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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
all of these the Vision of the Paramatman is Obtained.

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Prabuddha Bharata

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JUNE 1984

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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 89

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No. 6

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

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

यं क्रन्दसी अवसा तस्तभाने
अभ्यैक्षेतां मनसा रेजमाने ।
यत्राधि सूर उदितो विभाति
कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥

आपो ह यद् बृहतीविश्वमायन्
गर्भं दधाना जनयन्तीरग्निम् ।
ततो देवानां समवर्ततासुरेकः
कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥

1. Let us worship with oblation the divine *Ka*¹ upon whom the heaven and the earth², created and protected³ by Him, have fixed their mental gaze⁴; and in whom the risen sun shines.

Rg-Veda 10.121.6

2. When the great waters⁵ spread all over the universe, containing the germ and producing Fire, then arose⁶ the one life-breath of all gods. Let us worship with oblation the divine *Ka*.⁷

Rg-Veda 10.121.7

* The hymn to Hiranyagarbha is continued here.

1. For the meaning of *Ka* see notes in the April issue.

2. The meaning given by Sāyaṇa to *krandasī* as 'heaven and earth' is not convincing, but that given by Griffith as 'two armies embattled' makes little sense.

3. Mahīdhara interprets *avasā tastabhāne* as 'maintaining living beings with sacrificial food,' that is, generating rain. (*Yajur-Veda* 26.7)

4. A figurative expression to indicate the fixed nature of earth and sky.

5. In terms of later Vedantic thought 'waters' may be interpreted to mean *Maya* or *Prakṛti*.

6. Arose from what? From the waters or from the germ (*garbhah*)? Sāyaṇa accepts both the possibilities. In the first case, the meaning would be: 'From those waters arose Prajapati as the one life-breath of all gods'. In the second case, the meaning would be: 'From that Prajapati in the form of the germ or egg (*garbha*) the life-breath of gods and other beings arose'.

7. There is a change in the sentence pattern here. Instead of connecting the whole passage to *Ka* through a relative pronoun, there is a statement followed by the burden of the hymn.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL discusses the importance of work in meditative life.

In ABUSES AND USES OF PRAYER Dr. Bruce Alan Southworth examines some of the popular notions of prayer. The article is the transcription of a sermon preached at the Community Church of New York where Rev. Bruce is senior minister. Like his predecessor in ministry, Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington who was a frequent contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, Dr. Southworth, though young in years, is a brilliant scholar and thinker of wide sympathies and understanding.

GOPALA BHATTA: A VRINDAVANA GOSVAMIN by Prof. Ranjit Kumar Acharjee, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Ramakrishna Mahavidyalaya, Kailashahar, Tripura, is a brief study of the life and work of one of the six great teachers of Bengal Vaishnavism.

In THE YOGA OF SUFFERING Dr. Vinita Wanchoo discusses how sorrow and suffer-

ing, which are unavoidable in life, could be converted into a means of realizing God. Though an expression of the author's own personal philosophy of life, the article is based on the traditional concepts and presuppositions of Vedanta. The author is Professor of Philosophy (Rtd.), Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow.

Dr. S. K. Chakraborty, M. Com., Ph. D., A.I.C.W.A., a faculty member in the Finance and Control Group of Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, has been engaged in a pioneering work to bring Indian spirituality to bear on business management. In the first instalment of BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN INDIA: LIGHT FROM WITHIN, he critically examines the presuppositions of Western experts in their judgement of the Indian ethos. The author, who received his doctorate from the University of Liverpool, has wide post-graduate teaching experience in British and Indian universities.

MEDITATION AND WORK—I

(EDITORIAL)

Conflict between work and meditation

There is hardly a sincere spiritual aspirant who never felt the conflict between meditation and work. The main causes of his conflict are sufficiently well known. One is the contradictory nature of their aims and modes of operation. Work seems to be an outward movement leading us away from God into the world and its problems whereas meditation is apparently an inward movement towards divinity and peace. Secondly, shouldering responsibilities, dealing with people, planning about future

and other problems which are unavoidable in work cause distraction at the time of meditation. The third difficulty is the inability to maintain in the course of one's work the peace and recollectedness acquired during meditation.

Because of the orientation of Indian culture to contemplative life, this conflict is more widely prevalent in India. But it is found in other cultures as well, though in a less accentuated form and usually restricted to monasteries and circles of spiritual seekers. In Christianity it is symbolized by the story of the two sisters

Martha (who busied herself in receiving and serving Jesus and his disciples) and Mary (who preferred to sit at the Lord's feet and listen to his words), mentioned in the Gospels.¹

Integration of work into meditative life

Modern socio-economic conditions do not allow most spiritual aspirants to spend long hours in contemplation. Even among those who have the means and leisure, most people must need engage themselves in some work to prevent themselves from going insane. Moreover, the benefits of an hour or two of daily meditation are often found to be neutralized by the other activities of the day. So unless the conflict between meditation and work is resolved, our spiritual progress will be slow.

There is another reason why the integration of work into meditative life is necessary. Work itself transforms consciousness, as much as meditation does, though its effects are less obvious. When we speak of the results of our work we usually mean only the changes produced in the objective world by our work: how we influenced this man or that, how much money we got, and so on. We seldom think of the effect produced in our consciousness by our work. And yet, without our notice, everything that we do slowly changes our attitudes, ideas, emotions, power of concentration, and the quality and direction of our awareness. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that if a person served another for twelve years, he would acquire that man's character. Work changes the worker as much as it does the external world. It was the understanding of the transforming power of work that made Karl Marx assign to work a central place in his philosophy of social change. We are so much carried away by our thoughts and emotions that we fail to notice the subtle changes that

work brings about in us. Spiritual aspirants often exaggerate the importance of meditation and ignore the power inherent in work to transform human consciousness.

A third factor which makes work important is that it is the only way of relating ourselves to the world in a realistic way. We may have lofty ideals and dreams but what determines our relationship with others is our work. It is the type of work that a man does that determines his place in society.² Society judges us by our work, and it is not possible to live in harmony with others if we do not do our work properly.

Lastly, there is in all people an inherent creative urge. We not only want to experience and accept but also want to express and create. We want to give to others what we have gained, we want to share with others our own individual life. It is through work that the creative urge finds expression. When we are able to do the right type of work that allows the full expression of the creative urge, life energy flows freely through us. Our life then appears to be purposeful, meaningful, joyful. If we do the wrong type of work, or do the right type of work in a wrong way, or do no work at all, the creative urge gets dammed up within. Our life will then become empty and meaningless.³

2. It was this idea that originally served as the basis of caste in India. Each caste originally represented a certain mode of work. A similar idea was developed in the West by the British philosopher F.H. Bradley (1846-1924) through his concept of 'My Station and its Duties', but it never gained popularity.

3. This is an important point in Marx's concept of work. According to him the main purpose of work is not to earn money, which he regarded as dehumanizing, but self-realization by which he meant the full development and expression of human aspirations and creative powers. When work does not serve this higher purpose, it leads to the 'alienation' of man from humanity and life.

1. St. Luke 10:38.

The above discussion clearly shows the importance of harmonizing work and meditation in spiritual life. The next question is, how to do it? To find an answer we must first of all understand how meditation and work are related to each other.

Relation between meditation and work

Right from the dawn of Vedic religion Indian sages have speculated about the relation between work and contemplation. As was pointed out on an earlier occasion, meditation during the early Vedic period was an integral part of the fire ritual, *Yajña*.⁴ The separation of the two was a gradual process, and it was only during the period of the Upaniṣads that meditation (known as *vidyā* or *upāsanā*) got the status of a completely independent discipline. The Upaniṣads declare the results of the two to be different: "The world of manes is attained through rites, and the world of gods, through meditation."⁵

However, Advaita teachers never forgot the original connection, and grouped both meditation and ritualistic work together as two different forms of Karma. Both are characterized by *kriyā* (action), *kāraka* (agency) and *phala* (result), and imply subject-object dualism. They are thus different from *Jñāna* which, being non-dual in its true nature, is free from such distinctions.⁶ Since everything other than *Jñāna* is *ajñāna* (ignorance), work and meditation are both products of ignorance and cannot lead directly to liberation. Their function is chiefly negative, in the form of purification of mind and removal of obstacles.

4. See Editorial, *Prabuddha Bharata*, July, 1983.

5. कर्मणा पितृलोकः विद्यया देवलोकः ।

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.5.16

6. Confer, Samkara's introduction to *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

On the other hand, the teachers of Bhakti schools regard meditation and work as essentially different disciplines. Ramanuja identifies meditation (*upāsanā*) with Bhakti which itself is a special kind of knowledge of God in the form of unbroken memory.⁷ The definitions of Bhakti given by other teachers indicate that according to them also Bhakti is a higher type of meditation which is quite different from Karma. They also hold that Karma in itself is not a direct means to liberation, but becomes an indirect means when it is done as worship of God.

To know the true relation between meditation and work it is necessary to understand some of the fundamental psychological processes involved in both work and meditation.

Karma and Karma Yoga

Among the four main yogas, the most misunderstood and misused is Karma Yoga. One type of misunderstanding is to confuse it with mere karma or work. To work like a bullock, or to work in any way one likes, is not Karma Yoga. The work that most people do is nothing but a semi-conscious, passion-driven, aimless rat race for name and fame and sense enjoyment, and to call it Karma Yoga is an insult to the great teachers of Yoga. The goal of Karma Yoga is not worldly success. It is primarily a spiritual discipline which aims at liberation, *mukti*.

Another misunderstanding is to think that Karma Yoga could be undertaken by anyone without any prior preparation or qualification. Karma Yoga is work done with self-awareness, detachment of will and God orientation. It differs from other

7. स्मृतिसन्तानरूपं दर्शनसमानाकारं ध्यानोपास-

नादि शब्दवाच्यं ।

Gītā-bhāṣya 7.1

Yogas only in its outer form, and the internal psychological processes involved in it are not much different from those in other Yogas. It is impossible to practise Karma Yoga without attaining a certain degree of purity of mind, inner awakening and training. That it is not a simple and easy path will be clear to any one who studies the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave, two foremost teachers of Karma Yoga in modern times.

Nor is Karma Yoga a straight path. Like all other Yogas, it too passes through several stages. The first is the stage of *phala-saṅkalpa tyāga* where the aspirant tries to give up attachment to the result of his actions. At the second stage, *Karma-saṅkalpa tyāga*, giving up attachment to work, takes place. The aspirant neither seeks nor avoids more work; he does all the work that has fallen to his lot, but he does not attempt to determine the course of the work. Next comes the stage of *karṣṭva-saṅkalpa tyāga*, giving up the feeling of being the agent or doer. He does not give up 'I'-consciousness for, without it, it is impossible to do any work, except some automatic mechanical movements of the body. But, knowing that Prakṛti, impelled by God, does all work, he ceases to regard himself as the moral agent, *kartā*.⁸

The Karma Yogi works incessantly. He gives up only the *saṅkalpa*, intentionality or willing, but not the work. He detaches his will progressively from the external world, from his body and from his ego. The aim of Karma Yoga is not to change the world but to change oneself. The three stages mentioned above only represent the progressive transformation of the Karma Yogi's consciousness. It is this interior transformation that turns ordinary work

(for Karma Yoga is not doing some extraordinary work) into a Yoga.

Effects of Karma

The present context calls for another important clarification. Karma produces two kinds of result: a cosmic one and an individual one. When a stone is thrown into a pond it produces ripples which travel outwards and, after striking the bank, return to the point where the stone has fallen. Similarly, every action produces an effect on the cosmic mind (*mahat*) and returns to the doer after a certain period of time. The effect produced on the cosmic mind is what the Mīmāṃsakas call *apūrva*. It gets stored up and, after undergoing a process of 'ripening' (*vipāka*), changes into *karma-phala* (the fruit of action) and returns to the doer. It is this *karma-phala* that determines the environment we are born in and the experiences that we get in life. Like the banks of the pond, God who is the Supreme Self acts as a great reflector and returns the fruits of actions to every soul in each birth. According to Buddhists, Jains and Mīmāṃsakas, once a person does an action, no power can prevent the *karma-phala* from returning to him. But the teachers of Bhakti hold that God, the Eternal Giver, can do, undo or modify⁹ any Karma. The plan of Advaitins is slightly different: they strive to eliminate the 'I' itself so that if the *karma-phala* returned, there would be none to receive it!¹⁰

Karma also produces an individual effect. Every action leaves on the mind of the doer an impression known as *saṅskāra*. *Saṅskāra* is of two types: *Karma-bīja* and *vāsanā*. If you smoked one cigarette you would feel like smoking one more. This

8. It is the persistence of 'I'-consciousness in work that makes Śrī Śaṅkara regard Karma and (non-dual) *Jñāna* as incompatible. Regarding this point confer, Rāmānuja, *Srī-Bhāṣya* 2.3.33.

9. कर्तुम्, अकर्तुम्, अन्यथा कर्तुम् ।

10. Confer, Śaṅkara, Commentary on *Brahma-Sūtra* 4.1.13 and 3.3.26.

motivation, impulse or tendency to repeat a former action comes from the *karma-bīja* left in the mind by that action.¹¹ The experience resulting from an action at the same time leaves another type of impression in the mind known as *vāsanā* which later on produces the memory of (not the impulse to repeat) that experience.¹²

Motivation and memory—or rather, *karma-bīja* and *vāsanā* which give rise to them—are closely inter-linked. The rousal of the one rouses the other too. But it is important to know the distinction between the two. The memory that *vāsanā* produces consists chiefly of mental images and ideas, and is a more or less conscious process; whereas the impulse that *karma-bīja* produces is an unconscious drive. The memory of a cigarette produces the impulse to smoke in a smoker, but produces no such impulse in a non-smoker. This shows that memory and motivation are different processes.¹³

The following points regarding memory and motivation deserve special attention here: (1) Experience is the result not of *vāsanā* but of *karma-bīja*. Memory of cigarettes or even of smoking does not give one the experience, the joy, of smoking. For that joy one has to act, obey the impulse and smoke a real cigarette.

(2) Purity of mind cannot be attained by merely suppressing or repressing impure memories (or *vāsanās*). Simply thinking that we are pure does not make us pure, though it is better than thinking that we are impure. We must do pure, virtuous actions. Impurity lies not in the images and memories that rise in the mind but in

the impure impulses that are consciously or unconsciously connected with those images. Impure impulses are produced by impure actions, and can be checked only by good impulses produced by good actions.

(3) Meditation is chiefly concerned with memory. It deals mainly with images and ideas. The control of anger, anxiety and other wrong impulses is, strictly speaking, outside the sphere of meditation. They are to be dealt with *at other times* through virtuous actions and ways of living. Without a rich stock of good *samskāras* (acquired through virtuous actions) it is impossible to deal with the wrong impulses that intrude themselves into meditation. This shows that Karma Yoga is an indispensable adjunct to meditative life.

(4) Virtuous actions and ordinary meditation can only keep in check bad impulses but cannot destroy their roots. The roots, (that is, the *samskāras*) can be burnt up only with *prajñā*, the light of Atman, that shines forth during the advanced stages of meditation. The immediate goal of both Karma Yoga and meditation is the awakening of this inner light—an experience which Rāmānuja has termed *ātmāvalokana*.¹⁴ Most of the traditional teachers of Vedānta have held that Karma Yoga does not lead directly to the attainment of Brahman and *mukti*, whereas a few others including some modern teachers have held that it does. Rāmānuja has effected a compromise between these two views by showing that though Karma Yoga does not lead directly to the realization of the infinite Brahman, it does lead to the realization of the *pratyagātman*, the individual inner Self. This is one of the significant contributions of Rāmānuja to Vedāntic spirituality. Karma Yoga does not merely purify the mind, it

11. The sum total of all *karma-bījas* is called *karmāsaya*. Confer, Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtra* 2.12.

