* 1.9. *Devasyaisa svabhāvah ayam āptakāmasyakā sprhā* (the appearance of the universe is there due to the very nature of the Effulgent Being; for what desire can the ever fulfilled Infinite One have?).

5. Vedānta, especially Advaita, is not primarily interested in the status of the universe, but in the nature of Reality—Brahman/Atman. In the course of rationally establishing the absoluteness and non-duality of Brahman/Atman, which is a fact of spiritual experience, it discusses the nature of the universe—appearance. As Śaṅkara points out: By knowing the nature of the universe ('the stories of creation etc.') nothing is gained spiritually; but by realizing the Unitary, that is, Absolute, nature of Atman, which is the Self of all, one attains Immortality, that is, perfection and spiritual freedom (*mukti*). (Cf. *Bhāṣya* on *Aitareya-Upaniṣad*, introduction to the chapter 2.

Maya and Mayic appearance or projection is accepted even in the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā*.⁶ In *ajāta-vāda* there is an attempt to prove that the universe is unreal like dream and did not really originate, and not that it does not appear in the dualistic state. When one becomes aware of oneself as Brahman in Perfect Realization (*pūrṇa-jñāna*), his separate limited individuality disappears and along with it the appearance of the universe also ceases as there is only the non-dual infinite Brahman, just as the dream-world disappears on waking up and is realized to have no existence. But as long as one is aware of oneself as an individual, the appearance of *the rest of the universe* with its beings and its functional validity will not cease, *for the individual himself is an aspect or part and parcel of the total universe*. Even if the empirical world seems to disappear during dream and deep sleep, since true knowledge of Reality has not arisen, it comes back along with the individuality on waking up with the same power of delusion.⁷ This dichotomy of the one integral undivided Existence into individual perceiver and the perceived universe is itself due to Maya.

Though Ācārya Śaṅkara is said to have commented on the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā* where *ajāta-vāda* is advocated, in none of his other works he seems to mention it. *Ajāta-vāda* is only from the Ultimate Reality (*pāramārthika*) point of view of Advaita. But Śaṅkara's is a comprehensive system which

Na hi sṛṣṭi akhyayikadi pariṇanat kincit phalam iṣyate; aikātmya-svarupa pariṇanattu amṛtattvam phalam).

6. Cf. loc. cit. 1.16-17; 2.12 ff. 19; 3.10, 18-19, 27 ff.

7. In the case of the *pūrṇa-jñāni* (*jīvanmukta*) where there is a semblance of individuality, the universe also appears as a semblance without any power of delusion. He always remains aware of the true nature of his Self and the world as Brahman, and seemingly conducts all his activities free from attachment and delusion.

accounts for empirical experiences as well. He maintains philosophically *vivarta-vāda* (superimposed illusory transformation) from the empirical point of view, for *ajāta* is only from the *śruti* or *Realizational* standpoint; it cannot be an empirical *vāda*. That is, though *ajāti* (non-origination of the universe) is a Realizational fact, *ajāta-vāda* cannot be maintained philosophically in the realm of duality in the sense of non-appearance of the universe. Śaṅkara accepts and propounds the three-fold *sattā* of Reality, from the *vivarta* point of view. The *vyāvahārika* and *prātibhāsika sattā* relate to the universe and the experiences *within it*. In the *pāramārthika-sattā* (absolute validity) point of view, *ajāta-vāda* is implied, for it asserts, on the basis of *śruti*, that 'Brahman is the only Reality and it is changeless; the *jagat* (universe) is unreal and is a Mayic appearance superimposed on Brahman; and the apparent individual soul (*jīva*) is nothing but Brahman' (*Brahma satyam jaganmithyā; jīvo brahmaiva na aparah*).⁸

The gradation of *adhikāris* (aspirants) into *uttama* (superior), *madhyama* (mediocre), and *adhama* (inferior) in this context is from the Advaitic point of view. Such gradation can be based on only spiritual competence, though there may be different intellectual viewpoints. Probably, it is meant to classify fitness or competency for different types of *sādhanā*, *ajāta-vāda* being for those who seek identity with Brahman, the Infinite, losing their individuality.

8. The following verse of the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā* (2.32) is also found in the *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi* (574) of Śaṅkarācārya.

Na nirodho na cotpattih na baddho na ca sādhanah;

Na mumukṣuh na vai muktah ityeṣā paramārthatā.

(There is neither dissolution nor origination; there is none bound and no spiritual aspirant; there is none seeking liberation nor the liberated one—this indeed is the highest Truth for there always exists only the non-dual Infinite Brahman.)

The *srsti-drsti-vāda* as explained in the book, seems to be for those who accept a prior *Īśvara-sṛṣṭi* (creation by God), which we perceive. It is a dualistic theological view. Probably that is why it is said to be for *adhama-adhikāri*, for in this view the duality of *Jīva-Īśvara* (soul and God) ever remains, and the universe too has real permanent existence.

The *drsti-srsti-vāda* can be of two types: One is from the point of view of Brahman Atman, the Universal Self, which is the Universal Consciousness and the substratum and source of all empirical consciousness, patent or latent, in all beings and entities. From this point of view, nothing can exist independent of Universal Consciousness, for everything rises in it and merges into it like waves.⁹ Hence, all things get their relative

9. Existence apart from Universal Consciousness has no meaning for existence is always associated with awareness of a being or entity by itself or by others. Hence pure Existence and pure Consciousness are synonymous. Modified existence as things is modified consciousness, as is evident from the dream. It is only because of latent consciousness, that entities possess the power of revealing themselves to other conscious beings. Moreover, space-time-causation, in which all things exist and function, are not entities and do not exist independent of consciousness. The knowledge that a thing exists, it is such and such, it does not exist, or exists apart from consciousness are modes of consciousness only. Such declarations are objectively meaningful as external facts and applicable in life and functioning only in the case of embodied limited consciousness. The whole universe and all the beings and entities in it rise like waves from the ocean of Universal Consciousness, rest in it, and disappear into it, even as the dream-world does from the individual sub-conscious mind. Just as the dream-world and the beings in it with all their functioning do not exist outside the sub-conscious mind of the individual dreamer, the waking universe and its beings and their activities do not exist outside the Universal Consciousness—the 'Universal Dreamer'. (cf. *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yatprayantya abhisamvisanti... tad brahma, Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* 3.1.1).

existence and validity because of the Atman, the very principle of existence and revelation.¹⁰ This view, however, does not say things do not exist, but holds that they do not exist by themselves apart from Atman, just as the waves cannot exist apart from the sea, and are ever changeful too. But things can exist apart from individualized consciousness (Jīva), just as different waves can exist apart from each other, and individuals have to perceive and deal with them as they present themselves to their empirical consciousness. This is something akin to *srsti-drsti-vāda*. Again, consciousness too, both individual and universal, can exist without objects, as exemplified in deep sleep and realized in *samādhi* (transcendental state). Consciousness is primary in experience and consciousness of objects secondary. Hence, the universe has no permanent or independent existence of its own apart from Universal Consciousness, and as such is only an appearance in Universal Consciousness.

The other type of *drsti-srsti-vāda* refers to individual creation or *jīva-srṣṭi*, that is, the world is related to individual consciousness. When the individual perceives, the things are there or come into being; and when he does not, they do not exist for him. This can be true only of the individual's dream-world, which is entirely related to his own *sub-consciousness*, from where thoughts manifest as things. It is analogous to Universal Consciousness, so far as the dream-world is concerned. However, the minds of persons within the dream-world, including that of the dreamer's dream-personality within it, or even the empirical

part of the mind of the dreamer, cannot create things within the dream even. This again is somewhat akin to *srsti-drsti*. Similarly, creation by the empirical consciousness or by the perception of the individual cannot be substantiated in the case of the waking state world.

The writer of the letter mentioned above seems to imply *drsti-srsti* by an individual in the *jāgrat* or waking state world, and he says it is rational and is supported by science. I do not think science has anything to do with any of these philosophical views or gives support to it. At the most it shows that the world is not as we see it or *as it appears to us*, and *not that the world itself is an appearance*, or that we bring it into existence, or that it depends on our perception. It asserts the independent reality of matter/energy and its formations. Science is 'materialistic' at present, and does not deny the validity of the world. It is empirical in its approach and limits itself to it. But in Western philosophy there is an analogous view called "Solipsism" or subjective idealism. It is generally rejected as irrational and that it does not accord with facts.

