



Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 87

JULY 1982

No. 7

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

य इमा विश्वा भुवनानि जुह्वद्-
ऋषिर्होता न्यसीदत् पिता नः ।
स आशिषा द्रविणमिच्छमानः
प्रथमच्छदवराँ आ विवेश ॥

किं स्विदासीदधिष्ठानमा-
रंभणं कतमत् स्वित् कथमासीत् ।
यतो भूमिं जनयन्विश्वकर्मा वि
द्यामौर्णोन्महिना विश्वचक्षाः ॥

1. [At the time of *pralaya* or cosmic dissolution] the Lord, who is the great Seer (*ṛṣi*), great Sacrificer (*hotā*) and Father of all (*pitā*), destroyed all the worlds in a great cosmic sacrifice, and remained (*nyasīdat*) alone.¹ Then desiring (*āśiṣā*) to enjoy creation² he again [projected the universe and] entered (*āviveśa*) into all beings,³ veiling his real original nature (*prathamacchad*).

Rg-Veda 10.81.1

2. What was the place [where He worked]? What was the primal material (*ārambhaṇam*)? How was it done? How did the all-seeing (*viśvacakṣāh*) creator of the universe (*viśvakarman*) created the earth and revealed the heaven (*dyām aurnot*) by his glory (*mahinā*)?⁴

Rg-Veda 10.81.2

* Given here is an important mystical hymn on Visvakarman. Though in the Purāṇas he is regarded as the architect of the gods, in the Vedas Visvakarman stands for Virāj, the Supreme Spirit identified with the gross universe. All individual gross bodies (*visva*) are parts of the Virāj. According to Sāyaṇa, Visvakarman stands for *Paramesvara*, the Supreme Lord. He has given a spiritual interpretation (something unusual for him) to this hymn which proves its importance. Our translation follows his interpretation.

1. Here Sāyaṇa quotes *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.2.1) सदेव सोम्य इदमग्र आसीत् ।

2. *Draviṇam icchamānah* literally means 'desiring wealth'.

3. Sāyaṇa quotes *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.6.1) here : बहुः स्यां प्रजायेयेति . . . तदेवा-
नुप्राविशत् ।

4. After speaking of God as the efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*) in the first stanza, here He is spoken of as the *material cause* (*upādāna kāraṇa*) in the second stanza. In this world a potter must have his shop, his clay, his wheel—so what site, material and implements had Īsvara? Sāyaṇa says the questions really mean a negative answer. The Lord needs nothing external for creation; it is all a projection of consciousness.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

This month's EDITORIAL briefly discusses the spiritual path in a general way.

In the second instalment of THE SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE LIGHT OF VEDANTA AND YOGA Swami Ranganathanandaji shows that spiritual life is an inward penetration into deeper levels of consciousness. 'When the psycho-physical energy of man is directed by enlightened intelligence or enlightened reason, something wonderful happens : every step of his life's journey is accompanied by a steady rise in the quantity and quality of life energy', observes the author. To know how this happens you should read the article.

When we take delight in the Truth of the spirit, the highest Truth that transcends the laws of nature, we will be liberated from earthly desires and will enter eternal beatitude—this theme, proclaimed by all religions, is expounded with great lucidity by Dr.

Leta Jane Lewis in THE TRUTH THAT FREES. The author who is familiar to our readers is Professor of Foreign Languages in the School of Humanities, California University, Fresno.

In HELEN KELLER, THE MYSTIC the reader will get a glimpse of the spiritual side of that blind and deaf genius. Its author Dr. Victoria Hugo, who holds a doctorate in music, was for more than twenty-five years closely associated with Helen Keller in working for handicapped children.

Dr. Sushanta Sen, Reader in the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Visva-Bharati University, concludes his Birmingham University lecture IS BUDDHISM A RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM UPANISADIC HINDUISM with a discussion on the points of similarity between Buddhism and ancient Hinduism and the uniqueness of the way shown by Buddha.

SPIRITUAL QUEST—PRACTICE

(EDITORIAL)

One's own path

If you stood on the bank of a river or a lake early in a winter morning, you would behold the crimson orb of the sun emerging out of the horizon striking a golden path across the waters right up to your feet. It would then appear as if there now existed a luminous path connecting you to the sun by which you could travel to a world of dazzling brilliance. Something similar actually happens when the sun of knowledge rises on the shores of the lake of consciousness within you. When spiritual awakening takes place, you see the luminous path of the Self across your consciousness which, unlike the

illusory path of the sun outside, is the real path leading to the eternal Divine.

Everyone has his own true spiritual path in the depths of his consciousness. But in the darkness of ignorance most people do not recognize it, and instead search for it outside in books and external practices. The different techniques and yogas described in books are only classifications. They are only labels, signposts, and one should not mistake them for the real path. The real path is within and has to be discovered first. Hence Swami Vivekananda says, 'No man is born to any religion ; he has a religion in his own soul. . . . Each life has a current running through it, and this current will

eventually take it to God.¹ In another place he says, 'There are infinite ways of practising yoga.'²

When we say that everyman has his own path what we mean is everyman has his own yoga. The inner path is not like the inert macadamized roads in the physical world. The true spiritual path is a yoga, a living, dynamic process of transformation of consciousness. Everyman's nature is unique, and so everyman's yoga is unique. It is something to be sought within himself through inner struggle and experience. When you try to follow somebody else's path by imitating his way of life, you miss your own path. Says Swami Vivekananda : 'Each one has a special nature peculiar to himself which he must follow and through which he will find his way to freedom . . . you should never try to follow another's path, for that is his way, not yours. When that path is found, you have nothing to do but fold your arms and the tide will carry you to freedom. Therefore when you find it never swerve from it. Your way is the best for you, but that is no sign that it is the best for others.'³

In ancient India during the Vedic period everyone was taught to find out his own path within him. There was no indoctrination to follow any sect. Each boy was given the Gāyatrī, a simple prayer for the awakening of the *dhī* or *buddhi*, the power of intuition lying dormant in the soul. When through the intensity of this prayer the power of intuition awakened, it revealed to him his own path, his own yoga, in the depths of his consciousness.

The two dharmas

Unlike some other religions, Hinduism places before mankind two modes of life. One is known as *pravṛtti-dharma* which aims at worldly enjoyment (*bhoga*) and material

prosperity (*abhyudaya*). The other is *nivṛtti-dharma* which aims at the highest good (*niḥśreyasa*) which is liberation (*mokṣa*) attained through renunciation (*tyāga*). Hindu law-givers allow freedom to people to choose either of these ways of life, but point out the superiority of the latter. Says Manu, '*Pravṛtti* is natural to human beings, but *nivṛtti* produces great results.'⁴

The popular notion that *pravṛtti* means doing work and *nivṛtti* means not doing work is not correct. Work is of two types : *bhogātmaka-karma* or work with attachment and *tyāgātmaka-karma* or work with detachment. The former belongs to *pravṛtti*, and the latter, to *nivṛtti*. The life of *nivṛtti* is not meant only for the monks. It is also meant for those who want to realize God but who cannot formally renounce worldly ties and obligations. The chief aim of *nivṛtti-dharma* is to give up the desire for enjoyment and convert all life activities into a means of liberation. All spiritual disciplines like meditation, japa, self-analysis, etc. done with this aim belongs to *nivṛtti-dharma*. So also does *niṣkāma-karma* or work performed without any selfish desire. All those who seek liberation are followers of *nivṛtti-dharma*, whether they are monks or householders, whether they lead an active life or contemplative life.

All those who seek worldly enjoyment belong to the realm of *pravṛtti* even if they have faith in God and practise prayer and worship. Meditation done for the sake of relaxation or physical health, yoga practised with a view to acquiring psychic powers, service rendered with the idea of getting name and fame—all these belong to *pravṛtti*.

Thus the difference between *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* is a question of the aim or ideal sought. Before attempting to practise medi-

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1978), vol. 6, p. 82.

2. *ibid*, p. 107.

3. *ibid*, p. 99.

4. प्रवृत्तिरेषा भूतानां निवृत्तिस्तु महाफला ।

Manu Smṛti 5.56.

tation and other spiritual disciplines an aspirant must make a final choice between these two ideals; he cannot have both. Here we are interested only in *nivṛtti-dharma* which is what spiritual life really means.

The two mārgas or highways

Depending upon the nature of the soul's orientation to Reality, the *nivṛtti* mode of life has been divided into two *mārgas* or highways: *jñāna-mārga* or the way of knowledge, and *bhakti-mārga* or the way of devotion. The Mīmāṃsakas once tried to establish the performance of Vedic rituals as a third independent way known as *karma-mārga*. The earlier belief was that the purpose of Vedic rituals was the attainment of heavenly enjoyments, and therefore this path belonged to the realm of *pravṛtti*, and was not a spiritual path. However, later Mīmāṃsakas like Kumāṛila and Prabhākara tried to establish the possibility of attaining liberation through the mere performance of Vedic rituals. They held that neither knowledge nor God's grace could destroy the seeds of past *karma* which had to fructify someday or other. Their basic belief was formulated in a well-known dictum: *na-abhuktam kṣīyate karma*, 'The effects of Karma get exhausted only through enjoyment.' Pārthasārathi Miśra in his commentary on Kumāṛila's *Śloka-vārtika* says, 'Had bondage been due to Karma, it could have been removed with the cessation of Karma. But as bondage is due not to the actual performance of Karma, but only to the fitness for Karma (produced by the latent seeds of Karma) it cannot be removed with knowledge, because although the actual performance ceases, the fitness remains even after *jñāna* is attained.'⁵ Unless and until all the

seeds of past Karma were worked out, liberation would not be attained. Till then all that one should do was to perform Vedic rituals with complete detachment. The great teachers of Vedānta from Śaṅkara onwards relentlessly fought this doctrine for centuries until it vanished from India.⁶

So then, there are only two main *mārgas* to liberation: *jñāna-mārga* and *bhakti-mārga*. All spiritual disciplines fall under either of these two. These two ways are based on certain fundamental differences in the soul's orientation to Reality. A spiritual aspirant must have a clear understanding of these differences and must choose that path which is in accord with his temperament.

One significant difference between these two paths is that in the path of Jñāna the ultimate Reality is regarded as impersonal, whereas in the path of Bhakti it is regarded as personal with or without a human form. Another difference is that the path of Jñāna is subject-oriented; it is essentially an enquiry into the true nature of the subject, the Self. The path of Bhakti, on the other hand, is object-oriented; it is an attempt to realize the nature of God as the highest object. Thirdly, in the path of Bhakti the main effort is to establish a loving relationship with God. This relationship between the soul and God is a direct person-to-Person encounter, which the famous Jewish mystic philosopher Martin Buber characterized as I-Thou relationship. On

6. When it is said that Swami Vivekananda has taught Karma as an independent means to liberation, it should be noted that what Swamiji has taught has nothing to do with the Mīmāṃsaka doctrine of Karma. Like all other great Vedantic teachers he too believed that the effects of Karma could be destroyed through knowledge. The Karma Yoga that he taught is a Vedantic discipline. But unlike most other teachers of Vedānta, Swamiji believed that Vedantic Karma Yoga is in itself a direct path to liberation and that knowledge and work are not antagonistic to each other.

5. कर्मनिमित्तो हि बन्धः कर्मनिवृत्तौ नश्येत् ।
योग्यतामात्रनिबन्धनस्तु बन्धः तस्य विज्ञाने
सत्यपि योग्यत्व-अनपायात् न निवर्त्तेति ।
Nyāyaratnākara on Śloka-vārtika, 101.

the contrary, in the path of knowledge the relation between the soul and the ultimate Reality is more correctly described as 'I-That', as the four *mahāvākyas* indicate. And even this relation is illusory, for what Jñāna establishes is not a relationship but an awareness of the identity of one's true nature. In the path of Bhakti the soul does not remain satisfied with mere knowledge, but wants to participate in God's *līlā* or sport. So I-Thou relationship is a form of participation rather than identity. A fourth difference between the two paths lies in the mode of realization followed. In the path of knowledge self-effort is alone, or chiefly, stressed. But in the path of devotion, divine grace is stressed far more than self-effort. In fact in this path, spiritual effort consists mainly in opening one's mind and heart to Grace which brings about the needed transformation of consciousness. In other words, human yoga is nothing but an attunement to Divine Yoga.

Yet another difference lies in the method of approach. The path of knowledge is essentially that of negation, while the path of Bhakti is that of affirmation. Says Swami Saradananda, 'Generally speaking, the afore-said effort in search of the Reality beyond the universe has taken its course along two main channels. One is what has been called in the Śāstras *neti, neti* "not this, not this" or the path of knowledge; and the other *iti, iti* "this, this" or the path of devotion.'⁷ In the former path the ultimate Reality, Brahman, is regarded as devoid of attributes. So the aspirant goes on negating the attributes experienced in empirical life until he attains identity with the attributeless Absolute. In Buddhism this negation process is carried to the extent of negating even an ultimate Reality. In the path of Bhakti the aspirant begins with meditation

on certain attributes of God which are within the field of ordinary experience. As he progresses, these attributes get more and more divinized until the light of the Deity shines through them all. It is a progressive affirmation, *iti, iti*, of the higher and higher attributes of God.⁸ In Patañjali's Yoga these two paths, known respectively as *asamprajñāta* and *samprajñāta*, alternate each other through a series of stages.⁹

The four yogas

The two *mārgas* described above only indicate the direction in which the goal lies. But to follow it one should adopt certain spiritual practices called *yogas*. In Vedantic usage the word 'Yoga' is derived from the root *yujir-yoge* meaning union. Explains Swami Vivekananda :

The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religions, is but one—reunion with God, or what amounts to the same, with the divinity which is every man's true nature. But while the aim is one, the method of attaining it may vary with the different temperaments of men. Both the

8. How this *iti, iti* process culminates in the highest realization has been described with great clarity by Swami Saradananda in *ibid*, p. 90-91.

9. In Christian mystical theology the two paths are known as *via negativa* or apophatism and *via positiva* or cataphatism respectively. Strictly speaking, the technique of negation can be applied only with regard to an attributeless reality. But under the influence of Neo-Platonism, the *via negativa* or apophatic technique was developed in Christianity which believes in a personal God. It was introduced into Western thought in the fifth century by Pseudo-Dionysius but was never fully integrated into it. The resulting ambiguity and contradiction are seen in the writings of some Western mystics including St. John of the Cross. In Eastern or Greek Christianity the apophatic method was developed by St. Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth century, by Simeon the New Theologian in the tenth century and by Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century, and was better understood and expressed. The method of negation will be discussed in greater detail in a future editorial.

7. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master* (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1970), p. 88.

goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called Yoga, a word derived from the same Sanskrit root as the English 'yoke' meaning to join—to join us to our reality, God. There are various such Yogas or methods of union, but the chief ones are : Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Rāja Yoga and Jñāna Yoga.

Every man must develop according to his nature ... and the different forms of yoga that we teach are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of man. We classify them in the following way under four heads :

1. Karma Yoga—The manner in which man realizes his own divinity through work.
2. Bhakti Yoga—The realization of divinity through devotion to, and love of, Personal God.
3. Rāja Yoga—The realization of divinity through control of mind.
4. Jñāna Yoga—The realization of man's own divinity through knowledge.