12. Prof. Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya has given the term *jñānāsaya* to the sum total of all *vāsanās*. Confer, his *Bhāratīya-manovidyā* (Calcutta: Nagendra Prajna-Mandir, 1972) p. xvii.

13. For the distinction between *karmāsaya* and *vāsanā* see *Bhojavṛtti* on *Yoga-sūtra* 4.8.

14. Confer, Rāmānuja, *Gītā-bhāṣya* 2.53; 6.1 and *passim*.

also gives rise to a definite spiritual experience: *ātmāvalokana* or the awakening of the inner Self. This point deserves the careful consideration of all sadhakas, especially those who give more importance to Karma Yoga.

(To be concluded)

ABUSES AND USES OF PRAYER

DR. BRUCE ALAN SOUTHWORTH

A colleague of mine is a Unitarian Universalist minister in New England and he lives in one of the outer suburbs of Boston. One of his parishoners serves in the Massachusetts State Senate and arranged for my colleague to offer a prayer at the beginning of the legislative day one morning last winter. After the prayer a member of the congregation, the state Senator, came up to him and said, 'Let's hope what you said will stay with us for at least a few minutes.' My colleague's reflection lingers in my mind: 'Perhaps, that's what a prayer is all about—not to change a lifetime, but a few minutes in the day's session with life (for those who choose to listen.)'

Prayer and its kindred spirits of meditation and contemplation in this ordinary, daily sense have a modest purpose: to assist us in small ways to discern more clearly—at least for a few minutes.

Howard Thurman, the great theologian, minister and student of the human spirit, has written extensively about the nature of prayer and one of his best books is titled *Disciplines of the Spirit*. In that book he tells about a tree in his back yard when he lived in Oberlin, Ohio. One day he noticed workmen digging a large hole in the street in front of his house, and as he watched, he discovered that a large section of sewer pipe was exposed; 'around it and encircling it was a thick network of roots that had found their way inside the pipe by penetrating the joints in many places. The tree

was more than four hundred yards to the other side of the house, but this did not matter to the roots.' As he puts it, 'They (the roots) were on the hunt for life.'

We too as living entities seek nourishment; we are on the hunt for life. We humans have a deep hunger for meaning, for clarity, and for transcendence. We have our own roots and tendrils deep within.

Prayer, as I am coming to understand it and to appreciate it in totally new ways, is a basic yearning for a higher, richer, and intenser life. It is the tapping of the deep well-springs of life and love, connecting us with the source of creativity and joy. Prayer is, to put it most simply, falling in love with life more deeply.

If we find ourselves experiencing a deep love of Life and thus a deep love for our neighbours and world around us, if we find this for only a few minutes at a time from day to day, that is a blessing and a worthy pursuit. But there is something more possible.

Prayer, or meditation or contemplation, the kindred disciplines of the spirit, and its gifts of perspective, peacefulness and prophecy can with cultivation have more than a few minutes' effect.

An Eastern story about a monk in the days of old tells of a pilgrim who asked the monk, 'What is Prayer?' The monk, and I can see the gentleman in my mind's eye, held out his hands and flames shot up from his fingers! 'That is prayer.'

he said. He was a soul on fire, and he could manifest that fact if he wished. To pray is to fall more deeply in love with life. To pray can lead us to become aflame with the divine energy or spark. To pray helps us clear away baggage which hinders the divine spark from burning brightly.

Most of the time I fear I have some kind of invisible gloves which cover my fingers. I am not at the point where I can take the gloves off at will, nor am I at the point, perhaps, where I would dare to live without the gloves. I feel like Lucy from the Peanuts comic strip who groans in frustration when Charlie Brown asks an innocent yet penetrating question. He begins cautiously saying, 'May I ask you a personal question, Lucy?' 'Why, of course,' she answers. 'I don't want to upset you,' he says; but she protests saying, 'Don't be silly Charlie Brown...Nothing you ask could possibly upset me!' He looks directly at her and asks, 'Do you pray before you go to bed or after you get up in the morning?' Lucy has no words, only a deep anguished cry.

Her response recognizes the heart's deep hunger and the roots within looking for nourishment, and neither she nor I have—nor, I suspect, most of us have—so deeply fallen in love with life that we can command divine sparks from our fingers at will. I should add quickly that we have in our midst—here and there—a few saints who have that glow, and live a life of service that speaks of the Life Abundant. Others of us are on the way. And, some of us have difficulty making the first step.

The abuses and uses of prayer is an endlessly fascinating topic to me. As with so many other traditional religious concepts, we Unitarian Universalists are apt to reinterpret the meaning of prayer, meditation and contemplation. Many of us abhor the idea of prayer; many embrace it; many simply do not know what to think about it.

The problem is a basic theological one. Susan B. Anthony in the last century was an ardent Unitarian who summarized the position of many in our own day when she said, 'I pray every single second of my life; not on my knees, but with my work. My prayer is to lift women to equality with man. Work and worship are one with me. I cannot imagine a God of the universe made happy by my getting down on my knees and calling him "great".' Prayer conjures up such patriarchal images of God for many. Some renounce God and pronounce their faith in humanity, and others in humility pronounce their faith in human capacity and *also* recognize creative powers beyond our human ones. Our congregation, if the results of several surveys over the last few years are representative, and I think they are, includes profound diversity of belief *and* disbelief in God. This diversity is a great strength in our church.

Ralph Waldo Emerson reported once about the minister in Concord, Massachusetts who one Sunday prayed for rain 'with great explicitness', to use Emerson's words. Indeed, on Monday there was a torrential downpour, and Emerson concludes, 'When I spoke of the speed with which his prayers were answered, the good man looked modest.' For many such intercessory prayer, which makes God's creation subject to human egotistic manipulation, is rather obnoxious.

Prayer has earned a deservedly bad name when we encounter such utterances as one by a Salvation Army officer in 1880 in England. Seven women soldiers in the Salvation Army were heading to America as missionaries, and the officer sent them off with these words of prayer: 'Lord, these ladies are going to America to preach the gospel. If they are fully given up to Thee, be with them and bless them and grant them success. But, if they are not faithful, drown them Lord, drown them.'

Some prayers are fanciful and in their imagery depict a deep love of Life and do not strike me as irreverent at all. This prayer offered by Little Ducks begins:

Give us a flood of water,
Let it remain tomorrow and always.
Give us plenty of little slugs
and other luscious things to eat.

But, it then transcends the private:

Protect all folk who quack
and everyone who knows how to swim.

It expresses basic need and it petitions, but basically it offers a wider, deeper perspective. The hopes expressed go beyond manipulation of the weather.

The abuses of prayer are in part theological when we petition for that which we have no right to petition—changes in weather, good grades in school, a better paying job, polite children, unblemished skin, winning at Lotto or whatever.

The idea of prayer as talking to God is an interesting one. Basically, it is anthropomorphic, and one study pointed out that this is the way twelve year olds understand prayer. My hope is that deeper more sustaining forms of falling in love with life can come into our lives. Prayer as talking to God (even if there were no God) at least suggests we are talking to ourselves and that's not necessarily bad. If we talk to ourselves and recall what we value most, we are moving in the right direction.

For some, prayer has a bad name because of its rote character. A church member the other day was telling me that she objected to the way the minister in another denomination had read a prayer at a wedding. He read the Lord's Prayer almost as fast as he could with as little apparent feeling as possible. Saying prayers which are devised in some formula has never made much sense to

me because of the lack of spontaneity, the lack of gut feeling, whether it is joy or anguish. If prayer is a yearning for deeper, intenser, richer living and if prayer attended to is a process of falling more deeply in love with Life, then my own clumsy experience tells me that it includes and often includes, anguished, painful cries of the heart—cries of confusion, fear, panic, anxiety. To fall in love with life we must meet the whole of Life, and I have always been struck by Thomas Merton's comment that prayer is the 'way we hold ourselves together' and the way we root ourselves 'to our own inner truth'.

The primal cries of anguish can lead to magical thinking. I remember more than one occasion when I have cried out childishly wanting God to fix something or another, usually at times of life and death and in a hospital setting. 'God, don't let it happen!' To him, to her, to me—whatever. I understand and have felt the pure panic and deep longing for release or salvation that has engendered such prayers. The emotions are honest; the theology is manipulative and arrogant.

Often accompanying such childish prayer is a degree of bargaining. 'God, if you spare me this...I'll do this or that in turn.' You know how it goes. Trade-offs. God, Let's make a deal!

Jesus gave us a better model at the Garden in Gethsemane. He said several wise things about prayer—one of them right before giving what is now called 'the Lord's prayer' when he said that we do better to pray in private than parade our piety in public. And, at Gethsemane, he displays a faithfulness to the Source of Life that still challenges me and prods me. It is one of the few stories in the Bible that has made complete, immediate personal sense to me.

You remember the situation. Jesus and his friends have entered Jerusalem. Tensions are high with the Roman authorities and

with the local Jewish establishment. He has cleansed the Temple; the Last Supper and Judas' betrayal await and no doubt, no doubt, Jesus was wondering what kind of mess he had gotten himself into and no doubt, no doubt, he had a troubled heart. He goes to Gethsemane to pray; his friends who come along are to stay awake and keep their eyes open; three times they fall asleep.

The elements of significant prayer are these: confession, acceptance, and thanksgiving. With these a strength to go on may emerge. Jesus began with a word of love and Thanksgiving as he addressed God, 'Abba, Daddy...dearest God, you who are like a parent to me.' Then the cry from the heart. 'Don't allow this to happen. Take this cup from me.' Here is confession of weakness, of being human and limited. But then his heart's cry changes. He knows better. His prayer escapes that of the twelve year old—and manipulation. He knows in his deepest heart that he cannot command the future. He can only be a co-creator of it and that he is responsible for his actions and must suffer the consequences of the Truth of his life: 'Not what I want, but what must be I accept.' Three times he confesses his fear, accepts his situation all in the context of Thanksgiving and praise for the giftedness of Life. Three times he repeats it; he finds strength—the divine spark surging in him, glowing aflame again.

I can command some of the world around me, I can command some of my thoughts and emotions and actions and I can make a difference here and there. We all can. Moments of deep prayer, remind me that within our human frames is a deeper well-spring of creativity, a divine spark we humans share; we can tap it and gain strength and even a sense of peace.

Confession, acceptance, thanksgiving... strength. You want to remember those four elements. Think of CATS—confession,

acceptance, thanksgiving, strength. If that seems a little cute, I apologize, but it might be helpful.

I do believe that we can gain strength from prayer, but I also caution that it is not an automatic process. Comfort does not necessarily come just because we ask for it. It is a growing process and requires a little discipline. I shall say a bit more about that in a moment.

Prayer is abusive which seeks to manipulate the divine or Nature rather than to help create a strengthgiving centre.

There is great wisdom in the Russian proverb which says, 'Pray without ceasing, and row like crazy for the shore.' Frank Leahy, who once coached the Notre Dame football team understood the abuses of prayer when he responded to a question about whether the prayers of the nuns helped his team. He thought for a moment and answered: 'Their prayers work better when my players are big!' He knew that like so much in life the players and not the manipulative prayers make the difference. But, honest prayers, I believe, help us keep perspective.

I do want to say one more thing about the way prayer is being trivialized in our society. Our President, Ronald Reagan, along with some myopic clergy and politicians, believe we should have voluntary prayer in the public schools. In addition, such prayer has wide public support. Last June I had the occasion to discuss this matter with the head of the Moral Majority in New Jersey on a television show on Channel 11. It was a fascinating experience.

Proponents of voluntary prayer in the public schools believe that little children are being deprived of their free exercise of religion by not being allowed to say a voluntary prayer in school. They fear what they call the religion of secular humanism. Admittedly, school is a socialization experience and transmits the values

of our Western democratic, capitalistic, narcissistic Judeo-Christian society, but it is empty rhetoric to describe this as the religion of secular humanism. Their fears about the society at large are well-placed because so little seems to be going well with massive unemployment, increasing crime, instability in family life, waning church influence, massive military buildups and on and on it goes.

My responses to this view can be summarized simply. Voluntary prayer in public schools is not voluntary, but coercive because of the tremendous influences of peer pressure. Voluntary prayer in public schools violates the separation of church and state and contrary to the ill-informed claims of those like Jerry Falwell, the so-called 'Founding Fathers' meant exactly what they said when writing the First Amendment. They knew the only way to guarantee freedom of religion was to prohibit government sponsorship of it in any form; they knew enough not to trust one another so they put it in the Constitution.

Voluntary prayer in public schools is not only coercive, but also no matter what prayer is devised it is likely to be offensive to some in our pluralistic society. Christians like to invoke the name of Jesus Christ. Jews do not. Atheists abound. Other religious groups have their own ritual formulations. Many of you probably saw the article in the newspaper about two months ago that explained why the Moral Majority did not open its meetings with prayer. Their spokesperson said that it would be too divisive and inappropriate for a political action committee to do that. And, so it would be similarly too divisive for a school to have coercive, voluntary prayer.

Finally, what irks me about the whole thing is that it makes a mockery of prayer. No wonder prayer has a bad name. In such a context prayer is trivialized. The

idea that some innocuous formulation could be devised that would not offend anyone and that any such innocuous formula could speak also of deep human hope in a way that anchors anyone to life—that such a rote exercise could be meaningful—is preposterous. It treats prayer as a decoration. It is a product of American pragmatism that is simply misguided and foolish, as well as offensive and essentially violating the spirit of prayer.

Religion should be taught at home. Religion should be strengthened at church, not in public schools.

Russell Baker captured my feelings well when he wrote: 'I have nothing against children praying, but I can't understand why Congress is so determined to have them do their praying in school. As a city man, I think it would be much better—if Congress wants to make children pray—to make them pray on buses and subways to and from school...This would make the ride to work a lot quieter for city people and give you a chance to read the newspaper in peace. As a matter of fact, if Congress wants to compel prayer, I'd favour extending it to adults. Why limit spiritual refreshment to school children?' So much for abuses!

Prayer has uses such as spiritual refreshment. We do need to build our personal pagodas as well as celebrate life in worship. The seductions of metropolitan living, the pressures of jobs, trying to make ends meet, the dilemma of finding time for work, family, friends—all militate against finding time for oneself. A cycle of activity and contemplation, of renewal and action is a healthy one. I know it requires some discipline to take time for important matters—matters like being honest with oneself, forgiving oneself, getting priorities straight, acknowledging inner contradictions, and moving beyond them. That is what prayer is about, and perhaps reluctance to pray or meditate or to attend to our inner voice

arises from the fear of acknowledging our shortcomings and fear we cannot forgive ourselves.

Prayer has great use in spiritual refreshment from the busyness of the world and the busyness of our inner lives.

Prayer can also help us keep from being changed by the world. A cynic, one has given up hope, one who no longer loves the world and only criticizes it, has allowed the world to change him or her. I know of a person who attends to the life of the spirit because he refuses to be changed by the world's limitations; he loves life and seeks to love it more deeply, with richness, intensity and clarity.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once wrote: 'Only through inner spiritual transformation do we gain the strength to fight vigorously the evils of the world in a humble and loving spirit.'