The existence of the universe apart from Universal Consciousness cannot be proved or asserted for he who has to prove and to whom it is to be proved are themselves objects of consciousness.

10. Cf. Śamkara's commentary on *Katha-Upaniṣad*, 2.20. *Tadātmanā vinirmuktamasat-sampadyate* (Bereft of the Self, entities lose their being).

Though the mind or consciousness is a necessary instrument in all our perception, and our views of the world and things are coloured by our mind—in that sense the view is subjective—the things exist apart from the individual mind. For instance, you say you see a temple. Even when you close the eyes, and do not see it, other with you there can see the same temple. Further, when you open the eyes though you do not see exactly the previous temple, you cannot see the temple by your wish as a tree or a cow. You will see the temple only, though it is not exactly the same. If a fire is burning a house, if you close your eyes or run away, it does not stop burning. When you come back, you will see no house there, it is burnt; and you cannot create it again by your perception, for it does not depend

on your consciousness. Things no doubt change. For that, one does not have to close his eyes. That change is not caused by one's non-perception. All things are affected by time and are constantly changing. So even with open eyes, we do not see the same thing for even two seconds, though we do not recognize the fact. Further, even our body, senses, and mind are constantly changing, which themselves are part of the world. Since we cannot create things by our mere perception and have to perceive different things as they are presented to us—a tree as a tree, a man as a man, a cow as a cow, etc.—and all the changes that take place in the world, and further since they are commonly seen by others also, though our evaluation may be coloured by our mind, we cannot substantiate *drsti-srsti-vāda* from the individual point of view. And it cannot explain purposeful activity also. Hence things can exist apart from individual consciousness, though not apart from Universal Consciousness which determines the nature of things and time-space-causation, based on which we act. In the individual case the only correct inference warranted is, one cannot perceive things apart from one's consciousness, and not that they depend upon one's consciousness or perception.

The whole subject can be put in another way. There is only one absolute Spiritual Existence (*sat* or Brahman) which is apparently dichotomized or polarized into subject and object, within the framework of time, space, and causation, amenable to change and activity, by its inscrutable Maya Power. Since they are the same one apparently polarized Reality, which continues as the substratum of both and as the source and unchanging witness of all experiences, the subject and the object are of the same substance and have the same status and validity, though they apparently differ diametrically. When in the waking state, the perceiving subject considers him-

self as a psycho-physical being, subject to changes, *the rest of the universe* is also perceived as an objective physical entity with other psycho-physical beings, subject to changes. When in the dream state, the perceiving subject within the dream is mental in nature, the objective universe and the beings in it are also mental, and the dream-world has its own framework of time-space-causation.¹¹ When in the deep sleep state, there is no personality of the perceiving subject, the universe also is not perceived as an object. Both are in abeyance.¹² When in

¹¹. The dichotomization of one reality into bipolar subject and object is very clearly seen in the dream where the one mind itself appears as the subject as well as the object. The dreamer remains as the witness of both.

¹². One may say, though during the dream and deep sleep states, the empirical universe disappears for the individual, it is present for the others and will also reappear to the individual on waking up. But here the perception of the empirical individual or the modes of his waking consciousness are not referred to, when even though one may not be aware of some things in the universe, he is aware of the universe itself, but the experience in different states of consciousness itself through which an individual passes. These are natural and common to all individuals, and the nature of their experience too is the same in the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. So it can be taken as a universal scientific fact. For example, when a person is looking at the moon through a powerful telescope, he has a different view of it with the mountains and valleys etc. seen clearly, while the others continue to see it in the ordinary way. If each one of them sees the moon by turns through the telescope, each one sees in the same way as the first one did, while the others, including those who have seen through the telescope, continue to see the moon as before. Yet, they all have now the conviction of a different common idea of the moon as seen through the telescope, which is factual and is valid scientifically for all. Similar is the case here.

However, since everyone finds a changed empirical universe when they come to the waking state from dream or deep sleep, one may say the universe must have an independent existence. But the issue is clinched in the *samādhi* experience

samādhi, one realizes oneself as Atman (the Universal Pure Consciousness beyond name and form, the substratum of individual con-

when the individual realizes his real nature as Brahman/Atman, after which one has a clear and unshakable conviction that the universe, including all beings and his own personality, is only an appearance like dream without any real independent existence and that Atman/Brahman is the only Reality, just as a waking man has with regard to the dream he saw, though during the dream the dream-world appeared to exist independent of himself and the other individuals within it. A waking person will not feel or say, though the dream-world has disappeared for me who was in the dream-world and have woken up, it exists for the other beings who were in the dream. So far as the dream-world is concerned, he is the only reality and the source of the appearance of the dream-world. Similarly, on realization of Brahman as one's Self, one's personality and its correlate the universe with all its beings disappear, or appear like shadows, and he knows that Brahman is the only Reality, the Source of the appearance of the universe. It is only in *samādhi* that the empirical personality really disappears and in other states it is only in abeyance. While in deep sleep he perceives the absence of everything, in *samādhi* he has the experience of the Infinite Brahman only and does not perceive the absence of anything, just as the

consciousness), and is aware of only the infinite Brahman (Universal Pure Consciousness) and the identity of Atman-Brahman, beyond subject-object relationship, beyond all duality, there is neither the universe nor its perceiver. Only the absolute Brahman, the erstwhile witness of the appearance and disappearance of the three states, remains beyond words and thought.

Hence, whether the universe is perceived or not, whether it is valid or not, whether it is independent of one's consciousness or not, depends on one's own condition of personality and the state of Realization. In each stage the universe has as much validity as the perceiving individual subject.

We may conclude by saying that the universe is characterized by *srsti-drsti* from the point of view of the individual (Jīva), by *drsti-srsti* from the point of view of Universal Self or Universal Consciousness (Atman/Brahman), and God (Īsvara), and *ajāta* from the point of view of Absolute Reality (Pure Brahman).

person woken up sees a greater reality everywhere and not the absence of the dream-world.

LET THE WORD GO FORTH

BRAHMACHARI SHUDDHA CHAITANYA

Advaita Vedanta is the crowning glory of Indian philosophy and religion. It represents the culmination of thousands of years of introspective thought and meditation. It is an ancient religion and was in practice long before the dawn of written history; yet, though ancient it is peculiarly modern and eminently suited to the present age. It is Vedanta alone which preaches the doctrine of the Self, which sets forth the concept of the personal/impersonal God,

which explains by logical argument the moral law of the universe and the course of life after death, which harmonizes and includes all other approaches to truth. It is the Advaita system alone which is eminently rational, which is founded on impersonal principles, which harmonizes science and religion and which may rightly lay claim to being a universal religion. And yet this teaching, which would bring about a renaissance of religion in the world, is little

known, especially outside India. This is the word the world is waiting for; yet it has not become a popular religion.

The reasons for this are several. In the first place, Advaita has been heavily complicated by the fine-spun speculations of metaphysics. So fascinating is this philosophy that the greatest intellects of India have generated a vast and complex literature in their attempt to explain the mysteries and contradictions of life. As a result, the essential truths are often lost in polemics and the message fails to come through. Secondly, Advaita often contradicts the narrow dogma of dualistic religions and hence meets some initial resistance on the part of confirmed believers in dualism. But these objections are by the way. The main reason why Vedanta has not entered into the main stream of Western thought is simply because it has not been preached abroad with the necessary zeal. Even in India, the land of its birth, it is not a popular religion.

Vedanta philosophy has a long history comparable to that of a hidden treasure. For ages it remained in the possession of only a few people, mainly the sannyasins living in forests and monasteries. In their retreats the all-renouncing monks studied and practised, and there they instructed their few disciples. These teachers would communicate only with selected individuals, the ideal students being the twice-born Brahmin who approached the guru in the traditional manner. The lowest classes, the foreigners, and the 'general public' had little access to this treasure. Again, it was only those who had completed a long course of preparatory discipline prior to applying for Jñāna that were vouchsafed initiation into the mystic truths. According to this traditional scheme, only a handful of gifted souls succeeded in being blessed with the sacred knowledge, and a few rare lineages preserved for ages what was an elitist and exclusive religion.