These are all different roads leading to the same centre, God.¹⁰

The sole cause of human limitation, bondage and misery being the ego or the lower self, each Yoga may also be looked upon as a particular means of transcending it. In Karma Yoga this is done through self-sacrifice ; in Rāja Yoga, through self-control ; in Bhakti Yoga, through self-surrender ; and in Jñāna Yoga, through self-analysis.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to state the views of traditional teachers on Yoga. In the first place, they accept only three Yogas—Jñāna, Bhakti and Karma Yogas—as valid means. Patañjali's Yoga is regarded as outside the fold of Vedānta, though some of its basic principles have been integrated into Vedāntic praxis. Secondly, in the traditional schools the three Yogas are practised in a particular sequence. In Jñāna-Mārga the aspirant first practises Karma Yoga for purification of mind ; then practises *upāsana*, which is a combination of meditation and Bhakti, for the sake of concentration of mind ; and finally takes to Jñāna Yoga. In Bhakti-Mārga the aspirant

first practises Karma Yoga for purification of mind ; then practises Jñāna Yoga, which is a combination of meditation and Jñāna, for the realization of his true self ; and finally pursues Bhakti Yoga for the realization of God. Another point to note is that though the teachers accept the sequence of yogas, they regard only the final Yoga—Jñāna according to Śaṅkara, Bhakti according to Rāmānuja and others—as the direct means of liberation. In other words, they do not accept that the highest realization is attained by a synthesis (*samuccaya*) of the Yogas. The fourth point is that almost all the traditional teachers are unanimous in holding that Karma Yoga is not an independent or direct means of liberation. Lastly, it should be noted that each traditional school has its own conceptions regarding the different Yogas. For instance, Śaṅkara's conception of Bhakti Yoga is not the same as that of Rāmānuja, nor is Rāmānuja's conception of Jñāna the same as that of Śaṅkara. As a result, the views of traditional schools have for centuries remained conflicting and antagonistic to one another.

The meaning of the term 'Yoga' and the scope of the different Yogas underwent considerable expansion in the hands of the great seer of modern times, Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji introduced the following changes into the field of yoga. One, to the traditionally accepted set of three Yogas he added a fourth, the Rāja Yoga, by combining the systems of Tantra and Pātañjala Yoga.¹¹ Two, he held that each Yoga is

11. In the Tantras four kinds of Yoga are dealt with : Hatha Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga and Rāja Yoga. Of these, Hatha Yoga is the lowest ; it is an attempt to control the subtle body, mainly by controlling the gross body, through seven methods. These are: *sodhana* or cleansing of the body (by the six processes called *śatkarma*), *dr̥ḍhatā* or strength of body (by bodily postures called *āsanas*), *sthīratā* or firmness (by bodily positions called *mudras*), *dhairya* or steadiness of mind (by withdrawal of senses or

an independent and equally valid path to liberation. According to him even Karma Yoga can directly lead to the highest realization. Three, he at the same time thought that the best course to be followed by all aspirants was a synthesis (*samuccaya*) of the four Yogas. Four, Swamiji showed that the different Yogas are not mutually contradictory in so far as they led to the same goal. What were contradictory were the different views of the traditional teachers. By re-interpreting the meanings of Jñāna, Bhakti and Karma he established their overall harmony. Through his doctrines of *samanvaya* (harmony) and *samuccaya* (synthesis) of the Yoga Swamiji freed Yoga from the narrow limits of tradition and dogma. Lastly, he interpreted the Yogas

in the light of modern knowledge and adapted them to the needs of the modern man. Through the efforts of Swami Vivekananda Yoga has now become a universal spiritual discipline practicable in all walks of life and for all people, irrespective of their differences in culture, race or religion.

Choosing one's own path

The two Dharmas (*pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*), the two Mārgas (negation and affirmation) and the four Yogas together cover the entire gamut of praxis or *sādhana* in Vedānta. The methods of spiritual discipline followed in all other religions could be accommodated within this broad and flexible framework. However, as already stated, each person has his own spiritual path, and these descriptions are only meant to enable him to recognize and know more about his own true path.

Each person has to discover his real path in the depths of his consciousness. This discovery comes in the form of a transformation of consciousness. So the fundamental problem in spiritual life is how to transform one's present state of consciousness. These days meditation has become very popular, and many people think that it is the only means of bringing about transformation of consciousness. It is not, however, widely known that true meditation or *dhyāna* is a fairly advanced stage and calls for a higher degree of concentration than most people are capable of. Hence it is not uncommon to find people who have undergone no appreciable degree of inner transformation even after practising japa and meditation for several years. About a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna by name Ishan, who for a long time practised *purāścaraṇa* (methodical repetition) of the Gāyatrī, the Master once remarked, 'I was noticing Ishan. Why, he hasn't achieved anything! What can be the reason? He practised the purascharana for five months. That would

pratyāhāra), *lāghava* or lightness (by *pranayama*), *pratyakṣa* or direct seeing (by the experience of various psychic powers) and *nirliptatva* or complete detachment. Mantra Yoga is an attempt to realize śabda Brahman through the repetition of Mantras. It is also called Nāda Yoga when concentration is practised not on a Mantra, but on various other sounds. Laya Yoga is the main Yoga of the Tantras and deals with Kuṇḍalinī, the six lotuses, ritualistic worship, etc. Here the aim is to unite śaktī with śiva by awakening the Kuṇḍalinī through various Tāntrik *kriyas* or disciplines. Hence it is also called Kuṇḍalinī Yoga. Rāja Yoga is the highest, and the other three Yogas are regarded as only preparations for it. In Rāja Yoga meditation is employed as the chief means, taking the help of reasoning and knowledge, and its goal is the attainment of non-dual Brahman. It is Tāntrik Jñāna Yoga. Seven types of meditation are taught in Rāja Yoga : *nāmapara* (on name), *rūpapara* (on form), *vibhūtipara* (on divine glories), *saktipara* (on Power), *guṇapara* (on qualities like purity), *bhāvapara* (on devotion) and *svarūpapara* (on Atman as pure consciousness). It should be noted here that Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra* does not deal with *kuṇḍalinī* and the awakening of the various *cakras* which are central to Rāja Yoga. Moreover, in Pātañjala Yoga the aim is the separation of the soul from Prakṛti, whereas in Rāja Yoga the aim is the merger of the soul in Brahman. There are other differences also between these two systems of Yoga.

have caused a revolution in any other person.¹²

There are several causes for failure in spiritual life. The most common of these is trying to follow an advanced spiritual technique like *dhyāna* which is beyond one's present capacity. A form of practice which is beyond our capacity becomes unreal to us. Clinging to an unreal practice will not bring about any real transformation in us. A spiritual technique can produce real changes in us only when it satisfies three conditions : simplicity, intensity, constancy.

A spiritual technique becomes real to us only when it is within our capacity to practise. For this it must be simple. Prayer, worship (external or internal), remembrance of the Lord, self-surrender to Him, singing His glories, self-analysis, self-enquiry, serving people especially holy men—these are some of the simpler techniques which we can practise without much difficulty. We may choose any one of them according to our temperament. It should be pointed out here that, with the exception of a few sincere aspirants who are endowed with intense longing for God, Karma Yoga is an unavoidable preliminary spiritual discipline for the majority of spiritual aspirants. Ancient Vedantic teachers insisted upon it as a means of purifying the mind, and this is still true in modern times. For many it is about the only discipline worth the name that they can practise. Even those who are capable of practising higher disciplines will find that Karma Yoga is a great help in purifying the mind, reducing egoism, winning God's grace, keeping up one's spiritual vigour and testing the extent of one's spiritual progress.

No spiritual discipline will produce any significant change unless it is practised with intensity. Intensity will come only when your total life is involved in it. When you

have found a simple technique which is best suited to your nature, your whole personality will respond to it. Such problems as lack of concentration, lack of enthusiasm, etc. will not then trouble you.

Spiritual practice to become effective must be kept up continually. When you have found the right technique, you will find that at least a part of your mind is constantly working at it. You will then be able to pursue it wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

When a spiritual aspirant succeeds in acquiring a spiritual technique which satisfies these three conditions—simplicity, intensity and constancy—he will find it leading him deeper and deeper into his consciousness. And when he at last discovers his own true path, he will find that though it may contain elements of Karma, Dhyāna, Bhakti and Jñāna, it is in fact none of these. It is his own path, his own yoga. Every Tom, Ram and Rahim has his own yoga in the depths of his consciousness. Once it is discovered more than half of the struggles in spiritual life will be over.

Auxiliary disciplines

Every spiritual aspirant must hold on to one main path, one central discipline. But he soon realizes that this is not possible unless his inner life is supported by some auxiliary disciplines. In traditional treatises on Vedanta and Yoga these auxiliary disciplines are regarded as qualifications. According to what is known as the doctrine of *adhikārin*, a person is not considered eligible for the practice of the main discipline unless he acquires necessary qualifications. It is the neglect of this doctrine that is another cause for failure in spiritual life in modern times.

The nature of auxiliary disciplines varies from one school to another. In the school of Advaita they constitute the four-fold effort, *sādhana-catustaya* : discrimination,

¹². M. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 583.

dispassion, self-control and yearning for liberation. In Patañjali's Yoga the auxiliary disciplines are the five rules of *yama* (truthfulness, chastity, non-violence, non-stealing, absence of greed) and the five rules of *niyama* (purity, contentment, austerity, self-study, self-surrender to God). The Bhakti schools have their own sets of rules, the chief of which is love of God.

From a survey of the auxiliary disciplines followed in the different schools of spirituality we can see that the three most important ones are: aspiration, detachment and discrimination. These represent the spiritualization of the three main faculties of man: feeling, will and reason. Unless these three faculties are purified and trained, it is not possible to practise any spiritual discipline properly.

Aspiration is the primary motiveforce in *sādhana* which impels the soul Godward. It is faith energized and raised to a high degree of intensity. In the path of Jñāna aspiration takes the form of longing for liberation, while in the path of Bhakti it takes the form of intense love for God.

Human mind is seldom steady: sometimes it longs for God and sometimes it runs after worldly pleasures. To keep the mind constantly turned towards the highest goal through intense aspiration is the main task in spiritual life. Patañjali calls it *abhyāsa*, effort. This, however, is not possible unless the tendency of the mind to run after worldly pleasures is checked. This checking is done through *vairāgya* or detachment. So Patañjali says: 'The waves of the mind are controlled through *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya*.'¹³ Commenting on this aphorism, Vyāsa gives a striking illustration: 'The river of mind flows in two opposite directions—towards virtue and liberation and towards vice and bondage. Through

dispassion the channel to sense-objects is to be closed, and through intelligent effort the channel to spiritual knowledge is to be opened.'¹⁴

Thus aspiration and detachment represent the positive and negative aspects of spiritual effort. In order to maintain this twofold effort the constant exercise of the faculty of reason is necessary. This is known as *viveka* or discrimination. It strengthens detachment and inflames aspiration, and keeps the soul on the right track.

Apart from these auxiliary disciplines, two more factors are of great help in making spiritual effort fruitful. These are the guidance of an experienced teacher and the company of holy men. Without the guidance of an illumined teacher spiritual progress gets considerably delayed. For many years are wasted in finding out the true path by the trial-and-error method. No less than Swami Vivekananda has borne testimony to the importance of the Guru in these burning words: 'The one thing necessary is to be stripped of our vanities—the sense that we possess any spiritual wisdom—and to surrender ourselves completely to the guidance of our Guru. The Guru only knows what will lead us towards perfection. We are quite blind to it. We do not know anything. This sort of humility will open the door of our heart for spiritual truths. Truth will never come into our minds so long as there will remain the faintest shadow of *ahamkāra* (egotism).'

(Continued on page 308)

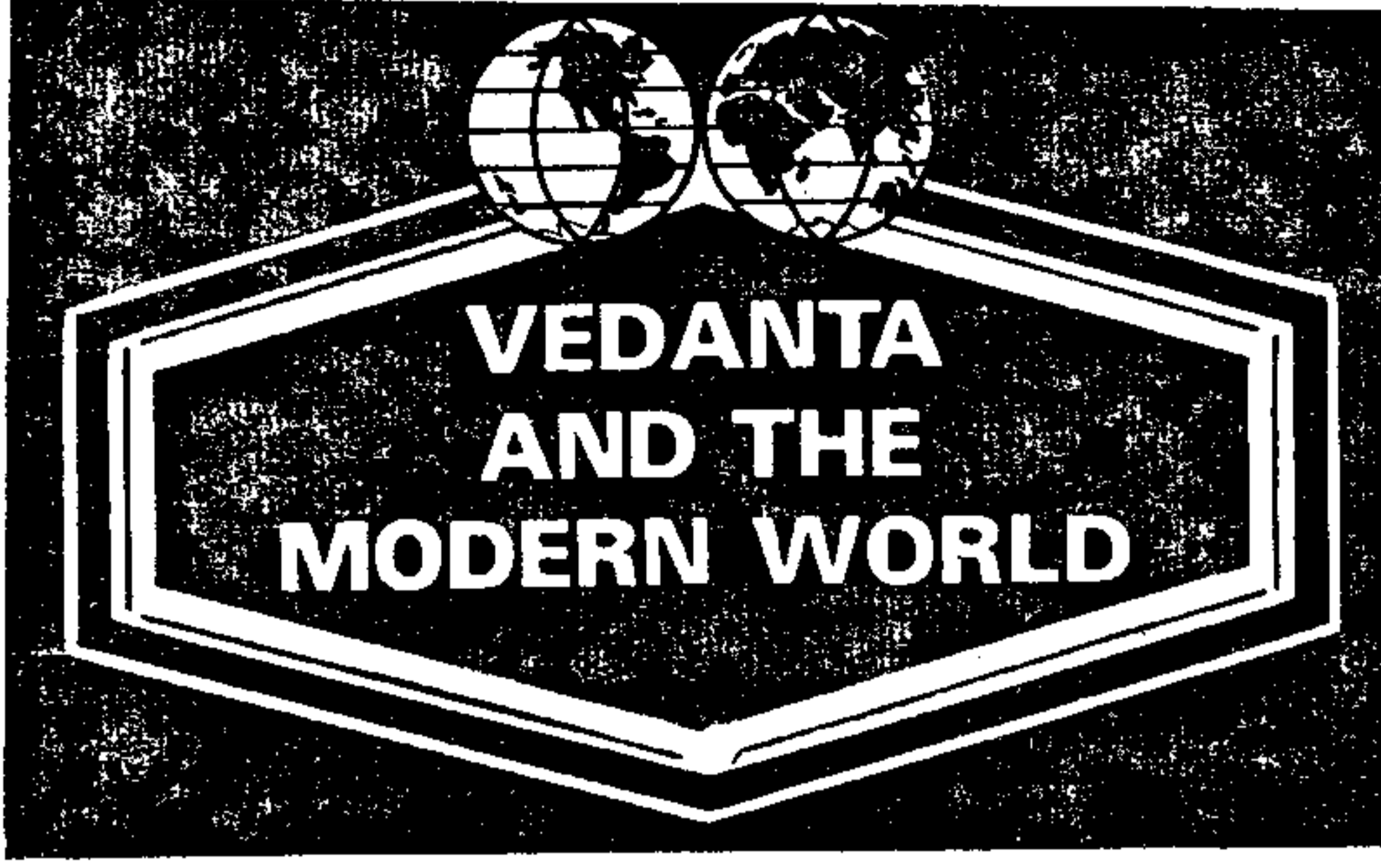
14. चित्तनदी नाम उभयतो वाहिनी । वहति कल्याणाय वहति पापाय च । . . . तत्र वैराग्येण विषयस्रोतः खिली क्रियते । विवेकदर्शनाभ्यासेन विवेकस्रोत उद्घाटयत इत्युभयाधीनश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ।

13. अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः ।

Yoga-sūtra 1.12.

Vyāsa-Bhāṣya on *ibid.*

15. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 5, p. 258.



THE SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE LIGHT OF VEDANTA AND YOGA

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Gauḍapāda on the non-duality of pure consciousness

Gauḍapāda, in his *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, proclaims that the non-causal Pure Consciousness is realized by the non-causal pure knowledge, and salutes the teacher who discovered and taught this philosophic and spiritual vision of Advaita, non-duality, in two famous verses.

Beyond all conceptual thinking is *jñānam*, spiritual knowledge, and is ever non-different from the knowable Reality; Brahman, the sole knowable Reality, is unborn (beyond causality) and eternal; the non-causal (knowledge) realizes the non-causal (Brahman).²⁶

I salute that best among the bi-peds (men), who has realized, through knowledge which is infinite like space, the non-separateness of all objects, which are also infinite like space, with the object of knowledge (Brahman).²⁷

Anticipating the views of John Welwood, John White, Robert E. Ornstein and others, quoted earlier, the ancient Indian law

26. अकल्पकमजं ज्ञानं ज्ञेयाभिन्नं प्रचक्षते ।
ब्रह्मज्ञेयमजं नित्यमजेनाजं विबुध्यते ॥

Mandukya-Karika 3.33.