Langston Hughes gave voice to a prime use of prayer as I conceive it. The poem is called *Final Curve*:

When you turn the corner
And you run into *yourself*
Then you know that you have turned
All the corners that are left.

Prayer then has its uses: self-knowledge, spiritual refreshment, transformation, dialectic preparation for active service and love in the world. Our prayers do not necessarily change God, Nature, History or the stars above. But prayer does seem to change us—those who take time to turn the corner. Contemplation, meditation, spiritual disciplines fan the spark within us that is human compassion and creativity. These are cultivated habits. We are changed and transformed. Our consciousness and attitudes and behaviour change.

Not only might we ourselves be changed for the good, more appreciative of the mystery and grandeur of the world, more aware of our own shortcomings, more accepting of the world and stronger from

our encounters, but we thus also change the world around us; we change at least a few minutes of the day.

Some perhaps already have habits of prayer or disciplines of the spirit that help them fall more deeply in love with life and its giftedness. Others may have given all that up with their childhood religion and be more than a little cautious about prayer in a naturalistic context.

I have been one of the cautious ones about prayer and spiritual discipline. The question where to begin is the serious one, and I think that I began with poetry, but perhaps even before that with silence.

Initiating a personal, private discipline of silence, of taking ten minutes a day in as quiet a place as possible, is a sound way to begin. In silence, the still small voice can become audible. I could talk about silence...for hours. I won't. Again, even finding ten minutes a day requires discipline, but it is a good start.

Vocal prayer I commend for its many uses, and I suggest we try to include in it the *confession* of our heart's deepest feelings (both joys and sorrows), an effort to be *accepting* of the world's challenges as opportunities, a word of *thanksgiving* and praise as honestly as we can manage. Attunement requires attention to it, and strength and hope may flow.

Childish habits of prayer do us no good. But childish rejection of all prayer, because childish prayer is all we know about, does us no good. I am learning that much.

Personal disciplines of the spirit—prayer, meditation, journal keeping, contemplation, devotional reading, silence involve a growing process of loving life more deeply. It issues in loving the world so deeply we cannot leave the world alone and must confront its injustices. It throws us back into the world and does not remove us from it.

Disciplines of the spirit like prayer change us at least for a few minutes, and

we change the world. With some attention, we can learn to get the gloves off our hands and with some attention we might become souls aflame like the elder with fingers on fire.

As the ancient sage Irenaeus proclaimed,

“The glory of God is a human being fully alive!”

Prayer does not change things.
Prayer changes people and
People change things.

GOPALA BHATTA: A VRINDAVANA GOSVAMIN

PROF. RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

Gopāla Bhaṭṭa is one of the six Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins who are held in high veneration by the followers of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. Nothing much can be said about his ancestry and life history, for almost all the authoritative texts of the sect are inexplicably silent on this Gosvāmin, and the later biographers of Caitanya give conflicting accounts of his life and works. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, who in his magnum opus, *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā, Chapter I) clearly mentions Gopāla Bhaṭṭa as one of his *śikṣā-gurus*. He had an intimate knowledge of Sri Gopāla Bhaṭṭa during the last phase of his life at Vṛndāvana. But, for some mysterious reasons, Kavirāja Gosvāmin has not cared to offer any detailed account of the life of this venerable Vaiṣṇava saint, though has devoted a considerable portion of his work to discussing the activities and achievements of other Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins and Vaiṣṇava saints and savants. It is also worth remembering that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja first used the expression ‘Six Gosvāmins’ specifically mentioning the names of all the six pious and scholarly Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana.¹

Murāri Gupta, an older contemporary, a co-student and also a disciple of Srī

Caitanya, in his Sanskrit work *Srīkṛṣṇa-Caitanya-Caritāmṛtam* has narrated that during his south Indian pilgrimage, Caitanya spent four months at the residence of a devout Sri Vaiṣṇavite brahmin named Trimalla Bhaṭṭa who held Caitanya in high esteem. His son Gopāla Bhaṭṭa was then a young lad. He turned into a Bhakta by the magic touch of Caitanya’s highly fascinating personality. Murāri Gupta, however, has not proceeded more in his narrative. Kavi-Karṇa-pūra (Paramānanda Sen) in his Sanskrit poem on Caitanya entitled *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* has presented almost a similar account, and no other details have been given regarding the trio, Venkata, Prabodhānanda and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. *Caitanya Candrodaya*, a Sanskrit drama on Caitanya by the same author, is totally silent about this incident. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has made matters more confusing by speaking separately in the same work, *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, of two Bhaṭṭas named Trimalla and Venkata both of them being described as Srīvaiṣṇavas. In chapter 1 of Madhya-līlā, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja narrates Caitanya’s meeting Trimalla Bhaṭṭa, a pious south Indian brahmin, during his pilgrimage in south India. On being requested by Trimalla, Caitanya stayed at his residence in Srirangam for the four months of rainy season. Caitanya, as the narrative goes, was pleased with the great hospitality and

1. The names of six Gosvāmins are Sanātana, Rūpa, Jiva, Raghunātha-dāsa, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa.

sincere devotion of the Bhaṭṭas, and spent his days there in chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy name and in religious discourses. His very presence at Srirangam, Kavirāja Gosvāmin informs us, brought about a great religious upheaval in the adjoining locality and the people were swayed by his devotional fervour. The ninth chapter of the same work (*Madhya-hīlā*) also contains a fairly elaborate account which runs as follows. During his south Indian pilgrimage Caitanya spent four months at the house of Venkata Bhaṭṭa in Srirangam. Venkata was a worshipper of Lakṣmi and Nārāyaṇa and belonged to the Srīvaiṣṇava sect. Caitanya convincingly impressed upon him the superiority of Śrīkṛṣṇa worship, though assuring at the same time that the Supreme Deity assumes the form which a devotee wishes to visualize. However, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has not mentioned even once the name of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa in this connection, nor has he cared to clarify whether there existed any relation between these two Bhaṭṭas (Trimalla and Venkata) referred to above.

Narahari Chakravartin in his *Bhakti-Ratnākara* informs us that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa was the son of Venkata, a pious south Indian Brahmin belonging to the Srīvaiṣṇava sect. He has not, however, mentioned the exact place where Venkata lived. Venkata's elder brother, according to Narahari, was Trimalla and younger brother was Prabodhānanda. All of them, including young Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, developed devotion for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship by the grace of Caitanya. Caitanya further directed Gopāla Bhaṭṭa to meet Rūpa and Sanātana at Vṛndāvana later on for spiritual guidance. This seems to be somewhat anomalous, for Caitanya met Rūpa and Sanātana for the first time at Rāmakeli after his return from his south Indian pilgrimage. How could he advise Gopāla Bhaṭṭa to see Sanātana and Rūpa at Vṛndāvana when he himself had not met them till then? The

later biographies of Caitanya, such as *Prema-Vilāsa* of Nityānanda-dāsa and *Anurāga-valli* of Manohara-dāsa generally conform to Narahari's description.

From these recorded accounts all that we can be sure of is that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa hailed from a South Indian Brahmin family belonging to the Vaiṣṇava tradition. One main reason for the disagreement among the vaiṣṇava scholars as regards his ancestry and personal history is that none of Caitanya's trusted disciples accompanied him during his South Indian pilgrimage. The biographers of Caitanya had therefore to depend much on hearsay and other unconfirmed reports. It is also interesting to note that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, at the commencement of his own work *Haribhakti-vilāsa*, has described himself as the disciple of Prabodhānanda without mentioning anything more about this teacher, and he is also silent about his own parentage. His unusual silence in this matter might have been motivated by his complete detachment from his premonastic days.

Evidently, it is not an easy task to reconstruct Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's life on the basis of the meagre information available and the conflicting legends. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, it is held, was born in a village named Velagundi on the bank of the river Kāveri not far off Srirangam in Saka 1422 (1500 A.D.).² The date and place of his birth as recorded in the *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna* (dictionary) edited by Śrī Haridāsa Dās, is however, not beyond doubt. In the said work again Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has been described as the son of Venkata Bhaṭṭa. Nothing definite can be said about his boyhood days, his spiritual practices and attainments. His reported meeting with Caitanya at his ancestral residence in South India and subsequent meeting at Puri along with his parents,

2. *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna*. Edited by Śrī Haridāsa Dās. 1st Edition Navadvīp, p. 1208.

uncles and aunts, as narrated by Manohara-dāsa in his *Anurāga-Valli*, are all clouded in mystery, notwithstanding laborious research conducted by some eminent scholars in this matter. We are equally in the dark as to when Gopāla Bhaṭṭa came to settle down permanently at Vṛndāvana and who had actually initiated him into Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship. However, this much appears to be certain that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa used to perform the rite of initiation (*dikṣa*) of the devotees eager to embrace the Vaiṣṇava faith, for both Sanātana and Rūpa considered themselves lowered in status because of their contact with and service under a Muslim king. Śrīnivāsācārya was one of his initiated disciples who served him devotedly so long Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmin stayed at Vṛndāvana. From the available records, it can be reasonably assumed that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa had the pious company of great Vaiṣṇava saints and savants like Sanātana, Rūpa and Raghunātha-dāsa during his Vṛndāvana days. He held them in the highest esteem. In the second opening verse of his *Haribhakti-vilāsa* he has distinctly stated that the work has been compiled for the satisfaction of Raghunātha-dāsa, Rūpa and Sanātana. Jīva Gosvāmin might have been alive at that time and in the height of glory and eminence. It is believed that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa passed away in Saka 1507 (1585 A.D.) and, if the reliability of his account is found acceptable, he seems to have enjoyed a pretty long life of 85 years.³

Like his ancestry and other antecedents, a great deal of confusion persists as regards his principal work *Haribhakti-vilāsa*. It is a voluminous compilation recognized to be the most authoritative ceremonial directory of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism in which the social and religious practices of the sect are codified in meticulous details. However, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's authorship of this work

is itself a matter of great controversy. In the list of Sanātana's works given by Jīva Gosvāmin, a close associate and nephew of Sanātana, at the end of *Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇi*, the authorship of the said work has been unequivocally attributed to Sanātana. This is also confided by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja.⁴ According to him, Caitanya himself taught Sanātana the rudiments of Vaiṣṇava *Smṛti* and instructed him to codify them in a systematic work within the scheme outlined by him. Sanātana simply acted in deference to the wishes of the Master and compiled this massive text.⁵ In the Bengali *Viśvakaśa* (encyclopaedia) also *Haribhakti-vilāsa* has been included in the list of Sanātana's work.⁶ We cannot reasonably set aside these testimonies. In *Bhakti-ratnākara*, however, it has been made out that Sanātana was heavily preoccupied with other compositions and so he entrusted Gopāla Bhaṭṭa with the responsibility of authoring a work on Vaiṣṇava rites within the conceptual framework of Caitanyaism. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa carried out the behest of the elder Gosvāmin by writing a book entitled *Laghu Haribhakti-vilāsa*, which is still available at the Sri Govinda Library in Jaipur. Later on, Sanātana produced an improved version of it (along with a Sanskrit commentary named *Dīgdarśaṇi*) and this is what we have as *Haribhakti-vilāsa* in its present form. But, for some unknown reasons, so it is said, Sanātana passed his own composition in the name of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. However, *Laghu Haribhakti-vilāsa* has been ascribed to Rūpa Gosvāmin in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1865, (p. 140), but as the list given there contains numerous wrong ascriptions, not much reliance can be placed on the

4. *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 1.

5. *ibid.* Chapter 24.

6. *Viśvakosa*. Edited by Nagendra Nath Basu (Calcutta 1317 B.S.) Vol. 21. p. 134.

3. *ibid.*

entry. Monohara-dāsa, on the other hand, presents a different story. He believes that Sanātana wrote the work himself but Gopāla Bhaṭṭa was instrumental in adding illustrative passages culled from Purānas, Tantras and other scriptures.

But in the text of *Haribhakti-vilāsa* itself, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's authorship has been unambiguously declared and there is nothing to show that the opening verses are spurious. Further, it has been noticed that in *Haribhakti-vilāsa* the worship of Lakṣmi-Nārāyaṇa has been prescribed but the author has not shown much interest in the cults of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. This lends support to the assumption that this work might have been composed by one who had emotional involvement in Srīvaiṣṇavism, though not overtly. Dr. S. K. De, an eminent modern authority on Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, made an in-depth study of this controversial issue and finally arrived at the following conclusion. 'It seems probable, therefore, that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, as stated in the work itself, was the actual author of the *Haribhakti-vilāsa* but the attribution to Sanātana might have arisen from a kind of close collaboration, which will remain undetermined, between this doyen of Vaiṣṇava sāstra and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, in making this voluminous compilation.'⁷ Dr. Radhagovinda Nath, another erudite Vaiṣṇava scholar, lends his support to this view, adding that Sanātana wrote a commentary on this work.⁸

The entire body of the sacramental and devotional practices of the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism has been codified in this most outstanding *Smṛti* work. *Haribhakti-vilāsa* aims at an exegesis of the obligatory

and occasional rites and ceremonies to be observed by each and every follower of the faith. Each *vidhi* or injunction included in the work is fortified by profuse citations from the Purānas, Samhitās, Tantras and other scriptures and the religious treatises of the sect. This eloquently speaks for the author's erudition in Vaiṣṇava devotional literature in general and in Purānic literature in particular. It has been accepted as the most dependable guide to the cultivation of *vaidhī* or *sādhanā-bhakti*, a stepping stone to the attainment of *Prema-bhakti*—the unconditional supreme love for God. It is well known that Caitanyaism in its highest form does not attach much importance to the performance of various religious practices and ceremonies or to the observance of various religious injunctions. On the contrary, it lays great, if not exclusive, emphasis on an inner and deeply mystical way of realization. *Prema-bhakti*—the state of intense devotional love for the Lord, has been set forth to be the ideal of a Vaiṣṇava spiritual aspirant. However, Bengal Vaiṣṇavism has not altogether dispensed with the necessity, or minimised the importance, of *vaidhī bhakti* which depends on devotional acts performed in accordance with scriptural injunctions. Very often a distinction is made between moral injunctions and religious injunctions, but no such hard and fast distinction is contemplated by the saints of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism for, according to them, religious life presupposes a disciplined moral life. Moral training is an essential prerequisite for the purification of mind and body, and only through the purification of mind and body can man attain the highest devotional attitude. When this highest devotional attitude is realized, outward ritualism and ceremonial performances drop away of their own accord. But till that apex state is realized, the observance of universally accepted principles of right living in the light of religio-ethical concepts has

7. Dr. S. K. De, *Early History of Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal*. (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1961), p. 143.

8. R. G. Nath, 'A Survey of Caitanya Movement' in the *Cultural Heritage of India*. (Calcutta: The R. K. Mission Institute of Culture 1975), Vol. 4, p. 189.

paramount importance. The elaborate account of ritualism given in the *Haribhakti-vilāsa* is meant for those who are still in need of purification of mind and body, who of course constitute the less enlightened and larger mass of devoted followers.

It is not easy to give even a brief summary of the contents of this massive compendium running into twenty *vilāsas* or chapters, nor is this essential for our present purpose.⁹ Apart from the description of rituals and sacred formulas and other details connected with different devotional acts which a devout Vaiṣṇava is expected to perform, this extensive work does not contain anything which merits intensive metaphysical analysis. Its importance as the most authoritative text of Vaiṣṇava *Smṛti* might be great to the faithful followers of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism but its emotional and devotional appeal to a general religious mind is not likely to be equally great. However, some interesting features, which indicate that the work departs in many details from the accepted views of the sect, deserve our attention.