The ancient ṛṣis had a definite rationale for their exclusive policies. They adhered to the doctrine of *adhikāravāda*—special rights and privileges—according to which only a fit and fully qualified disciple was allowed to receive instructions. The masses were deemed unfit and effectively barred from coming in contact with the higher teaching. Their contention was that the doctrines of *Jñāna* would unsettle the minds of the common folk and, as the Gita says: 'One should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant attached to action by teaching them Jñāna...'¹ The ancients believed that the general public was unfit to receive the highest knowledge. Instructing men who were devoid of virtue would be an exercise in futility, like pouring water in the desert or casting pearls before swine. Unqualified persons, it was said, should be led to the truth gradually, by stages, proceeding from the lower to the higher. They should begin with dualism and worship of a personal God, then, by slow degrees purify themselves. In so doing they may subsequently undertake the disciplines of the 'four sādhanas' which would then qualify them for the Advaitic teaching. According to the traditional notion, men in their present stage of evolution must be given a 'diluted' teaching. They cannot be expected to understand, let alone realize, the pure and simple bold truth.

In the present day there are two contending schools of thought. One adheres to the orthodox, traditional opinion that monism should be taught to the select few and is inappropriate for the masses. According to another, newer and more progressive outlook, however, these truths are to be broadcast to all mankind. The issue at hand here, it should be clearly noted, is not one of evangelism. The question is not whether one should or should not engage in a more active missionary or outreach programme.

1. *Bhagavad-Gītā* 3.26.

The point is rather whether it is right and proper and desirable for Advaitic ideas to be made public at all. The purpose of this short essay is to endorse and encourage those who believe that it is and whose motto is: Let the word go forth !

Swami Vivekananda, in his 'Lectures from Colombo to Almora', emphasized that the central truths of Vedanta, the 'gems of the Upaniṣads', must be taken out of their exclusive setting and promulgated in the world. He says :

The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our Upaniṣads, in our scriptures, in our Purāṇas must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries, brought out from the forests, brought out from the possession of selected bodies of people, and scattered broadcast all over the land, so that these truths may run like fire all over the country from north to south and east to west, from the Himalayas to Comorin, from Sindh to the Brahmaputra. Everyone must know of them, because it is said, 'This has first to be heard, then thought upon, and then meditated upon.'²

This latter point, that these truths must be broadcast to all, Swamiji made again and again. Speaking of the central theme, the glory of the human soul, he says :

Ay, let everyman and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind everyone, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good.³

Swamiji recognized further that for these truths to become popular they must be made practical. They must be rescued from the realm of abstract intellectualism and made 'living and poetic in everyday life'.

The time has come when this Advaita is to be worked out practically. Let us bring it down from heaven unto the earth; this is the present dispensation. Ay, the voices of our forefathers of old are telling us to bring it down from heaven to the earth. Let your teachings permeate the world, till they have entered every pore of society, till they have become the common property of everybody, till they have become part and parcel of our lives, till they have entered into our veins and tingle with every drop of blood there.⁴

The particular teachings which Swamiji is referring to here are the divinity of man, the Upaniṣadic ideal of strength and faith in oneself, the doctrine of oneness and the impersonal principles of harmony. These ideas in some form or other are to be found in all phases of Indian religion. Swamiji himself points out that they are the common basis of Hinduism; and yet they find their fullest expression in what is known in India as Advaita Vedanta, and in the West simply as Vedanta.

Swami Vivekananda himself preached the principles of Advaita in the East and West to the public at large, never making distinctions between the high and the low, the rich or the poor, the 'right' or the 'wrong' sort of people. His preaching of monism to the masses was consistent with his vision of the New Age and the spirit of the times. The Swami believed that the men of this age have tremendous potential for responding to the call of the highest truth. And who can say otherwise—who can say that men are incapable of responding to the highest teachings of religion? Has it ever been given them? Is it fair to presume that people would prefer a lesser teaching; that men would choose to drink muddy ditch water when the clear stream of life is flowing by?

But the question still remains : Will the common man be able to understand? The answer is certainly in the affirmative, for

². *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973), vol. 3, p. 221.

³. *ibid*, p. 193.

⁴. *ibid*, p. 428.

Advaita is not some highly complex and difficult subject like differential calculus which may be incomprehensible to an uneducated man. The precepts are not metaphysical abstractions but living truths that have a direct practical bearing on the problems of life for everyman and appeal more to the heart of awakened spiritual consciousness than to the discursive intellect. Advaita Vedanta is the simplest form in which one can put truth. It can be taught to children; in fact, children are often the best receptors of these teachings in all their purity. But everyman is capable of appreciating these ideas if he is taught in his own language. This latter is a most important consideration; and if in the end the student cannot grasp the idea at all, it is most likely that, not he, but the teacher who is at fault.

The bold promulgation of the lofty truths of Advaita should not ignore the fact that some self-preparation is necessary before one can benefit fully from them. The traditional insistence on the 'four sādhanas' is still an important part of the discipline of the student. Before he can fully assimilate the spiritual teachings he has to purify his mind and heart. Only the highly refined and purified mind can fully understand the highest truth of the identity of man and God. But still, the lack of these personal virtues should be no bar to *hearing*. Nor should race, caste, or other arbitrary 'qualifications' stand in the way. Whether one is 'fit' or not

one can still *hear* about the truth; for while it is true that men will not take the teaching to heart until they themselves are ready, it is equally true that unless they hear the teaching they will have no incentive to purify themselves at all.

Advaita Vedanta represents the high water mark of Indian philosophy. Its unifying principles provide the basis for the harmony of religions. It is a man-making, character-building religion that can benefit mankind regardless of sect, creed or mental disposition. Let this religion, therefore, be preached in the marketplace. As Swami Vivekananda said :

These conceptions of the Vedanta must come out, must remain not only in the forest, not only in the cave, but they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit, and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fisherman that are catching fish, and with the students that are studying...⁵

Let all come to hear the truth. Some will understand; others will not. Some will take it to heart; others will pass it by. But even if no one at all understands this philosophy today, still, like beautiful background music it will resonate in the heart and uplift the collective consciousness of the nation until, on a day of new awakening, the highest ideas will be realized by all men.

⁵. *ibid*, p. 245.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

JEAN C. MACPHAIL

[During the 14th and 15th centuries when monastic spirituality decayed in Europe, there appeared a new form of piety known as *devotio moderna* (modern devotion) independent of clerical leadership. This form of piety characterized by a personal imitation of the actual life of Christ, especially his virtues of simplicity, poverty, humility and prayer, found its best expression in the book *The Imitation of Christ* (written between 1390 and 1440) which soon became the most widely read and translated book after the Bible. Though its authorship is a matter of controversy, it is traditionally ascribed to Thomas a Kempis. It was formerly believed that Thomas a Kempis belonged to the Brethren of the Common Life founded by the Dutch preacher Gerhard Groot, but modern research has shown that he was a monk of the order of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine known as the Windesheim Congregation in Holland. The interest that Swami Vivekananda had in the *Imitation of Christ* and the possible influence that the book exerted on him were discussed by Jean C. MacPhail in the August issue. The present article is a sequel to that. In it Swamiji's selections are numbered 1 through 17. They are arranged under the appropriate chapter headings from the *Imitation*, with the verse number of each selection indicated in parenthesis after it. The footnotes are entirely Swamiji's.—Ed.]

Introduction

In 1889 Swami Vivekananda published in Bengali in the 5 issues of a now defunct monthly magazine, *Sāhitya Kalpadruma*, his selections from the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis. As footnotes he appended selections from Hindu scripture which he felt paralleled the ideas expressed by the Christian mystic; or his explanation of the underlying Christian theology; or, occasionally, his own comment or interpretation. The selections from the *Imitation* are all from Book I, Ch. 1-6. It was originally intended to publish selections from the entire book, but the Swami did not complete the project.