27. ज्ञानेनाकाशकल्पेन धर्मान्यो गगनोपमान् ।
ज्ञेयाभिन्नेन संबुद्धस्तं वन्दे द्विपदां वरम् ॥

ibid.,4.1.

giver Manu says that all higher spiritual truths are obtained only through inner penetration and the raising of consciousness to higher and higher levels.

All these that have been expounded earlier (about the realization of the non-dual Pure Consciousness), are the products of *dhyāna*, Meditation; none bereft of the knowledge of the Atman can, verily, enjoy the fruits of his labour (in peace and joy).²⁸

We see the truth of this today when the contemporary high material prosperity through an efficient technology, alienated from higher spiritual values, has led to increasing psychic and social distortions and the inability to enjoy life in peace and joy.

The chariot imagery and man's spiritual journey

Speaking on *Sadhanas* or Preparations for the Higher Life, Swami Vivekananda said :

Meditation is the one thing. Meditate ! The greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life—the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material—the Soul thinking of

28. ध्यानकं सर्वमेवैतत् यदतत् अभिशद्वितम् ।

न ह्यनध्यात्मवित् कश्चित् क्रियाफलम् उपाश्नुते ॥

Manu Samhita 6.82.

Itself, free from all matter—this marvellous touch of the Soul!²⁹

The Upaniṣads view the human personality, consisting of the body, the sense-organs, mind, intellect, and the soul, in the light of the mighty evolutionary movements of nature. The *Kātha-Upaniṣad* employs a beautiful imagery—the imagery of the chariot—to illustrate the evolutionary advance at the human level:

Know the Atman as the master within the chariot, and the body, verily as the chariot; know the *buddhi*, enlightened reason, as the charioteer, and the *manas* (incipient mind), verily, as the reins.

The sense-organs, they say, are the horses, and the roads for them to travel are the sense objects. The wise call Him (namely, the Atman) the enjoyer of the experiencer (when He is united with the body, senses and mind).

He who is devoid of right understanding and with *manas* always undisciplined, his senses become uncontrolled, like the uncontrolled horses of a charioteer.

He who is possessed of right understanding and with *manas* always disciplined, his senses become controlled, like the controlled horses of a charioteer.

And he who is devoid of right understanding, with *manas* not disciplined and always impure, never attains that goal, but gets into the repetitive experience of worldliness.

But he who is possessed of right understanding, with *manas* disciplined and ever pure, reaches that goal whence there is no return to worldliness again.

He who has *vijñāna*, or enlightened reason, for his charioteer, and a (disciplined) *manas* as the reins—he verily attains the end of the journey in that supreme divine state of Universality.³⁰

This imagery tells us that man has an inner journey to perform in the context of his outer journey in the world of space and time. The world of sight and sound, of touch and taste and smell, is the environment for both the outer journey and the inner journey. The inner journey is a spiri-

tual journey of inward penetration, made by training the psycho-physical energies and raising mind and consciousness to higher and higher levels. As the chariot gets its energy of movement from the horses, the body gets its energy of movement from the sense-organs, consisting of the nervous system and the brain. The organs of perception and the organs of action convert the animal body into a centre of the most dynamic activity in nature; but at the level of the senses themselves, this activity is mostly uncoordinated and, therefore, not fit for purposes beyond mere organic satisfactions and survival. It is this coordination that is provided by *manas*, or incipient mentality, which Swami Vivekananda renders as 'mind indecisive'. It is even treated as merely a sixth sense-organ. As in the case of the horses, the reins, meant to control them, involve a charioteer to hold the reins. In the human system, this is the function of *buddhi* or enlightened reason. And behind the *buddhi* is the master of the chariot, whose is the journey, while the rest form equipments for his journey.

Mere external journey in the world of space and time is what is termed *samsāra* or worldliness, which means stagnation at the organic level. The Upaniṣad considers this as the spiritual death of man, which is more serious than physical death in the case of a species so high in evolution. Life's journey, whether outward or inward, to be successful, needs the contributions of all the constituents of the human personality; the body, the sense-organs, the *manas*, and the *buddhi*. Each of these plays a significant part in the journey; but the most important thing is to ensure that the initiative and control pass from the body, the senses and the *manas* to the *buddhi*. This cannot happen unless the *buddhi* and the *manas* are trained and disciplined in their true forms. The true form of the *manas* is its pure state when it is aligned with *buddhi* above it, and ceases to be a mere appendage of the sense-

29. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1973), vol. 5, p. 253.

30. *Kātha-Upaniṣad*, 3.3-9.

organs; then alone it can stand the stress and strain involved in its unique situation, namely, between the two powerful and initially opposite forces of the sense-organs and the *buddhi*. All psychic breakdown is the snapping of the *manas*. The true form of *buddhi* is its pure state as enlightened reason, when it is independent of the *manas* and the sense-organs and functions as their guide and master. This is the source of far-sight and foresight. It then reflects the Pure Light of Consciousness of the Ātman behind. When free from inebriations arising from the indigestion of wealth, power, knowledge, pedigree, drugs and wine, the *buddhi* becomes luminous and calm, steady and sure. Such a *buddhi* is the best guide in life's journey. It denotes the fusion of intelligence, imagination, and will in their purest forms. Its impact on life is irresistible as well as wholesome. The *Gītā*, therefore, speaks that the Ātman is realized by the *buddhi* and is unattainable by the sense-organs or the sense-bound *manas*—*buddhi grāhyam atīndriyam*.³¹

When the psycho-physical energy of man is directed by enlightened intelligence or enlightened reason, something wonderful happens: every step of his life's journey is accompanied by a steady rise in the quantity and quality of his life energy. The *buddhi* becomes freed from thralldom to the sense organs and from the service of mere organic survival. This freeing of *buddhi*, through the freeing of its physical instrument, the cerebral system, was achieved by nature, in a small way, in man, through evolutionary processes initiated even in the pre-human stage. In the words of neurologist Grey Walter:

The acquisition of internal temperature control, thermostasis, was a supreme event in neural, indeed, in all natural history. It made possible the survival of mammals on a cooling globe. That was its general importance in evolution. Its

particular importance was that it completed, in one section of the brain, an automatic system of stabilisation for the vital functions of the organism—a condition known as homeostasis. With this arrangement, other parts of the brain are left free for functions not immediately related to the vital engine or the senses, for functions surpassing the wonders of homeostasis itse

The matter is epitomized in a famous saying of the French physiologist Claude Bernard: *La fixite du milieu interieur est la condition de la vie libre* (a fixed interior milieu is the condition for the free life).³²

The spiritual journey, as I said earlier, is essentially an interior journey, and not an outer journey in space and time. Man, as a product of nature's evolution, is a unique specimen of that evolution, holding the key to the mystery of nature, to the purpose of evolution, and to the meaning of all existence. His psycho-physical system is a miniature universe in itself; the immensity of its interior dimension is obscured by the smallness of its external physical covering or *kośa* (sheath), as Vedānta terms it. The body and the environing world constitute the gross outer fringes of reality; this is reality as revealed by the sense-organs. As we penetrate into the interior, we come across subtler and, accordingly, more immense aspects of reality; these are revealed only by the mind. With the advance of knowledge, the conviction is borne in upon man that, if ever there is an eternal, changeless, and accordingly, infinite dimension to reality, it must lie in the centre of consciousness; such a centre can be discovered only through a mighty penetration, which will also reveal the nature of the various layers or sheaths covering reality. This is what the Indian sages did, including the great Buddha of a later age, and this is what the Upaniṣads convey to us in words which bear the stamp of authentic experience.

³¹. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 6.21.

³². Grey Walter, *The Living Brain* (London: Gerald Duck Worth & Co., 1953), p. 16.

The spiritual journey as inner penetration

In the course of this inner penetration to the Ātman, man comes across, says Vedanta, not only subtler dimensions of Reality, but also more immense resources of energy. The first form of energy that becomes manifest in a human being is his or her muscular energy; this multiplied becomes bull power and horse power. The muscle power is the outermost and grossest, *sthūla*, in Sanskrit, dimension of human energy. This muscle power of man or horse is insignificant compared to the multi-million horse-power rockets of modern space technology.

Behind the muscle, there is the tiny nerve fibre; it is subtle compared to the large muscle; but cut out that nerve fibre, and the muscle is dead. Thus at the very outset of our investigation, we realize that, behind the gross muscle power, there is a subtle, but more significant, and more immense, energy system in the nerves. Investigating further, we find that, behind the nervous system, there is the more subtle psychic energy system, sustaining and controlling that nervous system. If that psychic system breaks down, the muscle and the nerve will become powerless to function. Thus we see that, as we go deeper into man, we come across subtler energies within him. Further, we also note that, as we progress from the gross to the subtle, human energy resources become more and more immense in quantity, quality, and range. The ancient sages of the Upaniṣads successfully tried to penetrate man in depth with their highly trained and pure minds.

Penetrating behind the psychic system, they discovered the infinite and most subtle and most immense spiritual energy system in man in the Ātman, the true Self of man. It is this discovery that is conveyed by that short *mantra* from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*: *Tat tvam asi*—“That thou art”.³³

Through this investigation and experience, Vedanta discovered the profound truth about man, just as modern physics discovered the truth of the immense energies hidden at the nuclear core of a lump of matter, that human energy resources are organized on an ascending scale of subtlety, immensity, and inwardness: *sūkṣmā, mahāntāśca, pratyagātma-bhutāśca*, in the language of Śaṅkarācārya, giving the meaning of the term *Parā*, higher used in the verses to be presently quoted (*Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* 3.10); this subtlety, immensity, and inwardness reach their final consummation in the Ātman, the pure and non-dual Consciousness. Speaking on ‘Vedanta in All Its Phases’ at Calcutta in 1897 Swami Vivekananda presented India’s experience of man’s search for truth gracefully rising, from the field of external physical nature, to the strange new field of the internal nature of man, to the ‘within’ aspect of nature (*Complete Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 330-31).

Just as the Greek mind, or the modern European mind, wants to find the solution of life, and of all the sacred problems of being, by searching into the external world, so also did our forefathers; and just as the Europeans failed, they failed also. But the Western people never made a move more; they remained there; they failed in the search for the solution of the great problems of life and death in the external world; and there they remained, stranded; our forefathers also found it impossible, but were bolder in declaring the utter helplessness of the senses to find the solution. Nowhere else was the answer put than in the Upaniṣads (*Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* 2.4); *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*—‘From whence words come back reflected, along with the mind, without attaining “The Truth”’; *na tatra cakṣuḥ gacchati, na vāk gacchati*—‘There the eye cannot go, nor can speech reach’ (*Kena-Upaniṣad* 1.3).

There are various sentences which declare the utter helplessness of the senses; but they did not stop there; they fell back upon the internal nature of man; they went to get the answer from their own soul. They became introspective. They gave up external nature as a failure, as

³³. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7.

nothing could be done there, as no hope, no answer, could be found. They discovered that dull, dead matter would not give them truth; and they fell back upon the shining soul of man, and there, the answer was found.³⁴

Referring to the advance attained by ancient India in this 'Science of Human Possibilities', Max Muller observes :

But if it seems strange to you that the old Indian philosophers should have known more about the soul than Greek or medieval or modern philosophers, let us remember that, however much the telescopes for observing the stars of heaven have been improved, the observatories of the soul have remained much the same.³⁵

The *Kātha Upaniṣad* gives us a glimpse into this inner penetration in the verses 10 and 11 of its third chapter. Introducing these verses, Śaṅkarācārya says in his commentary : *Adhunā, yat padam gantavyam, tasya indriyāṇi sthūlāni ārabhya, sūkṣmatār-atamyakrameṇa pratyagātmatayā adhigamaḥ kartavya, ityevamartham idam ārabhyate*—'Now that state, which is to be attained (through the spiritual journey), a journey which begins with the sense organs which are gross, and proceeds through comparatively subtler and subtler aspects—that state is to be realized as the *pratyagātman*, the Inner Self.' In order to convey this truth the *Upaniṣad* proceeds as follows :

The sense-objects (in their nuclear dimensions) are *parā* that is, higher, than the sense-organs, the *manas* is higher than the sense objects; the *buddhi* is higher than the *manas*; the *mahān ātma* (great self that is, the Cosmic Mind) is higher than the *buddhi*.

The *avyakta* (undifferentiated Nature) is higher than the *mahat* (Cosmic Mind); the *Puruṣa* (the infinite Self) is higher than the *avyakta*. There is

nothing higher than the *Puruṣa* that is the finale, that is the supreme goal.³⁶

The layers spoken of in these verses as covering reality are described as *kośas* or sheaths in the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* (second and third books). They are five in number : *annamaya*, material or physical, constituted by the body and the environing physical nature revealed by the sense-organs; *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, and *vijñānamaya*, corresponding to the three layers of the sense-organs, *manas*, and *buddhi*; and *ānandamaya*, corresponding to the *avyakta* or undifferentiated nature. *Indriyas*, *manas* and *buddhi* may stand for the bio-spherical, the psychical, and the noospherical of modern enumeration.

Studying the phenomenon of man and seeking for the true focus of his experience of selfhood at the core of his personality, Vedānta came across these five *kośas* or sheaths, enumerated also as the three *śarīras* or bodies, namely, *sthūla śarīra*, gross body, *sūkṣma śarīra*, subtle body, and *kāraṇa śarīra*, causal body, in all of which, as remarked by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his translation of the *Gītā*, 'There is no changeless centre or immortal nucleus in these pretenders to selfhood.'³⁷

The body, the sense-organs, the mind, and the ego, all lay claim to being the Self of man. Before enquiry, man takes one or other of them as his self. But philosophical enquiry reveals their not-self character; it reveals each one of them as an object with reflected light of consciousness, and not as a subject which is self-

36. इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।

मनस्ततु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः ॥

महतः परमव्यक्तं अव्यक्तात्पुरुषः परः ।

पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित्सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ॥

Kātha-Upaniṣad, 3.10, 11

37. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavad-Gītā* (London : George Allen and Unwin), p. 177.

34. *Complete Works* (1978), vol. 3, p. 330-31.

35. Max Muller, *Three Lectures on the Vedānta Philosophy* (London : 1894), p. 7.

luminous; each is a *saṁghāta* or aggregate, in the terminology of Vedanta and Buddha, and as such, subject to change and destruction.

The search for the Self must leave them behind and proceed deeper. If nothing is discovered beyond these changing not-self elements, man is right in resigning himself to nihilism in philosophy and pragmatism in life. Vedanta, however, finds in the facts of experience enough intimations of a changeless reality, which justify a more penetrating investigation of experience by reason. Reason is confronted by the puzzling fact that the diverse experiences of man form a unity; and there is also the fact of memory. These presuppose a changeless centre in man; without such a changeless centre, the perceptions of change, the experience of memory, and their attribution to one and the same knowing subject, will become inexplicable. Such a scrutiny of experience revealed to Vedanta the presence of a changeless subject or knower at the centre of the knowing process, at the core of the human personality. As affirmed by Śaṅkarācārya in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* :

There is some entity, eternal by nature, the basis of the experience of ego-sense, the witness of the three states (of waking, dream, and deep sleep), and distinct from the five sheaths.

Who knows everything that happens in the waking, dream and deep sleep states; who is aware of the presence or absence of the mind and its functions; and who is the basis of the ego-sense.³⁸

The discovery of the truth of the immortal Self behind the mortal body-mind complex is the universal 'gospel', or good news,

³⁸. अस्ति कश्चित्स्वयं नित्यमहंप्रत्ययलम्बनः ।

अवस्थात्रयसाक्षी सन्पञ्चकोशविलक्षणः ॥

यो विजानाति सकलं जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिषु ।

बुद्धितद्वृत्तिसद्भावमभावमहमित्ययम् ॥

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, 125, 126.

which the Upaniṣads have left as their immortal legacy to all humanity. It was not just an intellectual discovery through a speculative venture; it was a spiritual realization, holding at the same time vast possibilities for the intellectual and moral life of man. It underwrites and guarantees the precious value of freedom of the human spirit. Being a spiritual discovery, it is announced to the world at large not as an *intellectual formula to be believed in*, but a *spiritual fact to be realized*, by every human being. The discovery by a few is to be translated into a re-discovery by the many; for it is the *birthright of one and all*. This makes it a compelling message to all men.