To begin with, the work carries a large number of quotations from the Tantras in addition to the Purāṇas and other religious scriptures. This testifies to the fact that the Tantras, which seemingly have little relation to Vaiṣṇavism, exerted considerable influence on this work. It contains

9. For details see chapter VI (Pp. 408-520) of Dr. S. K. De's outstanding treatise *The Early History of Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal* where a lucid and comprehensive summary of the text has been given.

salutations to Caitanya at the commencement of each of its twenty chapters (called *vilāsas*) though the cultic worship of Caitanya, which turned out to be a remarkable feature of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism later years, has not been recognized by the author. This confirms the supposition that the early Vr̥ndāvana Gosvāmins did not wholeheartedly approve the cult of Caitanya worship, as the leading figures of the Navadvip circle did. Again, while describing the various religious festivals connected with the supreme deity, Kṛṣṇa, in which a Vaiṣṇava takes keen interest, the author has, for some mysterious reasons, excluded Rāsa-yātrā, the most important Vaiṣṇava festival, though he has included Śivarātri, a festival with which Vaiṣṇavas have no apparent devotional relation. Kṛṣṇa is described in the work as *caturbhujā cakradhara* (four-armed and holding the discus) instead of as *dvibhujā muralidhara* (two-armed flute player) of Vr̥ndāvana. Again, directions for the construction of the image of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are not to be found in this work, though clear directions have been given for that of Lakṣmi and Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini and many others. A careful perusal of the text gives the impression that our author has not accepted the Rādhā cult and also the worship of the joint form Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, which is another distinctive feature of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. Strictly speaking, *Haribhakti-vilāsa* has not scrupulously adhered to the familiar orthodox views of the sect; rather, it represents the views of an outstanding scholar who had some lingering Sr̥vaiṣṇava leanings.

THE YOGA OF SUFFERING

DR. VINITA WANCHOO

Introduction

From time out of mind men have pondered the problem of suffering. But it was the great Buddha who gave *duḥkha*, suffering, a metaphysical status and built a philosophy of life upon it. As is well known, this philosophy is based on the four Noble Truths: that there is existence of *duḥkha*, that there is an origin or cause of *duḥkha*, that there is the cessation of *duḥkha*, that there is a path leading to the cessation of *duḥkha*. As the way to the cessation of sorrow he propounded the *ārya aṣṭāṅgika mārga* (Eightfold Noble Path) consisting of right faith, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The means he employed to counteract the phenomenon of suffering was other than the phenomenon he wanted to bring to an end for ever. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's teachings contain the analogy of using a second thorn to remove the first thorn which has pricked one's flesh and then throwing away both. According to the *Gīta*, the *kauśala* or special skill lies in using the unavoidable factor of karma in such a way as to end it. Karma done with desire keeps the *jīva* (embodied soul) revolving in *samsāra*, the cycle of birth-death, but when it is done without attachment becomes an instrument of liberation and its own cancellation. This is the basic principle of Karma-Yoga. Another instance of self-cancellation is the case of Tāntrika sādhanā, the underlying principle of which is that poison in the form of sense pleasure can be counteracted by poison itself, if used in the right quantity and right way through Yogic discipline and sublimation.

Similarly, suffering may be counteracted and cancelled through suffering itself. All

that is necessary is to change one's attitude towards suffering and its application in one's life. Through this *kauśala*, skill, one can attain fulfilment of not only *trivarga*, namely, *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* (the three mundane ends of morality, wealth and pleasure) but even the summum bonum, namely, *parama-puruṣārtha* or *mokṣa* (the highest good or liberation). Suffering can be metaphysically (spiritually) universalized and intensified to the highest degree to negate itself in all the three orders of time: past, present and future. Suffering when accepted and undergone willingly and voluntarily, in a spiritual attitude for the sake of salvation, liberates the individual as well as mankind from all lesser mundane sufferings. Surely the discipline can be termed a Yoga, leading, as it does, to the transcendence of suffering, breaking the bonds of suffering eternally, and culminating in the experience of supreme peace. We may call it *duḥkha-Yoga*, the Yoga of Suffering.

The goal of this sādhanā

The philosophy of this sādhanā may be expounded in the context of Vedānta and its principal presuppositions. In Advaita Vedānta the highest goal of life is the experience of non-dual Reality or oneness of the individual Atman with the Atman of the whole universe known as Brahman. Its real nature of Reality is *Saccidananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). This unitive experience is attained through any of the four traditional Yogas: Jñāna, Bhakti, Dhyāna and Karma. Similarly the goal of *duḥkha-yoga* is the realization of Atman-Brahman unity. It is not something to be merely imagined, perceived or conceived intellectually, but a matter of direct experience (*aparokṣa anubhūti*), more real and

permanent than any experience of the world. Our attempt here is to prove that the means of ending the *duḥkha* of *saṁsāra* is *duḥkha* itself, and that through the *duḥkha-yoga* also the highest goal of *mukti* or *nirvāṇa* can be attained.

Possibility of such a sādhana

Duḥkha, suffering, is the common fate of mankind and all living beings, but the point to understand is its possibility of being utilized as a *Sādhana*. There is a vast distance between *duḥkha* as fact and *duḥkha* as yoga, and, until this is grasped, hardly anyone will accept *duḥkha* voluntarily as the instrument of achieving the highest goal of human life.

The question, then, is, can there be any such thing as a suffering-yoga? The classical philosophy of *Sādhana* propounds *Jñāna-yoga*, *Karma-yoga*, *Bhakti-yoga*, *Rāja-yoga* and other yogas. Anyone or all of these Yogas may or may not be practised, but spiritual sublimation of suffering itself can be made a major means of union with Reality.

Basis in experience. Suffering is universally regarded by mankind as a negative factor of life. The Aristotelian axiom is that all men desire happiness; since unhappiness is its opposite, it has a negative quality. The world over, pleasure is treated as a plus quantity for which men have a natural bent, and pain as a minus quantity which human nature avoids. Thomas Hobbes defined pleasure as the 'toward' movement of the body and pain as the 'fromward' movement of the body in relation to an object. The state of liberation, *mukti*, is defined by Indian philosophy as: *ātyantika duḥkha nivṛtti parama sukha prāptisca* (total cessation of suffering and obtainment of supreme happiness). Therefore, suffering is something that has to be got rid of absolutely. But there is no reason why, with a certain

change of perspective, this negative experience of man cannot be utilized in a positive way, to bring about its own end.

Basis in human nature. Indian philosophy of *sādhana* is most comprehensive as it takes into account all of human nature and capacities, and excludes none. Thus the cognitive, conative, or affective faculties or the psychic mechanism itself—any element of man's mind can be utilized for the attainment of union with the Absolute, depending upon the innate tendency and bent of mind (*saṁskāras* and *svabhāva*) of the *Sādhaka*. The *Purāṇas* tell the story of a soul which attained liberation through enmity, anger, hatred. In three successive births as *Hiraṇyakaśipu*, *Rāvaṇa* and *Kamsa*, that soul lived as the greatest enemy of God and was slain by the incarnate God's own hands. Though the emphasis in this *Paurāṇic* story is on the power of grace of God in liberating that *jīva*, yet it may be interpreted as its choice between the longer path of love-friendship-devotion and the shorter path of hate. Similarly when *Jarāsandha* was killed by *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, he was also liberated. In both cases their whole-hearted, unbroken hatred of God meant uninterrupted contemplation of and communion with the object of hate. What was needed was total concentration on this object of anger, hatred, jealousy or revenge, to the exclusion of all else from consciousness. Yoga or union arises from hundred per cent *ekāgratā* or one-pointed concentration on an object to the point where difference of subject and object disappears.

Psychologically speaking, it is immaterial whether concentration is inspired by negative feelings and thoughts or by positive ones. Why should only gentler and softer emotions be utilized by man and not the harsher emotions? If a man has the latter *svabhāva* what is he to do? When *Sri Kṛṣṇa* asked the serpent *Kāhya* why he gave only venom to others, his

reply was significant, 'You did not put elixir (*amṛta*) into my constitution but only poison (*viṣa*), and I am only using the nature you have given me.' Changing one's nature through evolution involving rebirth and formation of new *samskāras*, is too long a process. Is not a speedier process possible? Of course, one way is that of instantaneous conversion and the giving up of wrong habits under traumatic experiences or the influence of a striking personality or event. But this is a rare occurrence which is actually caused by the fructification of previous karmas and latent *samskāras*, and is not really instantaneous.

The point to be made is the utilization of hatred etc. as a *Sādhana* by turning them towards their object, God. It is the negative, destructive and divisive character of these emotions that is bad or vicious. Freed from this nature, these emotions could play a constructive role. For instance, anger becomes the spirit of righteous indignation against injustice, exploitation, inequity and tyranny. The basic precept of Mahatma Gandhi's practice of non-violence was that one should hate sin but not the sinner. By the transmutation of anger etc. from the will to injure and destroy into the will to remove obstacle on the spiritual path, God may be realized, provided there is so much sincerity and intensity as to lead to the exclusion of all other thoughts, emotions and volitions.

It may be granted that this is a dangerous doctrine, as the chances of misapplication and misunderstanding are much greater here than in the path of love and devotion or any of the orthodox methods. However, this theory of spiritual discipline might be examined in order to rebut the view of some Western psychologists which attributes the mental-physical symptoms of spiritual experiences to abnormal mental states. Similarity of psycho-physical symptoms produced by abnormal and supernormal states is super-

ficial. The distinguishing marks of the two conditions are fundamental and not difficult to discover.

Universal nature of this Yoga

Since the capacity for suffering is universal, the Yoga of Suffering is open to all, but few choose this difficult path. The Christian belief is that some are chosen by God for suffering and His will cannot be questioned. The explanation of Vedānta would be that those who adopt the *duḥkha-mārga* are so constituted, because of their inherited *samskāras* fitting them for it, and not because of God's arbitrary will. Be the case as it may, the point to note is that suffering can be and has been transformed in personal life, human society and history, from loss and negativity to gain and positivity, from failure in the material world to success in the spiritual world.

The common argument used in moralization that good comes out of evil may sound hackneyed but is nevertheless true. Phrases like 'a blessing in disguise', 'the healing quality of surgeon's knife', etc. are different expressions of this argument. Pain, evil, loss have served as preludes to refinement of character, as occasions to learn great lessons in life, occasions for more solid and positive gains. If this much is conceded in the mundane sphere, why should not this be extended to the super-mundane sphere? A similar process at spiritual level may transmute suffering from minus to plus quantity, and this unavoidable feature of life in *samsāra*, which everyone bears or undergoes under compulsion, can become a *Sādhana* by the change of its meaning and nature.

Putting it in the philosophical terminology of Vedānta, one can examine the role of suffering in both *pravṛtti mārga* (path of enjoyment) and *nivṛtti mārga* (path of renunciation). In the first path one's interest gravitates towards the world and

the pursuit of the *trivarga* [the ends of *artha* (wealth), *dharma* (morality), *kāma* (pleasure)]. A person treading this path may meet *duḥkha* in a negative way, that is, as only an evil to be removed as soon as possible, but the results he gets will also be only negative. He learns nothing from *duḥkha* and, instead of coming out of this fiery ordeal a spiritually better person, he becomes more bitter, angry, unkind and revengeful. Or he may meet *duḥkha* in a positive way, that is, he may regard suffering as the fruit of his own karma, to be borne in a spirit of resignation arising from the acceptance of divine justice. He now gets positive results; he cancels the evil fruits of evil deeds and becomes kinder and more understanding and his faith grows.

What about the person who treads the path of *nivṛtti*, whose outlook gravitates away from the world and who is pursuing the goal of *paramārtha* or *mokṣa* (liberation)? He meets suffering only in the positive way, as something to be borne with the same equanimity of spirit with which he accepts its opposite experience of pleasure. He looks upon every experience as God's gift, given out of compassion, given to help others to get rid of their burden of suffering, which is the true service of God. And for him the result is a positive realization of his Chosen Deity or the non-dual experience of Brahman, the Absolute underlying or permeating this universe of appearances.

Not to avoid the experience of suffering but to accept it calmly, conversion of suffering into a spiritual technique, and realization of the Supreme Self by transcending suffering—these constitute what we call the Yoga of Suffering. That was what Christ did on the cross and Mahatma Gandhi did in the political field. The path to God shown by Jesus is the *Sādhana* of love of God combined with suffering for the salvation of mankind. Unlike tradi-

tional Bhakti which is the way of love and worship of the Most High and Beautiful, and hence strewn with flowers, the special feature of Suffering-Yoga is that it is the way of thorns. But flowers and thorns are often found conjoined in life; there is no rose without a thorn. Bhakti without suffering or suffering without Bhakti are both abstract methods. And, in fact, the history of *Bhakti-mārga* is replete with examples of how the devotees of God have had to suffer for their faith. So, Jesus' was the concrete way of wearing both the flowers (Bhakti) and the crown of thorns (suffering). He took upon himself the role of the sacrificial lamb, as an atonement for the sins of mankind. By taking upon himself the burden of the world's sin (although he was himself sinless) out of love for God and man and undergoing the world's suffering a million times intensified on the cross, he cancelled universal sin and consequent sorrow and grief for ever, and is therefore called the Redeemer.

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi taught and practised the method of self-suffering for the sake of Truth to destroy collective suffering caused by injustice, oppression, exploitation and tyranny in society by changing the hearts of evil-doers. *Satyāgraha* is the soul-force (*ātma-bala*) which spiritualizes him who practises it as well as all others who feel its effects. One of its primary conditions is to undergo suffering oneself for the sake of others. In fact, it is a path of suffering for the realization of God in the form of Truth.

Axioms of this sādhana

The first fundamental principle of this yoga is the attitude or spirit of welcoming suffering as the only or primary condition of spiritual growth or evolution through learning and experience. There is indifference towards happiness which is universally desired by all creatures (except in the sense

of *ātmānanda* or the bliss of one's higher Self) because it is an obstacle to wisdom (Jñāna), diverting, as it does, attention towards enjoyments. Human birth is a precious gift and, to avoid wasting this life in mere enjoyment, one should be ready to face suffering with equanimity if not with eagerness. Vedānta Philosophy starts with the axiomatic assumption that all men seek happiness. But experience proves that all happiness, whether coming from the outer world of objects and beings or from the inner world of feelings and thoughts, is impermanent. The wise man therefore neither seeks nor remains contented with lower forms of happiness, but aspires to attain super-mundane and eternal happiness which is of the nature of supreme peace beyond both sorrow and pleasure. The true aspirant must be willing to give up the pursuit of lesser, ephemeral happiness and accept its opposite experience, namely, sorrow, in order to understand the deeper meaning of life. Development in both mundane and spiritual spheres must be based on the foundation of sorrow-suffering. One who does not suffer learns nothing about the meaning of existence; only when he suffers does he begin to rise slowly beyond the mere surface appearance of things, to the hidden reality. According to William James, the pessimistic outlook is truer than the optimistic one—the pessimism of the 'twice-born' nature is a deeper and more comprehensive attitude of life than the optimism of the 'once-born' nature. So suffering is not to be shunned as an enemy but to be welcomed as a friend, leading the Sādhaka to the highest good (*niḥṣreyas*).