His introduction to these selections was published in the first issue of the magazine, and has been reproduced in English in volume eight of the *Complete Works*. The actual selections themselves, however, are not included in the English *Complete Works*, although they are in the Bengali and Hindi

versions. Swami Gitananda has very kindly made this material available in English translation, which is presented here, with specific references to source material, where available. Many of the Sanskrit quotes were rendered into English by Swami Vivekananda in later years in the course of his lecturing and writing. These English translations are appended as adding to the interest of the selections themselves. An attempt has been made to place this early publication of Swami Vivekananda in the context of his life and teachings.¹

Swami Gitananda has provided historical data relating to the publication of this material; Swami Prabuddhananda and many members of the Vedanta Societies of San Francisco and Berkeley have assisted with research and with technical advice. I am very grateful to them all.

1. See 'The Imitation of Christ in the Formative Years of Swami Vivekananda' in *Prabuddha Bharata*, August, 1982.

SELECTIONS FROM THE IMITATION OF
CHRIST WITH PARALLEL PASSAGES FROM
HINDU SCRIPTURES COMPILED BY SWAMI
VIVEKANANDA

BOOK I

Chapter 1. *Of the Imitation of Christ and
Contempt of all the Vanities of the World.*

1. "He that followeth Me, walketh not
in darkness," saith the Lord.--John 8.12.
(V. 1.)

Footnote : *Gītā*, 7.14 :

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

*Daivi hyesā gunamayī mama māya duratyaya ;
mameva ye prapadyante māyāmetam taranti te.*
Swami Vivekananda's English translation : This
My Maya is divine, made up of qualities, and
very difficult to cross. Yet those who come unto
Me, cross the river of life.

2. 'Let therefore our chief endeavour be to
meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.' (V. 1.)

Footnote : *Adhyātmārāmāyaṇa*, Uttara-
Kāṇḍa 5.54 (*Rāmāgītā*) :

ध्यात्वैवमात्मानमहर्निशं मुनिः ।
तिष्ठेत् सदा मुक्तसमस्तबन्धनः ॥

*Dhyatvaivamatmanamaharnisam munih ;
tisthet sada muktasamastabandhanah.*
Thus meditating upon his own self day and night,
let the sage abide free from all bonds.

3. 'The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the
doctrines of holy men ; and he that hath the
Spirit, will find therein the hidden manna.'
(V. 2.)

Footnote : When the Israelites were afflicted by
want of food in a desert God showered on them
a kind of food called 'manna'

4. 'But it falleth out, that many, albeit they
often hear the Gospel of Christ, are yet but
little affected, because they have not the
Spirit of Christ. Whosoever then would

fully and feelingly understand the words
of Christ, must endeavour to conform his
life wholly to the life of Christ.' (V. 2.)

Footnote : (a) *Gītā*, 2. 29 :

श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ।

Śrutvā'pyenam veda na caiva kascit.

Swami Vivekananda's translation : Others, hearing
of It, do not understand.

(b) *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, 62 :

न गच्छति विना पानं व्याधिरौषधशब्दतः ।
विनाऽपरोक्षानुभवं ब्रह्मशब्देन मुच्यते ॥

*Na gacchati vina panam vyadhirausadhasabdatah ;
vinā 'parokṣānubhavam brahmasabdairna mucyate.*

A disease does not leave off if one simply utters
the name of the medicine, without taking it:
(similarly) without direct realization one cannot
be liberated by the mere utterance of the word
Brahman.

(c) *Makābhārata* :

श्रुतेन किं यो न च धर्ममाचरयेत् ।

Śrutena kim yo na ca dharmanācarayet.

If you read the Vedas but do not practise religion,
of what avail will it be to you?

5. 'What will it avail thee to be engaged
in profound reasonings concerning the
Trinity, if thou be void of humility, and art
thereby displeasing to the Trinity?' (V. 3.)

Footnote : According to the Christians, God the
Father, Holy Ghost, and God the Son are One in
three and Three in One.

6. 'Surely great words do not make a man
holy and just ; but a virtuous life maketh
him dear to God.' (V. 3.)

Footnote : *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, 58 :

वाग्वैखरी शब्दभरी शास्त्रव्याख्यानकौशलम् ।
वैदुष्यं विदुषां तद्वत् भुक्तये न तु मुक्तये ॥

*Vāgvaikharī sabdajharī sāstravyākhyānakausalam ;
vaiduṣyam viduṣām tadvat bhuktaye na tu muktaye.*
Swami Vivekananda's translation : Wonderful
methods of joining words, rhetorical powers, and
explaining texts of the books in various ways—

these are only for the enjoyment of the learned, and not religion.

7. 'If thou knewest the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it profit thee without the love of God and without grace?'—I Corinthians, 13. 2. (V. 3.)

8. '“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” (Eccles.) except to love God and Him only to serve.' (V. 3.)

Footnote : *Maṇiratnamālā* :

के सन्ति सन्तोऽखिलवीतरागाः ।

अपास्तमोहाः शिवतत्त्वनिष्ठाः ॥

*Ke santi santo'khilavītarāgāḥ ;
apastamohah sivatattvanisthah.*

They alone are holy men (sādhus) who are devoid of any longing for worldly objects, free from delusion and are devoted to the truth of Shiva.

9. 'Call often to mind that proverb, “The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.”’—Eccles. 1. 8. (V. 5.)

10. 'Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible. For they that follow their lusts stain their own consciences, and lose the grace of God.' (V. 5.)

Footnote : *Mahābhārata*, 2. 63. (*Yayāti-gāthā*) :

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।

हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मैव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

*Na jatu kamah kamanamupabhogena samyati ;
haviṣā kṛṣṇavartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate.*

Swami Vivekananda's translation: Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of desires, it only increases the more, as fire, when butter is poured upon it.

Chapter 3. Of the Doctrine of Truth

11. 'What availeth it to cavil and dispute much about dark and hidden things, for ignorance of which we shall not be reprov'd at the day of judgement?' (V. 1.)

Footnote : According to the Christian view, God will judge all beings on the last day (the day of the dissolution of the world), and will award heaven or hell according to the virtues or vices of different individuals.

12. 'He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh, is delivered from many an opinion.' (V. 2.)

Footnote : This *Word* is somewhat similar to the *Māyā* of the Vedantists. This Itself was manifested in the form of Christ.

Chapter 5. Of Reading of Holy Scriptures

13. 'Truth, not eloquence, is to be sought for in Holy Scripture. Each part of the Scripture is to be read with the same Spirit wherewith it was written.' (V. 1.)

Footnote : *Kātha-Upaniṣad*, 1.2.9 :

नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया ।

Naiṣā tarkēṇa matirāpaneyā.

Swami Vivekananda's translation : Neither is the mind to be disturbed by vain arguments, for it is no more a question of argument, it is a question of fact.

14. 'Let not the authority of the writer be a stumbling-block, whether he be of great or small learning ; but let the love of pure truth draw thee to read.' (V. 1.)

Footnote : *Laws of Manu*, 2. 238 :

आददीत शुभां विद्यां प्रयत्नादवरादपि ।

Adadīta subhām vidyām prayatnādavarādapi.

Swami Vivekananda's translation : Learn supreme knowledge with service even from the man of lowbirth.

Chapter 6. Of Inordinate Affections

15. 'Whensoever a man desireth anything inordinately, he becometh presently disquieted in himself.' (V. 1.)

Footnote : *Gītā*, 2.67 :

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥

*Indriyanam hi caratam yanmano'nuvidhiyate ;
tadasya harati prajñāṁ vāyurnāvamivambhasi.*

For, the mind which follows in the wake of the wandering senses, carries away his discrimination as a wind (carries away from its course) a boat on the waters.

16. 'The proud and covetous can never rest. The poor and humble in spirit dwell in the multitude of peace.

The man that is not yet perfectly dead to himself, is quickly tempted and overcome in small and trifling things.' (V. 1.)