The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* knew the universal appeal of this message. In verse twelve of its third chapter, the Upaniṣad spells out the *universality* of the Ātman, and its *verifiability* in life :

This Atman, (being) hidden in all beings, is not manifest (to all). But (It) *can be* realized by all who are trained to inquire into subtle truths by means of their sharp and subtle reason.³⁹

As the eternal subject or knower, it is an ever-present datum of experience and not a mere logical construction; but it does not reveal itself as such to one and all. Not to speak of ordinary people, even great scholars fail to comprehend the Ātman. The verse gives the reason; *gūḍhaḥ*— 'it is subtle, hidden'. It is a mysterious presence; it is a splendour, but imprisoned, in the language of Robert Browning in his poem *Paracelsus*; and therefore *na prakāśate*— 'it is not manifest'; *asaṁskṛtabuddheḥ avijñeyatvāt*— 'since (it is) unknown to him whose *buddhi* or reason is not refined or purified', comments Śaṅkarācārya. It is

³⁹. एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।

दृश्यते त्वग्रथया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

Kaṭha-Upaniṣad, 3.12.

not present on the surface of experience; it is hidden in its depth.

Though a mystery, the Ātman shall not always remain so; though an unknown, Vedanta does not treat it as an unknowable. *Drśyate*— 'It can be seen, realized', through pure *buddhi*, since it is an ever-present datum of experience. What is that *buddhi* which achieves this? *Agryayā buddhyā sūkṣmayā*— 'by *buddhi* which is sharp and subtle.' Explaining the meaning of this, Śaṅkarācārya says in his commentary: *Indriyebhyaḥ parā hyarthā ityādiprakāreṇa, sūkṣmatāpāramparyadarśaneṇa, param sūkṣmam draṣṭum śīlam yeṣāṃ te sūkṣmadarśinah*— 'They are *sūkṣmadarśinah*— "subtle seers"— who are trained, through seeing subtler and subtler realities as mentioned in the passage: "the objects are higher than the sense-organs" etc. (verses ten and eleven), to see the supremely subtle reality (of the Puruṣa or the Ātman).'

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* then proceeds in verses thirteen and fifteen expound this extraordinary Vedantic discipline of inner penetration for the realization of the Ātman and the sweet fruit of that penetration:

Let the *prājña* (wise man) merge the speech in the *manas*, and the *manas* in the *buddhi*; let him merge the *buddhi* in the Cosmic Mind, and merge that Cosmic Mind again in the Self of Peace (the Ātman or the Puruṣa).⁴⁰

The Ātman is significantly characterized as consisting of *śānti* (peace). Commenting on this, Śaṅkarācārya says: *Śānte, sarva-viśeṣa pratyastamita rūpe, avikriye, sarvāntare sarva buddhi pratyaya sākṣiṇi, mukhya ātmani*— 'In the peace of the primary Ātman (Real Self which is) characterized by the complete cessation of all differentia-

tion, changeless, the innermost reality of all, and the witness of all the pulsations of *buddhi*.'

By realizing that Ātman which is beyond sound, beyond taste, beyond smell, even beyond the *mahat* Cosmic Mind, formless, imperishable, eternal, beginningless and endless, and immovable, (man) is liberated from the jaws of death.⁴¹

The vedantic clarion call: Arise! Awake!

Vedanta proclaims that something wonderful happens when man succeeds in stilling the sense-organs and the mind; it brings him face to face with the mystery of his own true Self. Just as in physical science, we study the behaviour of matter under various conditions, such as extremely high or extremely low temperatures and pressures, and the resulting phenomena are wonderful, similarly, in the science of man's inner life, which Vedanta developed into what Julian Huxley wants modern physical science to develop into, namely, 'a science of human possibilities', we have a study of man under various conditions of inner discipline, which has yielded results more wonderful and significant than those in the physical sciences. The highest result of such discipline of the energies of the inner life is total illumination—*jñāna* or *bodhi*, the state of spiritual incandescence, and creative peace.

Consciousness becomes an explicit datum in experience in the form of a hazy awareness of the environment, with the appearance of the living cell in evolution. From that stage up to the stage of man, we find a parallel and gradual evolution of the depth and range of consciousness and a corresponding grip of the organism on the environ-

40. यच्छेद् वाङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद्यच्छेज्ज्ञान आत्मनि ।
ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत्तद्यच्छेच्छान्त
आत्मनि ॥

Kaṭha-Upaniṣad, 3.13.

41. अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं

तथाऽरसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।

अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं

निचाय्य तन्मृत्युमुखात् प्रमुत्यते ॥

Ibid, 3.15.

ment. Vedanta refers to this as *evolution of the physical organism and manifestation of consciousness*. Progress in the defining and coordinating of this awareness is registered as advance in knowledge. All creatures, says the *Devīmāhātmyam*, have their knowledge confined to the world of sense objects— *jñānamasti samastasya jantor-viśayagocare*.

Consciousness at this level is tied down to the organic system, whose primary urge is only organic satisfaction and organic survival. It is this consciousness and this knowledge that becomes capable, at the human level, to penetrate into the heart of Reality, in its external and internal dimensions.

If the innermost Self is all peace, the outermost sheath, the *annamaya*, or the physical self, is all noise and distraction. The farther we are from the centre of our Ātman, the more become the noise and distraction of our lives. Peace is not in things outside, says Vedanta, but in man himself. This peace has to be realized by the development of the capacity for inner penetration through inner discipline. The structure of human life becomes steady when it is founded on the rock of the eternal Ātman within, of the indwelling God in every being.

The raising of consciousness from lower to higher levels, and finally taking it out of the network of relativity, is the hardest task that man can set for himself. The gravitational pulls of the non-spiritual parts of his being, consisting of *samskāras* or *vāsanās*— impressions, make this path out of bounds for any but the most heroic of

men— the *dhīras*— as the Upaniṣads term them. Most people need much practical help and guidance, and several easy steps, in this path; and that is provided by Vedanta in its *bhakti* and other paths of its practical science of spirituality. In these, there is legitimate place for rituals and other outward spiritual practices, if the goal of spiritual growth is constantly kept in view. The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* summons all humanity to undertake this great adventure of raising consciousness to its highest level of purity, luminosity, and universality.

Arise! Awake! enlighten yourself by resorting to the great (teachers); like the sharp edge of razor is that path, so say the sages, difficult to tread, and hard to cross.⁴²

Implicit in this philosophy of Vedanta is the fulfilment of the hopes of one and all to reach the summit, since that fulfilment, forming one's very Self, is built into each and every human being. What is needed is only man's awakening to this inalienable heritage of his—his inborn divinity. Awakened thus, each may follow the path that suits him or her best; and Vedanta provides different paths to suit different types of mind and mood, of endowment and capacity.

(To be concluded)

42. उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गं पथस्तत्कवयो
वदन्ति ॥

ibid, 3.14.

THE TRUTH THAT FREES

DR. LETA JANE LEWIS

Truth is reality. It accords exactly with that which is, or has been, or shall be.¹ Knowledge of the truth is power. On the empirical level, we use it to overcome the limitations which cloud our lives with fear. As we discover scientific truth, we gain control over nature and free ourselves from suffering. Only a few hundred years ago, raging smallpox epidemics killed millions of people. More recently the discoveries of the virus which causes the disease and of the vaccine which prevents it have eliminated horrible suffering and death.

Science has considerably increased the longevity of prosperous educated people. Yet suffering has by no means been eliminated even for them. Despite the best medical skill, people die in hospitals every day, burn victims often after weeks of torture, and cardiac patients sometimes overnight. Although it has made miraculous progress, science still has its limitations and probably always will. But even if scientists were to learn all there is to know, there is one truth which would eternally defy all their efforts. That is the truth of change. No object in the universe remains forever unchanged. No finite thing is absolutely permanent. Even an iron mountain, given sufficient time, will disintegrate and disappear. The soft, corruptible human body rarely lasts more than one hundred years. Earthquakes, volcanoes, and landslides have wiped out villages, even entire cities, in a few minutes. Although the time may conceivably come when medical science will cure all possible cancers and slow hardening of the arteries, it is unlikely that we will ever be able to extend our life expectancy to reach two hundred years. Whatever science may learn and whatever

we may do with the acquired knowledge, we cannot conquer suffering and death. Change holds the trump card.

Thus, the first of the Buddha's four noble Truths, the Truth that there is suffering, is scientifically correct. The second of his noble Truths, that there is a cause of suffering, is axiomatic. But what logic is there to the Buddha's third noble Truth, that suffering can be overcome, and to his fourth noble Truth, that there is a way to overcome it? Are these so-called Truths actually in accord with that which is?

Jesus apparently agreed with the Buddha. He taught his followers that they would know the Truth and that it would make them free.² He told them to be of good cheer, for he had overcome the world.³ A great Upanishadic seer likewise promised: 'Hear all ye children of immortal Bliss. I have known that Truth which is beyond darkness. You also, having realized that Truth, go beyond death.'⁴

What is this Truth which, according to three of the world's great wise men, defies the ultimate law of nature? Swami Prabhavananda elucidates: 'Although it may sound strange to Western ears, I must point out here that two kinds of truth exist. One kind of truth is perceived by the senses; and the other kind of truth ... cannot be perceived by the senses. ...'⁵ The transcendent Truth which the senses cannot perceive is, in Biblical symbolism, the divine breath which God blew into Adam's body at the time of creation. Because this Truth of man's divinity is absolute, that is, above

1. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, fifth edition.

2. John 8 : 32.

3. John 16 : 33.

4. Quoted by Swami Prabhavananda in *Religion in Practice* (Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1968), p. 32.

5. *ibid.*, p. 71.

and beyond all relative qualification, Upaniṣadic seers spoke of it as 'satya', the root of which is 'sat' or absolute Existence. Absolute Truth is reality, but not in the sense in which relative truth is reality. Absolute Truth does not exist; it is 'Existence itself'.⁶ It is 'sat-cit-ānanda', absolute Existence, absolute Consciousness and absolute Bliss, incomprehensible to the unilluminated mind. Although we do not know it, this immortal Existence is our true nature. When the body dies, the true Self, like a traveller who has spent a night in a lodge, moves on to other quarters.

Worn-out garments

Are shed by the body :

Worn-out bodies

Are shed by the dweller

Within the body.

New bodies are donned

By the dweller, like garments.⁷

Being divine, we cannot suffer and die the death of the body. The trouble is we think we can. Because of a primal error, we have erroneously identified ourselves with the body, the mind, and the senses, with the ego and the personality. Being unaware of our real nature, we think that we are subject to physical discomfort, to psychological distress, and, finally, to death. We do not realize that we are only the witnesses of all physical and psychological phenomena. In the words of Swami Vivekananda :

This whole nature is a book before the soul, chapter after chapter is being read and turned over, and every now and then a scene opens. That is read and turned over. A fresh one comes, but the soul is ever the same—eternal. It is nature that is changing, not the soul of man. This never changes. Birth and death are in nature, not in you. Yet the ignorant are deluded ; just as we under de-

lusion think that the sun is moving and not the earth, in exactly the same way we think we are dying, not nature. These are all, therefore, hallucinations. Just as it is a hallucination when we think that the fields are moving and not the railway train, exactly in the same manner is the hallucination of birth and death.⁸

Whether we realize it or not, we are perfectly safe. As children of immortal bliss, we are not born ; neither do we die.

But the objection may be made that we cannot avoid the consequences of our good and evil deeds, that our joy and sorrow in the world to come will be the products of what we have done in this world. St. Paul wrote, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap',⁹ and many people think it only fair that salvation should be contingent upon our actions on earth. According to Christian theology, our eternal destiny is determined by this one life. Although, traditionally, Christians have thought of heaven and hell as places where some enjoy everlasting bliss and others suffer everlasting torment, many theologians now think that heaven is the continuous presence of God and hell the unceasing withdrawal of God's presence. They propound the beautiful idea that Jesus, in his infinite love and compassion, took the sins of the world upon himself so that those who believe in him may have everlasting life.

The Vedantic sages are not so much in disagreement with these beliefs as a novice judging superficially might suppose. Vedantists agree that we will reap what we sow, that our good and evil deeds will determine our fate after death. They teach that we will experience the consequences of our actions not only in some postmortem heaven or hell but also in some future life on earth. Vedantists do not believe, however, that our stays in heaven and hell will be permanent.

6. *ibid.*, p. 40.

7. *The Bhagavad -Gītā*, trans. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1972). p. 37.

8. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 277-8.

9. Galatians, 6 : 7.

Since the good and evil we do are finite, their reward must also be finite. The reward will be exactly in proportion to our deeds. Even we mortals would not send a mere pick-pocket to prison for life. Vicarious atonement is another concept common to Christianity and Vedanta. According to Vedantic tradition, divine incarnations and compassionate saints gladly suffer to atone for as many of our sins as possible. But none could suffer sufficiently in one life-time to take upon himself the consequences even of Hitler's hideous crimes against the Jews to say nothing of the sins of all mankind over a few millenia. Like the Christians, the Hindus have sometimes thought of their heavens and hells as places. In this connection, Swami Vivekananda puts Brahmaloaka in fine perspective :

The highest heaven, of which the Hindus conceive is called the Brahmaloaka ; and in this, the Truth is seen much more clearly, like light and shade, but not yet quite distinctly. But as a man sees his own face in a mirror, perfect, distinct, and clear, so is the Truth shining in the soul of man. The highest heaven, therefore, is in our own souls ; the greatest temple of worship is the human soul, greater than all heavens, says the Vedanta ; for in no heaven anywhere, can we understand the reality as distinctly and clearly as in this life, in our own soul. Changing places does not help one much.¹⁰

As Swami Vivekananda implies, salvation in Vedanta is the realization of our oneness with the Divine. If the remission of all our sins became possible through vicarious atonement, we would not experience eternal beatitude as long as we had earth-bound desires. God does not punish us by withdrawing his presence from us ; being engrossed in the world, we do not love him sufficiently to experience his presence. All of us tend to seek the situations where we can get the things we want. People who like music go to concerts. Those who like to water-ski go to the ocean. Those who

enjoy gourmet food go to find restaurants. Similarly, the time will come after death when we will seek the place, probably a new human body, where we can fulfill the desires, gross and subtle, which are still important to us. We will experience perfect divine bliss only when we long so intensely for God that our earthly desires are stilled. Vedantic sages promise us that, if we truly thirst for God, we will put forth every effort to find him in this life. If we do not seek God in this world, we will not be motivated to seek him in the next. Sri Ramakrishna was fond of saying that if a threshing machine went to heaven, it would continue to thresh grain.

When we will take joy in the Truth of the spirit, our earthly desires will be stilled and we will enter eternal beatitude. But we cannot take joy in the Truth until we know it. As Swami Prabhavananda writes:

Christ . . . insisted upon personal experience when he said : 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' And the freedom he spoke of was the freedom from all sufferings, bondages, and limitations imposed upon us by our surface life. Only the transcendental knowledge of the truth of God can give us that freedom. . . . Sri Ramakrishna, in our present age, said : 'It is one thing to hear about milk, another thing to see milk, and still another to taste milk.'¹¹

In other words, it is not enough to hear about God's truth, for God's truth is not abstract thought. It is living, vivid reality which must be experienced to be known. No philosopher or theologian, for that matter, no great saint or mystic, has ever expressed this truth in words. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that 'the truth of God has never been defiled by the lips of man'. Buddhists likewise say : 'The truth indeed has never been preached by the Buddha.'¹² 'What is

¹¹. *Religion in Practice*, p. 116.

¹². *Sūtrālamkara*, quoted by Aldous Huxley in *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1945), p. 127.