The second principle of this Sādhana, which may be considered a logical corollary of the first, is the conscious cultivation by the sādhanaka of the attitude of making suffering a gain—not to allow any suffering to be totally negative. It is converted from negative to positive quantity when treated

as an experience having some metaphysical truth hidden in it, and hence adding to Jñāna. Putting it in theistic terms, one sees the will of God in this as in all other experiences. In Vedāntic terminology, it promotes *vairāgya* (renunciation) as it reveals the undesirable or impermanent nature of this world. There should be the conscious practice of searching for the meaning of suffering while the experience is taking place. This is to be done by cultivating the *abhyāsa* (practice) of the attitude of detached witness or *sākṣī-bhāva*, even during the experience of sorrow, and not only afterwards for moralizing or as mere academic analysis. The will or message of God or unity of non-dual Reality is grasped instantaneously as this discipline gets perfected. Only when approached in this way does suffering lose its merely factual quality and acquire the metaphysical quality of the meaning of Reality. One explanation of the pessimistic emphasis on *duḥkha* in Indian Philosophy is that it teaches that suffering has to be grasped in a metaphysical-spiritual sense, and not merely as a natural condition of body-mind-spirit (classified in Indian Philosophy as *ādhibhautika*, *ādhidaiivika* and *ādhyātmika*), in order to break the bondage of transmigratory life. The fundamental assumption in the Yoga of *Duḥkha* is that suffering is caused by man's ignorance (*ajñāna*) of his real nature (*svarūpa*) as saccidānanda Atman. In the Upaniṣads such a person is called an *ātmahat* or destroyer of Self. Most people are not only ignorant of their true nature, but are also unaware that they are in ignorance, and that all their suffering is caused by this ignorance. But when *duḥkha* is thus grasped, it cancels Self-ignorance or alienation from the *ātmasvarūpa* of the individual Self.

The third and most important principle of this Yoga is that suffering to become a yoga has to be self-suffering and not other-

suffering. For, the suffering which is a means of evolution in both mundane and spiritual life has to be one's own. One should not cause or even wish for suffering in others. One should have nothing but greater kindness, sympathy and compassion for those who suffer: only then can one be called a Sādhaka. Self-suffering is to be welcomed as a means to liberation, but as the suffering of other people is concerned, it is to be removed as quickly as possible, by all means at one's disposal, through alleviation, amelioration or sublimation. In fact, the essence of this spiritual discipline (*duḥkha-yoga*) is the wisdom of discovering the right cause and reason for inviting self-suffering in order to bring relief to mankind, temporarily or permanently. Removal of any form of empirical suffering of others by self-sacrifice makes one a great benefactor. But the highest cause for which one can sacrifice oneself is the removal of the ontological evil of *ajñāna* (ignorance) present in the human soul and the suffering caused by it. In this connection the essential point to remember is that mankind or humanity is collectively, not distributively, present in each and every person, so that service of one person or a few persons—whether to relieve them of any empirical suffering or of the highest spiritual suffering of alienation from their true nature—is service of humanity as a whole. And the Sādhaka suffers every pain and sacrifice of life to attain his end together with the humanity he serves. The goal of *sarvamukti* (liberation of all) occasionally referred to in Vedāntic thought is the fittest ideal for his Sādhana. Or one may adopt the ideal of Bodhisattva, who is so enlightened that he abjures his own personal liberation until the whole world is liberated.

Elements and stages of this sādhanā

Any complete philosophy of sādhanā must present both the theory and the practice

of that discipline. Philosophy is not merely a way of thought but a way of life. The scheme laid out in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* for the attainment of Jñāna consists of three steps: *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*: passing from 'hearing' of doctrines from a teacher to reflective examination or 'analysis' of doctrines in order to remove all doubts about them, and finally to one-pointed 'contemplation' of them until direct experience or *sākṣātkāra* of truth is achieved. The same Upaniṣad mentions (in 3.5.1) another scheme of three major stages of personality development: *pāṇḍitya*, *bālyā*, and *mauna*, before he becomes a *brāhmaṇa* or knower of Brahman. Spiritual knowledge gained from books and teachers must lead to a state of guilelessness and purity of heart like that of a child, and ultimately to the direct experience of Atman which, being beyond thought and speech, produces deep silence. The stage of intellectual learning, achieved by the sādhanaka according to his saṃskāra and training is a complicated mental condition; it is to be replaced by the simplicity of natural sainthood, before the last state of deep interior stillness and silence is attained. In whatever way the stages of progress are conceived, spiritual life is a matter of personal experience. This being the case, only a few of the important elements of the Yoga of Suffering can be stated here, and even these are being put forward tentatively as they are not experienced realities but are based only on the author's personal conviction. However, the truth of these propositions have been attested to by the lives of great spiritual leaders of mankind like Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi.

Though the prevalent tradition allows each of the orthodox yogas to be an independent means to enlightenment, in practice they are found to be combined and shading off into one another in the lives of great Sādhakas, as none of the

elements of human nature—intellect, will, emotion, the psychic mechanism and its experiences—has an independent existence. Therefore *duhkha-yoga* cannot remain completely independent of other yogas. Its foundation is Bhakti or love of God. The desire for the vision of *Iṣṭa* or for union with Atman must become a burning, overpowering impulse. Absolute devotion and constant remembrance only can prepare the *Sādhaka* for yoga. There may be the cultivation of an attitude of submission, as in *dāsya bhāva*, to enable the *sādhaka* to willingly and cheerfully bear the burden of suffering laid on him by the will of God; or the sharing of all experiences and problems with God by looking upon Him as Friend and constant Companion, as in *sakhyā bhāva*. However, the ideal of the *jñāni bhakta* propounded in the *Gīta* (7:17) is perhaps the best psychological basis for the practice of the Yoga of Suffering. It should be noted here that though Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja propound the independence of their paths (Jñāna and Bhakti respectively), they allow synthesis of jñāna, bhakti and karma in the preparatory stage of Sādhana. Since suffering-yoga involves intense activity in the spirit of yoga, the approach of *samuccayavāda* (doctrine of synthesis) of karma and bhakti with jñāna seems to be indicated as the foundation of this discipline.

From this follows total surrender to the guidance of God in suffering. *Ātma-samarpaṇa* is the leap of faith into the abyss of the one Reality. The aspirant lets God decide the current of events and experiences. This means relaxation of tension caused by exerting oneself beyond one's energies to bring about events, solve problems or end the suffering of others. There should be not so much the feeling of being forced to submit to His will, as the sense of glad relinquishment of responsibility for one's life into His hands. We should wait upon God without doubt,

worry or uncertainty, and with the conviction that all measures of suffering move towards a divine consummation. And thus an attitude of acceptance of both good and evil with perfect balance of mind gradually develops. At a certain point the feeling of self-surrender converts one's physical-mental sufferings from mere phenomena into the means of attaining yoga. God is the eternal Teacher residing in the heart, and He guides and directs the resolution of all difficulties.

Here one question arises: is self-surrender the only differentia that separates suffering as fact from suffering as yoga, or is some other change or quality required in this path? Humility is an important distinguishing mark of this Yoga. True *ātma-samarpaṇa* can only result from a sense of humility in the *Sādhaka*. Humility has a special role to play in the Yoga of Suffering as in Bhakti Yoga. A realization of the insufficiency and unreliability of one's powers to cope with life is essential. As in every other spiritual path, here also losing of *abhimāna*, pride or self-will and the sense of doership, *karṭṛtva-ahamkāra*, occurs in a more essential form than in the earlier stages of Jñāna-Yoga and Karma-Yoga. Self-surrender and consequent equanimity are the result of the sacrifice of the sense of ego. What is required is not only renunciation of self-interest, but renunciation of the lower self itself. So, the first categorical imperative of this Yoga of Suffering would be: renounce self-interest, sacrifice the self. The sacrifice of material objects, ends and values (small-leap) precedes, and the negation of egoistic-self (big-leap) succeeds, the leap of faith or self-surrender. True surrender to God comes only after this sacrifice of the self, *aham-yajña*.

The *Sādhaka* now feels he has no bank balance to meet the challenge of the goal which he aspires to attain. But he is ready to renounce his bank balance, not only in the material sense, but in terms of all his

capacities, and leap into the vale of sorrow with the certainty that spiritual realization will come in and through the spiritual transmutation of suffering. Men generally meet the challenges or problems of life with the sense of security of having accumulated a store of physical, mental, moral and spiritual capacities by means of education, training and experience. But in the Yoga of Suffering what is required is to renounce the feeling of security and meet life only on the basis of one's faith and reliance on the Supreme. Therefore, the second categorical imperative of this sādhana would be: throw away your bank balance, do not rely upon your own powers and capacities.

The spirit of Karma-yoga underlies all actions in which the sādhanika engages: the loss of selfish and petty desires and urges enables him to work for the fulfilment of other people's desires, as there is total indifference towards such ends for himself, but he is sympathetic, kindly inclined and tolerant towards others who desire such ends and objects which he has outgrown and rejected.

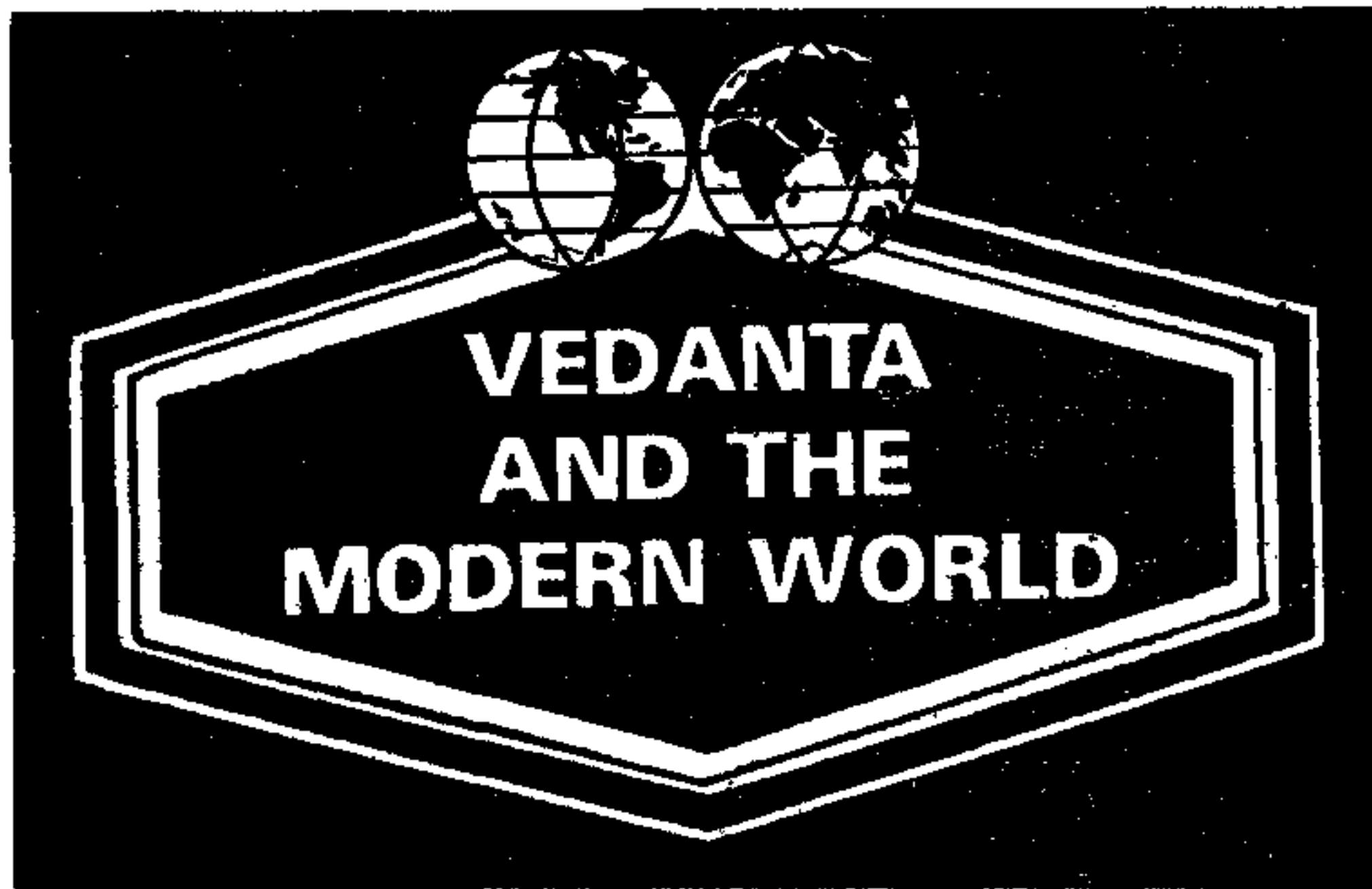
Ancient philosophy exalted the contemplative spirit, while modern philosophy of life admires the life of action. A balance of both contemplation and work is the true ideal. Contemplation has to be made a full-time vocation underlying all actions. There has to be a rhythm of contemplation supporting all action in the course of this Sādhanika. Withdrawal from the world means really gathering, conserving and concentrating all the energies on realization of the One Reality. But withdrawal must be followed by going out into the world. Every realization of contemplation must be substantiated by following actions, to test its truth. Contemplative detachment from the world in the course of this Sādhanika does not mean total lack of interest, for, after attaining perfection in the Yoga of Suffering, the interest and involvement

in the alleviation of the sufferings of others revives on a full-scale and in the impartial spirit. The perfect balance or ideal synthesis of both aspects of life seems to be the practice of contemplation in action and action in contemplation.

The meaning of Sannyāsa has to be understood or specially clarified in both its feeling quality and its doctrinal nature. It may not be essential to follow the traditional pattern of taking certain vows and wearing the ochre robe, but the spirit of *vairāgya* (renunciation) is indispensable, which is not so much an external condition as a state of mind or outlook of non-involvement. Outer acts of renunciation of object-ends through austerities and vows must give place to true *nivṛtti* which is detachment from the world. Only the person himself can know when it comes in the fullness of time (and there is no difficulty in recognizing its presence), like love or any other emotion which one knows when one has it, though he might have wondered previously how he would recognize it. The nature of real Sannyāsa is the freedom which comes from detachment without indifference. The world is renounced for the sake of liberation, but ascetic renunciation which turns one into a stony-hearted unfeeling robot is to be rejected. Here is utmost scope for the operation of all feelings of love, sympathy and compassion free from emotional attachment, possessiveness and expectations. Personal ties and small circles of attachment end with the realization that these relations are not more special than one's relationship to the whole world. The realization that everyone is a friend fills the heart with love and the desire to bring relief and help to all beings.

The understanding and practice of the Yoga of Suffering is founded upon compassionate identification of oneself with the suffering of others. Universalization and

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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN INDIA: LIGHT FROM WITHIN—I

DR. S. K. CHAKRABORTY

This paper attempts to produce some evidence, from indigenous Indian thought and literature bearing on her culture and tradition, that most of the conceptual and ideological ingredients for economic development and organizational management are lying untapped within her shores. A beginning is made by citing some brief anecdotes from the author's recent experience which seem to capture some of the most deep-rooted problems of man-management in Indian organizations (section I). Some typical Western critical analysis on this theme has itself been critically probed by us, showing that they mostly constitute rather unreliable diagnoses, with little hope to yield valid prescriptions for Indian management (section II). Japan's faith in her own cultural traditions in solving her management problems has been illustrated from some representative literature produced by the Japanese themselves (section III). In section IV Indian sources like the *Manusmriti*, the *Pancatantra* and some *Upanishads* have been examined to highlight the fundamentally valid concepts they still have to offer us for the present age. In section V we distil these concepts into a list of ten typical keynotes which could constitute an organically resonant man-management strategy for Indian organizations.