Footnote : *Gītā*, 2.62-63 :

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

*Dhyayato visayanpumsah sangastesupajayate ;
sangatsanjayate kamah kamat krodho'bhijayate.
Krodhādbhavati sammohah sammohāt*

*smṛtīvibhramah ;
smṛtibhramsād buddhināso buddhināsatpranasyati.*
Thinking of objects, attachment to them is formed in a man. From attachment longing, and from longing anger grows. From anger comes delusion, and from delusion, loss of memory. From loss of memory comes the ruin of discrimination; and from ruin of discrimination he perishes.

17. 'There is then no peace in the heart of a carnal man, nor in him that is given to outward things, but in the spiritual and devout man.' (V. 2.)

Footnote : *Gītā*, 2. 60 :

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

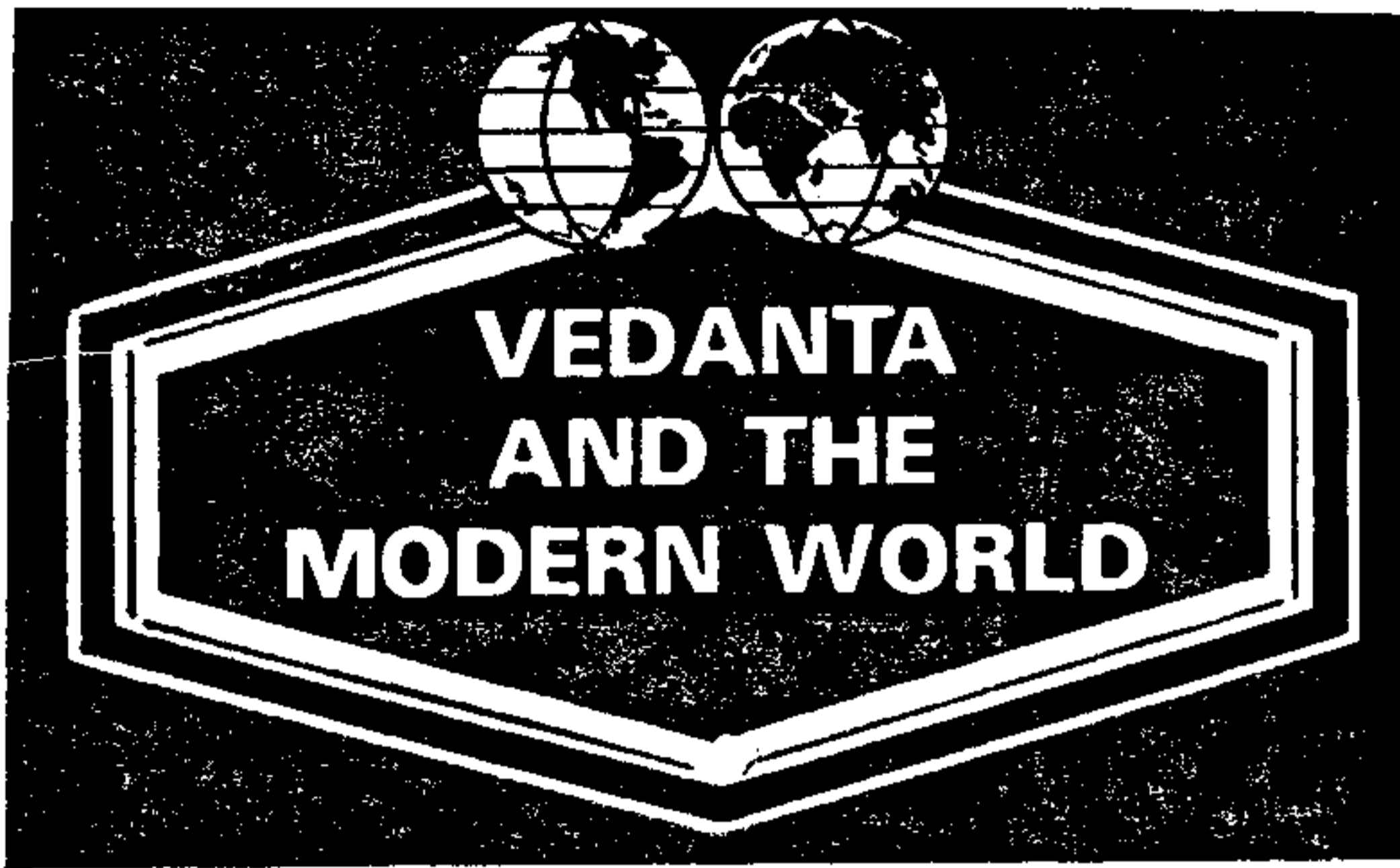
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

*Yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipascitah ;
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabham manah.*

The turbulent senses, O son of Kunti, do violently snatch away the mind of even a wise man, striving after perfection.

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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND INDIAN MYSTICISM—I

DR. S. K. CHAKRABORTY

Common be your prayers, Common be your end ;
Common be your purpose, Common be your
deliberations ;
Common be your desires, Unified be your hearts ;
United be your intentions, Perfect be the union
amongst you.

(*Rg-Veda*, 10.191.3-4.)

Two basic propositions

Some months ago a few top executives were exchanging at the lunch table notions and data on the high standards of living in the classical affluent nations and in the *nouveau riche* Arab nations. After a few minutes we made an impulsive interjection: these countries may have very high standards of consumption, but not necessarily high standards of living. This abrupt intervention did not quite sink into the group. But we consider this paradox to be the key dilemma in managing economic development, of which process economic enterprises are a major instrument. For, India also seems to be rather defensive about the very marginal improvements in the so-called standard of living of its population.

Many deep and right thinking persons all over the world, and certainly most in India, have always felt that hurtling up a steep consumption curve is a tragic course to take. We suggest the proposition that : *'High standards of consumption go with low standards of living ; There is often a negative*

correlation between the two ; and there is hardly any case for regarding them as synonymous.' Since one of the important popular criteria of 'modernization' is the achievement of higher standards of consumption, especially amongst the urban elite, we have a case for revising the concept of modernization in our context.

'Living' a life is entirely an interior affair and experience. Per capita consumption of steel or electricity and similar exterior standards delude us into an alley of precarious and fleeting satisfaction. Many readers of this article are capable of leading a higher standard of life by stripping down right at this moment much of the paraphernalia of high-level consumption packages. There is no chink in this logic, although it may be there in our courage to face it.

Mysticism is essentially an effort to interiorize ourselves. The hallmark of present-day civilization appears to be a remorseless process of exteriorizing. And this is but another side to the process of popularly understood modernization. All satisfaction is derived from outside my being—whether it be colour television or space shuttle or job enrichment. Alas ! we do not ever talk of mind enrichment. The awesome effects of such dependency are very much in evidence all around us. We are beginning

to acquire 'gadgeted' minds !

So far as this paper is concerned, our readers may be feeling intrigued by these preliminary remarks of ours, and by the caption of this paper. So we now share with them our second proposition : *'Management is decision-making; decision-making has always been, is always, and shall always be subjective; the training and purification (the word purification, like character, is a taboo in management literature) of the subjective is indispensable for appropriate decision-making; the essential insights of mysticism are wholly relevant and necessary for such decision-making within human organizations; Indian psychological theories and principles offer a tremendous scope to us to make such insights operational in managerial processes.'*

Our argument is that mysticism is practical. It is needed for the practical man-of-the-world, be he a manager, a politician or a house-holder. *For India a mass-scale raising of basic consumption standards is dependent upon first raising the standard of living (inner) of all decision-makers.* We hear and write so much these days about objectivity in decision-making. Much of it is pretentious, and very little a reality. In this context let us hear what a scientist has to say with respect to a field of most sophisticated experimentation in sub-atomic physics :

The crucial feature of atomic physics is that the human observer is not only necessary to observe the properties of an object, but is necessary even to define these properties.... They are only meaningful in the context of the object's interaction with the observer.... If the experimental arrangement is changed, the properties of the observed object will change in turn.... John Wheeler sees this involvement of the observer as the most important feature of quantum theory and he has therefore suggested replacing the word 'observer' by the word 'participator'.¹

So much for objectivity in the domain of physical science itself ! Where might we stand, then, in relation to human relationships in human organizations, say, in the area of performance appraisal—with or without the support of MBO—amongst several more? Yet another popular dimension of modernization is to assert that there are no eternal or absolute values of verities—every truth is relative, temporary. To be sure, this is a grievous misunderstanding. For, in a way this stand opposes the very making of objective decisions one is espousing. To illustrate, in Bengal and certain other parts of India giving and receiving things with the left hand are considered to be ill-mannered. This is a relative value. But not to be envious of my colleagues or neighbour if he succeeds in something on his own merit is an absolute value. Our problems in decision-making arise because we often fail to maintain an alert sense of discrimination between relative and absolute values or truths.