¹⁰. *Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 184.

known as the teaching of the Buddha is not the teaching of the Buddha.'¹³ Books about saints can inspire us, but they cannot convey the saint's heavenly joy. The world's great scriptures can so impress us with the suggestion of God's beauty that we will wish to find it, but we will have to see it ourselves to know what it is. Seeking the Truth that frees is like going on a treasure hunt at a party. The guests do not know what the treasure is, but they can tell by the hostess's pleased smile that it is something worth having. So they follow her careful directions until they find it. Similarly, the scriptures and biographies of holy men and women create a taste for the joy of divine Truth in us and instruct us how to find it.

At the beginning of spiritual life, the Truth of the divinity of man is sensed by a higher intuition, which comes from the true Self, the Ātman. Deep in all our hearts is the sure knowledge of our divinity. Although this knowledge is ordinarily obscured by egotism, a budding love of the divine, a little purity of heart, permits tiny rays of light from the Ātman to penetrate the surface consciousness. When this happens, we intuitively sense deep meaning in the scriptures and in the lives of the saints.

Saints are the mirrors in which we can see our souls. Swami Vivekananda declared: 'That is why men worship Incarnations, such as Christ or Buddha. They are the most perfect manifestations of the eternal Self. They are much higher than all the conceptions of God that you or I can make. A perfect man is much higher than such conceptions.'¹⁴ Jesus brought salvation to mankind by manifesting the divine so brilliantly that those who had eyes to see would not fail to see it. He was very explicit, saying, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by

me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him. . . . He who has seen me has seen the Father.'¹⁵ The 'I' of which Jesus spoke was not the mind/body complex. It was the eternal spirit, which also lived in the Buddha, Rāma, and Kṛṣṇa.

The devotee who can recognize the divine spirit in one of these incarnations will be able to recognize it in others. Swami Vivekananda makes this point forcefully: 'A mother recognizes her son in any dress in which he may appear before her; and if one does not do so, I am sure she is not the mother of that man.'¹⁶

Saints and sages also embody the Truth of the spirit but with less intensity than the divine incarnations. While the divine incarnations are blazing suns, the saints and sages are glowing torches. A glowing torch is no sun, but it is easy to see a glowing torch and to catch fire from it. A genuine saint can impart something of his spirituality to his disciple as one torch can light another. The fire of the first torch actually burns in the second. Likewise, something of the guru's divine consciousness enters the disciple's consciousness. As Swami Vivekananda said in the following magnificent statement: 'Spiritual vitality can be given from one mind to another. The man who gives is the Guru. The man who receives is the disciple. That is the only way spiritual truth is brought into the world.'¹⁷ This gift of spiritual vitality is what is known as grace.

Jesus and Sri Ramakrishna were able to impart spirituality by a touch, but that rarely happens. Especially at the beginning, the ordinary aspirant experiences the guru's holy consciousness only to a limited degree.

13. *The Diamond Sutra*, quoted in *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 127.

14. *Complete Works* (1973), vol. 3, p. 9.

15. John 14 : 6-12.

16. *Complete Works* (1978), vol. 4, p. 125.

17. *Complete Works* (1977), vol. 1, pp. 511-12.

Knowing that the disciple needs still greater inspiration, the wise guru directs his worship to the divine incarnation to whom the disciple is most attracted. Through prayer and meditation on the holy personality, the aspirant is to learn, in Swami Yatiswarananda's words, 'to connect ... his individual consciousness with the consciousness of ... [his] Iṣṭam.'¹⁸ Finally he will become so absorbed in divine consciousness that worldly pleasures will lose their attraction for him. His evil tendencies will be forced out of his psyche.

Because he is not pure enough to know the Truth as it is right from the outset, the aspirant grows slowly in spiritual life. In the beginning the thin veil of egotism prevents his feeling the presence of God intensely. Egotism seems to him then to be a discouragingly ineradicable part of his nature. How is he to overcome it? Through the practice of spiritual disciplines, the sages tell him, through the practice of spiritual disciplines, one of the most important of which is adherence to the truth. Sri Ramakrishna makes it clear that 'truthfulness alone is the spiritual discipline of the *kaliyuga*.'¹⁹ 'If a man clings tenaciously to the truth, he ultimately realizes God.'²⁰ 'God can be realized through truth alone.'²¹

Knowing the disciple's limited capacity, the guru does not begin by forcing the entire religious and philosophical Truth upon him. Instead, he teaches the disciple to adhere strictly to the highest truth he can grasp. Then, if the disciple makes no dishonest compromises with the truth as he sees it, truth itself will lift him to higher

understanding. As Swami Vivekananda taught, spiritual life

... is the journey from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. Darkness is less light; evil is less good; impurity is less purity.²² ... It is too often believed that a person in his progress towards perfection passes from error to truth; that when he passes on from one thought to another, he must necessarily reject the first. But no error can lead to truth. The soul passing through its different stages goes from truth to truth, and each stage is true; it goes from lower truth to higher truth. This point may be illustrated in the following way. A man is journeying towards the sun and takes a photograph at each step. How different would be the first photograph from the second and still more from the third or the last, when he reaches the real sun! And all these, though differing so widely from each other, are true, only they are made to appear different by the changing conditions of time and space.²³

There is, for example, truth in materialism—the universe obviously exists—but Vedanta teaches that other interpretations of the universe are closer to ultimate Reality than the materialistic interpretation is.

The deadly consequences of rejecting the truth that we know, imperfect though it may be, can be illustrated on all levels of existence. For instance, the refusal to accept the shocking fact that one has cancer and needs an immediate operation can prove physically fatal. Similarly, the refusal to admit that this universe offers pain as well as pleasure can prove spiritually fatal. The person who does not wish to accept the fact that pleasure eventually runs into pain and, therefore, cannot be permanent, is in danger of stressing pleasure so much that he will lose his higher Self in forgetfulness. The statement that God created nature for man to enjoy is a pernicious rationalization that can lead to self-indulgence if one deliberately ignores the statement's one-sided illogicality and takes it

¹⁸. Swami Yatiswarananda, *Meditation and Spiritual Life* (Bangalore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1979), p. 439.

¹⁹. Mahendranath Gupta, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, 1973), p. 177.

²⁰. *ibid.*, p. 296.

²¹. *ibid.*, p. 418.

²². *Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 327.

²³. *Complete Works*, vol. 1, p. 385.

seriously.²⁴ When we rationalize away the potentiality of suffering, we are tempted to over-emphasize pleasure and under-emphasize spiritual life.

Because we do not want to renounce the pleasures which obstruct our knowledge of the Truth, we rationalize with regard to religion. All of the world's great spiritual teachers have stressed the necessity of self-control. Jesus taught, 'Be ye, therefore, perfect even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect.'²⁵ 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'²⁶ But to become pure in heart, it is necessary to undergo a self-purification process against which the ego rebels for fear of being annihilated. We find false security in our pleasant sense life and in the deceptive adjustment to reality our petty faults achieve. So we sometimes take the easy way out protesting that it is normal, natural, and relatively harmless to be as we are. We rationalize that no one is perfect, that it is impossible for weak human beings to attain divine goals. Thus, in conformity with our desires, we attempt to downgrade religion to the point where it will cease to challenge us. Instead of trying energetically to rise above our lower natures, we find it all too easy to rely on vicarious atonement for salvation or to postpone the unpleasant purification process for a lifetime or two.

The pain which acknowledging some lower truths can cause us could have inspired Swami Vivekananda to comment, 'We are always after the truth, but we never want to get it.'²⁷ As distasteful as it may initially be, we cannot know the higher Truth until we are willing to accept the lower truth in both its pleasant and unpleasant aspects.

Because it obscures our vision of the Divine, dishonesty with ourselves is the most serious sin.

No one likes to have an infected tooth extracted. If the tooth is not very painful, we would rather put off diagnosis and extraction as long as we can. So it is with the ego. Even those who genuinely desire to grow spiritually feel threatened by the necessity of facing their faults and struggling to overcome them. The humiliation and guilt we feel when we face our imperfections squarely prompt us to rationalize them away and perhaps even to blame others when we are to blame ourselves. We contemplate the process of extracting the diseased psychological tooth, that is, of ridding ourselves of our weaknesses, with considerable apprehension. Because we feel that our weaknesses are parts of our very souls, we anticipate rooting them out as something akin to death.

'It is very important,' Swami Yatiswarananda writes, 'to be able to stand the destructive aspect of Truth. It must first of all burn away all our false hopes, false identifications, pet ideas, all our false worldly aspirations, all our small, petty, greedy loves. Then only Truth will reveal itself, not before.'²⁸ Swami Vivekananda exhorts us to

Worship the terrible.²⁹ ... Follow the truth wherever it may lead you; carry ideas to their utmost logical conclusions. Do not be cowardly and hypocritical.... Perish in the struggle to be holy; a thousand times welcome death. Be not disheartened.³⁰ ... Practise that boldness which dares know the Truth, which dares show the Truth in life, which does not quake before death, nay, welcomes death, makes a man know that he is the Spirit, that, in the whole universe, nothing can kill him. Then you will be free. Then

24. The entire truth is that if God created some things for us to enjoy, he obviously created other things to make us miserable.

25. Matt. 5 : 48.

26. Matt. 5 : 8.

27. *Complete Works*, vol. 1, p. 439.

28. *Meditation and Spiritual Life*, p. 224.

29. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western Disciples (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1960), p. 597.

30. *Complete Works* (1978), vol. 6, p. 121.

you will know your real Soul.³¹ . . . Few can face the truth; but to accomplish anything we must be willing to die for the truth.³²

Truthfulness with one's self is a rigorous form of renunciation inspired by divine love. It purifies the entire psyche. The honest aspirant will not stop with mentally accepting the truth. His truthful nature will force him to live by it. He will then be rewarded with grace, which easily enters the pure

heart and intellect, and the suffering caused by facing relative truth will disappear in blissful divine consciousness.

Although the struggle may seem hard, Truth will eventually win over falsehood, which, despite all appearances to the contrary, has no more real existence than a mirage. 'Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone is opened the way to God.'³³

³¹. *Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 85.

³². *Complete Works*, (1977), vol. 8, p. 45.

³³. *Mundaka-Upaniṣad*, quoted by Swami Vivekananda in *Complete Works*, vol 8, p. 382.

(Continued from page 293)

is in itself a great discipline which unites the light of Jñāna, the fire of Bhakti, the joy of meditation and the power of Karma into one mighty all-fulfilling Yoga.

The wheel of Yoga

Yoga has a two-fold function. On the one hand it lifts the self from a lower level of consciousness to a higher level and, on the other, it connects individual consciousness with cosmic consciousness. It may be compared to the Persian wheel consisting of a series of buckets which lift water from a deep well to the fields above and worked by bullocks. As we go through our daily routine of spiritual practice day after day, our life may appear an endless and monotonous repetition like that of the bullocks which go round and round the well. But it is this seemingly monotonous movement that raises and expands consciousness through Yoga.

The revolving of a wheel needs the simultaneous operation of two forces: an upward thrust and a downward pull. So also the wheel of Yoga needs the operation of two forces: self-effort and divine Grace. As the Upaniṣad says, *tapah prabhāvād devaprasādācca*, 'By dint of one's effort and by the grace of God.'¹⁶ Yoga is the union of the limited powers of the soul with the infinite powers of God. At first these two appear to be separate and different. But as the aspirant advances in spiritual life, he realizes that all human efforts are only manifestations of one great cosmic movement initiated and sustained by the inexhaustible and limitless power of the Prime Mover, the Supreme Being. There is in reality only one great Divine Yoga for the whole universe and all individual yogas are only partial expressions of Its glory and splendour.

¹⁶. *Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad* 6.21.



HELEN KELLER, THE MYSTIC

DR. VICTORIA HUGO

Blind, deaf and mute, Helen Keller was a living legend in her life-time. Triumphant over her handicaps, she attained a level of intellectual and spiritual development and creativity which was far above that of average humanity. She symbolized not only the power of the spirit but also its omnipresence. For Helen Keller embraced all humanity. She was a mystic who had the entire world as her friend. One cannot paint her as a private individual during her adulthood. She believed that she belonged to all nations and all peoples.

Helen Keller was born on 27 June 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama, in southern United States. Alexander Graham Bell tested Helen, as a child of five years old, and discovered that she was a genius of the highest calibre, in spite of the fact that she was totally sightless and soundless due to a rare childhood disease. This malady afflicted her as a baby of 18 months old. It left her a wild, uncontrollable child until seven years of age, when on March 3, 1887 the Kellers employed a tutor, Anne Sullivan

'Teacher', as Helen always called Miss Sullivan, developed the helpless child to become one of the greatest and most famous individuals of the world. Anne Sullivan struggled many months to awaken the little girl mentally, who was very beautiful physi-

cally, with a strong and healthy body. The teacher's method of education was unique. She was a graduate of Perkins Institute, Boston, Massachusetts, America's original school for the handicapped. Teacher and student were never separated for many years.

All of Helen Keller's elementary and secondary education was developed entirely with private tutoring by her teacher. Finally, Helen's college education was undertaken at Radcliff College, the women's Harvard University for higher worldly and mental knowledge. Anne Sullivan sat side by side reading all texts laboriously and playing it into Helen's palm; often the red flesh broke through the skin, then the wrist and arm was finger-played with the deaf alphabet. Very few braille books were available at that period.

Radcliff's requirements were strict, without any special consideration for a handicapped individual. Helen Keller graduated in four years with a B.A. degree, *cum laude*. She mastered English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, science and mathematics. Helen wrote all the European languages well.

One of America's great writers, Mark Twain, named these two remarkable women 'two bodies with one mind'. The comple-

particular level of consciousness, and each 'door' marks the threshold at which the self or I-consciousness assumes a higher dimension. Seeking God through meditation is not like seeking somebody in the outside

world. It is continual process of transformation of the self, beginning with the ego and ending in the Supreme Self.

(To be concluded)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO THE WEST

ROBERT P. UTTER

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, 'Whenever virtue declines and evil increases, I incarnate Myself to rescue the holy, to destroy evil and to establish righteousness.'¹ History shows that from time to time world teachers have arisen who have done just this. Swami Vivekananda was such a world teacher. He travelled all over the world and taught in both the East and the West. He always taught what was needed by the country and culture he was in. His teachings in the West were formulated to meet the special needs of the West, just as his teachings in the East were formulated for the East.

He admired the West for its energy, its enterprise, its enthusiasm, its accomplishments in practical affairs. But he was not deceived by the fact that the accomplishments of the modern West were mostly in the realm of wealth and physical comforts. He saw that beneath its mask of easy optimism the West had desperate need of something more than material prosperity and efficiency. He knew that this need was neither physical nor intellectual, but spiritual.

He admired and loved the Orient also, especially India, for it was the land of his birth and he was always a great patriot but was based on spiritual perception. He loved the Orient for its age-old tradition of renunciation and its whole-souled pursuit

of spiritual realization. He knew of its vast accomplishments in that area, of its long line of ṛṣis from time immemorial down to the present who have immersed themselves in the Infinite and turned their backs on the finite. But he saw that this too needed correction, for to turn one's back on the finite completely is to forget the vow of the world teachers, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the Rāmas and the Kṛṣṇas, and the Śamkarācāryas and the Caitanyas, and all the sung and unsung sages who have vowed to help all beings attain enlightenment. He knew that India needed some of the practicality of the West, and that the West needed the spirituality of the East.

As a world teacher of both East and West Swami Vivekananda knew that meditation and realization must be put to practical use for the relief of the sufferings of the world, and that Buddha's basic pronouncement that all relative experience is suffering would be of no avail without the opening of the gates to liberation or nirvana for as many illusion-bound souls as possible. He knew that Buddha's last temptation under the Bo tree had been to refrain from teaching anyone what he had realized, for the Swami himself had felt the pull of that very same temptation. He had asked his Master, Ramakrishna, to grant him the boon of staying in samadhi for many days at a time. Ramakrishna knew that this desire, worthy as it might be in itself, was not the destiny

1. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 4.7-8.

she beheld of the great creation that the Almighty had materialized for the benefit of the soul's experience on the physical plane.