I. A Few Areas of Darkness

Let us begin by citing a few incidents we have witnessed during 1982.

1. While travelling by train from Delhi to Dehradun, I was the occupant of a berth along with two others in a four-berth air-conditioned compartment. After an overnight journey our fellow-travellers began to discuss various official and sundry topics over a morning cup of coffee. The train would take a couple of hours more to touch Dehradun. I tried to concentrate on some serious reading. However, as my co-travellers warmed up, I could only keep my eyes on my papers, but not my mind. At one point, one of them remarked to the other, in a tone of despair at their own foolishness: 'You see, our organization can give us so much more. It is our fault that we don't know how to extract more juice'. As their conversation snowballed, I could realize that they were managers in one of the largest and highly profitable public sector undertakings in India. And, obviously, they were of a very senior and well-paid rank as indicated by their use of the highest-priced railway berth in Indian railways.

2. In an autonomous academic institution a proposal to finance a foreign trip for a research scholar, entailing an expenditure of about Rs. 40,000, came up before the Board of Governors. Having read the proposal, one Board Member suggested that while the support might be granted, it should carry a stipulation that the recipient should undertake to come back and serve the institution for at least three

years. No sooner had he finished than several other Board Members made their colleague appear silly and outdated for having suggested such a clause. Why on earth retain a person who might be unwilling, and add thereby to his frustration, but add nothing to the institution's output? Such was the majority argument.

3. During a confidential interview (for a survey of the status of the organization's excellence on the human dimension in a large and profitable multinational company) the head of the marketing function of one of the three profit centres mentioned, as one of his points of disenchantment with the firm, the following fact: 'How do you think I will continue to be highly motivated for the company, when my counterpart in another profit centre not only gets a free car, free petrol, free maintenance, but a free chauffeur too, whereas I merely get a free car, free petrol and free maintenance but no chauffeur? May be he is senior to me. So what?' (We discovered later that both the heads of marketing were receiving gross annual emoluments of around Rs. 75,000).

4. While delivering a pre-dinner talk about his experiences as the Chief Executive of a very large and well-known private sector company, at one stage the guest speaker mentioned that currently his entire management staff was motivated to such a high pitch that they could even pluck the stars from the heavens! One amongst the thirty and odd top management participants in one of India's most prestigious annual management development programmes asked the speaker about the secret of such a marvellous achievement. Back came the astonishing answer that within a few months of his taking over the reins, nearly 700, out of about 800 managerial personnel, were given promotions. After the talk was over, one intrepid participant chipped in: 'Sir, how long do you think that the effect of this magnanimous gesture might last?' There was no answer. We wished someone had also asked: what happened to the unfortunate hundred and odd non-promotees?

5. In a state-level public sector company, a company not only sick but almost dead, the Managing Director got the news one morning that about a 1000-strong contingent of labour force was going to stop production on that date. On asking why, the union leaders told that there was a directive from the political party bosses of the majority union that the workers would have to join a procession that was being organized that afternoon. Thus the ethical standard of

dedicating oneself to the rescue operation of a gasping unit, which was offering the employees their bread and survival, was apparently too narrow and shortsighted a goal in the face of the call for joining a procession, which would culminate in a mammoth rally.

These random snap-shots from all over the country highlight one of the most pervasive problems confronting Indian management today. Whatever be their level in the hierarchy—the topmost managers down to the lowest level workers—they all seem to be caught in the compulsive tangle of individual need satisfaction, without caring even as much as a fraction for giving and contributing. Unfortunately, there is much intellectual writing too (like Prof. Amartya Sen's recent 'goals-rights' model)¹ which plays down the giving or contributing or duty aspect of man in society (although Sen appears to recognize certain constraints on individual rights, insofar as they impinged on others).

We now turn to a second problem. Try to discuss certain new ways of looking at a problem, or of managing a human or group situation (e. g., management by objectives, performance reviews, open communication etc.) with any hierarchical level of managers: and they will always point their fingers upwards and argue that it is better you tell these things to our superiors before talking to us. We have witnessed this upward-buck-passing syndrome even at the highest management and administrative levels. None looks at the other side of coin. Each higher level manager has junior level people working with him. Why should he not, if he is personally convinced of the new idea or of the better principle, apply it within own zone of discretion, to his own juniors? If this is not the way, how else will change be effected? By

1. *Business Standard*, 2 January 1982.

always showing the man above me, am I not trying to rationalize my escapist mentality?

The third core of our concern lies in the singularly cavalier attitude towards the sanctity of promises and commitments made. We look in vain for living examples in our daily lives of the truth of the Indian saying: 'a man's words and an elephant's tusks come out but do not go back'. There is little appreciation of the tremendous repercussions of a promise unfulfilled or a commitment dishonoured in an increasingly interdependent and complex society. If the objective or scientific case for promises to be honoured by compliance is not yet fully sunk in us, why choose to ignore the moral—ethical or even religious sanctions behind it? Why should the joyful self-confidence born of commitments honoured cease to be a prized practical virtue? Could not Indian management do with a little more of such a virtue?

The fourth ubiquitous variable in Indian management is the multi-lingual, multi-cultural cocktail of the Indian population. Rank parochialism and petty chauvinism seem to be eating into the vitals of most large organizations with all-India activities. And this is equally true of private and public sector enterprises. This is a factor probably unique to India. No country in the West, or even Japan or China faces this monstrous problem. With the departure of the British rules, it has certainly assumed more serious proportions. Time has come to acknowledge this ugly reality honestly.

As an Indian student of the Indian scene these four manifestations of managerial and employee behaviour, amongst several more, have appeared to us to be very deep and fundamental. But let us examine below what the majority of sociologists from the West, and many of their Indian followers, diagnose to be the basic ills afflicting India's economic development and its

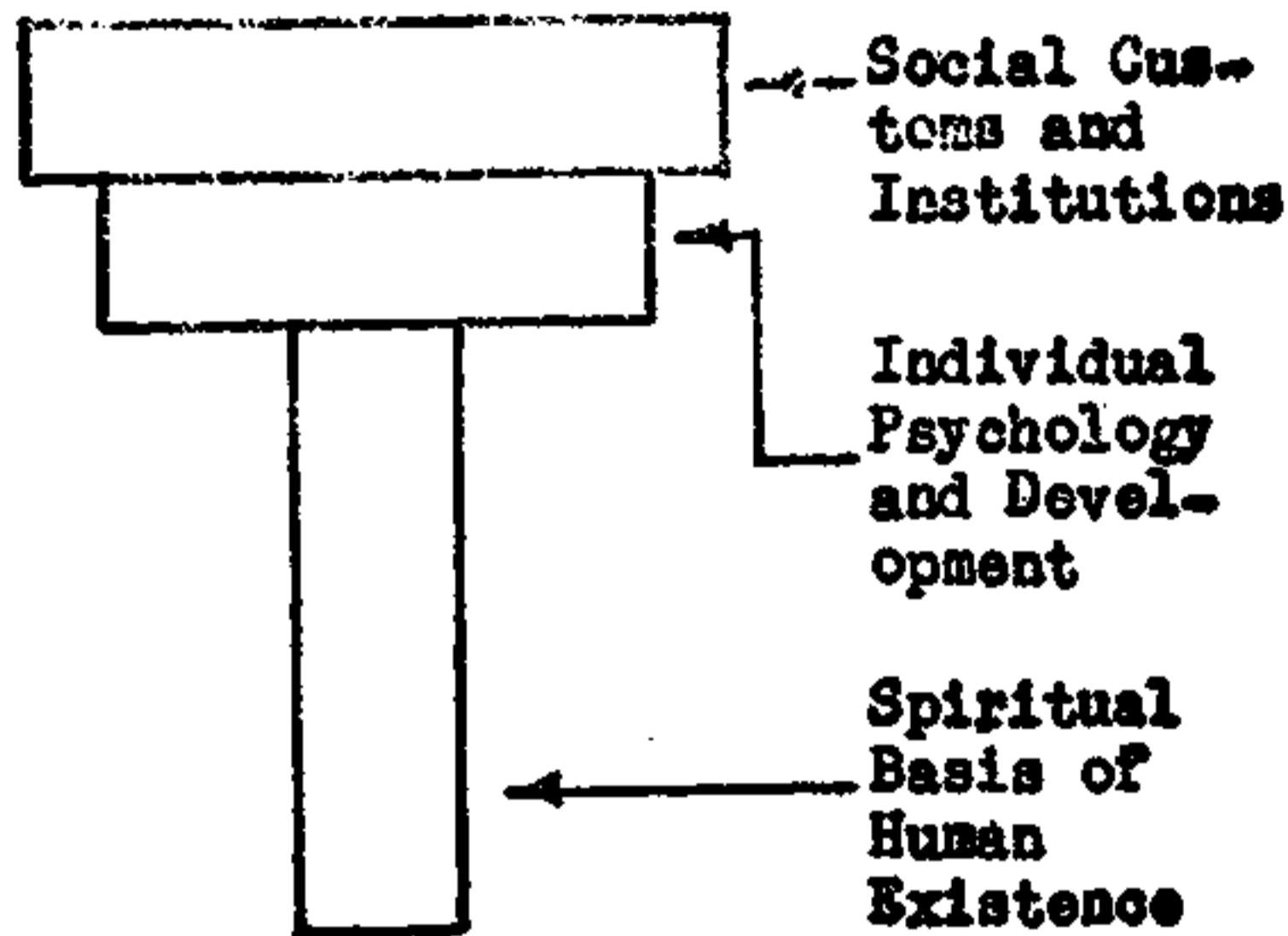
management through various types of organizations.

II. *Light from the West—USA*

Copious literature is available from Western scholars on the problems of slow economic development and sloppy organizational management in India. The main burden of such writings is that the 'Hindu' world view, the religio-psychological tenets of 'Hinduism' about the purpose of man's existence, its social forms like the joint family or the caste system, its theory of reincarnation and the doctrine of Karma and kindred constituents of the Indian ethos all combine to erect formidable barriers in the path of modernization. Accordingly, all these elemental forces of Indian society should be replaced by tenets, values and structures which are seen today to be the accompaniments of high economic development in Western countries. Even if this proposition is not pressed home so explicitly by most scholars, the implicit practical message seems to be very close to it. Most Indian students of the subject also seem to have accepted this interpretation, and its policy implications.

Before we begin to deal with only one representative work written along the lines just mentioned, a general point is in order. We have noticed many Indian academics feeling rather apologetic to own that the 'Hindu' ethos is also the 'Indian' ethos. Such ambivalence is probably a unique feature of India only. The words 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' originated with the Greek pronunciation of the river Indus as *Hindus*. The Indian psychological-religious main-springs are embedded in the universal Vedantic and Upanishadic thought structures. They are not credal structures as other world religions springing from individual Masters or Prophets are. It appears, therefore, that those of us who understand and portray the so-called Hindu ethos *only*

in terms of some of the social customs and institutions of Hindu society indulge in too superficial an assessment of an old, complex but living culture. The Indian ethos—not just the Hindu ethos—might be better conceptualized through the following diagram.



The Structure of Indian Ethos

The majority of Western as well as Indian scholars observe only the top, wide but thin layer of Indian culture. This to them appears, and quite reasonably so, as archaic and antediluvian. There is very little evidence of their inclination to penetrate into the middle, less wide but more deep layer. This too is understandable because the manifest and measurable top layer covers up and conceals the middle layer. But is this pardonable too? And as to the third, the narrowest but deepest layer, the trend of thought is that this is precisely what is most antithetical to India's emergence as an efficiently managed industrial economy. This is the villain of the piece as it were. Alas! it is management systems experts who talk and write about adopting a 'systems view' of organizations and their problems. But what about applying the same to the understanding of a country's culture and ethos? More on this aspect will be dealt with in section IV.

Let us now examine some of the key arguments posed by William Kapp and

Lore Kapp, whose work we take as the representative of a dominant school of sociological writing on India.² We shall let the Kapps speak to us in their own words:

1. Hindu culture must be regarded at the same time as a religion and as a social system. This is an important characteristic which in effect tends to provide religious sanction to a great number of facets of the social system which in modern civilizations have become clearly secular in character.³

2. Until recently, and with the exception of a small urban middle class elite, the unit of action and the source of aspiration in Indian social life is not the individual but the group as represented by the extended family and caste.⁴

3. Time and duration are viewed not as a linear process but as repetitive and cyclical. Hinduism shares with many pre-technological civilizations the older and archaic concept of time and duration modelled in harmony with universal cosmic and biological recurrences. In contrast, modern civilizations which have incorporated into their thought and action patterns the implications of techniques derived from modern physics and chemistry have secularized time and duration (including history) and view both as linear.⁵

4. It is this iron law of inescapable retribution (*Karma*) which gives Hindu culture its distinct character. By connecting the actual finite human situation with the individual's previous incarnations, cause and effect are spread over totally different lives. As a result causation tends to lose all continuity and assumes a fatalistic tinge.In this sense Hinduism is indeed a perfect example of a religion providing a rationalistic explanation for existing incongruities of suffering, fortune and merit.⁶

5. It is the great saint and not the practical man who occupies the place of honour. Renunciation, austerity, sacrifice—and not the accumulation of wealth or political power—will gain the full respect and admiration of the

2. Kapp, K.W., *Hindu Culture, Economic Development and Economic Planning in India* (Bombay: Asia, 1963).

3. *Ibid.* p. 10.

4. *Ibid.* p. 10.

5. *Ibid.* pp. 11-12.

6. *Ibid.* p. 15, also pp. 41-42.

Hindu. Such is the inevitable outcome of a culture which has permitted traditional metaphysics and religion to embrace the sacred and the profane and made the preoccupation with absolute reality more important than concern with the amelioration of the actual conditions of human existence.⁷

6. ...Both the joint family and the caste with which it is interlocked tend to channel behaviour along lines that are predominantly group-oriented.⁸

7. ...In a transitory world of appearances desireless action without attachment to its fruits runs the risk of degenerating into ritualistic performances of one's duties. Such performances born of renunciation and nonattachment will not generate the strong aspirations and motivations required for the hard and systematic work carried out with precision and punctuality, without which there can be no increased productivity and efficiency.⁹

8. The patriarchal family structure and the omnipresence of ancestors may well result in the crystallization of a dependency complex which leads the individual to expect to be taken care of in a manner reminiscent of childhood.¹⁰

We think the above list of points is extremely potent in destroying all vestiges of self-respect and self-confidence in an Indian reader's mind—especially in that of a budding young Indian who has no prior authentic acquaintance with the pillars of his culture. An air of condescending superiority about Western technological achievement (shall we say an almost narcissistic infatuation for it?) seems to be oozing out of the above statements. Even more important, here is a perfect example of what shallow comments and grievous misjudgments can stem from scholars who are steeped in only a particular—and their own—thought frame but try boldly to apply it in studying a culture so incomparable with theirs. It is significant to note the references to the class of Indian writers which the Kapps include

in their footnotes. They are mostly respected names in the fields of history and sociology. And yet, our contention is that they all have limited their understanding and analysis of Indian culture to its wide, top, thin layer only. Theirs is not the mind and vision which have lived and experienced Indian culture to its marrow and then articulated it with forceful conviction born of insight. It is not for mere scholars to deliver the goods in this respect. Thus, nowhere in the first three Chapters, where the Kapps deal with Indian metaphysics, the iron law of *Karma*, the *Gita* and so on, occurs a single reference to the immensely rich clues to these vital constituents of Indian culture provided by men like Swami Vivekananda or Sri Aurobindo. They did not write for royalty and recognition doctorates and scholarships. (This background might of course be interpreted as having produced only 'ritualistic performances', à la Kapps, and therefore unworthy of any attention!). Besides, the very Indian scholars quoted by the Kapps are themselves trained in the same mould of thinking which their Western predecessors and mentors have built up earlier. Naturally, their writings cannot but generally corroborate the hypotheses posed by scholars like the Kapps. They usually are not equipped with an alternative set of perspectives and thought frames to be able to stand apart and look courageously and critically into the face of well-written and amply-documented literature from their Western gurus.