There is immense variety in decision-making. The decision to decide is probably the beginning. And then to decide to think, to contemplate, to write, to talk, to plan, to execute, to monitor, and so on. Choices about ends and means are also embedded in all the decision areas just mentioned. What are the characteristics of good decisions in all these spheres? What help can an approach towards mysticism render to the compliance with these characteristics?

Before we proceed to the next section, we ought to clarify one major point. The journey on the path of mysticism is a long, long one. It may be true that mystics of the highest order apparently withdraw from the world. And even if they might physically do so, the true mystics have always been great lovers of all living beings. Their intense goodwill and prayers for the welfare of all vibrate through the atmosphere, although such vibrations are impalpable to

1. Capra, F. *The Tao of Physics* (London : Fontana/Collins, 1979), pp. 144-145.

our gross minds. But when people like us just begin to take only the first steps on this path, they come nowhere near such withdrawal. It is indeed our proposition that we shall continue to work in the world where we are—but the efforts in this direction will make us better workers and managers than before. As Swami Vivekananda has said, if you teach yourself that you are the spirit (not just body and mind) then: if you are lawyer, you will become a better lawyer; if you are a doctor, you will become a better doctor; if you are a scientist, you will become a better scientist. And to this we may very well add: a better manager too.

*The foundations of good decision :
towards an Indian theory*

If we are honest and humble we shall admit the truth brought home to us about human mind through this ironic imagery: our mind is like a monkey which has drunk some intoxicating liquor and is then stung by a bee! And this is the sort of instrument we bring to bear on the resolution of momentous, as well as mundane issues of management—no matter whether they relate to the nation or the organization or the home. Let us try to still our mind even for one minute (and, by the way, that is in conformity with the scientific method of experimentation), and we shall then see the truth of the scathing symbolism just cited.

Next, we think our mind walks on the stilts of reason and intellect—at least we often do claim so. How do they fare? Not much better. They are more like a blind man leading another blind man through a dark road. For, between reasoning and acting, between intellect and behaviour, the chasm is too often too wide. Cases of exorcists themselves being afflicted with the fantasies they claim to exorcise others of are disquietingly copious around us. Whether one calls them change agents or organization developers makes no difference. The task of

the change agent is to lead and demonstrate a life, and not merely to don a role for given hours in a week, or given weeks in a year. A role is often contrived. It degenerates many a time into a mask. That is not 'living'. Others cannot be inspired to change or develop by that process. Changes in behaviour—resulting in better decisions—stems from the heart. Intellectual saturation is neither a complete nor a sure answer—as we notice by scanning the daily evidence in this sphere.

Indian thought had long ago sized up the intellect and put it into its own place. It is ascribed a role no more exalted than that of a street cleaner or a policeman. We need them both, they are essential—but only up to a very limited extent. The working of the intellect is like the display of a movie film against a screen with the help of a powerful beam of light piercing through the film. That screen is our mind. The intellect the movie film. And the unseen powerful beam of light is what Indian psychology calls direct apprehension, the 'super-conscious', or more technically, the Atman, the true Self. It is this superconscious beam of light which we should all try to tap, and mysticism is largely all about that. If the film itself is of warped and distorted material, and the mind is fickle or soiled, this mystic superconscious beam of light fails to produce the appropriate effect.

But, before we expound a little more on this theme, it might be better now to attempt to put down somewhat precisely a few of the requisites for good decision-making (especially in the human side of an organisation):

(a) the self-interest of the manager should not hinder a clear perception of the essential nature of the problem and its effects on others;

(b) the backward and forward linkages of the decision are grasped as much as possible—both in space and time;

(c) the decision taken leaves the manager in a state of healthy mental quiet and repose;

(d) the decision taken creates more of unity and harmony in the situation than before;

(e) the decision taken involves the manager more in 'giving' of himself to the task, than in a calculus of receiving in return.

Recognized authorities on decision-making or problem-solving from the West advise us to 'depersonalize problem-solving'. Thus Likert and Likert say :

This is the 'depersonalizing' of differences and removing the identification of any one's ego from that person's contribution. This 'de-egoizing' of the decision-making process is necessary at every step. And, in all situations involving actual or potential differences or conflict among the members of the group, procedures should be used to separate the ego of each member that is, the member's sense of personal worth, from the member's contribution. . . . In this way, ego forces do not stimulate conflict among members. Instead, each member's desire to achieve and maintain a sense of personal worth is harnessed to the efforts of the entire group at each stage and to its final decisions and goals (somewhat contradictory to the previous sentence !).²

And they also suggest some steps for the leader to de-emphasize status :

1. Avoid displaying authority and status by never showing impatience. . . .
2. Accept more blame than may be warranted for any failure or mistake.
3. Be generous in giving credit to others. . . .
4. Share with the group all relevant information.
5. Be humble in the group's problem-solving discussions. . . .
6. Encourage the group to evaluate solutions proposed by you with a more critical eye. . . .

We are happily tempted to infer that with advancing age Rensis Likert may have been moving towards a mystic understanding of

2. Likert, R. and Likert, Jane, *New Ways of Managing Conflict* (New York : McGraw Hill, 1976), pp. 160-161.

the decision-making process—although unknowingly perhaps. And they may not even relish this inference of ours. But we must add that in this appeal to de-egoize and de-emphasize status the authors have not been able to catch hold of the key. The extremely rigorous psychological training and transformation required for de-egoizing (ego = *aham* in Sanskrit) is nowhere conveyed through these appeals to intellect and reason. The tackling of the false ego, 'I', associated with mind and body, which is the source of all conflict, has been done most comprehensively in Indian mysticism especially yoga psychology.³ Western psychology, in the shape of formal literature, has very little to offer in this important dimension. We hope to convey something of such insights later on.

Much of what Likert and Likert exhort leaders to do has no basis at all until we shed our concept of the intellect being supreme, and begin to recognize the essentials of human decision-making in a direct, matter-of-fact manner just mentioned above. Thus, much is made of data-based decisions, supported by management information system using sophisticated computers. But are not the data recorded, data screened and data fed into models and computers always getting filtered in the first place through men and women, at various points in the organization? And then, when we made use of the results from the models or the computers, are we not once again applying our personal filters, that is, our ego-dominated vision?

The Indian theory would, therefore, be more practical in never asking us to depersonalize decisions or problems—which is a sheer impossibility. Instead, it would beckon us to make the filter itself clean, the screen itself white and stable. The kind of desid-

3. For a very compact and intellectual presentation on the theme see Dasgupta, S. N., *Hindu Mysticism* (Delhi : Motilal Banarsidas, 1976).

erata suggested above for good decision-making may be seen in live play only if we first believe in the tangibleness of superconscious insight, and then try to systematically practise its attainment. We may argue for this because, since independence, India has succeeded in accumulating the third or fourth largest pool of high-powered technical/intellectual manpower in the world. And yet, with all this vast reservoir, we seem to be in no sight of redeeming even our basic material pledges to our own people. Perhaps intellect has so far not performed even its rudimentary task of street cleaning for us.

The Indian epics and mythology are replete with stories of sages, kings, gods, and even demons sitting in contemplation or penance or meditation to acquire power, knowledge, weapons and so on. For instance, when Viṣṇu incarnated himself as Vāmana we find that the proud king Bali's guru, Śukrācārya, goes into meditation to discover who truly Vāmana was—the little dwarf who was demanding of the king merely as much land as would be spanned by the former's three footsteps. And out of his meditation the Guru emerges with a true assessment of the dwarf—an incarnation of Viṣṇu himself—and advises Bali not to commit to gifting away the small, deceptively trifling bit of land asked for. The proud king would not listen, and then he had to end up by giving away all the 'three worlds' Stories, such as these are not mere childish and fanciful concoctions for folk consumption. They contain the essence of the Indian psychological theory that all power and knowledge is lodged *within us*—the 'super-conscious'. Divine power is *within us*, it only awaits awakening from torpor by systematic and rigorous discipline, and honest and humble prayers (again a word which is intellectually unfashionable). For instance, we can visualize the Works Manager of a multi-union plant on the eve of fresh negotiations,

or a boss with five subordinates to appraise or reward at the year-end, to go into meditation in the early hours of the morning, seeking the direct apprehending power of the superconscious to aid his reasoning and intellectual faculties. This is no superstition, no weakness. It is scientifically tested truth.