So often Helen Keller was mystified at the indifference of human beings who had eyes that refused to see and ears that refused to hear the music of the universe and the world. She regretted that the average person, even children, could so seldom feel enchanted upon hearing Beethoven's music or seeing a glorious sunrise or sunset. Countless small joys pass by the average people unnoticed. This situation pained the great lady. She wanted that the handicapped should not miss the pure joys of existence. Whether they were blind or soundless, none of these deserved, or wanted, pity. The millions of dollars she gathered for them simply had to bring results.

Miss Keller pressured the U.S. Congress for years on end until they finally established state-wide funds for blind children's education. Prior to Helen Keller there existed three types of braille: this was very difficult for children, not to mention the near impossibility for adults. Helen's determination and inner vision were strong enough to finally establish only one type of braille book. Lastly, she created talking books for those who were unable to learn printed braille, mainly adults and the aged.

There were no irksome tasks for Helen. Her immense love which flowed continuously from her beautiful soul was ever present in all that she did and created a world of joy for her beloved handicapped. She refused to be negative and could not and did not accept failure. She was always positive and optimistic and never took a gloomy view of life. Even though it often took years, she nevertheless forged ahead and realized her goals through patient hard work.

Miss Keller's insight, spirituality, cheerfulness and inner happiness were infectious to all who came into touch with her. She was able to influence and bring understand-

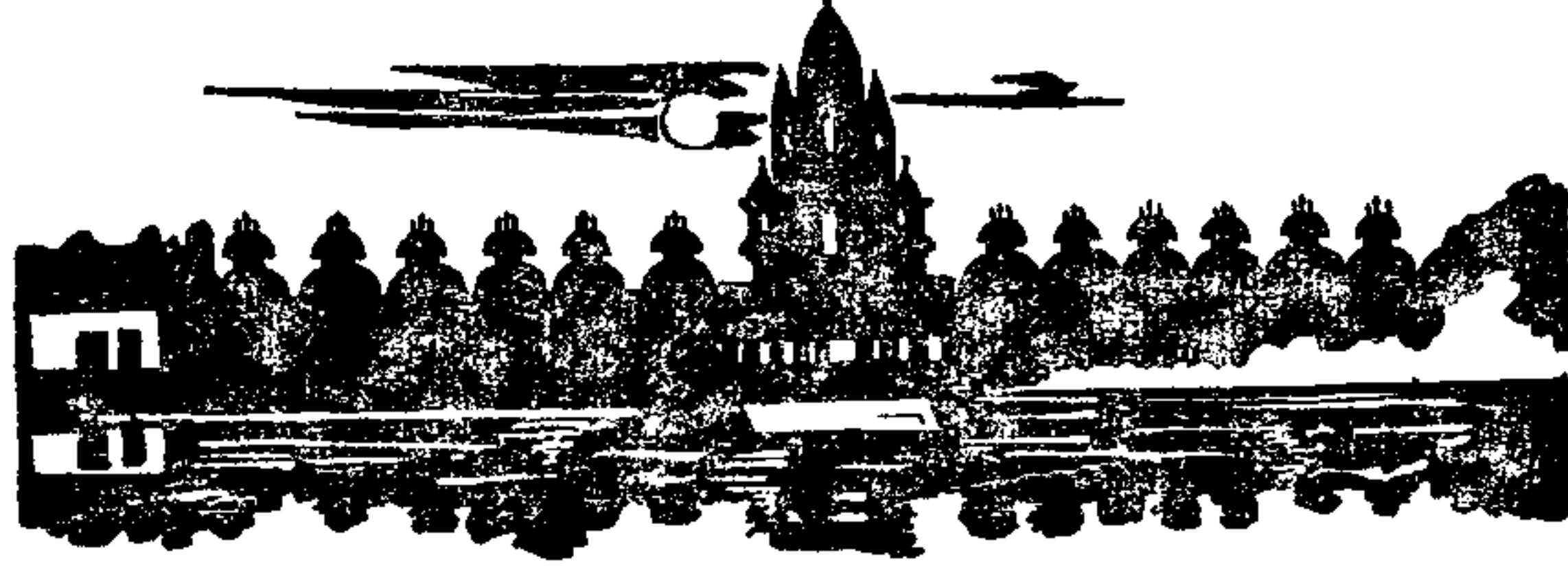
ing to many great men and women in the countries that she visited. Faith was her greatest virtue and she always lived by it. Other virtues like sincerity, honesty, perseverance, etc. are of course important in life, but without faith no real success can come.

Helen Keller's activities constantly attracted press reporters who pestered her for interviews. She wanted to avoid personal publicity but this was not always possible especially in America. She was a wonder-child and a miracle in her own country and had been highly publicized since her youth and even childhood.

She was a happy and healthy person with a pure and intelligent mind and was always creating new projects and ideas. Her sightless and soundless mission never ended, flowing majestically and irresistibly like a river into the ocean. Spiritual qualities and humanistic endowments never failed Helen during her lifetime. Her inner life which was highly developed gave her an unusual awareness of the special needs that her handicapped people faced in the physical world. Her brilliant mind illumined by God always directed her along the proper channels that lighted the path to success. Most of her efforts bore fruits bringing solace and fulfilment to her beloved sightless and soundless sisters and brothers. These selfless delights she would reveal frequently to her intimate friends who were in a position to assist her financially or otherwise in her great humanitarian work.

Some of her intimate friends often marvelled at her beautiful experiences which she narrated as they issued from her inner being. She would often describe her visions through vivid and colourful pictures. She would relate with the thrill of joy that she saw beautiful children, lovely forests, rivers, gardens of flowers, beautiful sunrise, sunset and the beauty of life pulsating every-

(Continued on page 318)



IS BUDDHISM A RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM UPANIṢADIC HINDUISM ?

DR. SUSHANTA SEN

(Continued from the previous issue)

Points of similarity between Buddhism and Upanisadic Hinduism

Let us now examine some of the basic similarities between Buddhism and Vedantic Hinduism. In the first place, both the Upaniṣads and Buddha have the same problem before them, namely *duḥkha* or suffering, and they see it in all its intensity and universality. The first item in the four Noble Truths discovered by Buddha is pain (*duḥkha satya*). The term 'duḥkha' in Buddhism, however, is to be understood not merely in terms of the *feeling* of pain, but also as the very *texture* of the phenomenal world. Pain is said to be inherent in the phenomenal world, because it is impermanent (*anitya*), 'withering away, passing away, fading away, coming to an end',¹⁶ and 'that which is impermanent, O monks', asks Buddha, 'is it painful or pleasant?' 'Painful'—is the answer of Buddha.¹⁷ The basic experience of Buddha is thus the experience of the passing nature of things which is but another name for 'duḥkha'. The human condition on earth is expressed by Buddha-ghoṣa, a versatile Buddhist scholar of the

fifth century A.D. : 'All health ends in illness, youth in decrepitude, life in death; earthly existence is originated by birth, afflicted by age, upset by illness and destroyed by death'.¹⁸ In the same way the Upaniṣads emphasize the experience of sorrow as the given, basic, irrefutable fact of human existence. That the phenomenal world, with all its alluring variety of sights and sounds, is nothing but transient appearance in which can be found no abiding happiness, value and comfort has been repeatedly expressed in various passages of the different Upaniṣads. Thus we read in the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* the story of Naciketā who went to Yama, the King of Death, to learn the secrets of immortality. But before Yama taught him he tested Naciketā to see if it was really a longing for knowledge that filled the heart of the young boy. He offered him, instead of the secret he had come for, the pleasurable worldly objects that ordinary men most desire. But Naciketā replied : 'These things endure only till the morrow, and the pleasures they give wear out the senses. Keep thou therefore horses and chariots, keep dance and song for thyself ! How shall he desire wealth, O Death, who

16. *Samyutta Nikāya*, 2.26.

17. *Majjhima Nikāya*, 3.19.

18. *Visuddhimāgga*, 8.15.

has once seen thy face?"¹⁹ This sense of the transitoriness of worldly objects resulting in pain and tension of life is the basis on which both the Upaniṣadic Hinduism and Buddhism proceed to construct their salvation programme.

The second point of agreement between the Upaniṣads and Buddhism lies in the recognition of the fact that pain or suffering of worldly existence is not something everlasting and eternal, and that it can be helped, suppressed and eradicated for ever. This is the basic contention of the third Noble Truth—the *Nirodha Satya*, as envisaged by Buddha. According to both Buddhism and the Upaniṣads there is an ideal state of existence beyond all possibility of pain and suffering and this state can be realized by men in their present life. This painless state of ideal existence is called Mokṣa in the Upaniṣads, and in Buddhism it is termed Nirvāṇa. The only difference between these two concepts is that, while the Upaniṣads speak of it more positively as a state of consciousness and bliss (*vijñānam ānandam Brahma*), Buddha emphasizes the negative aspect of it: Nirvāṇa is the absolute annihilation of human sufferings.

Again, both the Upaniṣads and Buddhism agree in holding that the state of Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa is devoid of any conceptual determination. No empirical concept or predicate is adequate to describe this state. The principle theme of Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika-Kārikā* is to show how our attempt to interpret Nirvāṇa in terms of the categories of reason like existence (*bhāva*), non-existence (*abhāva*), motion, rest, etc., results in self-contradiction. It really lies beyond all concepts, thought and speech. It can be realized only in an incommunicable mystic intuition (*prajñā*) which is said to be identical with Nirvāṇa itself. The *Prajñāpāramitā* texts speak of this intuition (*prajñā*) as unfathomable (*gambhīrā*), immeasurable

(*aprameyā*) and infinite (*asamkheyā*); it is really inexpressible, too deep for words.²⁰ The most appropriate language to express it is indeed 'silence' Buddha himself used to remain silent when any question pertaining to the nature of this transcendent reality was referred to him. The Buddhist scriptures record fourteen such unanswered questions of Buddha which are technically known as *avyākṛta* or inexpressibles. Buddha did not doubt the reality of Nirvāṇa; only he would not allow us to characterize and clothe it in empirical terms like being, non-being, etc. His silence can only be interpreted as meaning the consciousness of the indescribable nature of the unconditioned Reality. The Upaniṣads too in like manner voice the non-conceptual and ineffable nature of the state of Mokṣa which is nothing else than the realization of Brahman within our inner self. Thus we read: 'Brahman is He whom speech cannot express, and from whom the mind, unable to reach Him, comes away baffled.'²¹ Again, in a passage preserved only in Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Kena Upaniṣad*, we read about the 'language of silence' as the most befitting language to express the nature of Brahman: "'Sir", said a pupil to his master, "teach me the nature of Brahman". The master did not reply. When a second and third time he was importuned, he answered: "I teach you indeed, but you do not follow. His name is silence."²²

Apart from this both the Upaniṣads and Buddhism agree that no empirical means, organizational device, sacrifice and penance can bring us directly to the attainment of this state of Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa. These can at best be instrumental to this end, but taken

20. Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita (Bib-Indica), p. 192, 467.

21. *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad*, 2.4.

22. As quoted by Śwami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Allen & Unwin, 1962), p. 45.

19. *Katha-Upaniṣad*, 1.1.26-27.

by themselves these are simply worthless. Only the insight (*prajñā, aparokṣa anubhūti*) into the nature of Reality is the direct path to liberation. Of course on the question of the nature of this liberating knowledge Buddhism differs radically from the Upaniṣads,—and what this difference is we shall see in the next section of this paper. For the present purpose it is sufficient to note that both these religions unmistakably underline the hollowness of ritualism and emphasize the necessity of *knowledge* as the only way to Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa.

It is a characteristic of the Indian mind in general to conceive of knowledge in practical terms, as leading directly to felicity. Liberating knowledge is seen as the product of a certain kind of transformation. It is what is left when false beliefs are removed. It is something we live through: it is, to use a fashionable term, existential. It is a living through of what seems to be a transformation of the world but is really only a transformation of the manner in which one sees the world, and, so is a transformation of oneself. In the course of this transformation nothing happens to the world. One sees after all just the same trees, just the same stones. But, without there being any objective transformation in the field of experience, one sees them now as laden with divine transcendental meaning. To take a more familiar example, it is like learning to read the meaningless marks that one has seen for so long are given a meaning. It is the same and different at once, but the difference is due to a modification of understanding rather than an alteration of the world. When the whole world is seen as different from what one had believed it to be, then the rules and theories applicable to *that* world no longer have application. For example, everyone in a way is aware of the First Noble Truth of Buddhism that suffering (*duḥkha*) exists, but it took a virtual act of genius to see it as the sort of truth that Buddha did. Everyone suffers. But

not everyone knows that he suffers. Suffering is a passion. To know that is not a passion, but a piece of knowledge. What Buddha recognized is that knowledge of the fact can be a step towards its mitigation, and therefore it is in some measure a mitigation of suffering to know that suffering is universal. One of Buddha's celebrated cures—and he performed no miracles—was of a mother, who, wild with grief, had asked him to restore her child to life: he told her he required only a handful of mustard seed from any house where there had not been a death, and of course she could not find this. What she did find was that the condition she lamented was a universal condition and that restoring the child to life would only postpone an inevitable fact. Nothing was changed by what Buddha did. Only, she saw the same facts in a different way and, seeing them so, she was transformed.

Another striking feature of agreement between the Upaniṣads and Buddhism lies in the fact that they incorporate the law of Karma and the doctrine of re-birth as the essential elements into the systems of their religious thought. It has been emphatically declared in both these religions that the attainment of Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa, the ultimate goal of man's religious life, is a long-drawn process and one single earthly life is quite inadequate and too short for this purpose. Man has to be born again and again in this world with a physical body to reap the fruits of his *karmas*—the actions done in his present life—until eventually he realizes Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa. This repeated reincarnation of the individual soul is known as *samsāra*. The idea of *samsāra* finds its fullest expression in the different Upaniṣads from where Buddha borrows and adopts it into his own religious system. In fact Buddha's belief in *karma* and *samsāra* is part of his overall Hindu heritage. So far as these striking points of similarity between Hinduism and Buddhism are concerned, there is nothing to distinguish the one from the other.

It was perhaps these considerations that led Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu saint and savant, to remark : 'Śākya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus.'²³

If the contention of the above passage be true, a legitimate question can be asked: is there nothing new in the teachings of Buddha? Is Buddha to be regarded merely as a powerful reformer of Hinduism carrying on the insight of the Upaniṣadic seers? But Buddha himself denies this and he considers himself as opening up an entirely new tradition having no precedence in the history of religious thought. He claims that the views propounded by him are unique in the sense that they bear no resemblance with any prevailing views of the world. The following *Buddhavacana* in support of this may be cited :

Na me ācariyo atthi sadiso me na vijjati

*Sadevakasmim lokasmim na atthi me patipuggalo*²⁴

But what is this alleged novelty of Buddhism which would distinguish it from Hinduism based on the Upaniṣadic tradition? As answer to this question it may be pointed out that though both Buddhism and Hinduism have a common problem and a common ideal before them, namely, the problem of suffering and the ideal of absolute eradication of suffering from the life of the individuals, the respective paths suggested by them for the solution of this problem and for the attainment of this ideal are entirely different. Upaniṣadic Hinduism prescribes the path of *ātman* or soul whereas Buddhism recommends the path of *nairātmya* or no-soul. The doctrine of *nairātmya* is the

unique contribution of Buddha to the history of Indian religious thought. This point needs some elaboration.