Thus, we would like to contest the very first argument of the Kapps quoted above. That Indian culture is both a religion and a social system is, in fact, a strength and not a weakness as implied by them. The inner and deeper meaning and cohesion given to social activities by being blended with religion is what India today should begin to rediscover and capitalize. From a systemic viewpoint too this is a much

7. *Ibid.* p. 19.

8. *Ibid.* p. 29

9. *Ibid.* p. 44.

10. *Ibid.* p. 59.

more integral frame, and indicative of a highly matured culture. In fact, the Indian stand in this respect is: 'All acts are spiritual, and every step is a pilgrimage'. It requires far greater familiarity with a certain kind of literature on India, which is never touched even at its fringe by the class of scholars we are alluding to here, to be able to grasp the essential message in this quote.

As regards the second argument about the unit of action and source of aspiration in Indian culture being the group and not the individual, we fail to understand why this should be considered a brake upon organizational efficiency. Is it not a fact that we bemoan constantly the lack of team work or group work in Indian organizations? If group orientation had been integrated in the past into the grain of Indian culture, is it correct to assume that imposed western individualistic values have today pushed it so deep underground that our organizations are helplessly groping in the dark for a group work ethos?

On the Kapps' argument about the linear conception of time and progress characterising post-technological economically advanced societies, against the cyclical conception nurtured by pre-technological societies (like India), our comment is that this is simply an evidence of an unrecognized, and therefore unstated, truth that a civilization hardly four centuries old is apt to view human existence and progress linearly, compared to a civilization which is perhaps at least fifteen times older than the former. A young son of twenty is bound to view his life linearly, whereas his grandfather of seventy five is surely going to see it in a cyclical pattern—whether in the USA or in India. Looking back in calm reflection will generate a sense of cyclicity. Looking forward in wishful anticipation will create a linear vision to justify itself. Both are facts of life—one

cannot be the subject of scorn, while the other cannot be the subject of infatuation without attendant perils. The Kapps' effort to align physics and chemistry to strengthen the linear perspective is also not so invincible as it might appear on first sight. Thus one might profitably read Capra's (a physicist of considerable standing) book *The Tao of Physics* to understand whether modern physics might corroborate more the archaic foolishness of old Indian or Vedantic wisdom on cosmic cyclicity, or the intrepid linearity of the brave new world civilization that America is.¹¹

The Kapps present us with a really surprising contradiction when in their fourth argument they say that the law of *Karma* spreads cause and effect over totally different lives, and then in the very next sentence assert that, as a result, causation tends to lose all continuity. It is precisely this continuity which is enshrined in the law of karma. We reap as we sow—*whether in this life or in the following ones*. We are reaping in this life what we had sown—either in this life or in preceding ones. A law such as this is exactly the opposite of what fatalism means. The individual, the group, the nation can create the causes now and here which will inevitably produce corresponding effects then and there—in *this or future phases of his or its existence*. Probably the American civilization is too young to realize the truth of this law—at least her sociologists and kindred scholars leave that kind of an impression. There are exceptions, however, like Philip Kapleau, who see a lot of practical sense in this law to regulate our daily lives in society and organizations.¹² Toynbee—primarily a historian and not a sociologist, and the product of an older anglo-saxon

11. Capra, F., *The Tao of Physics* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1979).

12. Kapleau, P., *The Wheel of Death* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972), pp. xvi-xvii, and pp. 26-9.

civilization than America's frontier civilization—has illustrated the operation of this law with the help of several portions of England's history stretching over the 14th to 19th centuries.¹³ It is equally a travesty of right judgement to claim that the law of karma sanctions or legitimizes oppression, misery and suffering around us. If you are a hungry leper on a city street, the law says, your plight must be the result of causes in this life or preceding lives set in motion by yourself. But where does the law say, or how does it imply that we, who hurry past you lost in our selfish reveries, should not stretch out to you a helping hand—from throwing a coin, or buying some food, or taking you to a hospital, or to bringing you to our home and dressing you up and feeding you for the day in a warm homely atmosphere? Truly, the law implies that such cruel apathy and neglect would be the cause of some retribution visiting on us—sooner or later, singly or collectively.

In the fifth point of the Kapps the implied suggestion is that a saint is not and cannot be a practical man. This again is an instance of how much a Westerner could be out of his depth in assessing the worth of cultural symbols of a country like India. The models held out for India's "man of the world" are those of King Janaka of Mithila, or Bhishma of Kurukshetra, or King Ashoka of Pataliputra, who first acquired the intrinsic qualities of saintliness—renunciation and all that—and then rose to become the greatest men of action, kings and benefactors of society. If the Indian psyche bows down in humble reverence to such men and women of self-abnegation and altruism, we have to take this characteristic on its own terms. This is a strong point of Indian culture which leaders of change in Indian society today

may well pay heed to even now. And if the Kapps observe the profane in some of the ritualistic components of Indian religion, they are entitled to it. But no profanity can be admitted in Indian metaphysics. One needs the perceptiveness and direct insight of persons like Sri Aurobindo to plumb into the deeper meanings underneath the apparently barbaric images and symbolism of spiritual works like the *Rgveda*.¹⁴ And the tears shed by observers from affluent Western countries on the dire poverty of Indian masses, their pathetic contentment and so on, do not seem to be genuine, for much of the visible poverty of today is a direct consequence of three centuries of Western exploitation of the resources of India. These were the countries which under the influence of the Protestant Ethic—that much haloed talisman of modern economic development—accumulated wealth for themselves by the systematic draining of so-called traditional societies. It was left, for instance, to an Indian sannyasi to beard the lion in his own den, at the very time when the political glow of protestant ethic was at its radiant best, by pinpointing 'the ugly impression left on our mind by the ultra-luxurious, insolent, despotic, barouche-and-brougham driving Christians of the Protestant sects'.¹⁵ Thirty-five years of post-independence trauma and confusion is but a fleeting moment in the six-thousand-year-old history of India. During this span India had witnessed numerous phases of accumulation of wealth—but never by military conquest and ruthless bloodshed and political machinations. And it is precisely such wealth which was either plundered or destroyed by the torch-bearers of Protestant Ethic. Not that Indians should not worry

14. Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda* (Pondichery: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971).

15. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works*, (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1959), Vol. VIII, p. 160.

13. Toynbee, A., and Ikeda, D., *Choose Life—A Dialogue* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 318-9.

about the lost time in the last three and half decades. But few Western scholars have the moral right to stand on a high pedestal and utter woolly comments on Indian metaphysics. And even more disastrous becomes the folly when we Indians accept such assessments as gospel truths. More will be said on this aspect a little later.

Regarding the interlocking of the caste and joint family systems leading to pronounced group-orientation, this feature should have constituted a firm launching pad for team work in the management of organizations. But both these concepts are 'untouchables' for our intellectuals—much of it under the influence of Western writers. Some features in both systems are bad which must be discarded at the earliest. Yet what substitutes have we devised, or are in the process of developing? It is a mark of shallow intellectual conceit to desecrate and dismantle such systems without having the capacity to evolve anything which is even remotely as viable as they have been. Thus, it makes a most pathetic reading when men of stature like P.N. Haksar blow the trumpet call: 'Courage and irreverence towards old scriptures is the necessary precondition of our renewal'.¹⁶ A political speech might as well end up like that. But does it befit a man of erudition? Irreverence is a negative gospel. Haksar does not say what he means by 'scriptures', and obviously his reading or understanding or both are hopelessly inadequate in this respect. We shall try to show this in section IV.

The Kapps' interpretation of the *Gita's* gospel about the way of action is equally superficial. 'To action and duties alone do thy rights extend, and not to their fruits' is first of all based on the principle of conservation of energy. Once you decide to do

something, do not worry or burden your mind with thoughts of what rewards or penalties might follow its completion. Anxiety about such end-results will dissipate your energies, and the quality of execution of the task will suffer in consequence. Besides, a work well done with full devotion is a good 'cause' which, by the law of Karma, is bound to produce its good 'effect'. Is this then not an immensely practical philosophy? Could we not all determine to put it to test, and prove it to ourselves? Secondly, this gospel of the *Gita* is an epitome of ethical and exemplary conduct in practical affairs. Thus, it is always true that if I am anxious about the result while I work, its successful accomplishment normally makes me more egoistic and proud (cf. high economic development achieved by the West and its loud pride in that). On the other hand, failure makes me despondent and lose respect in myself. But neither of these consequences is a healthy one for the human mind (or for any group or society as a whole). Besides, with a training of our mind on such foundations, the performance of tasks can never become ritualistic. In fact, the execution of tasks then is invested with a serenity and a poise which produce far more enduring and positive consequences—just the opposite of what Kapps' 'strong aspirations' for selfish, individual interest would lead to. Milton Singer (one amongst the very few Western scholars who seems to have drunk deeply Indian culture and to have tried to interpret it in the light of the Indian psyche) challenges the Kapps in the following words:

The Kapps do not demonstrate that such consequences follow logically, psychologically or culturally from these metaphysical beliefs. Nor are there any empirical studies cited to show that Hindus who profess such beliefs have become fatalistic and other-worldly and as a result do not arrive on time for appointments, have a high frequency of absences from their

16. Haksar, P. N., *Reflections on Our Times* (Delhi: Lancers, 1982) p. 111.

jobs, do not work hard, cannot save or invest their savings, do not know how to organize their lives according to methodical schedules, lack a drive for achievement and mastery of this world—in short do not have those character traits which modern European capitalists were supposed to have derived from the Protestant Ethic.¹⁷

Our point is that even if many features inimical to modern industrial development are visible on the social plane in India today, yet her rich storehouse of spirituo-psychological concepts, models, principles and theories contains the full range of tools to cope with or eliminate these barriers, and to lead her on to the road of development in her own terms.

The last argument of the Kapps we have quoted above reverts to another criticism of the patriarchal, joint family system which allegedly promotes childhood dependency values among family members. Our own scholars of the Indian management scene have also voiced the same criticism. For example, Chattopadhyaya assails the 'omnipotence' of the joint-family head (the *karta*) which makes him trespass his role boundaries and inflict 'infantilization' upon the rest of the adult members of the family.¹⁸ Such assessments are at best partial truths. They may also be the products of an individual's own unfortunate experiences in a joint family system during his or her own childhood (which leads to generalizations—unconsciously perhaps). Contrary and positive experiences of growing up in a joint family are also heard frequently from as many adults as those who have negative features to highlight. As to fostering dependency complexes, our own experience points to just the contrary

phenomenon. Unlike the lone child in present-day nuclear homes, the large number of children in a family under one roof would be left almost entirely to themselves or to other adult members of the family, and not so much to their own parents. The pampering over-care bestowed on one or two children in the nuclear homes of today produces dependency complexes and infantilization of a worse kind. A child grows into an adult expecting that the whole world, like its parents, is obligated to it to satisfy its ever-growing ego-centric cravings. On the contrary, the socialization of idiosyncrasies and angularities is taken care of most spontaneously in large joint-family homes. Moreover, if the charge of omnipotence against a joint-family head is taken as true, how much more or equally true is the promethean fortitude and relentless self-denial such an individual goes through to maintain and build up a whole generation of people entrusted to his care. In fact his charity and large-heartedness are often exploited. We have personally witnessed several such instances, and we bow to their memories in reverence. And most of them have been men of great self-discipline too. It might be proper for us to be sensitive to the fact that in the name of slaying the ghost of alleged omnipotence of the joint-family heads, in most cases licence is being given today to wanton indiscipline at home. And such normlessness is then being transferred to organizations with all its consequent perils. Finally, if we wish to temper our partial sociological analysis of joint family systems, we might like to take a look at the galaxy of giants Indian society produced in every walk of life during the century 1830-1930, from Ram Mohan Roy to Tagore, Tilak to Gandhi, Vivekananda to Aurobindo and so on. Almost all of them have been the products of the joint family environment. Shall we not judge the tree by the quality of fruits it produces? (And for what

17. Singer, M., 'Religion and Social Change in India: The Max Weber Thesis, Phase Three'. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. Vol. xiv, No. 4 July 1966, p. 499.

18. Chattopadhyaya, G. P., 'Joint Family and Industry—Transfer of Values'. *Business Standard*, 18 May 1982.

Japan has done in this respect, we shall presently discuss it in section III).

To sum up, we have tried to argue in this section that popular scholarly literature condemning wholesale Indian metaphysics and social institutions is mostly superficial and partial. Very few viable operational guidelines for managing Indian organizations can spring from such sources. For the types of typical problems faced by Indian organizations—shorn of professional jargon—highlighted in section I, the lines of criticism built up by nonempathic sociological or behavioural literature on India can scarcely furnish relevant solutions.

We may end this section by pointing out one more instance of wrong Western interpretation of Indian culture, society and psychology. The following excerpts from Carstairs are typical:

(a) A growing child is taught to avoid his mother during menstrual periods as one who is *mysteriously dangerous*, like the *bloodstained demon-goddess Durga* (whose name means 'unapproachable') (emphasis ours).

(b) The most widely known of all forms of the Goddess is that which depicts her as Kali, the black *she-demon*, naked, four-armed, wearing a garland of the heads of giants, dancing on the breast of her prostrate consort, Mahakala, who is Lord Shiva. In this context, the child's father is seen as a *fellow-victim of this mother* figure who is at once an object of adoration and of fear.

(c) When confronted with...complete surrender, the deity, the father and the Guru are compelled to offer help; the *tyranny of early childhood* reasserts itself.

(d) *Samadhi*, achieved by entering the pit—the womb of earth, is described as 'voluntary regression to the pre-natal state.'¹⁹

The nadir of shallowness and profanity touched in such scholastic obiter dicta is simply flabbergasting. Let us offer the reader an alternative interpretation of the

symbolism contained in the image of Goddess Kālī:

The symbol is full of spiritual meaning for the votary: the dark blue colour is that of infinity; the nudity signifies the 'unconditionally self-conditioned' nature of the Universal Energy whose joyous dance or sportive play is Life; the third eye is the eye of knowledge; the garland of skulls and girdle of human arms as well as the decapitated head and the sword in the left hands represent the terrible side; and the right hands bestowing boons and fearlessness represent the gracious aspect. Kali therefore is both severe and sweet like nature. Shiva lying inert like a corpse is the Absolute Intelligence beyond all creation and all activity. He is the Lord of Kali, for Kali who is Shakti or Cosmic Energy is inseparable from Him whose Energy she is. Her dance on Shiva denotes.....the union of Intelligence and Energy...The Energy that is personified as Kali is therefore not the inert and lifeless energy of the materialist, but the Divine Energy instinct with intelligence and purpose.²⁰

A great modern Indian savant, Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, offers excellent additional insight into the meaning of the image of Goddess Kālī. The two right arms indicate grace and boon—grace for the sincere seeker of liberation, and boon for the seeker of worldly spoils by righteous means. The sword in Her left upper arm represents knowledge which is used to cut asunder the delusive ego and maya, represented by the decapitated head in the lower left arm. It is this maya which prevents man's search for eternal beatitude.²¹

Now, these psycho-spiritual expositions of Kālī need to be compared with the psychoanalytic perversions of the same. Shall we as Indians embark on this task, and reach our own judgment? Or, are we

20. Swami Ghanananda, *Sri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message* (London: Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 1970), pp. 44-5.