Let us hear a bit what Arnold Toynbee conveys on this issue (although it appears to us that he is erroneously using the expression 'sub-conscious' for what he really wants to mean the 'super-conscious') as recently as in 1976 :

The subconscious is the source of intuitions that can inspire rational thought, but that cannot be reached by the mind so long as the mind is confining its activity to the conscious level.

I agree that discovery and exploration of the subconscious depths of the psyche, which, in the West, started only as recently as Freud's generation, was anticipated in India at least ... 2400 years earlier than Freud. The modern Western attempt to explore and master the subconscious has not yet progressed beyond a naive and crude early state.⁴

In fact, we could even argue that the notion of the superconscious, transcending the subconscious and the conscious (in a sort of three-tier hierarchy), is still outside the scope of Western psychological thought-frame.

Here is a more trenchant piece of comment from Pitrim Sorokin, a renowned Harvard professor of Sociology :

Freudianism, indeed, is one of the most insidious products of our decadent sensate culture. A certain disillusioned Freudian rightly declared that 'Freudian theory is itself a disease'....⁵

And we think that in his following observations he demonstrates a clearer grasp

4. Toynbee, Arnold and Ikeda, D., *Choose Life—A Dialogue* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 26-27.

5. Sorokin, P. A., *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1960), p. 173.

than Toynbee about the meaning of super-conscious and related issues :

Blinded by its materialistic, mechanistic, and empirical bias respecting anything 'superconscious', spiritual, or religious this pseudo science largely disregarded the techniques of Lao Tse and Buddha, Christ and Saint Paul, Saint Francis of Assisi and Ramakrishna, the yogis and ascetics, the mystics, the founders of monastic orders, and other eminent altruists and moral educators. In comparison with the altruising of millions which these achieved, all the 'socialization' accomplished by scientific educators counts for little ...

The methods and techniques of the yoga, particularly those of the Rāja-Yoga as a technical part of the yoga ... these systems contain in themselves nearly all the sound techniques of modern psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, psychodrama, moral education and education of character ...⁶

All sobering thoughts indeed for managers, change-agents, and management educators ! There is hardly any reason to rouse our confidence in this field of managerial literature and endeavour even after thirty-five years from the time when Sorokin spoke thus. As our readers would have seen, Toynbee too expressed similar views thirty years later.

Writing on the theme of oriental mystico-yogic methodology, F. S. C. Northrop had this to say in 1962 :

It is a straightforward matter of experimentation as to whether or not it is possible to eliminate all differentiation from the totality of immediately apprehended fact, and whether anything positive remains when this is done.

.... Not until all these differentiations are eliminated does the crucial experiment give a decision with respect to the question it is devised to answer. Westerners as well as Orientals who have performed this experiment report that the outcome is precisely what the Oriental philosophical and religions doctrines maintain ...⁷

A tangible, luminous, overwhelming certitude about the decision or problem put

through such experiment. Going back to our tormented Works Manager or the high-strung appraising boss, the lesson obviously is that it is no way to enlighten oneself and seek release from tension by going beyond midnight on drinking bouts and garrulous parties. The answer rather lies in slowly interiorizing the exteriorized and many-splintered mind, to receive an insight into the integral totality—to rise up as it were from the profusely confusing and cacophonous tumult of each situation—and to try to reach a decision with a serene and poised mind.

It is somewhat painful for us, as we quote Western authors on such issues, to restrain ourselves from citing the names of authentic Indian writers on the same themes because, for one thing, we still accept more readily what Westerners say about us and, for another, the kind of Indian thinkers and writers we have in mind are an anathema to our modern readers. But again, even in accepting Western writings we today seem to be taking in predominantly one type of potions, namely, those which spring from superficial, irreverent, and at times motivated interpretations of Indian culture and psychology. One such typical example is a book by Spratt on the Hindu personality.⁸ Herein he advances the thesis—inspired by Freudian psychology—that all the mystics and yogis are super-narcissists, having fallen into utter self-love, seeking their personal salvation only. He squeezes all Indian models of man—from Rāma to Gandhi—into the pigeonhole of narcissists. And we find echoes of such analysis in much more recent writings by Indians too. For example, in one recent and otherwise penetrating analysis occur the following comments :

The unambiguous rightness and righteousness of the eldest male child is drilled into almost every Indian child's head through extolling the virtues

6. *ibid.*, pp. 186-188.

7. Northrop, F. S. C., *The Meeting of East and West* (New York : Macmillan, 1962), pp. 369-370.

8. Spratt, P., *Hindu Culture and Personality*, Manaktala, Bombay.

of Rāma who made a mess of his personal life... of Yudhiṣṭhira who behaved like an unmitigated ass... (of) Bhīṣma (who) gave up his option of leading the family and making a life for himself....⁹

How abysmally pitiful it is to see such epic, multi-dimensional, comprehensive characters, who have symbolized all that is best in Indian—nay Universal—culture, contemptuously dismissed in such capsule language. Rather, a detailed study of each of these characters will produce practical guidelines for today's social environment by the scores. Let us hear how the poet Vyāsa, through the words of Kṛṣṇa offers an assessment of Bhīṣma to his disconsolate mother Gaṅgā when the son had shuffled off his mortal coils :

Your son Devavrata became Bhīṣma or the man of extraordinary deeds. His career on earth has been exemplary. Dharma found its explanation in him. As a character he was superb. He utilized his divine powers for the service of the wicked and thereby proved to the world that it was not possible for Bhīṣma even to protect the bad. Tacitly he hastened the destruction of the wicked. His self-sacrifice went to its zenith in this respect. He bequeathed his wisdom to the posterity. Above all he enthroned the virtuous. There is no parallel to Bhīṣma on earth or heaven.¹⁰

How true it is that we see in someone or something what we want to or are predisposed to see ! And how true again that we all judge others by our own standards, revealed unmistakably in the aspersion cast on Bhīṣma because he did not make a life for *himself*. Yet we do not cease to vaunt our objective thinking and assessment. Do we really claim that our modern family lives are the epitomes of ideal harmonious

living and social responsibility? And when we revel in reviling and becoming iconoclasts, what alternative models can we conceive and put up as substitutes to hold the country's psychological mainspring intact? Until we can do so, we seem to serve no purpose by putting forth spicy and profane interpretations of characters conceived by poets or seers who were endowed with superconscious wisdom, and were impelled by celestial compassion to achieve that. They did not have an iota of personal, selfish, worldly goals to attain for themselves, unlike the royalty-seeking and publicity-hunting writers like us. And most of them did not even care to leave behind their names as revealers of such profound truths.

There is a well-accepted psychological tenet which says that each child, each individual, has a unique psyche or bent of mind. So, his or her education and training should follow that bent for best and effective growth. *There is an unassailable case for using this principle for national development also.* There is a definite, millenia-long, enduring bent of the Indian psyche : the religious, or spiritual or mystical bent. And people like us with pny intellects and 'out-sights' only, should have the courage to accept this verdict from those who have caught the keynote of Indian psyche from a plane of altruistic, superconscious 'insight'. For, our mind and comprehension do not normally extend beyond a few decades or at the most a century or two. And then again, in these days of proliferating specialization we are knowing—even intellectually—only very minute fragments of the world and our lives. So, let the time-tested and richly corroborated diagnosis about the basic psyche of the Indians be accepted by us as given. (If we can take Mclellandian¹¹ or Freudian

9. Chattopadhyaya, G. P., 'Immature Dependency—The problem of Indian Personality', in *Research Gaps in Management in the Indian Environment* (eds. A. K. Chaudhuri et. al), Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, 1980, p. 206.