The concept of *ātman* is the pivot around which all the doctrines of the Upaniṣads revolve. In the *Prasnopaniṣad* it is stated that just as the spokes of a chariot's wheel are strung together at its navel (*nābhi*) so the soul (*ātman*) remains at the centre of the universe through all its different phases of change (*arā iva rathanābhau kalā yasmin pratiṣṭhitāḥ*)²⁵ This *ātman* is supposed to be the inner essence of man—a permanent substance which remains fixed and constant amidst all sorts of change of the body, sense-organs and the mind. The body of a man may change beyond recognition, his sense-organs may be mutilated and his mind may be (and in fact is) in a state of incessant flux—its sensations, emotions, ideas, images etc., are continuously gliding away one after another. But somewhere within this ceaseless phantasmagoria there exists an abiding reality which simply witnesses these changes but does not become affected by them. This permanent immutable substance in man is called his *ātman* or soul. This *ātman* is thought to be not only the inner essence of man but also the outer essence of the universe. The Upaniṣads do not make any distinction between within and without. We read in the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* : 'What is within us is also without. What is without is also within. He who sees difference between what is within and what is without goes evermore from death to death.'²⁶ When viewed as the ultimate metaphysical principle of the outer universe, the *ātman* is termed Brahman. There is endless change without in the shape of movement, growth, decay and death, and at the heart of these changes there is an abiding reality called Brahman. Again at

²³. See *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 1, p. 19.

²⁴. *Majjhima Nikāya*, 1.26.

²⁵. *Prasna-Upaniṣad*, 6.6.

²⁶. As quoted by Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India*, p. 59.

the heart of endless changes within our body-mind complex there is an abiding reality called Ātman, and these two principles are treated as the one and the same. *Ayam ātmā brahma*—‘this Self is Brahman’—is one of the great sayings (*mahāvākyas*) in which the Upaniṣads sum up this teaching.

Uniqueness of Buddha's path

But a crucial question can be raised here: if an immutable changeless *ātman* is the sole reality of man and the universe, then how are we to view the phenomena of change and becoming which characterize the world of our everyday experience? The reply of Upaniṣadic Hinduism to this question would be that whatever undergoes change and is unstable, fleeting and evanescent cannot have any intrinsic value and reality of its own. Hence change or becoming is to be regarded as more or less unreal and as the source of all pain and suffering of our life. It is the *ātman* alone that lies beyond any possibility of change and suffering and is intrinsically blissful in nature. But though itself devoid of any suffering and change, the *ātman*, under the spell of ignorance (*avidyā*), forgets its real nature and wrongly identifies itself with the changing phenomena of the body and the mind. This mistaken identification of the *ātman* with what it is not, that is, the body and mind, is held to be responsible for all the sorrows and sufferings of human life, because the soul wrongly imagines that various affections and afflictions which really belong to the body-mind complex are aspects of its own nature. Hence to get liberation or final release from this tragic sense of life a man has to dissociate his *ātman* from his changing body and mind, and to realize his unchanging inner soul as the essence of his true being. To an individual aspiring for attaining the state of liberation the Upaniṣads thus prescribe—*ātmānam viddhi*—know thy self.

It is precisely on this score that Buddhism

takes its departure from Hinduism in general. Buddha emphatically denies the existence of a permanent unchanging soul (*ātman*) in man. Becoming or change, observes Buddha, is a patent fact of the world—an obvious phenomenal truth confirmed by our everyday experience. To deny change as unreal as is done by the Advaita-Vedantic tradition of Hinduism, would mean closing one's eyes to the glaring facts of the world around us, namely, the growth and decay of natural objects, the birth and death of man and various other kinds of change observed by all of us. Our uncontradicted experiences of the transitoriness of life and worldly objects were systematized by Buddha into a philosophical doctrine which is usually expressed in the dictum ‘all is impermanent’ (*sarvam anityam*). Amidst the ceaseless changes of the world there is nothing fixed, stable or permanent substance, that is, there is no soul or *ātman* in the Hindu sense of the term. A man, according to Buddha, is simply the conglomeration of five *ever-changing* elements which are technically called *skandhas* in the different Buddhist systems. These are: (1) *Rūpa* or matter, which includes body with its sense-organs; (2) *Vedanā* or sensations; (3) *Samjñā* or determinate ideas; (4) *Samskāras* or mental and non-mental forces and (5) *Vijñāna* or consciousness. No separate permanent substance called a soul can be abstracted from this cluster of changing *skandhas*, nor can anyone of them be identified with an *ātman*, which is by definition, devoid of any change. In spite of this if Buddha is sometimes found to speak in terms of a separate soul in some of his sermons, as recorded in the Buddhist canons, it means nothing else than a conventional name (*prajñapti sat* as opposed to *vastu sat*) designating the *aggregate of five skandhas*, just as a chariot is a mere conventional name for the collection of its different parts arranged in a particular way and is nothing over and above them. The

word 'soul' thus does not refer to any single self-identical entity beyond the ever-changing *skandhas*. In Buddhism therefore there is no thinker, there is only thought; no feeler but only feelings; no actor but only visible actions. This is obviously a phenomenalistic doctrine which maintains the non-existence of any permanent substance while insisting on the reality of the modes. Buddhism in this way represents a modal view of the soul rejecting the substance-view of it. Buddhaghosa, an eminent exponent of the Hinayanist Buddhism of the fifth century A.D., expresses this: 'Suffering exists, but there is no one who suffers. Deeds are, but there is no doer of deeds. Nirvāṇa is, but no one is blissful. The path is but there is no traveller on it.'²⁷

One of the principal reasons that led Buddha to reject the notion of a permanent soul is this: In Buddha's opinion attachment or mental clinging (*trṣṇā*) of any kind is the root cause of all sufferings in human life. Attachment generates passion, and passion leads to suffering. A man tends to get attached to a thing which he thinks to have some permanent and abiding value. Nobody after all becomes attached to an utterly perishable object having only a moment's existence. Now Buddha believes that though no permanent selfhood is ever to be discovered in the ever-changing psycho-physical organism of man, under the spell of ignorance (*avidyā*), one imagines that there is one and becomes passionately attached to it. Buddha remarks that this is like falling in love with the most beautiful maiden of the city although she has never been seen.²⁸ The so-called imaginary permanent soul in this way becomes the passionate concern of man and he indulges in all sorts of activities to please and satisfy it, as a result of which he falls into the innumerable sorrows and sufferings of the

world. This passionate attachment to the false notion of a substantial soul is, therefore, the root cause of human sufferings. But as soon as a man realizes that there is in fact no abiding selfhood in him but only a fleeting stream of experiences, he becomes free from attachment towards the imagined eternal self, and all his sufferings which spring from vain and strenuous efforts to promote the interest of this illusory self come to an end and he attains Nirvāṇa—a painless state of ideal existence. Thus the realization of the truth that there is no unchangeable soul leads him straight to Nirvāṇa, which is regarded by Buddha as the summum bonum of human life.

Another consideration on which Buddha denies the existence of a permanent soul in man is ethical. Primarily an ethical teacher, Buddha takes his stand on the reality of moral consciousness and the efficacy of *karma*—a concept which, as we have seen, he borrows from the Upaniṣads. According to the Upaniṣadic doctrine of *karma* it is our own *karmas* or willed activities that are ultimately responsible for our moral progress. Virtuous actions purify our mind and produce a sense of security, serenity, peace and happiness. Vicious actions, on the other hand, have a corrupting effect on the mind. They degrade us morally and retard our journey towards the ultimate goal of life. But if there is a fixed permanent soul which is not susceptible to any kind of development and change, that would render the phenomenon of moral progress itself meaningless. For the real person, the soul, would neither be better nor worse for our moral acts and efforts. Virtuous actions would not make our real self morally better, nor vicious actions make it morally worse, since the soul of a man is supposed to be a permanent substance incapable of any kind of change. Accordingly this static concept of the real self was replaced by Buddha by a dynamic concept of man. Thus, to give significance to the doctrine of *karma* and

²⁷. *Visuddhimāgga*, 14.90.

²⁸. *Digha Nikāya*; *Potthapādasutta*.

the fact of moral progress, Buddha came to deny the existence of a permanent soul in man and regarded the changing empirical self as the real person.

To conclude our survey, we repeat what we have said elsewhere that both Hinduism and Buddhism have the same problem and the same ideal before them, namely, the problem of suffering and the ideal of absolute emancipation from suffering; but the respective paths suggested by them for the solution of the problem and for the attainment of this ideal are entirely different. Hinduism suggests the path of *ātman* or soul. It teaches that the re-discovery of a permanent soul which, as it were, has lost its way in the labyrinth of endless change of the world is the only way to get rid of

worldly sufferings. But Buddhism suggests an altogether different path for the same purpose. It prescribes the path of *nairātmya* or no-soul, according to which the liquidation of a false notion of a permanent soul is the exclusive way leading man to the Nirvāṇic bliss. Thus both Hinduism and Buddhism reach the same goal, namely, Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa, but through different paths. The spiritual genius of Buddha carved out a new path, the negative path. Considered in this light, we find that Buddha was perfectly justified when he announced to his disciples that he was initiating a new path never trod before in the field of spirituality.

(Concluded)

(Continued from page 311)

where She often wondered how people endowed with natural sight and hearing could miss so much joy present everywhere in the universe. She was a great mystic and a lover of mankind. She prayed for all humanity and sincerely wished that all men would be able to live in peace and joy.

One of England's queens once gave a reception for Helen Keller and Polly which was attended by a large number of celebrities and England's royalty. The queen questioned Helen as to how it was possible for her to enjoy all of nature, as she apparently did without sight or hearing. Helen answered the queen, 'But Your Majesty, even though I have no physical sight or hearing, I do have an imagination, a sense of smell, taste and feeling of touch. This enables me to enjoy all of nature in its splendour with inner feeling and sensitiveness. By vibrations I can also enjoy music, especially

Beethoven whose glorious music is so divine.' Elevating music for Helen was as alive as for most normal people.

Religion and philosophy for Dr. Helen Keller were not only academic subjects. She believed and understood the true meaning of spirituality of living a most saintly life. She was aware and realized the genuine significance of 'I am, therefore, I think.' Her inspired conviction was that all beings are different manifestations of the One unborn, unchanging Reality, the Supreme Being who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient. She saw the whole world lit with the light of God. There was no division between her inner life and outer life. She lived perpetually in the glory of the Spirit.

God alone knows why He dropped Helen Keller and her magnanimous teacher Anne Sullivan from heaven to wander side by side on earth and into eternity.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA : TEACHINGS AND REMINISCENCES : BY SWAMI CHETANANANDA. Published by The Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 205 South Skinker Boulevard, Saint Louis, Missouri 63105, U.S.A. 1980. Pp. 175. \$ 6.95. (Available through Ramakrishna Ashramas in India).

This first complete English-language biography of Sri Ramakrishna's remarkable monastic disciple Swami Adbhutananda is a helpful supplement to the expanding literature about the great spiritual genius Sri Ramakrishna and the men and women who became saints under his influence. Written and compiled with admirable skill, the book throws new light on days of rare spiritual power when these holy personalities were alive and associating with one another. In bright, clear language Swami Chetanananda develops hitherto neglected areas of the already existing composite picture of those days and illuminates other areas which had still remained vague. By translating Bengali Reminiscences which had previously been inaccessible to Western readers he contributes substantially to our knowledge of the saint and his surroundings. Being keenly aware of the value this Knowledge can have for anyone who assimilates it, the Swami keeps the reader in mind at all times and does his utmost to help him understand. For instance, instead of distracting the reader by forcing him to refer to a glossary or to footnotes for the definitions of unfamiliar Sanskrit and Bengali terms, he includes these definitions in square brackets within the text itself. His delicate, precise choice of words and his gently flowing style facilitate comprehension and make reading a pleasure.

Swami Chetanananda uses perspective to present Swami Adbhutananda's personality in a living, almost three-dimensional way. He does this in part by showing the saint through the eyes of many of his contemporaries, persons with widely divergent backgrounds, and in part by relating dozens of significant episodes from Swami Adbhutananda's daily life. He shows us Swami Adbhutananda as a boy in the company of Sri Ramakrishna, as a virtual hermit meditating alone on the banks of the Ganges, and as a *teacher striving to impart spiritual truth to others*. Sometimes, too, Swami Chetanananda quotes Swami Adbhutananda directly, so that the reader can know the saint's thoughts and feelings as he himself expressed them and see the inception of

the Ramakrishna movement through his eyes. The section of the book devoted to Swami Adbhutananda's teachings is a compilation of direct quotations from his conversations, and two chapters, 'Memories of Sri Ramakrishna' and 'Passing away of the Master,' are entirely in his words. Since no two people experience the same situation in exactly the same way, the observations which Swami Adbhutananda made in these two chapters are somewhat different from those made by other witnesses of the same events. These keen observations of a humble, devoted sage supplement those already existing to create a fuller, more vivid awareness of Sri Ramakrishna and the circle of holy persons around him.

In part three Swami Chetanananda records Swami Adbhutananda's major teachings, which strikingly verify Swami Vivekananda's statement that Swami Adbhutananda was 'Sri Ramakrishna's greatest miracle. Having absolutely no education, he attained the highest wisdom simply by virtue of the Master's touch.' A poor orphan boy, Swami Adbhutananda had never had the opportunity to learn to read and write. But for him books were unnecessary. He by-passed them to draw knowledge from a higher, more certain source, that of personal spiritual experience. On the basis of this experience he could explain difficult metaphysical concepts like maya and nondualism as logically and clearly as he might have done had he been a distinguished professor of philosophy.

Swami Adbhutananda's one-pointed devotion to God is the central theme of the many scenes in which he appears throughout the book. After his first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna, when he realized that spiritual life is the pearl of great price worth any sacrifice, he would not allow anything to interfere with his spiritual practices. Neither hunger nor sleep could interrupt his meditation, the sole occupation of his night hours. His absolute humility was astonishing. He did not suffer egotistically from being the only illiterate servant boy among Sri Ramakrishna's well-educated young disciples. Instead of envying the others, he concentrated on becoming the best, most-dedicated servant possible, the servant of the servants of Sri Ramakrishna, and through Sri Ramakrishna, the servant of all mankind. He made himself a channel for Sri Ramakrishna's universal love. His endearing whimsicality reminds one of the small child who cries for his toy and throws it away as soon as he gets it. The child, however, is whimsical because he has not

yet learned the value most adults place on their possessions, while Swami Adbhutananda was whimsical because he had lost the desire for material things.

The absolute determination with which Swami Adbhutananda dedicated himself to spiritual life convinced many of his contemporaries that he had found something of tremendous value, which they, too, should try to attain. Some who knew him personally experienced his saintliness so intensely within their own hearts that they began to develop saintly characteristics themselves. This consciousness communication plus the spiritual disciplines which the Swami inspired them to perform revolutionized their lives. Unfortunately, this great saint passed away many years ago. It is impossible to associate directly with him today, but this gracious little book evokes such a living awareness of him that even now we can feel something of his holiness and try to assimilate it.

DR. LETA JANE LEWIS
*California State University
Fresno, California*

THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY.
Part one : Perspective. Part two: Special Concepts : BY DR. T. R. RAMACHANDRAN. Published by Dr. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras 600 005. 1979. Pp. Part one 104; Part two 152. Price Rs. 10/- for Part one; Rs. 13/- for Part two.

Part one

This is an impressive publication from many points of view. There has been a longstanding need for a technical writer in Indian philosophy among contemporary writers to produce an authentic and well-documented work on the Indian Philosophy of Beauty. The only solitary exception in the field has been Prof. M. Hiriyanna, whose works on Indian Aesthetics are marvels of profundity and compression. A more spacious work covering the ground was a basic demand and Dr. Ramachandran, inspired by the elder philosopher's work and on similar lines—almost dedicating his writing to his memory—is meeting the demand with conspicuous ability. His writing is conscientious, patient and analytical and achieves great lucidity of style. Writers there have been many in the field of literary criticism and *Alankāra-Śāstra* who have dealt with this theme. But an exposition of it from the stand-

point of Indian philosophy has also been a fundamental necessity, for aesthetics truly conceived and correctly approached is one of the mansions of philosophy.