21. Kaviraj, Gopinath, *Paramārtha Prasanga* (in Bengali), (Calcutta: Pashyanti, 1977), Vol. I, p. 106.

19. Carstairs, G.M., *The Twice Born*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 158-61.

already too dazed and mesmerized to do so? And on Samadhi, should we follow Carstairs? Or, should we be sensible enough to hear about it from a man who attained that state himself, and could help others to reach it; who declared that if a fool enters Samadhi he comes out of it a fully illumined man!²² Or, to listen to Patanjali's inclusion of Samadhi as the eighth and last stage of yoga practice which brings superconscious wisdom?²³ And anyone—even in the West—who kneels down before his Lord in humble prayer and soulful surrender, should be quick

enough to reject Carstairs' equalization of surrender with the sly invocation of childhood submission to the tyranny of a compulsively loving mother. For, such surrender always soothes and purifies a parched soul, instead of imparting to it the sadistic satisfaction of tyrannizing over the deity or God. This will be the testimony of all who practise it daily for self-development. It is the pure simplicity and full trust of the child which is implied in surrender to the Deity, and not its tyrannous machinations. Such surrender is meant to de-egoise the individual for his growth to superior states of existence. Of course it is too much to expect minds cast in the psycho-analytic mould to come anywhere close to such thinking.

²². Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, (1959) Vol. V, p. 300.

²³. Chakraborty, S.K., 'Patanjali's Yogasutras and Behavioural Sciences,' in *Value Orientation*, Calcutta, Vols. I and II, 1982.

(To be continued)

(Continued from page 265)

humanization of outlook occur as metaphysical understanding of this human problem deepens, and efforts at the alleviation of suffering at material and mental levels and removal at spiritual level intensify. When a person is greatly moved by others' sufferings, feels it as if it were his own, or puts another's need before his own and wants to give each what he desires, he is advancing fast on the path of *duḥkha-yoga*. But still his ego is alive, as it is he who is feeling their pain by empathy though, admittedly, the suffering is not merely personal and private. When he goes totally beyond the scope of private individual suffering, and suffering is universalized by

losing his ego-sense (*aham-bhāva*) in universal consciousness (*sarvātmabhāva*), then joy and sorrow lose their common connotation, and these opposites, like all other pairs of opposites, disappear in that Reality. By taking on the burden of the world's suffering on himself the realized soul does not feel the sorrow and pain as a psychological experience at the final level. When thus approached, suffering is transcended once and for all, not only for him but for all those who participate in his consciousness. This is the ideal of the liberation of the whole world exemplified in the lives of Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

BHAGAVAN AND NAYANA: BY S. SHANKARNARAYANAN. Published by Sri Ramana-nashramam, Tiruvannamalai 606 603, Tamil Nadu. 1983. Pp. 165. Rs. 10.

'I have read all the sastras, performed japa of the famous mantras, observed hundreds of penances and austerities. Yet I have had no realization. Is my tapas tainted, is there any shortcoming or perhaps I do not know the method. I am said to be a learned man, yet I do not know. I take refuge in thee. Help me out!'

That was in 1907, a famous scholar and Tantra adept, prostrating himself before an unknown ascetic on the hill of Arunachala and crying out in agony.

'Find out wherefrom this "I" springs forth and merge at its source; that is tapas. Find out wherefrom the sound of the mantra in japa rises up and merges there; that is tapas.'

These were the words that slowly emerged from that mystic who had been in *mouna*, silence of speech, for over a decade. They thrilled the scholar, Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, who announced:

'I have found my master, my Guru. He is the Sage of Arunachala known as Brahmanaswami. He is a great Seer, a mighty spiritual personality. To me and to you all he is Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Let the whole world know him as such.'

That was the beginning of a saga told in graphic detail in these pages. The high ministry of Sri Ramana Maharshi may be said to have begun that day, and continued till 1950 when it changed its character with the mahasamadhi of the Sage. The author narrates a number of interesting details about the interaction of the Sage and the Muni resulting in a number of authentic expositions of the Maharshi's Teaching by Nayana (as the Muni was affectionately called by his disciples and also by the Maharshi). The circumstances in which each of the famous works came to be written and the part that the Maharshi played in them are recorded in detail.

In the section on the life of the Muni, a whole world of literary creativity, occult interventions in the cultural and spiritual history of the land, divine inspiration effecting miracles of diverse kinds, are portrayed with skill and taste. And there is practical guidance to the aspirant

on every page. To cite a passage from one of his writings:

'One should worship Kali by watching the inflow and outflow of the life-breath. When it is accomplished, the life-breath Prana becomes full of light. One should worship Lakshmi by watching the thoughts rising like waves in the mind. When it is accomplished, the mind will be devoid of thought. One should worship Gayatri by following with care the subtle sound. Then the inner sound will become full of light. One should worship Ishvari by constant remembrance. By that the release of all knots will be accomplished. One should worship Sadasiva by a natural inborn poise. By that the Self will be transformed to Brahman.' (P. 160)

A luminous book on two great luminaries on the southern horizons.

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THOUGHTS FOR DAILY MEDITATION,
VOL. I (JANUARY 1 TO MARCH 31): BY ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM. Published by Aquinas Publications, Mount Mary Hill, Bandra, Bombay 400 050. 1983. Pp. 170. Price not stated.

Anthony Elenjmittam's prolific writings are familiar to readers of *Prabuddha Bharata* for over two decades. He has always been an exponent of the *philosophia perennis* in all its glory and grandeur. Whatever the genre, his writings always embody the basic tenets of universal religion. The resultant catholicity of outlook is seen abundantly in the present volume.

The 'focussing point' of this book of daily meditations, as the author rightly says, 'is to help the aspirant or any genuine seeker of the Kingdom of God within to reflect, analyse, compare, contrast and, on an experimentable and verifiable basis, search and discover the secret tabernacles of the Most High within the depths of human consciousness.'

The book is, accordingly, arranged with two items for each day: an extended passage on the different facets of spiritual life, followed by a small, pithy 'mantram' for, obviously, intensive meditation. The 'mantrams' are short, aphoristic sayings mostly by the author himself or choice quotations from Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, the Psalms etc. That the author describes these

short 'aphorisms' after the Hindu mode of a 'mantra' shows the deep roots that inter-religious modes of contemplation and meditation have struck. The 'mantrams' themselves are instinct with great scope for in-depth reflection (cf: 'Proportionate to the internal silence is the Divine eloquence within the heart of the meditative soul, 'No cross, no crown' etc.) Everywhere, the dominant mood is one of calmness, purity and strength and, above all, prayer.

Thoughts for Daily Meditation easily takes its place alongside comparable volumes. We look forward keenly to the completion of the series.

DR. M. SIVARAMAKRISHNA, PH. D.
*Reader in English
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INSPIRING QUOTATIONS. COMPILED BY R. N. LAKHOTIA. Published by Asha Publishing House, 1A, Love Lock Place, Calcutta 700 019. 1983 Pp. 208. Rs. 35.

Sri Lakhota is a well-known advocate and tax consultant of Calcutta and, besides being the principal of a commerce college, is also the editor of four journals on taxation and author of several popular books on income-tax, and even of some books on humour! Evidently, Sri Lakhota is as versatile as he is successful in practical life. When such a person turns his attention to the thoughts of great men, his compilation acquires a special significance. For, obviously, many of these higher ideas must have become a part of his own thinking and attitudes, and must have contributed something to his personal dynamism and success.

The men and women whose thoughts have been gathered up here belonged to all walks of life. They include Lao Tze, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Thomas A Kempis, Emerson, La Roche Foucauld, Benjamin Franklin, Swami Vivekananda and a host of other great men who have left their footprints in the sands of time. Their teachings have been classified under alphabetically arranged topics. An appendix containing brief biographical notes on the great persons mentioned in the book would have greatly enhanced the value of the book. This is an ideal book to be given as a gift to young people.

S.B.

KANNADA

SUVARNA-VRSHTI: BY PRABHUDASI NIVEDITA. Published by Sri Vineeta Ramachandra Rao, Prabodha Mantapa, Dharwar 850 001. 1980. Pp. 72+155. Rs. 10.

This is a book of religio-spiritual allegorical stories originally written by the author in Marathi and translated into Kannada by the publisher. The author has been devoted to spiritual life from her young age and is a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, whose pictures appear at the beginning of the book with appropriate homages. The translator is a well-known Kannada writer and was the Editor of the cultural periodicals 'Jaya-Karnataka' and 'Pradipa' for long years. He himself is devoted to spiritual ideals, and it is this common interest and natural admiration that brought them together some years ago both in literary endeavour and also as life's companions in the socio-spiritual journey.

Prabhudāsi Nivedita has written a few other books also of this type. This one is a collection of 10 stories of which one with the caption 'Suvarṇa-Vrishti' (Golden-Shower) provides the title for the book. The stories are interesting and enlightening and convey ethical and religio-spiritual ideas in a simple and touching manner through the events in the lives of the characters in the stories.

The translation is in scholarly (northern) Kannada. The stories cover 155 pages. In addition, in the beginning are appended 40 pages of appreciations and appraisals by some ten eminent persons and Kannada writers; 20 pages are devoted to the translator's introduction; and another 12 pages cover the author's and publisher's Foreword. All these are enough evidence of the importance attached to the book. However, even without these elaborations, the reader can benefit by the well-conceived allegorical stories. Omission of these extraneous matters would not reduce the value of the book, rather it would reduce its cost and also help the readers to appreciate it independently in their own way.

The printing and get-up need improvement.

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Belur Math*

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA VRINDABAN

Report for April 1982—March 1983

Begun in 1907 as a small homoeopathic dispensary, the Sevashrama has now grown into a 121-bed allopathic hospital and an important monastic centre. The hospital has departments of General Surgery, Ophthalmology, Dentistry, General Medicine, and a Homoeopathic Outpatient Clinic. The General Surgery Department performs a wide variety of operations; a neurosurgeon is also in the faculty. Facilities exist for conducting electrocardiography, radiography, physiotherapy and laboratory tests. An 8-bed ward is provided for cancer patients. The Emergency Department is a boon to the public, conducting medical and surgical services round the clock. A well-equipped Eye Department is a special feature of this hospital. The Pallimangal (integrated rural development) scheme recently introduced started serving poor people free of charge covering 150 villages in Mathura district.

The Nursing School, recently started to meet the acute shortage of nurses in the hospital, offers a three-year course in nursing. It admits 10 students every year.

During the period, the Sevashrama treated 2,29,570 outpatients (new: 45,588). All outpatients received free consultation and medicines. It treated 3,465 inpatients and conducted 381 surgical operations. 41% of inpatients had free treatment, the rest had subsidized treatment. The homoeopathic clinic treated 968 cases.

Immediate needs: It should be noted that the Sevashrama does not ask for or receive any Government grant. It depends solely on financial help from the generous public for the maintenance of the hospital. Persons desirous of endowing beds in memory of their loved ones may do so by donating Rs. 50,000/- per bed. Or donations may be made for any of the items mentioned under *Future plans* or *pallimangal* (integrated rural development) activities. The immediate need is to buy certain essential equipment and also to wipe out the accumulated deficit of Rs. 2,01,100.

Future plans

Construction:

1. Intensive Care Unit: One block with attached Laboratory, Toilet, Waiting room, Utility room, fittings etc.	Rs. 2,75,000
2. Modifications in the existing Ophthalmology and Neuro-surgery wards	1,00,000
3. Completion of unfinished work of roofing the hospital building	1,50,000
4. Staff Quarters	3,00,000

Equipment:

1. Ceiling Operation Lamp	40,000
2. Some essential instruments for General, Orthopedic, E. N. T., Ophthalmology and Neuro-surgery	1,94,000
3. Operating Microscopes	2,00,000
4. Spectrophotofluorometer, Automatic Slide Staining machine, Refractometer, Blood Gas Analyser, Electronic Cell Counter, Electrophoresis unit, Slide counter	3,13,000
5. Angiomat 3000 Viamonte—Hobbs Injector	3,00,000
6. Florobrite Tri Mode Cesium Iodide Image Intensifier with T.V.	5,00,000
Pallimangal Work:	5,00,000

Intensive Care Unit:

Central Monitoring Cardioscope, Defibrillator, Pacemaker etc. for 8 patients	6,00,000
Laundry:	2,70,000

Endowments:

Endowments for 45 beds Rs. 50,000/- per bed	22,50,000
Endowments for Building Maintenance Fund	2,00,000
Endowments for Hospital Maintenance Fund	50,00,000
Endowments for Goseva (Dairy) Fund	1,95,000
Endowments for Land Development Fund	1,00,000
Endowments for Hospital Development Fund	4,85,000
Endowments for School of Nursing	4,30,000

Grand total Rs. 1,24,02,000

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Higher Technical Education in India

A report submitted to the Parliament in July 1983 by the Review Committee on post-graduate education and research in engineering and technology, headed by Dr. Y. Nayudamma, has made some significant revelations and recommendations. The general contention of the committee is that a mis-match between educational objectives and social needs and between university products and industry's needs has only widened the gap between the urban elite and the rural poor, leading to unemployment, underemployment and brain drain. 'The fact remains that the science and technology content in Indian society as well as the extent of involvement in research and development are incredibly low,' the report points out.

According to official statistics for 1976-77, the number of scientific and technical personnel in India per 1000 of population is only 3.8 compared to 12 in the U.S., 19 in West Germany, 82 in the Soviet Union and 185 in Japan. Scientists and engineers engaged in R & D (research and development) in India per 1000 population is only .09 compared to 2.68 in the U.S., 2.97 in FRG, 3.72 in the USSR and 4.98 in Poland. Studies show that 25% of the top engineering graduates leave the country every year. The 'reverse transfer of technology' through the migration of high quality manpower to developed countries is, according to the committee, 'to be taken as a defeat of the very purpose of the high quality technological education.'

The committee regrets the fall in standard noticeable in most institutions. One of the main causes for this is the failure of these institutions to admit only the very best students to the post-graduate department. To ensure that only meritorious and motivated students are selected, the committee recommends that a GATE test (Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering) be held at the national level in widely dispersed centres. The committee also states that several reasons like outdated and prolonged courses, inadequate facilities, lack of motivation, recognition, incentives and employment opportunities, and incompetent administration are responsible for the inability of technological institutions to attract very bright students and for the high drop-out rate. Since India's science and technology manpower will have to grow at a faster rate, particularly in quality, in the coming decades, it is necessary that national investment in scientific and technical education must increase many times. The committee, therefore recommends enhancement of scholarships, shortening of courses, introduction of new courses and the conversion of the present Post-Graduate Board of the All India Council for Technical Education into a new statutory organization.

What is really important is to bring into existence a supportive environment, an intellectual climate, that actively promotes science, research and technology all over the country. This cannot be done in a day nor through committees and their recommendations alone. It calls for an intellectual revival of the whole nation, and the only pragmatic way of attaining this at present is to establish a close liaison between education and industry.