10. *Mahābhārata*, Anusāsana-parva.

11. Mclelland, D. C., *The Achieving Society* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1961).

or Sprattian¹² or Carstairian¹³, or Benedictian¹⁴ diagnoses; we see no reasons why the diagnoses reached by Sorokins, Northrops, Capras and Toynbee, and above all, those reached by our own seers—who literally 'saw' truth—cannot be taken as authentic.) And such seers include a long list of kings and rulers who had themselves discovered as well as practised such mystic insights for and through secular work of all variety. Herein lies our greatest hope for the decades to come: *the models of man to charge us with the conviction that secular,*

12. Spratt, op. cit.

13. Carstairs, G. M., *The Twice Born* (London: Hogarth Press, 1961).

14. Benedict, Ruth, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).

worldly life—economic development or management included—and mystic life can, nay must be, blended. This is India's unique framework of thought. And it is such a framework which lay behind the material affluence of ancient and medieval India, which caused greedy hordes of foreign marauders to pillage and plunder here for tens of centuries. There is absolutely no reason to wait for a stamp of clearance from messiahs from beyond the Indian shores for picking up this approach and to begin operationalizing it. We are in urgent need of help from this source for the very economic and social goals we have set for ourselves.

(To be continued)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE ASCENT OF SELF : BY B. N. PARIMOO. Published by Motilal Banarasidas, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007. 1978. Pp. xxxii + 217. Rs. 50.

The great saint and poetess of Kashmir Laleshwari or Lalla Yogeshwari, affectionately called Lal Ded, lived in the 14th century A.D. Tradition says that she was the contemporary of Sayyed Ali Hamadani, popularly known as Shah Hamdan Saheb. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din alias Nunda Rishi, a great Muslim saint (born 1377 A.D.) also lived during the same period, and held Lalla in reverence. The sublime mystical poetry of Lal Ded exists in the form of innumerable didactic stanzas called Vakhs, composed in an old form of the Kashmiri language. These have come down to us through oral tradition and not in the form of a manuscript. It is, therefore, probable that what we now have as Lalla-Vakhs may not be in the exact form in which they were uttered. It is the metrical form of the Vakhs and particularly the reverence for the Yogeshwari that have preserved these sayings, which contain a great many archaic expressions, to this day. Learned Kashmiri Pandits have these at their finger-tips and Kashmiri people in general, both Hindus and Muslims, recite them with love and respect.

It was mainly owing to the efforts of Sir George Grierson, who first compiled a number of these Vakhs in 1914 A.D. with the help of his friend and assistant M. M. Mukund Rama Sastri (who had noted down the Vakhs from a dictation given by a very old Brahmin named Dharmadasa Darvesh of Gush village near Sarada) that the immortal wisdom of Lal Ded started attracting the scholarly world. Later there arose other records, but all differ from one another in content as well as number.

What we now know of the personal life of Lal Ded is all from the numerous stories about her current in Kashmir valley. She was the very personification of patience and penance which qualities she displayed when she had to live under the cruel treatment of her step-mother-in-law. After meeting a famous Kashmiri Saiva saint, Seda Boye, she got her first spiritual awakening. It is difficult for one to trace the course of her spiritual development as it is purely personal. She sang and danced in half-nude condition. Those who refute this condition of a Siddha Yogi are perhaps unaware of the nature of divine ecstasy. About such an evolved soul, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.13.36) says: 'The perfected man is not aware of the doings of his own body, a perishable thing,

though it brought him to the knowledge of the Self; he does not notice whether it remains seated or has got up, whether by chance it has gone out or come back, any more than the man who is dead drunk thinks of the cloth he had wound round his loins. As for the body, it continues to live by the decree of destiny as long as the karma that brought it into being is operative.' This was true of Lalla Yogeshwari.

Prof. B. N. Parimoo has made a laudable attempt, in the book under review, to trace the spiritual evolution of Lal Ded, the path of the ascent of her self, in the Vakhs by rearranging them in a sequential order. Not only this, but he has also tried through painstaking scholarship to do a careful sifting of the Vakhs which have been mixed up with the *shrukhs* of Nunda Rishi. This is a commendable beginning. But any speculation about the evolution of Self is futile without the practical knowledge is accordance with the spiritual tradition of the saint. The learned professor has classified the Vakhs under different headings which give biographical continuity to the work. Translation of the verses is lucid. The verses have been given in Devanagari script as well as in Roman script. Satisfactory attempt has been made to explain the esoteric meanings. Each verse quoted is accompanied by an elaborate commentary which often includes quotations from diverse sources. A lengthy introduction summarizes Lal Ded's experiences and teachings. In it the author says, 'Spiritual attainment boils down to a two-fold process: firstly, discovering one's own self... Secondly, yoga is perfected when the individual self is recognized as the Universal Self...' Again, 'Concentrating on the *praṇava* at the *nābhi-padma* is a means to build a bridge to *sahasrāra*'. Such flashes of ideas are found throughout the book.

The publishers are to be congratulated for the excellent printing and getup of the book.

JATH KAUL 'KAMAL'
Srinagar, Kashmir

SIVA SUTRAS (The Yoga of Supreme Identity): translated and edited BY JAIDEVA SINGH. Published by Motilal Banarasidas, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007. 1979. Pp. 42+278. Rs. 45 (paper); Rs. 60 (cloth).

The literature of the Trika, as the school of Kashmir Śaivism is known, falls into three categories: (1) the Agama Śāstra, (2) the Spanda Śāstra, and (3) the Pratyabhijna Śāstra. Of these the first one provides the foundation for the whole

system. The most important Agama is the *Śiva-Sūtra*.

Śaivāgama is regarded as having high antiquity. Indeed, the spiritual truths of it have eternal existence like those of the Vedas. There are a number of Tantras (like *Mālinīvijaya*, *Rudra-Yāmala*, etc.) belonging to this Śāstra, and most of these had existed long before the appearance of Trika. These mostly taught a dualistic doctrine. To stop the spread of dualistic teaching and to show that the highest form of Śaivāgama was Idealistic Monism Lord Śiva Himself, it is believed, revealed the *Śiva-Sūtras*. Kashmir Śaivism, as distinguished from other forms of Śaivism known and still practised in different parts of India, is to be traced to these *Śiva-Sūtras*, which are believed to be a revelation and not a composition, being taught by Śiva to Vasugupta in a dream or in some other mystic way. Śaivism, in its Trika form, thus re-appeared in Kashmir in the ninth century A.D., which is the date of Vasugupta.

Kṣemarāja, a disciple of the illustrious Śaiva master Abhinavagupta, wrote the commentary called *Vimarsinī* on the *Śiva-Sūtras* in the eleventh century A.D. Another commentary called *Śiva-Sūtra-Vṛtti* is obviously an extract from this *Vimarsinī*. Bhatta Bhāskara wrote his *Vārtika* to the *Śiva-Sūtras* about the same time. Then, Varadarāja, who flourished in the beginning of the sixteenth century A.D. wrote another *Vārtika* to the *Sūtras*, entirely in the light of the interpretation given to these by Kṣemarāja in his *Vimarsinī*. He also put his faith in the traditional history of the origin of the *Śiva-Sūtras* that these were revealed to Vasugupta by Lord Śiva and were found by the sage inscribed on a boulder called 'Shankara Pa' in the vicinity of Harwan village at the foot of Mahadeva Giri in Kashmir. Although Kṣemarāja and Bhatta Bhāskara lay claim to one common source, yet they differ from each other in their views as to the meaning of the *Sūtras*. Kṣemarāja speaks of the *Sūtras* as the *Śivopaniṣad-Samgraha*, in the very outset of his commentary.

Jaidev Singh has done a laudable service to spiritual seekers in translating the *Vimarsinī* of Kṣemarāja into English language along with the original *Sūtras*. The book, in original Sanskrit, was first published in 1911 by the Archaeological and Research Department, Srinagar, Kashmir, as the opening volume of the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies. The same work, translated into English by P. T. Srinivas Iyengar and reprinted from *Indian Thought*, Allahabad, 1912, has been

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