The compact volume consists of nine chapters. The first two long chapters are devoted to the basic problems of placing aright the philosophy of Beauty in the general scheme of Indian philosophy. It is rightly pointed out that Indian philosophy is value-oriented, and among the values Mokṣa is the supreme value. It surpasses Kāma, Artha and Dharma in the scale of Puruṣārthas and so does it surpass and complete the conventional trinity of values, Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The latter values are instrumental to the supreme value of Mokṣa. So much is common ground between the learned writer and Prof. Hiriyanna and he closely follows the arguments of the venerated pioneer. The following five chapters cover fresh ground and three levels of Beauty are distinguished and elaborately delineated. They are, 'Beauty in separate parts of Nature', 'Beauty in Art' and 'Cosmic Beauty'. He offers an account of their character and 'significance', the latter in the sense of their status and inter-relationship in the total hierarchy of values. The survey, as could be expected, links Beauty to Brahman, the ultimate spiritual principle of Vedānta. The author does well to emphasize the due recognition given to both the subject and object in the Indian conception of the experience of Beauty. He gives many diagrammatic representations of the ideas propounded and abundant notes and references. It is altogether a very honest and competent presentation of the subject in the aptest style and conveys the inspiration under which the author has thought and written.

After paying this due tribute to a worthy performance some observations can also be hazarded.

There is minimal use of Western aesthetic thought. It is likely that the treatment would have been enriched if Kant's analysis of aesthetic experience had been utilized in characterizing the uniqueness of the experience of Beauty. There is a great deal of Indianism in Kant's aesthetics. The general problems of art, such as Realism, Symbolism, Formalism and Expressionism and the category of the sublime, the tragic and the problem of the 'ugly' do need some discussion in a philosophy of Beauty. Arts other than the literary are hardly touched in the consideration of Art-forms. The Concepts of 'Empathy' and 'Psychic distance' have been anticipated in the Indian Philosophy of Beauty and this fact deserves to be mentioned.

The scheme of the three levels of Beauty namely, that of the separate parts of Nature, that presented in Arts, and Cosmic Beauty, is a neat one. The term 'Cosmic Beauty' in contrast to beauty in the 'separate' parts of nature would suggest that it is the beauty of the totality of nature, on which interpretation it would differ from the first level only in range and inclusiveness. If it is something altogether transcendent unitary and non-material, not carrying just the connotation of the wholeness of nature, then why describe it as 'Cosmic'? Would it not be the Super-Cosmic Divinity itself? Beauty is just an instrumental value leading up to the experience of Divinity (p. 16). There seems to be some ambiguity in the term 'Cosmic Beauty'.

That all truth is 'mediate' (p. 16) and 'Saksatkara' is not to be classified as Truth seems to be very doctrinaire. That Anandavardhana belonged to the Pratyabhijñā School of Philosophy goes beyond the evidence available to us (p. 64). His great invocatory verse does not confirm that identification.

These are minor points and do not reduce the solid worth of the achievement.

Part two

The second part continues the qualities of thoroughness and lucidity characterizing the first volume. It is devoted to the exposition of 'special concepts'. It runs into eleven chapters.

As in the first volume, there are very helpful diagrammatical representations supporting the exposition and copious notes and references. The first three chapters are of an introductory character and crystalize the two central problems of the philosophy of artistic Beauty, namely, the content of art and the method of art. The following six chapters deal with the content of art as 'Rasa' and the method of art as 'Dhvani'. The last two chapters discuss Śānta Rasa and Bhakti Rasa and conclude, as could be expected, with reflections on the relation of art to Religion, which can be both indirect and direct. Such is the map of the text before us. It can be noted that this philosophy of Beauty is almost an exclusive and intensive investigation into the literary art, inclusive of its principal part, the drama. The special concepts are only two, Dhvani and Rasa. Its chief creative philosophers are only two: Anandavardhana and Abhinava Gupta. There is no discussion of what the non-Alankārika philosophers might have said or could have said on the theme and no interpretation of the concepts in relation to other arts in any recognizable measure. Objections to 'Dhvani' are raised and

answered in accordance with the guidelines of Anandavardhana. The various prima facie interpretations of Rasa are formulated and are refuted in conformity to Abhinava Gupta's directions. His final theory is cogently and fully stated. The treatment is fine and illuminating.

After noting that all this credit justly goes to the learned author, something more seems to require mention. He has modern forerunners of great gifts and magnitude of performance in this field. They were real explorers who consolidated their conquests in memorable writings. One may mention Prof. Hiriyanā, Dr. Kuppuswamy Sastry, Dr. Ganganath Jha, Dr. Kane, Dr. G. K. De, Dr. V. Raghavan, Dr. Shankaran and Dr. Panchabhiksha Sastry, to confine ourselves to the founding fathers of this line of research. With this heavy inheritance, a writer with less insight and expository power than Dr. Ramachandran would have made no mark at all. But in spite of this liability of Inheritance, he has produced a very praiseworthy work. On some particular topics, his clarifications are really valuable. The reviewer can instance his account of the varieties of Dhvani in this connection. The reason is not far to seek. He has mastered the relevant authorities and thought deeply for himself and hence, his work carries the quality of an original re-discovery. It bears the impress of integrity. The Institute by publishing this work has substantially furthered the cause of philosophy. The format of the two volumes is charming and the price is very reasonable.

PROF. S. S. RAGHAVACHAR
Professor of Philosophy (Rtd.)
University of Mysore

GITOPASANA : BY SWAMI ISWARANANDA GIRI. Published by Samvit Sadhanalaya Santasarovar P.O. Mt. Abu (Rajasthan). Also available at Samvit Vikasa Kendra, No. 31, Sir M. N. Krishna Rao Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore 560 004. 1980. Pp. ix+120+84. Price Rs. 8.

For the Hindus the *Gītā* is the crest jewel of their scriptures. The philosophy it epitomizes, however, is universal and that is why it is sought by all the earnest seekers throughout the world. Arjuna first heard these words of eternal wisdom amidst the din and clatter of the battle field, and since then they have been reverberating all the time to be heard by those, who would care to listen.

The present book is based on lectures delivered over a period of five years on the occasion of *Gītā* Jayanti, with more matter added to give it a full shape. The book now serves as a manual

for *sādhakas*. The author believes that an *upāsaka* should gather the golden strands from the thoughts of various great intellects and weave his own robe of adoration to clothe the central truth of the *Gītā*.

The first chapter eulogizes the *Gītā* as Mother. The well-known dhyāna sloka addresses the *Gītā* as *ambā*. In order to understand the true spirit of the *Gītā* we must enter into the heart of Arjuna and hear it as Arjuna heard it. The *Gītā* is the embodiment of the wisdom of Kṛṣṇa. This wisdom is *prajñā*, the spiritual wealth, which was nurtured through all the amazing years of Kṛṣṇa's tumultuous life (p. 2).

The author cautions us lest we take the *Gītā* as a mere text, a book. The *Gītā* is verily an embodiment of Truth. 'Truth is an unbroken experience, liquid enough to yield to all pressures and obstacles to its flow, all the facts of life.' (p. 6).

Subsequent chapters deal with the different aspects of the process of attaining perfection namely, the *Upāsya*, the guru, the *Upāsaka*, the *Upāsana*, and lastly the *Visarjana*. In *Upāsya*, the author dwells on the intimate affinity between Nara and Nārāyaṇa and explains the significance of the *Gītā* as—*advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇī*. In the chapter on the Guru, the author says that the *Gītā*, as the Guru, walks with you and at every step shares the strain of your pilgrimage and corrects the slightest error in your orientation with the goal (p. 29). The chapters on *Upāsana* and *Visarjana* are equally potent and they give us a new understanding of the problem of Self-realization. The language of the author is so refreshing that one goes through these pages with a feeling of exhilaration. A final chapter on 'Spandana' focusses reader's attention on some precious flashes of inspiration derived from each chapter of the *Gītā*. The original text of all the eighteen *adhyaayas* in Devanāgarī script has been added to make the book self-contained.

All told, the present book is indeed an inspiring introduction to the study of the *Gītā* as a practical guide book on *sādhana*. More such publications dealing with the varied aspects of the divine love and wisdom contained in the *Gītā* will slake the thirst of the aspirants. The get-up and the printing of the book are excellent, and the price is very moderate.

DR. NARENDRANATH B. PATIL, M.A., LL.B., PH.D.
Joint Director of Languages
Bombay

SELF-MASTERY : BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA.
Published by Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore,
Madras 600-004. 1980. Pp. 82. Rs. 2.50.

REINCARNATION AND IMMORTALITY :
BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA. Published by Sri Rama-
krishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 600 004. 1980.
Pp. 100. Rs. 3.

The two little volumes *Self-mastery* and *Reincarnation and Immortality* are complementary versions of a single theme—for it is through self-mastery that man triumphs over life and death and attains immortality. While the first volume presents conquest of the Self as the goal of human life from various angles of human experience, the second volume seeks to drive home the Law of Karma, which is the basic logic and guidance in the life of a spiritual seeker dedicated to that central goal—self-mastery. The urgency and excellence of self-mastery is exposed with a clear logic which is characteristic of the author who, besides being a direct disciple of Vivekananda, was a mystic, a poet, and a born spiritual teacher. The calm assurance and the penetrating force of the sweet simple sentences tell us that the author himself was a frequent sojourner in the empire he was speaking of. No pedantry, no scholastic argumentation, no prophetic claim is to be found anywhere in these books. Common experiences of life are interpreted with a clear teleological vision. The author speaks in a persuasive and loving manner as if he is talking to his brethren still stumbling in the great journey to God. The books drive home the truth that the great aim of life is not enjoyment of wealth and sense-pleasure, but self-mastery or attainment of immortality which alone give men abiding happiness, fearlessness and freedom from the tremors of life and death.

Self-Mastery opens with the words of St. Cadoc, 'there is no king like him who is the king of himself.' Then it plunges right into the many variations on its central theme—'Therefore, self-mastery is a vital theme if we would enjoy in full measure all the blessings of life. Our blessings are now often carried away by our short comings.' (p. 22) This is only a translation in simple logic of the famous Upaniṣadic imperative—*tena tyaktena bhunjithā* which means 'one must enjoy through renunciation.'

Christ and Buddhas are our masters. Why? Because they attained self-mastery over desire, fear, jealousy, hatred and ignorance. 'And being masters of themselves', the author says, 'they alone can be masters of men. If we wish to attain this state of mastery, we must make our own self

obedient to our will.' (p. 52) But, says the author, 'even a divine Incarnation cannot save one who is without the will to be saved and devoid of the energy necessary to follow His example and precepts' (p. 47).

The last chapter entitled 'Self-help and Self-surrender' is a finale after the earlier five chapters which are arranged in a rising crescendo. The seeker realizes after much suffering like the lower bird in *Mundaka Upaniṣad* that all his self-assertion was only another name of self-abnegation, all his self-help was only leading to a final self-surrender like that of the other bird sitting still on the tree top in unbroken peace. 'The more clearly we see God working everywhere', says the author, 'the more easily we shall be able to resign ourselves to Him.' (p. 74) Vedantic self-assertion merges into a calm self-surrender to a providential God.

The central theme of *Reincarnation and Immortality* is understanding the Law of Karma. This is set forth in the following words: But saying prayer before the altar, reading the scriptures, or going to the church, these things alone do not make life consecrated. It is understanding the law and practising the law in our life. When we have this, then we are religious' (p. 70). Who

keeps the record of our past? 'In our own character', says the author, 'and condition of life is stored up the record of every selfish and of every loving thought, of every good or bad deed; and we receive the fruits of these.' (pp. 82-83) Therefore let us know this central truth of life and 'Truth shall make us free'.

But how to get rid of bad or negative thoughts? The author strikes at this point with confident mastery and style reminiscent of his great master Vivekananda. 'Can a man suddenly think of something high and lofty? Does a man paint a master-piece suddenly? He strives for it. He thinks, he dreams, he imagines; his whole being is on fire with it; and that fire consumes his limitations and he is able to paint a great picture. So it is with us when our whole being is on fire with spiritual yearning. That fire burns off the blemishes of our nature and lofty thoughts become habitual with us' (pp. 81-82).

The books are nominally priced. Interested readers and seekers of God should like to keep these two small volumes on the same shelf along with the little book of Brother Lawrence.

SWAMI JITATMANANDA
Ramakrishna Math
Hyderabad

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR APRIL 1981 TO MARCH 1982

Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, was started on 19 March 1899 under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda in the Kumaon Hills of the Himalayas. In 1903, a small dispensary was started by the Ashrama in response to the dire need of the local villagers in sickness. Since that time the dispensary has developed into a fairly well-equipped, small rural hospital. The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is under the charge of a monastic member. A resident allopathic doctor treats the patients with the help of his assistants, and earnest efforts are made to maintain a high standard of efficiency in service. Moreover, all patients receive prompt and sympathetic treatment completely free of charge.

The hospital has 25 beds in the indoor department, but sometimes arrangements have to be made for more. There is also a small operation theatre. A dental chair and a pathological department provide additional help in the treatment of patients. The total number of patients treated

during the twelve months in the Indoor Department was 439, of which 315 were cured and discharged, 99 were relieved, 11 were discharged otherwise or left, 14 died. In the Outdoor Department the total number of patients treated was 31,752, of which 10,584 were new and 21,168 were repeated cases.

Urgent requirements: (1) Utensils for the use of patients: Rs. 5,000. (2) Equipment for the operation theatre: Rs. 5,000. (3) Construction of a dormitory for the patients' attendants: Rs. 30,000. (4) Endowment for the purchase of medicines: Rs. 1,00,000. (5) Repayment of a Rs. 20,000 loan. Our appeal to charitably disposed individuals and institutions is to lend us their helping hand in a big way, so that the accumulated loan can be wiped out soon, and we shall have sufficient funds, at our disposal to meet future requirements, particularly for the purchase of medicines which we wish to improve both qualitatively and quantitatively. Cheques and drafts may be drawn in favour of *Mayavati Charitable Hospital* and sent to the President, Mayavati Charitable Hospital, P.O. Mayavati, via. Lohaghat, Dist. Pithoragarh (U.P.), 262 524, India.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Focus on Children

Disturbing reports continue to appear in newspapers regarding the condition of children belonging to the weaker sections of society in India. As ever, the main problems of course are: non-starters, drop-outs and malnutrition. It is to be noted that the rate of additional enrolment in elementary schools has not registered any appreciable improvement over the years. The ambitious programme of universalization of education conceived long ago envisages the additional enrolment of 17 million children in classes I to V in all the States over the next five years. But educational planners now believe that the actual enrolment will not be more than 11 million. It has been accepted as a norm that a primary school should be available within a kilometre of human habitation, and a middle school within three kilometres. But this ideal has not been actualized in many parts of the country.

The existence of schools does not alone ensure continuance of education for children, for the rate of drop-outs continues to be high. According to the findings of the Union education ministry, nearly two-thirds of children dropped out of the country's primary schools between 1965 and 1975. A recent survey conducted by the Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research, Ahmedabad, shows that 56.98 percent of Harijans, 61.90 percent of Adivasis and 45.83 percent of other communities leave school after primary education. In all, the percentage of children from slums reaching up to secondary education level is just 28.74.

Educational planners should work out incentive programmes for the education of children belonging to socially and economically backward communities. The main thrust of the programmes should be on non-formal education as it has been found that a large number of drop-outs are withdrawn from schools to assist their parents. The non-formal system is not to be viewed as a poor substitute or as inferior to the formal system. On the contrary, the non-formal system should prepare a boy to move into the formal system at some appropriate stage in his life. More important, the non-formal system should be so designed as to give poor children some roots in the ancient culture of the land and a sense of belonging.

The other problem of malnutrition was highlighted in a seminar on 'Nutrition: trends and perspectives in the eighties' organized in New Delhi in May. It is estimated that at least 60 percent of pre-school children suffer from severe malnutrition. The death rate among these children is 50 percent. 22 percent of school children suffer from nutrition-deficiency diseases. Dr. C. Gopalan, director-general, Nutrition Foundation of India, who delivered the key-note address at the seminar, called upon the Union Government to set up a high-power Committee for the formulation and implementation of a national nutrition policy. He pointed out that a national nutrition policy which was limited only to warding off hunger or saving malnourished children from death would merely serve to perpetuate the present scenario. What is needed is to ensure that even the poorest segments of society are able to obtain inexpensive balanced diets containing all the nutrients needed for good health.
